

JOB INTERVIEW

Sponsored by:
CASNR Career Services
College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

Contest Superintendent

Ms. Amy Gazaway
136 Ag Hall
(405) 744-9464
amy.gazaway@okstate.edu

Contest Co-Superintendent

Ms. Cori Woelk
136 Ag Hall
(405) 744-9464
cori.woelk@okstate.edu

Contest Details

Date: Saturday, April 25, 2009
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Location: Room 103 Agricultural Hall, OSU

Contest Purpose, Objectives, Rules and Guidelines

NOTE: This contest requires early submission of materials

PURPOSE

The FFA Job Interview Career Development Event is designed for FFA members to develop, practice and demonstrate skills needed in seeking employment in the agricultural industry.

GENERAL EVENT RULES

1. The Job Interview Career Development Event is an individual event and will be limited to one competing participant per chapter. One additional member from each chapter may participate in the contest process as a non-competing participant; however, the chapter advisor must designate the competing individual during the early submission of contestants' résumés, cover letters, and reference letters by attaching a signed memo on school letterhead with the names of both participants and the identity of the competing participant clearly defined.
2. The FFA Job Interview Career Development Event will only be for students who are regularly enrolled in agricultural education during the calendar year, have a planned course of study, or who are still in high school but have completed all the agricultural education offered.
3. Participants shall be in official FFA dress throughout each contest event.
4. Each participant's cover letter, résumé and application will be the result of his or her own efforts. If a contestant's materials are found to not be their own original work, that contestant will be disqualified from the Job Interview Contest. **Participants must submit a**

signed Statement of Originality. A copy of the form is provided at the end of this contest outline.

5. The event will include both written portions as well as oral presentations. Students must provide their own writing utensil.
6. Participants shall be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge in each contest event without consultation. The judges' rankings of each participant then shall be added, and the winner will be that participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will also be determined using the low point score method of selection.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The minimum length of time required to complete this contest is two hours. However, not every contestant will be finished with the competition within that time frame, as contestants will rotate through the interview judges. Dependent upon the number of entries, the contest may run through the lunch hour. Contestants are encouraged to plan accordingly by choosing one of the following three options:

- (1) Bring a sack lunch,
- (2) Make arrangements for someone to deliver lunch to them in 103 Ag Hall, if they have not completed the contest before noon, or
- (3) Bring money for lunch. The Contest Superintendent will provide pizza and pop to interested contest participants for a \$5 charge.

CONTEST DESCRIPTION, GUIDELINES AND SCORING

BACKGROUND:

This contest was developed to give students an opportunity to develop and enhance their job search skills. Each part of the contest simulates “real world” activities that will be used by “real world” employers and job seekers. The contest is developed to help the student in their **current agriculturally-related job search** (for SAE projects, part-time jobs, etc.). Therefore, the cover letter, résumé and references submitted by the student **must reflect their current skills and abilities** and must be targeted to a job for which they would like to apply. In other words, students cannot develop a fictitious résumé for a fictitious job. Instead, they are expected to **target the résumé towards a real job for which they are currently qualified** (i.e. a job that is realistic for a high school student). Contestants who submit cover letters, résumés and reference letters for positions for which they are not reasonably qualified or whose materials do not realistically reflect their knowledge, skills and experiences will be disqualified.

FAQ:

Q: What if a student wants to compete in the contest but has no intentions of applying for a real part-time job?

A: We recommend the student choose a “real world” job that interests them and develop the résumé and cover letter for that situation. Even if the student is not really applying for the position, he/she can still base the cover letter, résumé, application, references and interview on the position selected.

PART I - Submission of cover letter, résumé and reference letters (early submission)

- Participants must submit **twelve collated copies** of a *cover letter, résumé and reference letters* (explanation provided below) as well as one original of the Statement of Originality to the office of the contest superintendent **before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17th**. These copies will be distributed to judges. Mailed items must be **postmarked by Wednesday, April 15th**. Superintendent's address is listed on the previous page.
- **DO NOT BIND early submission contest materials with staples, in folders or otherwise.** Collated materials should be grouped together with a simple paperclip or binder clip.
- No faxes will be accepted.
- Please double check materials before mailing/delivering to the contest superintendent. **Incomplete submission materials (i.e., materials not copied, materials with missing reference letters, materials with no Statement of Originality, etc.) will not be accepted for competition.**
- Contestants are encouraged to contact the contest superintendent to verify that their résumé, cover letter and letters of reference have been received prior to the actual contest date.

