Prepared Event Submission Guidelines

The following requirements are in effect for <u>all Prepared Events</u> submitted to Michigan DECA for the State Conference only. These requirements are in addition to the guidelines set by National DECA.

1. All students competing at the State Conference MUST be included in the chapter's submitted conference registration before you can upload projects.
2. Advisors are responsible to ensure that the prepared projects are submitted under the correct event and that team members paired correctly. If Michigan DECA discovers that an event has been submitted incorrectly (for example, a BOR project submitted as BMOR), a $25 fee per project will be accessed. **Michigan DECA is not responsible if the incorrect prepared event is uploaded to be screened and evaluated.**
3. All entries *(except Chapter Award Program)* must be digitally uploaded during the window of February 9-15, 2027, through the online competition submission portal. Complete instructions on how to upload projects will be provided in January.
4. The **DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form** *(on page 61 of the national DECA Guide)*, which certifies the originality of the work, must be signed by the advisor and each student listed on the event before the event is submitted. The DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form must be the first page of each entry. Only those students who signed the DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form and have been included on the chapter's registration will be allowed to compete in the event. The signature(s) must be either physical signatures or digital signatures. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.
5. **All content must be original work of the student member(s) who signed the DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form. No part of the prepared project can be previously entered into competition or submitted in another DECA competitive event.** Michigan DECA staff will upload all entries to TurnItIn.com to be screened for plagiarism. Any events that are found to be plagiarized or previously submitted into competition will be disqualified. All student members listed on the project will be dropped from the conference, and are not eligible for a refund of the conference registration fee.
6. Entries must be in the following order: completed and signed DECA Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form, Cover Page, then the actual event following the guidelines set by DECA. (Do not include any evaluation forms.)
7. Chapter Advisors should review the work of the student members and only submit Prepared Events that are a positive reflection on their chapter and their school.
8. We strongly recommend that these projects have a minimum number of pages of at least half of the maximum pages allowed.
9. If a project needs to be re-uploaded after the submission deadline (i.e., missing any required documentation or pages as is specified in the event guidelines), the project will be assessed **20 penalty points**.
10. Prepared Event Screening will take place in-person at EMU on Saturday, February 27, 2027, to review projects and access penalty points prior to the conference. Chapters that have more than 2 prepared projects are to assist on this day, or pay a $50 fee.
11. Any project that receives **25 or more penalty points** will not be eligible to compete or attend the State Conference. The registration fee will be refunded at the 50% refund rate. Merit Award Projects and Chapter Award Projects that receive 35 or more penalty points will not be eligible to compete or attend the State Conference.
12. 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.

Prepared Event Submission Guidelines

In addition to the guidelines on page 61, the following additional guidelines apply:

For the Following Prepared (Written Paper) Events:

Each of the Prepared Events listed below must be uploaded using the Competition Portal during the window of February 9-15, 2027. **No hardcopy will be turned in for these events:**

- Business Growth Plan (EBG)
- Business Services Operations Research (BOR)
- Business Solutions Project (PMBS)
- Buying and Merchandising Operations Research (BMOR)
- Career Development Project (PMCD)
- Community Awareness Project (PMCA)
- Community Giving Project (PMCG)
- Finance Operations Research (FOR)
- Financial Literacy Project (PMFL)
- Franchise Business Plan (EFB)
- Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research (HTOR)
- Independent Business Plan (EIB)
- International Business Plan (IBP)
- Sales Project (PMSP)
- Sports and Entertainment Marketing Operations Research (SEOR)

  - Michigan DECA will share the uploaded entry file with a judge who has volunteered to evaluate the written portion of the project online prior to the State Conference.
  - A different judge will be recruited to evaluate the presentation portion of the project at the State Conference.
  - The written score and presentation score will be added together to determine the State Champion for each section.

For the Following Prepared (Pitch Deck) Events:

The five pitch deck events will compete at the District Conference in order to qualify for State Conference competition. The pitch deck must be uploaded one week prior to the District Conference date.

If the pitch deck event has qualified for the State Conference at the District Conference competition, it must be re-uploaded using the Competition Portal during the window of February 9-15, 2027. *Pitch decks may be edited/updated between competitions.* **No hardcopy will be turned in for these events.**

- Innovation Plan (EIP)
- Integrated Marketing Campaign Event (IMCE)
- Integrated Marketing Campaign Product (IMCP)
- Integrated Marketing Campaign Service (IMCS)
- Start–Up Business Plan (ESB)

  - One judge will be recruited to evaluate both the presentation and the pitch deck together on one rubric at the State Conference.

