



2026 National FFA Organization Agricultural Proficiency Awards Handbook

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Official Rules and Policies

for the Agricultural Proficiency Awards Program.

Refer to the Agricultural Proficiency Program webpage at [FFA.org/proficiency](https://ffa.org/proficiency) for the most up-to-date edition of the handbook.

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FFA VISION

Growing the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Guiding Principles

National FFA believes that awards and competitive events should:

1. Inspire members to explore, learn, and be prepared for future careers related to the AFNR career pathways and FFA AFNR Value Chain
2. Recognize achievements in skill development and knowledge [including: (2a, 2b, 2c, 2d)]
 - a. Leveraging relevant technologies.
 - b. Utilizing creative problem solving.
 - c. Meeting developmentally appropriate learning objectives (Blooms Taxonomy)
 - d. Utilizing employability skills (teamwork, communication, collaboration).
3. Be accessible and engaging for all students and FFA members.
4. Provide awards and recognition opportunities for students at all levels.
5. Work with other groups to utilize or partner with existing experiences.
6. Provide feedback that promotes personal and professional growth.

National Quality Program Standards for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Education

The National Council for Agricultural Education has provided permission to the National FFA Organization to use the National AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards in the development of their educational resource materials. AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards ©2016 and reserves all rights to the original material used here with permission. In addition, The National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education/National Career Technical Education Foundation (NASDCTE/NCTEF) has provided permission to use the Common Career and Technical Core (CCTC) Standards in support of this project. NASDCTE/NCTEF are the owners and developers of the Common Career and Technical Core (CCTC) Standards © 2012 and reserve all rights to the original material used here with permission.

The National AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards are a guide to developing a well-planned curriculum in agriscience education to be delivered to students throughout the country. For a complete set of the standards, please visit the [2016 AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards](#).

The National FFA Organization has adopted the National AFNR Career Cluster Content and integrated them into the national award and recognition programs for the benefit of members, school administration and agriculture as a whole.

AGRICULTURAL PROFICIENCY AWARDS

What Are They?

Agricultural Proficiency Awards are based entirely on a member's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). These awards recognize individual skills and career-based competencies developed through multiple years of participation in Immersion type SAE projects.

Agricultural Proficiency Awards are divided into "areas" where members exploring or becoming established in specific agricultural career pathways can receive recognition. Each area has a specific description that the SAE project must fit to apply in that area.

Proficiency award areas do not and are not meant to define SAEs. Not all SAE projects will have a proficiency award area to be recognized in, though areas are added and updated each year, attempting to include as many SAE projects as possible.

For Which Agricultural Proficiency Award Does My SAE Qualify?

There are three important steps to selecting the right proficiency award area to apply in: determining the SAE type, determining the correct application type and finding the best proficiency award area.

SAE Types

The correct SAE type must first be known to determine which Agricultural Proficiency Award area an applicant should apply in. Five SAE types are recognized by the [National Council for Agricultural Education](#) and defined by the [SAE for All Guidelines](#). Learn more about these on the website [SAE for All](#).

Click any of the following to learn about and accurately determine the type of SAE:

- [Placement/Internship SAE](#)
- [Ownership/Entrepreneurship SAE](#)
- [Research: Experimental, Analysis or Invention SAE](#)
- [School-Based Enterprise SAE](#)
- [Service-Learning SAE](#)

Award Application Types

Once the correct SAE type is determined, the next step is to select the correct Agricultural Proficiency Award application type. There are four application types:

- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** – The application type is for Ownership/Entrepreneurship SAE projects, School-based Enterprise SAE projects and some Service-Learning SAE projects.
- **PLACEMENT** – This application type is for all Placement/Internship SAE projects and some Service-Learning SAE projects.
- **COMBINED** – This application type is for applicants who have multiple SAE projects, some of which fit into the Entrepreneurship application type and some of which fit into the Placement application type. This application allows both SAE types to be included.
- **AGRISCIENCE RESEARCH** – This application type is for Research SAE projects. If you determine you have an Agricultural Research SAE, go to the [Agriscience Research Proficiency Awards Handbook](#) for information specific to this agricultural proficiency award type.

Award Areas

The list of available Agricultural Proficiency Award areas is updated yearly and released each fall. The current list is available on the [Agricultural Proficiency Awards webpage](#) of FFA.org.

Carefully review the current year's award area list to find an award area description that matches the SAE project(s). Read all possible award areas to be certain. Some types of agriculture are specifically specified in certain areas. If the wrong award area is selected, the application will perform poorly in the judging process.

With constant changes in agriculture and the creativity of students, parents and advisors, it is possible to have an SAE project that will not fit into any Agricultural Proficiency Award area. Updates are made each year, attempting to include all types of SAE projects.

Local chapters and state FFA associations may offer additional or different agricultural proficiency award areas for local and state-level competition. Only the current year list, published by the National FFA Organization, is applicable for national-level competition.

Consult with the chapter FFA advisor, state or national FFA staff if help is needed to determine the most appropriate Agricultural Proficiency Award area for an SAE project.

Competition and Recognition Levels

Agricultural Proficiency Awards start competing at the chapter level and are narrowed down through multiple levels of competition until a single national winner in each award area is named at the National FFA Convention & Expo. Opportunities for awards and recognition are provided at each level.

- **CHAPTER** – Agricultural Proficiency Award applications start the competition process at the local chapter level. Check local chapter and state rules to ensure eligibility, meet local deadlines, and use the correct application forms and procedures. Chapters have many options to provide recognition to local winners. Certificates, pins, plaques and even cash awards may be offered.
- **DISTRICT/AREA/REGION** – Some but not all state associations have competition levels between the chapter and state levels. Consult state FFA staff in your state association for information, rules and instructions. Winners at these levels are recognized for winning above the chapter level.
- **STATE** – State FFA associations set their own rules, deadlines, application procedures and judging processes for recognizing Agricultural Proficiency Award competitors. Consult your state association for the specifics. Through funds given by National FFA Foundation donors, associations are provided financial support from the National FFA Organization to recognize state winners. Check with your state FFA association to discover the state recognition offered.
- **NATIONAL** – The National FFA Organization allows each state association to submit one national competitor in each current year's Agricultural Proficiency Award area for competition at the national level. Each state association may submit only FFA members from their association.

If an FFA member moves to another state between the time of qualifying as an association's national competitor and the national level competition, the member is still eligible to compete at the national level for that award year from the original state association.

National-level competitors receive a rating of Participant, Bronze, Silver, Gold, National Finalist or National Winner from the national judges.

- **Participant Rating** – Applications rated Participant are not recognized on the national website or provided an award pin. These applications generally have major errors such as being submitted on the wrong application type, being non-agricultural or being submitted in the wrong proficiency award area.
- **Gold, Silver, Bronze** – Applicants are listed on the National FFA Organization website and receive a bronze, silver or gold medallion to wear on their FFA jacket. Gold-rated applications received high scores from judges. Silver-rated applications received middle scores, and bronze-rated applications received low scores from the judges.
- **National Finalist** – Four competitors in each award area are rated National Finalist. These applicants move on to the finals round of judging and are expected to attend the National FFA Convention & Expo to be recognized in person. These

applications are recognized on the National FFA Organization website and may receive certificates, medals, plaques, or cash awards.

- o **National Winner** – One applicant from the four National Finalists is selected as the National Winner. This achievement is announced live during the National FFA Convention & Expo. The national winner is recognized on the National FFA Organization website and may receive additional certificates, medals, plaques, or cash awards.

