

2024-25 Competitive Events Guidelines

Exploring Business Ethics



Exploring Business Ethics provides members with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge around competencies in business ethics. This competitive event consists of an individual objective test and presentation. It aims to inspire members to learn about the standards for morally right and wrong conduct in business.

Event Overview

Division: Middle School

Event Type: Team of 1, 2, or 3 members

Event Category: Presentation

Event Elements: Objective Test (50-multiple choice questions) and a Presentation (with a Topic)

Objective Test Time: 30 minutes

Presentation Time: 3-minute set-up, 7-minute presentation, 3-minute Question & Answer

NACE Connections: Career & Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Equity & Inclusion, Leadership, Professionalism, Teamwork, Technology

The Daniels Fund, in conjunction with a grant provided to MBA Research, is the sponsor of this event. The Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative provides principles-based ethics education to students and focuses on practical, real-world application of ethical principles as a basis for decision-making. Click [HERE](#) to learn about the Daniels Fund ethical principles.

2024-25 Topic

Honesty and Integrity in School and Business—Why It Matters

See page 6-7 for the full background and scenario.

Objective Test Competencies

- Business Law
- Communication Skills
- Emotional Intelligence
- Professional Development

Note: There is no test composition available for this event.

State

Each chapter may submit one (1) entry for state competition.

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National

Required Competition Items

	Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
Objective Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharpened pencil Fully powered device for online testing Conference-provided nametag Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One piece of scratch paper per competitor Internet access Test login information (link & password)
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology and presentation items Conference-provided nametag Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table

Important FBLA Documents

- Competitors should be familiar with the Competitive Events [Policy & Procedures Manual](#), [Honor Code](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Dress Code](#).

Eligibility

- FBLA membership dues are paid by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 1 of the current school year or by the SLC registration deadline, whichever is earlier.
- Members may compete in an event at NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top ten of that event at NLC. If a member places in the top ten of an event at NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event. This event is not eligible for those that placed in the top ten at previous NLCs in Business Ethics.
- Members must be registered for the SLC/NLC and pay the conference registration fee to participate in competitive events.
- Each chapter may submit one entry; each state may submit four entries.
- Each member can only compete in one individual/team event and one chapter event (Annual Chapter Activities Presentation or Community Service Presentation) for national competition; for state competition, students may participate in one objective test, one performance event, and one chapter event.
- Only competitors are allowed to plan, research, prepare, and set up their presentations.
- Each competitor must compete in all parts of an event for award eligibility.
- All members of a team must consist of individuals from the same chapter.
- If competitors are late for their assigned presentation time, they will be allowed to compete with a five-point penalty until such time that results are finalized, or the accommodation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event.
- Some competitive events start in the morning before the Opening Session of NLC. The schedules for competitive events are displayed in the local time of the NLC location. Competitive event schedules cannot be changed.

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Recognition

- The number of competitors will determine the number of winners. The maximum number of winners for each competitive event is 10 at NLC; 5 at SLC.

Event Administration

- This event has two parts: Objective Test and Presentation based on a topic
- Objective Test
 - **Objective Test Time:** 30 minutes
 - The objective test is administered online prior to the SLC and onsite at the NLC.
 - No reference or study materials may be brought to the testing site.
 - No calculators may be brought into the testing site; online calculators will be provided.
 - Unless a pre-approved accommodation is in place, all cell phones, smart watches, and headphones must be turned off and put away before competition begins. Any visibility of these devices will be considered a violation of the Honor Code.
 - Competitors on a team must test individually, starting within minutes of each other. Individual test scores will be averaged for a team score.
- Presentation Information
 - **Equipment Set-up Time:** 3 minutes
 - **Presentation Time:** 7 minutes (one-minute warning)
 - **Question & Answer Time:** 3 minutes
 - **Internet Access:** Not provided
 - Competitors must research the topic and be prepared to present their findings and solutions. The presentation must address why the ethical issues happened, how it should be resolved, and what could have prevented it.
 - All competitors will present. The presentation is judged at the SLC/NLC. Presentations are not open to conference attendees.
 - Timing: The presentation time is exclusive to the allotted times. Once the set-up time has been reached, the presentation time automatically begins. The presentation time shall not exceed the stated time, meaning that the set-up and Q&A time cannot be used as presentation time.
 - Technology
 - Competitors present directly from a device which includes a laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or external monitor (approximately the size of a laptop screen). Competitors can present with one or two devices. If presenting with two devices, one device must face the judges and one device must face the competitors.
 - Projectors and projector screens are not allowed for use, and competitors are not allowed to bring their own.
 - Wireless slide advancers (such as a presentation clicker or mouse) are allowed.
 - External speakers are not allowed. Only device audio can be used.
 - Power is not available.

