



Supervised Agricultural Experience

SAE FOR ALL

STUDENT GUIDE

Real Learning for a Real Future

A Project by
The National Council for Agricultural Education

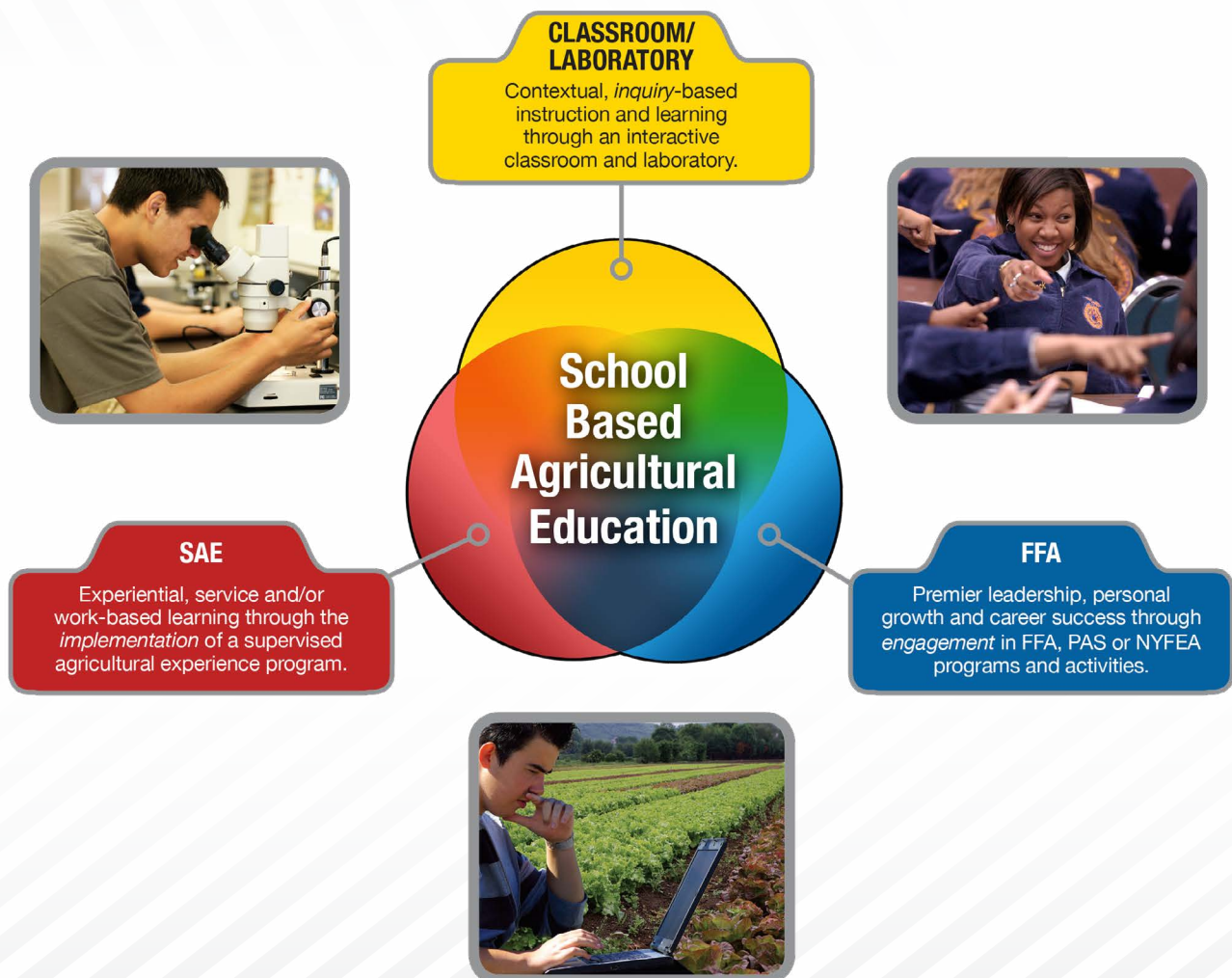
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Welcome to the SAE for All Guide!

In agricultural education, learning does not start and stop at the classroom door! Through FFA and Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) you will have many opportunities to learn and develop real-world skills outside of the classroom and beyond the school day. This guide will provide you and your parents:

1. **Clarity about what an SAE is and how it works.**
2. **A roadmap to get you on the correct SAE path.**
3. **An understanding of how an SAE provides *Real Learning for a Real Future!***



What is an SAE?

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) is a **student-led, instructor-supervised, work-based learning experience** that results in **measurable outcomes** within a predefined, agreed upon set of **Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Technical Standards and Career Ready Practices** aligned to your **Career Plan** of study.

HERE'S WHAT THAT DEFINITION MEANS FOR YOU.

Aligned to Your Career Plan

SAEs are designed to grow and modify as you grow and develop your skills and identify new interests that may affect your Career Plan. The end goal of an SAE is that you are career-ready, no matter what path you take to get there!