Eligibility of Participants

Membership

Agricultural Proficiency Awards are available to all FFA members, including students with disabilities, who meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Applicants must be current National FFA Organization members in good standing during the membership year in which the application is submitted for each level of competition.
2. Only activities, events and SAE records that took place while an active FFA member may be included in the application.
 - a. *EXAMPLE: Juanita began showing sheep at the age of 8. Only what happened while she was an active FFA member can be included in the proficiency award application. The earnings, activities she performed, skills she learned, etc. before becoming an FFA member may not be included in the award application.*
3. Applicants may apply through the calendar year immediately following high school graduation but not beyond. Eligibility is based on the National FFA membership year (August 1–July 31)—not a school's academic calendar or "rising grade" designation.
 - a. *EXAMPLE: Tom graduated from high school in 2024, so he may apply for a proficiency award in 2025. Jane graduated in 2023, so she is no longer eligible to apply in 2025.*
4. SAE records, information about activities and skills acquired after Dec. 31 of the calendar year before application submission may not be included.
 - a. *EXAMPLE: In January 2025, Jamal applies in his chapter, hoping to compete in the 2025 state-level competition. On Dec. 31, 2024, he owned a camera drone, which he uses as part of his crop scouting service. In January of 2025, he sold the drone and put the money in the bank to purchase a newer version in the spring. Jamal would include the drone in his application since he owned it on the application end date. He would not include any information in his application about selling the drone since it happened after Dec. 31, 2024.*
5. Applicants may be submitted for national competition only once, in the same agricultural proficiency award area.
 - a. *EXAMPLE: In 2023, Min was submitted by her state FFA association to compete at the national level in the Equine Science - Placement agricultural proficiency award area. In 2024 she expanded her equine business and now wants to apply for the Equine Science - Placement*

proficiency award again in 2025. She is no longer eligible to apply in this proficiency area since she was already submitted at the national level in a previous year.

Min started a second SAE project in 2023, taking photos of animals for an online livestock auction site. She can still apply in the Agricultural Services proficiency award area since she has not yet competed in that area. She would include only information about this SAE project in the application.

6. A state association may submit an applicant for national competition in only a single award area in a single award year.
 - a. *Example: Festus raises catfish, does welding repairs on farm implements and works for a local landscaper trimming trees and shrubs. His state FFA association rules allow applicants to apply in multiple Agricultural Proficiency Award areas in the same year. Festus is selected as the winner in both the Specialty Animal award area and the Agricultural Mechanics Repair & Maintenance award area. Only one of these applications may be submitted by the state association for national competition.*
7. Applicants can compete at the national level only in the same calendar year and award area in which they are submitted for national competition by the state association.
8. National level applications must include SAE records (*hours, paid/unpaid or finances*) from at least two calendar years for the specific SAE project(s) on which the application is based. **NOTE:** *More years make the application more competitive.*
 - a. *Example: Cindy started a new job writing online articles about local agriculture for a news website in 2023. She could not apply in 2024 since she could only report records from one calendar year. She continues the SAE project through 2024 and can now apply in 2025 since she has SAE records for this SAE project from at least two calendar years.*

Zara from the neighboring state began doing agricultural stories for the local radio station in 2021 and applies in 2025 using records and experiences from four years calendar years. Zara's application scores higher than Cindy's.
9. The SAE project(s) detailed in the application must be directly based in agriculture or natural resources and must meet the written description of the award area to qualify.
 - a. *Example: Liam designs, fabricates and sells custom parts for racing motorcycles. He applies for an Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance proficiency award. Liam's application is ruled out of area by the judges. The SAE project is non-agricultural and does not meet the award area description, which specifies repairing and maintaining agricultural equipment.*

How to Complete the Application

The application provides information to judges about the applicant's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project(s). Questions are designed to give judges a detailed look at the SAE project, how it has developed, and what the applicant has learned and earned. The best start to an application is a complete set of SAE project records.

The application is electronic and completed online. A reliable internet connection is required to access and complete the application.

This portion of the handbook explains the application sections and provides instructions, definitions, examples and helpful hints for each section of the application.

Professional Integrity

FFA members participating in national FFA programs and events understand and agree that all work must result from their own effort and ability, created, and completed alone (except for partner or chapter applications). When outside sources (direct quotes or phrases, specific dates, figures, or other materials) are used for a project, document, or application, the required reference citation must be completed according to the rules specified by the applicable handbook.

While participating in National FFA programs, FFA members are prohibited from:

- Plagiarizing
- Violating copyright
- Cheating
- Falsifying information
- Using another person's results or thoughts as their own, even with this person's permission. This includes work done by a family member or a mentor.
- Using information or data obtained from the internet without proper citation.

Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Non-compliance represents plagiarism and will automatically disqualify a member.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for National Programs and Events

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing complex tasks that historically only a human could do, such as reasoning, making decisions, or solving problems. As AI continues to evolve, it can be a tremendous tool to help companies, organizations and individuals enhance their productivity and work. Therefore, the National FFA Organization allows the use of AI tools. FFA members may use AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and CoPilot, to assist them in their learning.

Appropriate uses of AI may include:

- generating ideas for any FFA-related assignments, projects, contests and award applications
- checking facts of a phenomenon
- checking for and correcting grammatical errors in a paper written by a member

For more information, please see the [Standard Operating Procedures on the Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) for National Programs and Events document](#).

Code of Conduct

FFA members participating in National FFA programs understand and agree to abide by the [National FFA Code of Conduct](#).

Overview

1. Report your records on a calendar-year basis.
2. Review and follow your chapter and state association rules and submission deadlines.
3. Obtain the required signatures on the application in the proper places.
 - a. Placement applications require an employer's signature, even for volunteer, unpaid and research SAE projects. The person supervising the SAE project must sign the employer line, even if that same person is also a parent or advisor and has already signed in the parent/guardian or advisor slot.
4. Review your application carefully for spelling, grammar or mathematical errors. Spell check is available in every text box.
5. Include only your share of inventory, income and net worth in the award application if the SAE project involves other owners, especially for family-owned SAE projects.
6. Verify that the figures used are true and match your SAE records. Round them to the nearest dollar. Applications that are incomplete or have mathematical errors are penalized.
7. Use information and examples on the [Agricultural Proficiency Awards](https://www.ffa.org) webpage of [FFA.org](https://www.ffa.org) to clarify and assist you in completing your application.

Instructions and Icons in Application

Carefully reading the "Instructions" screen/page of the electronic application before beginning the application will help avoid technical issues and save much frustration while filling out the application.

For help and tips, click on the following icons as you complete the application:



Click on this icon to get additional help and tips for that application section.



Click on this icon for tips from the scoring rubric to help get maximum points.

Read the instructions and "Special Notes" at the top of each screen/page in the electronic application carefully. This will save a great deal of time and effort.

Application Screens/Pages

The following information will cover each screen/page of the electronic application.

