Completing the American Degree in AET (Updated November 2026)

By: Carole Fay: PA SAE Specialist

Cfay1212@gmail.com

2026 American FFA Degree Review Process

In 2027, all American FFA degree applications submitted Jan. 1 - March 15 that do not pass the national-level review will have one revision opportunity. All applications submitted March 16-June 15 that do not pass national review will be rejected, with no revision opportunity provided.

American Degree Information from National FFA (ffa.org)

If you plan to apply for the American Degree in 2027, contact your FFA Advisor, right away, so they can help you through the process.

This link is to the American Degree Handbook from National FFA, it is a great reference for information on completing the American Degree: https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/american-ffa-degree/

American FFA Degree Cover Information

Please strongly encourage American FFA Degree candidates to check the contact information (email address and phone number) on the cover page of their degree applications. Candidates must be able to access their email addresses through ***October 2027.*** *An active email address is vital for candidates to receive communications, instructions, and information regarding approval of their degree application, participation in the American FFA Degree Ceremony at national convention, and more.*

Remember to hit "Refresh" on the advisor information section of the cover page to ensure it is up to date.

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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** (12^{th}, 11^{th}, 10^{th})(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, and projects completed for a high school or college course, do not qualify.)
- ✓ Food Service projects must include food safety skills/knowledge learned in the SAE Description/clipboard.
- ✓ 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 more than 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.

NOTE: The candidate must have been enrolled in an Ag Ed class during their Senior year of HS in order to continue FFA membership after graduation.

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 are not stand alone classes: they are in Addition to a scheduled Ag course
SAE projects MUST be Ag related
Projects in the food service area must include food safety knowledge/skills in
The SAE description/clipboard
Your application must be opened in the year that the degree will be submitted.
Ex. If your app will be submitted in 2027, the date created needs to be in 2027.
You can open one in previous years to see how close you are, but, open a new one after Jan. 1,
so that all of the dates are correct.

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 in AET

I. **_____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 birth year is correct, too. All of this information affects your FFA membership and degree eligibility. Include your parent/guardians' first and last names.

II. ***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.

III. *******Convention information will only be sent by email.*****

IV. **_____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.

V. Back to the Profile Area

VI. Go to the Experience Manager

*****To qualify for the American Degree, <u>SAE projects must be Ag related</u>. 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. ALL projects will feed into the application ("active or not")**

a. ____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.

b. _____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.

c. 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.

d. If you have market animals the name should include the YEAR that you planned to sell or sold the animals. Market Steer 2026, for example. Steer was purchased in 2025 and sold or butchered in 2026. 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.**

e. _____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. SAE Plans will be reviewed as part of the review/approval process. Electronic signatures in the plans will need to be completed, also.

f. Financial entries: make sure you have recorded purchases of all animals (Inventory purchased for resale/livestock purchase), feed expenses, vet expenses, and the sale of all of the animals that you purchased. Financial entries need to be complete, realistic for the animals raised, and in chronological order (you didn't sell the animal before you bought it)

g. 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? There should be enough journal entries to validate the completion of the projects.

h. _____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 and is completed at the end of the calendar 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. Efficiency factors are not necessary, this year.
Your description should include something that you learned or a new skill that you practiced.
Do not copy and paste entries in ongoing projects. What new skills/knowledge did you learn each year?

Placement Clipboards/Descriptions

Placement Examples:

2025: Lebanon Area Vet Clinic : Veterinary Assistant. I started working as a general maintenance person in May of 2019 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. (NOTE: 7 months of work; 28 Saturdays x 8 hours: approx. 224 hours expected in the paid column of the application, numbers do not have to be exact, but, reasonable from the description)

2026: 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. (NOTE: working 28 Saturdays for 8 hours should be approx. 224 hours in paid hours, comment made that hours increased, so the hours in 2026 should be higher than in 2025)

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Smith Dairy Farm Placement– (this could be unpaid placement or paid on a student's home farm or family business)

2024: 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.

2025: 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.

2026: 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: 2025 We raise 1 acre of watermelons, 2 acres of strawberries and 5 acres of sweet corn, there are 4 other employees. I started out in June weeding the strawberry patch and picking produce as needed. Seasonal job ended in October this year.

Jones Produce Farm: 2026 Starting in January: 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. Next year, I plan to change the feed program for better weight gain.

