



United States Academic Decathlon® Welcome Letter
2026 USAD Nationals
April 23-25, 2026

To: Division I-V Teams
From: United States Academic Decathlon

Congratulations on achieving the honor of representing your state at the 2026 USAD National Competition in Garden Grove, California. Plans for Nationals are underway and the USAD staff and volunteers are working hard to make this an enjoyable competition.

Abbreviated Nationals Schedule

Thursday, April 9 CDT

- Online essay, art, and literature events are followed by the Most Valuable Team Member selection at 12:30 p.m. and interview 3-6 p.m.

Thursday, April 23 PDT

- Registration and team identification, 8–10 a.m.
- Welcome ceremony, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
- Mandatory coaches meeting, 12–1 p.m.
- Speech competition, 3–7 p.m.

Friday, April 24 PDT

- Student breakfast, 6–7:45 a.m.
- Objective testing, 8:15–11:45 a.m.
- Super Quiz™ & Speech Showcase, 2–5 p.m.
- Team Event, 7–9 p.m.

Saturday, April 25 PDT

- Awards ceremony, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
- Champions reception (*immediately following Awards ceremony*)

- **Nationals registration**

All forms must be completed and uploaded to the USAD Competition Site by **March 12**. All names will appear on all documentation as they are entered into the system.

Coaches, teams, and state directors: please comply with the deadlines specified for submission of your team registration(s). If your competition is too close to the deadline for forms to be received on time, please contact nationals@usad.org.

- **Competition site and hotel accommodations**

This year's competition site is the Hyatt Regency Orange County at 11999 Harbor Blvd, Garden Grove, CA 92840.

The host hotels are the Hyatt Regency Orange County and the Residence Inn. Teams are required to stay at one of the host hotels or they will not be allowed to compete.

Rooms are limited at each property and reservations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. To make a reservation, click on the online registration link for the hotels, found on the USAD Nationals pages. **The hotel reservation deadline is April 2.**

Reservations will be confirmed directly by the hotel. The USAD discounted room rate at the Hyatt is \$179/day; the Residence Inn is \$179/day. Each rate will also include applicable taxes. Team reservations will take precedence over guest reservations.

Payment must be made at the time of arrival with a credit card or cash. Out of town checks, purchase orders, and money orders are NOT accepted. Each team will be responsible for payment of hotel rooms and other incidentals. All team keys and room assignments will be given to the coach upon check-in. The hotels are all non-smoking.

- **Transportation**

Transportation is on your own; the hotel does not provide an airport shuttle. Uber and Lyft are popular methods of transportation to the hotel. Rental cars or vans are also available. If renting a car/van at the airport and driving, both hotels offer parking for \$15/day.

Detailed Nationals Information

Thursday, April 9 CDT

- **Essay, art, literature, and interview** – 12:30–3 p.m.

The pre-competition online events will be held on April 9 at 12:30 p.m. Essay is first, followed immediately by art, literature, and interview. All decathletes and proctors must participate in a practice session some time between April 10 at 12:30 p.m. and April 16 at 5 p.m. to test their usernames and passwords and so USAD can confirm everyone will be able to access the testing site on competition day.

All decathletes must participate in the essay, art, and literature testing on April 9. Any who do not participate will not be eligible to participate in the remainder of the competition.

- **Most Valuable Team Member**

After students have completed the online essay, art, and literature tests, they will be prompted to complete a rubric to register their vote for the Most Valuable Team Member. Each member of the official team is eligible to vote. Votes will remain anonymous and the rubrics will be computer-tabulated.

- **Interview** – 3–7 p.m.

Interviews will be conducted in an online Zoom room. The link will be emailed to coaches prior to the competition. Students should log in 10 minutes before their scheduled interview time and should be ready to present their competition ID number and/or photo ID if requested.

