

# Adviser Job Description

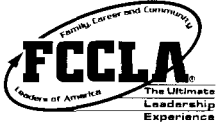
The requirements for student activity advisers—FCCLA advisers, class and club advisers, and so forth—will vary from district to district, and job descriptions often involve little more than a list of activities for which the person is responsible. Check with your school administration to determine if a general written description exists for an activity adviser or specifically for a chapter adviser. If not, it's a good idea to draft one so that everyone involved knows what is expected when taking on the responsibility of working with a student organization.

The following checklist of essential skills for an adviser, excerpted from *A Handbook for the Student Activity Adviser* by Ron Joekel (NASSP, 1989) can help a new adviser understand what is required in the role of activity adviser.

## The Adviser's Checklist of Essential Skills

An effective student activity adviser...

- Is well educated about the organization and understands its purposes.
- Is familiar with the school philosophy and policies for activities.
- Is committed to the concept of student activities and student participation.
- Knows and understands the constitution and bylaws.
- Knows the role and responsibilities of an adviser and has a written job description.
- Understands the importance of committees and assists in setting up a functioning committee system.
- Can instruct officers in the effective performance of their duties.
- Knows how to help students establish goals and objectives and plan for their effective implementation.
- Communicates regularly with the administration and faculty.
- Can work with the students in an orderly process of problem-solving and decision-making.
- Is familiar with the skills necessary to conduct meetings and is able to teach the skills to the members of the organization.
- Is knowledgeable about principles of organizational structure and management.
- Understands the importance of public relations and communication skills and demonstrates them effectively.
- Knows the functions of projects/activities and their relationship to the success and image of the organization.
- Remains objective and works with the students to continually evaluate and obtain feedback on the organization and its activities.
- Is resourceful and knows where to go for help and assistance.
- Participates in activities to continually increase knowledge and skills as an adviser.
- Exhibits good human relations skills in working with others.
- Has an understanding of the teaching-learning process and the necessity of working with the student and not telling them what to do.
- Gives credit where credit is due and constantly encourages the students.
- Is willing to devote the time required, both in and out of school.
- Sets personal goals and evaluates performance in meeting them.



# FCCLA Chapter Roles

As illustrated here, FCCLA members initiate, plan, and evaluate action, while advisers serve as facilitators and guides.

## **MEMBERS**

- Set and enforce chapter expectations
- Identify concerns and project ideas
- Choose projects
- Develop plans
- Assume leadership roles (run meetings, gain administrative approval, research information, contact speakers, fill out forms, serve as group/team leaders)
- Carry out plans and use resources
- Publicize results
- Evaluate experiences throughout projects

## **ADVISERS**

- Mediate enforcement of expectations
- Handle disciplinary action if necessary
- Encourage all students' input
- Ensure suggestions relate to Family and Consumer Sciences Education
- Ask questions that guide students to evaluate pros and cons of each option
- Introduce the FCCLA Planning Process
- Guide students to consider all phases of planning
- Encourage student leaders
- Model appropriate leadership behavior
- Suggest leadership resources/training
- Guide leaders to coordinate member participation
- Suggest programmatic resources
- Redirect inappropriate efforts
- Recognize supporters and participants
- Suggest public relations resources
- Ask leading questions
- Encourage input from all students
- Encourage openness and honesty

**E**nthusiasm, genuine concern for young people, and familiarity with FCCLA resources and opportunities are keys to adviser effectiveness. Patience, a sense of humor, and flexibility help too! Here are some ways to strengthen members' FCCLA experiences:

- **Encourage youth-centered leadership so all members have the opportunity to participate.** Students may need to be convinced they want to participate in youth-centered leadership. It's easier for them to let the adviser do everything for them. An effective chapter adviser helps students by guiding instead of prescribing, suggesting rather than dictating, and encouraging not demanding.
- **Help students feel comfortable assuming leadership roles.** Students' leadership abilities and interests will vary, but each FCCLA member can gain experience that strengthens his or her leadership for families, careers, and communities. Advisers can help students see chapter projects and activities as part of a larger process of learning.
- **Put members in charge so they truly feel responsible for the project or activity.** Using the FCCLA Planning Process gives youth the opportunity to identify their own concerns and establish their own goals. Some students may be skeptical about being given the responsibility for the planning, but if the adviser establishes a feeling of trust, chapter leaders will feel comfortable asking for adult advice.
- **Help students understand themselves and learn from their experiences, including successes and failures.** Incorporate evaluation and reflection throughout project development and implementation. Allow students full responsibility for their efforts, even if that means they are not completely successful.

