# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*updated 3/2016*

## New Resource: Application Troubleshoot Tips/Technical Difficulties

*There is a new resource available on the Proficiency and American Degree home pages. Application Troubleshoot Tips. Review this information for potential solutions to your technical difficulties.*

*Also, you can contact info@theaet.com or proficiency@ffa.org for assistance.*

*For State or Chapter FFA Degree questions please contact your local advisor or state staff.*

## How do I get access to the electronic applications?

> Log into ffa.org.
> Select "**Open your FFA Dashboard**" from the top right portion of the screen
> Select **"My Toolbox – Student"**
> From the **"Apply Now"** box select – "**Other Applications**"
> You are now on the "**FFA Degree/Application Manager**" page

o To start a new application use the Drop Menu to select the application type. Then click the "**Add New**" button.

## OR

o To return to an already started application use the table below the drop menu and select the already started application by clicking on the "Application" hyperlink.

## I forgot my User Name and Password to log into ffa.org. What do I do to access the applications?

From the ffa.org homepage select "My FFA Registration and Login" as you would to sign in. Next to the "**Sign In**" button click "*Forgot username*" or "*Forgot password*". Click the appropriate option for assistance.

| Sign In | Forgot username?<br>Forgot password? |
| --- | --- |

## Do I have to use the new electronic applications on ffa.org, or can I still use the Excel templates I have filled out in the past?

The Excel templates are no longer valid. All applications must be filled out thru the Application Manager on ffa.org.

## I added a Proficiency application but can't find the award areas for research.

There are two (2) different applications for Proficiency awards. For entrepreneurship, placement or combined type SAE projects use the "**Proficiency Application**".

For research SAE projects, use the "**Research Proficiency Application**"

## I need more detailed information on Proficiency applications.

There are two (2) handbooks available for Proficiency Awards located on the Proficiency home page:  https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/proficiencies

Located in the right hand column under Handbooks

➢ Proficiency Handbook
➢ Agriscience Research Handbook

## The applications require me to designate a career pathway. I need more information regarding career pathways.

Page 11 of the *Proficiency Handbook* provides detailed information on the AFNR career pathways.

## I'm not sure what Proficiency Award area my Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) should be placed in. What do I do?

The Proficiency Award Area Descriptions can be found on the Proficiency home page at:  https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/proficiencies under **Resources** in the right hand column.

If you need assistance to choose the correct award area, contact proficiency@ffa.org

# Agricultural Proficiency Awards

*I filled out the Proficiency application last year and when I view the resume on this year's application I see it looks different.*

The electronic applications have been reformatted by a resume' builder. Some of the titles of the sections have been changed and a couple of new sections have been added.

- ➢ Objectives (previously Career Objectives)
- ➢ Agricultural Classes/Coursework (previously named Agricultural Science Courses)
- ➢ Supervised Agricultural Experiences
- ➢ FFA Leadership (previously FFA Involvement and Leadership)
- ➢ Community Service (Leadership)
- ➢ School and Extracurricular Involvement (new section)
- ➢ Awards and Honors (previously Accomplishments)
- ➢ Certifications (previously Certifications, Skills and Memberships)
- ➢ Skills (new section)
- ➢ Recommendations

*I need some examples to assist me in filling out the application. Where do I find those?*

Go to the Proficiency home page – right hand column for the link to sample applications: https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/proficiencies

Examples of all 4 types of examples are provided.

- ➢ Entrepreneurship
- ➢ Placement
- ➢ Combined
- ➢ Research

Example of multiple award areas are available.

## *Any hints on what judges look for when judging applications?*

➤ Make sure the application version #'s match on all pages of the application. The version #'s are located on the bottom left hand corner of the printed application. If you make changes, reprint ALL OF THE PAGES THAT HAVE VERSION NUMBERS again before turning it for state or national judging.

**AWARD AREA**

➤ Make sure the SAE project fits the category/award description you are applying in.
  o Contact proficiency@ffa.org for an official determination

**EXAMPLE APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE**

➤ Example applications are available on the Proficiency home page. We add to these examples yearly.

**RUBRICS/SCORE CARDS**

➤ The rubrics/scorecards are available on ffa.org on the Proficiency home page – right hand column. There are 4 different rubrics. One for Entrepreneurship, one for Placement, one for Combined and one for Agriscience Research. Judges use rubrics and scorecards to judge applications.
  o Have student/advisor score the application using the rubric. This points out strengths and weaknesses.
  o Follow all rules printed on the rubrics.
  o Make sure goals are defined and measurable and then addressed in results.
  o Be reasonable and realistic in defining goals and outcomes of these goals.
  o Be specific with goals.

**APPLICATIONS:**

➤ Read the application directions. Follow the rules!
➤ Be specific, to the point and direct. Use all space provided to tell your story. Make sure you fill out the applications completely.
➤ Photos should be action shots related to your SAE.
➤ Try to make your SAE unique and different. Describe how you are in charge and involved. If you have an item that is unique or unusual in your program or application, explain it to the judges within your application.
➤ Tell a story. Use questions at the beginning to thoroughly explain your projects, especially if there are unusual circumstances.
➤ Answer questions as they relate only to the award area you are applying for. Many applications talk about total SAE, or mix in information about things not related to specific the award area.

- Be creative in writing narratives. "Ever since I was little . ." is overused and does not set an application apart from the other applications.
- Proof read, proof read, proof read!!! Check spelling/grammar. Have another teacher or advisor proof read the application before submitting it.
- Utilize English instructors and/or local news people to proof read applications.
- Look for holes in your application, problems that might prevent you from having the potential to become a national finalist.
- Having someone review your application will decrease the number of mistakes that affect your overall outcome in the judging process. For example: have someone else from your state look at the application if time permits.
- Make corrections noted by any judges/state staff at the local, or state level before submitting the application for national judging.
- Explain everything completely. **Do not assume the judges know something.**
- Have all of application completed and signed. If there is an employer, make sure the employer signature is included.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- Check numbers!!! Make sure all figures are accurate and correct.
- Check, double check and triple check for technical accuracy (i.e. finances).
- Financial records need to be explained in the written portions of the application since an inventory sheet is not included in the application. Note: If you would like to include an inventory sheet, you could use as your personal page.
- If trading labor expenses, etc. make sure to explain this in your application.
- All applications must end December 31st the year prior to submitting the application. For example: Applications submitted for competition in 2016, must include only records through December 31, 2015.

## ADVISOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advisors are encouraged to provide letters of recommendation on school or chapter letterhead.
- For Placement applications include both employer and instructor statements. You can put both recommendations on one page (each use ½ the page) or you can submit the additional recommendation letter as the Personal Page.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

- Make sure photos demonstrate skills and knowledge learned/practiced in the proficiency area.
- Use good/clear pictures.

- Show 6 different skills or practices provides a judge a much better picture of the project than showing similar activities multiple times.
- Use action photos of yourself relating to your SAE.
- Use the captions should give more detail about your project rather than explaining things that are obvious in the photos.
- Refer to the judging rubrics to get the most value from your photos.
- Be realistic.  For example, you wouldn't wear your official dress to clean out a barn

## PERSONAL PAGE

- Include a personal page that deals with the SAE, alternate pictures, newspaper clippings, inventory you couldn't list elsewhere, second recommendation.  Collage of photos relating to SAE.
- This page can be anything as long as it is not larger than 8 ½ x 11 SINGLE SIDED

## CHECKSHEET

- Follow the rules as they are stated in the check sheet.
- Refer to rubrics on ffa.org https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/proficiencies

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