

## LEVELS OF COMPETITION

- A. The breakdown of grades noted below is used to designate levels for competition entries. Each level has its own unique competitive events guide.
- Middle School/Junior High School level—Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
  - High School level—Grades 9, 10, 11, 12
  - Ninth graders must compete at the level in which the chapter affiliates.
    - If the ninth grade is housed in a high school, grades 9-12, ninth grade students must compete in high school events.
    - If the ninth grade is housed in a school of grades 6-9 or 7-9, ninth grade students must compete in middle school events.
- B. If the school has a K-12 configuration, or a configuration other than the examples above, national TSA should be contacted for clarification and approval regarding the appropriate school level designation.

2. Students must be registered and be in attendance with an adult chaperone at the National TSA Conference in order to enter and become a semifinalist or finalist in any event.
3. All adult advisors, chaperones, and student participants must be in attendance for the entire conference.
4. National TSA Conference registrants must wear conference identification badges at all times.
5. The TSA competitive event limit is six (6) events per conference participant—individual and team events combined.
6. Team events:
  - a. All team members must be affiliated with the same chapter.
  - b. To enter a team event, the chapter designates only that it is participating; names of the individual team members are not required.
  - c. Unless otherwise designated in a competition's eligibility guideline, the maximum size of a team is six (6) members.

## GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

**NOTE:** General rules and regulations apply to *all* competitive events and are *in addition* to each event's specific guidelines.

### A. Affiliation and Membership

1. TSA members, advisors, and chapters must be currently affiliated with TSA to enter any competitive event.
2. TSA membership rights extend through the year of graduation.
3. Students who graduate mid-year may compete at the National TSA Conference that immediately follows their end-of-year graduation.

### B. Conference Registration, Attendance, and Participation in Events

1. Anyone who wishes to attend the conference must complete conference registration.

### C. Student Responsibilities for Competitions

1. It is the individual responsibility of each participant to obtain all rules and guidelines for competitive events.
2. Lack of knowledge or understanding about a particular event is neither reason nor excuse for an individual to request an accommodating adjustment or change.
3. *Students and advisors must routinely check the TSA website, [TSAweb.org](http://TSAweb.org), for updated information about TSA general rules and competitive event guidelines.*
4. Students who participate in any TSA competitive event are responsible for knowing all updates, changes, and clarifications related to that event.

### D. Competition Entries

1. Entries must be started and completed during the current school year.
2. Entries may be submitted for one (1) year, and one (1) competition only. An infraction of this rule results in disqualification.

3. All entries requiring documentation materials (comprising a “portfolio”) must be secured in a clear front report cover (visit this [site](#) for a sample report cover), unless otherwise indicated in an event’s regulations.
4. All entries must be in English.
5. Students must check in and pick up their event entries at the times and places stated in the conference program, or as announced during the National TSA Conference.
6. For any competition that involves the use of a pencil (e.g., for taking a written test, for producing required sketches), participants must provide—and bring to the test site two (2) pencils, either:
  - sharpened standard #2/HB grade with an eraser, or
  - #2 mechanical with an eraser
7. Entry content:
  - a. National TSA provides guidelines for individual and team entry content but does not bear responsibility for content choices made by participants.
  - b. Entries are evaluated on the basis of an event’s official rating form/rubric.
8. Projects and/or products:
  - a. Unless otherwise specified in a specific event’s regulations, no identifying information—other than a student or team identification number—is to be included on an entry.
    - i. Events that require submission of a Plan of Work Log should include indication of student initials only.
  - b. Unless otherwise noted, for all events that require a display, the size of the display may not exceed 15" deep x 3' wide x 4' high.
9. TSA may choose to keep National TSA Conference student entries.
  - a. Such entries may be used by national TSA for promotional purposes. Should that occur, credit for any such entry would be noted by TSA.

### E. Citations, References, and Copyrighted Material

1. For all applicable competitive events, citations or references must follow Modern Language Association (MLA) style.
2. All entries must be the original work of the student participant or student team.
3. All ideas, text, images, and sound from other sources must be cited.
4. If copyrighted material is used, written permission must be included.
  - a. An internet search about copyrighted material and copyright fair use is recommended if ideas, text, images, or sound from other sources is incorporated into an event entry.
  - b. For information about the use of the TSA logo, see [TSAweb.org](http://TSAweb.org).
5. Failure to follow any of the above procedures results in disqualification.

### F. Prohibited Materials, References, and Images

1. Hazardous materials, chemicals, lighted or open flames, combustibles, wet cell batteries, and other similar substances are not allowed at the National TSA Conference.
2. Competition entries or presentations by participants must not include racial or ethnic slurs/symbols, reference to gang affiliation, or vulgar, violent, subversive, or sexually suggestive language or images.
3. Entries or presentations may not promote products that students may not legally buy, such as tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs.
4. Images of guns, knives, or other weapons are prohibited.
5. Failure to follow any of the above procedures results in disqualification.

