

FIRST® Leadership Award

Interviewer Manual

Revision History	
Revision	Description
V26-27.1	Initial 2026-27 Season Release
V26-27.2	Updated links in “Useful Links and Information” section

Overview	3
Job Description	3
Time Commitment	3
Training and Certification	3
Roles and Responsibilities	4
FIRST Leadership Award Interviewer	4
Prerequisites for FIRST Leadership Award Interviewer	4
Managing Conflicts of Interest.....	4
Understanding Differences.....	5
Interpreters and Coaches in the Interview.....	6
What is the FIRST Tech Challenge Leadership Award?.....	6
Student Eligibility	7
FIRST Leadership Award Criteria	7
Important FIRST Leadership Award Season Dates	7
FIRST Leadership Award Evaluation Structure	8
Before the Event.....	9
Pre-Event Training	9
Access the Nominations.....	9
Essay Nomination	9
Review the Nomination.....	10
Interview Types	11
Preparing for the Interview	12
Aligning with Criteria	12
Additional Considerations	14
Event Day	15
End of the Day	15
Interviewer Summary Notes	15
FIRST Leadership Award Evaluation Form & Interview Questions	16
Judges Portal.....	17
Review Nominations	17
Entering Notes into the Judges Portal.....	20
FIRST Leadership Award: Helpful Terms	21
Useful Links and Information.....	22
On-Call Support Numbers.....	22
Pre-Event Support.....	22

Program Resources	22
Feedback.....	22

Overview

Roles Covered: *FIRST*® Leadership Award Interviewer

Job Description

The *FIRST*® Leadership Award interviewer is responsible for interviewing students that have been nominated for the *FIRST* Leadership Award. They are responsible for reading the student nomination prior to the interview, interviewing the student, and adding notes into the Judges Portal following the interview.

Requirements	
Technical	Medium
Physical	Low
Administrative	High
Communication	High
Pre-event Training	High

Time Commitment

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewers should expect to spend 3-6 hours interviewing students. Most regions host *FIRST* Leadership Award interviews remotely, therefore attending an event is not required. Interviews may be divided up over a couple of days, depending upon the number of nominations for the region. Approximately 3-6 hours of pre-event training and planning, including reviewing student nominations, is required.

Training and Certification

Read and complete all tasks listed in the [Pre-Event Training](#) section.

Any volunteer who applies to a role will be able to get into the Learning Management System (LMS) using the 'FIRST Training' button. Roles with the training required will appear in the 'roles missing certification' area.

If you have applied for a role but have not received access to the training, please email training@firstinspires.org. A separate confirmation of the role assignment will come later.

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewers should speak to the Program Delivery Partner to find out what additional requirements, such as meetings before interviews take place, or assisting with interview scheduling are required. The approximate training time is 3-6 hours.

All volunteers are expected to read and comply with the [Volunteer Handbook](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

FIRST is fun for all. The most important role of a volunteer is to provide a safe, fun, and welcoming environment to all *FIRST* participants. When executing the duties of your role, always make decisions with the team experience in mind. Ask for help from event leadership if you feel your required duties conflict with the best team experience.

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewer

The *FIRST* Leadership Award Interviewers' responsibilities include:

- Access and read nominations prior to the interview.
- Interview the semi-finalists.
- Write a narrative about the semi-finalist after the interview.
- Enter the narrative into the Judges Portal

The next few sections of this manual will go over each of these responsibilities in greater detail and will outline the importance of each.

Prerequisites for FIRST Leadership Award Interviewer

To serve as a *FIRST* Leadership Award Interviewer:

- must be 21 years of age or older.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Conflict of Interest – a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust.

All listed volunteer roles will be asked to disclose any potential Conflicts of Interest, and to complete the [Conflict of Interest and Disclosure form](#). During the Judges meeting, Judges will be asked to declare any potential conflicts to the rest of the judging pool. During the Referee meeting, Referees will be asked to declare any potential conflicts to the rest of the referee team. Some scenarios of conflict of interest:

- A coach/mentor volunteers as a Judge or a Referee.
- A parent/relative of a team member volunteers as a Judge or a Referee.
- A recent alum (student or adult) of a team competing at the event volunteers as a Judge or a Referee.
- A sponsor of a team competing at the event volunteers as a Judge or Referee.

Having a Conflict of Interest, or even the perception of a Conflict of Interest can affect a team's experience, even if decisions that were made throughout the day were not biased in any way. The perception of potential favoritism is enough to discourage a team, coach, or mentor, and take away from their overall experience at an event. Knowing what Conflict of Interest is, and how to avoid being in a position that could be a conflict will ensure all teams feel they have been evaluated fairly.

