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*FIRST® GAME CHANGERS<sup>SM</sup> powered by Star Wars: Force for Change*  
2020-2021 *FIRST® Tech Challenge*

# Dean's List Reviewer Manual



[FIRSTINSPIRES.ORG/ROBOTICS/FTC](http://FIRSTINSPIRES.ORG/ROBOTICS/FTC)

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## Volunteer Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to volunteer for a *FIRST*® Tech Challenge event. *FIRST*® and *FIRST*® Tech Challenge rely heavily on volunteers to ensure events run smoothly and are a fun experience for teams and their families, which could not happen without people like you. With over 6,500 teams competing yearly, your dedication and commitment are essential to the success of each event and the *FIRST* Tech Challenge program. Thank you for your time and effort in supporting the mission of *FIRST*!

Revision History		
Revision	Date	Description
1	11/2/2020	Initial Release

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## Introduction

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### **What is FIRST® Tech Challenge?**

FIRST® Tech Challenge is a student-centered program that focuses on giving students a unique and stimulating experience. Each year, teams engage in a new game where they design, build, test, and program autonomous and driver operated robots that must perform a series of tasks. To learn more about FIRST® Tech Challenge and other FIRST® Programs, visit [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org).

### **Gracious Professionalism®**

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FIRST® uses this term to describe our programs' intent.

*Gracious Professionalism®* is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

Watch Dr. Woodie Flowers explain *Gracious Professionalism* in this [short video](#).

Learn more about the roles of volunteers on our [Volunteer Resources page](#), "Volunteer Role Descriptions".

## Volunteer General Information

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### **Volunteer Training and Certification**

#### **To Access BlueVolt and Complete a Volunteer Role Training Course:**

Once you have applied for a volunteer role that requires certification a link will appear in your FIRST dashboard that will connect you to our learning management system BlueVolt.

1. Login to your FIRST Dashboard
2. On the grey menu below "Dashboard" Click on "Volunteer Registration"
3. Click on "Roles Missing Certification"

- a. Click into the link to “Review Outstanding Tasks” which will take you to the BlueVolt site where you can complete your certifications and sign up for new training

### **How to Access BlueVolt After Certifications are Complete:**

Once you complete your certifications, you will no longer see a “Roles Missing Certification” link or a link to “Review outstanding Tasks” to get to BlueVolt. If that is the case, follow the steps below to access BlueVolt courses and updates.

1. Login to your *FIRST* Dashboard
2. At the top right of the page, click on the dropdown under your name and go to “My Profile”
3. Once there, on the left menu of the page, click on the “Certifications” link which will take you to the BlueVolt site where you can view/print your existing certifications and sign up for new training

If you have applied for a role but do not see the link to training in your dashboard, or you have other training related questions please email [FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org](mailto:FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org).

### ***Volunteer Minimum Age Requirement***

*FIRST* requires that *FIRST* Event volunteers be at least 13 years old, however, the Regional Planning Committee can *increase* the age requirement as needed. Adult volunteers cannot have children with them while volunteering nor be responsible for supervising children at the event. Children under the minimum age are welcome at *FIRST* Competitions with suitable supervision by someone other than a volunteer.

### ***Bring a Friend!***

Volunteers are a huge part of the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Program and continuing to inspire students to seek out careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). *FIRST* Tech Challenge needs your help in recruiting new volunteers to keep our programs thriving for future generations! If you have a friend or co-worker you think would be interested in volunteering at an event, there are just a few easy steps to help get them involved!

1. Check out our full list of [volunteer opportunities](#) online!
2. Have them apply for the Event in the [Volunteer Registration System](#). Volunteers must be screened before volunteering.
3. Have them contact [Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org](mailto:Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org) with any questions they may have.

If they are concerned about jumping in head first, no worries! Job shadowing at a *FIRST* Tech Challenge Event is a great way to get a taste of what a full day's worth of competition looks like. New volunteers can discover ways they can fit their personal skills into a volunteer position!

## **Job Description**

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The Dean's List reviewer role is to read all the student nomination essays, along with the Dean's List interviewer feedback. Using the Dean's List Award criteria, reviewers will determine which students will advance from the position of semi-finalist to finalist within their region.

