

Sam Houston District FFA Association Policy Handbook

Section 1: Active Membership Eligibility

1.0 Operational Principles

The FFA Organization is an integral part of agricultural education, a leadership development program for students of agricultural science and technology programs. FFA programs are intended to be applied activities related to the classroom and laboratory instructional programs. Thus, membership guidelines should reflect this philosophy and support enrollment in agriculture food & natural resources (AFNR) courses.

1.1 Constitutional Authority

National FFA Constitution, Section C. To be eligible for active membership in a chartered FFA chapter, a student must be enrolled in a secondary Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources program. To retain membership, a student must:

1. Be enrolled in a least one Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program, the objective of which is to gain experience in agriculture related careers.
2. Show an interest in the affairs of the Association by attending meetings, striving for degrees of membership, and participating in other organized activities of the chapter.
3. Pay all current District, Area, State and National dues by the date determined by the chapter.
4. Display conduct consistent with the ideals and purposes of the Texas FFA Association/Texas Association of Future Farmers of America.

1.2 Membership Eligibility

- (a) A student may establish initial membership by enrolling in an approved agriculture, food and natural resources course. An approved agriculture, food and natural resources course shall be (1) any course in the agriculture food and natural resources cluster; (2) an approved agriculture, food and natural resources innovative course taught by the agriculture, food and natural resources instructor; or (3) any other career and technical education course in an approved statewide agriculture, food and natural resources program of study taught by an agriculture, food and natural resources instructor.
- (b) All courses taught as a part of an agriculture, food and natural resources program of study must include a documented Supervised Agricultural Experience. The Texas FFA Association reserves the right to verify or audit any program of study claimed for membership eligibility purposes.
- (c) After completing two consecutive semesters for high school credit, a student may maintain continuous membership for a maximum of one membership year while not enrolled in a course provided they maintain an approved supervised experience program which is documented in an approved agriculture, food and natural resources record book. Pursuant to state and national constitutions, the membership year shall begin August 1 and conclude the following July 31. For the purposes of this policy, two one-semester

classes taken concurrently count as two consecutive classes semesters. After re-enrolling and completing one agriculture, food and natural resources course, a student will be eligible to maintain one more year of membership without re-enrollment provided an approved, documented SAE is in place.

- (d) (d) Local departments may establish more stringent membership requirements. Districts and areas may also adopt enrollment guidelines applying to officers of those associations.
- (e) (e) More rigorous enrollment standards which apply to competitive events supersede this policy and are enumerated in the respective handbooks.

Section 2: Roster Submission

2.1. Operational Philosophy

A. The Sam Houston District FFA Association requires each chapter to submit a membership roster annually, a provision which is in harmony with the National FFA Constitution and provides an orderly, consistent record of membership.

B. Compilation of membership data in a timely and orderly fashion requires a systematic approach to receiving and processing such documentation.

2.2 Deadlines

A. Fall Rosters must be posted online no later than November 1 and District and Area dues postmarked no later than November 1 or the next business day if November 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

B. Spring Rosters must be posted online no later than March 1, and applicable District and Area dues postmarked no later than March 1 or the next business day if March 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

2.3 Allocation of Voting Delegates

Voting delegates are determined by the number of delegates on a chapter's roster on December 1 of that year.

2.4 Standing of Members, Chapters, Appeals

Members who are not in good standing with the Area FFA due to missing dues, rosters, or other requirement documentation may be brought into good standing through the correction of all deficiencies. Such remedy shall bring the member in good standing retroactive to applicable deadlines.

A. Chapters with delinquent dues accounts shall be declared to be “not in good standing” and not eligible for participation in FFA events and may not use the FFA identity and trademarks. All reasonable attempts shall be made to collect the debt. Withdrawal of good standing shall be declared after all means have been exhausted. The Executive Officers shall be briefed of all such pending cases.

B. Appeals regarding membership, issues of good standing or allocation of delegates may be made in writing to the Area Coordinator. The elected Area Committee will review all such appeals. A written response to such appeals shall be issued in a timely manner and in a period not to exceed 10 working days from the date of the executive committee ruling.