All volunteers at an event have a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interest of the event which means to treat all teams fairly and equitably.

Volunteers should use prior *FIRST* experience to help inform their decisions but should not use prior knowledge or perception of any specific team to inform their decisions either good or bad. Every team, at every event, deserves a fresh blank slate with all volunteers.

A volunteer who does not disclose their conflict of interest can compromise the integrity of *FIRST* Tech Challenge events. In judging, this could cause teams affiliated with the volunteer with a Conflict of Interest to be removed from consideration for awards.

Conflict of Interest, in some cases, can be quite easy to see. In other cases, it may be less obvious, and it may be difficult to decide what constitutes a true Conflict of Interest. In some cases, the bias may be apparent, while other times a Conflict of Interest may be perceived by a team or a coach. It is best to keep the following in mind when volunteering:

- Be open and forthcoming about any conflicts you may have with a team competing at the event.
- If there is a known Conflict of Interest, avoid making decisions about a team that would change the outcome of the day, such as speaking for or against a team in judge deliberations, or holding some teams to a different refereeing standard than others.
- Remove yourself from any situation that could be perceived as a Conflict of Interest.

Below is one example of a Conflict of Interest. Keep in mind this is an example, and there are many forms of Conflict of Interest, and ways to handle it.

Parent/Relative/Alumni of a Team

If a parent or a relative of a team member, or an alum of a team is volunteering at an event, this volunteer must abstain from making any decisions that could affect the results of the tournament. Whether volunteering as a Judge or as field personnel (Referee, Field Technical Assistant, etc.) it is important to have that volunteer remove themselves from making any decisions related to that team. For example:

- If the volunteer is a Judge, they must recuse themselves from any conversations about that team during deliberations.
- If the volunteer is a Referee, they should not be involved in any decisions around penalties, match replays, etc.
- Keep in mind that there are many ways Conflict of Interest can be presented, from parents to sponsors. Make sure to remove any apparent Conflicts of Interest but also keep in mind any perceptions of conflicts.

Understanding Differences

Each student is special and unique, with different strengths, challenges, social skills, and learning abilities.

Some differences may be misinterpreted. Please be mindful that your first perception may be off. For example, a student who is quiet or has limited social skills may have extensive knowledge to share. You may also notice cultural differences. Remember that some cultures expect eye contact, while others may find eye contact to be disrespectful. Always be positive, flexible, and patient.

A few differences that you may encounter include students with limited social skills, who have difficulty expressing thoughts verbally, who shout out blunt or inappropriate comments, or may distance themselves physically from the team. Some of these challenges may be neurological in nature. Differences between a student who is not able to do something as compared to a refusal to do something can show up in a way that is not familiar to you.

A student may have an intense interest in a specific topic or area. For example, they may not be able to see the big robot picture, but may have extensive knowledge about programming, or the mechanical build.

As an interviewer, you will need to adjust your expectations. Many students with high abilities may take longer to process and answer questions and may get left behind compared with a student who reacts more quickly.

When evaluating students who seem “too rehearsed,” think about how an adult might prepare for a big presentation at work. Some students may memorize facts and examples. Seeming rehearsed is not necessarily a sign of an over-involved adult. If you are not sure of the students’ true understanding, ask follow-up questions for explanation of their thought processes, or go into more detail.

Interpreters and Coaches in the Interview

Since *FIRST* Leadership Award interviews are mostly done remotely, *FIRST* requires that a coach, parent, or adult over 18 is present with the student during the interview. This can be someone who is physically in the room with the student, or the adult may call into the interview and silently observe. While an adult is required for the interview to take place, they do not participate in the interview.

Some students may need the help of an interpreter. Some of the circumstances that allow for an interpreter are students who speak a language different than that of the interviewers; a student who requires a sign language interpreter; a student who would benefit from questions being asked in specific ways. This is not an exhaustive list. Make sure to check with the coach when setting up the interview if the student you will be interviewing needs an interpreter. Coaches may request an exception when they register for an event.

What is the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Leadership Award?

The *FIRST* Leadership Award recognizes the dedication and individual contributions of outstanding secondary school students participating in *FIRST* Tech Challenge or *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams. Students in 10th or 11th grade are eligible to be nominated by their team for the *FIRST* Leadership Award for excelling in areas such as leadership, entrepreneurship, and dedication to advancing the mission of *FIRST* within their communities. There are three (3) levels of *FIRST* Leadership Award students.

