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Virtual Competitions 101:

This guide was created to provide all Alabama SkillsUSA Advisors with a baseline structure and format for running 2021 competitions in either a virtual or hybrid format in their classroom/lab. This guide is based on the current planned format for the 2021 SkillsUSA Championships national competitions being planned for next June.

The concepts in the guide are based on recent successful trial runs conducted by the SkillsUSA National Competition Planning and Support Team.

Note: SkillsUSA National Technical Committees will make adjustments or changes to the format described in this guide to adjust for individual competition needs. Alabama SkillsUSA Technical Committees will also make adjustments or changes to the format in this guide to adjust for individual competition needs. Some contests, including many leadership events, may easily lend themselves to a fully virtual format. Most skill competitions will require a hybrid competition with students in a lab or shop setting. Students will be performing tasks as their work is assessed by judges, who may be offsite viewing the contest remotely or pre-recorded contests.

Definitions

In-person: An in-person event is a “normal” competition scenario with contestants, technical committees and judges as well as advisors all at one competition site, either all on the same day or staggered into small cohorts spaced over several days. Testing is also done on-site.

Virtual: A virtual competition is one held via Zoom where the contestant, his/her advisor and a proctor are at a contest site together, following guidelines that allow for contest integrity as the student or team performs tasks. Students are assessed one contestant or team at a time, so schedules will have to be managed carefully, most likely with a shortened task sequence. Testing can be conducted online ahead of the competition. For leadership events, virtual competitions may be held completely via Zoom.

Hybrid: A hybrid competition is one that combines elements of the in-person event and the virtual event. For example, contestants may take tests online but perform tasks in person, in a small cohort or in rotating groups. Judges may be on-site, or they may be remote.

Pre-recorded: A pre-recorded virtual competition is one held via Zoom where the contestant, his/her advisor and a proctor are at a contest site together, following guidelines that allow for contest integrity as the student or team performs tasks. A stationary camera and the proctor camera (phone) record the student or team contest tasks. The recorded contest is uploaded to an LMS on contest day. Judges will have a specific time frame (window) to judge each contestant.

Note: The contest type (Virtual, Hybrid, or Pre-recorded) will be released in the “Contest Description” two weeks prior to contest day.

SPECIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTE

All schools conducting competitive events are encouraged to establish a health and safety committee as part of your local competition structure. The role of this committee will be to
review health guidelines from your school district, state or federal agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and align your competitions with these established protocols.

Section 1: Foundation and Structure for Contest Delivery Method

Alabama SkillsUSA Districts and State Virtual Competitions will be consistent with national SkillsUSA Championships.

Below is the foundation upon which all national SkillsUSA Championships competitions will be built. Each individual National Technical Committee will adjust as needed to provide the highest quality contest and experience based on their unique individual competition needs.

- **The delivery platform will be Zoom.** The SkillsUSA Championships team is well aware there are some restrictions and school policies in place that may limit or prevent some schools from using Zoom. The Alabama SkillsUSA staff will work with the Technical Committees to provide alternative platform for contestants as needed. Contact contest coordinator, if you need an alternate platform.
  - Multiple breakout rooms may be needed to provide a manageable and observable number of contestants for judges.
  - Multiple Zoom meetings may also be needed due to the number of contestants in any given competition. The platform will limit the number of cameras that can be viewed at one time. Separate simultaneous Zoom meetings may be required, or the Zoom meetings may be scheduled at different times or on different days.

- **On-Site Contest Proctor**
  - Technical committees may require a proctor. You will be notified in advance if one is required.
  - A local industry expert may serve as the proctor at each contestant location. The judges will communicate with the proctors directly and guide them in moving the camera, measuring components, or anything else the judges need to be able to see to accurately score the contestants’ work. The proctor will be asked to assist the judges better if they are an expert in the trade area of the competition.
  - A school staff member may be used as a proctor if a local industry expert is not available due to policies that may be in place that prohibit visitors to the school campus.
  - The proctor IS NOT allowed to score or judge the contestant’s work.
  - The proctor will ensure that all safety procedures are followed, and the student contestants are kept safe. The proctor will step in and communicate with the contestant if safety is a concern.
  - The proctor should use an earpiece or headset to hear instructions from the judges. This will help to minimize the interruptions with the contestants. There
may also be instructions to the proctor that a judge does not want the contestant to hear.

- **Role of the Contestant’s Instructor or Advisor**
  - Prior to the contest, the instructor will make sure the contest site is set up properly and the contestant has all the equipment and materials needed for the competition. An orientation meeting for the instructor may be required to ensure the contest site is prepared properly for the competition.
  - Once the contest begins, the primary responsibility for the contestant’s instructor will be to serve as a safety monitor. They will be required to observe the contestant’s work to ensure that everyone present is kept safe and healthy. **Instructors will only be allowed to intervene or communicate with the contestant if safety is a concern.**
    - The instructor must stay in constant view of the main video feed for the contestant to provide the Technical Committees with evidence that contest integrity is not violated.
    - The instructor will be directed to stay in a location out of the direct eyesight of the contestant. Most likely, this location will be behind the contestant and facing the main video feed. “Section 5: Creating a Contest Floor Layout” will provide more detail for the set up and location of the instructor in the contest area.

