Agricultural Communications

Nebraska Career Development Event
Handbook and Rules for 2025-2029

STATEWIDE PRE-QUALIFYING PROCESS:
A pre-qualifying event is open to ALL schools in Nebraska and will be held via Zoom during the first two weeks of February. The Top 10 teams from the pre-qualifying event will be invited to the state finals and to submit a full communication plan. For full details of the change in format, see "Section 8. Event Format."

1. PURPOSE

The Agricultural Communication Career Development Event will provide individuals with basic communication skills necessary to take advantage of career opportunities in agricultural communication. Public communication about agricultural products, practices and policies is essential to the future of agriculture. Students who are equipped with strong communication skills and who can use a variety of media to help the public understand issues related to the agricultural industry have a bright future in the job market. This event draws from Ag Communication curricula that contain the following elements: strategic communication/integrated multimedia communication, science literacy, public issues and policy, presentation strategies, news writing/editing, Associated Press style.
AFNR Courses this CDE Aligns with: ag sales and marketing, ag businesses, ag communication, entrepreneurship, economics and agribusiness management, leadership and ethics in agriculture.

2. OBJECTIVES[1]

The Agricultural Communication CDE provides an opportunity for the participant to:

1. In a team effort, develop and present an effective communication plan for a client by creatively employing elements of communication planning which are referenced in the communication plan proposal scorecard.
2. Demonstrate knowledge in areas of agricultural communication.
3. Apply correct Associated Press style conventions to the selected communication channels.

Editing Exercise and Communication Quiz Objectives:

- Demonstrate proficiency in Associated Press style.
- Identify and correct grammatical errors.
- Demonstrate knowledge related to basic elements of journalistic writing, broadcasting, public relations, graphic design, and communication ethics.

FINALS: Communication Plan and Deliverables Objectives

1. Properly select a situation that matches the current year's scenario.
2. Properly identify client needs.
3. Create a strategic communication plan for a client using all the elements from the communication plan scorecard to satisfy the client's needs.
4. Deliver an effective presentation to communicate key points of the communication plan.
5. Develop a news story that accurately reflects the campaign.
6. Develop a social communication plan that promotes the campaign.
7. Design a magazine spread.
8. Create an audio/visual component that relates to the campaign.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of AP style writing.
10. Consider writing quality, clarity, grammar, punctuation and format.

3. ELIGIBILITY

a. **Team Eligibility Guidelines**
1. Teams consist of four members.
    i. Teams must provide the names of the four team members and up to four alternates at registration.

---

[1] For information on best practices to meet these objectives please review the "Agricultural Communication in the Classroom Guidebook" available on the National CDE website or at https://alec.unl.edu/agedcde/ag-Communications.

ii. Alternates may be used during finals as long as they were listed on the pre-qualifying round registration.

iii. <mark>**Teams will need to identify a proctor at registration.**</mark> **The FFA advisor CANNOT be the proctor.** The proctor must be an administrator, guidance counselor, or a librarian, and the contact information for the proctor will be required by a specified date after registration. Proctor guidelines will be distributed to registered proctors prior to the pre-qualifier.

2. All teams must register and pay to compete in the pre-qualifier event. Teams that qualify for finals will NOT pay an additional registration fee.

b. **State Pre-Qualifier Guidelines**

1. All Nebraska schools will be eligible to compete in the state pre-qualifying competition (via Zoom) hosted by the Nebraska Agricultural Communication CDE superintendent(s) in late January or early February.

2. The qualifying event will consist of the following components:

    i. Communication Quiz (15 minutes)

    ii. Editing Exercise (15 minutes)

    iii. Communication Plan Exercise (30 minutes)

c. **State Finals Eligibility Guidelines**

1. The top 10 teams from the pre-qualifying round will be eligible to compete at the Nebraska Agricultural Communication CDE Finals.

2. Qualified schools must complete and submit a communication plan by the provided deadline (typically mid-March) to compete in the state CDE. The communication plan must be submitted electronically in PDF format to the link provided on this webpage: https://alec.unl.edu/agedcde/ag-Communication

3. No entries will be accepted after the deadline.

4. The communication plan must address the theme/scenario as described and meet the same criteria as the National FFA rules and will be judged using the same rubric. Refer to the "Event Guideline" section for more details about the communication plan format.

4. REQUIRED ATTIRE

a. FFA official dress or other professional dress is required to participate in this event.

b. 10 points will be deducted from the individual score if official/professional dress is not worn, per individual who does not wear official dress.

5. REQUIRED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

a. **State Pre-Qualifying Event** (via Zoom)

Students must be in the same room with an approved proctor. The room must be quiet, and no one other than the proctor and four students may be present.

