

2026–2027 Competitive Events Guidelines

Business Ethics (Collegiate)



Educational
Alignments

Business Ethics recognizes members who can analyze ethical dilemmas in the workplace and present thoughtful, well-reasoned solutions. Members deliver a presentation that demonstrates their understanding of ethical principles, decision-making frameworks, and the impact of ethics on business practices.

Event Overview

Division	Collegiate
Event Type	Team of 1, 2, or 3 members
Event Category	Presentation
Event Elements	Presentation with a Topic

Event Information:

National Leadership Conference:

Timing Structure:

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 3 minutes
 - No interaction allowed with judges during this time.
- **Presentation:** 7 minutes
 - a one-minute warning will be provided
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):** 3 minutes

Important: Time allocations are exclusive. The presentation must begin immediately after the 3-minute set-up time concludes. Time may not be shifted between segments. Competitors will not interact with judges during the set-up period.

Important Notes:

- **Internet Access:** Not provided
- **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.

State Leadership Conference:

Timing Structure:

Presentation:

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 1 minute
 - No interaction allowed with judges during this time.
- **Presentation:** 7 minutes
 - a one-minute warning will be provided
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):** 3 minutes

Important Notes:

- Time allocations are exclusive
- This event does not have a preliminary round at the State Leadership Conference.
- Colorado FBLA follows the NLC model for Event Administration unless noted otherwise.
- Check the SLC Call to Conference for additional information and prejudice deadlines (if applicable).

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

2026-2027 Topic

Stakeholder Trust During a Food Safety Crisis

Food safety crises present organizations with complex ethical challenges that can affect customers, employees, suppliers, investors, regulators, and the communities they serve. Whether caused by contamination, supply chain failures, labeling errors, operational deficiencies, or other organizational issues, these situations require leaders to balance public safety, legal obligations, financial sustainability, corporate responsibility, and stakeholder trust while making timely and transparent decisions.

Select a real or hypothetical organization within the food industry that is experiencing a food safety crisis. Evaluate the organization's ethical decision-making, the factors that contributed to the crisis, and the effectiveness of its response. Develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the needs of key stakeholders, strengthens organizational accountability, and supports long-term resilience. Support your recommendations with research, professional perspectives, and established ethical principles or business frameworks.

How should organizations make ethical decisions during a food safety crisis while balancing stakeholder interests and maintaining long-term trust?

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National Leadership Conference

Required Competition Items

<u>Items Competitor Must Provide</u>	<u>Items FBLA Provides</u>
- Technology and presentation items - Conference-provided nametag Photo identification - Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	Table

Competitor 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*).
- **Competitor Responsibility:** Only registered competitors are permitted to plan, research, prepare, and set up their presentations. Advisers and others may not assist.
- **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. If judges have left the competitive event area, it is no longer possible to compete. Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals in any competitive event.

Event Administration

This event consists of two phases: a preliminary presentation and a final presentation.

Preliminary & Finals Presentation Details

Venue & Format

- Presentations occur in-person at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- Competitors/teams are randomly assigned to presentation sections.
- Presentations will take place in a large, open area with a designated space of approximately 10' x 10', which includes a table and chairs for the judges.
- The preliminary round is closed to conference attendees and audience.

Technology Guidelines

- **Internet Access:** Not Provided

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- Presentations must be delivered using one or two personal devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or monitor approximately laptop-sized).
- If using two devices, one must face the judges and the other must face the presenters.
- Projectors and projector screens are not permitted, and competitors may not bring their own.
- Wireless slide advancers (e.g., presentation clickers or mice) are allowed.
- External speakers are not allowed; audio must come directly from the presenting device(s).
- Electricity will not be available.

Non-Technology Items

- Visual aids, samples, notes, and other physical materials related to the project may be used.
- Items may be placed on the provided table or on the judges table, if space allows.
- No items may be left with the judges following the presentation.

Restricted Items

- Animals, except for authorized service animals.
- Food, which may be used for display only and may not be consumed by judges.
- Links and QR codes, which may be shown but may not be scanned or clicked by judges at any time.