- **Physical/Technical Requirements:**
  - Technical – Low
  - Physical – Low
  - Administrative – Medium
  - Communication – High
- **Proper Dress:**

- Wear comfortable shoes, most of the day will be spent standing and walking between the pit area and the competition fields.
- ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses are required in the competition area.

### **Time Commitment**

A Dean's List reviewers' main role is to review nominations and interviewer notes, and then collectively (with at least one other Dean's List reviewer) determine which semi-finalists will become finalists. The time commitment is approximately 2-4 hours, depending on the number of semi-finalists nominated in the region.

## **FIRST Dean's List Award**

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### **Award Overview**

In an effort to recognize the leadership and dedication of *FIRST*'s most outstanding secondary school students, the Kamen family sponsors an award for selected 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students known as the *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge Dean's List.

Similar to the very prestigious National Merit Scholarship Award winners, there are three (3) "categories" of *FIRST* Dean's List Award students:

1. ***FIRST* Dean's List Semi-finalists** – comprised of the two (2) students in their 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade school year\* nominated by each team.
2. ***FIRST* Dean's List Finalists** – comprised of the students (2, 3, or 4, depending on the region) selected at each State/Regions Championship.
3. ***FIRST* Dean's List Winners** – comprised of the ten (10) *FIRST* Robotics Competition and ten (10) *FIRST* Tech Challenge students selected from the applicable *FIRST* Dean's List Finalists at the *FIRST* Championship.

The students who earn *FIRST* Dean's List status as either a Semi-finalist, Finalist, or Winner, are great examples of current student leaders who have led their teams and communities to increased awareness of *FIRST* and its mission while achieving personal technical expertise and accomplishment. It is *FIRST*'s goal that all Dean's List Semi-finalists, Finalists, and Winners will continue on, post award, as great leaders of *FIRST*'s ever growing student alumni.

Prestigious colleges have expressed great interest in meeting *FIRST* Dean's List's Award winners and *FIRST* hopes that each team will take advantage of the opportunity to nominate the most qualified students as *FIRST* Dean's List nominees!

\*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 the year of graduation during the nomination process.

### **Student Eligibility**

Every registered *FIRST* Tech Challenge *Team* can submit up to two (2) students as *FIRST* Dean's List 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.

### Criteria

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

- Demonstrated leadership and commitment to *FIRST* Core Values
- Effectiveness at increasing awareness of *FIRST* in their school and community
- Interest in and passion for a long-term commitment to *FIRST*
- Overall individual contribution to their team
- Technical expertise and passion
- Entrepreneurship and creativity
- Ability to motivate and lead fellow team members

### Dean's List Award Evaluation Structure

The chart below is a visual aid to show how each category feeds into specific levels of competition. Dean's List interviewers are responsible for interviewing semi-finalists. Interviews are done at the qualifying tournament, league championship or Interview only events. The Dean's List 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 Dean's List finalists. Depending upon the size of the region, there will be 2-4 Dean's List finalists within each state or region (see [Number of Advancing Finalists by Region](#) for further details). These finalists will be announced at the State/Region Championship Tournament. A separate panel will review the Dean's List finalists and choose the 10 *FIRST* Tech Challenge Dean's List Winners.



## Dean's List Reviewer Role

### Role Overview

The Dean's List reviewers are responsible for selecting the Dean's List Award finalists. There will be at least two reviewers in a State/Region that work together to determine the finalists for that State/Region. The reviewers must access the Dean's List Award System to view the original nomination as well as the notes from the Dean's List interviewers. Once all the nominations and notes have been considered, the Reviewers are responsible for choosing the finalist students to be announced at the State/Region championship. Dean's List reviewers do not need to be present at the event; rather they review each semi-finalist and enter the finalists in the Dean's List Award System. This information will feed up to the state championship tournament director.

### **Conflict of Interest**

“Conflict of Interest – a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust. “Conflict of Interest.” Merriam-Webster.com Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 2 Oct. 2014.

