

2025–2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Foundations of Digital Design



Foundations of Digital Design challenges members to demonstrate their understanding of basic design principles and tools used in digital communication through an objective test. This event covers topics such as layout, typography, color theory, branding, and the use of digital software to create effective visual content.

Event Overview

Division	Collegiate
Event Type	Individual
Event Category	Objective Test
Event Elements	50-minute test, 100-multiple choice questions

Educational Alignments

<u>Career Cluster Framework Connection</u>	Arts, Entertainment, & Design
<u>NACE Competency Alignment</u>	Career & Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Professionalism, Technology

This event is intended for students who are early in their collegiate academic journey and just beginning their study of digital design. Only members who have completed no more than six credit hours on a semester schedule (or the equivalent number of quarter hours) of college-level digital design coursework by May 1, 2026, are eligible to compete.

Knowledge Areas

- Graphic Design Fundamentals
- Software Proficiency
- Digital Communication
- User Interface (UI) Basics
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Project Presentation
- Ethical and Inclusive Design

Test questions are based on the knowledge areas and objectives outlined for this event. Detailed objectives can be found in the study guide included in these guidelines.

State

Testing will take place prior to the State Leadership Conference. Testing must occur at school under the supervision of an adult proctor. Check the Call to Conference for specific instructions and deadlines.

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National

Required Competition Items

<u>Items Competitor Must Provide</u>	<u>Items FBLA Provides On-site</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharpened pencil• Fully powered device for online testing• Conference-provided nametag• Photo identification• 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 provided at test check-in)

Important FBLA Documents

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

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in FBLA competitive events at the National Leadership Conference (NLC), the following criteria must be met:

- **Membership Deadline:** FBLA national membership dues must be paid to the specific division by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1 of the current school year.
- **Conference Registration:** Members must be officially registered for the NLC and must pay the national conference registration fee to participate.
- **Official Hotel Requirement:** To be eligible to compete, competitors must stay within the official FBLA housing block.
- **State Entry Limits:** Each state may submit up to four entries per event.
- **Event Participation Limits:** Each member may participate in:
 - One individual or team event, and
 - One chapter event (e.g., *Community Service Project* or *State of Chapter Presentation*).
- **Participation Requirement:** To be eligible for an award, each competitor must complete all components of the event at the National Leadership Conference.
- **Identification at Check-in:** Competitors must present valid photo identification (physical or digital) that matches the name on their conference name badge. Acceptable forms include a driver's license, passport, state-issued ID, or school ID.
- **Late Arrivals:** Competitors will be allowed to compete until such time that the results are finalized, or participation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event, as determined by Competitive Events staff. Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals in any competitive event.
- **Event Schedule Notes:**
 - Some events may begin before the Opening Session.
 - All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.
 - Schedule changes are not permitted.

Event Administration

- **Test Duration:** 50 minutes

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- **Format:** This event consists of an online objective test that is proctored and completed on-site at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- **Materials:** Reference or study materials are not permitted at the testing site.
- **Calculators:** Personal calculators are not allowed; an online calculator will be available within the testing platform.
- **Question Review:** Competitors may flag questions within the testing platform for review prior to the finalization of results at the NLC.

Scoring

- Each correct answer is worth one point.
- No points are deducted for incorrect answers.
- Tiebreakers are determined as follows: (1) The number of correct responses to 10 pre-selected tiebreaker questions will be compared. (2) If a tie remains, the number of correct responses to 20 pre-selected questions will be reviewed. (3) If a tie still remains, the competitor who completed the test in the shortest amount of time will be ranked higher.
- Results announced at the National Leadership Conference are considered official and will not be changed after the conclusion of the National Leadership Conference.

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 the testing site.

Recognition

- A maximum of 10 entries (individuals or teams) may be recognized per event.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing reasonable accommodations for competitors. Accommodation requests must be submitted through the conference registration system by the official registration deadline. All requests will be reviewed, and additional documentation may be required to determine eligibility and appropriate support.