Thursday, April 23 PDT

- **Registration** – 8–10 a.m. Hyatt, Grand Foyer (N. Tower)

All teams must register during this time. All decathletes must accompany their coach and show a photo ID (e.g. school ID, driver's license, passport, etc.) to register for the competition.

Teams arriving before April 23rd should plan to register early Thursday morning. Please leave the later times for teams arriving that morning.

The official USAD identification badges issued to students and coaches upon registration, as well as personal photo ID, must be worn at all times while competing. Coaches must also carry medical release forms for team members.

- **Welcome event** – 10:15–11:45 a.m. Hyatt, Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)

All teams, coaches, and USAD representatives are invited to a welcome event. Meet and greet teams from all over the United States, experience a taste of Garden Grove, and jumpstart a memorable national competition!

- **Mandatory coaches meeting** – 12–1 p.m. Hyatt, Royal A & B (S. Tower)

There will be a mandatory meeting for all coaches at this time. Coaches should fully review the *2026 Critical Guide for Nationals Prep* prior to the meeting. Any final information or changes to the competition will be covered at the meeting.

- **Speech competition** – 3–7 p.m. Hyatt (see chart and student schedule for rooms)

Teams will be assigned speech time by lottery. All team members will have times assigned randomly. Please remind your students that no cell phones, electronic devices, smart watches, backpacks, purses, study materials, etc., are allowed during the speech event.

All participants will present their speeches before a panel of two-three speech judges. As in previous years, up to six decathletes will be present in each room during the speech competition. All decathletes enter and leave the room at the same time. This format benefits decathletes by allowing them to listen to their peers' speeches. Decathletes will only receive scores from the official speech judges. The peer audience will not score the speeches.

Friday, April 24 PDT

- **Objective testing** – 8:15 –11:30 a.m. Hyatt, Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)

Doors open promptly at 8:15 a.m. ID badges must be worn and will be checked when entering the testing area. Calculators, cell phones, electronic devices, backpacks, print materials, jackets, and hats are not permitted. Testing starts promptly at 8:45 a.m. Decathletes will not be excused from the testing room for any reason before the scheduled break. View the *Critical Guide* for the complete testing schedule and detailed information.

- **Super Quiz Event & Awards; Speech Showcase** – 2–5 p.m. Hyatt, Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)

Students will come to the testing area as a group according to their GPA category. Each team will record one answer per question on a team answer sheet by bubbling in the correct option. The same team answer sheet will be used to calculate team scores for all rounds of the Super Quiz. Questions and subjects are randomized. Super Quiz is a standalone event and scores will not be added to team scores.

The Speech showcase will immediately follow the Super Quiz. The highest scoring decathlete in the prepared speech component for Honor, Scholastic, and Varsity categories will present their speeches. Coaches and decathletes will be notified before the Super Quiz, so they are prepared when their name is called. Coaches will be asked to provide USAD with a short synopsis of their decathlete's speech. At the conclusion of the speech showcase, the Super Quiz awards will be presented.

- **Team Event** - 7-9 p.m. Hyatt, Fountain Terrace

All teams are invited to attend the *Roaring Twenties* event on Friday night. This event is free for all competing decathletes and their coach(es). A DJ and games will be available.

Saturday, April 25 PDT

- **Awards Ceremony** - 8–12 p.m. Hyatt, Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)

There will be assigned seating for all teams. Up to nine team members and one coach will be seated together. Open seating will be available for additional coaches, parents, and guests after teams have been seated.

Scores will not be posted during the competition. An award list will be emailed to State Directors following the ceremony that indicates the gold, silver, and bronze medal winners in each event; top teams in each division; and special awards. They will share these with their teams.

- **Champions Reception** – 11:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Hyatt, Garden 1 & Garden Patio (N. Tower)

All division champion teams, coaches, and related state directors will gather for a celebratory reception following the awards ceremony.

UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON®
National Finals – April 23–25, 2026
Hyatt Regency Orange County - Garden Grove, CA

Green
Team Events

Blue Italic
Volunteers

ALL CAPS RED
BOARD/STAFF EVENT

Wednesday, April 22		
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	NATIONALS TEAM MEETING	Garden 4 (N. Tower)
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	USAD STATE DIRECTORS MEETING	Garden 4 (N. Tower)
Thursday, April 23		
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	USAD BOARD MEETING	Harbor Room (N. Tower, 2 nd Floor)
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Team & Individual Registration	Grand Foyer (N. Tower)
10:15 – 11:45 a.m.	Welcome Event	Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Mandatory Coaches Meeting *Coaches Only	Royal A & B (S. Tower)
12:45 – 7:00 p.m.	Speech	
12:45 – 1 p.m.	Judge, Timer, and Guide Registration	Grand Foyer (N. Tower)
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	• Speech Judge Training	Garden 4 (N. Tower)
	• Speech Timer and Guide Training	Garden 1 (N. Tower)
2:30 – 2:45 p.m.	All Speech Volunteers	Hyatt Regency Orange County *Report to assigned rooms
3:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Speeches *Decathletes check-in at least 15 minutes before the hour (e.g. 4pm); see chart & schedule for rooms	Hyatt Regency Orange County
Friday, April 24		
6:00 – 7:45 a.m.	Student Breakfast	Royal Ballroom (S. Tower)
6:45 – 11:45 a.m.	Testing	
7:15 – 7:30 a.m.	• Proctor Registration and Breakfast	Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)
7:30 – 8:15 a.m.	• Orientation and Preparation	

8:15 a.m.	Doors Open	Grand Ballroom (N. Tower) *ID check with students seated and ready to test by 8:30 a.m.
8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Economics Test	
9:05 – 9:35 a.m.	Social Science Test	
9:40 – 10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:05 – 10:35 a.m.	Mathematics Test	
10:40 – 11:10 a.m.	Science Test	
11:15 – 11:45 a.m.	Music Test	
12:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Super Quiz	
12:00 – 12:15 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proctor Registration	Garden Foyer (N. Tower)
12:15 – 12:50 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proctor Orientation	Garden 4 (N. Tower)
12:50 – 1:15 p.m.	All Super Quiz Volunteers	Grand Ballroom (N. Tower) *Report to assigned places
1:15 p.m.	Doors Open for Team Seating	Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)
1:30 – 1:45 p.m.	General Seating	
2:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Super Quiz and Speech Showcase	
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Team Event	Fountain Terrace
Saturday, April 25		
7:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Awards	
7:15 a.m.	Doors Open for Team Seating	Grand Ballroom (N. Tower)
7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	General Seating	
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Awards Ceremony	
Immediately following Awards Ceremony	Champions Reception	Garden 1 & Garden Patio (N. Tower)

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 California.

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.

General Rules & Guidelines

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 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; 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 calculators, books, notes, purses, backpacks, coats, hats, cell phones, electronic devices, or any other items to the team seating area or to the competition floor. 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.

Student Code of Conduct

The United States Academic Decathlon expects all team members to conduct themselves with decorum while attending Academic Decathlon events. This includes travel, time on hotel premises, and any sightseeing associated with students' participation in the 2026 USAD Nationals, and all related events in Garden Grove, California.

Appropriate conduct of team members is the sole responsibility of the team coach who has legal responsibility as the chaperone for team members at all times. Students should be under the supervision of the coach during the entire competition. All students are expected to be in their rooms by 10 p.m. (unless participating in a scheduled event). If behavior in common areas of competition hotels is disruptive, an earlier curfew may be imposed either by USAD or hotel management. It is the responsibility of the team coach to enforce such a curfew and any other regulations determined necessary by USAD officials.

