

## State Officer Candidate Study Guide

### **Competencies:**

What does it take to perform this job effectively? The National FFA has identified five competencies required for fulfilling the job description of a state officer.

Competency — a defined behavior, in combination with skills and knowledge, that enables evaluation of the candidates.

The following is a listing of the essential competencies required for serving as a state officer. The officer selection process is designed to screen candidates to find those who demonstrate these competencies consistently. It is expected that officers continue to demonstrate these and also work to develop and refine their skill set in each area throughout their year of service. The competencies are listed in no particular order.

#### Competency #1 — Communication

Demonstrate the effective use of various forms of communication, i.e., nonverbal, listening, written, speaking and facilitation to convey a message in both large group and one-on-one settings.

#### Competency #2 — Team Player

Demonstrate the ability to work in a team setting, values diversity of opinion, works to be inclusive in the process and is willing to put others above self.

#### Competency #3 — Areas of Knowledge

Demonstrate the ability to articulate the systemic nature of food, fiber, agricultural and natural resource issues, FFA, educational issues and all respective current issues.

#### Competency #4 — Character

Display a disposition that is genuine, responsible, honest, mature, confident, respectful and has a positive outlook on life.

#### Competency #5 — Influence

Demonstrate the ability to influence others through modeling expectations, building relationships and growing the organization.

## Schedule for the personal interviews

### **Friday:**

#### **Personal Round 1:**

In this six-minute one-on-one format interview, candidates should capitalize on this time by making their first impression a lasting one. Candidates can expect to answer three or four behavioral-based interview questions posed by the nominating committee and to expound on their goals, motivations and/or desire to be a state officer. Candidates should be able to share who they are and why they are here as a result of this round.

Practice questions: (Please note these questions will not be the exact questions used in personal round 1, **BUT**, they are a great tool to practice the type of questions being asked).

1. What is your philosophy on service?
2. Do you feel you deserve to be a state officer?
3. How has your self-confidence allowed you to advance the FFA mission within yourself and within others?
4. What motivates you to stick to your beliefs?
5. What do you feel is the value of service?
6. Why should agriculture science students become FFA members?
7. Tell us about a time you questioned your self-confidence?
8. When someone meets you for the first time and asks about your FFA Jacket and its meaning, what would you tell them?
9. What is the biggest risk you have ever made?
10. Tell us about a service project that you were required to do?
11. Tell us about a time you helped a team overcome a problem that was causing hurt feeling among team members?
12. What is one thing from your resume or application that you feel exemplifies your ability to serve as a State FFA Officer?
13. Tell us about a project outside of FFA that has fueled your passion for serving others?
14. How have you challenged yourself over the course of the past six months?
15. What is one characteristic that you feel every team member should display?

**Written test:**

The written test will be composed of fill in the blank and short answer. This test will be a pen and paper test. Come prepared with a writing utensil. The written test's purpose is to evaluate the candidate's FFA Knowledge. **THE FFA MANUEL AND FFA.ORG ARE GREAT TOOLS! USE THEM TO FIND YOUR INFORMATION.** Each of the tests will be reviewed on site by independent adult judges. All writing exercise scores will be given to the nominating committee to be used as evidence during deliberations.

Below are the areas to be aware of and study:

- FFA Facts (important dates, mission, motto, National Alumni, creed, history of the jacket, etc.)
- Opening Ceremonies (have them memorized)
- Important acronyms to know:  
NAAE, AFNR, CASE, FFA, MDA, MATA, MAEF, CDE, LED, SAE, SNAP, ACTE, USDA, AAAE
- What is National FFA's stance on diversity and inclusion?
- What is a living to serve grant?
- What is the Smith-Hughes act?
- What is Perkin's funding?
- How are agriculture education programs preparing students for careers in the agriculture industry?

**Saturday:**

**Facilitation:**

The purpose of this round is to evaluate the candidate's ability to work as a team in planning and facilitating a 10-minute portion of a student workshop in front of the nominating committee. Candidates will be given an overall objective for a workshop. The candidates will then develop and deliver a 10-minute portion of that workshop. Candidates should include an experience and opportunity to process the experience. It will be the candidate's responsibility to use the materials provided for them to plan, craft and implement appropriate methods for engaging the audience and addressing the key points.

