



United States Academic Decathlon® Welcome Letter 2026 USAD Nationals

To: Academic Decathlon Online Competitors
From: United States Academic Decathlon

Congratulations on achieving the honor of representing your state at the 2026 USAD Online National Competition. All registration documents and competition information can be found on the [USAD website](#).

Registration

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

Decathletes competing as individuals, you should [register using this form](#).

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

Practice

All decathletes must participate in a practice session some time between April 1 at 12:30 p.m. and April 8 at 5 p.m., so USAD can confirm all students will be able to access the testing site on competition day.

Essay, Art, and Literature

The essay, art, and literature events will be held on April 9 at 12:30 p.m. Essay is first, followed immediately by art and literature.

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 on their team. Each member of the official team is eligible to vote. Votes will remain anonymous, and the rubrics will be scored by the computer.

Remaining Objective Tests

The economics, social science, music, mathematics, and science events will be held on April 24 at 1:00 p.m. There will be a 5-minute break between every three tests, with an extra 15 minutes between music and mathematics.

Miscellaneous Information

Team ID numbers will be assigned and posted on the USAD Nationals page under the Helpful Information tab.

Modifications and Accommodations

If there are decathletes who require modifications or accommodations, please notify USAD by including the Modifications and Accommodations form located on the USAD Nationals page.

Results

Scores will not be posted during the competition. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded in each event and for each category (honor, scholastic, and varsity). All ties are awarded. Trophies will be given to the top three teams competing.

Winners of the 2026 USAD Online Nationals will be listed on the USAD website within two weeks after the competition. USAD will also produce an awards' ceremony and provide the link to all attendees.

UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON®

2026 ONLINE NATIONAL SCHEDULE

Times are Central Daylight

April 1-8, 2026	Practice
April 9, 2026	Art, Essay, Literature
April 24, 2026	Economics, Math, Music, Science, Social Science

Practice:

April 1-8, 2026* Essay and Objective Test Practice

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

Essay, Art and Literature:

April 9, 2026	12:15 PM	Sign In
	12:30 PM	Essay
	1:35 - 2:05 PM	Art
	2:10 - 2:35 PM	Literature

Remaining Objective Tests:

April 24, 2026	12:45 PM	Sign In
	1:00 - 1:30 PM	Economics
	1:35 - 2:00 PM	Social Science
	2:05 - 2:35 PM	Music
	2:55 - 3:25 PM	Mathematics
	3:30 - 4:00 PM	Science

United States Academic Decathlon®
2026 USAD Online Nationals

Qualifications

1. A state association, chartered by USAD, must have a state championship team that participated in USAD Nationals the previous year and intends to participate during the current school year.
2. School enrollment of competing online schools must be: large = not to exceed 10,000; medium = not to exceed 1,300; small = not to exceed 650 (grades 9–12).
3. Schools participating in the large, medium and/or small online team competition must not include any of the teams participating in Garden Grove, California.
4. Students participating in the online individual competition can come from any state/school, as long as they have a Round 3 score.

Certification and Selection

Teams from each state participating in the Online Nationals will be selected and certified by the state director. Teams must participate in the appropriate enrollment category. If their state does not have schools to meet the various enrollment category criteria, and the team participated in the state competition, then a team may compete up, but not down to fill any open enrollment categories for the Online Nationals.

Competition

1. Eight events - essay, literature, art, music, math, science, economics, and social science.
2. The 2026 USAD Online Nationals will be held on the same days as the competition in Garden Grove, California.
3. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded in each event and for each category (honor, scholastic, and varsity). All ties are awarded. Trophies will be given to the top three teams competing.
4. Winners of the 2026 USAD Online Nationals will be listed on the USAD website within two weeks after the competition. USAD will also produce an awards' ceremony and provide the link to all attendees.

Guidelines

1. Contestants will NOT be excused from the testing room 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 at the conclusion of the subject area tests. Any participant who has a medical condition which 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.
2. Participants are responsible for being in the proper test location at the time each test begins. If a participant is tardy, they will NOT be allowed to enter the testing room.

3. Participants are NOT permitted to bring books, notes, purses, backpacks, coats, hats, mascots, electronic devices, cell phones, computer watches or any other items, except for approved calculators, into the testing room. Any such items will be confiscated by the proctor.
4. If the competition official finds a contestant involved in using or possessing a cell phone in any competition area, using any unauthorized means of communication, using any type of crib, sharing, storing or transporting test information, the proctor must remove the student for the duration of the test. 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 published practice tests, will disqualify them and their team from Decathlon participation. The decision of USAD will be final and irrevocable.
5. If a proctor determines that a student has failed to stop when instructed to do so or has started before being instructed to do so, the student will receive a score of zero for that particular test.
6. 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 his/her withdrawal to USAD. An alternate student CANNOT be added to a team in the case of a withdrawal.
7. The team members who participate in the Online Nationals must be the same 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.
8. Decathletes and coaches are required to comply with the above competition rules. Failure to adhere to these rules may, at the discretion of USAD, result in the disqualification of the participant and/or their team. Decathletes will uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity while participating in Academic Decathlon. If necessary, a decathlete may be required to re-take an alternate test to validate their test results.

Notes:

- USAD will do everything it can to make this competition a success, including awarding medals and trophies based on competition results. USAD is not responsible for power failures, school lock-outs, etc.
- The state Academic Decathlon organization is responsible and liable for the administration of the tests and the supervision of students participating in the USAD Online Nationals.
- Entry to this competition is voluntary.

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.

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.

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.

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