Inappropriate conduct includes, but is NOT limited to:

1. Cheating
2. Being in possession of any cell phone, electronic device, study materials, etc., in the competition testing areas, including speech, interview, and Super Quiz™
3. Being in possession of any weapon
4. Damage to, or vandalism of, any property including hotel rooms and competition sites
5. Use of alcohol or illegal drugs by students, regardless of age
6. Use of water pistols, water balloons, or any other projectile at the hotels or competition site
7. Fighting, loud noise, or any other behavior that is disruptive to others at the hotels or competition site
8. Disrespect to the competition, competition officials, proctors or coaches

Financial liability for all damage incurred by actions of a team member shall be the sole responsibility of that team member and their parents. Failure to comply with the Student Code of Conduct may result in disqualification from the event, the entire competition, and/or the awards ceremony. The decision of the USAD administration is final.

Teams should be aware that failure of any team member to adhere to these policies and procedures may result in disqualification of the delinquent student and/or the entire team. Furthermore, cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Any act of cheating will be promptly brought to the USAD officials for review, evaluation, and imposition of possible sanctions. If someone is proven to have cheated, it is within USAD's power to disqualify not only the person caught cheating, but the entire team.

Decathletes that violate the Student Code of Conduct run the risk of being eliminated from the national competition.

Dress Code

As representatives of the United States Academic Decathlon, their respective states, and their high schools, coaches and decathletes are expected to maintain a positive and professional appearance during all Academic Decathlon-related events. Inappropriate attire may result in disqualification from competition or exclusion from awards ceremonies.

General Guidelines:

The dress code aims to create a fair and distraction-free environment for all participants. Attire must be neat, clean, and conducive to focused competition. USAD Officials have been trained and have the authority to address violations. If a violation occurs, the decathlete will be given an opportunity to correct it. Failure to comply may result in missing a scheduled test or, in severe cases, disqualification. Decathletes with medical, religious, or accessibility needs requiring exceptions should notify their team coach in advance to request approval from the USAD Officials with their registration for the national competition. Students with exceptions will be provided with a designation on their name badge/lanyard for the competition. Test proctors will be trained to apply the policy consistently and objectively, addressing violations discreetly and providing opportunities for correction. Concise guidelines are listed below and will be provided to all participants ahead of the competition, with opportunities for questions and clarification.

Objective Testing and Super Quiz

- **Acceptable Attire:**

For objective testing and Super Quiz, decathletes may wear casual attire or clothing that represents their school or team. Attire may incorporate the current Academic Decathlon theme but must not include any content that could provide an unfair advantage during testing (e.g. maps, art specific to the year's curriculum, math formulas, etc.), such as maps with locations, math formulas, art related to the art curriculum, or information directly related to potential test questions. Attire should reflect positively on the individual, their school, and the Academic Decathlon program. Hoodies and sweatshirts are permitted, but the hood must remain down and turned inside out. Cardigans and windbreakers are also permitted, but coats are not allowed in the testing area.

- **Inappropriate Attire:**

Unacceptable attire includes clothing that conceals the face or head (e.g. hats, sunglasses, etc.) with the exception of religious headwear (e.g. hajib, yarmulke, dastar, etc.). Garments with excessive rips or holes that expose undergarments, clothing with distracting graphics or messages, and any attire that may be considered offensive or vulgar are also deemed inappropriate.

Dress Code

Speech and Interview

For Speech and Interview events, decathletes are encouraged to dress in business professional or business casual attire. Attire should not include any reference to their team or school and should not include uniforms or costumes.

Appropriate attire may include, but is not limited to, a business suit (pants or skirt) with a dress shirt or blouse and necktie, a blazer, sport coat, or jacket with a dress shirt/blouse and pants/skirt, or a business dress.

Divisions Criteria

For Nationals 2026 in Garden Grove, California, all states are invited to send three teams:

1. their state champion team
2. their second-place team
3. and a third team

The third team must be from a different enrollment division than the state champion team. The enrollment divisions used to determine the eligibility of the third team can either be the same that are used within that state or USAD's enrollment divisions (large = not to exceed 10,000; medium = not to exceed 1,300; small = not to exceed 650 (grades 9–12)).

