

2023-24 CAD TEAM ELIGIBILITY

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

Schools may participate in California Academic Decathlon's (CAD) program with as few as one (1) decathlete. Schools that do not have an official team may participate in Regional Academic Decathlon activities (i.e., scrimmages, workshops and other special events open to participating schools).

Participating schools that do not have an official team will not be qualified to advance to the state championship. Team eligibility requirements ensure consistency in competition.

Teams that advance to the state championship, either by winning their regional competition or scoring high enough to receive an invitation by CAD, will not be disqualified if their team number drops below the minimum required to compete as a team following the regional competition. This rule allows for unforeseen circumstances that may cause a decathlete to withdraw following the regional competition and before the commencement of the state championship.

TEAM PARTICIPATION

An official team consists of six to nine full-time decathletes from the same high school (9th – 12th grade). A full-time decathlete is defined as a decathlete who is enrolled in four or more class periods per day. Each team is made up of two to three decathletes in each of the following categories: Honor, Scholastic, and Varsity, in accordance with the following grade point average (GPA) definitions:

Varsity: 0.00 – 3.19 GPA **Scholastic:** 3.20 – 3.79 GPA **Honor:** 3.80 – 4.00 GPA

Contestants may compete in a higher division than their own grade point average category but not in a lower division.

Each team member competes in all ten events of the Decathlon and is eligible for individual medals in all ten events. Only six scores count for the final team standing in the competition—the top two Honor scores, the top two Scholastic scores, and the top two Varsity scores.

COMPUTATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGES FOR 2023 - 2024

NOTE: CAD offers a GPA worksheet calculation service. For a small fee, CAD will complete the GPA calculation worksheet for coaches. Coaches only need to submit their team roster along with the students' transcripts for Scholastic and Varsity students and CAD will do the rest.

Students participating in the Honor category do not need to submit a GPA Worksheet. Transcripts are required to verify full-time status only.

GPA calculations for ninth-grade students include only their grades earned while in the eighth grade and in the summer session between eighth and ninth grade. The "focus semesters" for GPA computation for tenth, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students go back two years prior to the present grade level of the decathlete. If the decathlete is a twelfth grader in September of the competition year, then the semesters that are used for GPA computation are all the tenth grade, all the eleventh grade, and the summer sessions between tenth and eleventh grades and between eleventh and twelfth grades. Likewise, if the contestant is in eleventh grade in the fall, the focus period for GPA computations includes the entire ninth grade, the entire tenth grade, and the summer sessions between ninth and tenth grades and between tenth and eleventh grades. If the contestant is in tenth grade in the fall, the focus period for GPA computations includes the entire eighth grade, all the ninth grade, and the summer sessions between eighth and ninth grades and between ninth and tenth grades.

Regardless of the system used to determine a GPA locally, these criteria must be followed to ensure uniformity and equity among all participants in the United States Academic Decathlon.

Grades for courses shall be used in GPA computations for Academic Decathlon competition purposes if the courses focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories of a specific discipline and the assessments are objective in nature. Grades for courses that directly deal with the theoretical content covered in the Academic Decathlon curriculum and competitive events should be included in GPA computations. However, a grade for a course focused specifically on the Academic Decathlon should NOT be included in GPA computations.

Grades for courses shall NOT be used in GPA computations for Academic Decathlon competition purposes if they are hands-on, performance-based, skills type, non-book, lab-based, or more than 50% of course time is spent in service learning or internship. The skills that are developed in these courses tend to be more technical or vocational, and the majority of a decathlete's grade in these courses is subjective in nature. Please refer to CAD's current Acceptable/Unacceptable document.



Inquiries regarding borderline courses should be referred to the state director, who will make the determination based on the academic nature of the course, and who will then implement the decision uniformly throughout the state. The decision of the state director about which course grades are applied to the Academic Decathlon GPA tabulation is final.

For all alpha grades, all A's will count as 4.0, all B's will count as 3.0, all C's will count as 2.0, and all D's will count as 1.0. Anything below D will count as 0 points. When numerical grades appear on the transcript in place of alpha grades, they shall be converted to alpha grades according to the official conversion scale that appears on the school's official transcript or in the school's official profile.

If a student receives a Fail in any academic course, the F is counted in averaging the student's grades even though no credit is given. When a course has been failed prior to the focus period for which the GPA is being computed but repeated during that period, only the repeat grade is counted. When a course is failed and repeated during the focus semesters, both grades are counted in the GPA.

A grade, regardless of whether it is advanced placement, honors, regular, or remedial classification, will count the face value of the final grade as reflected on the official transcript. No weighting of grades for honors classes will be included, even if this is the local district policy. An “A” grade, therefore, will count as four points for Decathlon computation even if it counts as five points within the local system. Under no circumstances may an “A” grade count as three points. The letter grade shown on the transcript will be used in computing GPA regardless of any plus or minus. The state director may determine standards for eligibility for decathletes from schools with non-traditional grading systems. Such standards will be communicated to USAD for review and approval prior to the state competition.

The GPA for each student shall be calculated by dividing total points by total credits completed for the focus terms. The total points shall include the alpha grade points multiplied by the credits completed. Unless a school’s curriculum defines the specific credits completed by a course or missing credits completed (mainly in 8th grade transcripts), credits completed can be determined as 10.00 credits for a full-year grade, 5.00 credits for a half-year grade, 3.33 credits for a trimester grade, and 2.25 credits for a quarter-year grade.

