

## CRITERIA for JUDGING INTERVIEWS

- Present ideas and responses informally and orally that are appropriate to the setting and the questions asked
- Listen to the comments and inquiries of the interviewers and elaborate with interesting detail and vivid impressions while avoiding repetition.
- Establish and maintain rapport with members of the interview judging team through voice, gestures and attitudinal posture.
- Use voice, vocabulary and language structures appropriate to informal oral communications.

## INTERVIEW JUDGES' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Conduct objective, consistent and uniform interviews.
- Create a positive atmosphere.
- Be personable, attentive and responsive to the student's comments.
- Avoid controversy in the interview. Do not argue, interrupt or display authority that will put the student on the defensive. Do not be confrontational.
- Be an active listener, listen not only to what is being said, but observe **how** it is said.
- Ask pre-determined open-ended questions. Follow-up questions may be asked.
- Refrain from asking question regarding race, religion, creed, ethnic groups, national origin or ancestry, political beliefs or affiliations or any question that can be so construed.
- Help students relax and talk if you sense apprehension.
- Allow the student to complete his/her comments before moving to the next question or ending the interview.
- **Keep on schedule!!**  
10 minutes per student: 1 minute preparation time + 7 minutes interview time + 2 minutes evaluation time
- After the student leaves the room, rate the student's interview performance. It is distracting to the student to be rated while he or she is speaking.

**UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON**  
**DESCRIPTORS for INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM – Rating Scale**

**Voice** is the way a speaker controls volume, clarity, and distinctness of voice to gain greater audibility. Voice should have a variety in the rate, volume, and pitch to engage interest, hold attention and convey self-assurance.

**Language Usage** refers to the appropriate choice of words, proper use of grammar and correct enunciation. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and be appropriate for the occasion.

**Interpersonal Skills** are measured by the candidate's ability to establish rapport with interviewers. The candidate's response should correspond to and interact with the interviewer's questions, and he/she should stimulate an involvement with the interviewers.

**Non-Verbal Language** refers to the manner in which the candidate uses gestures, facial expressions, and physical involvement for effective communication.

Through the interview process, the individual reveals:

Problem Solving Skills  
Analytical Skills

Organizational Skills  
Promotional Skills

When asking question of the candidate, keep these skills in mind. Help the candidate to develop experience in answering questions that reveal these skills.

**Manner** is measured through the candidate's ability to speak with enthusiasm and assurance while showing interest in the interviewers and confidence in their reactions. The candidate should be direct in his/her response.

**Appearance** refers to the appropriate attire for the candidate. The candidate follows USAD dress standards.

## **CONTENT**

**Listening Skills** refers to the ability to analyze and interpret "what is being asked." In order to answer skillfully and address the issue being considered, the candidate must listen carefully and attentively. The candidate's responses to the questions will give an indication of his/her level of attention and ability to identify, sort, and process the information being requested.

**Answering Skills** refers to the ability to 1) address the issue being considered; 2) present information in a clear and concise manner; 3) organize information in a logical and sequential order; 4) adjust responses appropriately to a variety of audiences; and 5) paces conversation to convey necessary information and achieve purpose. Order, logic, imagination, intelligence, and other personal qualities are reflected in the way answers are given. All information presented should be relevant to the question being asked.

**Responses** refer to the quality of the answers given. The candidate should reflect on the questions to provide thoughtful and insightful responses. A well thought-out answer engages the interviewers' attention and gives insight into the candidate's personal qualities, skills goals, and experiences. Relevant examples and illustrations support the answers. The candidate should speak with certainty and conviction.

**Overall Effectiveness** measured the 1) nature of information provided; 2) manner in which it was communicated; 3) overall impression it created, and 4) rapport established between the interviewer and candidate. Some of the questions to consider are: Did the candidate able to achieve a positive impression of this/her skill, experiences, and personal qualities?

