

United States Academic Decathlon®

2025 USAD Nationals

General Rules & Guidelines

The United States Academic Decathlon® Nationals is held under the auspices of the USAD Board of Directors. All testing, judging, scoring and any other function of the competition per se are managed by USAD. This year's event is being hosted by the United States Academic Decathlon in conjunction with a host of volunteers from the state of Iowa.

Decathletes and coaches are required to comply with the competition policies and guidelines. Failure to adhere to the policies and regulations could result in the disqualification of the participant and/or their team at the discretion of the USAD officials.

Eligibility Guidelines

The nine team members who participate on a Nationals team must be the same nine students who participated in the state competition. No substitutions are permitted. In case of an extreme medical emergency occurring after the state competition, USAD and the State Director will determine if another student may replace the absent team member. Teams shall NOT consist of more than nine members. Teams may compete with fewer than nine members, but must have a minimum of six members, two in each grade point average category. To be eligible for competition, teams must file all required documents in accordance with the deadlines set by USAD.

Identification

USAD ID badges must be worn to all competition events and must be plainly visible to the proctors and judges to verify each participant's identity. On each test booklet, you will find a "certification statement." You are to print your name and four-digit ID number on the designated line and then sign and date the statement for the test to be acceptable for scoring.

Testing Arena

Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the testing arena. Contestants will NOT be excused from the testing room (including Super Quiz) for any reason before the scheduled break. If a student leaves a testing room or event, they will NOT be permitted to return until the next scheduled break. Any participant who has a medical condition that requires special provisions of any kind must provide USAD with written documentation from a physician in advance of the competition. The decision to allow a medical exception is at the discretion of USAD and is final.

Tardiness

Participants are responsible for being in the proper location at the time each event begins. If a participant is tardy, they will NOT be allowed to enter the testing room or the speech and interview events. Contestants will NOT be allowed to enter the Super Quiz venue once the competition begins.

Starting/Stopping

If a proctor determines that a student has failed to stop when instructed or has started before being instructed to do so, the student will receive a score of zero for that particular test.

Test Materials

The proctor will supply all printed materials and writing utensils necessary for the subject area tests. Participants are NOT permitted to bring books, notes, purses, backpacks, coats, hats, mascots, electronic devices, smart watches, cell phones, or any other items (except for approved calculators), into the testing room. Any such items will be confiscated by the proctor and may result in the student receiving a zero for that particular event. The decision of USAD will be final and irrevocable.

Cheating

If a proctor or competition official finds a contestant involved in using or possessing a cell phone during testing; using any unauthorized means of communication; using any type of crib notes; or sharing, texting, storing or transporting test information (including inappropriate use of a calculator); the proctor must report the incident to the USAD testing director. If a participant is proven to have cheated, they will be disqualified from the event. However, depending on the severity of the infraction, the participant may be disqualified from the entire competition. Participants removed because of cheating or misconduct will NOT be eligible for any awards. Any person receiving or passing along any current year's tests or test items, except for USAD published practice tests, will disqualify themselves and their team from Decathlon participation. The decision of USAD will be final and irrevocable.

Super Quiz™

This event is held before a large audience; therefore, spectators are asked to be as quiet as possible while the questions are being read to give each group of contestants an equal opportunity for hearing and responding. Participants are NOT permitted to bring books, notes, purses, backpacks, coats, hats, cell phones, electronic devices, or any other items to the team seating area or to the competition floor, except for one acceptable calculator for the mathematics questions. Any such items will be confiscated by proctors. Mascots must remain in the team seating area and are NOT allowed in the competition area. Coaches and state directors are NOT allowed to communicate with their team members during the Super Quiz. Any team that does not adhere to the Super Quiz rules may be disqualified from the event.

Withdrawal

In the case of an emergency or illness, a participant must formally withdraw in order to be eligible for any awards. To formally withdraw, a participant must give a written explanation of their withdrawal to a proctor or Decathlon official. An alternate student CANNOT be added to a team in the case of a withdrawal.

Test Scores

Any scores announced during the competition are unofficial. Test scores will NOT be posted at any time during the competition. The scoring center is off-limits to everyone except designated officials.