

The Next Big Step | Systems for New Advisors

SESSION TOOLKIT

ADVISOR SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Choose one manageable change. The goal is progress, not a complete chapter redesign.

One thing I will stop doing is

One thing I will delegate is

One system I will build this semester is

One student I will empower this year is

My first step will happen by

The person who can help hold me accountable is

I will know this change is working when

ADVISOR VS. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

Use this as a starting point. School policies and chartered association requirements always take priority.

Responsibility	Advisor Role	Officer / Student Role	Who Owns It This Semester?
Chapter meetings	Coach, approve, supervise	Build agenda, facilitate, follow up	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Membership recruitment	Approve messaging and school procedures	Plan outreach and welcome members	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Communication	Set channels, boundaries and standards	Draft reminders and share approved updates	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Social media	Approve access and brand alignment	Create and schedule approved content	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Competition preparation	Teach, coach and connect resources	Practice, track progress and support peers	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Events and projects	Approve scope, budget and safety	Plan tasks, assign roles and execute	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Recognition	Ensure equitable standards	Track and celebrate member contributions	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Deadlines	Confirm official requirements	Maintain internal timeline and reminders	Advisor / Co-Led / Officer
Add your own:			
Add your own:			

Reflection: Which responsibility can move one step closer to student ownership this semester?

OFFICER OWNERSHIP LADDER + TRACKER

Leadership is developed gradually. Move one recurring responsibility up the ladder at a time.

LEVEL 1	ADVISOR LED	The advisor models the process and explains why each step matters.
LEVEL 2	CO-LED	The advisor and officer complete the responsibility together.
LEVEL 3	OFFICER LED	The officer leads; the advisor coaches, reviews and gives feedback.
LEVEL 4	OFFICER OWNED ADVISOR APPROVED	The officer owns the process; the advisor provides approval, accountability and support.

Ownership Tracker

Responsibility	Current Level	Next Level	Student Owner	Next Check-In

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS TEMPLATE

Edit the bracketed language to fit your school, chapter and communication tools.

PRIMARY COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Chapter updates will be shared through [platform / email / learning management system]. Students are responsible for checking this channel [frequency].

DECA OFFICE HOURS

Questions may be brought to me during [days / times / location]. Officers may also use [scheduled check-in time].

RESPONSE TIME

Messages will typically receive a response within [timeframe] on school days. Messages sent during evenings, weekends or school breaks may be answered on the next school day.

STUDENT FIRST STEP

Before contacting the advisor, members should first check [chapter resource folder / FAQ / calendar] and contact [officer role] when appropriate.

DEADLINES

The chapter may set internal deadlines before official school, association or DECA deadlines. Missing an internal deadline may affect participation if required steps cannot be completed safely or on time.

URGENT MATTERS

Same-day communication should be reserved for safety concerns or circumstances that genuinely require immediate attention. Lack of planning is not automatically an emergency.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Families can find official information through [channel]. Questions involving travel, forms, payments or student safety should be directed to [advisor / school contact].

CHAPTER SYSTEMS CHECKLIST

You do not need every box checked. Use this page to identify the next system that would save time or increase student ownership.

FOUNDATION

- ☐ We selected one priority for classroom integration, chapter leadership and competition.
- ☐ We know which national resources and chartered association resources to use.
- ☐ Our officers and members know where chapter information is stored.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- ☐ Officers have responsibilities, not only titles.
- ☐ At least one recurring task is officer-led or officer-owned.
- ☐ Officers have a consistent check-in structure with the advisor.

COMMUNICATION

- ☐ Members know the primary communication channel.
- ☐ Response time expectations are clear.
- ☐ Internal deadlines are posted before official deadlines.

MEETINGS + OPERATIONS

- ☐ We use a repeatable meeting agenda.
- ☐ We have a process for tracking forms, tasks and follow-up.
- ☐ Students help plan, facilitate and communicate chapter activities.

ADVISOR SUSTAINABILITY

- ☐ I have identified one task to stop doing.
- ☐ I have identified one task to delegate.
- ☐ I have set at least one boundary that protects my time.
- ☐ I keep reusable agendas, messages and checklists for next year.

My next system to build:

DECA RESOURCE QUICK LINKS

DECA Inc. provides the national foundation. Your chartered association provides local deadlines, policies, conference information and implementation guidance.

Resource	Link	Best Use
Advisor Resource Center	https://www.deca.org/resources	Search classroom resources, chapter strategy tools and advisor professional learning.
New Advisor: Let's Get Started	https://www.deca.org/advisor-resources/lets-get-started	A foundational new-advisor overview with steps and related resources.
DECA Guide	https://www.deca.org/advisor-resources/deca-guide	Use the current guide for program information, competitive events and annual updates.
DECA Chapter Strategy Guide	https://www.deca.org/advisor-resources/deca-chapter-strategy-guide	A road map with lesson plans and student worksheets for managing a chapter.
DECA Direct Online	https://www.decadirect.org/	News, announcements, classroom connections, competition tips and member content.
DECA Brand Center	https://www.deca.org/brand	Official logos, messaging guidance, templates and brand resources.
Your Chartered Association	Add your association website and advisor contact here.	Use this source for local requirements, deadlines, conferences, procedures and support.

THE NEXT BIG STEP STARTS NOW.

Build the next system. Give students the next opportunity to lead. Then keep going.