Cover Page

1. **Name:** Enter your name or confirm that your name is spelled correctly if already entered. Be certain your name is typed exactly as you want it to appear on awards, websites and press releases. National FFA staff download this information directly from the application, so your name will appear exactly as shown in the application.
 - a. If the box is grey and will not allow you to type in it, change the information in your record book where the information is downloading from.
2. **Name on FFA Roster (if different):** If the name you entered on the application is different from your name shown on the FFA roster, type your name here exactly as it appears on the FFA roster. This helps staff confirm FFA membership eligibility.
3. **Chapter ID:** This information will load automatically into the application based on the login credentials used to start the application.
4. **FFA Member ID#:** This information will load automatically into the application based on the login credentials used to start the application.
5. **Name Pronunciation:** Provide an easy-to-read pronunciation example of your name so award announcers do their best to pronounce it correctly.
6. **Personal Telephone Number:** Provide the best phone number to reach you. This number will be kept private. FFA staff will only call to provide assistance and correct errors.
7. **Home Mailing Address:** All mail will be sent to this address, including, in some cases, checks. Be certain this address is complete and correct. DO NOT USE the school address.
8. **Email Address:** This is the primary way FFA staff will communicate to provide information on competitions and awards. Provide an email address that will remain active even after high school graduation. Your email address will not be sold or provided to anyone outside of FFA without your permission.
9. **Physical Address:** If your mailing address is different from your physical address, complete this section. This ensures packages can be delivered as some mail cannot be delivered to P.O. boxes.
10. **Names of Parents/Guardians:** This information is used for press releases and award announcements. Ensure the spellings are correct and the name(s) is the one they wish to use.
11. **Parent/Guardian Email Addresses:** This information is used only to help FFA staff communicate with national competitors and will not be given to any outside parties.
12. **FFA Chapter Name:** Provide the official name of the FFA chapter (Example: Pleasant Grove). Do not include "FFA" or "Chapter".
13. **Name of High School:** Give the complete official name of the school as it is often different from the chapter name. This information will be used on websites and press releases.

14. **School Address:** FFA advisor(s) or other school officials will be sent mail at this address.
15. **School Telephone Number:** Include the area code and number where your FFA advisor or school officials can be reached.
16. **Chapter Advisor(s):** Click the (Refresh) link to load this information automatically from the FFA.org Chapter Profile. If the information is not up-to-date, ask your advisor to update the information and then click (Refresh) again.
17. **Year of High School Graduation (or expected graduation):** Enter the calendar year you will graduate or have graduated from high school. This date will determine your award eligibility.
18. **Years of Ag Education Offered (grades 7-12) in High School Attended:** This number provides important data to National FFA.
19. **Years of Ag Education Completed in High School:** This number provides important data to National FFA.

Membership Check

This information will load automatically into the application based on the login credentials used to start the application.

- Click the "Refresh Membership Data" button if the information is not complete.
- Read the "Special Notes for this page" at the top of the screen if you have issues.

Proficiency Area

Click the "Select" button next to the proficiency area you wish to apply for. Make this selection carefully for your application to compete well. Read the "Special Notes for this page" at the top of the screen for assistance.

Basic Setup

This page interacts with and impacts the following screens/pages in the application. It should be completed before trying to enter data into the following screens/pages:

1. **Dates for This Application**
 - a) **Beginning Date** – Enter the date the SAE project included in the application began or the date your FFA membership began, whichever is **later**.
 - i) *Example: FFA membership began Aug. 1, 2020. The SAE project on which the application is based did not begin until June 1, 2021. Enter June 1, 2021, as the later date. This will ensure that only records from this specific SAE project will be included in the application.*
 - ii) The beginning date **MUST** be entered on the Basic Setup page for the rest of the application pages to work properly.
 - b) **Ending Date** – Enter the year prior to the National FFA Convention year in which the application will be submitted for competition.

- i) *Example: The ending date for an application that will be turned in to compete at the state or national level in 2025 must have an ending date of 2024.*
- ii) **IMPORTANT** – Only records and activities that occurred prior to the ending date of the application are eligible to be entered into the application. Any mention of records, skills, events or activities that occur after this date will cause the application to be penalized. *(Including future SAE goals or plans is acceptable; reporting outcomes is not.)*
- iii) Want to add years to an application already started in a prior year? Changing the Ending Date will allow additional years of records to be entered into the application.

2. Proficiency Type

This page will appear differently depending on the Proficiency Area you selected on the previous screen.

a) Entrepreneurship/Placement Slide Bar

- i) If you selected a Proficiency Area that is Entrepreneurship or Placement only, the Entrepreneurship/Placement Slide Bar will not appear.
- ii) If you selected an award area in which entrepreneurship and placement applications are judged against one another, the Entrepreneurship/Placement Slide Bar will appear in the application.

II. PROFICIENCY TYPE ?	
Proficiency area for this application	Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication
Please select your estimated proportion of entrepreneurship versus placement SAEs represented by this application ?	Entrepreneurship 50% Placement 50%

- iii) If you are applying in a combined area but your SAE project is Entrepreneurship only or Placement only, move the slide bar to 100% of the appropriate type.
- iv) If you have both Entrepreneurship and Placement SAE projects to enter, move the slide bar to the appropriate percentage.

TIP – If you have a large SAE project of one type (Entrepreneurship or Placement) and only a small SAE project of the other type, the application will be easier to complete and probably score better by moving the slide bar to 100% of the larger SAE project type and not including the small SAE project in the application at all.

b) Primary Pathway

These are the Agriculture Food and Natural Resources pathways created by the [National Council for Agricultural Education](#). To learn more about the pathways and see all of the possible standards in each pathway review the [2016 AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards](#).

Select the primary pathway your SAE fits into. Even if entering multiple SAE projects from different pathways, one of the eight career pathways must be selected. Do not select Career Ready Practices (CRP) or Cluster Skills (CS) as a Primary Pathway unless applying in the Agricultural Communications or Agricultural Education award areas.

National FFA Organization

The application will be heavily penalized if one of these are selected for any other award area.

The pathway selected will determine the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Performance Indicators available to select in a later section of the application. The Biotechnology Systems pathway performance indicators will be available in addition to the performance indicators for the AFNR Pathway selected. This selection can be changed at any time, but if the pathway is changed and the "Skills, Competencies and Knowledge" portion of the application has been completed, this section must be redone.

Pathways available to select are:

- (1) **Agribusiness Systems** – The application of business principles, including management, marketing and finance to agriculture, food and natural resources.
- (2) **Animal Systems** – Applying and managing animal life processes, health, nutrition, genetics and processing.
- (3) **Biotechnology Systems** – The use of data and techniques of applied science to solve problems concerning living organisms.
- (4) **Environmental Service Systems** – Using instruments and technology used in waste management and to influence the environment.
- (5) **Food Products and Processing Systems** – Developing and applying skills in product development, quality assurance, food safety, production, and regulation and compliance within the food science industry.
- (6) **Natural Resource Systems** – The management of soil, water, wildlife, forests and air as natural resources.
- (7) **Plant Systems** – Applying and managing plant life cycles, classifications, functions and practices to crops, turf grass, trees and shrubs and/or ornamental plants.
- (8) **Power, Structure and Technical Systems** – Developing and applying skills creating, using, or maintaining agricultural equipment, power systems, alternative fuel sources, and precision technology, as well as woodworking, metalworking, welding, and project planning for agricultural structures.

Tip: Career Ready Practices and Cluster Skills are not AFNR Pathways but rather practices and skills that should be applied to all pathways. DO NOT select Cluster Skills (CS) or Career Ready Practices (CRP) as Primary Pathways unless your Proficiency Area is Agricultural Communication or Agricultural Education.