Student-Led

You will be the primary decision maker throughout your SAE. Many options may be shared with you by your instructor and other supporting adults, but you ultimately have control.

Connected to Agriculture

No matter what type of SAE you choose, it needs to be agriculturally-related. You can choose to experience any of the AFNR career pathways:
Agribusiness Systems, Animal Systems, Biotechnology Systems, Career Ready Practices, Environmental Systems, Food Products and Processing Systems, Natural Resources Systems, Plant Systems, Power, Structural and Technical Systems.

AN SAE IS

Instructor Supervised

Your agricultural education instructor will help guide and foster growth within your SAE as needed. They serve as your SAE mentor.

Measurable

Because SAEs are connected to agriculturally-based knowledge and skills your growth can be measured as a graded component of your agricultural coursework. Your SAE experience may also be considered for high school graduation credits.

Work-Based Learning

Depending on the type of SAE you select, your work-based experience could be in or out of school. Specific definitions of each SAE work-based category can be found on pages 9-20 of this guide.

IS THIS A FIT FOR ME?

You bet! Because of the unique ability of an SAE to prepare you to leave high school and be ready for college and a career, it is expected that all students have one. Why not learn the skills you want, in the way you want, while potentially earning money and experience along the way? Choose your own SAE adventure and make it a great one.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

If you are looking for a meaningful high school experience, SAE is as real as it gets. By connecting you to employers, leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs in your community, SAE is your best path to:

Learn **real-world** skills.
Get **hands-on** experience.
Explore careers. Find a career **mentor**.
Be **college-** and **career-**ready.
Find your **passion**.
Earn \$ while you learn.
Be an **entrepreneur**.
Put your **talents** to work.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

SAEs will help you: explore careers, refine your career choice, meet real-world career expectations and develop specific skills to be successful in the agricultural industry. SAEs enhance your school experience, allowing you to apply what you learn in the classroom in a real-world setting. Most of all, your SAE is personalized learning for you. It will allow you to build on your talents and strengths and develop your passion.

IS SAE A CLASS?

SAE is not usually a class by itself. Instead, it is a graded piece of every agricultural education class you take. Some of your SAE activities will occur at school during class time, while most will be outside of the school day, in your workplace, home or community. This format allows you to apply the skills you are learning in class in the real world.

IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN MY SAE AND MY CAREER?

Absolutely! SAEs are unique to each student and based on career interests and aspirations. If you are thinking that your career path is in a field other than agriculture, do not worry. Work with your agricultural education instructor to find a related career within the agriculture umbrella and use your SAE to build the knowledge and skill you need to be career-ready. For example, if you believe you want to be a doctor, focus on the health-related aspects through an animal systems SAE. If you want to be an engineer, launch a power, structural and technical systems SAE. The key is to use your SAE to explore, develop and advance your career path.