Technology minimum requirements for the pre-qualifying event:

    a. A reliable internet connection of at least 10 mbps is required.

    b. Zoom should be installed and updated to the latest version prior to the event. We recommend testing Zoom prior so you know that the camera and audio are configured properly. Tip: Students may need to click "Connect to Computer/Device Audio" after joining a meeting.

    c. Each student must have their own device with a functioning web camera, microphone, and speakers capable of running Zoom. Choose an option listed below:

        ■ Option 1 (preferred): A Windows or Mac laptop/computer. System Requirements for [Windows/Mac](#) can be found here.

        ■ Option 2: A Chromebook capable of running Zoom (download from the Google Play Store). Some Chromebooks have difficulty running Zoom, so pre-testing is strongly encouraged.

        ■ iPads/tablets are not allowed, as Zoom stops sending video once a student moves to a different App/web browser.

    d. Events will utilize Google Forms (Quiz) as the testing platform. Access to Google services with a modern web browser is essential, so school filters should be checked.

b. **State Finals** (in-person): Qualifying teams must supply the following:

    1. Four (4) pencil/pens for editing exercise and communication quiz.

    2. Materials needed for communication plan presentations.

    3. The following equipment will be provided for the communication plan presentations:

        i. PC computer with PowerPoint

        ii. Digital projector

        iii. Projector screen and table

    4. ***Note.*** Teams may bring additional equipment for the communication plan presentation as long as they are able to set up and tear down equipment in the time allowed for the presentation.

6. EVENT SCHEDULE

a. **Important Dates**
   1. **January 15** (Approximately)- Registration deadline for state pre-qualifying event
   2. **Late January/Early February** - State qualifying event held via Zoom (two meeting times available)
   3. **By mid-February** - Top 10 teams qualified for state finals competition notified and communication plan scenario provided
   4. **Mid-March** - Communication plans due to the CDE superintendent for qualified teams.

b. **State CDE Schedule**
   1. Teams will have scheduled times the day of the event for their presentations.
   2. The day of the event, teams will complete the editing exercise, communication quiz, and communication plan presentation of deliverables developed ahead of time.

7. ANNUAL THEME

1. All teams will receive a scenario (see page 1) each year that they will use in both the pre-qualifying and state rounds.
   a. Pre-Qualifying round: The communication plan exercise will be based on this scenario
   b. State Finals: The top 10 teams will use the same scenario to create a full communication plan and research a story idea and build supporting deliverables, which they will present at the state contest.

8. EVENT FORMAT

1. **PRE-QUALIFYING ROUND**
   Teams of four will compete in the event, and each member will complete the following exercises via a proctored Zoom event at their school, hosted by the CDE superintendent:
   a. Communication Quiz (15 minutes)
      i. Completed individually by all team members
   b. Editing Exercise (15 minutes)
      i. Completed individually by all team members
   c. Communication Plan Exercise (30 minutes)
      i. All members of the team will work together to complete and submit a single communication plan exercise.

    d.   No unapproved electronic devices of any kind, including cell phones, computers, tablets (e.g., iPad), or audio recorders will be allowed during the editing exercise or communication quiz. Use of these devices will result in an automatic disqualification of your team.

    e.   No dictionaries, AP Stylebooks or other paper resources are allowed during the editing exercise and communication quiz.

2. **PRE-QUALIFYING ROUND SCORING**

    a.   The top 10 scoring teams will be invited to the state finals.

    b.   All scores will be reset and will NOT carry over to scoring for the finals.

    c.   Both individual and team scores will be used to determine top 10 teams, so it is to your advantage to compete with 4 team members.

3. **STATE FINALS**

    a.   When the top 10 scoring teams will use the provided scenario to complete a full communication plan and accompanying deliverables that are due in mid-March.

    b.   At the state finals, each team will deliver their communication plan as a formal presentation, and each team member will take another communication quiz and editing exercise.

4. **STATE FINALS SCORING**

    a.   Only the scores from the finals will count toward the state final CDE.

    b.   The score will be a combination of the individual quiz scores, evaluation of the quality of deliverables, and the presentation of the communications plan.

A detailed description for each component of the CDE is below:

COMMUNICATION QUIZ
Pre-Qualifying Round AND State Finals

15 minutes
Individually taken and scored
Each member will complete a quiz that covers basic elements important to journalistic writing, broadcasting, public relations, graphic design, and communication ethics. Much of the information for the quiz will be drawn from the National FFA's online resource, "Agricultural Communication in the Classroom: Preparing for a Future in the Agricultural Communication Industry" or from the Associated Press Stylebook. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or dictionary during this exercise.

EDITING EXERCISE

Pre-Qualifying Round AND State Finals

15 minutes

Individually taken and scored

Each team member will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed document that contains 25 mistakes. Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included and should be edited according to the Associated Press Stylebook. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

COMMUNICATION PLAN EXERCISE

Pre-Qualifying Round ONLY

30 minutes

Taken and scored as a team

Each team will complete a communication plan exercise consisting of approximately five short-answer questions related to the development of a communication plan. Teams will not be developing full plans, but rather explaining/drafting components of a plan. The goal of this exercise is to show true knowledge of developing communication plans that meet specific client needs.

