

Interpretation of Qualifications Affecting State FFA Degree

With the presence of alternative scheduling methods used in West Virginia high schools (i.e., seven-period day, 4X4 block schedule, modified block schedule), questions have emerged pertaining to minimum qualifications regarding the minimum length of FFA membership for the State FFA Degree. The purpose of this document is to provide clarification so the issue in question may be consistently addressed.

Article VI, Section E of the National FFA Constitution addresses minimum requirements for the State FFA Degree. Item number two of Section E states a member must "...have been an active FFA member for at least two years (24 months) at the time of receiving the State FFA Degree." In the past, questions have been raised whether the 24 months of membership necessary for the degree should include portions of months to count toward membership. For instance, should a member paying local dues in late August, 2002 (at the very beginning of the school year) be considered as a qualified candidate to receive the state degree at the State FFA Convention in mid-July, 2004?

The interpretation of this question, endorsed by the State FFA Governing Body, is that a member has not met the minimum membership qualification until s/he has completed 24 complete months of membership at or above the ninth grade level. Therefore, in the example discussed earlier, the member who paid dues in August, 2002 would not have completed 24 months of membership until that same date in August, 2004. In this situation, the member would not be eligible for the State FFA Degree until the first State FFA Convention following August, 2004.

It should be noted active membership is described in Article V, Section B of the National FFA Constitution. Item number one in the list of requirements for active membership explains that a student must "while in school, be enrolled in at least one agricultural education course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program..." This fact, combined with the requirement of 24 months of active membership described previously, indicates a need for supervised agricultural experience records spanning at least 24 months.

Amended and Passed 6-13-02

Policy Modification Affecting Activities Counting Toward State FFA Degree Requirements

Situation

Significant concern has been raised in the past regarding which FFA activities can or should count toward meeting the minimum qualifications for the State FFA Degree. The National FFA Constitution explains in Article VI, Section E, Item 8, that a member must "have participated in at least five different FFA activities above the chapter level." Through the years, this standard has been interpreted in a number of ways, and previous attempts to establish a consistent interpretation of this standard have been inadequate. Currently, activities which involve more than one FFA chapter are considered as qualifying activities.

Questions have been raised, however, as to how many qualifying activities can occur at the same venue during the same time frame. For instance, if a member attends the State FFA Convention and in that one convention participates in the State FFA Creed Speaking CDE, the State Tractor Driving Contest, and the State FFA Chorus, should the member receive credit for one activity (the State FFA Convention) or three activities (Creed, Tractor Driving, Chorus)? Many would see this as three separate activities since these activities are different in scope and nature. If that is the position, then a member could theoretically meet the minimum qualification for five activities above the chapter level at one state convention, one state fair, etc. Critics suggest this is an erroneous interpretation of the standard which actually lessens the value of the state's highest degree of FFA membership.

Proposal

The State FFA Governing Body endorses the position that no more than two FFA activities may count toward the State FFA Degree if they occur at the same venue and involve the same time frame/same overall activity. This policy will become effective with all members applying for the State FFA Degree in 2003.

Example

The following examples are provided to illustrate the implication of this policy.

Example A -	State FFA Convention: Delegate, Parliamentary Procedure CDE, Prepared Public Speaking CDE	Count two activities - all at same venue
Example B -	WV State Fair: FFA Sheep Show, Showmanship, Tomato Exhibit, Field Corn Exhibit	County two activities - all at same venue

Example C -	State Agriculture CDEs: Horse CDE, (conducted in May at Salem) Agronomy & Poultry CDEs (conducted in September at WVU)	Count as three activities - one activity at one venue in June and two at another venue in September
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Effect

The intent of this interpretation is not to discourage members from participating in a number of different activities conducted at a single site. Rather, it is meant to encourage members to explore a variety of activities held at different times and sites. Implementation of this policy would assure a student's participation at a minimum of three different sites and times as opposed to the existing situation in which a student could theoretically meet the minimum qualifications regarding activities at one site and time. Strengthening the standard will ensure the integrity of the State FFA Degree and reduce the chances of the gold charm losing its luster.

Passed 4-19-02