Section 3: District Officers

A. The primary responsibility of a district officer is to serve the Sam Houston District FFA Association in local, district, area, and state activities in a way that will inform, motivate and inspire FFA members, advisors, state staffs, teachers and others to achieve the mission, strategies and core goals of the organization and to represent the district association in meetings according to the direction of the District Executive Committee and District Officer Advisors.

B. District officers serve under the supervision of the District Officer Advisors in accordance with official policy and budget limits. More specific responsibilities include:

- a. Participate in training, orientation, continual self-improvement and evaluation of activities as directed.
- b. Represent the Sam Houston District FFA Association at chapter, district, area, and state activities as requested by local advisors within the scope of Sam Houston District FFA Policies.
- c. Participate in the planning and conducting of the Area Leadership Camp, Greenhand Camp, and District Leadership Academy in the summer.
- d. Participate in the planning and conducting of Sam Houston District FFA Convention as assigned by District Officer Advisors.
- e. Keep up to date with all correspondence that comes from the District Advisors, Area Coordinator, and the Area Leadership Coordinator.
- f. Develop positive relationships with FFA members, advisors, staff, sponsors, and the general public.
- g. Maintain a positive attitude and enjoy your year of service with members, advisors, staff, sponsors and others.
- h. Perform other duties as instructed by the Area Leadership Coordinator.
- i. Attend State FFA Convention and assist the Area Officers as leaders to Area IX delegation during each and every session.

Section 4: District Officer Discipline Guidelines

A. The Sam Houston District FFA Association generally recognizes four steps or levels of discipline: verbal warning, written warnings, suspensions, and discharge. Disciplinary action may begin at any step or level of severity and does not have to include each level.

- a. **Verbal Warning** – should be used for minor violations. A written record should be kept to document the verbal warning, its content, and time frame for improvement, as well as the date of warning.
- b. **Written Warning** – should be used for repeated violations or for a more substantial violation. A time frame for improvement should be set by the District Officer Advisors and District Executive Committee. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file. The written warning notice will be discussed with the officer by the District ATAT President, Area Leadership Coordinator and the officer's Chapter Advisor(s) and the district officer will be asked to sign the warning to acknowledge receipt.
- c. **Suspension** – will be utilized for serious violations when immediate action is required while an investigation is being conducted to determine if the officer should be discharged. The length of the suspension depends upon the time necessary to investigate

the violation. The Sam Houston District Executive Committee must approve all suspensions. A written notice of suspension and documenting the reasons for the suspension will be provided to the officer, in person or by telephone with written notice to follow in the mail. Suspended officers may not wear the Sam Houston District FFA Officer jacket or represent the district association as an officer in any manner during the suspension.

d. **Removal** – will be utilized for the most serious violations such as but not limited to, alcohol related issues, sexual harassment, inappropriate social media posts, etc. The Sam Houston District Executive Committee must approve all discharges of student officers. If an alleged violation or continued failure to respond to disciplinary action for other violations is reported to or discovered by the District Executive Committee or Advisors, upon completion of the investigation and adequate due process, the Committee may discharge the officer with written documentation to explain the reasons for the discharge. This written notice will become part of the permanent operational record of the Sam Houston District FFA Association. The officer will be notified, in person if appropriate, or by telephone and/or registered mail. Removed officers will not be allowed to wear the Sam Houston District jacket after they have been removed from their office.

- B. The District Executive Committee and District Advisor must approve any disciplinary action for a violation, as well as any suspension or discharge of an officer, prior to any action.
- C. Disciplinary circumstances involving District officers should be dealt with by a progressive discipline system, if appropriate, to assure impartial treatment and acceptable conduct.

Section 5: Officer Selection Process and Candidate Campaigning

5.1 Guidelines

A. The policies related to officer selection are intended to identify individuals who represent a complete, well-balanced agricultural education/ FFA experience.

5.2 Candidate Evaluation/Election Process

A. The Sam Houston District Executive Committee will be in the balloting room during the scoring of the candidates.

B. The District Officer Selection process will be based on 5 areas and certain percentages per area. 40% for popular vote, 30% for the test, 15% for the interview, 10% for the application, 5% for the writing prompt.

