**Completing the American Degree in AET (Updated 2021)**

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**Updated: Jan. 13, 2020**

**American Degree Requirements from National FFA (ffa.org)**

ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible to receive the American FFA Degree from the National FFA Organization,

members must meet the following minimum qualifications:

* Have received the State FFA Degree, have been an active member for the past three years (36 months) and have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities on the chapter and state level.
* Have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least three years (540 hours) of systematic secondary school instruction in an agricultural education program, or have completed at least the equivalent of 360 hours of systematic secondary school instruction in agricultural education and one full year of enrollment in a postsecondary agricultural program, or have completed the program of agricultural education offered in the secondary school last attended.
* Have graduated from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.
* Have in operation and have maintained records to substantiate an **outstanding supervised agricultural experience program,** through which the member has exhibited comprehensive planning and managerial and financial expertise.
* SAE Projects MUST be AG RELATED!! (Projects such as: Babysitting, Life Guarding, clothing store, Projects completed for a college course, Do not qualify.)
* A student after entering agricultural education must have:
  + Earned at least $10,000 and productively invested $7,500 or
  + Earned and productively invested $2,000 and worked 2,250 hours in excess of scheduled class time. Any combination of hours, times a factor of 3.56, plus actual dollars earned and productively invested must be equal to or greater than the number 10,000. Hours used for the purpose of producing earnings reported as productively invested income shall not be duplicated as hours of credit to meet the minimum requirements for the degree.
* Have a record of outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement and have achieved a high school scholastic record of “C” or better as certified by the principal or superintendent.
* Have participated in at least 50 hours of community service within at least three different community service activities. These hours are in addition to and cannot be duplicated as paid or unpaid supervised agricultural experience hours.

**This document includes ALL of the steps necessary to complete a successful American Degree application.**

**It is imperative that you review all of the records in your AET account. Just because items were approved for the Keystone Degree, does not, necessarily mean they will be approved by National FFA for the American Degree.**

**Step by step recordkeeping instructions can be found here:**

**paffa.org/association FFA Menu, then, Choose SAE**

If you have recordbook questions, please see the ***Student Guide to AET by Robin Bechtel***

Before you submit the American Degree Application, you need to do some house cleaning and clean up/finish your record books. As you complete your records, then, that info will flow completely to the application

**SAE projects that are acceptable are those that are completed outside of classroom time.**

**SAE projects where only classwork is recorded are not accepted.**

**SAE projects MUST be Ag related**

**Projects in the food service area must include food safety knowledge/skills in**

**The SAE description/clipboard**

I recommend that you print this document and check off each item as you complete it.

OVERALL: Check for spelling – in several areas there are spell check options. If not, copy the info to a Word file and do a spell check. This is a National level application and the grammar/spelling should reflect that.

1. Watch your use of CAPITAL LETTERS. Names, first letter in sentences, and towns, are all capitalized and the letter I, when you mean you… (this is an application, so grammar, etc. is important)
2. Add enough detail to your entries so that anyone reading your application will be able to understand what you did/learned/accomplished. We are not all from your school/town/area.

**PROFILE TAB**

1. **\_\_\_\_\_UPDATE the Profile** – make sure all of the information, here, is ***complete, current, and accurate*** and capital letters are used as needed. This information flows onto the cover page of your application and on to your American Degree Certificate. Your FFA Member Number and Chapter Name and Number MUST appear, here. If not, talk to your teacher. Make sure your birthdate is correct, too. All of this information affects your FFA membership and award eligibility. Include your parent/guardians’ first and last names.
2. **\*\*\*All information will be relayed to you by EMAIL**. Check to be sure your email address is current, up to date and **NOT** your high school email address. After you submit your application in March, check your email at least weekly for information.
3. **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Convention information will only be sent by email.\*\*\*\*\***
4. **\_\_\_\_\_Ag Courses**: Make sure you have selected every Ag course you have completed in HS. The first Ag course is the most important as records entered before the first date of that class will not be included in your application and may generate an error message. If all of your courses are not listed your teacher will have to update the course list.

