Gold Merit Award Program Guidelines

The following summary of standards are in effect for the Gold-Level Merit Award Program.

1. Gold Merit Awards Program students ARE allowed to also compete in a roleplay event that competes on Friday at the State Conference.
2. Only students completing all three levels will compete at the State Conference. Students completing only in the bronze and/or silver levels need to have their names and occupational areas submitted online by the deadline to receive a certificate of participation and will not compete at the State Conference.
3. **Each chapter may register 8 students for competition in Gold Merit Awards at the State Conference.**
4. The Chapter Advisor should review the work of the students and only submit Prepared Events that are a positive reflection on their chapter and their school.
5. All students competing at the State Conference in Gold Merit Awards Program MUST be included in the chapter's submitted conference registration before you can upload projects.
6. Gold Merit Award entries will need to be uploaded to the competition portal by the chapter advisor during the window of February 9-15, 2027. **The upload will need to be in one file that includes only Gold level activities**. Complete instructions on how to upload projects will be provided in January.
7. A hard copy of the **Bronze, Silver, and Gold level activities** must be submitted in a DECA binder or a plain white or plain blue binder where the spine does not exceed 1 inch. **The hard copy of the original project must be mailed to the Michigan DECA office to be received by February 25, 2027 (note this date is later than the upload deadline)**. We strongly recommend shipping with a service that offers tracking of packages. Late arrivals will not be judged, so be sure that it arrives by February 25, 2027. We do not receive shipments on the weekends, even if you have paid extra for the service.
8. The **DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form** *(page 61 of the national DECA Guide and on the Michigan DECA website*) which certifies the originality of the work, must be signed by the advisor and the student before the event is submitted. The DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form must be the first page of the entry. The signature(s) must be either physical signatures or digital signatures. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.
9. **Page order:**
   All activities must be in the order indicated on each level's MAP Progress Forms.
   A separate Table of Contents should not be submitted.
   - The first page is the signed DECA Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form.
   - The second page is the title page.
   - Next is the tab for the Bronze Section which includes:
     - The completed Bronze Level MAP Progress Form
     - The completed Bronze level activities
   - Next is the tab for the Silver Section which includes:
     - The completed Silver Level MAP Progress Form
     - The completed Silver level activities
   - Next is the tab for the Gold Section which includes:
     - The completed Gold Level MAP Progress Form
     - The completed Gold level activities

10. Each activity must be cited appropriately by footnote(s) at the end of each activity. Students should use the formatting style recommended by their school, i.e., MLA and APA.

11. Tabs must be used for the different levels, (Bronze, Silver & Gold). Tabs should not be used for the different areas.

12. Sheet protectors may not be used.

13. All 22 activities submitted must be typed. The majority of the work must be typed in 12-point font. We recommend for the major content of the prepared project to be double-spaced.

14. Headings of each activity must consist of and be in the following order:
    1. Award Level (Bronze, Silver, Gold)
    2. Instructional Area *(Economic Understanding, Human Relations, Marketing, Promotion, Product & Service Knowledge)*
    3. Activity Title
    4. Member's Name
    5. Completion Date

15. All activities must be documented by: (activity cover/title pages should not be used):
    - Bronze level - include a total of 10 activities, 2 pages average = minimum length of 20 pages.
    - Silver level - include a total of 7 activities, 3 pages average = minimum length of 21 pages.
    - Gold level - include a total of 5 activities, 4 pages average = minimum length of 20 pages.

16. Examples of Original Work consist of the participant's drawings, photos of the participant's work or student generated computer illustrations. Photos of products, business maps, internet downloads, etc., may be included but are not calculated in the minimum page count.

17. Pages must have at least 2/3 page of text to count as a page. If the participant is making a PowerPoint presentation, the pages must be printed as a handout with a minimum of 3 slides per page. Please note that 6 slides on a page does not count as two pages. Hands-on projects must have at least a one-page narrative to support the photos of the hands on-work.