AGRICULTURE-RELATED COMMUNICATION PLAN

State Finals ONLY

Submitted by mid-March
Developed and scored as a team

The top 10 teams qualify for participation in the state final competition. Qualifying teams will develop a full communication plan for an assigned scenario. The scenario will identify a communication need. At the state event, the team will make an oral/visual presentation of the communication plan.

COMMUNICATION PLAN GUIDELINES (STATE FINALS ONLY)

1. A **maximum of three typed pages** not including cover page, table of contents, references, or appendices.
2. Double-spaced with 1-inch margins.
3. Paginated (numbered pages not including cover page).
4. 12-point Times New Roman font (not including display text or headings).
5. Written according to Associated Press Style
6. Sources should be cited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).

The Communication Plan must include the following sections (points will be deducted for missing or incomplete sections):

1. **Cover page**
    - i. Must include the title of the Communication Plan, CDE name, chapter name, team member names and year in school.
    - ii. May include a creative design.

2. **Table of Contents**

3. **Final Communication Plan**
    - a. Each of the 10 qualifying teams is required to prepare a three-page communication plan in PDF format as if it were to be presented to a client. Creating the communication plan should be a collaborative effort involving all team members. The communication plan should address the following points (refer to the scorecard for judging criteria):
    - b. Provide an overview of the communication plan and identify intended audience
        - i. Define the central theme or controlling idea
        - ii. Pose the main question or narrative inquiry
        - iii. Specify the intended call to action
        - iv. Explain the rationale and goal, as well as the relevance to the audience, of each deliverable component (feature story, magazine layout, broadcast production, and social media plan).

4. **References**
    - a. Formatted and edited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).

5. **Communication Deliverables (REQUIRED) Details for each below:**
    - a. **Feature Story (100 points)**
      Writers will write a feature story by interviewing your own sources and creating your story concept as it aligns with the given scenario.
        - i. Must address the specified audience.
        - ii. Should have a strong focus, lead (opening paragraph) and headline.
        - iii. Include at least two sources.
        - iv. Written as a feature article, rather than a news article, and in Associated Press style.
        - v. 500–1,000 words.
        - vi. Submitted as a text-only PDF.
        - vii. Refer to the scorecard for judging criteria

    - b. **Magazine Layout Design (100 points)**
      Designers will use the graphic elements they identify and create to develop a magazine layout.
        - i. Must use the feature story text written by the feature writer.
        - ii. Must include relevant photos, but may optionally also use graphics and logos. .

     iii.   Should be standard magazine size and final .pdf should reflect bleed and trim, so it displays as it would print.

     iv.   Submitted as a .pdf in facing pages format.

     v.   Software suggested (but not limited to): Canva, Adobe Express, InDesign, Design Wizard, etc.

     vi.   Refer to the scorecard for judging criteria

c. **Broadcast Production (100 points)**

Broadcasters will source video and/or audio clips, photos, and/or music for a multimedia story for client website. This broadcast product can be used to promote readership of the story created by their team, or it can supplement what is in the written story – it is up to the team to decide the best use of these resources.

     i.   60-90 seconds

     ii.   Can be a television story, online video, radio story, podcast (promo/intro), or slide show.

     iii.   If submitting a video, please submit a YouTube Link. You can find directions for how to post an unlisted video to YouTube here. https://go.unl.edu/unlistedyoutubevideos

     iv.   If you are submitting any other broadcast files, please export and submit as mp3, mp4, or mov file. Other file types will not be accepted and will result in a zero score for that portion.

     v.   Software suggested (but not limited to): Spotify for Podcasters, Adobe Premiere, Express, Rush, Spark or Audition; Canva Video; iMovie; Movie Maker; Magisto; Anchor; BounceCast; or PodCastle

     vi.   Refer to the scorecard for judging criteria

d. **Social Communication Plan (100 points)**

Social communication planners will develop posts to accompany and promote their team's magazine story.

     i.   One-week social media schedule

     ii.   Three social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, or others) that match the intended audience

     iii.   At least seven posts total

     iv.   Submitted in .pdf format, including screenshots, links and/or embedded images of each created post. Can additionally include downloaded posts and videos.

     v.   Software suggested (but not limited to): Canva, Adobe Express, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, for example

     vi.   Refer to the scorecard for judging criteria

COMMUNICATION PLAN PRESENTATION (STATE FINALS ONLY)

Teams that qualify for state finals will be asked to present their communication plan as if pitching it to the client identified in the scenario the day of the event.