\_\_\_\_\_Check the rest of the areas in the Profile and update areas that apply to you.

1. Back to the Profile Tab
2. **Go to the Experience Manager**

**\*\*\*To qualify for the American Degree, SAE projects must be Ag related. If you are not sure: contact your Ag teacher. All of your SAE projects will be listed in the application. You can not “turn off” SAE projects and not include them in the application.**

* 1. \_\_\_\_Check over your list of projects carefully, if there are projects that you started and did not complete, go to the Gears and delete them. If you need to finish the records, you can do that, backdating is fine and will not penalize you in any way. Records must be dated prior to Dec. 31 of the previous ending year.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_Gears: Make sure your project is the correct type. If you are not sure, go to Explore SAE and review the information, there. Placement and Foundational projects do NOT have ownership. Livestock projects do not go there. If the description indicates ownership, the application will be flagged for editing, so fix/update it now.
  3. Project names are VERY IMPORTANT!! Do not use animal names; if your horse’s name is Sadie, the project name should be Pleasure Horse. If you pay for the horse’s expenses, the project is entrepreneurship; If your parents or others pay for the project expenses, then, enter those expenses as non-cash expenses OR the project is owned by someone else and it is Unpaid placement.
  4. If you have market animals the name should include the YEAR that you planned to SELL or sold the animals. Market Steer 2020, for example.

Market projects are completed when the animal or group is sold. If you have another market project, that should be a new project the following year. Breeding projects and placement projects continue from year to year and do not include the year in the name: Beef Production, Rabbit Production

If you have market/replacement or breeding projects, select the management module that best applies to your project. (in the gears section)

Placement projects are named: Joe Smith Landscaping Company Placement or Jane Jones Dairy Farm Placement or Albert’s Electrical Contracting Company Placement

**\*\*\*For the American Degree you must have had an SAE project for THREE years that you were in HS and then, since you graduated. You can have different projects after high school or they can continue, either is OK.**

* 1. \_\_\_\_\_Make sure the Plans (Pencil) are completed for each project. They need to be very descriptive and if you have the same project for several years, update the description every year. You will print and submit your SAE plans with the American Degree application. (SAE Plans will not be submitted in 2021, they will be reviewed, electronically)
  2. **Financial entries: make sure you have recorded purchases of all animals (Inventory purchased for resale), feed expenses, vet expenses, and the sale of all of the animals that you purchased.**
  3. **Journal: make sure you have journal entries that document your work with the project: skills and knowledge learned. What was in the feed that you were feeding? When did you change the feed/why? When did you deworm/vaccinate? What did you use/why?**
  4. \_\_\_\_\_Complete the Annual Summary – that is the clipboard. Even if it is marked green, review it. The entries in Annual Summary go to the application as a description of the project. This page helps the reviewers of your application to fully understand your projects and YOUR ROLE in the project. Placement projects should include the month that the job started/ended. The annual summary is a REVIEW of what actually happened (past tense!) during the year, not what you PLAN to happen at the beginning of the year, but, is completed at the end of the year. You can include what you learned, new skills completed/learned, etc. “Scope” or the Numeric Quantity of animals that you worked with each year is completed in the Annual Summary section, also. If you are not sure what to enter, choose the green ? for more explanation. Be careful of the length of the description, it may cut off in the application.

**Your description should include something that you learned or a new skill that you practiced.**

**Placement Clipboards/Descriptions**

* A good tip for each year is to (#1) short sentence of how the year started (ex. This is my 1st year of this project that started in August...)
* (#2) A summary of skills gained in the year (ex. In this year I gained skills in \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_)
* (#3) A summary of important results or outcomes for the year (measurable values). (ex. in this year important outcomes were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_. )

**Placement Examples:**2017: Lebanon Area Vet Clinic (190 paid hours)- Veterinary Assistant. I started working as a general maintenance person in May of 2017 and worked 8 hours most Saturdays and I assisted the vets in the clinic holding animals and as a receptionist as needed. I learned how to take x-rays and assisted the vet techs.