1. ***FIRST* Leadership Award Semi-finalists** – comprised of the two (2) students in their 10th or 11th school year nominated by each team.
2. ***FIRST* Leadership Award Finalists** – The students selected for each regional championship.
3. ***FIRST* Leadership Award Winners** – comprised of the ten (10) *FIRST* Robotics Competition and ten (10) *FIRST* Tech Challenge students selected from the applicable *FIRST* Leadership Award Finalists.

The students who earn *FIRST* Leadership Award status as either a Semi-finalist, Finalist or Winner, are great examples of student leaders who have led their teams and communities to increased

awareness for *FIRST* and its mission, champion *FIRST* Core Values such as [Inclusion](#), and embody *Gracious Professionalism*®. It is the goal of *FIRST* that *FIRST* Leadership Award Winners will continue, post-award, as great leaders, [student alumni](#), and advocates of *FIRST*.

In 2019, the [Woodie Flowers Memorial Grant](#) was established for *FIRST* Leadership Award Winners pursuing STEAM fields of study. This grant is awarded to a student selected from among the prior year's *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge Leadership Award winners.

Student Eligibility

Every registered *FIRST* Tech Challenge team can submit up to two (2) students as *FIRST* Leadership Award semi-finalists.

- Students must be a sophomore (grade 10) or junior (grade 11) to be eligible for this award.
 - Note: For regions of the world that do not use grade levels such as this to identify years of schooling: This award is intended for students who are two (2) to three (3) years away from entering college or university. Students that would be attending college or university in the next academic year are not eligible. Mentors will be asked for the year of graduation during the nomination process.
- The coach or mentor nominating the student(s) must submit an essay explaining why the student should receive this award. The essay must be 4,000 characters or less.

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewers are not responsible for determining the eligibility of nominated students. Any questions about student eligibility should be directed to FTC-LeadershipAward@firstinspires.org.

FIRST Leadership Award Criteria

Criteria for selection of the *FIRST* Leadership Award shall include, but not be limited to a student's:

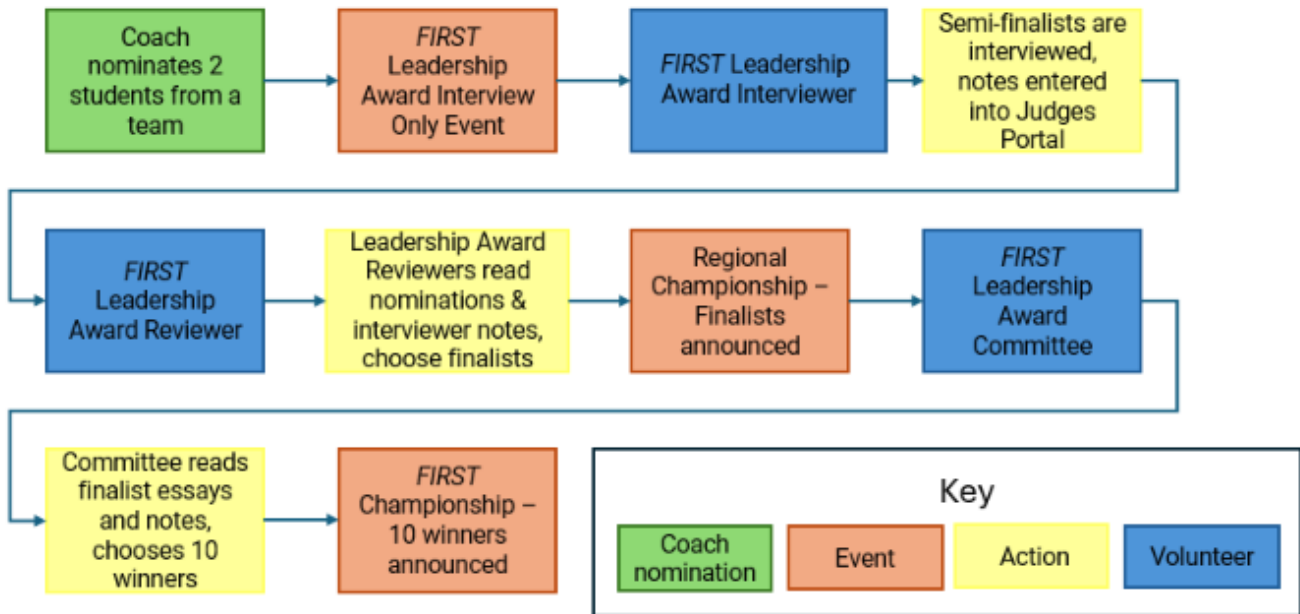
- Demonstrated leadership and commitment to the *FIRST* Core Values
- Effectiveness at increasing awareness of *FIRST* in their school and community
- Demonstrates passion for a long-term commitment to *FIRST*
- Individual contributions to their team contribute to the overall success of the team
- Proven experience in areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- The student is a role model and can motivate and lead fellow team members