Cover Letter..... (Points - 100)

- a. Cover letters should be single-spaced and on 8 1/2" x 11" **white** bond paper (plain white paper).
- b. The paper is to be single-sided only and typed using no less than a 10 point font. Font style is left to the discretion of the contestant.
- c. Letter is to be **addressed to the Superintendent of the Career Development Event and dated for the day of the event**. Each contestant should pretend that the superintendent is the person in charge of hiring at the organization to which he/she is applying. In other words, don't use the name of the "real" person in charge of hiring.
- d. The **original letter and eleven additional copies** must be submitted by the deadline listed above.
- e. Cover letters will be evaluated/scored by three separate judges based upon the scorecard provided at the end of these guidelines. Points awarded to each contestant for the cover letter portion of the contest will equal the average of the total points awarded by each judge.

Résumé (Points - 145)

- a. Résumé should be printed on 8 1/2" x 11" **white** bond paper.
- b. The résumé should be single-sided only, typed, not to exceed two pages total. (Career counselors and job search coaches recommend one page résumés for candidates of this level). Suggested formats can be found in the Greggs Manual and/or other résumé development resource books.
- c. Résumé **must be non-fictitious** and based upon student's work, education, volunteer and career-related history.
- d. Résumé should be targeted to the position for which the student wishes to apply.
- e. The **original résumé and eleven additional copies** must be submitted by the deadline listed above.
- f. Résumés will be evaluated/scored by three separate judges based upon the scorecard provided at the end of these guidelines. Points awarded to each contestant for the résumé portion of the contest will equal the average of the total points awarded by each judge.

Reference Letters.....(Points – 5)

- a. Students should obtain three letters of reference that are written to describe the student’s skills and abilities as related to the position for which they are applying.
 - b. Students will not be penalized for the spelling, sentence structure or content of the reference letters. However, the letters may be used to obtain questions for use during the interview.
 - c. Scores assigned to this component of the contest will be based on the logic the student used in selecting their references (i.e., did the student choose a person who knew them and could describe their skills as they relate to the position for which they are applying).
 - d. **The original reference letters and eleven copies of each letter** must be submitted by the deadline listed above.
 - e. Reference letters should be addressed to the Superintendent of the Career Development Event. Contestants should ask their references to pretend that the superintendent is the person in charge of hiring at the organization to which he/she is applying. In other words, ask references not to use the name of the "real" person in charge of hiring.
 - f. References will be evaluated/scored as a part of the résumé evaluation process as detailed within the scorecard provided at the end of these guidelines.
-

PART II - Required activities on the day of the contest

- Students may bring copies of their résumé, cover letter, and reference letters; blank letterhead upon which to print their follow-up letter; and a writing utensil into the contest area. No other materials will be permitted in the contest area.
- At the discretion of the contest superintendent and dependent upon contest entry numbers, contestants who arrive to participate on the day of the contest but whose résumé, cover letter and reference letters have not been postmarked or received by the designated early submission deadlines may be allowed to participate in the application, personal interview, and follow-up portions of the contest for practice only. **Contestants with incomplete or absent early submission materials will not be allowed to compete for contest awards or recognition.** Agricultural education teachers whose contestants have incomplete or absent early submission materials should contact the contest superintendent *before the contest date* to verify the non-competitive participation of their students within the contest process.

Phase 1

Application..... (Points – 50)

- a. Students will complete a standard job application on-site, prior to the personal interview.
- b. Students will assume the application is for the job for which they provided their cover letter, résumé and accompanying references.
- c. Students must provide their own writing utensil.
- d. Time limit of 20 minutes will be allotted.
- e. Applications will be evaluated/scored by three separate judges based upon the scorecard provided at the end of these guidelines. Points awarded to each contestant for the application portion of the contest will equal the average of the total points awarded by each judge.