This round will be 30 minutes in length: Candidates will have 20 minutes to prepare and 10 minutes to facilitate. During their 20 minutes of preparation time, candidates can expect to be provided with all the materials they will need, along with a sheet of instructions outlining the specific objective for the workshop. Candidates will have a room to conduct their planning. Following preparation, candidates will move to the interview room where they will have 10 minutes to facilitate to the available audience. No music shall be played during this 10-minute round. Tear sheets that are created in the preparation room may be taken into the interview room. No outside materials may be taken into the preparation or the interview room.

Examples of facilitation scenarios:

Example #1-You have been asked to facilitate a workshop for a group of FFA members about the importance of relationships. The FFA Advisor is concerned that many of their members have started running with the wrong crowd, and as a result have seen their participation decline, their grades tumble and their discipline issues at school increase. The title for this workshop will be, "Who are you hanging with?"

Example #2- You have been asked to facilitate a workshop to local FFA members about social media and the lasting effect it can have on their lives. There have been a multitude of negative Facebook posts made by local FFA members and they tend to see the humor in their posts rather than the negative impression they are sending and the advisor is concerned about this development. The title of your workshop will be "Stuck in the web."

### **Round Robin Interview:**

This round will consist of multiple 5-minute interviews, each with different members of the nominating committee. The interview is focused on two objectives. First, this is an opportunity for individual committee members to develop a rapport and get to know candidates in a two-on-one setting. Second, this will provide an opportunity for evaluation of several targeted competencies through structured questions and follow-up questions. For each of the interviews, should a candidate finish early, he or she should remain seated; it is encouraged the candidate and committee members have casual conversation with each other until the adult consultant calls time. Once the adult consultant calls time, the candidate should end their conversation.

Practice questions: (Please note these questions will not be the exact questions used in round robin **BUT**, they are a great tool to practice the type of questions being asked).

1. Tell me about a team disagreement that you have been involved with?
2. Describe a situation where you were able to empower a teammate.
3. How would you deal with a situation where you had little knowledge of what was expected of you?
4. Describe a situation where someone felt you were less than honest with them.
5. What is one of the most difficult decisions you have made as an FFA member?
6. How would you define yourself as a role model?
7. How have you been able to deal with teammates that have negative attitudes?
8. Tell me about a time you struggles to find the good in a situation.
9. Tell me about a service project that you helped organize
10. Describe someone you have a hard time respecting.

### **Conversation Round:**

State Officers often have conversations with stakeholders in an elevator or at an airport. The focus of the conversation round is to evaluate the candidate's demonstration in areas of agriculture, while carrying on a conversation regarding key issues related to a stakeholder. Stakeholders during the conversation round may include an expert in any industry of agriculture. This round will occur in a 5-minute interview. Each interview will position the candidate with one expert (a person on the nominating committee) at a table while the other nominating committee members observe the conversation. Each of these "experts" will represent a different stakeholder. All experts will be provided with an interview guide; however, they may interject specific follow-up questions to probe the candidate's understanding.

Example conversation round sets:

Example #1-Today you are meeting with Bob Smith, an agriculture teacher in Maryland. Mr. Smith is a new teacher who is eager to hear of opportunities in the Maryland FFA for his members. Mr. Smith teaches animal science classes and is working on building up his FFA chapter. As a state officer, you have the chance of giving Mr. Smith an insight into Maryland FFA opportunities.

Example #2- As a state officer, you are in Ocean City, Maryland at the Maryland Farm Bureau Convention. You have been asked to have a discussion with Bill Jones, a Maryland Farm Bureau member, about opportunities for FFA members in the Maryland agriculture industry.

Example #3- You are in a restaurant lobby waiting to be seated. Someone recognizes the FFA emblem on your shirt. This person shares with you that they were a former FFA member and want to give back to Maryland FFA chapters. As a State officer, you inform them of the opportunities for adults to give back to the Maryland FFA.

**Media Round:**

Throughout a state officers' year of service, they engage in radio and TV interviews with not only the interviewer, but a listening/watching audience. The focus of the Media Round is on the candidate's demonstration of either FFA or the American/agricultural education system areas of knowledge. While conducting a media interview with an outside expert. Nominating committee members will observe the interview and conduct their evaluations.

Examples of Media Round:

Example #1- As a State FFA Officer at the Maryland State Fair, you have been asked to take part in a TV interview about Maryland FFA. This reporter wants to know what FFA is all about.

Example #2- A newspaper reporter calls you and wants to hear about Maryland FFA members traveling to Indianapolis for the National FFA Convention. The reporter wants to know what members will be doing at the convention and why this is a great opportunity for FFA members.

"It is not important to be famous, but making people feel famous.... Now that's important."