Important *FIRST* Leadership Award Season Dates

FIRST Leadership Award Important Dates	
September 14, 2026	Nominations open
December 15, 2026	Nominations due
February 15, 2027	Finalist selections due to <i>FIRST</i>
Various	RCMP's announce finalists
April 2027	Winners announced at <i>FIRST</i> Championship

FIRST Leadership Award Evaluation Structure

The chart below is a visual aid to show how each category feeds into specific levels of competition, starting with the coach making the nominations. *FIRST* Leadership Award Interviewers are responsible for interviewing semi-finalists (nominees). Interviews are mostly remote, with some regions doing in-person interviews (this will be region dependent, please check with your local Program Delivery Partner). The *FIRST* Leadership Award Reviewer will then review the nominations and the interviewer notes within a state/region to determine which students will move to the next level as *FIRST* Leadership Award finalists. Depending upon the size of the region, there will be 2-4 *FIRST* Leadership Award finalists within each state or region (please see the [FIRST Leadership Award Nomination Guide](#) for region specific numbers). These finalists will be announced at the Regional Championship Tournament. A separate panel will review the *FIRST* Leadership Award finalists and choose the 10 *FIRST* Tech Challenge Leadership Award winners.



Before the Event

Pre-Event Training

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewers must complete the required reading in this section and are required to pass a certification test prior to serving in this role.

Resources for training and certification:

FIRST Leadership Interviewer Pre-Event Training List	
Requirement	Resource
Required	Welcome to FIRST
Required	The FIRST Leadership Award Interviewer Volunteer Manual (this document)
Required	Complete the FIRST Leadership Award Interviewer Certification Test in the FIRST Learning System, which is accessed through the www.firstinspires.org dashboard. (For volunteers outside of North America without a FIRST Dashboard Account use the PDF to self-certify)
Required	Complete the FIRST Data Protection and Privacy Training
Encouraged	Complete Strategies for Inspiring Success for All modules .
Encouraged	Attend the monthly Volunteer Calls

Access the Nominations

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewers are required to apply for this volunteer role through the dashboard on www.firstinspires.org. All Interviewers are required to apply and complete Youth Protection Program (YPP) screening and FIRST Data Protection and Privacy training prior to accessing any student information.

FIRST Leadership Award nominations are posted on a private, password-protected site where only the Interviewers and authorized FIRST staff can read the entries. The link to the system is below. Interviewers are then asked to review the FIRST Leadership Award nomination before the event. Please see the [Judges Portal](#) section of this manual for further instructions and features of the system.

Link to Judges Portal: <https://my.firstinspires.org/Judging/>

The Judges Portal will open on December 18, 2026

Essay Nomination

The essay nomination that is submitted by the coach of the student is broken down into five prompts. The prompts ask the coaches to provide specific examples of how the student meets the award criteria. Each of the prompts has an 800-character limit.

1. Explain how the student embodies the philosophies of *Gracious Professionalism*® and *Coopertition*® through the FIRST Core Values: Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork and Fun. Please provide examples.
2. How has the student increased the awareness of FIRST? Describe the student's interest and/or plans to continue to engage with FIRST beyond high school. Please provide examples.

3. How does the student's individual contribution to the team benefit the team as a whole? Please provide examples.
4. Describe the students' experience in areas of STEM. This could include but is not limited to skills in engineering, software, CAD, fabrication, etc. Please provide examples.
5. Explain the student's leadership to their fellow team members. How do they motivate others? What is their leadership style? Please provide examples.

Additionally, there is a 500-character limit prompt for sharing additional information about the student:

6. Please share anything else you would like us to know about the student, including academic performance, specialized skills, technical expertise, or additional extracurricular activities.

Review the Nomination

FIRST Leadership Award Interviewers must take the time to review each semi-finalist's nomination essay prior to arriving at the event. Every nomination is different and reading the nomination ahead of time helps prepare appropriate questions for each semi-finalist. Each nomination will include the following identifying information:

- Nominee name
- Nominee year of graduation
 - This award is intended for students who are two (2) to three (3) years away from entering college or university. Students that would be attending college or university in the next academic year are not eligible.
- Nomination essay of no more than 4,000 characters (spaces and punctuation are included in this limit)
- Additional information about the student including academic performance, specialized skills, or additional extracurricular activities.
- How many years the student has participated in *FIRST*
- **To be nominated and to receive an interview, students MUST have a signed *FIRST* Consent and Release form.** Students with a *FIRST* Dashboard account and a signed Consent and Release form in their profile can be selected in the drop-down list in the nomination portal. If the student does not have a signed form in their Dashboard account, or does not have a Dashboard account, Mentors may check off a new checkbox acknowledging that they have a signed paper copy of the *FIRST* Consent and Release form before submitting. Paper forms may be acquired by reaching out to your [local leadership](#).