[http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict\\_of\\_interest](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict_of_interest)”

Conflicts of interest should always be disclosed, either to the tournament director or program delivery partner. Volunteers serving in the role as a Dean's List reviewer must not interview teams with whom they have a conflict of interest with. Some scenarios of conflict of interests:

- A coach/mentor is volunteering as a reviewer;
- A parent/relative of a team member is volunteering as a reviewer;
- An alumnus (student or adult) of a team is volunteering as a reviewer;
- A sponsor of a team is volunteering as a reviewer;

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

### **Access the Nominations**

Dean's List reviewers are required to apply for this volunteer role through the dashboard on [firstinspires.org](http://firstinspires.org). All reviewers are required to apply and complete YPP screening prior to accessing any student information.

Dean's List Award nominations are posted on a private, password-protected site where only the interviewers, reviewers, and authorized *FIRST* staff can read the entries. Reviewers will receive a link to the *FIRST* Dean's List Award System once they are assigned to the role by the tournament director or volunteer coordinator. Please see the [Dean's List Award System](#) section of this manual for further instructions and features of the system.

### **Reviewer Collaboration**

There must always be at least two reviewers that will work together to read all the nominations and decide who the finalists will be. In some regions, a committee might be formed to review the nominations and to make final decisions. Reviewers should check with the program delivery partner in their region to determine if a committee has been formed to review nominations, or if they will need to collaborate with one other individual.

Reviewers can choose to either meet in person, or via conference call to discuss each semi-finalist in detail. It is most helpful for each reviewer to read the nominations prior to this meeting and have ideas of which candidates are the top contenders and why.

### **Review Timeline**

Working together with the other assigned reviewer(s), plan to discuss the nominations approximately 2 weeks before the championship tournament. This will allow plenty of time to collaborate and decide which semi-finalists will be named Dean's List finalists and provides time for the finalists to be communicated to the tournament director and/or program delivery partner.



## Dean's List Reviewers – Selecting Finalists

It can be a difficult task for the reviewers to determine which semi-finalists will move to the next level as finalists. The reviewer should always keep in mind the criteria when making their decisions. This section goes over some other items the reviewer should and should not consider when making their decision.

### **Essay nomination - New**

New this season, the essay nomination that is submitted by the coach of the student is broken down into 4 prompts. The prompts ask the coaches to provide specific examples of how the student meets the award criteria. Each of the prompts has a 1,000 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. Describe the student's increased technical expertise, entrepreneurship, and creativity. How does the student's individual contributions to the team benefit the team as a whole in areas of fundraising, outreach, robot build, programming, etc.? Please provide examples.
4. Explain the student's leadership to their fellow team members. How do they motivate others? What is their leadership style? Please provide examples.

The goal is to ensure the information provided in the essay is relevant to the award criteria. This will help the Dean's List volunteer when reviewing each nomination and eventually deciding which students will become finalists.

### **FIRST Robotics Competition/FIRST Tech Challenge**

Both *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge are eligible to be nominated for the Dean's List Award in their State/Region's program. There is no rule that states a student cannot be nominated for both. Reviewers should focus on the student's accomplishments in the program they have been nominated for, rather than disregarding a student that has been nominated for both programs.

### **Individual Contributions**

Many essay nominations will outline team activities, but not necessarily discuss what the student's individual contributions are to the activity. This is where the job of the interviewer is very important, and they have been instructed to include these types of notes to better assist the reviewer in making their final decisions.

Other questions a reviewer can ask themselves when making final decisions:

- Is the student a great ambassador for *FIRST*?
- Is the student a leader?
- Is this a student that will continue to be involved with *FIRST* and its mission in future years?
- How have they helped increase the awareness of *FIRST*?

### **Dean's List Evaluation of GPA**

- Dean's List nominations require that a coach/ mentor enter the student's GPA, with a brief explanation of how the GPA is determined as part of the particular school system. The GPA allows an interviewer or reviewer to identify students who present a good balance of both academics and *FIRST* core values. When evaluating a student, the GPA should be used as a tool, but not the deciding factor if a determination needs to be made between a short list of students.