**Section 2: Judging and Assessment Options**

- **Alabama SkillsUSA Competitions** will use one of the following options for assessment depending on the contest. The assessment option will be outlined in the contest description.
  - **Live Zoom feed and recorded Zoom video.** This is likely to be the preferred option to provide judges with a live, real-time ability to assess the contestants’ work.
  - **Pre-recorded video submitted by contestant.**
  - **Submitted document by contestants.** This will need to be an element included in many competitions. Contestants would be given a task or assignment, and then upload those documents for judges to view later. The notebook work in some of the leadership competition is one example where this may be done.

**Section 3: Orientation Meetings**

Just as they are in a normal in-person competition, orientation meetings are essential in preparing host sites along with all participants. The host site may be asked to participate in the following meetings:

- Instructor/Host Orientation.
- Proctor Orientation.
• Contestant Orientation.

Alabama SkillsUSA recommends instructors host orientation meeting with proctor, contestant, and anyone helping with the contest.

Section 4: Contest “Trial Runs” or Mock Competitions

Here are a few reasons why running small-scale mock contest is so valuable and important.

1. This provides an opportunity to work through any challenges that might occur in a virtual competition.
2. The trial run will bring attention to the unplanned challenges and provide the opportunity to create solutions before the actual competitions begin.
3. The trial run provides the opportunity to adjust, tweak or polish the baseline contest to create a more productive and efficient final contest format.
4. The trial run builds confidence in running virtual competitions.
5. The trial run event allows you to present a proven and tested contest delivery model to the technical committees.

Setting up and running the small-scale mock competitions

• Focus on the delivery and not on the specific skills performed by contestants. The task or project that the contestant does in the trial run can be very simple and brief, or just one component of a full SkillsUSA competition.
• Experiment with different camera angles and distances.
• Experiment with different types of cameras. Our experience has shown that simple cell phone cameras provided the highest quality video that could also be broadcast on Zoom.
• Experiment with different contest floor layouts and note the correct positions of contestants, proctors, cameras and instructors.
• Learn all the “ins and outs” of the Zoom platform.
  o How to use the main Zoom room.
  o How to best use the breakout rooms.
  o Recording Zoom meetings.
  o Zoom provides several training videos that you might find useful. [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials)
  Experiment with specific instructions provided by Technical Committee for individual contests.

• Lighting can be a challenge in some contests. For example, an Auto Service competition may need additional lighting if a contestant is working in a wheel well working on car
brakes. Cell phones provide a very high-quality video feed if adequate lighting is provided.

Section 5: The Contest Floor Layout

During your trial runs you should set up a sample contest layout as directed by the Technical Committee for individual competitions. Alabama SkillsUSA will provide information in the contest description. The contest description will be emailed to instructors and contestants two weeks prior to contest day. Create the floor layout keeping in mind that you may have to make changes according to the contest description.

Baseline Contest Floor Layout Appropriate for Most Contests (Based on successful trial runs)

- **Main Camera (stationary):** Place the main camera in front of the contest area at a distance that provides viewers with a wide-angle view of the whole contest area. Placing this camera at a 45-degree angle works best (see example layout below).
- **Instructor:** Remember, the role of the instructor after the contest begins is only to serve as a safety monitor. However, to hold the highest integrity, it’s important that the contest floor layout minimize any possible interaction between the contestant and the instructor. Placing the instructor **behind** the contestant at a 45-degree angle that is opposite of the main camera facilitates this integrity. This position allows the instructor to observe the contestant(s), while not providing direct eye contact with their own contestant. This angle will also provide the contest organizers with the ability to see both the contestant and the instructor in one camera view (main camera) to ensure the contest integrity is never compromised.
- **Proctor (2\textsuperscript{nd} Camera):** The proctor should be placed on the opposite side from the main camera. This provides the contest organizers and judges with views of the contests from two different viewpoints. This increases the level of contest integrity by providing a near-panoramic view of the contest floor layout when combining the main view video and the proctor’s camera.
  - This second camera must be **movable** to allow judges to direct the proctors to move around to change the view to best meet their needs in observing the contestant’s performance and as they score the projects.
  - It’s highly recommended this video be shot from a cell phone. Cell phones have proven to provide the highest-quality video feed in our trial run competitions.
  - The use of a **tripod** (or some other way to prop the camera up) will be helpful to the proctors to prevent them from needing to hold the camera throughout the entire competition.
Section 6: Integrity Commitment Form or “Fair Play” Pledge

All Alabama SkillsUSA participants will sign and submit a “Fair Play Pledge”. This will help promote a mindset of holding participants to a high standard and high integrity in every competition with all participants.
SkillsUSA Fair Play Pledge

It is the intention of Alabama SkillsUSA, all contest participants to promote integrity, fair play and respect for all participants within the state competitions and SkillsUSA Championships national competitions. All host teachers must sign this pledge before the contest.