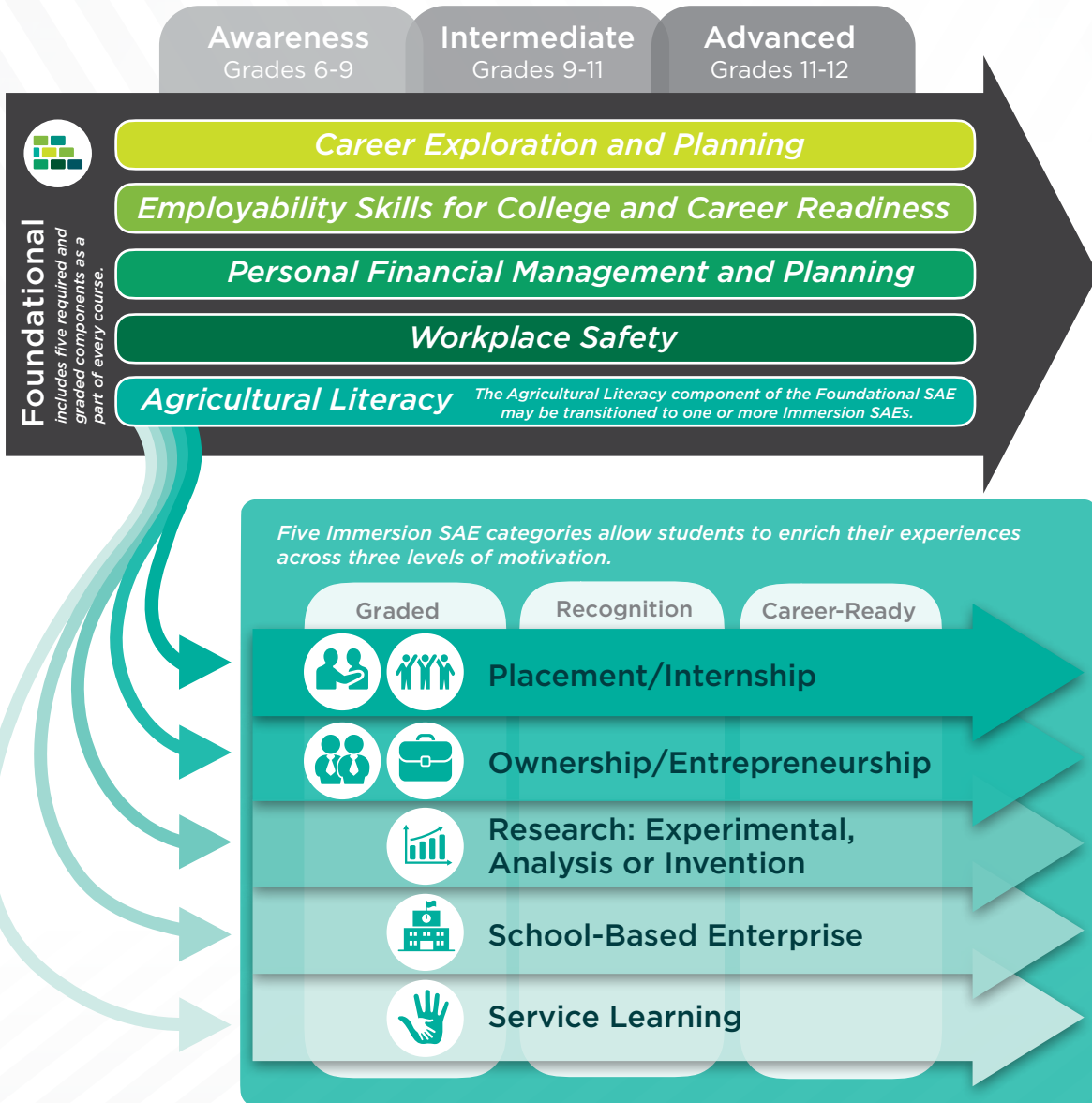
Your agricultural education instructor will assist you in creating a Career Plan. This plan will serve as your roadmap to college and career success. You will update it each year as your plans and aspirations evolve. It will guide you toward what classes to take, skills you need to develop and capture accomplishments to celebrate. Career Plans will vary by state, but they will commonly include the components illustrated in the graphic to the right.



SAE Student Roadmap



Students enter agricultural education.



How Does an SAE Work?

WHERE TO START

As part of your agriculture education class you will develop a Foundational SAE aligned to your career interests.



Every Foundational SAE will provide experiences in five components as a graded part of each of your agricultural education courses.

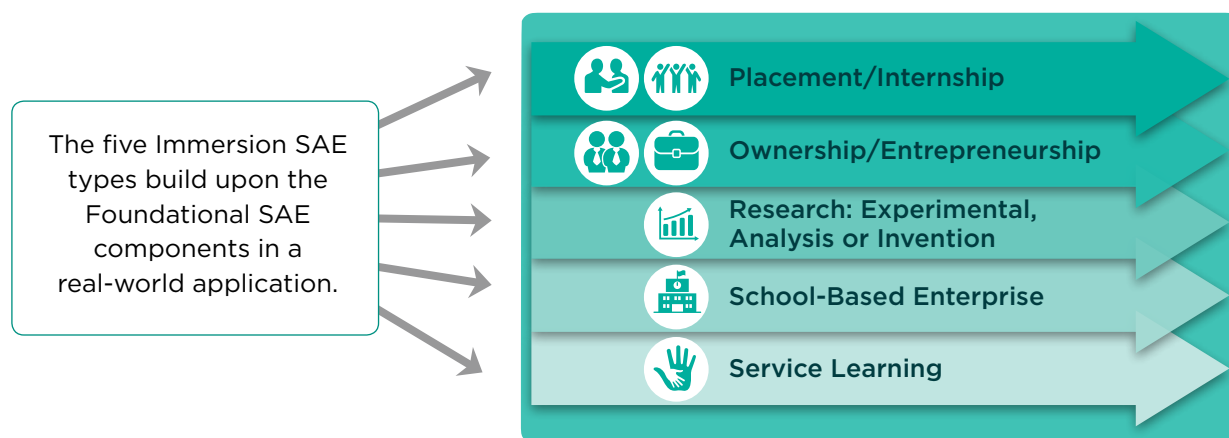
Your experiences in these components will help you:

- Explore and identify your agricultural interests
- Start to develop key employability skills
- Expand your personal financial literacy
- Prepare you to work safely
- Understand more about different areas of the agricultural industry

Your instructor will outline expectations for your Foundational SAE and will be there every step of the way to help guide and foster growth within your area of interest to help gain skills that will be valuable in your future career. Many of the activities related to a Foundational SAE may take place during your agriculture classes and change based on previous work you've completed or how close you are to graduating from high school.