### G. TSA Liability

1. TSA is not responsible or liable for any personal property, equipment, or materials brought to the National TSA Conference for use by a participant or attendee.

**H. Event Scheduling Conflicts**

1. When an event scheduling conflict could prevent an individual from participating in an event, the individual has the right to decide which event is eliminated from their schedule.

**I. Emergencies**

1. Team member substitution may be allowed, if approved by the event manager and coordinator, should a documented emergency arise in team events that involves written and semifinalist segments.
2. Competitive Event Change Requests:
  - a. Should a change be requested for any reason after the stated conference registration deadline, a \$50 change fee will be charged per person per event, if the change is approved.
  - b. Only competitors registered by the conference registration deadline will be eligible for change requests.
  - c. TSA reserves the right to approve or not approve a requested change.
  - d. Fees must be paid by credit card, check, or cash prior to any change being made.
  - e. No changes will be made once competitions start.

**J. Event Judging**

1. All events are judged in accordance with the stated event criteria noted in this competitive events guide.
2. The decisions of judges related to competitive events are final.
3. Concern about any event during the National TSA Conference should be submitted in writing to the Rules Interpretation Panel (RIP) at the conference.
4. The RIP will render a decision at the conference.
5. The decisions of the RIP at the conference are final. (For more information, refer to the Rules Interpretation Panel section.)

**K. Rules Violations and Disqualifications**

1. A rules violation that gives a contestant an unfair advantage will result in a twenty percent (20%) deduction of the total possible points in either a preliminary or semifinalist round, as applicable.
2. The coordinator or manager of an event has the right to disqualify a contestant when this type of incident occurs.
3. The event coordinator and manager must sign off on both a twenty percent (20%) deduction and a disqualification.

**L. Semifinalists**

1. All competitive events will have a minimum of twelve (12) semifinalists.
2. Semifinalists (individuals or teams, as applicable) will compete against one another to determine the top ten (10) finalists in an event.
3. All members of a semifinalist team will participate in the semifinalist portion of an event, unless otherwise noted in the event's regulations.

**M. Electronic Devices**

1. Recording devices are not allowed in certain competitive events.
2. CRC manager and event coordinator approval is required before any event may be recorded.
3. All electronic devices—including but not limited to, cell phones, iPads/tablets, electronic readers, smart watches, etc.—*must* be turned off unless otherwise noted in specific event regulations.
4. No electronic communication devices of any kind are permitted during competition.

### NATIONAL TSA CONFERENCE DRESS CODE AND OFFICIAL CONFERENCE ATTIRE GUIDELINES

- A. Chapter and state advisors, parents, and chaperones are responsible for seeing that all TSA student members wear TSA competition, general session, or casual attire as occasions may require.
- B. Everyone who is registered for the conference—including parents, guests, and children—must comply with the TSA Dress Code.\*
- C. TSA attire may be purchased online via the SHOP tab on the TSA website, or click on this link to the [TSA Store](#).
- D. TSA competition, general session, and casual attire are considered appropriate dress for conference activities and public appearances.
- E. Because adults (advisors, parents, and guests) serve as role models at TSA conferences and activities, they are expected to dress appropriately for all TSA occasions they attend.
- F. Students must adhere to the TSA Dress Code requirements as listed in this section and on the [TSA website](#).
- G. When students compete in any competitive event they must wear competition attire.
- H. Students not in appropriate competition attire when they compete may be allowed to participate in an event, but they will lose twenty percent (20%) of the total possible points per round.

### COMPETITION ATTIRE

1. **Shirt:** official royal blue TSA shirt
2. **Pants or skirt:** gray
3. **Shoes:** black dress shoes worn with black or dark blue socks, hosiery (optional);
  - open-toed shoes or sandals are acceptable
  - *unacceptable:* athletic shoes; flip-flops; military boots; or work boots
4. Also required for the middle school or high school level Chapter Team event only (but may be worn for other competitions if preferred by participants);
  - **Blazer:** navy blue with official TSA patch
  - **Tie:** official TSA tie (males)  
Females are not penalized for wearing the official TSA tie to Chapter Team or any other competitive event

### GENERAL SESSION ATTIRE

1. **Shirt:** The official TSA shirt (royal blue) is preferred; button-down shirt; polo/golf shirt
  - *Unacceptable:* T-shirts; halter tops; tank tops
2. **Dress, skirt, or pants**
  - *Unacceptable:* jeans; baggy pants; exterior pocket pants; shorts
3. **Shoes:** dress shoes worn with dark socks or hosiery (optional); open-toed shoes or sandals are acceptable
  - Unacceptable: athletic shoes; flip-flops; military boots; or work boots

### CASUAL ATTIRE

1. Appropriate t-shirts, shorts, or jeans
2. Casual attire **may not** be worn at competitions or general sessions

### \*Awards Ceremony

Registered parents, guests, and children who are not compliant with TSA General Session Attire and who wish to attend the Awards Ceremony, may be asked to sit in a designated section, if permitted entry.