I agree to abide by the principles of SkillsUSA and the Fair Play Code (see below) as set forth by Alabama SkillsUSA and the SkillsUSA Championships.

This commitment to fair play will pave the way for better competitions and positive attitudes.

Fair Play Code:
1. I will host a fair contest because I want to, not just because others expect me to.
2. In advance, I will make sure that all equipment and facilities are safe and ready for a fair contest.
3. I will remember that students need an advisor they can respect.
4. I will follow all rules of SkillsUSA and the spirit of fair competition.
5. I will do my best to be a true team player.
6. I will remember that winning isn’t everything—having fun, improving skill and preparing all students for successful careers are also important.
7. I will exclude myself from making any decision that will affect the outcome of the contest.
8. I will allow the contest judges to make critical decisions and will not use my power as the Host Teacher to persuade them in any way.
9. Once the competition begins, I understand my role will solely be focused on the safety and health of all attendees. I will only interact with the contestant if required to maintain safety.
10. I will not interact with my student(s) in any way to provide guidance or direction in the competition, except for when required for safety.

Name of Host Teacher (Please print clearly): ______________________________________

School, Campus and State: ______________________________________________________

Signature ____________________ Date: ______________

Submit signed pledge in PDF form to: maggin.edwards@alsde.edu
Resources

The resources below are meant to provide an overview and introduction to several commonly used online platforms and tools, as well as to the SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards. If you don’t find the answers you’re searching for below, don’t hesitate to reach out to one of the following:

**Alabama SkillsUSA State Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North:</th>
<th>Central:</th>
<th>South:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tessa Brown</td>
<td>Bryan Upton</td>
<td>Lisa Bruce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Tessa.brown@alsde.edu">Tessa.brown@alsde.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:bupton@alsde.edu">bupton@alsde.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Felicia.bruce@alsde.edu">Felicia.bruce@alsde.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College:**

- Yolanda Wilson
  - yolanda.wilson@accs.edu

**Zoom:**

Zoom is a leader in video communications, with a cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, chat, meetings, events or webinars. Zoom provides video, audio, file sharing and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform.

For **Quick Start Guides**, go to: [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360042982391](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360042982391).

**YouTube Tutorial** on using Zoom: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1CwZFiAyXy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1CwZFiAyXy).

**Dropbox:**

Dropbox is online storage that keeps files in sync between personal devices and the cloud, accessible via the web or in apps that you can install on Mac, PC, and mobile devices.


**YouTube Tutorial** on using Dropbox: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Nan6Zt6bzw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Nan6Zt6bzw).

**Google Drive**

Google Drive is a cloud-based storage solution that allows you to save files online and access them anywhere from any smartphone, tablet or computer. You can use **Drive** on your computer or mobile device to securely upload files and edit them online. **Drive** also makes it easy for others to edit and collaborate on files.

For **training and support**, go to: [https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2424384?hl=en&ref_topic=14940](https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2424384?hl=en&ref_topic=14940).
**YouTube Tutorial** on using Google Drive: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbVnObwFJic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbVnObwFJic).

**SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards**

The SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards is the official competition guide for the SkillsUSA Championships. It contains rules for all national events, including an overview of technical skills and knowledge required, clothing requirements, eligibility and equipment lists. It also lists the embedded academic skills. Rules for state and local events may vary from the national guidelines, but most competitive events are modeled after the national standards. SkillsUSA professional members (teachers/advisors) receive the SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards at no charge when they submit membership. The SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards manual is a digital download, organized by contest. Visit: [www.skillsusa-register.org/ProfessionalBenefitsLogin](http://www.skillsusa-register.org/ProfessionalBenefitsLogin) to join as a professional member and get your free copy of the SkillsUSA Technical Standards manual.

**YouTube tutorial** on accessing the SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR9Jet0PRP8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR9Jet0PRP8).

**Contest Descriptions**

Alabama SkillsUSA will modify Contest Technical Standards and Contest Descriptions for District contests and State contests. These modifications will be emailed to contestants and advisors two weeks prior to event date.

**Alabama SkillsUSA Contest Master List, 2021**

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hw5IOVvUymh7euz-FyiGbE2mc7CeBiXvTJ3WwqSQ4dk/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hw5IOVvUymh7euz-FyiGbE2mc7CeBiXvTJ3WwqSQ4dk/edit#gid=0)

For National **contest descriptions** and to download contest Scoresheets (rubrics), go to: [https://www.skillsusa.org/competitions/skillsusa-championships/](https://www.skillsusa.org/competitions/skillsusa-championships/).
# Calendar of Events

**State Conference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 15th, 2021</td>
<td>State Conference Registration Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31st, 2021</td>
<td>State Conference Registration Closes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7, 2021</td>
<td>State Contest Descriptions emailed to contestants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22nd, 2021</td>
<td>Live Contest Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7, 2021</td>
<td>State Awards Session Posted</td>
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