Prepared Event Competition at the DECA International Conference:

The following applies to ALL Prepared Events except for Chapter Award Program and Merit Awards Program. Refer to the event's guidelines for competition information at ICDC.

1. Any project that receives penalty points at the State Conference must be corrected prior to being submitted at the International Conference.

2. All international competitive events with a prepared project component will require that the prepared project be submitted online prior to the DECA International Career Development Conference. The window for submission through the national DECA online judging portal is March 23-30, 2027.

3. Preliminary presentations for International Prepared Events without an exam component will present to the judge on Sunday. The prepared project will be evaluated prior to ICDC. Finalists will be announced Tuesday morning.

4. Penalty Points will be accessed for Prepared Events at the International Conference to only the finalists' projects after the preliminary presentations, to determine the event finalists. Not every project will be accessed for penalty points.

Penalty Point Guidance

The Penalty Point Checklist is used to access penalty points for all Prepared Events *(except Chapter Awards and Merit Awards Programs, as they have their own specific Penalty Point Checklists).*

Explain to your student members that the primary purpose of the Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity Form, is to ensure that the highest ethical standards are maintained by the competitors. Make sure your student members understand that they agree that the contents of the prepared entry are the results of **their own work** and that credit has been appropriately cited.

Michigan DECA has clarified and expanded on national DECA's Penalty Point Checklist. Michigan DECA's Penalty Point Checklist will be used during Michigan's Prepared Event Screening which will take place before the State Conference. Each numbered item below corresponds to an item on the Penalty Point Checklist and includes frequently asked questions below each item.

1. **The DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity must be signed by all participants and the chapter advisor and placed in front of the prepared project. The signature(s) must be either physical signatures or digital signatures. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.**

   Michigan DECA is not responsible if the incorrect prepared event is uploaded to be screened and evaluated.

   - If only the chapter advisor signature is missing, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If one or more team members' signature is missing, are penalty points accessed? NO - *however, the student with the missing signature cannot participate in the presentation and will be dropped from the conference.*
   - If a student's name is missing on the form or not registered for the project, are penalty points accessed? NO - *however, if a name is missing from the DECA Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form, the student CANNOT participate in the presentation and will be dropped from the conference.*
   - If the wrong event name is listed on the form, are penalty points accessed? YES

2. **Limited to the number of pages specified in the guidelines (plus the title page and the table of contents). *This includes the appendix.***

   - Are 5 penalty points accessed for every page over the limit? YES
   - Do the Written Statement of Assurances, title page, and table of contents count in the total number of pages? NO

3. **All pages are numbered in sequence starting with the executive summary and ending with the final page of the appendix. Do not use separate sheets between sections or as title pages for sections.**

   - If the title page and table of contents are numbered, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If a graphic covers a page number, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If a page is used only as a title page for a section, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If page numbers are taped on, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If page numbers are handwritten, are penalty points accessed? YES

4. **The prepared project follows the outline in the guidelines for the event. Additional subsections are permitted in the body of the prepared project.** ***The Roman Numeral Section Headings and subsection headings MUST be in the body of the prepared project. The roman numeral section headings must be listed in the table of contents with the correct page numbers.***
   Note: The maximum penalty for this area is 5 points, even if there is more than one error. All errors will be noted.
   - Must the entry include a title page and table of contents? YES
   - Are the title page and table of contents penalty pointed for formatting? NO
   - Is the title page missing any required information? YES
   - Is the date missing any component? YES - correct format needs to include Month Date, Year. Note: *It is recommended that the date used for the entry is the date of the submission. No penalty points are assessed if a different date is listed, as long as it is during the current school year.*
   - Do page numbers on the table of contents have to match the body of the project? YES
   - Do main sections have to have page numbers on the table of contents? YES - *Main Sections are the sections in the event guidelines that have Roman numerals and are in UPPERCASE letters.*
   - Do Roman numerals have to be utilized? NO
   - Does each main section have to be addressed? YES - in the body of the project.
   - Are sections penalty pointed if this year's event guidelines are not followed? YES
   - Are sections penalty pointed if not properly sequenced? YES
   - Must each main section be titled exactly? NO - *wording may be adjusted. For example, section 4 in the event guidelines states: "Identification of the Target Market"; the section could be labeled "Target Market".*
   - Do subsections have to be in the paper? YES – *unless the guidelines state that the subsection is optional.*
   - Can additional subsections be added to content? YES - *Refer to the sample on page 66 of the Michigan DECA Guide for page number formatting.*
   - Do subsections have to be on the table of contents? NO
   - Do subsections have to have page numbers on the table of contents? NO - *however, if page numbers are included on the table of contents, and are not correct, penalty points will be accessed.*
   - Is a Bibliography required? YES
   - Is an Appendix required? NO

