

Volunteer Judge Overview

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a competitive event judge for California DECA. Thanks to your support and guidance we can better prepare our students to be college and career ready in an ever-changing economy and post-secondary landscape. Our goal is to ensure that each volunteer is well prepared for their judging experience. Please take a moment to review the following:

General Items:

- Students will dress professionally as part of our conference guidelines. Judges are encouraged to wear either business professional or business casual attire.
- When you arrive we will provide your event assignments, a light breakfast, and escort you to your assigned event area. Lunch will also be provided.
- Please arrive early on competition day. We have a tight schedule, so we ask that you plan ahead for traffic and parking. If you are running behind or unable to make it on the day of the event, please be sure to contact the on-site judge coordinator.

Judging Guidelines and Expectations:

- Out of respect to the participants, please put your cellphone on silent and avoid taking calls during competition. Our hope is that each participant gets your full attention.
- To prevent bias, if you know a participant, tell the judge coordinator or your event manager so that they can be assigned to another judge.
- All participants must be treated equally and respectfully regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.
- Please be consistent in what questions you ask, the tone and attention you give every participant, and how you evaluate all students.
- It is important that the participants are not interrupted while they are making their presentation. Please save all your questions until their presentation is completed. The only exception is if a participant asks you a question, then you may respond and engage, but again please be consistent. For some events, you will receive a list of questions that you must ask, and your event coordinator will guide you through that process.
- Students can leave visual aids with the judge if they are of non-monetary value.
- Please adhere to time limits. If a participant finishes early, they can leave, and we encourage you to use the extra time for written feedback and scoring. Please, don't go overtime.
- If you are assigned to an event where students participate in more than one role play, please notify your event administrator if you have seen a particular student before. You should not judge the same student twice if at all possible.
- On the day of competition, there will be a variety of teachers and conference staff managing the competitive events. Please listen closely to their instructions and follow the rules and guidelines that they share. Our competitive events are carefully organized to abide by DECA's strict competitive event standards, and it is important that all judges abide by these guidelines.

Scoring and Participant Feedback:

- Confirm that the name or names on the evaluation form match the participant(s) in front of you (i.e. be sure you're scoring the right participant(s)).
- Please do not give any verbal feedback. No good jobs. No excellent work. No high fives. Simply thank the participants for their time. Seemingly innocent comments can unintentionally give the participants a false sense of their performance. Just thank them and conclude.
- Although we don't want you to give any verbal feedback, we do want you to give written feedback. Give both positive praise and constructive criticism. Your evaluations help our students grow and prepare them to compete at the next level of competition. Also, please write clearly.
- Be sure to score along the way and take notes. You can go back and make changes to your scores, but don't try to wait until you've seen all the participants as it can be difficult to remember each presentation after seeing several of them.
- Students come into this competition with a broad spectrum of experience levels. Some students may never have participated in anything like this before. Help this be a positive experience for them. If a student receives a below average score, the reason should be because of lack of effort and not lack of experience. In that same vein, please avoid awarding a perfect score as there is always room for improvement.
- We use a score factoring system during tabulations, so a perfect score does not always mean the participant will receive first place as scores are equalized across all judges in a given event and many events have testing components and those scores factor in as well.
- Please write clearly and double check the math on each score sheet. It is critical that the total score at the bottom of every sheet clearly represents the accurate sum of scores for each area – and please fill in every field (no blanks). Legible judge sheets keep our scoring system running smoothly. This includes your initials – please make sure we can identify your score sheets.
- Avoid “ties” in all instances. It is important that each participant's score is unique to help us determine overall winners. If two participants' scores are equal, please identify the student that did slightly better and adjust their score accordingly.
- We recommend you see 2-3 students and then take a quick break to adjust your scoring sheets, as needed. Your scores should always match the order that you would rank all the participants, so be sure to always update your scores to keep them in the appropriate order (with no ties!).
- Our scoring system works best when judges assign scores in a consistent manner. If you are looking for a certain level of performance, please score based on the same expectation for all participants.

We value your time and willingness to volunteer. This organization and these events really do make a difference in our students' lives. If you have any questions, ask your judge coordinator, and thank you for your investment and commitment to supporting the success of our DECA members. We appreciate you!