



Middle Tennessee Employment Skills

Purpose

The Tennessee FFA Employment Skills Leadership Development Event is designed for FFA members to develop, practice, and demonstrate skills needed for employment in the agriculture industry. Each part of the event simulates, as closely as possible, real-world activities that real-world employers use.

Event Rules

- All written materials, including a cover letter, resume, etc., will result from each participant's efforts.
- The job description, cover letter and resume must be uploaded by the designated deadline as communicated by Tennessee FFA State Staff. A 10% penalty will be assessed on documents submitted late. Any document that is submitted more than one week late will be scored at a 0.
- Contestants can be in possession of their resume, cover letter, and padfolio throughout the duration of the event.
- The follow-up letter should only be completed during the follow-up correspondence portion of the event
- The event superintendent will check padfolios before the competition to verify that the only printed materials the contestant contains are as follows: business cards, cover letter, list of references, and resume.
- The top two teams from the district contests will advance to the sectional contest.
- The top three teams will advance to the regional contest.
- The top two teams at the regional contest will be recognized at the Middle Tennessee Awards Banquet.
- The top two teams at the regional contest will advance to the state contest at the Tennessee FFA Convention.
- The top two teams will be recognized on stage during the 7th general session of the Tennessee FFA State Convention.

Event Format

The event is developed to help participants in their current job search (for their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs, internships, and part-time and full-time employment). Therefore, materials submitted by the participant must reflect their current skills and abilities and be targeted to a job they would like to apply for. In other words, participants cannot develop a fictitious resume; they must utilize their actual experience. They are expected to target the resume toward a real job for which they presently qualify.

Equipment

Participants are required to bring the following items to the event:

- Writing utensils.
- Laptop or tablet capable of a Wi-Fi connection.

Participants are permitted to bring these items:

- Blank paper
- Copies of their resume and cover letter as submitted at the designated deadline for the event
- List of references
- Business cards
- Padfolio

The following items are **not** permitted:

- Letters of reference
- Samples of work
- Pictures
- Personal pages

Items to be electronically submitted before the contest

Participants will electronically submit the following in PDF format:

- Job description
- Cover letter
- Resume

A penalty of 10 percent will be assessed for documents received after the deadline. For documents received one week or later, they will be scored at a 0.

Job description

- The job description is required for the judges to score sections of the event. The job description will not be scored but is a required submission.
- Participants who fail to submit this component will be subject to disqualification.
- The job description should include a description of the position the student is applying for, desired qualifications for the job, and work experience.
- Sources for job descriptions can be found in the newspaper or online through job searches and company websites.

Cover Letter (100 Points)

The cover letter is to be typed, one page, single-spaced, left justified using Times, Times New Roman or Arial 10 to 12-point minimum font.

The letter is to be dated for the day of the event and addressed to:

Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Ellington Agricultural Center
c/o Mr. Ryan Inman

P.O. Box 68960
Nashville, TN 37204

Resume (200 Points)

The resume should not exceed two pages in total. If necessary, a complete list of references may be included on a third page, but references are the only information to be included.

The resume must be non-fictitious and based upon actual work history.

Items to be completed during the competition

Electronic Employment Application (50 Points)

Participants will complete a standard electronic job application. The application will be completed online and the students will have 30 minutes to complete the application. Additional time may be given at the discretion of the event superintendent if technology issues arise. Additionally, if technology issues arise, paper-based applications might be substituted.

Personal Face-to-Face Interview (500 Points)

The personal face-to-face interview will be with a panel of judges. Each interview will last 15-20 minutes. This interview will focus on more in-depth questions about the students' skills, work experience, expectations, leadership, problem-solving, decision-making, organizational skills, and any other questions deemed appropriate by the interview panel.

Follow-Up Correspondence (75 Points)

Participants will submit follow-up correspondence via a hand-written thank you note after completing the personal face-to-face interview. Participants will receive the necessary information and instructions to compose the follow-up correspondence. Participants will have 30 minutes to complete the follow-up correspondence.

Telephone Job Offer (100 Points)

Participants will participate in a follow-up phone call where they receive a job offer. They will be scored on their ability to collect information and negotiate. They will also be scored on their response to the offer and overall impression.

Tiebreakers

In the event of a tie the participant with the highest personal face-to-face interview score shall receive the higher rank.

If a tie still exists, the participant with the highest resume score will receive the higher rank.

Scoring

Preliminary Round	Individual Points
Electronic employment application	50
Resume	200
Cover letter	100
Personal face-to-face interview	500
Follow-up correspondence	75
Telephone job offer	100
TOTAL POINTS	1,025

References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available. Make sure to use discretion when selecting website references by only using reputable, proven sites. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation. The most current edition of resources will be used.