States with 30 or more teams participating will be permitted to send two additional teams, additional teams from these states must also be from a different enrollment division than the state champion. The intent behind inviting additional teams is to give schools that otherwise might not have the opportunity to experience Nationals.

All five divisions at Nationals will be score-based and will be determined using each team's total state score (includes all 10 events).

State directors must let their teams know prior to their state competition if their state will follow USAD enrollment divisions or those used within their state to determine how the additional teams will be invited.

Tentatively, between 50-100 individual participants will be invited to attend Nationals in California this year.

Explanation of Scoring

The United States Academic Decathlon® has 10 events. Each event is evenly weighted at 1,000 points per competitor for a possible 10,000-point total per student. However, only six scores per team are counted for the team ranking (top two honor, scholastic and varsity) making the highest possible team score 60,000.

The social science, music, and literature tests have 50 questions each. The raw score for these tests is converted to 1,000 points with each question worth 20 points. The art, science, and economics tests have 55 questions with each question worth 18.18 points. The math test has 45 questions with each question being worth 22.2 points.

The essay is scored based on a rubric. Each essay is independently read twice. If there is a divergence of 200 or more points in the two scores, the essay is read and scored by a third judge. The third score replaces the divergent score. The two scores are averaged for the final score.

The speech and interview are performed before a panel of judges (usually three). The judges complete the appropriate scoring forms online. The scoring program computes an average score based on a maximum of 1,000 points.

The Super Quiz™ will include questions from the subjects of art, economics, literature, mathematics, music, science and social science. In the Super Quiz three students from each GPA category will be asked to come to the stage. Varsity students will be tested with the first 18 questions, followed by the scholastic students answering the next 18 questions, and then the final 18 questions of the competition for the honor students. Questions are worth one point each for a total of 54 points per team. The Super Quiz is a standalone event, and scores will NOT be added to individual or team scores. Calculators will not be needed or allowed for Super Quiz.

Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded in each division, event and category (honor, scholastic and varsity). All ties are awarded.

Team overall ranking is determined by the six team members that make up the top two scores in each category (honor, scholastic and varsity).

There will be five divisions of schools - Division I, II, III, IV, & V, at Nationals. All five divisions will be score-based divisions and will be determined using each team's total 10-event state score. The teams will be distributed across divisions as evenly as possible. Each Division will have first (gold), second (silver), and third (bronze) place winners as their division champions. The Dr. Robert D. Peterson National Champion Award will be awarded to the team within each division with the highest number of points.

An award list will be sent to State Directors following the awards ceremony that indicates the medalists in each event; special awards; top team in each division in the Super Quiz; and top 10 teams in the overall standings.

Awards' Distribution

Awards to Teams:

- **The Dr. Robert D. Peterson National Champion Awards**

This award will be given to the team from each Division (I, II, III, IV and V) with the highest overall score.

- **Overall Teams**

Medals, championship trophies, and banners will be presented to the first, second, and third place teams in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V). Plaques will be awarded to the fourth-place team in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V). Team scores are determined by the highest two honor, scholastic, and varsity scores for all 10 events.

- **Super Quiz**

Plaques will be awarded to the first-place teams in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V) with the highest raw score for all competing decathletes in the Super Quiz.

- **Asa Edwin Reaves, Esq. Social Science Prize**

This award will be given to the highest scoring varsity team members from any Division (I, II, III, IV or V) in the area of social science.

- **Rookie of the Year**

This award is presented to the highest scoring rookie team in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V); defined as a team that has not competed at Nationals for 10 years or more.

- **State Directors' Communication Award**

A \$300 award will be given to the team with the highest combined Essay, Interview, and Speech scores. The award will rotate every three years based on varsity, scholastic, and honor categories. All three individual scores will be used to determine the team scores for that category.