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Over time, you will likely identify opportunities to become even more immersed in gaining skills for a career in a certain area of the agricultural industry. Immersion SAEs provide a way to build upon your Foundational SAE and gain direct experience in your selected career path that colleges and employers will value when reviewing your application for entry or employment. The outcome of this progression from a Foundational to an Immersion SAE is an authentic path to college and career readiness.



The selection of Immersion SAEs should align to and support your career interest defined in your Career Plan. Immersion SAEs are designed to help you transition from career exploration to career preparation. Participation in an Immersion SAE will give you hands-on experience with critical thinking, communication and leadership skills.

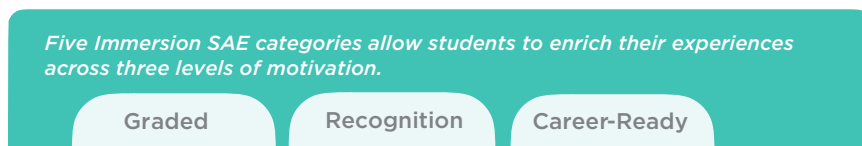
Due to the potential for financial earnings, Immersion SAEs will offer the opportunity for you to apply personal financial management and planning skills acquired through the Foundational SAE. From creating budgets to analyzing cash flow, you will expand your ability to manage your resources wisely.

It is important for all participants of Immersion SAEs to foster and implement a culture of safety.

To ensure this, you will be asked to:

- Perform an environmental safety review on yourself and your work site.
- Pursue and complete the necessary safety training needed for employment in the related Immersion SAE area.
- Take measures to address any safety concerns identified.

As you move beyond agricultural literacy to develop knowledge, skills and expertise within a specific AFNR pathway through an Immersion SAE, you will also find more opportunities for recognition, awards and rapid development of your employability skills for college and career readiness.



An Immersion SAE provides an enhanced high school experience that will prepare you for whatever is next and provide incentives along the way. Check out the benefits that other students have experienced in the [SAE Will Change Your Life!](#) section of this guide.

WHO WILL BE GUIDING ME?

Even though you will be the primary decision maker throughout your SAE, it will be important for you to use the people around you to set yourself up for success. Your agricultural education instructor will be the primary supervisor for your Foundational SAE. They will help set the parameters of your experience, provide feedback and coaching and grade your Foundational SAE work as a part of your course. During the Foundational SAE, it will also be important to connect with the guidance counselor at your school for the Career Exploration and Planning component. Your parents or guardians will also play a role in reviewing and supporting your Career Plan and helping identify opportunities for you to expand into an Immersion SAE.

Your agricultural education instructor will also supervise your Immersion SAE. However, your instructor may delegate supervision responsibilities to other trusted adults in your community. SAE mentors may be local volunteers, employers and community leaders. Where an Immersion SAE normally takes place outside of the school day, your parents or guardians will have a critical role in planning for and implementing this type of SAE.

SAE Options



Foundational SAE



All students in an agricultural education program are expected to have a **FOUNDATIONAL SAE**. Projects and experiential learning activities for this type of SAE will develop you in each of the five component areas:

Foundational
Includes five required and graded components as a part of every course

- Career Exploration and Planning*
- Employability Skills for College and Career Readiness*
- Personal Financial Management and Planning*
- Workplace Safety*
- Agricultural Literacy* The Agricultural Literacy component of the Foundational SAE may be transitioned to one or more Immersion SAEs.

Projects will involve both in and out of school experiences like:

- Creation of a Career Plan
- Development of a personal budget
- Attainment of safety certifications

This SAE will be a graded part of your classroom experience which provides the basics that you need to be college- and career-ready. Even though the Foundational SAE is essential for every student's SAE program, hours contributed in this phase of the project may not contribute to the attainment of FFA awards or degrees.

Your Foundational SAE will prepare you to select and implement one or more of the Immersion SAEs discussed later in this section. Immersion SAEs are an outgrowth of the Agricultural Literacy component of your Foundational SAE. For example, you may find in your exploration of the AFNR pathways that you have an interest in researching to find answers to problems. That interest may lead you to a pursue a Research SAE.



Meet Emma

Foundational SAE in Action

HOW DID YOU START YOUR SAE?

During my introduction to animal science class, my agricultural education instructor had me use the Career Finder in Ag Explorer to identify my career interests. Ag Explorer helped me connect my love for animals to possible careers and create my Career Plan. To make sure that this was a fit for me, my instructor suggested that I shadow our local veterinarian a couple days a week during the summer months. After my parents, teacher and I completed the SAE Risk Assessment and I received the proper training, I started my shadowing experience.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR SAE?

My Foundational SAE has helped me find and plan my career path. I love being a part of the work we do at the vet clinic and seeing the reactions from customers whose animals are happy and healthy again. I mostly observe when I am at the clinic, but I take advantage of any moment I get to love on the animals. My favorite part about my shadowing experience is listening to the staff members diagnose an animals' condition. Sometimes I even catch bits of information and terminology I learned in my animal science course.

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAS YOUR SAE CHANGED OVER TIME?