1. The presentation should follow the structure of the written communication plan. The goal of the presentation is to focus on WHY decisions were made in the plan to show true understanding of when, why, and how specific communication channels should be applied.
2. Teams are required to bring examples of materials that would be used in the execution of the plan (e.g., social media, broadcast advertising, print advertising, press releases, fliers, brochures, website, blogging, and displays).
3. Each team member must participate in the presentation.
4. Each team will be allowed 12 minutes to present their communication plan to a panel of judges, who will play the role of the client. Five points will be deducted for each 15 seconds over the 12 minutes allowed for the presentation.
5. Following the presentation, judges will be allowed five minutes to ask questions.
6. Teams will have a total of 10 minutes for setting up and tearing down equipment (e.g., five minutes to set up and five minutes to tear down).
7. In the case of equipment failure, the team may be asked to move forward with the presentation. A backup plan is strongly recommended.
8. Refer to the scorecard for judging criteria.

9. SCORING

There will be no debriefing. However, all scorecards are returned to the teams at the conclusion of the state convention.

    a. Pre-Qualifying Round Team Score Calculation
        i. Communication Quiz (25 points x 4) = 100 points
        ii. Editing Exercise (25 points x 4) = 100 points
        iii. Communication Plan Exercise = 25 points
            ● **Total Points Possible = 225 points**
    b. Finals Team Score Calculation Score (Based on scores ONLY from the finals)
        i. Communication Plan = 100 points
        ii. Feature Story = 100 points
        iii. Magazine Layout = 100 points
        iv. Social Media Plan = 100 points
        v. Broadcast = 100 points
        vi. Communication Plan Presentation = 200 points

      vii.   Communication Quiz (25 points x 4) = 100 points

      viii.   Editing Exercise (25 points x 4) = 100 points

- **Total Points Possible = 900 points**

c.   Final Individual Score Calculation Score (Based on scores ONLY from the finals)
      i.   Communication Quiz = 25 points
      ii.   Editing Exercise = 25 points

- **Total Individual Points Possible = 50 points**

10. TIEBREAKER

Pre-Qualifying Round Team Score Tiebreakers

a.   Team ties will be decided in the following order:
      i.   Communication Plan Exercise Score
      ii.   Combined Communication Quiz
      iii.   Combined Editing Exercise Score

Final Round Team Score Tiebreakers

b.   Team ties will be decided in the following order:
      i.   Communication Plan Score
      ii.   Communication Plan Presentation Score
      iii.   Combined Editing Exercise Score
      iv.   Combined Communication Quiz Score

c.   Individual ties will be decided in the following order:
      i.   Editing Exercise Score
      ii.   Communication Quiz Score
      iii.   Team Communication Plan Score
      iv.   Questions as determined by superintendent

11. RESOURCE MATERIALS

a.   Nebraska Agricultural Communications CDE - Find all practice exercises, example Communication Plans, and more at the following link: https://tinyurl.com/AgCommCDENE

b.   Agricultural Communication in the Classroom https://ffa.app.box.com/s/p0grr53pogn6lff1fuqffk96t2hi6o36/file/288007497829

c.   Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

d.   Associated Press (AP) Style https://go.unl.edu/owlapstyle https://www.apstylebook.com

    e. Format and edit according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) when citing sources https://go.unl.edu/owlapastyle

    f. Quick and Dirty Tips: Grammar (Grammar Girl) https://go.unl.edu/grammargirl

---

12. PAST EXAMS & EXAMPLES

    a. For past examples of communication plans, editing exercises, and communication quizzes, please click the links below
          1. National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE
          2. Nebraska FFA Agricultural Communications CDE

---

13. POST-CDE DEBRIEFING OPPORTUNITY

- There is no post-CDE debriefing offered.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Communication Plan Resources

- https://publicrelations.ucmerced.edu/writing-and-editing/communication-plan-101

Appendix 2. Feature Article Resources

A feature story is a news article that tells a story. Like a news article, it requires credible sources, a newsworthy topic and a timely element. However, a feature is written as a story that is consumed for the sake of the story, not to get the answer/resolution. A feature requires becoming familiar enough with the subject to identify and tell the story and angle, not just answer the who, what, when, where, why and how. It focuses more strongly on the "so what?"

- https://www.ragan.com/the-elements-of-a-strong-feature-story/
- https://www.nonprofitcopywriter.com/what-is-a-feature-article.html
- https://www.matrix.edu.au/how-to-write-a-amazing-feature-article/
- https://class-pr.com/blog/news-stories-vs-features/

Appendix 3. Magazine Design Layout Resources

As you will be designing this for FFA New Horizons magazine, please get familiar with the graphic style and format. Pay attention to fonts, image use, graphic devices, etc.