When reviewing the essay nominations, it is important to understand that these should not be evaluated for spelling, punctuation, or grammar since the student does not write the essay. The interviewer should only be concerned with the content of the essay and getting to know the student prior to the interview.

Interview Types

Every region will have a *FIRST* Leadership Award Interview Only event. This is a single event that every team within that region will apply to. The coach nominating the student will select the *FIRST* Leadership Award Interview event in the nomination page from the dashboard.

Remote Interviews

In most regions, the *FIRST* Leadership Award interviews are done remotely and not as part of an event. If you are in a region that is doing remote interviews, you may need to contact the coach to arrange a remote interview with the student. Make sure to check with the local Program Delivery Partner to determine who is responsible for contacting and setting up interviews.

The [FTC Scoring System](#) can be used to schedule interviews and to conduct remote interviews. There is a feature in the scoring system that allows interviewers to take notes during each interview. It is very important to note that notes entered in the scoring system are not official. The notes required after each interview must be entered into the Judges Portal.

Remote interviews may also be set up via Zoom, Teams, Google, or any other form of video chat software. There **MUST** always be 2 Interviewers that are interviewing the student. There also **MUST** be a coach, parent, or an adult over 18 present for the interview. The adult present does not participate in the interview.

All interviews must be completed prior to the regional championship since the regional championship is where finalists are announced. There are multiple platforms that can be used to interview students remotely.

In Person Interviews

Some regions may choose to interview students at the event where they will be competing. Make sure to check with the PDP or Event Director to confirm if interviews will take place in person. Interviewers will need to be present on the morning of the event when the interviews take place.

Preparing for the Interview

Aligning with Criteria

There are 6 criteria from the award description. Below, you can see those and some additional factors to look for when interviewing the students and questions to consider asking.

Award Criteria	Questions to Consider
Demonstrated Leadership and Commitment to the FIRST Core Values: - FIRST Core Values: - Discovery: We explore new skills & ideas - Innovation: We use creativity and persistence to solve problems - Impact: We apply what we learn to improve our world - Inclusion: We respect each other and embrace our differences - Teamwork: We are stronger when we work together - Fun: We enjoy and celebrate what we do! - Inspires others to become involved in FIRST - Confident and respectful - Exhibits behavior following <i>Coopertition</i>[®] and <i>Gracious Professionalism</i>[®]	- Describe one example of how you are a leader. - What leadership style do you find works best for you? - What advice would you give to a student considering joining a FIRST team? - Tell me about a problem your team experienced and how you helped solve it.
Effectiveness at Increasing Awareness of FIRST in their School and Community - Participation in and leadership of demonstrations and presentations at local events - Participation in and leadership of community involvement - Participation in and leadership of fundraising activities	- Can you give me examples of your involvement with FIRST activities in your school/community? - How have you increased awareness of FIRST in your school? In your community?
Demonstrates Passion for Long Term Commitment to FIRST - Extent of involvement in FIRST programs - Exhibits interest to engage with FIRST beyond high school	- How long have you been involved with FIRST? - Describe your progression with FIRST and your team. - Describe how you plan to continue to be active in FIRST beyond high school. - What are your plans for post-high school?

Award Criteria	Questions to Consider
Overall Individual Contribution to their Team • Extent of involvement on team • Can demonstrate impact with examples of accomplishments • Individual contribution on their team contributes to overall success of the team • Level of leadership in key team areas	• Describe your roles and responsibilities on the team. • What have you accomplished so far that you think will help set your team up for future success? • What would be different on your team if you had never joined? What contributions to your team make you the proudest?
Proven experience in areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) • Proven experience in engineering concepts or computer and/or software concepts • Proven experience in areas of STEM, including but not limited to skills in engineering, software, CAD, fabrication, etc.	• Provide examples of your technical experience. • What is your specialty role on the team? (Mechanical, electrical, design, etc.). Describe your contribution.
Ability to Motivate and Lead Fellow Team Members • Mentor/assist other students • Examples of leadership and how they are a role model • Ability to motivate & lead team members • Communication & presentation skills	• Describe a time you had to motivate fellow teammates. How did you do it? What were the results? • What do you do when you are working with a teammate who you feel is not as committed to <i>FIRST</i> / your team as you are? • How has your leadership style changed while you have been on your team?