Over time I have used my experience at the clinic to complete a variety of Foundational SAE activities assigned by my instructor. I interviewed the veterinarian, created and presented a report to my class on the employability skills she looks for in staff. I also learned about finances and the importance of accurate records not only for clinic, but for the animals as well. By the end of the summer, I had a journal full of pages detailing everything I learned.



Photo courtesy of the National FFA Organization

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

My instructor has asked if I wanted to start an Ownership SAE with a livestock species, but I told her we did not have the space at my house. Shadowing a veterinarian made me realize the amount of time and resources it takes to care for sick or injured animals. My dream is to work at a veterinary clinic after I graduate high school and eventually open my own clinic. For now, I created a personal budget to help me save for veterinary school. I also hope to expand my Foundational SAE to include an Internship SAE working part-time for the veterinary clinic.

IMMERSION SAE CATEGORIES

Students are encouraged to add to their Foundational SAE, one or more Immersion SAEs to extend their career preparation to include specific AFNR technical knowledge and skill attainment, and the practice and development of career readiness skills.



PLACEMENT/INTERNSHIP SAE

Definition & Requirements

One of the best ways to test your chosen career goal is to experience a career field as either a paid employee or a volunteer. These experiences are called a Placement/Internship SAEs.



In a **PLACEMENT SAE**, you perform the tasks determined by your employer which are necessary for the operation of the business. You are evaluated by the employer under the guidance of your agricultural education instructor. During this experience, you will be developing your agriculture, food, natural resource and employability skills and abilities outside the classroom.

Your experience will be defined through an SAE agreement that your agricultural education instructor and employer will help you create. The SAE agreement lays out the details of your job and includes considerations to make sure you are safe and able to learn on the job. During the experience, you will keep track of the hours you work, income received, tasks you complete and the knowledge and skills you attained. Your teacher will conduct regular check-ins with you and your employer to make sure the experience is a success.



The **INTERNSHIP SAE** takes the Placement SAE up a notch. Internships provide a more targeted experience that focuses on meeting your specific training needs. Together, you will define the focus of your work. An Internship SAE is directed not as much by the business operation but by your Training Plan. This plan will ensure maximum benefit of developing your knowledge and skill. The plan also contains a list of AFNR Technical Content Standards and Career Ready Practices which you will master as a part of your experience. Your employer will evaluate you regularly and provide feedback for where you can improve.

Internship SAEs require all the same things that are required in a Placement SAE. In addition, they require a Training Plan that clarifies the skills you will be working on and includes a plan for your safety in the workplace. An Internship SAE also requires regular (weekly) reflection on your experience and a summary presentation made to a local committee organized by the agricultural education instructor.



Meet Celia

Placement/Internship SAE in Action

HOW DID YOU START YOUR SAE?

I knew I wanted to get a part-time job while in high school to save money for a car when I turned 16. I thought I would enjoy working at a local bakery - the owners are family friends and we love buying their baked goods to celebrate every family birthday! So, I went to the bakery one morning during the summer and told them I was looking for a part-time job. They agreed to let me work at the front counter that summer. I started tracking my hours and income and, when school started back up in the fall, I continued working after school and on the weekends.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR SAE?

After working at the counter for a while, I started asking a lot of questions about how the owners developed the recipes our customers enjoy so much. The owners realized my interest and started letting me help them in the kitchen on Saturday mornings. I started noticing how much of a difference it makes to carefully selecting the right ingredients, like flour. Now, they let me try different brands and types of ingredients to identify possible ways of improving their products. I have so much fun experimenting with the recipes!

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAS YOUR SAE CHANGED OVER TIME?

While working at the counter, I found some customers liked to ask a lot of questions about the baked goods before deciding on their orders. As I relayed their questions to the bakery owners, the owners started thinking they would like to create an environment at the bakery that teaches customers what is in the baked goods. I thought that sounded fun and volunteered to design a display that demonstrates how flour is produced. Working with my agricultural education instructor, we identified a Training Plan that



Photo courtesy of the National FFA Organization

incorporated the skills necessary to promote consumer confidence. My employers agreed to support the plan and my Placement SAE became an Internship SAE. That project turned into ongoing efforts to help the bakery create materials and fun events to teach customers about the ingredients in the recipes. We even found opportunities to source ingredients straight from the community, like making our jams and jellies using fruits from nearby produce farms!

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I had no idea I would enjoy marketing so much, but I have had so much fun helping the bakery figure out marketing strategies that would show customers where the ingredients come from. I think I want to pursue agricultural marketing as a career, so I can continue the type of work I've been doing at the bakery with other agricultural businesses.



OWNERSHIP/ENTREPRENEURSHIP SAE

Definition & Requirements

If you prefer to work for yourself or be your own boss, an Ownership/Entrepreneurship SAE is a fit for you.