2018: I continued my job at the Vet Clinic and earned a raise and more responsibility. I have learned how to float fecal samples and have increased my hours. Next year, I am going to apply for a Vet Tech Certification program. My job ended in August, when I started the Vet Tech program at Wilson College.

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Smith Dairy Farm Placement–

2016: My project started in September when I learned about SAE projects and I worked for my dad on our dairy farm; where we milk 250 Holstein cows. I started out feeding calves and cleaning their hutches. I learned that clean hutches and feeding equipment results in healthier calves.

2017: After completing the AI Breeding school, I was able to breed the cows. My conception rate is 80%. In the future I hope to buy some of my own cows and integrate them into the herd.

2018: This year I have learned how to give shots and watch for mastitis and foot rot. I have applied to Penn State where I will major in Dairy and Food Science.

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Jones Produce Farm: 2016 We raise 1 acre of watermelons, 2 acres of strawberries and 5 acres of sweet corn, there are 4 other employees. I started out weeding the strawberry patch and picking produce as needed.

2017 I run a stand at Root’s Market on Tuesday and am involved in all aspects of produce production: planning the planting, planting, cultivating, spraying (I received my spray license this year), and determined the best harvest time.

NOTE: If you have completed 4 years in the same placement, the descriptions should change each year. And not be copied every year. You should show a change or increase in tasks that show more responsibility/skills learned and how this job can related to your Ag classes and career plans.

**Entrepreneurship:**

2016: I **bought two pigs** from Smith Show Pigs on 4/2/2016 to raise and show at the Somerset County Fair. I **sold** one of the pigs to Somerset Bank on 8/27/2016 and I sold the other one to my family to butcher on 9/1/16. I learned that proper animal management is important to raise a successful animal. I spent 117 hours working on my project.

My SAE project included 3 dairy cows; Crystal, Bonnie, and Sally. It also included Crystal’s heifer calf Catie and Sally’s calves Susie and Sammy. I sold Bonnie in 2013. Crystal and Sally are bred for next year.

This may explain the animals that show up in your inventory and it will explain what happened to Bonnie. Since this is an ongoing project: you can update the description each year. Then, the reviewers can follow the animals and see what has happened with them, sold, bred, transferred to another project, etc.

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Rabbit Production: Quantity: 31 bunnies 2016 I started my rabbit project when I started Ag class in August. I started with 2 Californian does and 1 Californian Buck. The does had 4 litters; 28 bunnies. I sold 25 bunnies at the Green Dragon Small Animal Auction and showed 3 at Solanco Fair as a meat pen. I still have the 2 does and buck and I sold the meat pen.

NOTE: If the rabbits are not sold, etc. they should appear in the non-current inventory in the application.

Market Swine 2017:In May, I bought 3 pigs to show, this fall. I showed and sold 2 hogs at Lampeter Fair and my family butchered and ate the third one. I included the funds for the 3rd hog as income market value. I don’t have any non-current inventory items, because I borrowed the equipment from my cousin. I learned how to exercise the hogs to keep them trim for the show. I also learned how to identify pig diseases and how to give shot.

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Market Goats 2017: (NOTE the year included in the name is the year the animals were sold)

I purchased 2 Boer market goats in April, which I showed and sold at Solanco Fair in September. I learned that feeding a consistent feed ration is important to prevent bloat. I also learned how to trim their hooves. My dad provided transportation for my animals.

Market Steer 2020

2019: I bought my steer in September and plan to show and sell him next year at the Bedford County Fair. I am learning about steer feed rations and how to budget for a profit.

2020: I continued to raise my steer and have learned about ringworm, this year. I was able to treat the ringworm and my steer was OK to show. I learned how to write buyer letters and other marketing strategies. I showed and sold my steer at the fair in August.

Butcher Steers (no year included)

2017 (Quantity 5 steers) I started this project in December with the purchase of 5 feeder calves. I plan to raise them and sell them next fall as quarters and halves. I have contacted a local USDA inspected butcher shop who will slaughter and cut them up for me. I am working on a budget so that I can advertise the price of the beef for my advertising.

