

Employment Skills

A Special Project of the South Dakota FFA Foundation

Important Note

Please thoroughly read the General Rules at the beginning of this handbook for complete rules and procedures that are relevant to all South Dakota FFA Leadership Development Events.

Purpose

The purpose of the FFA Employment Skills Leadership Development Event is to present an opportunity for participants to develop, practice, and demonstrate skills needed for seeking employment in the industry of agriculture. Each part of the event simulates, as closely as possible, real-world activities that will be used by real-world employers.

Objectives

- Provide students with experience applying for positions in order to assist them in attaining their real occupational goals.
- Acquaint students with employment procedures, including: application for employment, personal interview, letter of application, resume, and follow-up letter.
- Enhance the teaching-learning process regarding preparation for employment.
- Provide recognition for those individuals excelling in this area.

Event Rules

- Beginning in 2017, all written materials including resumes, cover letters and job applications will be submitted electronically per instructions from the State FFA Office. Please refer to the website (<https://www.sdaged.org/>) for more information about electronic submission of written materials.
- All information given by the participants in the Employment Skills LDE must be factual. The information listed in the application form, letter of application, and resume must be accurate and up-to-date. The participant may bring statistical information such as social security number, list of previous work experience, education record, etc. which may be required on the application form. The names, addresses, and positions of the persons given as references are to be accurate. No prefabrication of the student's resume will be allowed.
- A panel of interviewers will be utilized for the Employment Skills. Judges may be independent of the interviewing panel.
- It is highly recommended that participants wear FFA Official Dress for this event.

Event Format

The Employment Skills LDE will consist of five parts:

1. Employment application
2. Resume
3. Cover letter
4. Personal interview
5. Follow-up letter

Five employment positions will be posted on the State FFA website by October 1st. Students may choose any of the five positions to apply for.

The “employment positions” will be typical representations of part-time or summer high school positions that students currently qualify for.

Participants will be given 20-minutes to complete an application form for the position. The application form will be furnished and must be completed in ink. For reference information, participants can use a 3x5 inch notecard with their contact information for the completion of the application. Participants must provide their own pens.

Participants will be given a 3x5 inch notecard (separate from the card with their references) on which to write any questions they would like to ask the interview panel. Their question card will be written during the application completion time and taken from the participant with their application. The question card will then be given back to the student as they enter the competition room for their interview. The question card will be given to the judges following their interview.

The interview will last up to 10 minutes and will be done in a panel interview style.

Five minutes will be allowed for the judges to complete the interview scorecard.

Participants will submit a follow-up letter after interviews. If possible, students will be provided computers with word processing applications to compose and type a follow up letter. Plain white paper will be provided. Thirty minutes will be given.

Scoring

When all participants have finished their interview, each judge will total his/her score for each participant, including the written portions of the contest.

Ranking

Participants shall be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation with each other. The judges ranking of each participant shall then be added and the winner will be that participant whose total of the rankings is the lowest. Subsequent placings shall be determined in the same manner (low point score method of selection).

Tiebreakers

In case of a tie, that individual who has the highest grand total score shall have prior rating.

	Possible Points
Employment Application	100
Resume	200
Cover Letter	100
Follow-up Letter	50
Personal Interview	500
Total Points	950

Employment Skills Judges' Score Sheet: Summary

Participant Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Judge: _____

Scored Item	Points Allowed	Points Earned
Employment Application	100	
Resume	200	
Cover Letter	100	
Follow-up letter	50	
Personal Interview	500	
Grand Total	950	

Additional Comments:

Employment Skills Judges' Score Sheet: Cover Letter

Participant's Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Judge: _____

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
Format and General Appearance:					
Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 pt); uses appropriate business format, date and address at top; addressed to appropriate person; appropriate signature block.	Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 pt); uses appropriate business format, date and address at top; not addressed to appropriate person; inappropriate signature block.	Exceeds one page; margins are inappropriate; font style is unreadable; font size is too small or too large; no signature; no date or address; no inside address; not in appropriate business format.		X4	
Introductory Paragraph:					
Identifies position they are applying for; states how they heard about the position; states why they are interested in the position; uses wording to attract reader's attention.	Identifies position that are applying for; does not state how they found the job; vaguely describes why they are interested in the job; introduction is bland and not attention catching.	Does not clearly identify position they are seeking; no description of how you heard about the position; does not grab the reader's attention.		X4	
Skills and Experience:					
Identifies two to three strongest qualifications for the job; indicates how education has prepared them for this job; states why you are interested in the position; skills and experiences are consistent with resume; makes reference to resume.	Identifies one to two qualifications for the job; indicates how education has prepared them for this job; provides a vague explanation of why interested in the job; skills and experiences are somewhat consistent with resume; makes reference to resume.	Does not identify relevant qualifications for the job; does not indicate how education has prepared them for this job; does not state why they are interested in the job; skills and experiences are not consistent with resume; does not mention resume.		X4	
Closing Paragraph:					
Thanks reader for taking time to read; provides appropriate contact information; makes appropriate provisions for follow up.	Thanks reader for taking time to read; provides contact information, but makes reader to assume a follow up.	Does not thank reader; does not mention a plan for follow up; does not provide any contact information.		X3	
Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation					
Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X5	
Cover Letter Total (transfer score to total page)			100		

