

Number	Entry	Category	Registration Requirements
<b>412-418</b>	<b>Sewing/Needlecraft</b>	<b>Display</b>	Sign up on student registration form. Submit project info online. Dates on website.

## PACKING

All contestants are responsible for the packaging, transporting and proper handling of their competition entries. No entry may exceed 40 pounds in weight or exceed more than two or three feet in its longest dimension (depending on the category entered.)

## DELIVERY

All items must be brought to EXCEL Convention at registration and removed from the premises Friday night after award ceremony.

## DISPLAY

Entries must have a typed or neatly printed display card or label securely attached and clearly visible in the following format:

<p><b>Student Name</b>  City, State  Division (Junior/Senior)  Category (i.e. Oil Painting)</p>
---

## SEWING/NEEDLECRAFT CATEGORIES

**(412) Counted Cross-Stitch** - No stamped cross stitch accepted. Pictures must be framed. The back of all work must be accessible for judging. Examples: tablecloths, place-mats, pictures, samplers.

**(414) Crochet** - Examples: baby afghans, shawls, tablecloths, bedspreads, dresses, sweaters, baby garment sets (sweater, cap, mittens, or booties).

**(415) Embroidery** - decorating fabric with embroidery floss or thread. The back of all work must be accessible for judging. Pictures must be framed. No counted cross-stitch. Only regular "needle and thread" embroidery will be judged. Examples: scarf, pillowcases, tablecloths, hand towels, placemats, borders for skirts, pillows, pictures, samplers.

**(416) Knitting** - Examples: baby afghans, shawls, tablecloths, bedspreads, dresses, sweaters, baby garment sets (sweater, cap, mittens, or booties). Machine knitting not allowed.

**(418) Quilts** - Quilts may be machine or hand constructed. (Hand constructed quilts will receive higher points.) Minimum size 36x36 (baby quilt). Quilts must have been started and completed within fifteen months before Student Convention and must not have been entered in any other contest.

## GENERAL SEWING/NEEDLECRAFT GUIDELINES

- Submit a pattern. If your project didn't have a pattern, then draw one up.
- Submit a sewing report. Write a small summary of why you picked your project, changes that you made to the pattern, color selection, etc.
- For garments: Submit a picture. For repurposed garments: submit a before and after picture. It is important for the judges to see your finished project on a "model" for fit and modesty.
- Any garments entered must be girls/ladies apparel.
- Contestants must not receive help on their projects other than instructions.
- Contestants are allowed to submit one entry per category.
- All fashions must meet EXCEL Convention dress requirements. Do not submit mini-skirts, slacks, pant-suits, shorts, bathing suits, or sleepwear. (These rules also apply to the subjects used in Needlework entries.) Thin or "see-through" fabrics must be fully lined WITH OPAQUE MATERIAL. LACE MATERIAL IS SEE-THROUGH.
- No needlework entries should attempt to portray the face or image of Christ.
- The contestant is encouraged to be creative and vary from the pattern. If this is done, the differences should be explained. Points are given for originality.

## HINTS FROM THE SEWING JUDGES

The qualities the judges look for are originality and careful attention to details. High points are given for neatness, cleanliness, uniformity, and precision. Patterns used in garment entries (purchased or original) must accompany the sewing entry to receive the highest possible points. There are 5 points for submitting the pattern, and another possible 10-20 points for creativity. In crochet, knitting, and afghans, there is another possible 10 points for gauge. These points cannot be given if the pattern is not submitted. An original pattern will receive higher points than a stamped pattern. (Get some great tips from this pdf: [Measuring Up](#))

## GARMENT SEWING HINTS

- Make sure the student reads and understands the guidelines and Progress Control/Judge's Form of the category before choosing a garment. Garments submitted for judging should fit the criteria of the chosen category.
- Have the students select an outfit that would use as many of the areas that are being judged as their ability allows. Garments that use more details such as set-in sleeves, zippers, collars, etc., will receive higher points.
- Keep a diary or record of the time you spent on your project. Also save your receipts so you can calculate your cost.
- Have the student check with sewing books to learn proper techniques, i.e. proper seams, etc.

## NEEDLEWORK HINTS

It is best not to have any knots or loose ends. When working with an even number of threads you may use this technique: cut your thread twice the length needed, fold in half, thread loose ends through the eye of needle, bring needle up from back side of fabric, go down, and catch loop end of thread with needle--now you have started your work without knots or loose ends. To tie off without knots, simply hide ends in same color thread. When framing your needlework picture, DO NOT PUT GLASS in the frame. The glass distorts stitches and makes judging difficult.

## QUILTS HINTS

Quilting stitches (the stitches that go through all layers of the quilt) are what the judges are looking for. "Tying" is very easy and cannot compare to actual "quilting." Hand quilting will receive higher points than machine quilting

**Pressing** – Pressing is just as important as sewing! Sew, then press! Press each seam or construction detail before it is joined to another garment section.

