

**West Tennessee FFA**

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**Employment Skills  
Handbook**

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**2017-2021**

## **Purpose**

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

## **Event Rules**

- The West Tennessee FFA Employment Skills Leadership Development Event will be limited to one participant in each chapter.
- FFA Official Dress is required for this event.
- All written materials, including cover letter, resume, etc., will be the result of each participant's own efforts.
- Any participant in possession of an unapproved electronic device in the event area is subject to disqualification.
- Job description, cover letter and resume must be emailed or uploaded to designated Tennessee FFA State Staff in pdf form by the date listed on [westtnffa.ffa.org](http://westtnffa.ffa.org). A penalty of 10% will be assessed to late documents received one or two days after the deadline. Items received after the two day period will not be accepted for judging and no points for that section will be awarded.

## **Evaluation**

Participants will be randomly placed in interview order.

## **Event Format**

The event is developed to help participants in their current job search (for SAE projects, internships, part-time and full-time employment). Therefore, materials submitted by the participant must reflect their current skills and abilities and must be targeted to a job for which they would like to apply. 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.

The regional event will be conducted in two rounds: preliminaries and finals.

Participants will compete in a flight based system. Participants will be placed in each flight based on cover letter and resume scores. Students who advance to the finals will be placed in to one flight and drawn for random order the day of the finals event.

## EQUIPMENT

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

- Writing utensils
- 2-Page Resume, not including references
- Cover letter
- 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 REGIONAL EVENT

By the submission date determined on [westtnffa.ffanow.org](http://westtnffa.ffanow.org), participants will email or upload the following in PDF format to Designated State FFA Staff:

- Job Description
- Cover Letter
- Resume

A penalty of 10% will be assessed to late documents received one or two days after the deadline. Items received after the two day period will not be accepted for judging and no points for that section will be awarded.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

- The job description is required in order 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 and work experience.
- Sources for job descriptions can be found by looking in the newspaper or online through job search websites 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 **10-12** point minimum font.
- The letter is to be dated for the first day of the regional event and addressed to:

**Emily Grant  
West Tennessee FFA Regional Consultant  
Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station  
West Tennessee Research & Education Center  
Room 247  
605 Airways Boulevard  
Jackson, TN 38301**

**RESUME (200 POINTS)**

- The resume should not exceed two pages total. The two-page resume does not include the list of references.
- Resume must be non-fictitious and based upon actual work history.
- Presently it is not a requirement for the resume to be generated from the FFA Resume Generator on FFA.org. Tennessee FFA State Staff will notify chapters when an updated version of FFA Resume Generator becomes available and if it will be a requirement for contestants to use it.

**ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED DURING REGIONAL COMPETITION****EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION (100 POINTS)**

- Participants will complete the application in this handbook until a suitable online application is available from the National FFA Organization.

**PERSONAL INTERVIEW (500 POINTS)**

- The preliminary round interview will be with a panel of judges. Each interview will last twenty minutes.

## TIEBREAKERS

- In the event of a tie, the participant with the highest personal interview score shall receive the higher rank. If a tie still exists, the highest resume score will receive the higher rank.

## Scoring

Preliminary Round	Individual Points
Employment Application	100
Resume	200
Cover Letter	100
Personal interview	500
Total Points	<b>900</b>

## 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 *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>*
- Killer Questions Candidates Ought to Ask the Interviewer.  
*<http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/9-killer-questions-candidates-ought-ask-interviewer/>*
- 9 Keys to Telephone Job Interview Success.  
*[http://www.job-hunt.org/job\\_interviews/telephone-interviews.shtml](http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/telephone-interviews.shtml)*
- Sending Your Thank You After the Job Interview.  
*[http://www.job-hunt.org/job\\_interviews/job-interview-thank-you.shtml](http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/job-interview-thank-you.shtml)*
- Accepting a Job Offer? Asking These 10 Questions First.  
*<http://www.wetfeet.com/articles/accepting-a-job-offer-ask-these-10-questions-first>*
- References from the career center at the land-grant university in your respective state
- FFA resume generator *FFA.org*