In an **OWNERSHIP SAE**, you create, own and operate a business which provides goods and/or services to the marketplace. Your business can range from starting a mowing service to developing mobile apps. You make the operational and risk management decisions on how goods and/or services are provided. Some facilities, resources and equipment necessary for the SAE operation can be provided from your friends and family. The operation must be of sufficient scope to enable development of your skills and abilities aligned to the AFNR Technical Standards and Career Ready Practices.

In addition to providing the labor for your Ownership SAE, you keep records of both your time and money involved in the project. You will conduct a simple analysis of your productivity and profitability at the end of each production or business cycle to see where you are making and losing money and how you might improve your operation. Throughout the experience, you will document the knowledge and skills you have gained and add them to the Career Plan and portfolio you created through your Foundational SAE.



You can transition your Ownership SAE to an **ENTREPRENEURSHIP SAE** by meeting a few additional criteria. You start by incorporating all aspects of an Ownership SAE. Then you identify and account for, either financially or non-financially, all resources used in the business. You will maintain and analyze financial records just like any other business owner. In this process, you will become familiar with common financial tools like, balance sheet, income statement and cash flow. You will become skilled at using these tools to grow your business.

The Entrepreneurship SAE includes a Business Plan which provides for the continued growth and expansion of your operation. Your Business Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect the changes in your operation. The Entrepreneurship SAE is where the you get serious about business.



Meet Frank

Ownership to Entrepreneurship SAE in Action

HOW DID YOU START YOUR SAE?

One of my weekly chores was to mow my family's lawn. Our neighbor saw me mowing one day and asked if I could mow their lawn as well. I figured this would be a great opportunity for the future because one of my goals after high school is to own my own business. I started small, mowing only a few lawns my first year. When my agricultural education instructor saw my progress, she suggested I take the next step and move my Ownership SAE to an Entrepreneurship SAE. I created a Business Plan to market my services, add employees and equipment and track my return on investments. Before the next summer ended, I had 15 new customers and expanded the services I offered.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR SAE?

The best part about my SAE is the opportunity to create relationships and network with my customers. Many of the customers I work for each week have busy lives. I provide them a valuable service – more time with their family and loved ones. After mowing their lawns for a while, my customers began to ask me questions about their yards and landscaping. I found myself using information I learned from my horticulture and landscape design classes to help my customers in new ways. I love helping them enhance the aesthetic value of their property!

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAS YOUR SAE CHANGED OVER TIME?

After receiving positive customer feedback about my landscaping advice, I decided to expand my Business Plan. In addition to mowing, I now offer my customers landscape design, plant selection and regular maintenance services. My most active seasons are spring, summer and part of fall. During the winter months, I spend time drawing landscape designs and carefully selecting the best plants for



Photo courtesy of the National FFA Organization

my customers' yards. I also spend a lot of time documenting my expenses and income to keep track of my growth. To market my business, I hand out brochures explaining what services I offer and reviews from previous customers.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

I never thought mowing my lawn as a weekly chore would turn into a growing business I enjoy. Landscape design and maintenance has become not only an SAE and business, but a hobby of mine! I think landscaping and lawn maintenance is something I want to pursue as a full-time career. After high school, I plan to expand my Business Plan and attend college part-time to study landscape architecture.



RESEARCH: EXPERIMENTAL, ANALYSIS OR INVENTION SAE

Definition & Requirements



Do you like to test theories, apply the scientific method or invent new tools and methods? If so you should consider a **RESEARCH SAE**.

In a Research SAE, you will investigate materials, processes and information to establish new knowledge or the validation of previous research. Rest assured, your agricultural education instructor will help you navigate the process.

Research conducted must have an application within the AFNR industry. Options range from biotechnology to food products and processing. There are three variations of Research SAEs to pursue: Experimental, Analytical and Invention.

An **EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH SAE** involves the application of the scientific method to control certain variables while manipulating others to observe the outcome. You will define a hypothesis, determine an appropriate experimental design, conduct the research, collect the data, draw conclusions from the data and recommend further research that can be done.

An **ANALYTICAL RESEARCH SAE** often begins with a question that asks why or how something occurs, followed by a period of data collection using qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies. You will conduct analysis of data, facts and other information to determine the answer to the question posed.

An **INVENTION RESEARCH SAE** applies the engineering design process to create a new product or service. This type of research often begins with the identification of a need and the development of a product followed by a design process of prototyping and testing that results in a product that meets the identified need.

No matter which variation you choose, you will:

1. Follow the scientific process and accepted best practices for conducting research to ensure reliability, validity and replicability of research.
2. Complete a Research Plan to prepare you to safely meet all requirements.
3. Conduct peer reviews with your supervising agricultural education instructor or other professionals at multiple stages throughout the research cycle (e.g., proposal, report of findings, publications, etc.)
4. Make a summary presentation on your research and findings to a local committee organized by the agricultural education instructor.



Research SAE in Action

HOW DID YOU START YOUR SAE?