- **Keep the organization visible within the school and community.** This helps students identify with FCCLA and garners support for the chapter and the Family and Consumer Sciences education program. The adviser can help members feel a part of FCCLA by staying informed about the organization and sharing the information with members. It also helps to use FCCLA-branded materials.
- **Identify and encourage outstanding members to run for district/region, state, and national offices.**
- **Affiliate all members at the district/region, state, and national levels as early as possible in the school year.** Full service to the chapter begins when dues are processed by the national organization.

## Communication Is the Key

To be effective as a chapter adviser, it is essential to establish a personal level of communication with chapter members and to build a public relations link with the community. You can help make this happen by:

- Showing your enthusiasm for FCCLA activities and projects
- Dressing, acting, and feeling successful—it rubs off on those who come in contact with you
- Learning students' names and interests
- Informing parents when a member has done something that deserves recognition
- Letting school administrators know every time a member receives recognition at the district/region, state, or national level
- Establishing a good relationship with school counselors and encouraging them to promote FCCLA participation
- Expanding chapter connections by networking with professional and community organizations.

## The Do's and Don'ts of Advising

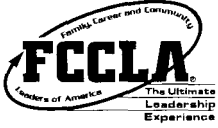
### Do:

- Allow others to succeed
- Allow others to fail
- Know your limits
- Know the group's limits
- Be visible
- Be consistent with your actions
- Keep your sense of humor
- Trust yourself and the group
- Learn when to speak and when not to speak
- Inform the group of policies
- Teach the art of leadership
- Serve as a resource person
- Be available in emergency situations
- Assist officers with procedural matters
- Represent the group in staff and faculty meetings

### Don't:

- Control the group
- Manipulate the group
- Miss too many group meetings and functions
- Take ownership for the group
- Close communication
- Be afraid to try new ideas
- Know it all
- Take everything so seriously
- Be the leader
- Say "I told you so..."
- Impose your own bias
- Tell the group what to do

Source: [www.csbsju.edu/sald/advisor\\_manual/default.htm](http://www.csbsju.edu/sald/advisor_manual/default.htm)



# Is Advising for Me?

Why do you want to be an FCCLA adviser? Chances are, the role will help you meet professional goals and offers personal and professional gratifications. As you "get psyched" for becoming an adviser, here's a chance to assess why being an adviser will be beneficial for you. Check all those that apply.

The key professional goals I look forward to achieving by advising an FCCLA chapter:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> facilitate youth leadership  | <input type="checkbox"/> meet new people          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> teach kids responsibility  | <input type="checkbox"/> gain recognition locally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prepare students for "real life and beyond"                            | <input type="checkbox"/> have fun                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> grow professionally  | <input type="checkbox"/> find new challenges      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> grow personally  | <input type="checkbox"/> stay young               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> improve teaching   | <input type="checkbox"/> foster community support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> travel   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make a difference in young peoples' lives                              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> develop a network of fellow Family and Consumer Sciences professionals |   |

My strongest qualities that will help me as an adviser:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> commitment                  | <input type="checkbox"/> promotional abilities               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honesty                     | <input type="checkbox"/> appreciation for teens              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> openness                    | <input type="checkbox"/> willingness to let kids take charge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> patience                    | <input type="checkbox"/> persistence                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> maturity                    | <input type="checkbox"/> friendliness                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> humor                       | <input type="checkbox"/> curiosity                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> discipline                  | <input type="checkbox"/> listening skills                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> management skills           | <input type="checkbox"/> motivational skills                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organizational skills       | <input type="checkbox"/> consistency                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> interpersonal communication | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____                        |

Three areas that will be challenging for me as an adviser are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.