5. **Entry must be typed and use a page size of 8½ inches x 11 inches. Handwritten corrections, notes, charts, and graphs will be penalized.**
   Note: Written content is no longer required to be doubled spaced; single spaced is optional.
   - If there are any handwritten marks or notes from previous reviews, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If there are any handwritten charts or graphs, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If something extends past the 8½ inches x 11 inches, are penalty points accessed? YES
   - If colored paper, card stock, graphics or water marks used, are penalty points accessed? NO

All penalty points accessed during Prepared Event Screening will be approved by one of the Prepared Event Directors. The Director will confirm the total number of penalty points assessed.

All penalty points must be corrected before submitting the prepared project for competition at the International Conference.

Sample Prepared Event Formatting

Be sure to consult the specific event guidelines for the correct section headings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page Number
I.	**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**	1
II.	**INTRODUCTION**	2
	A. Description of business or organization	
	B. Description of the community	
III.	**RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY**	7
	A. Steps taken to design the study and the instrument	
	B. Steps taken to conduct the study	
IV.	**PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN**	9
	A. Geographic, demographic, and psychographic description of affected populations	
	B. Goals/objectives and rationale	
	C. Proposed activities and timeline	
	D. Proposed Budget	
V.	**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**	20
	A. Benefits to affected populations	
	B. Short- and long-term benefits to the business	
	C. Strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the strategic plan	
	D. Conclusions based on the findings	
VI.	**BIBLIOGRAPHY**	26
VII.	**APPENDIX**	27

Commonly accessed penalty points:

Main sections as stated in the event's guidelines must be in the table of contents AND the body of the project with the correct page numbers.

Subsections must be in the body of the prepared event <u>UNLESS</u> the event's guidelines state that they are optional. Subsections are optional in the table of contents.

Page numbers for the main sections must be included with the correct page number.

Page numbers for subsections are not required on the table of contents, BUT if you choose to add page numbers for subsections, they must be correct, or you will be accessed penalty points.

SAMPLE

Sample Prepared Event Formatting

Update for 2027:

All Prepared Events (both written paper and pitch deck events) require a bibliography in the correct format, or penalty points will be accessed.

- **Follow either APA or MLA format.**
- **Any website links may not stand alone; they must include full information.**
- **All use of AI must be cited**
- **Be sure to consult your specific event guidelines**

Tip: use citationmachine.net to help with formatting

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Pfeiffer, C., & Tanner, K. (2026, June 15). ITC's Krista Tanner on building Michigan's grid for growth. Crain's Detroit Business. Interview. Retrieved December 12, 2026.

Woloszyk, C. A., & Farese, L. (2002). Marketing Essentials. school-to-work teacher manual. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.

Engel, J. F., Warshaw, M. R., & Kinnear, T. (1989). Promotional strategy: Managing the marketing communication process. Richard D. Irwin.

Ennis, S., Risso, M., Sansone, M., & Scafarto, F. (2021). Retail marketing. McGraw-Hill Education.

Durbin, D.-A., & Chea, T. (2026, July 31). Associated Press. https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/best-of-the-week/second-winner/2026/ap-and-local-news-partners-deliver

Aery, S. (2023). Assessing Potential Industry Growth for Economic Development in Oakland County. https://doi.org/10.15368/theses.2010.197

DeGrasso v Smith (micourt.courts.michigan.gov/ February 5, 2020).

Enova International, Inc. (2026, July 31). Press Release: Small Businesses Lean Into Growth and AI. Retrieved January 1, 2027, from https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-report-small-businesses-lean-into-growth-and-ai-302839588.html.

OpenAI. (2026, November 21). Business Finance Concepts [Generative AI chat]. ChatGPT (GPT-4o). https://chat.openai.com/share/dccb36wdlep1--b06fmgms67a/k982a.

SAMPLE