Awards to Individuals:

- **Events**

Medals will be awarded in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V) for the first, second, and third place decathletes from the honor, scholastic, and varsity categories in each event. All ties will be awarded.

- **Overall Decathletes**

Medals will be awarded in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V) to the first, second, and third place decathletes from the honor, scholastic, and varsity categories with the highest cumulative scores from all 10 events. Scholarships shall be awarded to the overall individual winners.

- **B. Franklin Reinauer II Economics Prize**

This award is presented to the highest scoring decathlete in economics from any Division (I, II, III, IV or V).

Awards' Distribution

- **Frank Wurtzel Prize**

This award is presented to a varsity decathlete in any Division (I, II, III, IV or V) who has the highest combined score in the areas of literature, essay, and speech.

- **Founder's Scholarship: Most Improved Varsity Student**

This award is presented to a varsity decathlete in any Division (I, II, III, IV or V) who has improved their score the most at Nationals from their state competition score.

- **Highest Scoring Student**

This award is presented to the highest scoring decathlete on each team in every Division (I, II, III, IV & V).

- **Most Valuable Team Member**

Medals will be awarded in each Division (I, II, III, IV & V) to the decathlete who was chosen by their teammates as the most valuable team member.

- **The Roberts/Caperton Inspiration Award**

Two awards are given by the USAD Board of Directors to decathletes who demonstrate a high degree of dedication, strength of character, team leadership, perseverance, and commitment while overcoming significant obstacles or unusual circumstances to participate in the United States Academic Decathlon. The Board welcomes nominations from USAD coaches during the course of each competition year and appropriate public recognition will be determined for the most deserving nominees.

2026 Contestant Schedule

Online Events:	April 1-8, 2026	Practice
	April 9, 2026	Art, Essay, Interview, Literature
In-Person Events:	April 23, 2026	Speech
	April 24, 2026	Economics, Math, Music, Science, Social Science, Super Quiz

Practice:

April 1-8, 2026*	12:15 PM CDT	Sign In
	12:30 PM CDT	Essay and Objective Test Practice

**The practice session is open from 12:30 pm on 4/1 through 5:00 pm on 4/8.*

Online:

April 9, 2026	12:15 - 2:35 PM CDT	Testing
	12:15 PM	Sign In
	12:30 PM	Essay
	1:35 - 2:05 PM	Art
	2:10 - 2:35 PM	Literature
	4:00 - 7:00 PM CDT	Interview

In Person Competition (PDT):

April 23, 2026	Speech
April 24, 2026	Remaining Objectives

Online Testing Integrity Guidelines

This policy outlines the procedures for maintaining test integrity during online USAD National competition. All coaches and students participating in the national competition must adhere to these guidelines.

I. Maintaining Focus During Online Testing

To ensure a fair and equitable testing environment, online testing platforms will employ features designed to detect activities that may compromise test integrity or constitute academic dishonesty. Students must strictly follow these instructions to avoid being flagged.

A. Student Responsibilities:

1. **Stay Within the Testing Browser:** Students must remain within the designated testing browser window for the entire duration of the exam. Navigating away from the test screen, even after completing the test before the allotted time, is prohibited. Right-clicking within the testing page is also prohibited, as this can open menus outside the testing environment.
2. **No Unauthorized Programs or Extensions:** Students must not open or interact with any other programs, applications, browser extensions, additional browsers, or browser tabs on their device during the testing period.
3. **Reporting Accidental Deviation:** If a student believes they have accidentally clicked outside the testing browser window, they must immediately report the incident to the proctor. The student is responsible for ensuring the proctor submits a report including the following information: date, time, test name, and student ID.
4. **Device Settings:** Students must ensure their testing device (tablet, computer, etc.) is not set to sleep or suspend during the exam. If a sleep/suspend setting is active, the timer must be set to a value exceeding the test duration. If the device does sleep/suspend, the student must immediately notify the proctor.