- https://www.ffa.org/news/
- https://www.calameo.com/read/005107524ea43d096e7ce

Don't copy their layouts, but feel free to use them for inspiration. Notice there are no ads to design around in FFA New Horizons. That allows for more creative options, but most magazines don't have that luxury.

Here are some general design guidelines:

- https://clearwaterpress.com/coverstory/resources/design/?srsltid=AfmBOop-d98Am1_I6o8TGwGxyL770ca2R3eFg1uhVWAn2wCIATmg3kbP

Appendix 4. Audio/Visual Editing Resources

You will create a video or other multimedia element as part of your communication plan. You may use any editing software you choose.

- https://www.visualstorytell.com/blog/how-to-tell-a-story-through-video
- https://libguides.umn.edu/podcasting101/home
- https://www.videostudiopro.com/en/tips/slideshows/

Appendix 5. Social Media Resources

- https://www.hootsuite.com/ >> Resources
- https://www.webfx.com/blog/social-media/social-media-101/
- https://online-journals.org/index.php/i-jim/article/view/10490

Appendix 6

Scorecards

Communications Plan Rubric

100 POINTS

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Overview	• Overview of communications package and created components is concise, precise, and clearly explained. • Created components are logical and relevant to the package.	• Overview of communications package and created components need clarification at times. • Created components are effective but need more relevance or thought.	• The overview of the communications package and created components is not clearly explained. • Created components are sometimes confusing or leave questions about their relevance.		x2	
Central Theme or Controlling Idea	• The central theme or controlling idea is clearly defined and is concise, precise, and clearly explained.	• The central theme or controlling idea is mostly defined but needs some clarification or additional details.	• The central theme or controlling idea is unclear, poorly defined, or confusing.		x2	
Main Question or Narrative Inquiry	• The main question or narrative inquiry is clearly posed and adequately guides the Communications Plan.	• The main question or narrative inquiry is only somewhat clear to guide the Communications Plan.	• The main question or narrative inquiry is missing or fails to guide the Communications Plan.		x2	
Call To Action	• The Communications Plan specifies a clear and appropriate intended call to action.	• The Communications Plan incudes a call to action, but it was not specific, clear, or appropriate.	• The Communications Plan does not specify a clear or appropriate intended call to action.		x2	
The following indicators reference the success of explaining the rationale and goal of the specific component, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of FFA New Horizons magazine						
Feature Story	• Rationale conveys the full intended message, calls to action and aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale mostly conveys the full intended message, some call to action and mostly aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale lacks a clear full intended message with little call to action and does not align to the publication's mission.		x3	
Magazine Layout	• Rationale conveys the full intended message, calls to action and aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale mostly conveys the full intended message, some call to action and mostly aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale lacks a clear full intended message is unclear with little call to action and does not align to the publication's mission.		x3	
Broadcast Production Piece	• Rationale conveys the full intended message, calls to action and aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale mostly conveys the full intended message, some call to action and mostly aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale lacks a clear full intended message is unclear with little call to action and does not align to the publication's mission.		x3	
Social Media Plan	• Rationale conveys the full intended message, calls to action and aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale mostly conveys the full intended message, some call to action and mostly aligns to the publication's mission.	• Rationale lacks a clear full intended message is unclear with little call to action and does not align to the publication's mission.		x3	
			TOTAL POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE			

Feature Story Practicum Scorecard

100 POINTS

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Lead/focus	• Lead is accurate, draws in audience, engaging, catchy, original	• Lead has 1 or 2 strong elements but fails in others, shows some signs of originality	• Misses point of story, buries lead, neither original or catchy, too long, inaccurate		x 3	
Accuracy of information and quotes	• Adequately uses multiple sources, ideas, and facts, tells complete story, information is properly attributed	• Minor inaccuracies or sources improperly used, info or opinion given without attribution, missing key sources, quotes used with weak connection	• Missing information, holes, no or weak quotes, unfounded opinions, inaccuracies		x 3	
Clarity and conciseness	• Focus of story is clear, makes use of effective words, descriptive, nothing detracts from focus of story, everything contributes to angle of story	• Clear writing with some poor word choice, passive voice, slightly wordy or confusing, lacks sense of unity, some areas detract from angle	• No clear angle, story rambles, is awkward, poor word choice, unclear statements, dull writing		X 2	
Correct style (AP)	• 0-2 errors in AP style, attributions done correctly	• 3-5 errors in AP style, 1 attribution error	• 6 or more errors in AP style, 2 or more attribution errors		X 2	
Depth of coverage	• Strong evidence of good research, adequately presents all sides, all in story are identified, info is accurate and thorough, overall fairness to subjects and sources, bias free	• Quotes are interesting and storytelling, presents sides mostly equal, quotes lead to question of bias, minor insertions of opinions	• Quotes are short, absent, or weak, ineffective use of quotes, displays unjustifiable bias, relies on stereotype, involves unwarranted opinion		X 2	
Header/ headline	• Headline is catchy, is positive and specific, contains strong, active verbs and short, simple words	• Headline is slightly mechanical, slightly longer or slightly shorter than needed, headline is slightly vague	• Headline is mechanical, too long or too short, has no connection to the story at all, left out or forgotten		X 2	
Grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice	• Largely error-free, well edited, no spelling errors, includes proper spelling of all names	• Minor errors but still readable, story is spell checked but contains several grammatical errors	• Errors interfere with comprehension, names are misspelled, spelling errors, contains many grammatical errors		X 2	
Organization and format	• Information flows seamlessly from one point to next, effective transitions, appropriate length of story, inverted pyramid order with information descending in order of importance	• Information generally well ordered with a few confusing jumps, weaker transitions, readable with inconsistent flow, somewhat abrupt or not using inverted pyramid fully	• Structure does not move logically from one point to another, no or poor transitions, choppy or confusing, not in inverted pyramid		X 2	
Accomplishment of purpose	• Story conveys the full intended message to audience, no doubt about any information	• Story has a few confusing parts but mostly leaves readers with a feeling of full information and understanding	• Creates confusion among readers, has information missing and is overall unclear		X 2	
			TOTAL POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE			