## COMPETITION REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

The Competition Regulations Committee (CRC) is charged with reviewing TSA's competitive events, updating them as necessary, and presiding over the competitive events at the annual National TSA Conference. The all-volunteer CRC is composed of dedicated STEM teachers and education professionals from across the country who have made major commitments to create and maintain the high quality of national TSA's competitive events.

- Questions about specific events may be addressed to event coordinators or event managers.
- Ideas and feedback regarding events are always welcome. Guidelines and forms can be found in the appendix of this guide for proposing a new event and for suggesting revisions to existing events.

## RULES INTERPRETATION PANEL

The Rules Interpretation Panel (RIP)—a group of at least three (3) CRC members—monitors and oversees competitive events during the National TSA Conference. The panel provides a means by which chapter advisors may express grievances and concerns about conference situations that pertain to events, and ensures continuity from year to year for competitive event rules and regulations.

### RIP GRIEVANCE PROCESS

1. Chapter or state advisors express concern about a rule to the CRC team.
2. The RIP panel will meet to discuss and analyze the advisor's concern; the advisor may be asked to submit a formal grievance in writing using the RIP Grievance form (see Forms Appendix).
3. The formal grievance is submitted by a chapter advisor, with approval from the state advisor.
4. It is the intent of the panel to resolve any grievances at the conference and provide a written response to the advisor.
5. All decisions made by the panel are final.

## EVENT COORDINATOR REMINDERS

TSA is grateful for the support of its event coordinators, many of whom are advisors attending the conference with students from their chapters. The busy schedules of these individuals prompt the reminders that follow.

- A. Competitive event coordinators must be present for a mandatory coordinator's meeting on the first day of the conference.
- B. Competitive event coordinators must be present for conference event check-in and check-out if they are coordinating an event in which these activities take place.
  1. Generally speaking, "check-in" is on the evening of registration day, and "check-out" is held on the day before the awards ceremony.
  2. Tentative schedule information is available before the conference on [TSAweb.org](https://www.tsa.org).
- C. The CRC, which consists of all the event managers, is available throughout the conference to support coordinators as they supervise competitive events.

## AWARDS

- A. At the conference awards ceremony, the top ten (10) finalists in each event are identified in random order and called to the stage for recognition.
- B. From those ten (10) finalists, first (1<sup>st</sup>), second (2<sup>nd</sup>), and third (3<sup>rd</sup>) place awards are presented to the individual or team representative, as determined for each event. Rankings beyond third (3<sup>rd</sup>) place are not announced at the awards ceremony.
- C. A list of the top ten (10) finalists for each event is available on [TSAweb.org](https://www.tsa.org) shortly after the conference.

### EVENT PROPOSAL INFORMATION

As technology changes and technology education attempts to keep pace and reflect these changes, new TSA events are added, some are revised, and others are dropped. TSA chapter advisors, state advisors, and others are encouraged to submit proposals for new events.

The following topics reflect potential areas for development:

- Lasers/satellites/radar
- Cloud computing
- Engineering
- Mobile apps
- 3D printing
- STEM
- Transportation technology
- Economic development
- Environmental technology
- Future technology
- Innovative power sources
- 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology
- Biotechnology problem solving
- Leadership development
- Electronic publishing
- Data management
- Social media marketing
- Green technology
- Manufacturing technology
- Cybersecurity
- Information Technology

An event proposal submitted for consideration must include these elements:

- Overview (description of the event and participant expectations)
- Eligibility for entry
- Limitations (such as time or entry submission requirements)
- Specific regulations
- Required personnel
- Standards alignment with STEM standards

Formative ideas are welcome, but the more complete the event proposal the less likely it will be misinterpreted. The CRC acknowledges all submissions, and each is given consideration for possible inclusion in a competitive events guide. Once submitted, ideas and events become the property of national TSA. Proposals must be submitted by August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in order to be considered for the next high school guide.

Proposals must include the submitter's name and complete contact information. Proposals may be mailed to CRC, c/o National TSA, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1540, or emailed in a Word file attachment to [general@tsaweb.org](mailto:general@tsaweb.org).