

Understanding and Avoiding Penalty Points

What are Penalty Points?

- Points deducted from a written report or pitch deck because the report/pitch deck did not follow the criteria established on the Penalty Point Checklist.

What is the Purpose of the Written/Prepared Event Checklist?

- In the DECA Guide
- Ensures fairness
- Maintains a level/equal playing field for all competitors
- Allows for consistent evaluation by judges



PENALTY POINT CHECKLIST

WRITTEN ENTRY

	CHECKED	PENALTY POINTS ASSESSED	PAGE NUMBER
1. The Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity must be signed by all participants and the chapter advisor and placed in front of the written entry. Only physical signatures or digital signatures will be accepted. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.	_____	15	_____
2. Limited to 20 pages (plus the title page and the table of contents).	_____	5 (per page)	_____
3. All pages are numbered in sequence starting with the executive summary and ending with the final page of the appendix. Do not use separate pages between sections or as title pages for sections.	_____	5	_____
4. The written entry follows the outline in the Written Entry Guidelines for the event. Additional subsections are permitted in the body of the written entry.	_____	5	_____
5. The entry must be typed and use a page size of 8½ inches x 11 inches. Handwritten correction, notes, charts and graphs will be penalized.	_____	5	_____

TOTAL PENALTY POINTS ASSESSED

*A check indicates that the item has been examined.
A circled number indicates that an infraction has been noted.
A page number indicates the location of the infraction.*

If the written entry must be submitted as a printed copy at district/region or association level competition, consult with your chartered association advisor regarding penalty points.

PITCH DECK

	CHECKED	PENALTY POINTS ASSESSED	SLIDE NUMBER
1. The Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity must be signed by all participants and the chapter advisor and turned in with the pitch deck. Only physical signatures or digital signatures will be accepted. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.	_____	15	_____
2. Limited to 20 slides.	_____	5 (per slide)	_____
3. All slides are numbered in sequence starting with the cover slide and ending with the final slide of the appendix.	_____	5	_____
4. The pitch deck follows the outline in the Pitch Deck Guidelines for the event. Additional subsections are permitted.	_____	5	_____
5. The pitch deck must be typed and use a 16:9 aspect ratio at 1920 pixels wide by 1080 pixels tall. Handwritten correction, notes, charts and graphs will be penalized.	_____	5	_____

TOTAL PENALTY POINTS ASSESSED

*A check indicates that the item has been examined.
A circled number indicates that an infraction has been noted.
A slide number indicates the location of the infraction.*

1. The Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity must be signed and submitted with the entry. -15 points

- In the DECA Guide
- Must be signed by advisor and ALL participants
- Wet signatures (not just typed) must be used
- Separate file upload



PREPARED EVENT STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Research, report writing and presentation design are important elements of modern business activities. Great care must be taken to assure that the highest ethical standards are maintained by those engaging in research, report writing and presentation design. To reinforce the importance of these standards, all written entries and pitch decks in DECA's Competitive Events Program must submit this statement as part of the entry. The statement **must** be signed by the DECA member(s) and the chapter advisor.

I understand the following requirements are set forth by DECA Inc. for all Competitive Event entries containing a written component or pitch deck. These requirements are additional to the general rules and regulations published by DECA Inc. By signing this statement, I certify that all are true and accurate as they relate to this entry.

1. The contents of this entry are the results of my work or, in the case of a team project, the work of current members of this DECA chapter.
2. No part of this entry has previously been entered in competition.
3. This entry has not been submitted in another DECA competitive event.
4. Credit for all secondary research has been given to the original author through the project's bibliography, footnotes or endnotes.
5. All activities or original research procedures described in this entry are accurate depictions of my efforts or, in the case of team projects, the efforts of my team.
6. All activities or original research described in this entry took place between the 2025 Chartered Association Career Development Conference and the 2026 Chartered Association Career Development Conference.
7. I understand that DECA has the right to publish all or part of this entry. Should DECA elect to publish the entire entry, I will receive an honorarium from DECA. Chapters or individuals with extenuating circumstances may appeal the right to publish the entry to the executive committee of the board of directors prior to April 1.