From the time I was a little girl, I have enjoyed visiting my aunt and uncle's dairy farm. I look forward to milking the cows or feeding the calves each time. After learning about milk replacer for calves in my Introduction to Agriculture course, I decided I wanted to apply some of my knowledge at the farm. I wanted to help my aunt and uncle use the best products and practices on their farm. With the help of my agricultural education instructor, I developed an Analytical Research SAE to determine the best milk replacer for my aunt and uncle to use for their livestock.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR SAE?

Math and science are two of my favorite subjects, but I could never think of ways to apply my skills outside of the classroom. My Analytical Research SAE gives me an avenue to pursue my love of science, math research and agriculture in one setting. Not to mention, I get to spend hours each week with my aunt and uncle and their livestock. I enjoy telling my friends stories about the work I am doing on the farm.

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAS YOUR SAE CHANGED OVER TIME?

The initial stages of my research started with identifying different brands of milk replacer and testing their effectiveness with different calves. I used qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and recorded my findings in a journal. Throughout the project, it was important I report my findings to my instructor to ensure I was following the best research practices available. At the conclusion of my research, I developed a presentation of my findings. I shared this with a local committee organized by my agricultural education instructor.

Meet Jessica



Photo courtesy of the National FFA Organization

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

My Analytical Research SAE sparked within me a passion for dairy research. I am applying to universities with degrees in Dairy Science to hopefully continue my research on improving production efficiency. I cannot wait to share my work with others and advocate for an industry I love.



SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISE SAE

Definition & Requirements



A **SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISE SAE** is an Entrepreneurship SAE with a twist. The difference is that the operation is based at the school and involves a group of students working cooperatively. If you like working collaboratively with others, a School-Based Enterprise might be the best SAE for you.

School-Based Enterprise SAEs are student-led business enterprises that provide goods or services. They are operated from the school campus utilizing facilities, equipment and other resources provided by the agricultural education program or the school in general. For a School-Based Enterprise you will be working with one or more of your peers in the operation of the enterprise. The business itself may be “owned” by the school or FFA chapter, meaning that the organization holds the risk of the business that is managed by students. Alternatively, the business may be structured as a partnership or cooperative between students. You will use partnership or cooperative agreements to define how you distribute responsibilities and profits.

Note: If an enterprise operated from the school setting is managed by an individual student, then it is considered an individual SAE and is treated as either an Ownership/Entrepreneurship SAE or a Placement/Internship SAE that happens to occur on the school grounds.

To start a School-Based Enterprise SAE you, and your team will need to:

1. Develop a Business Plan for the operation and have it reviewed annually by the leadership of your partnership or cooperative team.
2. Operate under the overview of a board of directors to which the student management team will provide reports throughout the business operation cycle. Reports will be based on the financial and operational records your team will keep and analyze to see if your business is meeting its goals.
3. Create a structure that provides for varying levels of student responsibility to allow for skill development and student advancement.
4. Operate in a realistic workplace environment providing real world workplace expectations for everyone involved.



Meet Jesse

School-Based Enterprise SAE in Action

HOW DID YOU START YOUR SAE?

When I enrolled in my agricultural education course as a sophomore, my parents worried I would not have extra time to have a job. I spoke with my agricultural education instructor and she told me she always needed extra seasonal help maintaining the greenhouse after school. I began selling plants to customers in the spring as an employee in our school's greenhouse business. By working hard for customers and helping the team, I was selected in my junior year to be the CEO of our School-Based Enterprise.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR SAE?

I love my SAE because I get to work with my peers and serve our community from our school greenhouse. High school keeps my friends and I busy. Being able to work on campus and learn more about agriculture in the process feels more like a hobby than a job. With the guidance of our student management team and community board of directors, I received a lot of support and advice to improve our business. I love my SAE because it shows younger FFA members the reward that comes from working hard for the things you care about.

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAS YOUR SAE CHANGED OVER TIME?

Toward the end of our first selling season, our sales decreased and we stopped seeing new customers at the greenhouse. Our student management team decided to spend time developing promotional materials to spread the word about our products. We launched a marketing campaign to inform businesses and other citizens within our community about our business. My senior year we started looking into the possibility of a school garden. With the help



Photo courtesy of the National FFA Organization

of our agricultural education instructor, we had a fully functioning school garden to care for, and sell from, by the end of the school year.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Gaining three years of experience in the greenhouse through my School-Based Enterprise SAE has given me the desire to study horticulture and start my own business. I want to continue the work I started at my school and educate people within my community about plant life and how each of them can start their own garden.



SERVICE LEARNING SAE

Definition & Requirements



Meeting a need in your school or community is the essence of a Service Learning SAE.

A **SERVICE LEARNING SAE** is where you, or you and a small team plan, conduct and evaluate a project designed to provide a service to the school, public entities, or the community. The project must provide benefit to an organization, group or individuals other than your FFA Chapter. The project must be pre-approved by a review committee that includes local stakeholders in addition to your agricultural education instructor. The project must be of sufficient scope to enable development of your skills and abilities aligned to skills and competencies within the agriculture, food and natural resource industry.