Research

- Information must be supported by credible, well-documented sources.
- Any use of copyrighted material, images, logos, or trademarks must be properly documented.

Team Expectations

- In team presentations, all members must actively participate in the delivery of the presentation.

Event Specific Information: Competitors should incorporate the following aspects in response to the topic

- **Identify Ethical Issues Clearly:** Define and explain the ethical dilemma using accurate industry terminology and demonstrate a clear understanding of the core issue.
- **Analyze the Root Causes:** Address and examine all contributing factors behind the ethical issue with depth and clarity.
- **Support Recommendations with Evidence:** Present strong, well-analyzed recommendations supported by multiple pieces of credible, relevant evidence.
- **Propose a Feasible Ethical Solution:** Recommend one clear and realistic solution to prevent future ethical problems. Include an action plan and identify the resources required.

Final Presentation Details

The presentation guidelines outlined above will apply to the final presentation.

Advancement to Finals

- The top-scoring competitors or teams from each preliminary section will advance to the final round in equal numbers.
- The number of competitors or teams advancing to the final round depends on the number of preliminary sections:
 - 2 sections: Top 6 from each section advance
 - 3 sections: Top 4 from each section advance
 - 4 sections: Top 3 from each section advance

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- 5 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
- More than 5 sections: Top 2 from each section advance

Scoring

- Preliminary round scores are used to determine which competitors or teams advance to the final round from each section.
- Final round scores determine the final rankings and top award winners.
- Judges are responsible for breaking all ties in both preliminary and final rounds.
- All judging decisions are final. 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 their assigned presentation time.

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.

Recording of Presentations

- Unauthorized audio or video recording is strictly prohibited in all competitive events.
- FBLA reserves the right to record presentations for educational, training, or archival purposes. Competitors should be aware that their presentations may be recorded by FBLA-authorized personnel.

Important FBLA Documents

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

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Business Ethics Background and Topic

Background: *This section provides competitors with context on ethical decision-making in business. Competitors should review this information before completing the Business Ethics competition using the topic on the following page.*

Every day, businesses make decisions that affect customers, employees, suppliers, investors, regulators, and the communities they serve. While many business decisions focus on products, services, costs, and profitability, others require leaders to make difficult choices that protect people while supporting the long-term success of the organization. In these situations, ethical decision-making becomes essential.

Business ethics refers to the principles and standards that guide responsible decision-making. Ethical leaders demonstrate integrity, honesty, accountability, fairness, and transparency in their actions. These principles help organizations build trust, strengthen relationships, and make decisions that balance business objectives with social responsibility.

One area where ethical leadership is especially important is food safety. Food manufacturers, restaurants, grocery retailers, agricultural businesses, and other organizations within the food industry provide products that millions of people depend on every day. Although organizations strive to maintain high safety standards, challenges such as bacterial contamination, foodborne illness outbreaks, manufacturing errors, supply chain failures, labeling errors, or product recalls can still occur.

When a food safety issue is identified, business leaders must make timely and responsible decisions in an environment of uncertainty. Protecting public health may require costly operational changes, recalls, or production delays, while failing to act quickly or communicate transparently can increase risks to consumers and erode stakeholder confidence. Effective leaders must balance ethical responsibilities, regulatory obligations, operational continuity, financial sustainability, and organizational reputation.

Customers expect safe products and accurate information. Employees rely on leadership for guidance during times of uncertainty. Suppliers, investors, regulators, and community members are also affected by the decisions an organization makes. Successfully responding to a food safety crisis requires leaders to consider the interests of multiple stakeholders while remaining committed to ethical principles and responsible business practices.

Organizations that respond with integrity, accountability, transparency, and a commitment to continuous improvement are more likely to maintain stakeholder trust and strengthen their long-term resilience. Although every crisis presents unique challenges, ethical leadership enables organizations to navigate uncertainty, protect public health, and reinforce confidence among those they serve.

As future business leaders, developing ethical decision-making skills will prepare you to evaluate complex situations, balance competing stakeholder interests, and make responsible decisions that support both organizational success and the public good.