Employment Skills Judges' Score Sheet: Resume

Participant's Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Judge: _____

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
Contact Information					
Includes name, address, email address, and phone number; name stands out on resume, provides professional e-mail address.	Name does not stand out; email address is too casual.	Missing name, address, email, or phone number' email address used is inappropriate or unprofessional.		X2	
Employment Objective					
Focused objective that states how employee will help company achieve its goals	Focused objective that states what you want from the company	No objective identified.		X2	
Education or Relevant Coursework					
Contains complete information (listed in reverse chronological order) with relevant courses listed, dates formatted correctly, GPA listed in correct format (if appropriate), includes appropriate honors and awards.	Contains information (listed in reverse chronological order) with relevant courses listed, dates formatted correctly, may show gaps in work history; inappropriate GPA listed, includes appropriate honors and awards.	Information not listed in reverse chronological order, important information missing, information not listed in correct format.		X7	
Relevant Experience and Skills					
Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; company name, title, location, and dates are included; strong action verbs used with correct verb tense; personal pronouns and extraneous words are omitted; bullets are concise, direct and indicate one's accomplishments; results are quantified; bullets are listed in order of importance.	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; entries have a pattern of one type of error; action verbs are weak; verb tenses are inconsistent; bullets are not concise or direct and do not indicate impact; bullets are written in complete sentences.	Entries are not in reserve chronological order; do not include company name, dates, location, or position title; bullets are written in complete sentences; verb tenses are inconsistent; bullets are wordy, vague, or do not indicate one's impact; bullets are not listed in order or importance to the reader; results are not quantified when appropriate; irrelevant or outdated information is listed.		X9	
Achievements and Honors					
Appropriate and relevant achievements and honors listed; achievements and honors related to career goal; provides specific details related to achievements and honors; listed in reserve chronological order.	Appropriate and relevant achievements and honors listed; achievements and honors related to career goal; lacks specific details related to achievements and honors; listed in reserve chronological order.	Achievements and honors not listed in reverse chronological order; inappropriate or irrelevant achievements listed; no achievement or honors are listed.		X5	

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
References					
Listed appropriate references and provided complete contact information for references.	References are listed, but not all may be appropriate or not all contact information for references is included.	Inappropriate references are listed; no references listed; no contact information listed.		X2	
Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation					
Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X5	
Format and General Appearance					
Does not exceed two pages without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 point); headings reflect content and content substantiates headings; resume is targeted to job.	Does not exceed two pages; appears overcrowded; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 point); headings don't necessarily reflect content and content substantiates headings; resume is targeted to job.	Exceeds two pages; margins are inappropriate; font style is unreadable; font size is too small or too large.		X8	
Resume Total <i>(transfer score to total page)</i>			200		

Judges Comments:

Employment Skills Judges' Score Sheet: Application

Participant's Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Judge: _____

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
Consistent with Resume					
Name, education, experience and other personal information matches information provided on resume.	Name, education, experience and other personal information generally matches information provided on resume.	Name, education, experience and other personal information do not match information provided on resume.		X4	
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling					
Spelling, grammar and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X6	
Form Completed					
Entire application was completed with "N/A" indicated where appropriate.	Majority of the application was completed with few blank fields.	Several blank spaces and missing information.		X4	
Overall Impression					
Application was consistent and appropriately highlighted candidates qualifications for the position.	Application was consistent and generally highlighted candidates qualifications for the position.	The application was not consistent and did not highlight candidates qualifications for the position.		X6	
Application Total <i>(transfer score to total page)</i>			100		

Judges Comments:

Employment Skills Judges' Score Sheet: Follow-Up Letter

Participant's Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Judge: _____

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
Format					
The document was directed to the appropriate person with an appropriate address and salutation. The level of formality was appropriate for the type of correspondence.	The document was directed to the appropriate person with an appropriate address and salutation with minor errors. The level of formality was generally appropriate for the type of correspondence.	The document was not directed to the appropriate person. No address or salutation was included. The level of formality was not appropriate.		X2	
Content					
Effectively expressed appreciation and appropriately reiterated their qualities. Expressed interest and appropriately stated provisions for follow-up.	Attempted to express appreciation and generally reiterated their qualities. Generally expressed interest and attempted to state provisions for follow-up.	Did not attempt to express appreciation. Did not attempt to reiterate their qualities. Did not attempt to express interest or state provisions for follow-up		X3	
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling					
Spelling, grammar and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X2	
Overall Impression					
Writing (when appropriate) was legible and length was appropriate.	Writing (when appropriate) was difficult to read and length was generally appropriate.	Writing (when appropriate) was illegible. Length was inappropriate.		X3	
Follow Up Letter Total <i>(transfer score to total page)</i>			50		

Judges Comments:

Employment Skills Judges' Score Sheet: Personal Interview

Participant's Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Judge: _____

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
Appearance					
Professional dress/ groomed: Follows standard dress code, polished shoes, clothes pressed, conservative accessories.	Dress appropriate: Just not as professional and "put together", shoes clean, but not polished.	Very disheveled: Dirty shoes, not wearing black shoes.		X10	
First Impression					
<u>Greeting</u> : Appropriate salutation and firm handshake. <u>Introduction</u> : States name. <u>Body language</u> : Smiling and pleasant, does not sit until invited, confident in manner.	<u>Greeting</u> : Confident but uneasy, soft handshake. <u>Introduction</u> : States name only when asked. <u>Body language</u> : Rarely smiles, cologne or perfume is distracting.	<u>Greeting</u> : Does not use salutation, very informal. <u>Introduction</u> : Fails to introduce self, fails to shake hands with interviewer. <u>Body language</u> : Obnoxious cologne or perfume, chewing gum		X15	
Response to Questions					
Cited relevant examples; evidence knowledge of career field; knows education and experience required for position; discussed skills gained through school or past jobs and how they are relevant to position applied; abilities described match the resume; responses concise and logically communicated; responses do not sound "canned" provided in-depth description of skills; not just a list, provided in-depth response to questions; not yes/no responses to establish a "theme" that overall describes their abilities.	Some holes, cited several relevant examples, but list is incomplete, knew about career, but conveyed incomplete picture; unsure of education or experience required; incomplete list of skills gained through school and past jobs and relevance to position applied; abilities mostly match resume; responses seemed rehearsed and somewhat disorganized; provided some depth to description of job skills, provided some depth to responses to questions; provided some yes/no responses; was able to tie some abilities together to form a picture of qualifications.	Used incorrect terminology or did not show understanding of terms: Unable to cite or few relevant examples; position education and requirements not known or does not match applicants skill set;; unable to relate skills learned in school or past jobs and relevance to position applied, abilities hardly match resume; responses seemed "canned" with little logical progression; mainly provided list of skills with little explanation; provided yes/no responses;; unable to see an overall theme of persons abilities		X30	

Very strong evidence 4-5 points	Moderate evidence 2-3 points	Weak evidence 0-1 Points	Points earned	Weight	Total
Communication Skills					
<u>Persuasive:</u> Led the interview in a direction that enabled them to expand so their skills were expressed, took initiative to add information beyond question asked. <u>Confident:</u> Exhibited self-confidence with body language. <u>Appropriate volume:</u> Spoke with proper volume to be heard clearly. <u>Enunciation/grammar:</u> Avoided words like "git" versus "get", used appropriate words when speaking. <u>Concise:</u> Avoided run on sentences and answered with logical and organized thoughts. <u>Poise:</u> Avoids distracting mannerisms such as drumming fingers or overuse of "uhm" and "you know". <u>Discretion/Tact:</u> Shared appropriate information and did not create an awkward situation through responses.	<u>Persuasive:</u> Was able to expand somewhat on skills that are a fit for the position, volunteered some additional information to questions asked. <u>Confident:</u> Exhibited some nervousness, but covered well; voice and body language showed some uncertainty. <u>Appropriate volume:</u> Could hear sometimes; but quiet when unsure of response and hard to hear. <u>Enunciation/grammar:</u> Some language not appropriate for position applied, used some slang. <u>Concise:</u> Some questions answered in a rambling fashion, but point was made. Thoughts were logical, but disorganized. <u>Poise:</u> Some nervousness, caught self before exhibiting distracting mannerisms, rarely used "uhm" or "you know". <u>Discretion/Tact:</u> Most professional in tone and shared information that created little, if any, awkwardness.	<u>Persuasive:</u> Answered yes or no to most questions, did not expand on skill set. <u>Confident:</u> Did not appear comfortable, nervous, slouched in chair. <u>Appropriate volume:</u> Hard to hear answers or volume too loud for room. <u>Enunciation/grammar:</u> Used overly complex or simplistic language, sprinkled in words like "git" versus "get" and "agin" versus "again". <u>Concise:</u> Rambled and used run on sentences. Answers were poorly organized and thoughts not clearly expressed. <u>Poise:</u> demonstrated distracted mannerisms such as tapping foot, drumming fingers, etc Excessive use of "uhm" and "you know". <u>Discretion/Tact:</u> Shared information that may be seen as personal about someone else creating awkwardness, appeared unprofessional.		X30	
Conclusion					
<u>Posed appropriate questions of interviewer:</u> e.g., when notification of selection will occur and how. Clarified next steps, inquired as to next step in interview process. <u>Appropriate thanks and exit:</u> Asked for business card, thanked interviewer, stands and shakes hands prior to exiting room.	<u>Questions posed were somewhat appropriate:</u> Some had no relevance to interview, Incomplete inquiry of the next steps in the interview process, Asked for business card, thanks interviewer and shook hand but seemed uncertain how to end the interview and exit.	<u>Asks no questions:</u> Questions asked (if asked), have no relevance to next steps in the interview process, Ends interview abruptly or awkwardly, exits without thanks or shaking hands.		X15	
Personal Interview (transfer score to total page)			500		