Additional Considerations

Individual Contributions

Many essay nominations will outline team activities but not necessarily discuss what the student's individual contributions are to the activity. Likewise, some nominations might not outline what the student's role is and how they contribute to their team, and if they are a leader. Since this award is about the student, and not the team, Interviewers should be prepared to ask the student questions that uncover how they contribute. For example:

Nomination Essay:	Example questions to ask:
"Ashley is a leader on her team. She was instrumental in setting up fundraising events with her team, which secured the team a grant to pay for travel to their regional championship tournament."	- How do you lead your team? - What are the steps you took as an individual to set up fundraising events?
"Team 1234 let a successful outreach event which led to the creation of 2 more <i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge teams within their high school"	- What was your role in the setting up of the outreach event? - How were you able to help support the creation of 2 new teams?

There are many other questions that an interviewer can ask but be sure to clarify the responsibilities and steps the student took as an individual contributor to the success of the event or activity.

FIRST Robotics Competition/*FIRST* Tech Challenge

Both *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge students are eligible to be nominated for the *FIRST* Leadership Award in their region's program. There is no rule that states a student cannot be nominated for both. Interviewers should focus on the students' accomplishments in the program they have been nominated for. As an Interviewer, preparing questions for these cases will help you to understand the differences in responsibilities from one program to the other. For example:

Nomination Essay:	Example questions to ask:
"Anna is the Co-Captain of her FRC team 1234 and started <i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge team 9876 her sophomore year of high school. Anna leads her team by example as the main builder and is truly a role model to all her teammates. She led the team to win her regional championship with her creative robot designs, and her ability to problem solve quickly during the competition."	- What are your responsibilities on <i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge team 9876? - How would your peers describe your leadership style on <i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge team 9876? Note that this sort of write up is ambiguous to which program is being described. Make sure to focus on the program they are interviewing for.

Simply asking what the responsibilities are on the *FIRST* Tech Challenge team can make a difference in uncovering the scope of how the student's attributes benefit the *FIRST* Tech Challenge team or the *FIRST* Robotics Competition team. Since the nomination is for *FIRST* Tech Challenge, interviewers should be focused on the efforts the student has contributed to *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

General Interview Questions

- Describe your roles and responsibilities on your team.
- What is your specialty role on the team? Describe your contribution.

- Describe one example of how you were/are a leader.
- Describe how you plan to continue to be active in *FIRST* beyond high school.
- Describe a time you had to motivate fellow teammates. How did you do it? What were the results?
- Can you provide me with examples of your *FIRST* activities in your school and/or community?
- What is your specialty role on the team? (Mechanical, electrical, design, etc.). Describe your contribution.
- What are your plans for post-high school?
- Is there anything not included in your essay, or that we have not discussed, that you would like to share?

Event Day

Whether the semi-finalist will be interviewed at an event or remotely, every nominated student must be interviewed. There must always be 2 Interviewers present, no exceptions. Interviewers should have approximately 15 minutes allotted for each interview; 6-10 minutes for the interview itself and at least 5 minutes for the Interviewers to make notes.

As discussed in previous sections of this manual, preparation for the interview is very important. Interviews are only 6-10 minutes and being prepared will help the Interviewer ask specific questions to better understand the student, their individual contributions, and how they align with the criteria. Please note that in the interest of consistency across all regions and events, the maximum interview time for a *FIRST* Leadership Award semi-finalist may not exceed 10 minutes. And remember that this is a conversational interview, there are no presentations, video links provided by the student for post-interview review, or informational handouts involved.

It is helpful to bring the criteria list to the interview as a reference.

End of the Day

Interviewer Summary Notes

Once interviews have concluded, the *FIRST* Leadership Award Interviewer is responsible for writing a summary outlining what they have learned about the student. The notes from the Interviewer are a **vital** piece of information when students are reviewed to potentially move to the next level. Notes from the interview should be entered into the system within 48 hours of the interview to ensure details from the interview are captured. The *FIRST* Leadership Award Reviewers rely heavily on the notes from the Interviewer in making decisions, and having short, brief notes or no notes at all are a disservice to those students who are deserving of the award.

Interviewers should expect to take 10-15 minutes per student to write up the notes. Some examples of items to include in the summary are:

- The student's individual contributions to the team.
- Evidence of eligibility criteria not included in the nomination essay.
- Facts/interesting stories that were uncovered during the interview not documented in the nomination essay.

Notes from the Interviewers should be tailored to the *FIRST* Leadership Award criteria, and how the student fits the award criteria.

Remember this should be a narrative and should paint a picture of who the student is and what their strengths or opportunities are. If an Interviewer feels very strongly about a student, they should clearly document it in the essay.