2018 (Quantity 16 steers) I finished out my **5** steers ahead of schedule because of the feed ration I was using. The slaughter house had an opening and I have been able to sell all of the meat from the 5 steers. I have found that consumers prefer “local” beef. I bought **6** more steers in March and **5** more steers in September with the plan of having a consistent supply of beef. I plan to contact a local restaurant to contract sales of my beef.

2019 (Quantity 24 steers) I butchered and processed the **11** steers that I had on feed and have delivered that beef to the restaurant. It’s neat to go to the restaurant and see my farm name on the menu! I bought **5** more steers in March and **8** more steers in September. Demand for beef is highest in the summer, so, I am planning for that demand.

2019 I raised a HampX wether market lamb which I purchased from Smith’s Club Lambs in Pittsburgh, PA. I purchased the lamb on March 20, 2018, for $1,800, and sold the lamb August 9, 2018 for $7.50/lb weighing 146lbs. I showed this market lamb at the Wayne County Premier Jackpot and at Greene County Fair. The project taught me to always ensure biosecurity on your farm, that you cannot take finish off a lamb, and the reasonable market weight is about 130-140.

*NOTE: some names were changed.*

f. \_\_\_\_\_Budget: Back to the Experience Manager and Select the Dollar Sign, make sure you have completed a budget for each project.

**JOURNAL TAB**

1. \_\_\_\_\_Choose: Review your journal entries, you can select the type of entries that you want to review. Select ALL in the year menu so that you can see all of the entries, not just one year of entries. Double check your FFA Activities and Community Service Hours. Your entries, here should be brief, descriptive and TO THE POINT! Make sure your journal hours are realistic. There are only 24 hours in a day and you need to sleep some of those hours!

A journal entry example could be: 9/8/15, Description:

9/1 – 9/8 This week, I worked Monday and Tuesday for 10 hours total, I waited on customers and stocked shelves.

Again on 9/8/15: 9/1-9/8 This week I fed and watered my pigs everyday. The vet came on Wednesday to blood test for the fair and I cleaned them out on Tuesday afternoon for the vet visit.

**Hours for placement projects come from the paycheck hour entries. Make sure hours are realistic and reflect the SAE description.**

Projects during HS should have weekly entries to help your teachers and mentors follow the progress of your projects.

After graduation journal entry frequency is up to you and your teacher. Entries should be at least monthly.

**Community Service Entry:** Lebanon Area Fair: In the vegetable building: I swept the floor, changed lightbulbs that didn’t work and I helped to set up the display tables and covered them with paper.

Millersville Cemetery: I contacted the cemetery committee to see if they needed help. I spent 5 hours weed eating around the headstones and picking up trash. My friend helped me to fix the fence. We also replaced one headstone that had fallen over.

Salvation Army: My friend and I rang the Salvation Army Bell for donations in front of the local Wal-Mart. 25 people put money in the bucket.

Campbelltown Nursing Home: I contacted the nursing home to see if I could volunteer. I had fun playing bingo with the residents 3 times. On another day, I helped the staff to make ice cream for the residents.

Londonderry Retirement Community: I helped patients: Mr. and Mrs. Jones to weed their flower beds and we planted new vegetable plants.

The requirement is 50 hours, strongly suggest at least 60 hours in case an activity is questioned.

This is NOT community service: Palmyra FFA: I carried fruit out to people’s cars during the fruit sale.

Palmyra FFA: I manned the FFA Booth at Tractor Supply during National FFA Week. Our chapter needed to work because of the grant that we applied for. If you/your chapter are paid or receive any benefits as a result of the service, is not community service. EX: working at the pizza stand at the Farm Show where you earn “scholar dollars”.

**FINANCES TAB:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_Select Beginning Values (Blue box)

In this section, you should have entered the values of any **items DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE Entrepreneurship SAE PROJECTS** that **you owned** prior to your first day in Ag. The first day in Ag is the first date that you had an Ag class. If that needs to be updated, go back to PROFILE tab and select the Ag classes section.