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- Non-technology Items: Materials, notecards, visual aids, and samples related to the project may be used during the presentation; however, no items may be left with the judges or audience.
- Restricted Items: Animals (except authorized service animals), Food (for display only; may not be consumed by judges during the presentation), Links and QR codes (for display only; cannot be clicked or scanned by judges before, during, or after the presentation)
- Teamwork: If performing as a team, all team members are expected to actively participate in the presentation.
- Research: Facts and data must be cited and secured from quality sources.
- Preparation for and presentation of the entry must be conducted by competitors.

Scoring

- Team members will test individually, and team scores will be averaged.
- The objective test score will be added to the preliminary presentation score to determine the finalists.
- Winners will be determined by adding the final presentation score to the objective test score.
- Ties are broken by the objective test score.
- All announced results are final upon the conclusion of the National Leadership Conference.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA meets the criteria specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act for all competitors with accommodations submitted through the conference registration system by the registration deadline.

Recording of Presentations

- No unauthorized audio or video recording devices will be allowed in any competitive event.
- Competitors in the events should be aware FBLA reserves the right to record any presentation for use in study or training materials.

Penalty Points

- Competitors may be disqualified if they violate the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- Five points are deducted if competitors do not follow the Dress Code or are late to their assigned test or presentation time.

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Business Ethics Background and Topic

Background Info

In 2022, FTX, one of the biggest cryptocurrency exchanges in the world, declared bankruptcy after extensive financial mismanagement and dishonesty were discovered throughout the company. FTX had been hiding billions of dollars in liabilities from the public and allowed sister companies to borrow nearly unlimited funds in customer deposits. FTX's customers lost billions, and the worldwide crypto market collapsed.

At the center of what became one of the biggest financial scandals in American history was the young, talented inner circle of FTX executives who went from rising stars to fraudsters. FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried—who was 30 years old at the time of the scandal and once dubbed the “crypto king”—was sentenced to 25 years in prison. FTX's former chief executive officer (age 28), chief technology officer (29), and director of engineering (27) all pleaded guilty to fraud as well.

As extreme as they were, the actions of these prodigious professionals present a learning opportunity for younger generations entering the workforce. Young professionals need more than just technical skills in the workplace. They need a strong ethical framework to help them distinguish right from wrong and make difficult decisions. Without it, they run the risk of making the same mistakes as the once-promising leadership at FTX. Not every employee can defraud millions like them, but any employee can demonstrate dishonesty, greed, or a lack of integrity if they don't uphold their own ethical principles.

But what are ethics? Ethics are the basic principles that govern your behavior. Although people often have different views on what ethics exactly means, following ethical principles means one's ethical beliefs remain unchanged no matter the circumstances, including—and especially—in professional settings like the workplace. Ethical principles can guide any employee through dilemmas with coworkers, superiors, and customers. Examples of ethical principles include honesty and integrity (adhering to a set of personal ethics).

And the need for greater integrity in the workplace has never been more relevant. According to a 2024 study from ethics education firm LRN, Gen Z employees are 2.5 times more likely than any other generation to agree that it's OK to break the rules to get the job done. In addition, 22% of Gen Zers admit to violating their company's code of conduct in the past year, a far higher number than Millennials, Gen Xers, or Baby Boomers.

What explains these statistics? Do Gen Zers inherently struggle to be as ethical as previous generations? Or does Gen Z's ethical culture simply differ from those of their predecessors? Whether the answer is one or the other—or both—does not change the underlying need for young professionals to develop a strong understanding of ethics in the workplace.

This development does not begin the first day on the job; it starts years before, in the classroom and at home. Every day, young adults encounter many situations in which they can demonstrate ethical principles such as integrity and honesty. They may not realize it in the moment, but these everyday actions can have a profound impact on their life and future.

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Middle School Scenario

Valerie works for Longcloth Avenue—a small, high-end clothing store—as a marketing specialist. Valerie’s boss has asked her to take on a special assignment: developing the customer testimonials section of the company’s annual report. This section will showcase how the company is loved by its customers. It is an important assignment, especially because this is Valerie’s first job out of college, so her manager gives her three weeks to complete her section of the report.

However, the weeks go by, and Valerie still hasn’t started the report. She has been busy with other projects. Plus, she always started her school projects at the last minute and got good grades, so she figures this work will be similar.

But then Valerie realizes the report’s deadline is only a few days away. To make matters worse, her manager wants to check in with her today to discuss her progress on the report section. Valerie must now decide what to do next. One option is to tell her manager that the report is going well and will be submitted on time. This means Valerie will need to rush and likely submit a report that isn’t very good.

The other option is to admit that she procrastinated on her assignment. In response, her manager would likely ask others in the department to help, which will throw off their schedules and disrupt other work. Plus, this course of action would damage the trust between them.