- (9) **Career Ready Practices** – fundamental skills and practices to be career-ready, including responsibility, maintaining personal finances, communication, decision making, creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, management, technology use, and cultural/global competency. DO NOT select Career Ready Practices (CRP) as Primary Pathways unless your Proficiency Area is Agricultural Communication or Agricultural Education.

(10) **Cluster Skills** – Developing and demonstrating fundamental knowledge of the nature, scope, and relationships of agriculture, food and natural resources systems and the skills necessary for analysis of current and historical issues and trends; application of technologies; safety, health, and environmental practices; stewardship of natural resources; and exploration of career opportunities. DO NOT select Cluster Skills (CS) as Primary Pathways unless your Proficiency Area is Agricultural Communication or Agricultural Education.

3. **Assets, Related to SAE in this Proficiency Area**

Enter the value of all items ALREADY owned that are related to the SAE project(s) on the start date of this SAE project(s) listed above in the "Beginning Date" box.

Do not enter the value of assets unrelated to the specific SAE project(s) being reported in this application or that were acquired after the beginning date.

Performance Reviews

The following instructions and suggestions cover Performance Reviews A, B, C and D.

- Provide clear and concise information to allow judges to understand the SAE project(s) the application is based on.
- Only include information on the specific SAE project(s) that qualify in the selected Agricultural Proficiency Award area. Information about show pigs in a Landscape Installation proficiency area is irrelevant and penalizes the application score.
- The performance review section must be supported by details provided in the remainder of the application. Stating that your SAE project expanded from one welder and a wire brush to owning your building and then not showing purchase and ownership of the building in the financial sections of the application provides contradictory information to judges and will reduce the application score.

1. **Performance Review A – Question 1:** Describe the SAE project(s) included in this application as completely and specifically as possible in the space allowed.

a) Suggested information to provide:

- i) What is the SAE project(s)? Providing a clear, concise overview of the SAE project for the judges is the most important piece of information to provide here. This helps the judges better understand the rest of the application. Remember that judges have only the information provided in the application. Be clear!
- ii) Explain unusual SAE project aspects such as labor exchanges, gifts, loans, etc. that helped start or sustain the SAE project.
- iii) Describe specifically how you started the project(s).

2. **Performance Review A – Question 2:** Briefly explain how your roles, responsibilities and/or management decisions related to this award area changed.

a) Suggested information to include here:

- i) How have your roles and responsibilities changed over the life of this SAE project(s)?
- ii) How have your responsibilities related to this award area changed or increased?
- iii) How have your knowledge and skills related to this area changed or increased?

3. **Performance Review A – Question 3:** Briefly explain the single greatest challenge you faced in this award area and how you overcame that challenge.

a) Suggested information to include here:

- i) Specifically describe the challenge and provide the judges insight into your management and performance skills when describing what you did to overcome the challenge.
- ii) Be clear and detailed.

4. **Performance Review B – Accomplishment/Finding #1 & #2:** Briefly explain your two greatest accomplishments or findings in this award area.

a) Suggested information to include here:

- i) Training, certifications, or knowledge gained that impacted success and/or growth as an owner or employee.
- ii) Expansion, adaptation or major changes to the enterprise or employment that had a significant positive impact.
- iii) Successful implementation of new methods or technologies.
- iv) Personal growth or skill increase gained through the SAE project that can be applied to future life or career.

TIP: Avoid repetition. If you have already shared information on a skill, experience or challenge, do not repeat it. Provide the judges with new and additional information.

5. **Performance Review B – Trend, Technology or Policy:** Name one issue, trend, technology or public policy that has impacted your SAE project or the industry your SAE project falls in and describe the specific impact on your SAE project.

a) Suggested information to include here:

- i) Specifically identify the current issue, trend, technology, or policy that impacts your SAE project.
 - ii) As specifically as possible, explain the impact on your SAE project. Impact may be positive or negative.
- 6. **Performance Review C – Question 1:** Specify your career objective and describe the career exploration and research steps you performed to select this career. This career objective does not have to be related to agriculture or natural resources.
 - a) Suggested information to include here:
 - i) List and describe a specific career objective rather than only a broad career field.
 - ii) List specific exploration and research steps taken to choose this career.
 - iii) Give reasons why you selected this career.
- 7. **Performance Review C – Experience/Activity/Opportunity #1 and #2:** Describe two experiences, activities, or opportunities provided by this SAE project and explain how they have helped you explore this career choice.
 - a) Suggested information to include here:
 - i) Specifically explain how these experiences, activities, opportunities have helped prepare you for your selected career.
 - ii) What certifications or trainings have you participated in, through this SAE project, which will apply to your selected career.
 - iii) Personal or business connections gained through this SAE project that will impact your future.
 - iv) Life skills learned through this SAE project that will impact your future career.
- 8. **Performance Review D – Financial Status Question #1 (Entrepreneurship Only):** Specifically describe the source of your assets to start this project and describe how you obtained them.
 - a) Examples
 - i) I borrowed money from...
 - ii) I created a barter agreement with...
 - iii) I used my personal savings...
 - iv) I was gifted money/assets from...
 - v) I already owned the (*list assets*) prior to becoming an FFA member because...

9. **Performance Review D – Financial Status Question #2 (Entrepreneurship Only):** Describe how you used your financial records to make decisions about your project.

a) Examples

- i) I found my feed costs were too high, so I changed...
- ii) Seeing my total rent payments convinced me to buy my own...
- iii) Seeing my low rate of return helped me decide...

SAE – Placement ([Placement](#) type SAE projects ONLY)

[PLACEMENT](#) or [COMBINED](#) applications ONLY

This screen/page of the application only appears in the application menu if you have selected a Placement only award area or a Combined award area and have moved the [slide bar on the Basic Setup screen/page](#) to any Placement percentage higher than zero.

Enter details about ONLY the SAE project on which this application is based.

You can make multiple entries in each year. For example, if you work for two different employers that both fit into the same award area, you can enter information for both in the year(s) you work for them. Use separate entries.

Year 2021 ▼	Pathway Agribusiness Systems (ABS) ▼	Job Title and Responsibilities / Project Description ? 		Add
Employer or Supervisor's Name ? 		Unpaid Hours 	Paid Hours 	
		Gross Earnings 	Expenses 	

1. **Year** – This drop-down menu will include only the years you designated on the [Basic Setup](#) screen/page of the application. The earliest year available will be the year of the "Beginning Date" you entered. The latest year will be the year of the "Ending Date" you entered. Change these dates to make additional years available if appropriate.
 - a) Select the year from the drop-down menu you wish to enter records for.
2. **Pathway** – There is no right or wrong answer for this selection; choose the pathway that best fits the SAE project. (See [Primary Pathway](#) for descriptions)
 - a) Select your desired pathway from the drop-down menu.
3. **Employer or Supervisor's Name** – Enter the name of the business or person you work for. Even if your SAE project is unpaid, to be a placement SAE project, you have someone to whom you report and who makes management decisions. Enter that person's name.
4. **Job Title and Responsibilities / SAE Project Description** – This portion is scored heavily. Provide the judges a succinct but clear description of your SAE project and specifically include your duties and responsibilities. Do not include duties or responsibilities from SAE projects that do not fit the selected award area.

TIP: Judges are looking for growth in responsibilities and duties over the years. Be sure your descriptions give details about any increased responsibilities, duties and skill growth.

