

# Connecting DECA's Competitive Events to Curriculum



## Vision 2012: Supporting student achievement

More than 65 percent of competitors at the 2009 DECA International Career Development Conference indicated an interest in attending a School of Business in pursuit of a college career.

To prepare for the postsecondary program of study, DECA members are increasingly enrolling in business management and administration, finance, hospitality and tourism, and marketing courses during high school. These courses represent career clusters.

DECA recognizes this opportunity to improve student achievement as student interest in each of these four areas of study continues to increase. By 2012, DECA's competitive events program will closely align with these career cluster areas, enabling teachers to better incorporate DECA into their classroom activities.

Likewise, DECA members can select

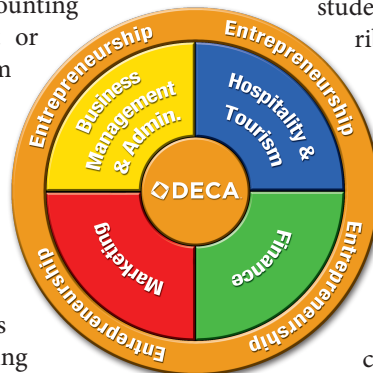
competitive events that best match the courses they are enrolled in, thus giving them an improved chance of winning.

For example, students currently enrolled in accounting would be well-served to compete in one of DECA's Finance Career Cluster Events such as Accounting Applications Series Event or Financial Analysis Team Decision Making.

Students currently enrolled in Hotel Management would benefit from competing in one of DECA's Hospitality and Tourism Career Cluster Events such as Hotel and Lodging Management Series Event, Travel and Tourism Team Decision Making or Restaurant Management.

### Designing the Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework

DECA's co-curricular methodology encourages advisors to integrate DECA's programs, including competitive events, into classroom instruction to increase student achievement. A blue-ribbon commission of leaders in career and technical education developed DECA's Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework that is industry validated and fully aligned with the national curriculum standards in the four career clusters.



### Academic and Technical Content

The National Curriculum Standards for Business Management and Administration, Finance, Hospitality and Tourism, and Marketing are the source of the specific academic and technical content used in DECA's competitive events program.

Charged by the States Career Cluster Project led by the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education (NASDCTEc), MBAResearch managed the development of the national standards for Business Management and Administration, Finance and Marketing. The Hospitality and Tourism standards are under development.

### Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework Goals

The 2010-2011 academic year marks the second year of the three-year implementation strategy designed to provide competitive events that:

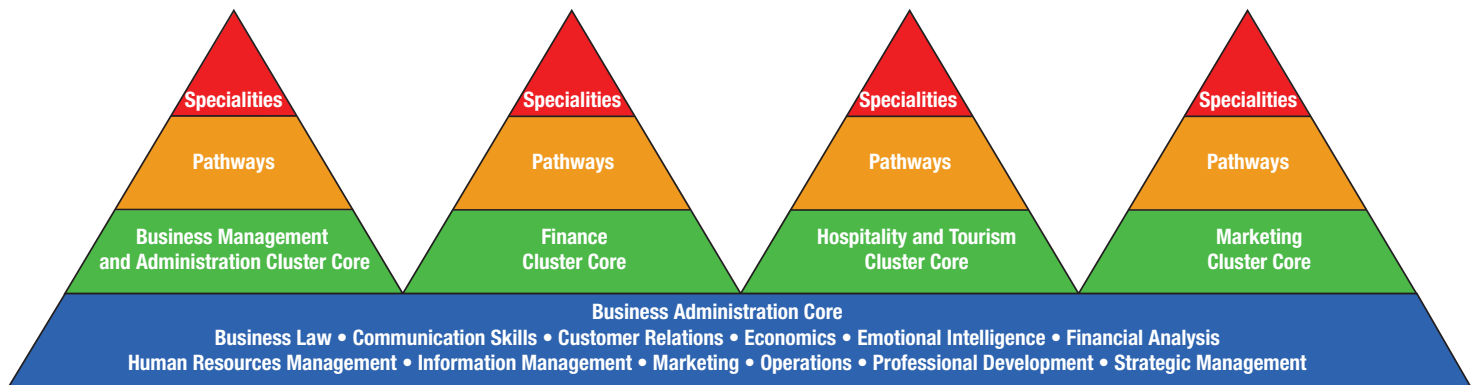
- are appropriate for each instructional level in each of the four career clusters
- utilize a variety of methods and models to measure the participants' knowledge and skills
- may be used to assess and improve classroom instruction
- may be used to document learning for state reporting purposes
- may be used to document learning for the purpose of advanced placement or other forms of articulation agreements with colleges



Competing against 10,000 of their peers, students vie to be named an international champion at DECA's annual International Career Development Conference.



# Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework



The curricular structure of the Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework starts at the Business Administration Core level, which serves as the foundation of knowledge and skills essential for all careers in the Business Management and Administration, Finance, Hospitality and Tourism, and Marketing Career Clusters. For a listing of Cluster Core Instructional Areas and Pathways for each cluster, visit <http://www.deca.org>.

## Curricular Structure

### Tier 1: Business Administration Core

The four career clusters share common skills and knowledge across thirteen instructional areas. For example, the ability to write professional e-mail messages or apply written directions to achieve tasks is essential whether you are in the finance field or marketing field.

### Tier 2: Career Cluster Core

Each cluster then has its own set of instructional areas unique to careers within that cluster.

For example, all careers in the marketing cluster require a strong foundation in the areas of channel management, marketing-information management, marketing planning, pricing, product/service management, promotion and selling – commonly referred to as the functions of marketing.

In the Finance Core, for example, specialized content is divided into the areas of compliance, financial-information management, product/service management and risk management.

### Tier 3: Pathways

Clusters are then separated into pathways, which group similar careers together into broad-based occupational opportunities.

The Marketing Cluster, for example, contains common knowledge and skills for all professional selling professions, which might be different from those in marketing research.

### Tier 4: Specialties

Finally, the specialty level addresses knowledge and skills needed for each specific career within the pathway.

For example, in the professional selling pathway, specialty careers include advertising sales, pharmaceutical sales, real-estate sales and more.

### Summary

The tiers do not necessarily indicate levels of rigor, but rather a progression from a broad career interest to a very specialized career focus. Rigor is measured by the curriculum planning level of each performance indicator.

For more information on the National Curriculum Standards, review the executive summary at <http://www.deca.org>.

## Competitive Events Framework

### Tier 1: Principles of Business Administration Events

DECA is excited to offer the Principles of Business Administration (PBA) Events, designed specifically for first-year students in introductory marketing and business courses. The guidelines and performance indicators will be exactly the same for each of these events, but they will allow students to explore career paths that best suit their interests and talents.

These events will include a comprehensive exam in the Business Administration Core and a content interview with a business

executive.

Rather than creating plans or solving workplace challenges (as in the Team Decision Making Events or Individual Series Events), students are asked to explain various concepts they would learn in an introductory marketing or business course.

While the student will be evaluated on the judge's overall impression, emphasis is placed on the student's content knowledge.

### Tier 2: Team Decision Making Events and Business Operations Research Events

The Team Decision Making and Business Operations Research Events will focus on concepts relating to the entire career path of each career cluster. Each event model will have at least one event from each cluster and perhaps more based upon student career interest.

### Tier 3: Individual Series Events and Prepared Presentation Events

The Individual Series Events and Prepared Presentation Events are designed around career pathways and have the most specialized content. They will probably be undertaken by advanced students.

### Tier 4: Business Plans, Chapter Projects and Online Events

These capstone-like events, including Business Plans, Chapter Projects and Online Events, allow students to apply higher-level management and entrepreneurship skills in career specialties.

Business Plans, Chapter Projects and Online Events
Individual Series Events and Prepared Presentation Events
Team Decision Making Events and Business Operations Research Events
Principles of Business Administration Events

DECA's Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework places event models in levels that align with the Career Clusters curriculum structure.

## Four Years of DECA

The event models of the Comprehensive Competitive Events Framework are layered so that as students focus their career interests, they can build on their previous experiences. This framework encourages four years of participation and career exploration in DECA.

For example, a student participates in the Principles of Marketing event her first year to experience interviewing with an adult and shares information she has learned in her Introduction to Marketing/Business course.

As a sophomore, she may enroll in Marketing I and partner with a classmate to participate in the Buying and Merchandising Team Decision Making Event.

During her junior year and Fashion Merchandising course, she may participate in the Apparel and Accessories Individual Series Event or Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan Event.

As an entrepreneurship capstone her senior year, she may use the Entrepreneurship Participating Event to develop a business concept for a fashion boutique and compete at district, state and international career development conferences.

DECA recognizes that state and local programs each have their own curriculum models. Therefore, some competitive events may be offered at several levels. For example, a school with a strong entrepreneurship program may integrate these events in its curriculum earlier.

Additionally, chapter advisors should check with their state association regarding their specific competitive events offerings.

## Instructional Areas and Performance Indicators

Comprehensive exam questions and performance indicators used in content interviews, case studies and role-plays will be selected from instructional areas relevant to the event's career cluster.

Each performance indicator, selected from the National Curriculum Standards is assigned a curriculum planning level on a continuum of instruction ranging from simple to complex.

Performance indicators are selected from instructional areas at the prerequisite (PQ), career-sustaining (CS) and specialist (SP) curriculum planning levels. For the Principles of Business Administration Events, the specialist-level performance indicators will only be used at ICDC.

A complete listing of performance indicators is available at <http://www.deca.org>.

