

Secrets of the DECA Test – Produced by Virginia DECA SAT 72

1. Know your exam – marketing, hospitality, finance, or business administration
2. Know where your exam is coming from – Performance Indicators
If you haven't already, download your list of Performance Indicators under your event at DECA.org at Competitive Events. Defining them in advance will help you on both the test and the roleplay!
3. Know who you're battling against – the MBAResearch Center
Directly from them:

General information for 2016-2017¹

- All exams are 100-item, multiple-choice. True/False and combination items (e.g., A & B are correct) are generally not used.
- Tests are designed with test discrimination in mind. The design is intended to encourage a broad range of student scores, minimizing the occurrence of “clusters” of students near the top. This approach results in lower overall scores, but makes the results more valid and reliable in terms of identifying “winners.”
- All exams are fully independent of one another. There will be little or no overlapping use of questions among exams used in competition. There will be no overlap between sample exams and those used in competition.
- Item selection is based on the national **MBA Research standards**. With the exception of the district and state level exams for the “Principles” events for first-year DECA members, exams are based on performance indicators at or below the specialist level (**Curriculum Planning Levels**). District and state exams for the “Principles” event are based on the prerequisite and career-sustaining level indicators.
- Items are prorated across all eligible performance indicators so that each instructional area (e.g., promotion) is represented in proportion to the total of all performance indicators. For example, if there were a total of 200 indicators in a particular list, and 25 of them were from the promotion area, there would be approximately 12 or 13 promotion items on the exam.
- For some events, DECA has added performance indicators for use in the participating portion of the event (role plays). These additional indicators are not used in the exams.
- Items for district and state-level exams include a mix of new and revised (previously used) items. All items are reviewed each year, and updated as appropriate. Although items are pulled from a large test-item bank, some may have appeared in other products, including other exams, LAP modules, or practice activities. However, although many items for a given performance indicator may sound similar to students, the actual reuse of items in any given year is quite small. (The item bank exceeds 30,000.)

¹ <https://www.mbaresearch.org/index.php/curriculum-teaching/student-organizations/deca/item/40-deca-test-specifications-2016-2017>

4. Know the breakdown to maximize studying efficiency. MBA Research provides the breakdown of the different questions according to what they are **aligned** with. For example, in your Performance Indicator packet (accessible on DECA.org) will have different topics such as Financial Analysis and Emotional Intelligence. What this means is you should focus your studying on the topics which most questions appear from! Important to note – Principles only tests on Business Administration Core, while people taking Marketing, Hospitality, or Finance need to pay attention to both the business administration core and their own cluster exam.

Here's the breakdown of your States exam:

Business Administration Core (50 items total)

(BA core included in all cluster exams)

- Business Law (BL): 2 items
- Communications (CO): 6 items
- Customer Relations (CR): 2 items ▪ Economics (EC): 7 items

- Emotional Intelligence (EI): 8 items
- Financial Analysis (FI): 5 items
- Human Resources Management (HR): 1 item ▪ Information Management (NF): 6 items
- Marketing (MK): 1 item
- Operations (OP): 6 items
- Professional Development (PD): 5 items
- Strategic Management (SM): 1 item

Business Management & Administration Cluster Core (50 items total)

(100-item exam also includes BA Core, above) ▪ Business Law (BL): 3 items

- Communications (CO): 2 items
- Financial Analysis (FI): 1 item

- Information Management (NF): 2 items ▪ Knowledge Management (KM): 5 items
- Operations (OP): 18 items
- Professional Development (PD): 1 item ▪ Project Management (PJ): 5 items

- Quality Management (QM): 3 items ▪ Risk Management (RM): 3 items
- Strategic Management (SM): 7 items

Finance Cluster Core (50 items total)

(100-item exam also includes BA Core, above) ■ Business Law (BL): 5 items

- Customer Relations (CR): 2 items
- Financial Analysis (FI): 20 items

- Financial-Information Management (FM): 8 items ■ Information Management (NF): 1 item
- Professional Development (PD): 8 items
- Risk Management (RM): 6 items

Marketing Cluster Core (50 items total)

(100-item exam also includes BA Core, above)

- Channel Management (CM): 5 items
- Marketing-Information Management (IM): 11 items ■ Market Planning (MP): 4 items
- Pricing (PI): 3 items
- Professional Development (PD): 1 item
- Product/Service Management (PM): 11 items
- Promotion (PR): 9 items
- Selling (SE): 6 items

Hospitality and Tourism Cluster Core (50 items total)

(100-item exam also includes BA Core, above) ■ Business Law (BL): 1 item

- Channel Management (CM): 2 items
- Communications (CO): 0 items

- Customer Relations (CR): 0 items
- Distribution (DS): 1 item
- Economics (EC): 0 items
- Emotional Intelligence (EI): 0 items ■ Financial Analysis (FI): 0 items

- Information Management (NF): 1 item
- Marketing (MK): 1 item
- Marketing-Information Management (IM): 9 items ■ Market Planning (MP): 2 items
- Operations (OP): 2 items
- Pricing (PI): 2 items
- Product/Service Management (PM): 7 items
- Professional Development (PD): 2 items
- Promotion (PR): 14 items
- Selling (SE): 6 items

5. MBA Research Prep2Test App

- a. The MOST effective tool for studying
- b. Questions on this app directly appear on the exam

- c. Download the one that's related to your Exam
 - d. It costs a few bucks, but let me reiterate, it is totally worth it
- 6. Use unconventional resources
 - a. Performance indicator definitions (emailed to you)
 - b. Order DECA flash cards
 - c. Search the Internet far and wide
- 7. Practice, practice, practice – but don't over practice
 - a. Take approximately 5-10 tests before states
 - b. Never take more than 2 tests in a day – and if you're taking two, make sure they're spaced apart
 - c. Your brain will not comprehend the content (or remember it) if you're trying to digest so many questions
 - d. Build practice into your daily routine
 - i. Prep2Test questions on the way to school
 - j. Take 10 actual test questions when you get home
 - e. Read the explanations for what you did wrong, and read the explanations for questions you guessed on (even if you got it right)