## **INTERVIEW – Rating Criteria**

### **Voice**

#### **Volume**

- Don't strain to hear
- Not aware of being loud

#### **Flexibility**

- Vary Volume
- Vary tone

#### **Expressiveness**

- Lively, animated and spirited

### **Language Usage**

#### **Grammar**

- No slang or common phrases (like, really, you know, etc.)
- Inappropriate sentence structure
- Wide range of words and phrases

#### **Enunciation**

- Proper pronouncement of words
- Words not slurred
- Understanding not strained

#### **Appropriateness**

- Combined use of Grammar & Enunciation

### **Interpersonal Skills**

#### **Rapport**

- Attentive, but relaxed
- Smiling
- Confident

#### **Interaction**

- Acts in ways to engage others

#### **Involvement**

- Eye contact with all judges

### **Non-Verbal Language**

#### **Movement**

- Not fidgety or distracting

#### **Gesture**

- Hand, arm and facial gestures to emphasize points
- Natural and appropriate vs. contrived or mechanical

#### **Posture**

- Erect but relaxed
- Purposeful and engaged

### **Manner**

#### **Assurance**

- Confident, convincing and secure

#### **Enthusiasm**

- Inspired, passion for ideas

#### **Directness**

- Acts toward others to establish a relationship
- Establishes a relationship with judges

### **Listening Skills**

#### **Appropriateness of Responses**

- Meaningful response to each question

#### **Attentiveness**

- Eye contact with questioner

### **Answering Skills**

#### **Clear**

- Don't strain to hear
- Not aware of being loud

#### **Flexibility**

- Vary Volume
- Vary tone

#### **Expressiveness**

- Lively, animated and spirited

### **Language Usage**

#### **Grammar**

- No slang or common phrases (like, really, you know, etc.)
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### **What is an "Excellent" performance?**

- Student is enthusiastic, confident and an effective communicator from start to finish of interview.
- Interview flows smoothly and naturally for you as well as the student.
- Student consistently uses ALL interview skills throughout the interview.
- Student left you with a strong positive impression of his/her abilities, opinions and interests.
- A meaningful encounter for you as well as the student.

## OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Objective:** Conduct an objective interview by creating the same situation for every student, (i.e., same judge asking the same set of questions to every student.) Try to develop three sets of questions to avoid unfair preparation times for students in the second and third Interview session. Second or third session students may overhear questions from students in the first session.

### Directions:

1. Develop **eight questions** for the first interview period. Since each judging team will be interviewing decathletes from different categories, the judging teams do not have to use the same set of questions. **Five questions** should focus on the Student's Resume. **At least one question** should focus on the USAD academic theme for the current year. The other questions may come from each category.
2. Try to develop another **eight questions** for the second interview period and another **eight questions** for the third interview period.

**NOTE: Please make sure your first 2 questions are about the student rather than the academic theme.**

1. When you look at the various activities that you have been involved with during high school, which group benefited the most from your participation and why?
2. If your younger brother or sister was just starting out as a high school freshman, what advice would you pass on to him/her...something you wish someone had told you?
3. Describe the most challenging part of preparing for the Academic Decathlon.
4. Why did you pick the \_\_\_\_\_ club as an extracurricular activity?
5. What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself in the past year?
6. Describe a situation you have been in where humor has relieved a tense moment. Or describe something humorous that has happened to you, a friend or family member.
7. Describe how you manage stress.
8. Describe a new relationship or friendship that has resulted with your participation in Academic Decathlon.
9. What traits do you look for when developing new friends? Why?
10. During high school, who has been the most influential person to you and why?

### Sample Questions: China and Its Influence on the World

1. The China was chosen for the theme for this year's Academic Decathlon. Why do you think this topic is suited for the competition?
2. In your study of Economics, you reviewed Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. Which of these concepts did you find most interesting and why?
3. How is Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* related to China and Its Influence on the World? Why do you think Li Po's "*Sent to My Two Little Children in the East of Lu*" was included in the Literature selections for this year's Academic Decathlon?
4. In the field of music, you studied music from China. Which musical piece was the most interesting to you and why?
5. Your study of art included a variety of statues, jewelry, and items from everyday life. Which object did you find most interesting and why?