C. The Sam Houston District will elect 2 Area Officer candidates at their district convention. The officer candidates must be from different schools.

D. The application will be the application developed by the Texas FFA and available from the Texas FFA Website.

E. The test will be developed through Q-Bank by Judging Card.

F. The District President is responsible for the writing prompt. In the event that the District President has a candidate, one of the other Executive Committee members will write the prompt.

G. The District and Area officer speech will last no more than 5 minutes. The candidate may not leave the stage during the speech. No props may be used during the speech as well.

H. Runoff speeches for District Officers will be the top 40% and will be no more than 1 minute in length.

I. District and Area officers are required to answer a thought question on stage upon completion of their speech. The question will be asked by a current Area Officer. The thought question will be developed by the District President. In the event that the District President has a candidate, one of the Executive Committee members that doesn't have a candidate, will write the thought question.

J. There will be a minimum of 2 judges for Interviews and applications.

K. The officers of the Sam Houston District Association shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, Sentinel, 2nd Vice President, and 3rd Vice President.

Section 6: Degree and Awards Checks

6.1 Advisor Responsibilities

A. All award candidates will be submitted online prior to District Degree Check on the Sam Houston District Degree date.

B. All applications will be checked at each district degree check. If applications do not arrive at, and qualify from, the district check then they will forfeit advancement to the Area Degree Check.

C. Every chapter advisor that has an application at degree check must be there to actively participate on a degree check committee. This includes Lone Star FFA degrees.

D. The location of the Sam Houston District Degree Check will be determined at the annual Agricultural Teachers Conference or District Meeting.

6.2 Submission Requirements

A. All applications approved and winners declared at the District Degree Check will be advanced to the Area Degree Check by the District President.

B. All applications submitted to Sam Houston District Degree Check must be complete (no draft across Lonestar Degree applications).

C. Star Award candidates must submit 8 copies at the District Check.

E. Proficiency Awards submitted to District Degree Check must make 8 copies.

6.3 Advancement to State Degree Check.

A. The Area Coordinator will advance to State Degree Check the approved applications and the winners declared at Area Degree Check. He/she will notify the advancing schools the day of Area Degree Check.

Section 7: Speaking Development Events

A. Each Chapter in Sam Houston District will enter their advancing speaking event on Judging Card prior to the entry deadline or they must pay the late fee to compete.

B. If a team is not entered by the date of the contest, that team will be charged a late fee.

C. Rules outlined in the State FFA Speaking Handbook will be followed.

D. Each team will provide 2 copies of the manuscripts for the judges.

E. The District will advance two teams to the Area Speaking Contest in each Senior Level speaking event.

F. The District will also advance two teams to the Area Speaking Contest in Soil Stewardship, Junior Prepared, and Extemporaneous Speaking events.

G. The location of the District Speaking will be determined at the annual Agricultural Teachers Conference or District meeting.

H. The entry fee for speaking events will be \$15.00 per team. Double entry fee will be charged for any late teams.

I. Talent teams will follow rules set forth by the State office.

Section 8: Leadership Development Events

A. Each Chapter in Sam Houston District will enter their Leadership Teams on Judging Card prior to the entry deadline or they must pay the late fee, double the entry, to compete.

B. If a team is not entered by the date of the contest, that team will be charged a late fee.

C. Rules outlined in the State Leadership Handbook will be followed at the District contest.

D. The District will advance two teams to the Area Contest in each event.

E. The location of the District Leadership Development Event will be determined at the annual Agricultural Teachers Conference or District meeting.

F. The entry fee for Leadership Development Events will be \$15.00 per team. Double entry fee for every late entry.

G. Judges will be selected by the District President and Vice President.

H. Judges for Area Leadership Contest will start with the 3rd place coach from District and go until a qualified judge is found.

Section 9: Executive Committee

9.1 Members

A. Sam Houston District Executive Committee shall be the ATAT District President, ATAT District Vice President, ATAT District Secretary, ATAT District Treasurer and District President Advisor.

9.2 Meetings

A. Meetings will be set as deemed necessary throughout the year.