A Service Learning SAE requires a service learning plan that is developed and approved for the project by your agricultural education instructor. This plan defines the need and proposed service solution. You will operate your

service plan under the overview of a local committee to which the project management team will provide reports throughout the service learning experience. The project must have a structure that provides for varying levels of student responsibility to allow for skill development and student advancement.

The project needs to serve your local school, community or beyond and provide real world service learning experiences for you and the rest of the students involved. You and potentially your team will be expected to provide a summary report of the impact of the project to the local school and community and write a reflection paper which describes your personal growth from the experience.



Meet Larissa

Service Learning SAE in Action

HOW DID YOU START YOUR SAE?

Some of my best childhood memories are riding my family's horses. Most of the time we ride for fun, but we also use our horses to herd cattle. One day while traveling with my family, I came across a therapeutic horseback riding center in a small community. I thought it would be a great idea to bring a similar service project to my community. I met with an organization that serves disabled youth in my community and gained their support for creating a program to provide horseback rides for the youth they serve. I worked with my agricultural education instructor to create an SAE Service Learning Plan to ensure the success and learning potential of my project. In the 18 months since the plan was approved, we have provided therapeutic horseback rides to more than 35 disabled youth.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR SAE?

I think the most valuable aspect of my SAE is providing a free, safe activity for children who are sometimes left out. A disability does not mean someone is unable to enjoy fun activities. It simply means they do activities a little differently. Therapeutic horseback riding is great for children and families who want to relax and enjoy the outdoors with equine. I also enjoy it because it connects citizens in our community to the agricultural industry. The stories families told about their time with the horses were rewarding for me and the other volunteers.

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS HAS YOUR SAE CHANGED OVER TIME?

My SAE began with me as the only volunteer. My parents allowed me to use a few of our horses while I was preparing. Based on my Service Learning Plan, I knew that I would need to learn more about horse training and therapeutic services. My parents taught me to train a couple of our horses to be gentle with kids. I worked



Photo courtesy of the National FFA Organization

with the Learning Disabilities Association of America to learn more about disabilities and caring for children who have them. After the conclusion of the project, other members within our FFA chapter wanted to help. I created a small team of volunteers and taught them everything I learned.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

When I prepared for this one-time project, I had no idea the community would show interest to continue the service for a longer period of time. I have always enjoyed serving others, but I never realized the impact I could have by using the resources I already had. My volunteer team and I are looking at the possibility of keeping the project going long-term. This project has opened my eyes to serving others in new ways and I have decided I want to work for a non-profit organization after high school.

SAE Will Change Your Life!

SAE opportunities are truly endless and entirely based on exploring your passions and career interests. Career and academic preparation and readiness is the top priority for all SAEs. SAEs will look different for everyone. Beyond a fun way to explore your interests while satisfying course requirements in your agricultural education classes, SAEs offer opportunities to earn awards and degrees in FFA. You will also begin to build your resume, gather credible references and earn industry certifications. Your SAE may even give you the opportunity to “earn while you learn!”

Ok, so you still may be asking, “Will an SAE make a difference for me?” Your SAE will provide a unique set of experiences which will equip you for future career success. SAEs consistently provide one or more of the following: Real Experience, Real Earnings and Real Employability Skills. Check out the stories below to see how SAE made a positive difference in the lives of these former students.*

REAL EXPERIENCE	REAL EARNINGS	REAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS
Hunter Ethan Corbett of the Lowndes County FFA Chapter in Valdosta, Ga., has an SAE comprised of five research projects conducted over five years. He used the scientific method to solve environmental problems by proving a waste agricultural product known as cotton gin trash could have completely cleaned up the 2015 BP Oil Spill. Corbett plans to use these research skills and experiences to earn a medical degree in noninvasive cardiology at Emory University in Atlanta.	Rhett Michael Bain of the Canyon FFA Chapter in Texas has developed, marketed and implemented a smartphone application called StockStat. The app has changed the way people attend and watch stock shows and state fairs. Free to customers but sold as a yearly subscription to each show or fair, the app shows classes of participants.	Lillian Rose Rodicio of the Ferguson Senior FFA Chapter in Miami, Fla., has worked as an intern at local vet clinics for the past five years. When she began her internship, she was little more than an observer. After learning the ropes of the office, she was trusted with more complex procedures like running blood tests and giving injections. She eventually had the opportunity to groom and care for the horses without supervision. Rodicio plans to continue working in a vet clinic while enrolled in college.

* Examples from National FFA Organization. (2016). 2016 National agricultural proficiency winners. Retrieved from https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/conv_2016_proficiencies.pdf

These are just a few examples of SAEs that started with an interest. Be sure to start a conversation with your agricultural education instructor about your interests in agriculture to start framing up your SAE. That conversation will lead you to **Real Learning for a Real Future!**

SAE: Real Learning for a Real Future