### Curriculum Planning Levels

Owner  
 Manager  
 Supervisor  
 Specialist  
 Career-Sustaining  
 Prerequisite

## Comprehensive Exams

DECA will use only five distinct comprehensive exams. This new model will provide an opportunity to use data to compare student achievement across the nation and perhaps support state reporting purposes.

Some competitive events require participants to take a 100-question, multiple-choice exam. Participants in the Principles of Business Administration Events will take the same exam that will assess performance indicators in Tier 1: Business Administration Core.

Other events that require an exam will include questions from Tier 1: Business Administration Core and Tier 2: Career Cluster Core of the event's respective cluster. Refer to page 60 of the DECA Guide to determine which exam is assigned to each event.

Performance indicators for all exams are selected from instructional areas at the prerequisite (PQ), career-sustaining (CS) and specialist (SP) curriculum planning levels. For the Principles of Business Administration Events, the specialist-level performance indicators will only be used at ICDC.

Assessment of specialized knowledge and skills continues to occur in the case study or role-play.

## Industry Validation

Each performance indicator used in comprehensive exams, content interviews, case study scenarios and role plays is industry validated. Furthermore, DECA has actively collaborated with industry in developing authentic scenarios.

More than 800 industry professionals will serve as competitive events judges in their area of expertise at the ICDC.



DECA's strong partnership with business and industry provides an unparalleled learning experience for members.

## Teaching through DECA's Written Competitive Events

Writing a 30-page research paper can be intimidating to a high school student. Imagine an entire class writing them at once.

Although sometimes overwhelmed by research papers as well, experienced DECA advisors have developed strategies to incorporate DECA's written events into classroom instruction.

DECA's written events increase relevance of learning by providing practical experiences for students, and they provide rigor by requiring high-level critical thinking and problem solving skills. Through the written entry and presentation, students also develop academic skills.

Stephanie Williams, a 10-year DECA advisor from Cameron, Mo., and her students experienced exponential success after implementing a strategy to incorporate written events into the instructional areas of her marketing and management classes. DECA's written events became the vehicle for instruction rather than just a competition entry.

### Setting the Stage

Williams begins the school year explaining her expectations and sharing the types of DECA's Business Operations Research Events and Chapter Team Events. She provides an overview of the written entry so her students see the big picture — the final project. For example, she encourages them to start a list of sources at the beginning of the process. In just four months, her students are surprised that they completed a 30-page paper and complementary presentation.

Once they have an understanding of the events, students brainstorm local businesses that would be a good fit and possible activities for chapter team events. Students then select partners, the type of event and a local business or event.

### Behind the Scenes

Once she receives the DECA *Guide*, Williams matches the event's objectives with her course's competencies (performance indicators) and the appropriate section of the written entry. She then develops learning activities and time lines for each section.



After implementing an integrated approach, Stephanie Williams (right) had two teams of top 10 finalists in written events at the ICDC. Her students are joined by their parents at an annual recognition ceremony.

### Learning Activities

After the students have identified business partners for their projects, for example, they compose a business letter that explains the project, asks for their collaboration and requests an opportunity to meet.

The students also develop interview questions, knowing that they will need much of this information to complete Section II.A. of this year's Business Operations Research Event. These activities review and reinforce effective communication skills.

Likewise, after discussing market segmentation, which might include a guest speaker from the Chamber of Commerce, Williams has a guided learning activity that requires the students to provide a description of their community. After answering questions requesting information on geographics, demographics, and socioeconomic and economic factors — key terms and concepts they just learned — students have already completed Section II.B.

She provides similar activities for each section of the written entry. The students complete each section of the project without an overwhelming burden.

The culminating tasks include combining the pieces into a final report, developing the presentation and writing the executive summary. "It must absolutely rock," Williams said of the executive summary.

Often times, polishing for competition requires additional "DECA project time" after school. Williams makes herself available at scheduled times more frequently as the deadlines near. Williams and her students

live by the motto of the six P's — proper prior preparation prevents poor performance.

### Industry Involvement

Williams believes strong involvement from businesses is key in the learning process. "The students get a network of community professionals that get to know them," Williams said. "It also presents the students in a positive light."

### Assessment

"It's easy. I use the scoring guide provided by DECA," Williams said recognizing that it is ultimately what will be used to evaluate the project at CDC.

### The Ultimate Outcome

"I take the approach that I am preparing my students for college," said Williams. "I want them to compete and be proud, but when they go to college, I want them to know how to organize data, analyze research and format a paper."

One of Williams' international finalists, now a junior in college, recently returned to share that as a store associate, he was tapped to make a presentation on market expansion at the large retail corporation's headquarters. He used Mrs. Williams' outline. The executives were impressed and asked which college course taught him how to do this. With a grin, Williams explains, "He told me he said, 'I didn't learn how to do this in college. I learned in my high school marketing class and DECA.'"