5. **Unpaid Hours** – Enter the number of hours worked in an unpaid position for experience or as a volunteer on the SAE project(s) the application is based on.
6. **Paid Hours** – Enter the number of hours worked for payment or wages on the specific SAE project the application is based on.

TIP: You cannot enter paid and unpaid hours in the same entry. If you work for an employer and some hours are paid and some are unpaid, you will enter the hours as two different positions and should explain in the descriptions why some hours are paid and some are unpaid.

TIP: Do not duplicate hours. Each hour worked is either paid or unpaid; it is not both.

TIP: If you own the SAE project (animal, business, etc.), you do not have a Placement SAE project and need to change to an Entrepreneurship application.

7. **Gross Earnings** – Enter the entire wage or salary you earned during that specific calendar year for the SAE project(s) in the application before any payroll deductions were made for taxes or other benefits.
8. **Expenses** – Some employment opportunities require you to provide your own equipment or safety items as part of your job. Enter the total amount spent during the calendar year of your entry on required items such as gloves, special shoes, safety glasses, etc. If you do not have such expenses, leave this box empty.

TIP: When good records are not maintained, it is easy to overestimate the number of hours invested in a SAE project. Review [SAE/Directed Lab Hour Limits](#) for information on the number of hours in a typical work year. If you are legitimately listing more than 2,080 hours in any one year, be sure to provide a good explanation for the judges in your description.

SAE – Entrepreneurship Details ([Entrepreneurship](#) SAE types ONLY)

[ENTREPRENEURSHIP](#) or [COMBINED](#) applications only

This screen/page of the application appears in the application menu if you have selected an Entrepreneurship only Agricultural Proficiency Award area or a Combined award area and have moved the [slide bar on the Basic Setup screen/page](#) to any Entrepreneurship percentage higher than zero.

Here you will enter details about ONLY the entrepreneurship type SAE project(s) on which this application is based.

You can make multiple entries in each year. For example, if you own multiple animal or crop SAE projects or multiple business enterprises that fit into the same award area, you can enter information for each in the year(s) you own them.

Year 2017 ▼	Pathway Agribusiness Systems (ABS) ▼ Project Name ? 	Size/Scope ? Description ? 	Add
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1. **Year** – This drop-down menu will include only the years you designated on the [Basic Setup](#) screen/page of the application. The earliest year available will be the year of the "[Beginning Date](#)" you entered. The latest year will be the year of the "[Ending Date](#)" you entered. Change these dates to make additional years available if appropriate.
 - a) Select the year from the drop-down menu you wish to enter records for.
2. **Pathway** – There is no right or wrong answer for this selection; choose the pathway that best fits the SAE project. (See [Primary Pathway](#) for descriptions)
 - a) Select the pathway that best fits the SAE project you are entering records for from the drop-down menu.
3. **SAE Project Name** – Enter the name of the SAE project you own. For example: Feeder Steers, 7E Lawn Mowing or Juanita's Pet Care.
4. **Size/Scope** – Enter the size or scope for each SAE project. Examples could include Three Head, 7 Clients, \$4,290 Gross Revenue, 8 acres, 69 tons or 71 repairs. Provide the information that best helps judges understand your size and scope.
5. **SAE Project Description** – This portion is scored heavily. Provide the judges with a concise but clear description of your SAE project and specifically include your duties, responsibilities and explanations about scope. Do not include duties or responsibilities from SAE projects that do not fit the selected award area.

TIP: Judges are looking for growth in responsibilities, duties and project scope over the years. Be sure your descriptions give details about any increased responsibilities, duties and skill growth.

Income/Expense Summary – (*ENTREPRENEURSHIP or COMBINED applications only*)

The income and expense summary is a yearly summary of annual cash and non-cash income and expenses from the SAE project(s) that qualify in the chosen proficiency area.

The dates entered in the application on the [Basic Setup screen/page](#) set your application years.

Your records should be organized by calendar year. If your SAE records have a short year (*example: four months*) and then a complete year (*12 months*), you will need to separate the records into two calendar years.

Example:

Year 1: Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 (four months of records for the year)

Year 2: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 (12 months of records for the year)

For more information on the Income and Expense Summary, refer to the tips and examples in the application by putting your mouse on one of the  symbols.

Ending Current Inventory – (ENTREPRENEURSHIP or COMBINED applications only)

Enter the value of items that you own on Dec. 31 of the year prior to the year applying and that you intend to use up or sell/trade over the next 12 months in this section of the application. Examples could include seed you intend to plant; fuel you will use; and animals, plants, or equipment you will sell/trade before Dec. 31 of the following year.

Do not include items in this section that you intend to keep for longer than the next 12 months and that you can depreciate. Examples could include fish tanks, a greenhouse, computer hardware or breeding stock.

Only include items in this section directly related to the SAE project(s) included in the application.

Example: The SAE project the application is based on is selling vegetable starts, and the award area selected is Nursery Operations. A saddle won at a rodeo should not be listed as inventory for the nursery SAE project.

For each of the following sections, fill in the Description, Quantity and Ending Total Value boxes. You can add as many lines as needed to each inventory section by simply completing one line and clicking "Add."

- **Description** – Enter a clear description of the item(s). For example, "Ewe Lambs," Feeder Steers or "Purebred Labrador Retriever Pups." Entering a description that only you understand, such as an animal's name (Spot) or tag number (582), is a bad idea. Remember: Judges do not know your SAE project; you must clearly describe it to them.
 - **Quantity** – Could be the number of animals, pounds, gallons, plants or other specific measurable amount of each item on hand.
 - **Ending Total Value** – The total dollar value of listed inventory items entered on the line as of Dec. 31. The value should be no more than fair market value on that date and may not be more than the original cost of items purchased.
1. **Harvested and Growing Crops/Plants** – This includes plants/crops owned on the date shown. Examples could include potted plants or trees being held for sale, crops growing in the field or greenhouse, and harvested grain in storage.
 2. **Feed, Seed, Fertilizer, Chemicals, Supplies, Prepaid Expenses and Other Current Assets** – This includes consumable items such as livestock feed and veterinary supplies; crop supplies such as fertilizer, potting soil, and pesticides; and supplies such as gas, oil, spare parts, etc.

3. **Merchandise, Crops and Animals Purchased for Resale** – This includes all items of inventory owned that have been purchased for the specific purpose of reselling within 12 months, which are on hand as of Dec. 31.
4. **Raised Market Animals** – Includes animals born to breeding animals you personally owned that year and on hand as of Dec. 31.

Ending Non-Current Inventory – (*ENTREPRENEURSHIP or COMBINED applications only*)

Enter the value of items that you own on Dec. 31 of the year prior to the year applying and that you intend to keep longer than 12 months in this section of the application. Examples could include but are not limited to tools, fish tanks, tractors, tack, buildings, breeding animals, etc.

Do not include items in this section that you intend to use up or sell within the next 12 months. Examples could include animal feed, fuel, items purchased for resale, etc.

Only include items in this section directly related to the SAE project(s) included in the application. Example: The SAE project the application is based on is building and selling crop scouting drones, and the award area selected is Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication. Feed and medical supplies for the exotic fish you breed and sell should not be listed as inventory for the agricultural mechanics SAE project.

For each of the following sections, fill in the Description, Quantity and Depreciation Claimed boxes. You can add as many lines as needed to each inventory section by simply completing one line and clicking "Add."