# Cover Letter Rubric

100 points

Name		Member Number	
Chapter		State	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill is present 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
<b>Format and General Appearance</b>	Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 pt); uses appropriate business format, date and address at top; addressed to appropriate person; appropriate signature block.	Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 pt); uses appropriate business format, date and address at top; not addressed to appropriate person; inappropriate signature block.	Exceeds one page; margins are inappropriate; font style is unreadable; font size is too small or too large; no signature; no date or address; no inside address; not in appropriate business format.		X 4	
<b>Introductory Paragraph</b>	Identifies position they are applying for; states how they heard about the position; states why they are interested in the position; uses wording to attract reader's attention.	Identifies position that are applying for; does not state how they found the job; vaguely describes why they are interested in the job; introduction is bland and not attention catching.	Does not clearly identify position they are seeking; no description of how you heard about the position; does not grab the reader's attention.		X4	
<b>Skills and Experiences</b>	Identifies two to three strongest qualifications for the job; indicates how education has prepared them for this job; states why you are interested in the position; skills and	Identifies one to two qualifications for the job; indicates how education has prepared them for this job; provides a vague explanation of why interested in the job; skills and experiences	Does not identify relevant qualifications for the job; does not indicate how education has prepared them for this job; does not state why they are interested in the job; skills and experiences are not		X4	

	experiences are consistent with resume; makes reference to resume.	are somewhat consistent with resume; makes reference to resume.	consistent with resume; does not mention resume.			
<b>Closing Paragraph</b>	Thanks reader for taking time to read; provides appropriate contact information; makes appropriate provisions for follow up.	Thanks reader for taking time to read; provides contact information, but makes reader to assume a follow up.	Does not thank reader; does not mention a plan for follow up; does not provide any contact information.		X3	
<b>Spelling/ Grammar/ Punctuation</b>	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X5	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>						



# Resume Rubric

200 points

Name		Member Number	
Chapter		State	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill is present 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
<b>Contact Information</b>	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 2	
<b>Employment Objective</b>	Focused objective that states how employee will help company achieve its goals.	Focused objective that states what you want from the company.	No objective identified.		X2	
<b>Education or Relevant Coursework</b>	Contains complete information (listed in reverse chronological order) with relevant courses listed, dates formatted correctly, GPA listed in correct format (if appropriate), includes appropriate honors and awards.	Contains information (listed in reverse chronological order) with relevant courses listed, dates formatted correctly, may show gaps in work history; inappropriate GPA listed, includes appropriate honors and awards.	Information not listed in reverse chronological order, important information missing, information not listed in correct format.		X7	
<b>Relevant Experience and Skills</b>	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; company name, title, location, and dates are included; strong action verbs used with correct verb tense; personal pronouns and extraneous words are omitted; bullets are concise, direct and indicate one's impact/accomplishments; results are quantified;	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; entries have a pattern of one type of error; action verbs are weak; verb tenses are inconsistent; bullets are not concise or direct and do not indicate impact; bullets are written in complete sentences.	Entries are not in reserve chronological order; 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		X9	

	bullets are listed in order of importance.		or outdated information is listed.			
<b>Achievements and Honors</b>	Appropriate and relevant achievements and honors listed; achievements and honors related to career goal; provides specific details related to achievements and honors; listed in reserve chronological order.	Appropriate and relevant achievements and honors listed; achievements and honors related to career goal; lacks specific details related to achievements and honors; listed in reserve chronological order.	Achievements and honors not listed in reverse chronological order; inappropriate or irrelevant achievements listed; no achievement or honors are listed.		X5	
<b>References</b>	Listed appropriate references and provided complete contact information for references.	References are listed, but not all may be appropriate or not all contact information for references is included.	Inappropriate references are listed; no references listed; no contact information listed.		X2	
<b>Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation</b>	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X5	
<b>Format and General Appearance</b>	Does not exceed two pages without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 point); headings reflect content and content substantiates headings; resume is targeted to job. References may be listed in addition to the two-page resume.	Does not exceed two pages; appears overcrowded; margins are acceptable; font size and style is readable (10-12 point); headings don't necessarily reflect content and content substantiates headings; resume is targeted to job.	Exceeds two pages; margins are inappropriate; font style is unreadable; font size is too small or too large.		X8	

**TOTAL POINTS**

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# Employment Application Rubric