What do you think Valerie should do?

Suggested Questions to Cover During the Event

- What is the ethical issue in this scenario?
- Who are the people that might be impacted by Valerie’s actions?
- Should Valerie hide her procrastination, admit her mistake, or do something else entirely? Why?
- How might Valerie’s opportunities at the company be impacted by her actions in this scenario?
- Would this scenario be different if Valerie had not been working on other projects? Why or why not?

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Objective Test Study Guide: Competencies and Tasks

Sample test questions are provided in the yearlong Ethical Leadership course guide from MBA Research's online store at www.mbaresearch.org.

- A. Business Law
 - 1. Comply with the spirit and intent of laws and regulations.
- B. Communication Skills
 - 1. Demonstrate active listening skills.
- C. Emotional Intelligence
 - 1. Describe the nature of emotional intelligence.
 - 2. Recognize and overcome personal biases and stereotypes.
 - 3. Assess personal strengths and weaknesses.
 - 4. Assess personal behavior and values.
 - 5. Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
 - 6. Demonstrate responsible behavior.
 - 7. Demonstrate fairness.
 - 8. Assess risks of personal decisions.
 - 9. Take responsibility for decisions and actions.
 - 10. Build trust in relationships.
 - 11. Describe the nature of ethics.
 - 12. Explain reasons for ethical dilemmas.
 - 13. Recognize and respond to ethical dilemmas.
 - 14. Explain the use of feedback for personal growth.
 - 15. Show empathy for others.
 - 16. Exhibit cultural sensitivity.
 - 17. Explain the nature of effective communications.
 - 18. Foster open, honest communication.
 - 19. Participate as a team member.
 - 20. Explain the concept of leadership.
 - 21. Explain the nature of ethical leadership.
 - 22. Model ethical behavior.
 - 23. Determine personal vision.
 - 24. Inspire others.
 - 25. Develop an achievement orientation.
 - 26. Enlist others in working toward a shared vision.
 - 27. Treat others with dignity and respect.
 - 28. Foster positive working relationships.
 - 29. Assess long-term value and impact of actions on others.
- D. Professional Development
 - 1. Follow rules of conduct.
 - 2. Make decisions.
 - 3. Demonstrate problem-solving skills.

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Exploring Business Ethics Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Content					
Identifies and defines ethical issues presented in the case study	<i>Fails to introduce the case study and its issues.</i>	<i>Introduces the case study but lacks clarity in identifying key issues</i>	<i>Identifies and defines the ethical issues</i>	<i>Captures attention, clearly presents the case study, and outlines the key issues.</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Explains why the ethical issues happened	<i>No reasons cited for the ethical issues</i>	<i>Reasons for the ethical issues identified but were not on target</i>	<i>Several, but not all, reasons accurately identified</i>	<i>All reasons addressed and analyzed</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Provides logical recommendations as to how the ethical issues should be resolved	<i>Fails to provide meaningful recommendations.</i>	<i>Presents recommendations for behavior but lacks thorough exploration of advantages and disadvantages.</i>	<i>Offers solid recommendations, but may not fully address all pros and cons.</i>	<i>Provides well-reasoned and supported suggestions. Balances advantages and disadvantages effectively.</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Recommends safeguards that should have been in place to prevent the ethical issues	<i>No ethical solution to prevent issues identified</i>	<i>One ethical solution to prevent issues provided with no plan</i>	<i>Ethical solutions to prevent issues provided and a plan developed</i>	<i>One feasible ethical solution to prevent issues recommended with supporting evidence with a plan and necessary resources identified</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Substantiates and cites sources used while conducting research	<i>Sources are not cited</i>	<i>Sources/References are seldom cited to support statements</i>	<i>Professionally legitimate sources & resources that support statements are generally present</i>	<i>Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources & resources is given to support statements</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Presentation Delivery					
Statements are well-organized and clearly stated	<i>Competitor(s) did not appear prepared</i>	<i>Competitor(s) were prepared, but flow was not logical</i>	<i>Presentation flowed in logical sequence</i>	<i>Presentation flowed in a logical sequence; statements were well organized</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates self-confidence, poise, assertiveness, and good voice projection	<i>Competitor(s) did not demonstrate self-confidence</i>	<i>Competitor(s) demonstrated self-confidence and poise</i>	<i>Competitor(s) demonstrated self-confidence, poise, and good voice projection</i>	<i>Competitor(s) demonstrated self-confidence, poise, good voice projection, and assertiveness</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	<i>Unable to answer questions</i>	<i>Does not completely answer questions</i>	<i>Completely answers questions</i>	<i>Interacted with the judges in the process of completely answering questions</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)					
Presentation Total (100 points)					
Name(s):					
School:					
Judge Signature:					Date:
Comments:					