Social Media Plan Practicum Scorecard

100 POINTS

Chapter			State			Team Number

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Purpose and goals of plan	• Purpose of the social media plan is clearly described. Plan clearly describe why and how social media promotion is important to the team's story. • Objectives/goals for the plan are clearly stated.	• Purpose of the social media plan is somewhat clearly described. Plan is lacking some detail on why and how social media promotion is important to the team's story. • Objectives/goals for the plan are lacking in detail.	• Purpose of the social media plan is not clearly described. Plan does not provide detail on why and how social media promotion is important to the team's story. • No objectives/goals for the plan are provided.		x 3	
Clarity and conciseness	• Focus of social media plan and posts is clear yet concise and is easy to understand and implement • Plan explains social media platform justification and use well • Plan is focused and cohesive. • All elements of plan contribute to overall purpose and goals	• Focus of social media plan and posts is only somewhat clear and lacks some clarity in places. Some areas are unclear or wordy. • Justification and use of social media platforms lacks some detail or clarity • Plan lacks sense of unity throughout • Some elements of plan detract from overall purpose and goals	• No clear focus for social media plan and posts. A lack of clarity and detail is provided. • Plan is too wordy or drawn out and lacks clarity. • No justification for use of social media platforms is provided. • Plan has no unity. • Elements of plan do not fit overall purpose and goals		x 3	
Scope of plan	• Social media plan encompasses one full week's worth of content. • Plan involves at least 3 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, SnapChat, etc.)	• Social media plan is written for one week's worth of content, but lacks an adequately complete plan for the week • Plan involves only 2 social media platforms	• Social media plan lacks content to fill one week of posting • Plan involves only 1 social media platform		X 3	
Posts contained within plan	• Social media plan contains 7 or more posts • All posts are relevant and promote/accompany team's story very well • Posts contain clear and specific message to promote/accompany team's story • Posts are concrete, creative and well thought out	• Social media plan contains 4-6 posts • One or more posts lack relevance and/or do not promote/accompany team's story well • Message(s) within posts are somewhat unclear and vague • Posts lack some creativity and thought and are a bit abstract	• Social media plan contains 3 or fewer posts • Posts provided are not related to team's story • Message(s) within posts are unclear and vague • Posts are not creative and lack thoughtfulness		X 3	
Timeline for plan	• Social media plan contains a clear timeline for use and for posting content online • Timeline is well-formatted and is easy to view • Timeline is logical and promotes proper use of social media platforms proposed	• Timeline is somewhat unclear or incomplete • Timeline lacks some formatting or is a somewhat confusing for viewers • Timeline is mostly logical but lacks some understanding of social media platforms proposed	• No timeline for plan is provided • Timeline does not reflect plan presented		X 2	
Grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice	• Largely error-free, plan and posts are well edited, no spelling errors, include proper spelling of all names	• Minor errors but still readable, plan and posts are spell checked but contains several grammatical errors	• Errors interfere with comprehension of plan/posts, names are misspelled, many spelling errors, contains many grammatical errors		X 3	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Organization and format	• Social media plan is well organized. • Plan flows seamlessly and makes use of effective transitions and heading/subheadings • Plan is formatted well for ease of use	• Social media plan is mostly organized. • Plan lacks some transitions and heading/subheadings • Plan is only somewhat well formatted •	• Social media plan is not organized. • No transitions or heading/subheadings are used • Plan if difficult to read or use		X 3	
		TOTAL POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE				