INCOMPLETE, CR/NC, OR P/NP GRADES

Incomplete, Credit/No Credit, or Pass/No Pass grades are not included in computing the GPA unless the decathlete received a letter grade that appears on the transcript. Once a grade is given to remove an incomplete, that grade must be used to determine the decathlete’s GPA.

To change an incomplete, CR/NC, or P/NP to a grade, a coach “must” obtain proper verification and present findings to the regional coordinator for review. Proper verification must include approval from the school site administration and school district(s). The regional coordinator may assist the coach in obtaining the proper verification. The regional coordinator will present the findings to the state director for review. If approved, the state director will present the proposal to the United States Academic Decathlon Testing Director for review.

COLLEGE COURSES

College courses are included in the GPA only if high school credit is given, the course is listed on the official high school transcript and the course is an Academic Decathlon acceptable course. Credits completed are reported just like any other course credits completed within a GPA calculation period, using the number of credit hours completed as listed on the high school transcript.

HOME-SCHOOLED STUDENTS AND TEAMS

According to the USAD guidelines, home-schooled teams may not advance to the National Finals. Home-schooled students can participate in the United States Academic Decathlon (USAD) if their school district allows home-schooled students to participate in other extracurricular activities. Home-schooled students can only participate in the United States Academic Decathlon program at the high school they would attend if they were not home-schooled. The GPA classification of home-schooled students will be made in accordance with state law pertaining to home-schooled students. The State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the state director have final authority regarding the participation and classification of home-schooled students, and the decision of the State Academic Decathlon Association and/or the state director will be final.

Home-schooled students can participate in the California Academic Decathlon as a team if they participate in the Independent Study Charter Region or at the high school they would attend if they were not home-schooled (if their school district allows home-schooled decathletes to participate in other extracurricular activities).

FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Foreign exchange students are eligible to participate in the Academic Decathlon. A foreign student who does not possess a valid transcript may participate in the Honor category of the high school they are currently enrolled in.

If a coach wishes to qualify a foreign student for the Scholastic or Varsity category, the coach must provide adequate evidence that the student performed at a relative B or C status within the foreign system during the GPA calculation period prior to participation in the Decathlon. The state director has final authority regarding the participation and classification of foreign decathletes.



CHANGING GRADES – TRANSCRIPT MODIFICATION

If a district, school, or a teacher has a policy of changing grades on a transcript, the new grade must be used for the computation of the Decathlon GPA. A grade adjustment must be reported immediately to the regional coordinator and state director to review the transcript and determine the new category for the decathlete before the next level of competition (round) begins. If a change to a transcript is not reported and the state finds out about the change, the decathlete and school risk disqualification for the remainder of the year and suspension to participate in future years.

DECATHLETE ASSISTANCE

Without a copy of a decathlete's IEP and history of how the decathlete has been accommodated in previous competitions, decathletes are not allowed to bring any other materials or aides to assist them in testing other than approved calculators for math and wrist watches (timers) that produce no noise, into the testing room.

If a decathlete wishes to use words or phrases from a foreign language in his/her speech or interview, then they are responsible for translating those words and/or phrases into English, and this must be done within the given time limit. Foreign language interpreters are prohibited.

VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Each high school will submit official transcripts to verify eligibility of team members to the regional coordinator at the local competition the team is entering. The school certification of transcripts will be the final indication of a decathlete's eligibility and GPA category. The regional coordinator shall check the GPA computation in accordance with the above guidelines and verify the eligibility of each team member. It is the responsibility of the coach and student to ensure they are placed in the correct category. In California, GPAs must be calculated using CAD's GPA Calculation Excel Worksheet which will automatically calculate a decathlete's GPA and identify the lowest division in which a decathlete may compete.

ELIGIBILITY FOR STATE AND NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

For a decathlete to be eligible to advance to the state competition, the decathlete must participate in all 10 individual subjects (Art, Economics, Essay, Interview, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Science, Social Science and Speech) in Round 2 (regional competition) unless a valid, written statement is provided by the regional coordinator explaining the circumstance(s) and approved by the state director.

Each decathlete must be a full-time student for the high school they represent at the time of competition and must compete in the appropriate category (Honor, Scholastic, or Varsity) of Academic Decathlon at the time of competition. USAD recognizes full-time status if a student is taking a minimum of four classes.

TEAMS ADVANCING TO THE NATIONAL FINALS

Teams advancing to the National Finals must be comprised according to the USAD guidelines. The decathletes who attend the National Finals must be the same decathletes who participated in and won the state competition. No different or additional team members may be included except in the event of a student's death, medical emergencies, or other extenuating circumstances and only with the express prior approval of CAD and USAD.

The California Academic Decathlon has the authority to declare the first-place team ineligible to attend the national finals in accordance with the rules and practices of the state organization and may send another team to represent the state. In such cases, the decision of the California Academic Decathlon organization is final. However, CAD will promptly notify USAD of such an occurrence.

Upon completion of the National Finals, California teams (including online teams and individual participants) will submit officially signed, stamped, and sealed high school transcripts for all decathletes who participated in the national finals. Transcripts must be dated after April 1 and received by the CAD office by May 31, or the school will be ineligible to participate in the state or national competition the following year.

Participation in the Academic Decathlon is voluntary and is open to all decathletes regardless of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, or handicap.

Questions regarding computing the Decathlon GPA or eligibility of decathletes should be addressed to CAD at ken@academicdecathlon.org or 707-646-7603.