

# 2026–2027 Competitive Events Guidelines

## Foundations of Communication

Foundations of Communication challenges members to demonstrate their understanding of basic business communication principles through an objective test. This event covers topics such as written and verbal communication, professional etiquette, and the use of technology to effectively exchange information in a business setting.



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

| Event Information:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>National Leadership Conference:</b><br><b>Timing Structure:</b><br><b>Test Duration:</b> 50 minutes<br><br><b>Important Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Internet Access:</b> Provided for testing time only.</li> <li>• <b>Event Schedule Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some events may begin before the Opening Session.</li> <li>○ All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.</li> <li>○ Schedule changes are not permitted.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <b>State Leadership Conference:</b><br>Testing will take place prior to the State Leadership Conference. Testing must occur at school under the supervision of a proctor. Check the SLC Call to Conference for specific instructions and deadlines. |

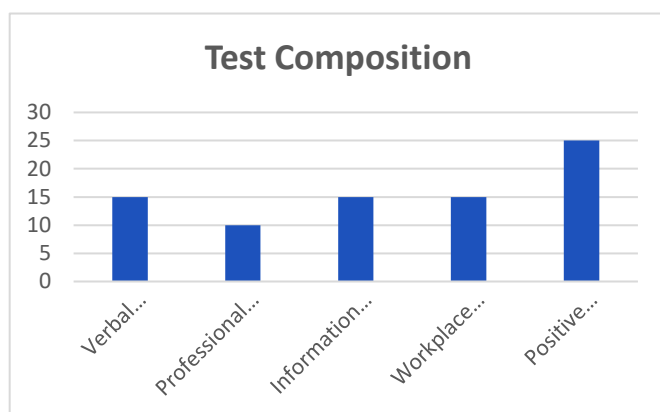
\*\*\* Event specifics are continued below. Review the document in its entirety.

*This event is intended for students who are early in their collegiate academic journey and just beginning their study of communications. 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 communications coursework by May 1, 2027, are eligible to compete.*

### Knowledge Areas

- Verbal Communication
- Professional Etiquette
- Information Literacy
- Workplace Communication
- Positive Working Relationships

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.



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### National Leadership Conference

#### Required Competition Items

| <u>Items Competitor Must Provide</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <u>Items FBLA Provides On-site</u>                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sharpened pencil</li><li>• Fully powered <a href="#">device for online testing</a></li><li>• Conference-provided nametag</li><li>• <a href="#">Photo identification</a></li><li>• Attire that meets the <a href="#">FBLA Dress Code</a></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One piece of scratch paper per competitor</li><li>• Internet access</li><li>• Test login information (link &amp; password provided at test check-in)</li></ul> |

#### 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:
  - Two individual or team events, 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 Administration

- **Test Duration:** 50 minutes
- **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.

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### **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 [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.

### **Important FBLA Documents**

- Competitors should be familiar with the [Competitive Event Operations Manual](#), [Honor Code](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Dress Code](#).

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### Study Guide: Knowledge Areas and Objectives

*This study guide outlines the skills and knowledge assessed for this event. Objectives followed by a two-letter, three-digit code in parentheses are aligned to the National Business Administration Standards from MBA Research and Curriculum Center. Some objectives reference MBA Research's Learning Activity Packages (LAPs), which are instructional resources with readings, activities, and assessments available **exclusively to teacher advisers**. For more information, visit [MBAResearch.org/FBLA](http://MBAResearch.org/FBLA).*

### Important Notice Regarding Test Preparation

*MBA Research materials are **not required** to study for or prepare for FBLA competitive event tests. MBA Research provides curriculum and instructional resources directly to teachers and does not administer or manage individual student testing or competition participation.*

**Note for members and parents:** *All questions related to tests, study materials, scores, or competition guidelines should be directed to the local FBLA adviser. Only teacher advisers should contact MBA Research directly.*

### Written Communication (20 test items)

1. Explain the nature of effective written communications (CO:016) (CS)
2. Write professional emails (CO:090) (CS)
3. Write business letters (CO:133) (CS)
4. Write informational messages (CO:039) (CS)
5. Write inquiries (CO:040) (CS)
6. Write persuasive messages (CO:031) (SP)
7. Write executive summaries (CO:091) (SP)
8. Prepare simple written reports (CO:094) (SP)
9. Adapt written correspondence to targeted audiences (CO:203) (SP)

### Verbal Communication (15 test items)

1. Employ communication styles appropriate to target audience (CO:084) (CS)
2. Handle phone calls in a businesslike manner (CO:114) (CS)
3. Participate in group discussions (CO:053) (CS)
4. Facilitate (lead) group discussions (CO:201) (SP)
5. Make oral presentations (CO:025, LAP-CO-025) (SP)

### Professional Etiquette (10 test items)

1. Adhere to company protocols and policies (PD:250, LAP-PD-250) (CS)
2. Follow rules of conduct (PD:251, LAP-PD-251) (CS)
3. Follow chain of command (PD:252, LAP-PD-252) (CS)

### Information Literacy (15 test items)

1. Distinguish between using social media for business and personal purposes (CO:206) (CS)
2. Explain how digital communications (e.g., email, text messages, chats) exposes business to risk (CO:202) (SP)
3. Use social media to solicit new ideas and solutions (EI:107) (SP)

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4. Organize information (CO:086) (CS)
5. Select and use appropriate graphic aids (CO:087) (CS)
6. Use data visualization techniques (e.g., infographics, heat-maps, dynamic model outputs) (CO:204) (SP)

### Workplace Communication (15 test items)

1. Explain the nature of staff communication (CO:014) (CS)
2. Choose and use appropriate channel for workplace communication (CO:092) (CS)
3. Participate in a staff meeting (CO:063) (CS)
4. Participate in problem-solving groups (CO:067) (CS)
5. Provide directions for completing job tasks (CO:139) (SU)

### Positive Working Relationships (25 test items)

1. Exhibit cultural sensitivity (EI:033, LAP-EI-033) (CS)
2. Leverage personality types in business situations (EI:104) (SP)
3. Explain ethical considerations in providing information (EI:038, LAP-EI-038) (SP)
4. Foster open, honest communication (EI:129, LAP-EI-129) (SP)
5. Solicit feedback (EI:106) (SP)
6. “Sell” ideas to others (EI:108, LAP-EI-108) (SP)
7. Demonstrate negotiation skills (EI:062, LAP-EI-062) (SP)
8. Use conflict-resolution skills (EI:015, LAP-EI-915) (CS)
9. Build trust in relationships (EI:128, LAP-EI-128) (CS)
10. Participate as a team member (EI:045, LAP-EI-045) (CS)
11. Use consensus-building skills (EI:011, LAP-EI-911) (SP)
12. Motivate team members (EI:059, LAP-EI-059) (SP)
13. Foster positive working relationships (EI:037, LAP-EI-037) (CS)
14. Consider conflicting viewpoints (EI:136, LAP-EI-136) (CS)

### References

MBA Research and Curriculum Center. *National Business Administration*

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

Park University. *What is interpersonal communication?* <https://www.park.edu/blog/what-is-interpersonal-communication/>

Indeed. *Interpersonal communication and its importance at work.* <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/importance-of-interpersonal-communication>

Investopedia. *How do interpersonal skills influence business culture?* <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/030415/how-do-interpersonal-skills-influence-business-culture.asp>