B. Technical Issues:

1. **Immediate Reporting:** Students experiencing any technical difficulties with their browser, network/Wi-Fi connection, testing device, or testing software must immediately inform the proctor.
2. **Proctor Documentation:** The proctor is responsible for documenting all technical issues reported by students. This documentation must include the date, time, test name, and student ID.

Online Testing Integrity Guidelines

II. Monitoring During Tests

The online testing platform will monitor student activity to detect potential violations of test integrity. Adherence to the student responsibilities outlined in Section I is crucial.

III. Goal

These guidelines aim to provide a fair and honest testing environment for all students participating in the USAD National Competition. Compliance with these procedures is essential for maintaining the integrity of the tests and ensuring equal opportunity for all.

Appeals Procedure

An appeal regarding any test item (question and/or answer) can be made by any contestant through their head coach. Such an appeal must be emailed to USAD's testing director - Daniele Grigsby (daniele@usad.org), during the earliest break after a test has been completed. Appeals must be submitted within 30 minutes of the completion of the final test. Appeals can be made by head coaches only.

Appeals will be decided by a committee consisting of the USAD board president, USAD state directors' president and vice president, USAD testing director, and the USAD executive director as ex-officio. If the committee deems a question invalid, all students will be given credit for that question. Appeals identifying an invalid answer will result in the giving of credit to all correct answers. The decision of the appeals committee is final. Essay, interview, and speech scores are NOT subject to appeal.

Interview and Speech Format

Interview:

Interviews will be conducted in an online Zoom room with two-three judges from 5-9 p.m. CST. The Zoom link will be emailed to coaches prior to the event. Students should log in 10 minutes prior to their scheduled interview time. Students should be ready to present their competition ID number and/or photo ID if requested.

Speech:

All participants will present their speeches before a panel of two-three speech judges as part of a group.

Each group of up to six students will be assigned a speech room and a session start time. Students are required to check-in at their designated location at least fifteen minutes prior to the group's start time. The start time will be listed on the decathletes' competition ID. Please ensure all decathletes with speech times in the same one-hour block are at their designated location and ready to enter the room at the beginning of the hour. No late entries will be allowed.

The head judge in each room will welcome the group of decathletes and show them to their seats prior to calling the first decathlete forward. Once a decathlete has presented both of their speeches, they will join the peer audience and the next decathlete will be called by the head judge. The group of decathletes will be released from the speech room at the end of the session after all have presented their speeches.

Super Quiz™ Format and Guidelines

Students will come to the testing area as a group according to their GPA category. A total of 18 multiple-choice questions will be given for each relay round with five possible answer choices. Students will have 10 seconds to respond to each question with the exception of the six mathematics questions where students will have 20 seconds to respond. Calculators will not be needed or allowed for Super Quiz.

Once the last answer choice has been read, team members can verbally communicate with each other. Only non-verbal communication is allowed before the 10 second timer begins.

During the Super Quiz, each team will record one answer per question on a team answer sheet by bubbling in the correct option. The same team answer sheet will be used to calculate team scores for all rounds of the Super Quiz.

All varsity students will be tested with the first 18 questions, followed by the scholastic students answering the next 18, and the final 18 questions of the competition will be for the honors students.

Questions and subjects are randomized. Questions are worth one point each for a total of 18 points per team, per round. The perfect score would be $18 \text{ points} \times 3 \text{ rounds} = 54 \text{ points}$.

The Super Quiz is a standalone event and scores will NOT be added to individual or team scores.

Test Time and Question Totals

Subject	Description (<i>all multiple choice tests</i>)
Art	55 questions, 30 minutes
Economics	55 questions, 30 minutes
Literature	50 questions, 25 minutes
Mathematics	45 questions, 30 minutes
Music	50 questions, 30 minutes
Science	55 questions, 30 minutes
Social Science	50 questions, 25 minutes
Super Quiz	54 questions with 18 per round