18. All pages are numbered beginning with the first activity in the Bronze section, starting at page 1 and match the Progress Reporting Form. Page numbers may start over for each section. All activities in each section must be consecutively numbered.

19. A team of volunteer advisors will review the projects online to access penalty points prior to the conference.

20. Projects with **35 or more** penalty points will not be allowed to advance to the next level of competition. Those projects will be returned, and the student **will not** be allowed to attend the State Conference as a Gold Merit Award Participant. The registration fee will be refunded at the 50% refund rate.

21. Michigan DECA staff will upload all entries to TurnItIn.com to be screened for plagiarism. The entries will be screened by Michigan DECA staff by the end of February. Evidence of plagiarism or cheating shall result in the student being disqualified from competition. No refunds will be given for disqualified dropped students.

State Conference Presentation Guidelines:

22. Participants will give a 10-minute presentation at the State Career Development Conference, which should cover the five gold level projects. The presentation will be followed by a 5-minute question and answer period.

23. The presentation begins immediately after the introduction of the participants to the judge by the adult assistant.

24. Each participant may bring a copy of the project or note cards pertaining to the project and use them as reference during the presentation.

25. Only visual aids that can be easily hand carried to the presentation by the actual participant will be permitted. The participant must set up the visuals without assistance. Wheeled carts, moving straps or similar items may not be used to bring visuals into the area. Set up time is included in the total presentation time. Participants must furnish their own materials and equipment. No electrical power or internet connection will be supplied. Alternate power sources such as small generators are not allowed. Sound may be used, if the volume is kept at a conversational level.

26. Materials appropriate to the situation may be handed to or left with judges. Items of monetary value may be handed to, but may not be left with judges. Items such as flyers, brochures, pamphlets, and business cards may be handed to or left with the judge.

27. No food or drinks are allowed.

28. Video may be shown during the presentation but are **not** to be included with the project when it is uploaded for competition.

29. Participants are not able to use internet for their Prepared Event presentations. Anything that participants might want to reference during the presentation must be saved directly onto the computer.

30. Special consideration during the evaluation will be given for special needs students who are unable to complete the above guidelines. Such a request needs to be communicated by the chapter advisor to the Michigan DECA Director of Competitive Events.

31. Awards will be given to the outstanding projects and will be evaluated using the Outstanding Gold Project Evaluation form, which can be found on Michigan DECA's website at www.mideca.org

32. **Projects must have at least 75 points after any penalty points have been deducted to advance on to the International Conference.**

International Conference Screening and Competition:

For Gold Level Projects competing at the International Career Development Conference, all items on the previous three pages for the State Conference apply, plus these additional points listed below:

1. If a Gold Merit Award Program delegate is elected as an incoming State Officer at the State Conference, they will **NOT** be allowed to compete in the Gold Merit Award Program at the International Conference.
2. If a Gold Merit Award Program delegate qualifies to attend the International Conference in another competitive event, they will **NOT** be allowed to compete in Gold Merit Award Program; the International DECA event has priority.
3. Projects will NOT be uploaded for competition for the International Conference. *See #4 below.*
4. **Two copies of ONLY the five gold level activities are to be turned in at the specified time and location at the International Conference.** Each copy needs to be in a separate DECA Prepared Event folio, not a binder.
5. Any project that received penalty points at the State Conference needs to be corrected prior to being submitted at the International Conference.
6. The project may be re-examined for penalty points at the International Conference, so please correct any penalty points that were awarded during the State Conference.
7. Two advisors will evaluate each project.
8. Participants will give a 10-minute presentation at the International Career Development Conference. The presentation should cover the five gold level projects. The presentation will be followed by a 5-minute question/answer period.
9. Participants must follow the International Conference Dress Code. This includes wearing a DECA blazer when being judged.
10. The top participants will be recognized as an outstanding project at Michigan DECA's State Recognition Session at the International Career Development Conference.
11. The decision of the judges is final. Students and advisors are not to ask judges for justification of their scores.