

JUDGING CRITERIA & PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES

Exhibits will be judged in one of three divisions: the Junior/Middle School (7th and 8th grades); the Ninth (9th grade); and the Senior (10, 11, & 12th grades) Divisions, Individual and Team. Each division is subdivided into subject classifications such as chemistry, engineering, zoology, botany, etc. Prior to judging, all project displays must be inspected and approved by the Rules/Safety Committee and the Scientific Review Committee on Thursday evening. Projects not approved must be removed from the Exhibition Hall prior to judging.

PHASE I: 9:00AM -12NOON

PLACE AWARDS ONLY - All exhibits are visited by the judging team. Exhibitor will present a 3-5 minute description of the project, followed by a series of specific questions by the judges. The exhibitor may also ask questions and seek advice from the judges at this point. Each judge should obtain all the information necessary to make a professional evaluation of each criterion listed on the project scoring sheet. The team captain compiles the judges' normalized scores and delivers the collective rankings to the category coordinator. The coordinator and team captains will then decide which projects will advance to Phase II judging.

PHASE II: 1:30 – 5:00 PM

PLACE AWARD JUDGING for almost 200 awards continues in the same manner as before, although different judges may be involved. Place award judges meet during and after Phase II to determine the place awards for each division and category. Normally no scores are tabulated for this process; rather, the judges arrive at their rankings through in-depth discussions and by consensus. Most place award winners are eligible to enter the State SEF. Junior place award winners are eligible to enter the National Discovery Competition.

SPECIAL AWARD JUDGING begins. Some agencies will judge just projects in particular categories while others will be interested in all categories. They determine their own judging criteria, procedures and awards.

PHASE III: 6:30-9:30 PM

PLACE AWARD JUDGING - category coordinators meet with the judging chair to evaluate the first place award winners in each of the three divisions. These judges normally work in small teams so that a wide spectrum of expertise can be brought to bear during each interview. After the teams complete their interviews, the overall division award winners; 3 for the Junior/Middle School Division, 3 for the Ninth Grade Division and 4 for the Senior Division are determined. The 4 senior winners represent SEFH at the International Fair in May.

SPECIAL AWARD JUDGING continues and approximately 400 awards is concluded.

JUDGE EXPECTATIONS:

- Judges must not attempt to learn the student's name, their school, or the name of their advisor. Such information may be requested from the category coordinator after the judging is complete.
- Judges are free to introduce themselves and identify their affiliation (in fact, the badge worn by each judge should contain this information), but the anonymity of the exhibitors must be preserved.
- Judges are encouraged to interact as little as possible in the exhibit area and to retire to the judging auditorium to discuss the projects (eager ears are listening to their conversations with other judges).
- The official scoring sheets and other notes kept by judges should be concealed while in the exhibit area. After each judging phase, the scoring sheets and any notes taken by judges will be collected and destroyed.
- All judging results are confidential and will be known only to the judges involved in the decision and the officials of the fair until they are publicly announced at the awards ceremony held on the day following the judging.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

The Official Scoring Sheet contains a complete summary of the criteria to be used by the judges in evaluating each project. It is intended to provide guidance for judges and to insure that the judging process is carried out as equitably as possible.

OBJECTIVES - Note that it is not essential for a project to be completely original, but the source(s) of ideas for the project should be acknowledged.

DESIGN - Judges will ascertain whether the student has applied the proper scientific and/or engineering principles in the design and execution of the experiment and carried out their data collection and analysis in a systematic manner. Students who do not have a good understanding of the science/engineering related to their projects will be downgraded accordingly by the judges.

EXECUTION/PRESENTATION - The project's conclusions should follow logically from the data analysis and reflect careful consideration by the student of possible errors in the experiment.

CONCLUSIONS – Student should keep their presentation within the time limits set by the judge. Judges are prepared to hear polished presentations from the more experienced students. Judges will go beyond the student's prepared presentation by posing questions that can determine the student's level of understanding of the principles underlying their project.