Annual Topic: Stakeholder Trust During a Food Safety Crisis

Food safety crises present organizations with complex ethical challenges that can affect customers, employees, suppliers, investors, regulators, and the communities they serve. Whether caused by contamination, supply chain failures, labeling errors, operational deficiencies, or other organizational

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issues, these situations require leaders to make difficult decisions while balancing public safety, legal obligations, financial sustainability, corporate responsibility, and stakeholder trust.

Select a real or hypothetical organization within the food industry experiencing a food safety crisis.

Evaluate the ethical issues surrounding the crisis, the factors that contributed to the situation, and the effectiveness of the organization's response. Develop a comprehensive strategy that demonstrates ethical leadership by balancing the interests of key stakeholders, protecting public health, strengthening organizational accountability, and supporting long-term resilience. Support your analysis and recommendations with research, professional perspectives, and appropriate ethical principles or business frameworks.

Your recommendations should demonstrate how ethical decision-making can influence organizational reputation, stakeholder confidence, operational effectiveness, and long-term business success.

How should organizations make ethical decisions during a food safety crisis while balancing stakeholder interests and maintaining long-term trust?

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Business Ethics Presentation Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Content					
Identifies and defines ethical issues presented in the topic	No identification of ethical issues as it relates to the event guidelines	Identifies OR defines the ethical issues	Identifies and defines the ethical issues	Identifies and defines the ethical issues using industry terminology	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Ethical dimensions of the problem are clearly defined	No reasons cited for the ethical issues	Reasons for the ethical issues identified but were not on target	Several, but not all, reasons accurately identified	All reasons addressed and analyzed	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Provides logical recommendations as to how the ethical issues should be resolved	No recommendations are given	Recommendations given, but they are not analyzed	Recommendations are given and analyzed with supporting evidence	Recommendations are given and analyzed with multiple pieces of supporting evidence analyzed	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Effective ethical solution is offered	No solution provided or does not address the ethical issue	Solution is unclear, impractical, or only partially addresses the issue	Solution is clear, relevant, and addresses the core ethical issue	Solution is well-developed, actionable, and grounded in ethical reasoning	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Research shows quality and related information to the ethical issues	No research done with 3 or more inaccurate statements	Research is unrelated to the ethical topic and 1-2 inaccurate statements	All research is accurate with no reference made to supporting evidence	Research is accurate with supporting evidence provided; incorporates input of businesspeople interviewed as part of presentation	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Substantiates and cites sources used while conducting research	Sources are not cited	Sources/References are seldom cited to support statements	Professionally legitimate sources & resources that support statements are generally present	Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources & resources is given to support statements	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Presentation Delivery					
Statements are well-organized and clearly stated	Competitor(s) did not appear prepared	Competitor(s) were prepared, but flow was not logical	Presentation flowed in logical sequence	Presentation flowed in a logical sequence; statements were well organized	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Consistently displays confidence, poised body language, engaging eye contact, and effective voice projection.	Did not demonstrate any of the listed skills	Demonstrated 1-2 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)	Demonstrated 3 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)	Demonstrated all skills, enhancing the overall presentation	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	Does not respond to questions or responses are completely off-topic.	Provides incomplete or unclear answers that show limited understanding.	Responds accurately and clearly to most questions, showing adequate understanding.	Responds confidently with clear, accurate, and thoughtful answers that enhance the overall presentation.	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	

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Presentation Protocols			
Adherence to Competitive Events Guidelines	Competitor(s) Did Not Follow Guidelines	Execution Aligned with Guidelines: ✓ Used only allowable technology devices (sizing specs followed; maximum of two, with only one facing judges at a time) ✓ Presentation aligned with the assigned topic ✓ Maintained professional boundaries during set-up time (no interaction with judges) ✓ Did not leave materials behind after the presentation ✓ Links or QR codes were displayed appropriately (not clicked or scanned by judges) ✓ Audio was presented without external speakers ✓ Avoided use of food or live animals	
	0 points	1- 10 points	
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)			
			Presentation Total (110 points)
Name(s):			
School:		Section:	
Judge Signature:		Date:	
Comments:			