- Past CDE materials and other resources are available on [FFA.org](https://www.ffa.org).
- Open Colleges – How to Write a Resume,
<http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/careers/resumes/how-to-write-a-resume>
- 8 Subtle Ways to Ace the Interview,
<http://www.businessinsider.com/subtle-ways-to-ace-the-interview-2015-2>
- 9 Tips to Help You Prep for a Virtual Interview,
<https://learn.uvm.edu/blog/blog-business/nine-tips-to-help-you-prep-for-a-virtual-interview>
- Sending Your Thank You After the Job Interview,
http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/job-interview-thank-you.shtml
- How to Accept a Job Offer,
<https://www.theforage.com/blog/basics/accept-job-offer>
- How to Negotiate a New Job Offer -
<https://www.payscale.com/salary-negotiation-guide/im-negotiating-new-job-offer>
- The Professional's Guide to Negotiating a Job Offer -
<https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/career-resource-center/negotiate-job-offer/>
- Tips for Networking Events,
<https://grad.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/PDFs/NetworkingEvents.pdf>
- How to Network Effectively: 15 Tips You Can Start Using Today,
<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/the-ultimate-guide-to-non-awkward-effective-networking>
- References from the career center at the land-grant university in your respective state.

Cover Letter Rubric

100 POINTS

Name

Chapter

Indicator		Strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Format and General Appearance		Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style are 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 are 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		X 4	
Introductory Paragraph		Clearly 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 they 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		X 4	
Skills and Experiences		Identifies two to three qualifications for the job; indicates how their education has prepared them for this job; states they are interested in the position; skills and experiences are consistent with resume; refers to resume	Identifies one to two qualifications for the job; indicates how their education has prepared them for this job; provides a vague explanation of why they are interested in the job; skills and experiences are somewhat consistent with resume; refers to resume	Does not identify relevant qualifications for the job; does not indicate how their 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		X 4	
Closing Paragraph		Thanks reader for taking time to read their cover letter; provides appropriate contact information; makes appropriate provisions for follow up	Thanks reader for taking time to read their cover letter; provides appropriate contact information, but leaves reader to pursue a follow up	Does not thank reader for reading their cover letter; does not mention a plan for follow up; does not provide any contact information		X 3	
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		X 5	
TOTAL POINTS							

Resume Rubric

200 POINTS

Name	Chapter
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Indicator	Strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
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 address or phone number; email used is inappropriate or unprofessional		X 3	
Education and 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; inappropriate GPA listed, includes appropriate honors and awards	Information not listed in reverse chronological order; important information missing; information not listed in correct format		X 7	
Relevant Experience and Skills	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; company name, job title, location, and employment 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 impact/accomplishment; results are quantified; bullets are listed in order of importance	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; company name, job title, location, and employment dates are included; 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 reverse chronological order; most entries 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		X 10	
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 reverse 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 reverse chronological order	Achievements and honors not listed in reverse chronological order; inappropriate or irrelevant achievements listed; no achievement or honors are listed		X 5	

Indicator	Strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
References	Listed appropriate references and provided complete contact information for references	References are listed, but not all are appropriate or not all contact information for references is included	Inappropriate references are listed; no references listed; no contact information listed		X 2	
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		X 5	
Format and General Appearance	Does not exceed two pages without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style are 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 are 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		X 8	
TOTAL POINTS						

Electronic Employment Application Rubric

50 POINTS

Name	Chapter
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Indicator	Strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
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.		x 2	
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		x 3	
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; "N/A" used inappropriately		x 2	
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		x 3	
TOTAL POINTS						

Follow-Up Correspondence Rubric (Thank-You Note)

75 POINTS

Name	Chapter
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INDICATOR	Strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Format	Follow-up was directed to the appropriate person with an appropriate address and salutation. The level of formality and was appropriate for the type of correspondence.	Follow-up was directed to the appropriate person with an appropriate address and salutation with minor errors. The level of formality and was generally appropriate for the type of correspondence.	Follow-up was not directed to the appropriate person. No address or salutation was included. The level of formality and was not appropriate.		x 3	
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		x 5	
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.		x 4	
Overall Impression	Follow-up was appropriate length, writing was neat and legible, completed appropriate sections of thank-you note, envelope addressed correctly	Follow-up was appropriate length, writing was somewhat legible, completed appropriate sections of thank-you note, envelope addressed correctly	Follow-up was too short, writing was illegible, did not complete appropriate sections of thank you note, envelope addressed incorrectly		x 3	
TOTAL POINTS						

Personal Interview Rubric

500 POINTS

Name	Chapter
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Indicator	Strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
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		x 10	
First Impression	Greeting: Appropriate salutation and firm handshake Introduction: States name Body language: Smiling and pleasant, does not sit until invited, confident in manner	Greeting: Confident but uneasy, soft handshake Introduction: States name only when asked Body language: Rarely smiles, cologne or perfume is distracting	Greeting: Does not use salutation, very informal Introduction: Fails to introduce self, fails to shake hands with interviewer Body language: Obnoxious cologne or perfume, chewing gum		x 15	
Response to Questions	Used appropriate language for career: Cited relevant examples; knowledge of career field evident (talk the talk); 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 questions; established a "theme" that overall describes their abilities	Seemed to know terms associated with career: Some holes, cited several relevant examples; but list is incomplete, knew about career, but conveyed incomplete picture; unsure of education or experience required for position; 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.	Knew some of the language of position, but used incorrectly or did not show understanding of terms: Unable to cite or provided 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		x 30	