1. \_\_\_\_\_Current Expenses are current assets (will be used up in a short time: feed) that you owned before your first day in class. If you showed animals in 4-H and had some feed left that you are going to use for your FFA projects, etc.
2. \_\_\_\_\_Non-current Items in inventory are OWNED by you, the STUDENT. Items listed are those used in your Ag related/Entrepreneurship/SAE Project.
3. \_\_\_\_\_Cash/Checking: How much money did you have or do you think you might have had when you started in Ag Education?
4. If you own inventory at the end of the year, the value of these items will impact your final numbers.

\_\_\_\_\_Go Back to the FINANCES TAB

Go to: the Tractor – Non-Current Items.

Make sure the description is complete and with enough detail that anyone will be able to know what the item is. Do NOT use animal names, only. Animal names are acceptable with a complete description included. Example: Sally: Registered Bulldog, Born 1/1/14 (used in a dog breeding project, not a pet)

In the left column, select Usage and enter the % that each item is used in each project. It must total 100% each year. If the item was sold or died, etc. make sure that is indicated as well.

1. \_\_\_\_\_Select Review and edit finances: Check the names of Vendors to be sure the entry is actually a vendor, such as a business or person where you made a purchase – DAD or GRANDPA are not vendors, please use their names. Make sure the vendor name is spelled correctly.

Each entry should be like this:

DATE of purchase/ Description: Project name (category of item purchased, Supplies) vendor From the memo box, a note of exactly what you bought. If you need to make changes, select edit. Always make sure you “SAVE” after making changes.

1. \_\_\_\_\_Year End Adjusted Value

The value of inventory items at Year End or in this case, October first. If the item has been sold, the number is 0.

1. \_\_\_\_\_Non-Current Items (New Items and Usage of Capital Items) Capital items are those items, used in your SAE project that YOU own for more than 1 year. Personal items do NOT go, here.

In this section, you will need to update the capital items information which transfers to inventory in the application. Please give a complete description of the items. If there are animals, then, date of birth and breed should be indicated, also. Each animal should be listed separately.

1. \_\_\_\_\_LOAN MANAGER

This is where you enter loans associated with your SAE projects. **Personal loans do not go here.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_NON-SAE ENTRIES

You can enter some personal expenses here.

This is money that you show as spent has to be indicated somewhere as income.. either as gifts, non-SAE income etc. or SAE income. Remember, you can’t spend money that you didn’t earn. If you enter an expense, it has to be covered by an income. The applications do NOT require non-SAE expenses.

1. \_\_\_\_\_EXPERIENCE MANAGERS

If you have animal, entrepreneurship projects, you should be using the Experience managers.

If that is not showing up in the Finance tab, then, go back to Experience Manager and the gears, go to the bottom of the screen and select

Category: Animal Systems

Sub category – Your animal type

Category/Unit – What type of animals; Breeding, showing, etc.

Management Module: Market/Replacements or Breeding Herd

**REPORTS TAB**

\_\_\_\_\_If you have CHECKED off every topic above and deleted non-Ag related SAE projects, you are ready for the BIG STEP!

To set up an American Degree application: go to the Reports tab and select Degree/Application Manager.

At the top of the page you will see: [**FFA Award Information**](about:blank) – Choose that and complete EVERY box that applies to you. It automatically inserts into FFA award reports: Make sure you enter the years AND hours of Ag Ed courses taken in your school. Hint: An average year long course is 120 hours. You can divide to get hours for partial credit courses.

\_\_\_\_\_In the box that says “AgriScience Fair, pull down American Degree and click Add New Then, Select Application. (You only have to do this ONE time)

The first window includes basic instructions – READ THE INSTRUCTIONS! If there is a red box at the top of the window that says: AET detected the following problems…. Fix the problems before you continue.