- Pressing is different than ironing. In pressing, you lift the iron up and down. In ironing, you move the iron back and forth.
- When you press, use a steam iron or cover the fabric with a damp press cloth.
- Choose the correct iron temperature for your fabric.
- Press on the back side of the fabric.
- Press the seam flat. This evens out the stitches and makes it easier to press the seam open.
- Next, press the seam open. Press over a seam roll (or rolled up towel) to prevent the seam edges from making an imprint on the right side of the fabric.
- You can also place paper between the seam and the fabric to avoid an imprint.

**Needles** – A new needle should be used that is the proper size for the fabric. This is especially important on delicate fabric.

**Types of Seams** – Seams need to be chosen to be appropriate for the chosen fabric and pattern. More advanced seam edges, score higher points. Serged seams will be allowed. (See note below.)

**French Seam** – This seam encases both raw edges and looks like a narrow tuck on the inside. It's the traditional choice for sheer fabrics. Use a narrower seam for curved areas. French seams are stitched twice: first on the right side, then on the wrong side. This seam within a seam is used on undergarments, blouses, and dresses of sheer fabrics. This is an excellent seam for fabrics that ravel a lot like satin.

**Flat Fell Seam** – Use this seam on clothes that will receive hard wear. Flat-felled seams are used for durable jeans, active sportswear, and reversible garments. Stitch a plain seam on the right side of the garment. Trim one edge to 1/8 inch. Crease the wider edge and turn over the trimmed edge. Baste. Press. Stitch. *Singer 101 Sewing Secrets* shows a way to make this seam without trimming one edge.

**Seams with Bound Edges** – This seam is suitable for unlined garments of heavy fabric. Crease seam binding near center. Arrange over seam edges, with wider part of binding on the underside. Stitch. Note: Bias tape (double fold) may also be used.

**Rolled and Whipped Seam** – This finish is used on sheer fabrics. It may also be used on a seam that is pressed open or to one side. After trimming seam allowance to 3/8 inch, roll edge toward the seam as narrow as possible. Sew rolled edge with whipped stitches.

**Open Seam Overcast** – Overcasting prevents raveling. Use this finish on fabrics that do not fray to excess. Take diagonal stitches about 1/8 inches deep about 1/4 inches apart. Do not pull stitches too tightly.

**Plain Seam, Stitched Edges** – You may finish edges of a seam by turning each edge under about 1/4 inch and stitching on your machine. Use a fairly long stitch and loosen the tension. You can use a zigzag, or running zigzag stitch. Stitches can make a ridge on delicate fabrics. You may want to select a different seam finish for sheer fabrics.

**Over locked or Serged Seams** – Serging does take practice and skill. Please be careful that all fabric is kept out of the way of the cutter blade. You can have some tragic results if you are not careful. Serged seams are nice on unlined garments. Serged seams will not count as much as other advanced seam finishes.

**Seams for knit fabrics** – 1. Stitch seam. Use a straight stitch for vertical seams. Use a zigzag for horizontal seams. This allows the seam to stretch as the fabric does. 2. Stitch the seam again, seeing 1/4” away from the first stitching through both layers of fabric. A wide zigzag works best because it stretches like the fabric does. 3. Trim the seam close to the second stitching.

**Pinked Seam** – If the fabric is firmly woven, edges may be pinked before seam is pressed. Use pinking shears for this purpose.

**Plain Seam** - No finish. Used only on fabrics that do not ravel. This type of seam would receive minimum points compared to other seam finishes.

Other Seam finishes include Mock Flat-fell, Welt seam, and Top-stitched seam. Check your sewing books for method.

**Resources:**

*Short Cuts to Home Sewing* – The Butterick Company

Singer Library – *101 Sewing Secrets*

Singer Library – *Sewing for Style*

*Let’s Sew* – by Nancy Zieman

**JUDGING CRITERIA**

AREAS OF EVALUATION	POSSIBLE POINTS
Pattern Submitted	5
Creativity (pattern changes, color changes, originality)	20
Over-all beauty	10
Technique (difficulty of stitches, variety of stitches)	15
Uniformity of stitches	20
Finishing (thread ends secured, preferably no knots)	10
Blocking (if applicable)	10
or	
Overall Shape (for quilts)	10
<b>Special Considerations-Crochet, Knitting, Afghans</b> Gauge	
or	
<b>Special Considerations-Quilts</b> Quilt Top, Quilting Stitches (uniformity, size, hand or machine, stitches that go through all layers of quilt)	10
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

EXCEL CONVENTION IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ENTRIES LOST, STOLEN, OR DAMAGED.