- **Description** – Enter a clear description of the item(s). For example: "Mature Mare," "2011 Case IH Tractor" or "5 Gallon Fish Tank." Entering a description that only you understand, such as an animal's name (Spot) or tag number (582), is a bad idea. Remember: The judges do not know your SAE project; you must clearly describe it to them.
 - **Quantity** – Could be the number of animals, pounds, gallons, acres or other specific measurable amount of each item on hand.
 - **Acquisition Cost** – The actual cash dollar cost to obtain the inventoried item. Fair market value should be used to determine the acquisition cost if it was a gift or barter.
 - **Depreciation Claimed** – Represents the total dollar value of the depreciation claimed since the property came into your possession.
1. **Non-Depreciable Draft, Pleasure or Breeding Animals** – Includes all working, pleasure, or breeding animals/livestock born and raised on your property and owned by you, which are on hand as of Dec. 31 of the year prior to the application being submitted. These are animals that have not reached their maturity (*the point at which they start to depreciate*).

Tip: Do not duplicate animals already listed in Current Inventory.

2. **Depreciable Draft, Pleasure or Breeding Animals** – Includes animals that have reached their maturity value and are now declining in value. These animals/livestock are owned by you and on hand on Dec. 31 of the year prior to the application being submitted.
3. **Depreciable Machinery, Equipment and Fixtures** – Includes all machinery and equipment personally owned as of Dec. 31.
4. **Depreciable Land Improvements, Buildings and Fences** – Includes all the buildings and land improvements, including tiling, terracing and fences, you owned as of Dec. 31 of the year prior to the application being submitted.
5. **Land** – Includes any land personally owned as of Dec. 31 of the year prior to the application being submitted. Land does not depreciate.

Tip: Only list items you personally own. Do not list items owned by family or partners.

Learning Outcomes and Efficiency Factors

Learning Outcomes are specific skills or abilities learned or developed through the SAE project.

Efficiency Factors measure how well an enterprise is managed compared to accepted industry standards. Efficiency factors are like grades on report cards. They help you know if your business is doing well and if you should continue your current practices or make changes to increase efficiency.

Click "+ Add New Outcome/Efficiency" in the upper left corner of the application table to make an entry.

1. **Learning Outcome or Efficiency Factor** – Enter clear, specific and measurable skills and abilities you have increased or efficiency factors you have achieved. *See examples below.*

TIP: Clear and realistically measurable outcomes/factors score better.

2. Beginning Level

- a) **Year** – Enter the year the specific outcome or efficiency started. This is generally the same year as the SAE project started.
- b) **Level** – Enter the specific outcome or efficiency level you started at when the learning outcome or efficiency factor began.

3. Level Attained

- a) **Year** – Enter the year the specific outcome or efficiency finished. This is generally the same year as the application closes.
- b) **Level** – Enter the specific outcome or efficiency level you have reached for the learning outcome or efficiency factor.

4. **Describe how this factor or outcome impacted the management decisions or performance objectives** – Provide a clear explanation of how the outcome/factor listed made a difference to the SAE project the application is based on.

Learning Outcome or Efficiency Factor EXAMPLES:

Learning Outcome  or Efficiency Factor 	Beginning Level	Level Attained	Describe how this factor or outcome impacted the management decisions or performance objectives. 
Hourly Pay Rate	Year 2018 Level \$8.00 per Hour	Year 2021 Level \$16.00 per Hour	I started with no experience but committed to being reliable, teachable and hard working. I have called in sick only twice in 3 1/2 years and arrive to work on time every day. I have applied on the job training and my employer has recognize my value as an employee with multiple pay increases.
Job Safety, Accidents in Employment	Year 2018 Level 3 Accidents	Year 2021 Level 0 Accidents	Job safety is closely monitored by my employer to keep workers safe and avoid downtime. My first year I had three minor accidents. By applying training and experience I have decreased my accident rate so I have not had a reportable accident in two years.
Job Skills	Year 2018 Level 1 Skill Attained	Year 2021 Level 11 Skills Attained	When starting my employment my only skill was arriving on time. I have now learned to operate three different types of mowers as well as gas powered trimmers and edgers. I have learned six different basic maintenance operations.
Pumpkin Crop Yield	Year 2019 Level 1 ton per acre	Year 2021 Level 1.6 tons per acre	By adding additional organic matter to the soil and applying fertilizer strategically rather than broadcasting The water retention and nutrient levels of my soils has been increased resulting in improved yield.
Survival Rate	Year 2018 Level 18% Loss	Year 2021 Level 6% Loss	By purchasing and installing a new computerized thermostat and grow light switch I was able to improve the growing conditions of my poinsettia's. The reduced loss rate increased the number of healthy plants available to sell and increased profit.
Written Communication	Year 2018 Level 8-10 Edits per Article	Year 2021 Level 1-2 Edits per Article	When I first began writing agricultural news articles my editor regularly found spelling, grammar and content errors which necessitated corrections. Through improvements to my writing skills my editor now generally finds few errors in each article saving us both time and effort.

Skills, Competencies and Knowledge

This section of the application is linked to the [2016 AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards](#) (AFNR Standards) established by the [National Council for Agricultural Education](#). This section of the application requires applicants to show how the included SAE project(s) meets AFNR Indicators.

The application provides the opportunity to select 10 different indicators: five (5) from the primary pathway you selected, two (2) from any AFNR pathway and three (3) from Cluster Skills and/or Career Ready Practices.

1. **A. Select up to 5 different primary pathway performance indicators you have gained skills, competencies, or knowledge in through your SAE project.**— This table in the application is controlled by the [primary pathway](#) selected on the application's [Basic Setup](#) page. If you decide the offered indicators do not match your SAE project well, consider returning to the Basic Setup page and choosing a more appropriate primary pathway.

If you find that no AFNR indicators match your SAE project well, you should consider whether your SAE project is actually within any agriculture, food or natural resource pathway. SAE projects determined to not fit within these indicators are rated Participant in the judging process.

- a) **AFNR Performance Indicator from Primary Pathway** – Select up to five different indicators which match your SAE and activities from the drop-down menus. Do not select the same indicator more than once including indicators used in other sections.
- b) **Specifically describe the SAE activities performed to learn or demonstrate the performance indicator selected.** – Concisely and clearly explain what you did that directly and clearly relates to the selected indicator. Describe how the activity contributed to the success of the included SAE project(s) and how it demonstrates performing the selected indicator.

TIP: The written description needs to match the selected indicator directly and closely.

2. **B. Select up to 2 different pathway performance indicators from any pathway you have gained skills, competencies, or knowledge in through your SAE project.** – This table allows selection from any AFNR Pathway, Cluster Skill and Career Ready Practice.
 - a) **AFNR Performance Indicator from any Pathway** – Select up to two different AFNR Performance Indicators from the drop-down menus. Do not select the same indicator more than once including indicators used in other sections
 - b) **Specifically describe the SAE activities performed to learn or demonstrate the performance indicator selected.** – Concisely and clearly explain what you did that directly and clearly relates to the selected indicator. Describe how the activity contributed to the success of the included SAE project(s) and how it demonstrates performing the selected indicator.
3. **C. Select up to 3 different Career Ready Practice and/or Cluster Skill content indicators you have gained skills, competencies, or knowledge in through your SAE project.** – These selections are limited only to Cluster Skills and/or Career Ready Practices.