This statement of assurances must be signed by all participants and the chapter advisor, and submitted with the entry, or the entry will be given 15 penalty points.

Only physical signatures or digital signatures will be accepted. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.

Place in front of the written entry or submit separately with the pitch deck. Do not count as a page.

Participant's Signature	Participant's Signature	Participant's Signature
Participant's Name	Participant's Name	Participant's Name
Competitive Event	School	Chartered Association (State/Province)

To the best of my knowledge, I verify that the above statements are true and that the student's (students') work does not constitute plagiarism.

Only physical signatures or digital signatures will be accepted. Typed names in a font will not be accepted as signatures.

Chapter Advisor's Name	Chapter Advisor's Signature
Chapter Advisor's Email	

2. Limited to the number of pages/slides specified in the guidelines, -5 points for each slide/page over limit

- 20 slide pitch deck max for EIP, ESB, IMCE, IMCP, IMCS, SMG
- 20 pages maximum (not including title page and table of contents) for BOR, BMOR, FOR, HTOR, SEOR, PMBS, PMCD, PMCA, PMCG, PMFL, PMSP, EBG, EFB, EIB, and IBP

3. All pages/slides are numbered in sequence starting with the executive summary and ending with the final page of the appendix. -5 points

- The Title Page and the Table of Contents should **not** be numbered
- The Executive Summary should be on page #1
- Ensure graphics don't cover up the page numbers

CONTENTS	
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
II. INTRODUCTION	2
Subsection A: Description of the Local DECA Chapter	2
Subsection B: Description of School and Community	2
III. MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES TARGETED AT OUTSIDE AUDIENCE.....	4
Subsection A. Purpose of the Activities	4
Subsection B. Planning and Organization of Activities	8
Subsection C. Implementation of the Activities	17
IV. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	24
Subsection A. Evaluation of Campaign.....	24
Subsection B. Recommendations for Additional Future Campaigns	27
V. BIBLIOGRAPHY	29
VI. APPENDIX	29

4. The written entry/slide deck follows the event guidelines. -5 points

- Be sure to use the current year's guidelines
- Each section should be addressed and titled
- Additional subsections are permitted

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
One- to three-page description of the project
II. INTRODUCTION
A. Description of the business or organization
B. Description of the community (economic, geographic, demographic and socioeconomic factors)
C. Overview of the business or organization's current culture and employee engagement strategies
III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY
A. Description and rationale of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study
B. Process used to conduct the selected research methods
IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY
A. Findings of the research study
B. Conclusions based on the findings
V. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN
A. Objectives and rationale of the proposed plan
B. Proposed activities and timelines
C. Proposed metrics or key performance indicators to measure plan effectiveness
VI. PROPOSED BUDGET
Costs associated with proposed strategies
VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY
VIII. APPENDIX
An appendix is optional. If additional material is appended, all pages must be numbered as noted previously. Include in an appendix any exhibits appropriate to the written entry, but not important enough to include in the body. These might include sample questionnaires used, letters sent and received, general background data, minutes of meetings, etc.

5. The written entry must be typed and use a page size of 8 ½ inches x 11 inches. Handwritten corrections, notes, charts, and graphs will be penalized. -5 points

- Even though your project will be submitted online, it must be on standard size paper of 8 ½ x 11
- No handwritten corrections will be allowed
- No handwritten notes will be allowed
- No handwritten charts or graphs will be allowed

5. The pitch deck must be typed and use a 16:9 aspect ratio at 1920 pixels wide by 1080 pixels tall. Handwritten corrections, notes, charts and graphs will be penalized. -5 points

- Even though your pitch deck will be submitted online, it must be on 1920 pixels wide by 1090 pixels tall (standard size for PowerPoint).
- No handwritten corrections will be allowed
- No handwritten notes will be allowed
- No handwritten charts or graphs will be allowed

Common Reasons Penalty Points are Assigned

- Not using the current year's event guidelines
 - Guidelines change from year to year
- All participants and/or advisor not signing the Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity
- Leaving out sections in the body of the written entry/pitch deck
- Missing page/slide numbers or nonconsecutive numbering
- Over the limit of pages/slides