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 year I learned……

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 rabbits 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 adult rabbits are not sold, etc. they should appear in the non-current inventory in the application. Value of bunnies kept will appear in current inventory. Use the Breeding Herd manager to record and track offspring.

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 a 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.

Market lambs 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 entrepreneurship project.

JOURNAL

a. _____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.

FOOD SERVICE:

What is Food Safety in Food Service?
An easy SAE project is working in the food service industry. One purpose of SAE is learning/practicing new skills. In the food service industry, someone at that business has completed the Serv Safe Certification. It would be good for your students to research Serv Safe and what that means to the industry and their job. Here is a free website where students can go and learn BASIC food handling and safety skills. They can document that information in their journals and in their clipboard.
https://fightbac.org/food-safety-basics/the-core-four-practices
Some states do not permit students to have food service as a valid SAE project, PA allows that and we can use food service for American Degree IF the candidate includes food safety in the SAE clipboard/description.

SAE Description(Clipboard)

I started working at Joe’s Italian Restaurant in October as a food prep assistant. I learned how to prevent cross contamination of foods such as ready to eat foods and fruits and raw meats.
(The next year)
My job at Joe’s continued and this year I learned how to prep vegetables for salads and how to store hot foods in the refrigerator. I wrote the date, time, and type of food on the container. I also learned how long certain foods can be

stored in the cooler and when they needed to be discarded. My boss showed me the 3 types of thermometers that we use to check the temperature of foods that are held for serving and after a period of time they are discarded.

Community Service Entry: If you look at the National FFA Community Service Guidelines you will see what types of service are allowed.

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

Examples: Note the group who benefitted from the service

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.

Fulton Township: My friends and I collected trash along the road 3 times this year: March, June, September for 9.5 hours.

Fulton Township Fire Company: I worked at the Fireman's carnival in the food stand. Profits from the food stand were used to purchase and update equipment in the fire company.

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" is also not Community Service.)

FINANCES:

I. _____Select Start of Ag Ed inventory (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 and select the Ag class Schedule section.

a. _____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.
b. _____Non-current Items in inventory are OWNED by you, the STUDENT. Items listed are those used in your Ag related/Entrepreneurship/SAE Project.
c. _____Cash/Checking: How much money did you have or do you think you might have had when you started in Ag Education?

II. 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.

III. _____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.

IV. _____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.

V. _____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.

VI. _____LOAN MANAGER

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

VII. _____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.

VIII. _____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** – 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.

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.

_____In the box that says: **Start a new application by choosing from this drop down men:** pull down to American Degree and click Add New Then, Select Application. (You only have to do this ONE time)

The first window includes basic instructions – you need to read: #1 and #9, the rest of the information is for candidates who are not using AET, you are, so, you can ignore those.

a) _____In the left margin Select COVER (This page should have filled in with information from your SAE profile)
    a. 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.
b) _____Major Region is the PA FFA Region: Minor Region is left blank.
c) Chapter Advisor name: if there is more than 1 listed, choose the advisor who will be the primary contact for the application process.
d) _____Read every page from the top down for special instructions. Where you see Green ? icons, select that for more information in an area.
e) _____At the bottom left Ag Education Hours and Years, please enter the years AND Ag course hours.
f) _____On the cover page, select "Review Profile in AET" to make sure the profile, addresses, etc. are complete.
g) Membership check: Review your FFA membership and be sure that it is correct.
h) _____BASIC SET UP PAGE – If the ending date is not **12/31/2022**, 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.
i) 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.

j) INCOME AND EXPENSE PAGE
k) _____Income and expenses should appear on this page according to the type of projects that you have had.
l) _____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.
m) _____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. You can do CS WITH members of your chapter, but, again, your chapter can not benefit from the service.

n) _____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 "Save a New Version #)
*****Choose the button; "Get PDF" and review the pdf of your application.**
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!!
Your teacher can contact Mrs. Fay for additional help if you have an issue.

Good Luck!!!!
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Application Submission
Applications are submitted electronically, no need to print anything
It is recommended that you print the application and READ it before it is submitted electronically.
Once your application version is made/saved,
Your Advisor will submit it to State FFA to be reviewed.
The application will be shared with a member of our review committee, electronically.

