FIRST® Leadership Award

The ***FIRST* Leadership Award** is a **prestigious** award that recognizes the **leadership** and **dedication** of select students. Students bring awareness of *FIRST*® and its mission, both to their team and their broader community. They are role models that inspire others to do the same. Students nominated by their team become **Semi-Finalists** and will be interviewed at a competition for the opportunity of becoming **Finalists** and possibly *FIRST* Leadership Award **Winners** at the *FIRST* Championship. Check out the *FIRST* Leadership Award Guide.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ❑ Teams can nominate up to **two students**
- ❑ Students should be **two or three years** away from graduation
- ❑ Students should be leaders and represent the very best your team has to offer
- ❑ There are seven steps in the ***FIRST* Leadership Award process**:
    1. Choose the students
    2. Gather information
    3. Write the essay
    4. Prepare for the interview
    5. Do the interview
    6. Where next?
    7. Celebrate!

01 CHOOSE A STUDENT

DISCUSSION

Consider these questions for each student you are thinking about nominating.

1. How long has the student been involved in *FIRST*?

2. What does the student do on your team? Are they in a leadership role?

3. How does the student promote the mission of *FIRST*?

4. Will the student remain involved with *FIRST* after graduation, and can you envision them leading future *FIRST* alumni?

02 GATHER INFORMATION

DISCUSSION

After choosing your nominees, start to gather information!

For the written submission, you will need the following information about the student:

- Name and address of their school
- Year of graduation
- **Number of years in *FIRST*** & on your team

GATHER YOUR INFORMATION HERE !

You can list it or make a mindmap, whatever works best!

03 WRITE THE ESSAY (cont.)

ACTIVITY

Gather as much information as possible about your nominees to make writing easier.

The essay has **five** sections with an **800-character limit** per section. Make sure each section includes **specific examples**.

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**.
2. 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.
3. How does the student's individual contribution to the team benefit the whole?
4. Describe the students' **experience in areas of STEM**. This could include but is not limited to skills in engineering, software, CAD, fabrication, etc.
5. Explain the student's **leadership** to their **fellow team members**. How do they motivate others? What is their leadership style?

There is an additional question with a 500-character limit:

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

When the essay is complete, a Lead Mentor should submit the nomination through the *FIRST* Dashboard. Make sure the students are correctly registered first!

04 PREPARE FOR INTERVIEW

ACTIVITY

Using this guide will assist your nominees with the interview preparation.

1. Help your nominees identify the key points they want to communicate during their interview. Think about:
    - Their big achievements described in the essay
    - Additional details that didn't fit into the essay
    - Some 'Fun Facts' about the student outside of *FIRST*. These should be relevant to the award criteria, e.g.:
        - External leadership roles
        - Other examples of entrepreneurship and volunteering
    - Statistics, e.g. team hours, volunteer hours, teams assisted

2. Practice, practice, practice for the interview! Some common interview questions include:
    - Why do you want to inspire others?
    - How do you plan on spreading the message of *FIRST*?
    - What would your goals be without *FIRST*?
    - In what ways are you a leader on your team?
    - Why do you think you deserve this award?
    - How long have you been involved in *FIRST*?

Be prepared for questions related to specific details in the essay.

05 DO THE INTERVIEW

ACTIVITY

Stressful but fun, this is your student's time to shine!

Interviews will take place at your team's nominated event. If you are participating at multiple regionals, you can choose which event your interview will be conducted at when you submit the nomination. (But if your team competes in the district system, you will be assigned to one of the events your team is competing at.)

Interview structure:

- 6-10 minutes long
- Interviewed by at least two judges
- Involves a range of questions about you and your essay

Tips for the interview:

- The judges are nice and are there to listen. Don't be intimidated by them!
- Treat it as practice for a future job interview.
- **Be proud of your achievements** - the judges want to know why you have been nominated!
- Remember to have fun. Make the most of this experience!

06 WHERE NEXT?

ACTIVITY

The interview is just the start!

It is a huge achievement for a student to be selected as a *FIRST* Leadership Award Semi-Finalist by their team! Here is what might happen next...

1. Two students from every Regional and at least two from each District Championship will be selected as *FIRST* Leadership Award Finalists.

2. Championship judges select 10 *FIRST* Leadership Award Winners. Award Winners are chosen based on their essay and notes from their interview - Finalists are not interviewed a second time.

3. All *FIRST* Leadership Award Finalists are invited to attend the Championship, where a special ceremony to announce the winners is held.

07 CELEBRATE!

Students are our future! So, **CELEBRATE** your students! Acknowledge their **efforts** and **dedication** to the team and this great **achievement,** whatever the result may be. And most importantly, celebrate by continuing to **inspire** them to be the next **STEM** leaders!

SOME WAYS TO CELEBRATE:

- THROW A PARTY
- MAKE CERTIFICATES/MEDALS
- TREAT THEM TO FOOD/COOL MERCHANDISE