## Number of Advancing Finalists by Region

The number of semi-finalists that will move onto the next level as finalists depends upon the region. Regions with larger team numbers will have additional spots to advance students. Below outlines the number of advancing finalists by region:

### North America

2 Finalists	3 Finalists	4 Finalists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alabama</li> <li>• Alberta, Canada</li> <li>• Arkansas</li> <li>• British Columbia, Canada</li> <li>• Connecticut</li> <li>• Delaware</li> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Idaho</li> <li>• Kentucky</li> <li>• Louisiana</li> <li>• Montana</li> <li>• Nebraska</li> <li>• Nevada</li> <li>• New Hampshire</li> <li>• New Mexico</li> <li>• North Dakota</li> <li>• Ontario, Canada</li> <li>• South Carolina</li> <li>• Texas – South</li> <li>• Vermont</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> <li>• Wyoming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska</li> <li>• Arizona</li> <li>• California – San Diego</li> <li>• Colorado</li> <li>• Georgia</li> <li>• Indiana</li> <li>• Maryland</li> <li>• Massachusetts</li> <li>• Mexico</li> <li>• Mississippi</li> <li>• New York – Excelsior</li> <li>• New York – Long Island</li> <li>• New York – NYC</li> <li>• North Carolina</li> <li>• Ohio</li> <li>• Oklahoma</li> <li>• Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Rhode Island</li> <li>• Texas – East</li> <li>• Texas – West and Panhandle</li> <li>• Utah</li> <li>• Wisconsin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California – LA</li> <li>• California – NorCal</li> <li>• Florida</li> <li>• Illinois</li> <li>• Iowa</li> <li>• Minnesota</li> <li>• Missouri</li> <li>• New Jersey</li> <li>• Oregon</li> <li>• Texas – North</li> <li>• Texas – Central</li> <li>• Virginia</li> <li>• Washington</li> </ul>

**International**

2 Finalists	3 Finalists	4 Finalists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brazil</li> <li>• CEESA</li> <li>• Chinese Taipei</li> <li>• Cyprus</li> <li>• Egypt &amp; Lebanon</li> <li>• Hong Kong</li> <li>• India</li> <li>• Israel</li> <li>• Jamaica</li> <li>• Kazakhstan</li> <li>• Netherlands</li> <li>• Nigeria</li> <li>• Qatar</li> <li>• Republic of Korea</li> <li>• Russia</li> <li>• Saudi Arabia</li> <li>• South Africa</li> <li>• Spain</li> <li>• Thailand</li> <li>• UAE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australia</li> <li>• United Kingdom &amp; Ireland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China</li> <li>• Romania</li> </ul>

## Appendix A – Resources

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### Game Forum Q&A

<https://ftcforum.firstinspires.org/>

Anyone may view questions and answers within the FIRST® Tech Challenge game Q&A forum without a password. To submit a new question, you must have a unique Q&A system user name and password for your team.

Volunteers that apply for a specific volunteer role will receive an email from [FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org](mailto:FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org) with their username and password to the forum. You will receive access to the forum thread specific to your role.

### FIRST Tech Challenge Game Manuals

Part 1 and 2 - <https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/ftc/game-and-season-info>

### FIRST Headquarters Pre-Event Support

Phone: 603-666-3906

Mon – Fri

8:30am – 5:00pm

Email: [Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org](mailto:Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org)

### FIRST Tech Challenge Event On-Call Support

*These numbers are available for event personnel only. Please **do not** call these numbers if you are a team looking for a ruling, a decision, or assistance. We trust that you will not misuse this resource.*

Day of event robot control system and scoring system support: 603-206-2450

All other day of event support: 603-206-2412

### FIRST Websites

FIRST homepage – [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org)

[FIRST Tech Challenge Page](#) – For everything FIRST Tech Challenge.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Volunteer Resources](#) – To access public volunteer manuals.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Event Schedule](#) – Find FIRST Tech Challenge events in your area.

### FIRST Tech Challenge Social Media

[FIRST Tech Challenge Twitter Feed](#) - If you are on Twitter, follow the FIRST Tech Challenge Twitter feed for news updates.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Facebook page](#) - If you are on Facebook, follow the FIRST Tech Challenge page for news updates.

[FIRST Tech Challenge YouTube Channel](#) – Contains training videos, game animations, news clips, and more.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Blog](#) – Weekly articles for the FIRST Tech Challenge community, including outstanding volunteer recognition!

[FIRST Tech Challenge Team Email Blasts](#) – contain the most recent FIRST Tech Challenge news for teams.

### Feedback

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