When you go to Reports Tab: Degree/App Manager, you will see a button: **Submission Lists and Feedback**
You will see notes, there, regarding your application. You may see a note that indicates edits that need to be made to the application.

Electronic Submission To National FFA Process:
When your application is ready to be submitted to National FFA: Your advisor will Contact Carole Fay; PA SAE Specialist for more information. Continue to check the submission list and feedback area to see updates/info on your application.

The checklist that is used to review American Degree applications in PA is below; Use that to review your SAE records and application before submission.

ADVISOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. **American Degree Submission Information for Teachers (updated for 2026)**
2. Make sure the candidate is on the FFA roster and has had continuous FFA membership.
3. Review their Experience Manager and make sure there is no Red.
4. **The member "saves" a pdf of the application. This must be done each time after edits are made to save a new version to be reviewed.
5. **Advisor:** Go to Reports tab: FFA Awards Degree/App Manager
6. Click on the word "Application" to review each page in the application
7. Check the cover page and be sure the Primary Advisor Contact is checked and the email is current.
8. Carefully read over each page, making sure the entries are reflected with the project type.
9. Once you have reviewed the application and it meets your approval:
10. **Return to the Application Manager:**
11. Then, choose: State Submission Lists and Feedback box/button
12. Find **PA2026 American Degree Candidates**: Choose: Edit list
13. Find the "Browse" button
14. Under the "Add to Submission List" column, Click "Add" Button
15. "Adding" the application to the list makes it visible to the State Reviewer: Carole Fay
16. Once it is reviewed by the state, it may be "Removed" from the state list with edits noted.
17. The student and teacher will see those notes in Deg/App Manager in the "State Submission Lists and Feedback Box"
18. When the edits are made, the student "saves" a new version, the teacher reviews the edits and "Adds" the new version to the list and the state will review it again. (in other words go back to ** in this document)
19. When the application is approved at the State level, it will be submitted to National FFA. If there are issues found, they will "remove" it, and make notes for edits. Carole, the teacher, and the candidate will all see the notes for edit. If there are any questions, feel free to email Carole Fay for clarification. When the edits are cleaned up and then a new version will be made and submitted. When the application is approved by National FFA, the line will be green and Status: Approved will appear. Yes, that does mean that the application is complete and has been approved by National FFA!
    You can check back on the American degree application page for details about National Convention, in the near future.

American Degree Checklist (Fay) **Submitted to N. FFA_____**

Candidate's Name: _____FFA Chapter: _____

Keystone Degree Year _____ **GRAD Year _____**

_____Reviewer VERSION # REVIEWED _____ MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS____

2027 American FFA Degree Review Sheet

Experience Manager checked: Complete? _____ (ALL GREEN) No red

Ag Courses Entered? 18/19 19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24 24/25 25/26

FFA Membership? (Each year of Ag Classes/SAE) 18/19 19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23 23/24 24/25 25/26

Email dates: _____

Yes No 1. SAE Agreements complete (Exp manager, green)
Yes No 2. Financial entries: adequate
Yes No 3. Journal Entries adequate
Yes No 4. SAE clipboards green

Application: SAE: 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19

Yes No 5. Review the Checklist of Minimum Qualifications: NO DRAFT on the application

Yes No 6. Chapter Number and Membership Number appear at the top of the Cover page.

Yes No 7. Personal email address included

Yes No 7 a COVER: Teacher/ Primary Contact marked?

Yes No 8. . Candidate has SAE projects for (at least) **3 years including 2025**

Yes No N/A 9. **(Basic Award Set up Page)** Check the Beginning Values: Entrepreneurship projects are the only type that will have beginning current or non-current inventory. Inventory values should be realistic.

Yes No N/A 10. If Education Expenses are indicated on page 4, Sect. V.d., check "post-secondary school attended" on page 3. If no school indicated, mark no and make a note.

Yes No 11. SAE descriptions on pages 5 - 8 include growth (knowledge, skills learned) as a result of the project. Written in past tense; what happened during the project? Responsibilities/sale of animals, etc. Does the number of hours reflect the SAE Description?
Does the description include the end result of the animals? 2 cows calved, sold 1 calf, kept 1, etc. Animals sold at local fair, etc. Placement projects are not to show OWNERSHIP, "My horse, My garden, etc."