INDICATOR	Strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Communication Skills	<p>Persuasive: Led the interview in a direction that enabled them to expand so their skills were expressed, took initiative to add information beyond question asked.</p> <p>Confident: Exhibited self-confidence with body language and verbally</p> <p>Appropriate volume: Spoke with proper volume for room to hear clearly; not too loud, not too soft</p> <p>Enunciation/grammar: Avoided words like “git” versus “get” and “agin” versus “again”; used proper words when speaking (didn’t use 10-dollar words when a five-dollar word would do)</p> <p>Concise: Avoided run-on sentences and answered with logical and organized thoughts</p> <p>Sincere: Expressed true interest in the position they were seeking</p> <p>Poise: Avoids distracting mannerisms, such as drumming fingers or overuse of “um” and “you know”</p> <p>Discretion/Tact: Shared appropriate information and did not create an awkward situation through responses</p>	<p>Persuasive: Expanded somewhat on skills that are a fit for the position, volunteered some additional information to questions asked.</p> <p>Confident: Exhibited some nervousness, but covered well; voice and body language showed some uncertainty</p> <p>Appropriate volume: Did not modulate volume to express answers, could hear sometimes; but was quiet when unsure of response and hard to hear</p> <p>Enunciation/grammar: Some language not appropriate for position applied, used some slang and exhibited some “dialect”</p> <p>Concise: Some questions answered in a rambling fashion, but point made; thoughts were logical but somewhat disorganized</p> <p>Poise: Seemed comfortable with some nervousness, caught self before exhibiting distracting mannerisms, rarely used “um” or “you know”</p> <p>Discretion/tact: Most professional in tone and shared information that created little, if any, awkwardness</p>	<p>Persuasive: Answered yes or no to most questions; did not expand on skill set</p> <p>Confident: Did not appear comfortable, nervous, slouched in chair</p> <p>Appropriate volume: Hard to hear answers or volume too loud for room</p> <p>Enunciation/grammar: Used overly complex or simplistic language, sprinkled in words like “git” versus “get” and “agin” versus “again”</p> <p>Concise: Rambled and used run on sentences; answers were poorly organized and thoughts not clearly expressed</p> <p>Sincere: Seemed uninterested in the position and distracted</p> <p>Poise: Demonstrated distracted mannerisms such as tapping foot, drumming fingers, cracking knuckles, etc.; Excessive use of “um” and “you know”</p> <p>Discretion/tact: Shared information that may be seen as personal about someone else creating awkwardness, appeared unprofessional</p>		30	
Conclusion	<p>Posed appropriate questions of interviewer: e.g., when notification of selection will occur and how. Clarified next steps, inquired as to next step in interview process e.g., if there will be additional interviews, etc.</p> <p>Appropriate thanks and exit: Asked for business card, thanked interviewer, stood, and shook hands prior to exiting room</p>	<p>Questions posed were somewhat appropriate: Some had no relevance to interview; incomplete inquiry of the next steps in the interview process; asked for business card, thanked interviewer, and shook hand, but seemed uncertain how to end the interview and exit</p>	<p>Asks no questions: Questions asked (if asked) have no relevance to next steps in the interview process; ended interview abruptly or awkwardly; exited without thanks or shaking hands</p>		x 15	
TOTAL POINTS						

Telephone Job Offer Rubric

100 POINTS

Name	
Chapter	

INDICATOR	Strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Response to Offer	Expressed appreciation; upbeat; sincere; shows excitement for the offer	Seemed caught off guard; attempted to be sincere; showed excitement for offer	Unengaged; insincere; showed little excitement for offer		X 4	
Gathered Appropriate Information	Provisions for follow up expressed; posed appropriate questions (start time, date, who to report to); got contact information	Somewhat expressed provisions for follow up; attempted to pose appropriate questions (start time, date, who to report to); asked for contact information	Poorly expressed provisions for follow up; did not pose appropriate questions (start time, date, who to report to); did not ask for contact information		X 5	
Negotiating Points	Negotiating points appropriate; exhibited appropriate poise and professionalism while negotiating points; accepted results with an appropriate response and maturity	Negotiating points were posed but were a little inappropriate; exhibited some poise and professionalism while negotiating points; accepted results with a mostly appropriate response.	Negotiating points were inappropriate/ none were stated; did not exhibit appropriate poise and professionalism; was disgruntled with results.		X 8	
Overall Impression	Exhibited poise; was pleasant; professional; courteous; ended call appropriately	Exhibited poise with some nervousness and attempted to be pleasant and courteous; Ended call with a thank you or just said bye	Seemed nervous; forced conversation; just hung up.		X 3	
TOTAL POINTS						