Although this is a vital part of the Interviewer's role, they should also remember that they are not making the ultimate decision. This is done by the *FIRST* Leadership Award Reviewers, and therefore simply stating that a semi-finalist should not advance is not acceptable feedback. Interviewers can, however, articulate that they feel a student may not be ready to move to the next level.

FIRST Leadership Award Evaluation Form & Interview Questions

Within the Judges Portal there are four categories with checkboxes to evaluate the student. There are an additional two boxes where interviewers will add their notes, with each box containing instructions on what information is needed. Below is a mockup of these checkboxes and questions asked within the system. Interviewers are encouraged to bring this to the interview to write down notes after the interview.

Student Evaluation Checkboxes				
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Finalist truly represents <i>FIRST</i> Core Values:				
Finalist has proven experience in areas of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM):				
Finalist is a leader who you can envision leading future <i>FIRST</i> alumni:				
Essay accurately reflects the student interviewed:				
Essay Box #1				
Without verbatim repeating the information contained in the submission, please advise the Championship judges about any additional information you learned regarding the topics below: • How Finalist represents <i>FIRST</i> • Finalist's expertise you believe is worth highlighting • Finalist's individual contribution to team and <i>FIRST</i> overall • Finalist's leadership capabilities	Interviewer Comments:			
Essay Box #2				
Please provide any information you learned that is not included in the written submission that you believe is relevant for consideration.	Interviewer Comments:			

Judges Portal

Link to judging portal: <https://my.firstinspires.org/Judging/>

Review Nominations

1. Click “Login” at the upper righthand corner. This will redirect you to the www.firstinspires.org login page.



2. Log in using your username and password for your www.firstinspires.org account.



Pick an account

Sign in to access FIRST Community

 volunteer@firstpartners.org

 Use another account



← volunteer@firstpartners.org

Enter password

Password

[Sign in](#)

Welcome to the all new *FIRST* Community Single Sign On, powered by Microsoft!

New User? [Create an account here.](#)

Existing User?

If you **last logged in before September 15, 2025**, you'll need to [reset your password](#) to access your account.

All users who have **logged in after September 15, 2025**, may follow the prompts above to sign in.

Forgot your password? [Reset your password here.](#)

Welcome to the all new *FIRST* Community Single Sign On, powered by Microsoft!

New User? [Create an account here.](#)

Existing User?

If you **last logged in before September 15, 2025**, you'll need to [reset your password](#) to access your account.

All users who have **logged in after September 15, 2025**, may follow the prompts above to sign in.

Forgot your password? [Reset your password here.](#)

3. Once logged in, click “FTC – Leadership Award”



4. Click “Edit/View” to access the nominations for the event.

FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC)
 FIRST Leadership Award System

2026 FIRST Leadership Award Summary

2026 FTC Events			
Event Name	Due Date	Winners / Finalists	
June		Start a capture	▼
December			↑ Back to top ▲
NH Test Leadership Award Event <i>Interview Only</i> Nashua, NH USA	Dec 15, 2026	(interview-only event) 0 Completed Submissions	EDIT/ VIEW
Test FIRST Leadership Award CA <i>Interview Only</i> San Diego, CA USA	Dec 15, 2026	(interview-only event) 0 Completed Submissions	EDIT/ VIEW
April			↑ Back to top ▼

- Click “Details” to access each individual nomination. The student information, along with the essay from the coach will be shown on this screen. Make sure to read through the nomination essay prior to interviewing each student.

Semi-Finalists to be Judged at this event			
Semi-Finalist	Team Number	Team Name	
John (Jack) Smith Concord, NH Modified:12-Oct-2023	8845	Trinity High School	Print All Contact Info Details
Back to Event Summary			

Preferred Name – If the student has a preferred name, it will be listed in parenthesis next to their legal name. If a preferred name is present, please use it when addressing the student during their interview.

View Submission
[Printable Page](#)
[Back](#)

2023 NH Test Interview Only Event Remote - Team 8845 - John (Jack) Smith 12-Oct-2023			
Team			Unlock
Team Number	8845	# Student on team	
City,State	Concord, NH		
First Name	John (Jack)	Last Name	Smith
Year of graduation	2025	How long has the student been involved in FIRST?	5 years
Judging Venue			
Judge Nominee At	NH Test Interview Only Event Remote		
Submitter Contact Information			
Submitted By	Coach Name		
Phone	6036663906	Email	coach1@gmail.com
Explain how the student embodies the philosophies of Gracious Professionalism® and Cooptition® through the FIRST Core Values: Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork and Fun. Please provide examples.			
Essay Test 1			
How has the student increased the awareness of FIRST? Describe the student's interests and/or plans to continue to engage with FIRST beyond high school. Please provide examples.			
Essay Test 2			
How does the student's individual contribution to the team benefit the team as a whole? Please provide examples.			
Essay Test 3			
Describe the students' experience in areas of STEM. This could include but is not limited to skills in engineering, software, CAD, fabrication, etc. Please provide examples.			
Essay Test 4			
Explain the student's leadership to their fellow team members. How do they motivate others? What is their leadership style? Please provide examples.			
Essay Test 5			
Please share anything else you would like us to know about the student, including academic performance, specialized skills, or extracurricular activities.			
Specialized skills, extracurricular activities, etc.			