Electronic Devices

- Unless approved as part of a documented accommodation, all cell phones, smartwatches, electronic devices, and headphones must be turned off and stored away before the competition begins. Visible devices during the event will be considered a violation of the FBLA Honor Code.

Sample Preparation Resources

- Official sample test items can be found in [FBLA Connect](#). These sample items showcase the types of questions that may be asked on the test and familiarize competitors with the multiple-choice item options.

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Study Guide: Knowledge Areas and Objectives

This study guide shows the skills and knowledge you'll be tested on for this event. Objectives followed by a two-letter, three-digit code in parentheses are based on the National Business Administration Standards from MBA Research and Curriculum Center. Some objectives also reference MBA Research's Learning Activity Packages (LAPs)—resources with readings, activities, and assessments to help you learn. For more information, visit MBAResearch.org/FBLA.

Design Principles (30 test items)

1. Describe the elements of design (PR:222) (SP)
2. Discuss 2D design characteristics (e.g., value, texture, contrast)
3. Discuss the use of positive and negative space
4. Explain the rule of thirds
5. Discuss the use of basic design principles (e.g., emphasis, movement, balance, variety)
6. Discuss Gestalt principles in design (e.g., similarity, proximity, continuity, closure, perception, organization, symmetry)
7. Explain the impact of color harmonies on composition (PR:314) (SP)
8. Discuss the psychological and aesthetic impacts of color

Typography and Layout (30 test items)

1. Discuss the nature of typography (PR:295) (SP)
2. Describe kerning, tracking, and leading in typography
3. Discuss the impact of typography on design
4. Explain how typography decisions may be influenced by tone, audience, and purpose
5. Define typography terms (e.g., font, typeface, ascender, serif)
6. Discuss the effects of document design elements (e.g., white space, headings, line lengths)
7. Discuss the use of font pairings and font hierarchies
8. Describe typeface categories and characteristics (e.g., serif, sans serif, script, monospaced, display)
9. Discuss relationships between layout elements (e.g., contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity)
10. Discuss framing concepts in layout design (e.g., cropping, bleeds, margins, borders)

Digital Design Technology (20 test items)

1. Discuss raster software and vector-based image technology
2. Discuss industry standard design software (e.g., Photoshop, InDesign, Blender)
3. Describe digital color concepts (PR:274) (SP)
4. Discuss key terms related to digital images (e.g., resolution, size, resampling, rendering)
5. Discuss types of image files and their characteristics (e.g., JPEG, PNG, SVG)
6. Explain bit depth and color gamut

User Experience and Accessibility (20 test items)

1. Discuss the importance of accessibility in design
2. Describe legal accessibility requirements for websites or other digital products
3. Discuss how design decisions can impact accessibility (e.g., colors, typography, layout)
4. Discuss elements of the design process (e.g., researching, brainstorming, collecting feedback)
5. Describe the importance of user feedback in the design process
6. Identify website design/components (PR:336) (MN)

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References for Knowledge Areas & Objectives

Borough of Manhattan Community College. *Foundations of Digital Graphic Design*.

<https://files.commonsc.gc.cuny.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3604/files/2018/08/MMA-100-Fall-2018-Syllabus.pdf>

Coursera. *Google UX Design Professional Certificate*. <https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/google-ux-design>

eDynamic Learning. *Digital Design 1A: Introduction*. <https://www.edynamiclearning.com/course/digital-design-1a-introduction/>

MBA Research and Curriculum Center. *National Business Administration Standards*.

<https://www.mbaresearch.org/local-educators/teaching-resources/standards/>

Skillcrush. *Tech 101: What is digital design?* <https://skillcrush.com/blog/what-is-digital-design/>

The Professional Association for Design. *Graphic Design Curriculum*. <https://www.aiga.org/resources/academic-design-education/graphic-design-curriculum>

Webucator. *Adobe Certified Professional: What is on the Photoshop exam?*

<https://www.webucator.com/article/adobe-certified-professional-photoshop/>