Magazine Layout Design Practicum Scorecard

100 POINTS

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Overall attractiveness of layout	• Layout is very aesthetically pleasing, nice to look at, and captures attention • Appropriate and attractive use of color, images, and fonts throughout • All content on layout is easy to read and consume • Consistent feel throughout all layout pages with consistent use of color, fonts, and font size • All pages have good flow and are easy to skim	• Layout look is average, but does not capture viewer attention • Most colors, images, and fonts are appropriate • Some content on layout is not easy to read or consume • Some consistency throughout layout pages, color or fonts, but not as cohesive as it could be • Layout pages have some flow, but one or more elements are out place • Not all pages are easily skimmable	• Layout does not draw viewer attention and is not pleasing to look at • Inappropriate use of color, images, and fonts – makes the layout difficult to view • Content on layout is not easy to read and consume • No consistency throughout Layout pages, color, or fonts • Pages have little or no flow and no pages are easy to skim		X 4	
Technical skills specific to activity	• Layout effectively utilizes a full 2-page spread • Layout has an appropriate and relevant title • Layout is appropriate and relevant for topic and story	• Layout does not effectively use full 2-page spread • Layout has a title, but it lacks appropriateness or relevancy to story content • Layout is only loosely tied to topic and story	• Layout contains utilizes only 1 page • Layout does not have a title • Layout does not fit with topic and story		X 4	
Use of design principles Appropriateness Consistency Focus & Flow Balance	• All elements match the purpose and audience. Fonts, graphics, and layout are "appropriate" for the purpose & audience. All elements have good contrast which make them easy to view and read. • Colors, fonts, graphics, and photos are used effectively throughout the layout and unify all pages of the spread. • Layout has a center of focus and leads the reader's eye across the spread. Layout encourages the reader to read the ENTIRE story. • All elements in layout create a balanced spread. All elements have good proximity with appropriate spacing between items.	• One or more elements does not match the purpose and audience. Fonts, graphics, and layout do not fit the purpose and audience. Some elements have poor contrast which make them difficult to view and read. • One or more colors, fonts, graphics, and/or photos are used ineffectively throughout the layout and break the unity of the spread. • Layout lacks a strong center of focus and fails to fully lead reader's eyes across the spread. • One or more elements in layout has poor balance in the spread. Some elements have poor proximity with inappropriate spacing between items.	• Many elements do not match the purpose and audience. Fonts, graphics, and layout poorly fit purpose and audience. Most elements have poor contrast which make them difficult to view and read. • Most colors, fonts, graphics, and/or photos are used ineffectively throughout the layout and break the unity of the spread. • Layout has no center of focus and fails to lead reader's eyes across the spread. • Elements in layout are poorly balanced. Elements are poorly placed.		X 4	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Neatness and creativity	• Layout is well-organized • Layout displays creative or unique design and layout • Layout creatively portrays elements of topic and story • No GSP errors found in layout text	• Layout is somewhat organized but could be improved to aid in viewing • Layout design is average (lacking creativity) • Minor GSP errors found in layout text	• Layout is disorganized and needs to be restructured • Layout design is poor • Major GSP errors found in layout text		X 4	
Choice and placement of photo(s) and graphic(s)	• Appropriate and relevant images, graphics, and photos were used • Placement of images enhances look of layout • Images help to promote the topic and help tell an appropriate story	• One or more images, graphics, and photos used are not relevant or appropriate • Placement of one or more images distracts from look of layout • One or more images do not help to promote the topic or do not relate to story being told	• No images, graphics, and photos used are relevant or appropriate • Placement of images is poor and distracts from look of layout • Images do not promote the topic or distract from story being told		X 4	
			TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF A 100 POSSIBLE			