- a) **Cluster Skill or Career Ready Practice Performance Indicator** – Select up to three different CRP or CS Performance Indicators from the drop-down menus. Do not select the same indicator more than once, including indicators used in other sections.
- b) **Specifically describe the SAE activities performed to learn or demonstrate the performance indicator selected.** – Concisely and clearly explain what you did that directly and clearly relates to the selected indicator. Describe how the activity contributed to the success of the included SAE project(s) and how it demonstrates performing the selected indicator.

TIP: Do not use a performance indicator more than once. Selecting the same indicator will result in a zero score for that indicator even if the activity described is different.

Photo Pages

Photos are used as supporting evidence to help tell the SAE project's story. They need to show activity, size and your involvement in the selected agricultural proficiency award area. Good photos and informative captions help judges understand SAE projects and provide additional information.

1. **Workplace Safety Photos #1 and #2**– The first two photo pages must be used to show and describe the applicant demonstrating one or more safety practices appropriate to maintaining their own safety and the safety of other people for the SAE project described in the application.
2. **SAE Project Photos #3, #4, #5, and #6**– The last four photo pages are for the applicant to show and explain their SAE project and the skills they have developed.
3. **Photo Page Rules** – Breaking any of the following rules will result in penalties up to and including disqualification of the entire application.
 - a) Each photo page may contain only a single original photo.
 - i) Photo pages on which multiple photos have been combined in anyway including to produce a single photo file (*collage, before/after, etc.*) are scored zero.
 - b) Photos may only show equipment, scenes, activities, etc. that are of the applicant's SAE project included in the application.
 - i) Using photos taken from magazines, the internet, photo banks, etc. and claiming they are of the applicant's SAE project will result in the application being disqualified.
 - c) Using photos that include a copyright mark, watermark or any other mark that shows the photo is the intellectual property of someone other than the applicant will result in the application being disqualified unless the following information is included in the application.
 - i) Professional photos that have been legally purchased or are used with permission of the photographer are allowed if the applicant clearly asserts permission to use the photo has been obtained and that the National FFA Organization has

permission to use the photo as well. This statement may be included in the photo caption or as part of the Supplemental Information uploaded to the application.

- ii) Using professional photos in the application is not needed and generally not recommended to avoid any issues.
 - d) Judges are instructed to deduct points from photo pages which show/discuss unsafe practices.
2. **Photo Tips** – The following suggestions can greatly improve the score for the photo pages.
- a) Photos and captions need to be related to the SAE project. Pictures of a grand champion ram in an Agricultural Mechanics application will score zero as sheep are not included in the Agricultural Mechanics proficiency area. A picture of a sheep in the fitting stand you built and a caption describing your steps to make the stand strong, durable, and safe are relevant. Don't add details about the sheep.
 - b) Don't use photo captions to tell judges something they can already see by looking at the picture. Use the caption to add more information.
 - c) An SAE project must cover at least two years; a national-level application is more competitive if showing more years. Inserting only recent photos all taken on the same day does not tell the story of your SAE as well as photos taken over multiple years that show the progress and growth of the SAE project.
 - d) Only six pictures can be included in the photo pages. Make each picture count. Judges don't know your SAE project, so make sure the photos and captions emphasize your strong points, not your weaker ones.
 - e) Ask a person unfamiliar with your SAE project to review your photos and captions to determine the type of message they convey.

Supplemental Information

The application form does not always allow the freedom to include all the information an applicant feels the judges need to evaluate their SAE project properly. Supplemental Information allows the applicant the freedom to provide additional details of their choice.

1. Supplemental Information Rules

- a) Uploaded information must be a single PDF file of fewer than 10 megabytes. Larger files will not load.
- b) There is no specific page limit.
- c) There is no specified format.
- d) Information can be anything legal based on the rules in this handbook and specified within the application itself.

TIP: The application will not allow the upload of a document that is not PDF format and larger than 10 megabytes. If unable to load the document, check the format and size.

2. Supplemental Information Tips and Examples

- a) Ensure the information provided is relevant. The information uploaded should help the judges better understand the specific SAE project included in the application. Information about anything else will not score points.
- b) Keep information clear and concise. Judges are reading 10 – 40 applications; making them read extra, unhelpful information does not increase the application score. There is such a thing as too much.
- c) Be sure that the information provided does not contradict or repeat information already included in the application.
- d) Examples of potential supplemental information include but are not limited to:
 - i) Additional SAE project photos with captions. These can be multiple per page.
 - ii) Proof of financial claims such as copies of receipts, checks, deeds, insurance policies, tax statements, etc. *(Be sure to black out personal information such as account numbers, social security numbers, tax IDs, etc.)*
 - iii) An SAE Agreement or copy of a business contract to explain labor exchanges, rental agreements or leases.
 - iv) Simple additional written explanations. Explain why your expenses or income are unusually high or low. Explain the unique circumstances of your SAE project in greater detail.
 - v) Screenshots of online marketing campaigns, websites, or social media campaigns for or about the SAE project.
 - vi) Samples of articles or curriculums created for agricultural communications or agricultural education SAE projects.
 - vii) Letters of recommendation from teachers, employers, clients, etc.
 - viii) Appropriate SAE Record Book pages.

These are just a few ideas. Remember: Be clear and concise, and don't go overboard.

Checklist

The application includes an automated checklist to help find errors or information missing from the application. It will not find every possible error. A clean checklist does not guarantee that the application won't be penalized.

1. **NOT MET, MISSING or ERROR** – The application cannot be submitted for national-level competition if there are any "Not Met," "Missing" or "Error" items in red font on the checklist. This signifies incorrect or missing information that may prevent the application from qualifying.

2. **REVIEW** – A checklist item that says “Review” in red font is not an error and may be fine. The checklist is simply calling attention to information in the application that should be double-checked. Applicants are advised to make sure the information the item points to is clearly explained in the application.
3. **MET** – Ideally, all items on the checklist should say “Met” in green font. This does not mean the application is perfect and without errors. It does mean everything the computer can automatically check for has been cleared.

TIP: Computers are not as smart as people. The computer can check whether or not a box contains text or numbers; it can't determine if the text or numbers are correct information. A clean checklist does not guarantee that the application is high quality or error free.

Electronic Signatures

Carefully read the signature statements before electronically signing the application. Commitments are being made for all signatories — know what you are signing.

1. **Student Approval** – This is the signature of the applicant. Information can only be entered when the applicant is correctly signed into their electronic account.
2. **Advisor Approval** – This is the signature of the supervising agricultural education teacher/FFA advisor. The advisor's signature is required to verify and certify the application. The advisor must be signed in to their electronic account to enter information here.
3. **Request for Parent/Guardian Approval** – This area is for the parent/guardian to certify the information in the application and give permission for information to be used.
 - a) Enter the email address of the parent/guardian whose signature is being requested and click the “Request Signature” button. The application will send an email to that address, which says:

Dear *(Insert Parent/Guardian Names)*,

(Name of Applicant) has applied for an Agricultural Proficiency Award and parent/guardian approval is required to complete the application process.