Phase 2

Personal Interview..... (Points – 450)

- a. The interview will consist of three fifteen to twenty-minute interviews with three separate judges.
- b. As with the Nation Job Interview Career Development Event, each contestant will not be interviewed by the same three interview judges. All interview judges complete a judges training

workshop prior to their interaction with the Job Interview contestants to provide a level of standardization in their evaluation of the contestants' interview skills. This training is equivalent to the training provided to the national contest judges.

- c. Points awarded to each contestant for the personal interview portion of the contest will equal the average of the total points awarded by each judge.

Phase 3

Follow Up Letter..... (Points - 100)

- a. Participants will submit a follow up letter after the personal interview. Students will be provided a computer with the Microsoft Word processing application to compose and type a follow up letter. 30 minutes will be given.
- b. Letter is to be addressed to the last person with whom the participant interviewed. The contestant should obtain the name and address of the last interviewer before leaving the interview by asking for a business card.
- c. Follow up letters will be evaluated/scored by three separate judges based upon the scorecard provided at the end of these guidelines. Points awarded to each contestant for the follow up letter portion of the contest will equal the average of the total points awarded by each judge.

Tie breaker

Ties will first be broken by the score for the interview portion of the event. If a tie still exists, the résumé will be used.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS & CONTESTANTS

10 Tips for Contest Participation

1. Start early in preparing materials. This is not a contest that a student can decide to enter the week of state CDE's. This contest requires prior preparation and early submission of materials.
2. Have at least three people proofread and critique your student's work. Are there any grammatical or spelling errors? Is the student doing his/her best job of marketing skills relevant to his/her job objective?
3. Mail materials early. Materials **must** be postmarked by Wednesday, April 15th or delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17th. **No exceptions are made** and materials are not accepted via fax.
4. Do not forget to have your student complete and submit one copy of the *Statement of Originality*.
5. Make sure your student provides eleven *additional* copies of materials. Collate materials into packets, and simply paperclip packets together. **Do not bind** materials for submission.
6. Use white bond paper as indicated in the contest guidelines. No colored paper or cardstock.
7. Ensure that your student has addressed all areas within his/her résumé and cover letter that are evaluated and scored, as detailed on the scorecards in the contest guidelines.
8. Don't forget to have your student bring a writing utensil to the contest for the application phase. If he/she forgets, one will be supplied, but it will be a red pen or plain pencil – not the ideal instrument for completing a job application.
9. Students should not plan to complete the contest before 2:00 p.m. In recent years, the contest has been completed before noon. However, the greater the number of participants, the longer the contest. If students have other activities in the afternoon and/or early evening

for which they need to be home to prepare, then they should likely choose a different contest in which to participate. Help your student decide upon lunch arrangements, should the contest run through lunch.

10. Students should pick up critiqued contest materials at the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources booth within the Career Show during the State FFA Convention in Oklahoma City.

10 Tips for Résumé & Cover Letter Development

1. Do not use MS Word resume templates. The font sizes are often too small to read, especially when copied, and the formats are difficult for students to work within.
2. Match the font style of the résumé with the font style of the cover letter.
3. Font size should never be below 11 pt. in size, and margins should create approximately a one-inch frame around each document.
4. Narrow the listing and descriptions of activities and awards on the résumé to those that are significant and relevant to the job objective. Eliminate or consolidate others.
5. Use lists within the résumé – not complete sentences. Never use “I”, “my”, or “me” in the résumé and minimize their use in the cover letter.
6. Consider all sources of experience and qualifications, including part-time and summer jobs, volunteer work, leadership experiences, class projects, and others.
7. Use strong words that show action throughout your documents.
8. Keep the cover letter to one page and the résumé to one page, if possible (does not include reference information).
9. Vary sentence structure and length within the cover letter and organize sentences into paragraphs around common main points.
10. Connect the job description to the résumé through providing supporting details and facts within the cover letter.