Broadcast Production Practicum Promotional Video Scorecard

100 POINTS

Chapter			State		Team Number	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Use of provided materials	• Photos, video, & audio add clarity and support overall message in the broadcast piece. • Incorporated numerous elements/visuals. • Content was not repetitive, no recognized use of repeated elements.	• Photos, video, & audio add some clarity and support to overall message in the broadcast piece. • Incorporated adequate number of elements/visuals. • Content was not repetitive, no recognized use of repeated elements.	• Photos, video, & audio add little to no clarity and support to overall message in the broadcast piece. • Failed to incorporate elements/visuals. • Repeated use of elements.		X 3	
Editing/ continuity quality	• Editing enhances final product, clear grasp of techniques and tools. • Broadcast piece moves smoothly (no erratic movements/ transitions). • Excellent placing and timing. • No spelling or grammatical errors. • Digital effects are used appropriately for emphasis.	• Basic usage of editing tools is evident. Techniques are clear and simple. • A variety of transitions are used. Most fit broadcast piece well. • Broadcast piece mostly moves at a steady pace, feels smooth. • One (1) spelling and/or grammatical error. • Digital effects are used appropriately for emphasis, some minor errors in timing or application.	• Excessive use of transitions • Seemed to have difficulty with editing tools. • No transitions or inappropriate transitions. • Timing is clumsy and choppy. • Multiple spelling and/or grammatical errors. • Digital effects/graphics are not used appropriately. • Excessive use of transitions		X 3	
Audio editing/ continuity quality	• Audio is clear and effectively assists in communicating the main idea. • No jumpy audio edits • Audio is balanced.	• Audio is clear; partially assists in communicating main idea. • One to two jumpy edits • Audio generally balanced.	• Audio is inconsistent/cutoff; confuses audience. • Audio is overpowering, unbalanced.		X 3	
Length	• Final broadcast piece play time was at or within the length requirement.	• Final broadcast piece play time was 10-15 seconds above or below the length requirement.	• Final broadcast piece play time was 15+ seconds above or below the length requirement.		X 1	
Promotional value	• Broadcast piece articulates a clear message and theme. • Broadcast piece actively promotes the topic, FFA New Horizons magazine or story team created.	• Broadcast piece struggles to present a clear message. • Broadcast piece passively promotes the topic, FFA New Horizons magazine or story team created.	• Broadcast piece lacks a central message. • Broadcast piece doesn't clearly promote the topic, FFA New Horizons magazine or story team created.		X 4	
Clear, Creative Storytelling	• Clear and logical story is told by broadcast piece. • Creative and compelling narrative. Evokes interest in the topic. • Supporting information/elements contribute to the narrative and overall appeal. • Content was used in appropriate places and presented in a logical order.	• Mostly clear and logical story is told by broadcast piece. • Some creative elements were used. Dull narrative. • Broadcast piece theme is vague, and some supporting elements seem disconnected. • Doesn't evoke interest in topic.	• Unclear or disorganized story told by broadcast piece. • Lacks creativity and a compelling narrative. • Lacks a clear theme and logical sequence of information. • Creates lack of interest in topic or negative perception.		X 6	

Communications Plan PRESENTATION Scorecard

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present (5-4 points)	Moderate evidence of skill is present (3-2 points)	Strong evidence of skill is not present (1-0 points)	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Examples	Examples are vivid, precise and clearly explained. Examples are original, logical and relevant.	Examples are usually concrete, sometimes need clarification. Examples are effective but need more originality or thought.	Examples are abstract or not clearly defined. Examples are sometimes confusing, leaving the listeners with questions.		X3	
Confidence in speaking	Speaks very articulately. Never has the need for Unnecessary pauses or Hesitation when speaking. Speaks at the right pace to be clear. Pronunciation of words is very clear and intent is apparent.	Sometimes speaks articulately. Occasionally has the need for a long pause or moderate hesitation when speaking. Speaks at the right pace most of the time, but shows some nervousness. Pronunciation of words is usually clear, sometimes vague.	Rarely articulate. Frequently hesitates or has long, awkward pauses while speaking. Pace is too fast; nervous. Pronunciation of words is difficult to understand; unclear.		X3	
Being detail-oriented; provide details	Is able to stay fully detail-oriented. Always provides details which support the issue to communicate the key concepts of the plan; is well organized.	Is mostly good at being detail-oriented. Usually provides details which are supportive of the issue, communicate the plan; displays good organizational skills.	Has difficulty being detail-oriented. Sometimes overlooks details that could be very beneficial to the issue; Not enough detail provided lacks organization.		X2	
Speaking unrehearsed and natural	Speaks unrehearsed with comfort and ease. Speaks effectively without losing focus and with organized thoughts and concise answers.	Speaks unrehearsed mostly with comfort and ease, but sometimes seems nervous or unsure. Speaks effectively, has to stop and think and sometimes gets off focus.	Shows nervousness or seems unprepared when speaking unrehearsed. Seems to ramble or speaks before thinking.		X3	
All team members participated	All team members took an active role in the presentation.	Two to three team members took an active role in the presentation.	One team member took an active role in the presentation.		X1	
Use of visual aids	Visual aids add clarity and support what is being said during the presentation.	Visual aids add some clarity and support to what is being said during the presentation.	Visual aids add little to no clarity and support to what is being said during the presentation.		X3	
Communication Plan	Key elements of the Communication Plan are clearly	Key elements of the Communication Plan are	Key elements of the Communication Plan		X3	

	communicated. Strong understanding of chosen media is present.	vaguely communicated. Vague understanding of chosen media is present.	are not communicated. Little to no understanding of chosen media is present.		
Questions and answers	Correctly respond to judges' questions. Answers show familiarity with subject matter.	Is somewhat able to correctly respond to judges' questions. Answers show vague familiarity with subject matter.	Is unable to correctly respond to judges' questions. Answers do not reflect any familiarity with subject matter.	X2	
Total (200 possible points)					