Please click this link to review the application and complete the approval:

(A unique link to the specific application will be shown)

If you have questions, please contact the *(Name)* FFA chapter advisor(s) listed below:

Advisor(s): *(The names of the FFA advisors in the application will be listed here.)*

Email: *(The email addresses of each listed advisor will appear here.)*

Phone: *(The school phone number will appear here.)*

- i) The parent/guardian must open the email message, click the link and follow the instructions to sign the application electronically.
- b) **Employer Approval** – This signature is for the employer or supervisor to verify that the application information is accurate. This signature is required even if the SAE project is unpaid. For an SAE to be a Placement type, there must be an employer or supervisor who makes the overall management decisions and directs the work. This could be a work supervisor, business owner, review committee chair, FFA advisor, parent, volunteer leader/manager, etc. — whoever supervises the SAE project and can verify the claims in the application.
 - i) This signature request appears only on Placement or Combined applications, which include Placement records. It will not appear and is not needed for Entrepreneurship applications.
 - ii) Enter the email address of the “Employer” whose signature is being requested and click the “Request Signature” button. The application will send an email to that address, which says:

Dear *(Insert Employer Name)*,

(Name of Applicant has applied for an Agricultural Proficiency Award and the Employer’s approval is required to complete the application process.

Please click this link to review the application and complete the approval:

(A unique link to the specific application will be shown)

If you have questions, please contact the *(Name)* FFA chapter advisor(s) listed below:

Advisor(s): *(The names of the FFA advisors in the application will be listed here.)*

Email: *(The email addresses of each listed advisor will appear here.)*

Phone: *(The school phone number will appear here.)*

- iii) The Employer must open the email message, click the link and follow the instructions to sign the application electronically.

Generate Your Application

Judges do not access the live online application. The live application can be constantly accessed by applicants and is ever-changing. The document that judges review is the specific, time-stamped PDF version of the application that is generated and submitted. If no PDF of the application is generated by completing the following steps, there is nothing to be submitted or judged.

1. **Save a New Version #** – The button labeled “Save a New Version #” is how application PDF versions are generated (created). This generated PDF is what is actually submitted and judged. As versions are generated, they are listed in the table on the screen. The most

recent version prior to the deadline is generally the one available to state leaders to select. Confirm with state leaders which version you want submitted.

1. **Get PDF** – To view the generated application, click the “Get PDF” button next to each listed version. What you see when you open this file is what is being submitted for the judges to review, possibly minus some pages depending on your state (*see details below in the Application Submission and Judging sections*).

Application Submission

Each state FFA association has its specific directions and deadlines for submitting applications for local/state judging. Consult with the chapter FFA advisor or state FFA staff for these instructions.

Only state staff may certify and submit applications for national judging. Instructions for state staff to submit applications online are provided yearly by national FFA staff and available in the State Staff Dashboard on FFA.org.

Each state association may submit a single application for national-level competition in each award area available at the national level each year. Find the current year’s Agricultural Proficiency Award List with Descriptions on the [Agricultural Proficiency Awards](#) webpage of FFA.org.

Application Judging

Each chapter and state FFA association uses its own processes to select winning applications. Consult with the chapter or state association for those specific rules. The national judging process starts in July.

National judging is conducted in two rounds — the Finalist Selection Round and the National Winner Selection Round.

National Judging Application Version

Only the generated PDF version of the application, certified and submitted by state staff, is received by National FFA. This does not include SAE record books or added information that may be used to verify and judge at the local/state level.

While all pages of the national application are important and used to administer judging and award presentations, not all pages are scored or even seen by judges.

1. **Page 1: Signature Page** – This page is required to certify the application but is not scored or provided to judges.
2. **Page 2: Applicant Information Page** – This page provides essential information for administering the judging and award process but is not scored by or provided to judges. This page includes personally identifiable information, including the applicant’s name, state and contact information, and is removed before applications are made available to judges. This protects the privacy of the applicants and removes any potential for bias by judges based on who the applicant is or where they are from.

3. **Extra Pages** – Some state associations and chapters have added additional pages to the application for local or state use. These pages are removed for national judging and are not seen by national judges. This ensures that for national judging, all applications contain the same pages.

Finalist Selection Judging Round

A team of judges from around the country is assigned to each national proficiency award area. These judges score each application independently using the [scoring rubrics](#). Judges submit their scores to national FFA staff.

The application score of each application from each judge is added together and averaged. The average application score for each application is used to rank it against the other application scores.

The top four applications, by average score, are named National Finalists and compete in the National Winner Selection Round of judging. Their rank is not announced.

All remaining applications are rated Gold, Silver, Bronze or Participant based on their average score. No rankings are announced. The process is complete for these applications. The ratings are announced and recognized on [FFA.org](https://www.ffa.org). Applicants may be recognized with certificates or pins.

National Winner Selection Judging Round

A second team of judges from around the country is assembled to interview the four national finalists. The national judge application versions of the four finalists are provided to the judges before the interview so the judges can review and prepare questions specifically about each finalist's SAE project. Judges use the Agricultural Proficiency Award [Finalist Interview Scoring Rubric](#) to score the interviews.

Each judge ranks the four finalists and submits their rankings independently to national FFA staff. National FFA staff combine the rankings of all judges to determine the Finals Judging Round rank of each finalist using the low score method.

Winner Selection

The applicant ranks from the Finalists Selection Judging Round and National Winner Selection Judging Round are combined to determine the national winner as follows:
 $(\text{Finalist Selection Round rank} \times .25) + (\text{National Winner Selection Round} \times .75) = \text{Combined Rank Score}$

The finalist with the lowest rank score is the winner.

- **Tie Breakers** – In case of a tie the applicant with the highest rank in the Finalist Selection Round (written application) is declared the winner. Ties other than for winner are not broken as these rankings are not announced.

Recognition

National Finalists are expected to attend the National FFA Convention & Expo to appear on stage to be recognized. The national winner is announced live on stage. All national finalists and winners may be recognized with certificates, pins, plaques and/or cash awards.

Scoring Rubrics

At the national level, judges score applications using specialized scoring rubrics developed to ensure that applications are all scored using the same criteria. The rubrics used for national judging are available for anyone to download and use on the [Agricultural Proficiency Awards webpage](#) of FFA.org. The online application provides links on multiple pages to the Agricultural Proficiency Awards webpage, or you can go directly to the scoring rubrics by clicking [here](#).

There is a specific scoring rubric for each of the four [agricultural proficiency award application types](#).

1. **Entrepreneurship Rubric** – This rubric is used to score all [Entrepreneurship application types](#). Entrepreneurship application types will be found in Entrepreneurship only award areas and in [Combined areas](#) that include Entrepreneurship, Placement, and Combined award types. In Combined award areas, use this scoring rubric for Entrepreneurship only applications. The application Signature Page (page 1) and the Basic Award Setup Information page (page 3) will note the award type.
2. **Placement Rubric** – This rubric is used to score all Placement application types. [Placement application types](#) will be found in Placement only award areas and in Combined areas that include Placement, Entrepreneurship and [Combined award types](#). In Combined award areas, use this scoring rubric for Placement only applications. The application Signature Page (page 1) and the Basic Award Setup Information page (page 3) will note the award type.
3. **Combined Rubric** – This rubric is used to score [Combined application types](#) that include both Entrepreneurship and Placement SAE records. Combined award applications will be found only in Combined award areas that include Entrepreneurship, Placement and Combined award application types. The application Signature Page (page 1) and the Basic Award Setup Information page (page 3) will note the award type.
4. **Agriscience Research Rubric** – This rubric is used to score all [Agriscience Research Proficiency Award application types](#).
5. **Finalist Interview Scoring Rubric** – This rubric is used to judge the finalist interviews for all agricultural proficiency award types.

Additional Information

The [Agricultural Proficiency Awards](#) webpage of FFA.org has additional resources such as “Tips and Tricks” from past judges, application examples and help videos.