OK SAE projects are not to be duplicated as multiple SAE types or as both paid and unpaid hours. Ex. Same project listed as entrepreneurship AND Placement.

Yes No 12. . **Are all of the SAE projects related to their Ag Ed program?**

Yes No 13. SAE Placement and Foundational Page: If Placement projects: are total hours for each year less than 2080 per year? If more than 2080 reported in one year; . Please make a note at the top of this page.

Yes No 14. Is the hourly pay rate reasonable for the described employment duties and responsibilities?

Yes No 15. . Research SAE; Does the research title provide enough description for you to understand the purpose of the project and do the hours reflect the description of the project?

Yes No 16 . Are unusually high numbers of hours/money explained in the checklist page of the application?

Yes No 17. Candidate has provided description of Entrepreneurship project inventory items as necessary. (Placement and Exploratory projects will not have inventory)

Yes No 18.. Are all inventory items directly related to the SAE projects?
Personal items will have to be removed (Personal vehicle/"toys"). Please Make notes.

Yes No 18 A. Is USAGE completed for non current inventory?

Yes No 19. Income and Expense Summary of SAE Program page should NOT indicate REVIEW (pg. 9-10 Line 6c

Yes No 18. Income and Expense Summary include expenses and income that are relevant to the project descriptions and type. (page 9 or 10) (Some Entrepreneurship projects should have "Inventory for Resale) Placement and Foundational types of projects should not have any Inventory.

Yes No 19.. If entrepreneurship SAE income exists, are there operating expenses in the application
See Income and Expense Summary Page; Section 2

Yes No 20.. Do market animals show financials for the purchase of the animals? Can be non-cash. (Inventory purchased for resale) each year of livestock projects?

Yes No 21. Financial Balance Sheet Information indicates Met, no errors indicated.

Yes No 22. Candidate has an operation and has maintained records to substantiate an outstanding SAE Program which exhibits comprehensive planning, managerial and financial expertise. (Financials)

Yes No 23. The candidate has qualified under at least one option (Met) (Section J, Qualification Check. (page 12 or 13)

Yes No 24. Review Community Service requirements, over 50 hours, must not be duplicated in SAE projects, "group" is the organization served, not the FFA Chapter, descriptions are complete. What did the member do/what was their involvement. Descriptions can be brief and to the point. At least 3 different activities indicated. **Make sure FFA activities are not used.** This is one area that National FFA screens very carefully. More than 50 hours HIGHLY suggested!! See CS suggestions below.

Additional Comments:

Community Service HINTS: Applications need to list "Individual/Group/Organization to whom **service was Provided**" in the first column, not who service was performed with. Applications which list FFA, 4-H or applicant's own school in the **first column** are wrong and will be questioned by national reviewers.

Example of Bad Entry:

Individual/Group/Organization to whom service was PROVIDED	Service performed and whom you performed the service with if applicable	Hours
FFA Chapter	Helped with fundraiser.	3

*In this example the applicant lists their FFA Chapter as the organization that they **served**. If true, this is not acceptable within the guidelines. A common error is for applicants to list who they served WITH in column 1. If what they actually did was participate in a fund raiser for something acceptable **with** their chapter, it meets the guidelines but is entered incorrectly leading reviewers to believe the service was provided **to** the chapter.*

Example of Acceptable Entry:

Individual/Group/Organization to whom service was PROVIDED	Service performed and whom you performed the service with if applicable	Hours
XYZ Local Children's Hospital	Raised money for play area.	3

In this example reviewers can reasonably assume the service was provided to a community group which meets the guidelines.

Example of Good Entry:

Individual/Group/Organization to whom service was PROVIDED	Service performed and whom you performed the service with if applicable	Hours
XYZ Local Children's Hospital	Volunteered with my FFA Chapter to hold a BBQ fundraising dinner. All money earned was used to clean and repair the children's play area in the pediatric wing of the hospital.	3

In this example reviewers can clearly determine the service meets the guidelines.

Continue to next page:

NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

Community Service for FFA Degrees

FFA Degree Community Service Guidelines

Updated: 08/2019

Community service is the engagement of individuals or groups in an organized activity that contributes to the local, national or world community. Community service activities are those opportunities that are available to all residents of a community. They consist of activities that make the community a better place to live and work. It is also known as volunteering which is defined as the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause, without payment, for their time and services.