10 Tips for Interview Preparation

1. Review the interview scorecard at the end of the contest guidelines to understand and practice all areas that will be evaluated.
2. Official dress is the dress code. How can your student best present himself/herself in official dress? Are shoes polished? Is there wild or bright nail polish? Is the student’s skirt or slacks worn, faded or wrinkled?
3. Research the potential employer and the position. Know the employer’s needs.
4. Practice good posture, a firm handshake, making eye contact and good voice qualities.
5. Know what is presented and/or described in the résumé and cover letter that was submitted. Anticipate questions about the content.
6. Control nervous gestures and fillers.
7. Respond to questions with more than one word.
8. Provide specific examples in answers that describe the use of relevant skills and abilities.
9. Prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewer in advance of the interviews.
10. Practice! Practice! Practice!

REFERENCES

Greggs Manual

Elements of Style - Strunk and White

101 Toughest Interview Questions...and Answers That Win Jobs
Daniel Porto, Daniel Porot / Paperback / Published 1999

25 Reasons Why I Won't Hire You!; What You Did Wrong Before, During & After the Interview!
Zenja Glass / Paperback / Published 1998

Best Answers to the 201 Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions
Matthew J. DeLuca, Mathew J. DeLuca / Paperback / Published 1996

The Complete Job Interview Handbook
John J. Marcus / Paperback / Published 1994

COVER LETTER SCORECARD

Composition:	Possible Points
Correct format and stationary	10 points
Punctuation	10 points
Grammar	10 points
Spelling	10 points
General appearance	10 points
<i>Composition Sub Total</i>	<i>50 points</i>
Content:	
Career goal specified	15 points
Proper qualifications	35 points
<i>Content Sub Total</i>	<i>50 points</i>
Total points	100 points

RÉSUMÉ SCORECARD

General Appearance	Possible Points
Presented in proper format	15 points
Pleasing to the eye (Captures interest, layout, easily read)	40 points
Spelling/Grammar (Punctuation, typing, spelling, grammar)	20 points
<i>General Appearance Sub Total</i>	<i>75 points</i>
Composition	
Personal data	10 points
Career objective	10 points
Educational background	20 points
Work experience/skills	20 points
Special experiences, activities, honors	10 points
References	5 points
<i>Composition Sub Total</i>	<i>75 points</i>
Total points	150 points

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION SCORECARD

	Possible Points
Overall impression	5 points
Legible	10 points
Neat (Grammar, punctuation, etc.)	10 points
Relevant information provided	10 points
Consistent with résumé	15 points
Total points	50 points

PERSONAL INTERVIEW SCORECARD

	Possible Points
Appearance and courtesy	45 points
Greetings and introduction	45 points
Speech (grammar, vocabulary, volume, enunciation)	45 points
Attitude and personality (forcefulness, poise, temperament, sincerity)	45 points
Ability to convince or impress interviewer (persuasiveness, self-confidence)	45 points
Knowledge and presentation of abilities (educational and occupational experiences)	45 points
Reliability (frankness, consistency, accuracy)	45 points
Poise (tact, discretion, questions asked of interviewer)	45 points
Career Objective (degree to which the contestant had determined career objective)	45 points
Conclusion of interview	45 points
Total	450 points

FOLLOW UP LETTER SCORECARD

	Possible Points
General appearance	5 points
Composition	10 points
Expresses appreciation	10 points
Comments on interview activities	10 points
Expresses interest in position	15 points
Reviews relevant qualification	15 points
Is requested information addressed	15 points
Provisions for follow-up stated	20 points
Total points	100 points

JOB INTERVIEW

Sponsored by:

CASNR Career Services

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Oklahoma State University

Statement of Originality

I hereby affirm that the résumé and cover letter included in this application packet are entirely my own work. I acknowledge that I may have received guidance and advice from various resources, but I have developed these documents through my own efforts. I further declare that the qualifications contained within the résumé and cover letter are true and accurate. If these statements are found to be untrue, I understand that I will be disqualified from the Job Interview Contest and any awards will be withdrawn.

Student's Signature

Date

FFA Advisor Certification

In signing this entry form, the sponsor attests to the originality of this contest entry and acknowledges having discussed the meaning of plagiarism and fraud with the student.

FFA Advisor's Signature

Date