1. \_\_\_\_\_In the left margin Select COVER (This page should have filled in with information from your SAE profile)
   1. Your contact information: especially email is extremely important and how National FFA will be contacting you. Make sure you update your email in the profile tab.
2. \_\_\_\_\_Area refers to the PA FFA Region: Leave District blank.
3. \_\_\_\_\_Read every page from the top down for special instructions. Where you see Green ? icons, select that for more information in an area.
4. \_\_\_\_\_At the bottom left Ag Education Hours and Years, please enter the years AND Ag course hours.
5. \_\_\_\_\_On the cover page, select “Review Profile in AET” to make sure the profile, addresses, etc. are complete.
6. Membership check: Review your FFA membership and be sure that it is correct.
7. \_\_\_\_\_BASIC SET UP PAGE – If the ending date is not 12/31/2019, go back to the Experience manager, delete the application and open a new one. You will not lose any records/info, the dates will be updated in the new application.
8. SAE Description pages (taken from the Experience Manager, Clipboard) make sure each SAE description is a “review” of each project year. Make sure the hours are reflected in the description and realistic.
9. INCOME AND EXPENSE PAGE
10. \_\_\_\_\_Income and expenses should appear on this page according to the type of projects that you have had.
11. \_\_\_\_\_If you have had entrepreneurship projects, expenses such as feed or other supplies should appear here. Throughout this page, you should NOT see terms like: not met or not balanced or No. If you do, you will have to go back to your records and make some changes.
12. \_\_\_\_\_Community Service: Make sure your community service entries explain what you did, Briefly. It is strongly recommended to have more CS activities than required and for each year of FFA membership.

Community Service Organization is for the ORGANIZATION that benefitted from your work/time.

Your FFA chapter is not the benefit of the community service. **Be specific as to the organization that the service was provided for/to.**  Good Examples: Palmyra Nursing Home; Ronald McDonald House; Your County Fair;

Examples that are not acceptable: Your FFA Chapter; Your High School.

1. \_\_\_\_\_Continue checking the rest of the pages, if there is an error or Not Met, then, refer to the Green? And go back to AET to see where your issues are.

When you are sure your application is complete: you can get the required electronic signatures.

Go to the Electronic Signature page in the application and read and follow all of the instructions. The SAE records can be edited without getting the application re-signed.

**SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION: IT IS NOT SUBMITTED UNTIL YOU COMPLETE THESE STEPS!!**

After you get the Electronic Signatures, check the Checklist page, one more time, to be sure that the list indicates “Met”, Community Service will say Pending Review (that is OK)

Then, Go to “Complete/Print Your App”

**\*\*\*Choose the button; “Complete/Save Your App” Your application will not be submitted for review until you complete this step.**

**NOTE: when you make changes/edits to the application, you will need to complete this step, again, for the edits to show up in the application that will be reviewed.\*\*\*\***

**Your application will not be reviewed without completing these steps!!**

**TWO copies of the Application and TWO copies of 2019 SAE plans will be printed and turned in at SLLC or postmarked to Mike Brammer’s office by March 9. (NOT 2021!!)**

**NOTE: After your application is submitted: check the application submission window, weekly for updates up to the FFA Convention. Important convention information will be provided in this area.**

Your teacher can contact Mrs. Fay for additional help if you have an issue.

Good Luck!!!!

You and your teacher will receive ONE email with edits/corrections required for submission to National FFA AFTER the applications are submitted to PA FFA at SLLC. Watch for an email in late April.

Please print/keep that email and make every correction on the list before notifying PA FFA for final review.

When that happens you will see a new link in the application: Submission Status, open that link to see any edit notes that may come from N. FFA. I suggest that you check that link, weekly, to see info from N. FFA. You will see: This Application is Fully Approved: PENDING. You will also see a box: Notes From N. FFA. If you receive any notes, there, please email me, Mrs. Fay, before you make any changes to your recordbook.

Check the Degree/Application Manager weekly for updates from National FFA. Applications are officially approved by the National FFA Board at their meeting in August. You will want to make your hotel reservations before that.

If you have any questions/concerns about the American Degree process: email [cfay1212@gmail.com](about:blank)

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Once your application version is made, the application will be shared with a member of our review committee, electronically, (you will not need to print/submit/mail your application)

You and your FFA Advisor will receive an email with a list of edits to be made, it is a good idea to print this list and check it off as you make ALL of the edits.

When the edits are complete, go through the steps to make another version and those edits will be reviewed.

When all edits are made and the app is approved by the PA committee, it will be submitted, electronically, to National FFA.