FOR ACTIVITIES TO BE ACCEPTABLE AS FFA DEGREE COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE MET:

1. The activity includes tangible community involvement by the applicant.
2. The applicant has an opportunity to gain skills and competencies or apply skills and competencies learned in the classroom setting.
3. The activity has a demonstrated positive impact and is focused on helping others, improving community resources or improving community infrastructure.
    a. Community members impacted may not primarily be members of the applicants own family.

4. The applicant must voluntarily donate his/her time, energy and knowledge outside of any class time, including non-agricultural education class time.

   a. If the applicant is allowed to perform service in place of other required activities *(classwork for example)* it is not donated time and should not be counted.

   b. Service required for reparations or punishment is not voluntary and cannot be counted.

5. Community Service activities can be organized by a group the applicant is a part of *(FFA Chapter, church congregation, sports team, etc.)*, but the activity cannot be for the benefit of the group itself.

   Exception: *If the applicant is a member of a group whose SOLE purpose for existing is to provide service (March of Dimes, United Way, American Cancer Society, etc.) an event put on by the group may benefit its own service mission.*

6. Activities listed/hours counted as Community Service cannot be duplicated in the FFA activities section of the application or as unpaid SAE hours. Activities/hours may only be used in one section of an application.

FFA Degree Acceptable and Unacceptable Community Service EXAMPLES:

Unacceptable ***These examples are participation/engagement rather than service or directly benefit the participant.***	**Acceptable** ***These examples are voluntary, provide tangible benefit to the community and do not directly benefit the participant.***
Participating in a fundraiser in which the profits benefit the FFA Chapter and/or chapter members.	Participating in a fundraiser organized by the FFA Chapter for which all profits are donated to another community group or cause.
Organizing and/or participating in a fall leaf clean up at **your own** club headquarters or a relative's home.	Organizing and/or participating in a fall leaf clean up for a civic building, community park, or for a group of community members in need.
Volunteering as the scorekeeper, manager, concessions stand attendant, etc. for **your own** or **your school's** sports team, band, play, assembly, choir performance, etc.	Volunteering as the unpaid coach, scorekeeper, manager or referee for a **non-profit community** sports team, band, choir, dance troupe, etc.
Playing on a sports team or participating in a club, band, scout troop, church choir, etc.	Participating in community service activities with or organized by a sports team, club, band, scout troop, church choir, etc.
Participating in or conducting religious worship services/practices such as performing in choir, band, play, re-enactment, providing clerical services (*alter server, priest, missionary, usher, etc.*); proselytizing, teaching religion classes, etc.	Participating with or as part of a non-profit religious organization/group/congregation to provide meals, build homes, provide child care, teach non-religion classes *(English language, employment skills, homemaking skills, etc.)*
Cleaned school windows as required service to make up for truancy, unacceptable behavior or other prohibited acts.	Volunteer to clean windows at local library, courthouse, community center or other not for profit public building/space.
Showing your own or assisting relatives to show animals at a livestock show for an award or to sell.	Serve as a volunteer to organize/conduct a community education event/display at a livestock show or fair.

Help with set up or tear down of fair/livestock show **if such participation is a requirement for** participation in the event/show.	Work with FFA, 4H or other group to voluntarily, and with no compensation to the group, setup/clean up a community event such as a fair, livestock show, community event, etc.
As a member of FFA or any other group *(4H, scouts, Key Club, etc.)* provide training for competitions, events, offices, etc. to your own chapter/group/club.	As an unpaid volunteer provide training for competitions, events, offices, etc. to members of a group of which you **are not a member.**
Serving as an officer in FFA, 4-H, scouts, Glee Club, etc.	Time spent planning, organizing and conducting **a community service project** as an officer or member of an organization/club/group. *(Cannot be double counted as an FFA or SAE activity for other degree requirements.)*
Provided paid training, judging or consulting services to groups or organizations. Example: Serving as a paid livestock judge for junior show.	As an unpaid volunteer, provide training for non-profit, DIRECT AND TANGIBLE community benefit to any group, including one of which you are a member, such as disaster preparation, first aid, suicide prevention, abuse prevention, hunter safety, pollution prevention, invasive species education and control, etc.