Entering Notes into the Judges Portal

The screenshot below shows the fields each interviewer will fill out after the interview. Once the notes have been entered, and the review buttons selected, click “add” to save.

Judge Review	
Who/When	Review
Add Review	
	Without verbatim repeating the information contained in the submission, please advise the Championship judges about any additional information you learned regarding the topics below: + How Finalist represents <i>FIRST</i> + Finalist's expertise you believe worth highlighting + Finalist's individual contribution to team and <i>FIRST</i> overall + Finalist's leadership capabilities characters 0 / left 10000
	Please provide any information you learned that is not included in the written submission that you believe is relevant for consideration. characters 0 / left 10000
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Strongly Agree	Finalist truly represents the <i>FIRST</i> Core Values:
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Strongly Agree	Finalist has proven experience in areas of science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM):
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Strongly Agree	Finalist is a leader who you can envision leading future <i>FIRST</i> alumni:
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Strongly Agree	Essay accurately reflects the student interviewed:
+ Add	

FIRST Leadership Award: Helpful Terms

These terms are intended to assist mentors in writing the nomination essays and for students to use during the interview. The use of these terms is not a requirement for submitting a nomination.

Possible Leadership Titles	
Captain	A top-level position of responsibility over the team - Teams with a flat leadership structure may have captains that cover specific areas, while making larger decisions as a group with no defined leader - Teams with a structured leadership would have one or more captains with multiple Leads working under them to lead smaller team areas. - Can be preceded by "co-" to indicate they shared that responsibility with one or more individuals.
Lead	A leadership position over a specific area of responsibility and should include a "team area" from the options below. Can be preceded by "co-" to indicate they shared that responsibility with one or more individuals.
Team Areas	
Marketing	Responsible for items like team branding, newsletters, website, etc.
Awards	Responsible for working on award submissions or pit presentation preparation.
Finance	Responsible for fundraising, grant writing, and sponsor relationships
Outreach	Responsible for organizing demonstrations and events not tied to competitions.
Drive Team, Scouting, and/or Strategy	Responsible for guiding the team's strategy, representing the team at competitions, and collecting data on the performance of other teams.
Mechanical	Responsible for the mechanical design and build of the robot. CAD can be included as a separate lead position or included alongside mechanical
Electrical	Responsible for the electrical design and build of the robot, including any sensors or custom circuits.
Programming	Responsible for programming the robot.
Other	Any team area that falls outside of the areas listed above should be detailed to provide the judges with appropriate context.
Action Specific Words	
Mentored	The student advises or trains, either in person or via phone/email/video conference, another team or team member, helping with technical or non-technical FIRST program specific issues.
Lead	The student leads an event if they are responsible for planning and execution. Can be preceded with "co-" to indicate a shared responsibility. - Planned - worked on the planning of the event but did not lead the execution. - Executed - responsible for the execution of the event - onsite leader throughout the event.
Conceived	Indicates the student introduced the initial concept.
Helped/Assisted	Indicates the student had significant impact or participation, without being a leader in that situation.

Useful Links and Information

On-Call Support Numbers

On-Call Support

These numbers are for volunteer support only. Teams should not use these numbers to call about rulings or technical assistance.

Administrative, Judge, Referee and Non-Technical Issues: (603)206-2412

Scoring System (FTC Live) or other Technical Issues: (603)206-2450

Call or use the **built-in chat feature on FTC Live** available for events with internet access.

Pre-Event Support



Mon – Fri 8:30am – 5:00pm Eastern Time (UTC-4 or UTC-5)

[Contact Support](#) including live chat or email customerservice@firstinspires.org

Program Resources



[Event Search](#)

ftc-events.firstinspires.org



[Game and Season Resources](#)

ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/game



[FIRST Tech Challenge Blog](#)



[Event Resources](#)

ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/event



[FIRST Tech Challenge Website](#)

firstinspires.org/robotics/ftc



[Volunteer Resources](#)

ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/volunteer

Feedback

We strive to create support materials that are the best they can be. If you have feedback about this manual, please email customerservice@firstinspires.org or by [contacting support](#). Thank you!