100 points

Name		Member Number	
Chapter		State	

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

# Personal Interview Rubric

500 points

Name		Member Number	
Chapter		State	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill is present 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Professional dress/groomed:</b> Follows standard dress code, polished shoes, clothes pressed, conservative accessories.	<b>Dress appropriate:</b> Just not as professional and “put together”, shoes clean, but not polished.	<b>Very disheveled:</b> Dirty shoes, not wearing black shoes.		x 10	
<b>First Impression</b>	<b>Greeting:</b> Appropriate salutation and firm handshake. <b>Introduction:</b> States name <b>Body language:</b> Smiling and pleasant, does not sit until invited, confident in manner.	<b>Greeting:</b> Confident but uneasy, soft handshake. <b>Introduction:</b> States name only when asked. <b>Body language:</b> Rarely smiles, cologne or perfume is distracting.	<b>Greeting:</b> Does not use salutation, very informal. <b>Introduction:</b> Fails to introduce self, fails to shake hands with interviewer. <b>Body language:</b> Obnoxious cologne or perfume, chewing gum.		x 15	
<b>Response to Questions</b>	<b>Used appropriate language for career:</b> Cited relevant examples; evidence knowledge of career field (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, provides in-depth response to questions; not yes/no responses to questions; establish a “theme” that overall describes their abilities.	<b>Seemed to know terms associated with career:</b> Some holes, cited several relevant examples; but list 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, some listing; provided some depth to responses to questions; provides some yes/no responses; was able to tie some abilities together to form a picture of qualifications.	<b>Knew some of the language of position, but used incorrectly or did not show understanding of terms:</b> Unable to cite or few relevant examples; position education and requirements not known or does not match applicants skill set; unable to relate skills learned in school or past jobs and relevance to position applied, abilities hardly match resume; responses seemed “canned” with little logical progression; mainly provided list of skills with little explanation; provided yes/no responses; unable to see an overall theme of persons abilities.		x 30	

<p><b>Communication Skills</b></p>	<p><b>Persuasive:</b> 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><b>Confident:</b> Exhibited self confidence with body language and verbally</p> <p><b>Appropriate volume:</b> Spoke with proper volume for room to be heard clearly; not too loud, not too soft.</p> <p><b>Enunciation/grammar:</b> 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 will do).</p> <p><b>Concise:</b> Avoided run-on sentences and answered with logical and organized thoughts.</p> <p><b>Sincere:</b> Expressed true interest in the position they are seeking.</p> <p><b>Poise:</b> Avoids distracting mannerisms, such as drumming fingers or overuse of “uhm” and “you know”.</p> <p><b>Discretion/Tact:</b> Shared appropriate information and did not create an awkward situation through responses.</p>	<p><b>Persuasive:</b> Was able to expand somewhat on skills that are a fit for the position, volunteered some additional information to questions asked.</p> <p><b>Confident:</b> Exhibited some nervousness, but covered well; voice and body language showed some uncertainty.</p> <p><b>Appropriate volume:</b> Did not modulate volume to express answers, could hear sometimes; but quiet when unsure of response and hard to hear.</p> <p><b>Enunciation/grammar:</b> Some language not appropriate for position applied, used some slang and exhibited some “dialect”.</p> <p><b>Concise:</b> Some questions answered in a rambling fashion, but point was able to be made. Thoughts were logical, but somewhat disorganized.</p> <p><b>Poise:</b> Seemed comfortable with some nervousness, caught self before exhibiting distracting mannerisms, rarely used “uhm” or “you know”.</p> <p><b>Discretion/Tact:</b> Most professional in tone and shared information that created little ,if any, awkwardness.</p>	<p><b>Persuasive:</b> Answered yes or no to most questions, did not expand on skill set.</p> <p><b>Confident:</b> Did not appear comfortable, nervous, slouched in chair.</p> <p><b>Appropriate volume:</b> Hard to hear answers or volume too loud for room.</p> <p><b>Enunciation/grammar:</b> Used overly complex or simplistic language, sprinkled in words like “git” versus “get” and “agin” versus “again”.</p> <p><b>Concise:</b> Rambled and used run on sentences. Answers were poorly organized and thoughts not clearly expressed.</p> <p><b>Sincere:</b> Seemed uninterested in the position and distracted,</p> <p><b>Poise:</b> demonstrated distracted mannerisms such as tapping foot, drumming fingers, cracking knuckles, etc., Excessive use of “uhm” and “you know”.</p> <p><b>Discretion/Tact:</b> Shared information that may be seen as personal about someone else creating awkwardness, appeared unprofessional.</p>		<p>x 30</p>	
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Posed appropriate questions of interviewer:</b> 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><b>Appropriate thanks and exit:</b> Asked for business card, thanked interviewer, stands and shakes hands prior to exiting room.</p>	<p><b>Questions posed were somewhat appropriate:</b> Some had no relevance to interview, Incomplete inquiry of the next steps in the interview process, Asked for business card, thanks interviewer and shook hand, but seemed uncertain how to end the interview and exit.</p>	<p><b>Asks no questions:</b> Questions asked (if asked) have no relevance to next steps in the interview process, Ends interview abruptly or awkwardly, exits without thanks or shaking hands.</p>		<p>x 15</p>	
<p><b>TOTAL POINTS</b></p>						

## APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

An Equal Opportunity Employer

We will not use as a basis for employment decisions any information regarding race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, public assistance disability, or disability.

NAME IN FULL				<i>(FIRST)</i>	<i>(MIDDLE INITIAL)</i>	<i>(LAST)</i>
PRESENT ADDRESS		<i>(STREET)</i>	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE NUMBER
U.S. CITIZEN	WHAT TYPE OF VISA?		WHAT PROMPTED THIS APPLICATION?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No →			<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			

### EMPLOYMENT INTERESTS

TYPE OF WORK DESIRED	WILL YOU RELOCATE?	DATE AVAILABLE	DO YOU HAVE A CURRENT DRIVERS LICENSE?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### EDUCATION

NAME AND LOCATION	DATES		TYPE OF DEGREE	MAJOR SUBJECT	AVERAGE GRADE			
	FROM	TO			A	B	C	D
HIGH SCHOOL								
COLLEGE(S)								
VOCATIONAL, TRADE OR OTHER SCHOOLS ATTENDED								
SCHOLASTIC HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, ASSISTANTSHIPS, ETC.								
LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, PUBLICATIONS, INVENTIONS OR PATENTS								

### HEALTH

<p style="font-size: small;">Describe any health condition(s) that would prevent you from doing certain kinds of work or interfere with job performance for the applied position. (Employment is contingent on meeting minimal health requirements established for the position.)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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### MILITARY

BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATE ENTERED	DATE OF DISCHARGE
RANK AT DISCHARGE	MAJOR DUTIES	
SPECIAL RECOGNITION OR ACHIEVEMENTS		

### REFERENCES

LIST THREE REFERENCES WHO ARE NOT RELATIVES OR PREVIOUS SUPERVISORS			MAY WE CONTACT REFERENCES?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
NAME	ADDRESS PHONE #	OCCUPATION	YEARS KNOWN
NAME	ADDRESS PHONE #	OCCUPATION	YEARS KNOWN
NAME	ADDRESS PHONE #	OCCUPATION	YEARS KNOWN

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (GIVE LAST OR PRESENT POSITION FIRST)**

COMPANY NAME		ADDRESS	
TYPE OF BUSINESS			
EMPLOYED AS (STARTING)		DATE	SALARY
EMPLOYED AS (AT TERMINATION)		DATE	SALARY
JOB DUTIES			
REASON FOR LEAVING			
SUPERVISOR			TELEPHONE NUMBER
COMPANY NAME		ADDRESS	
TYPE OF BUSINESS			
EMPLOYED AS (STARTING)		DATE	SALARY
EMPLOYED AS (AT TERMINATION)		DATE	SALARY
JOB DUTIES			
REASON FOR LEAVING			
SUPERVISOR			TELEPHONE NUMBER
COMPANY NAME		ADDRESS	
TYPE OF BUSINESS			
EMPLOYED AS (STARTING)		DATE	SALARY
EMPLOYED AS (AT TERMINATION)		DATE	SALARY
JOB DUTIES			
REASON FOR LEAVING			
SUPERVISOR			TELEPHONE NUMBER

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY:**

NAME			TELEPHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE

**UNDERSTANDING**

I understand that if I am employed my employment will be conditional and not for any definite or guaranteed period of time. I realize that my signature will be your authorization to research statements that I have made in this application.

Furthermore, it is understood and agreed that any misrepresentation by me in this application could be cause for cancellation of the application and/or for separation from the Company's service if I have been employed.

I further agree to wear and maintain such personal protective equipment as may be provided by the company; for instance, hard hat, safety belt, etc., and to return same to the company on termination of my employment.

SIGNATURE	DATE
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