

UPSTATE

University of South Carolina



PIEDMONT REGION III SCIENCE FAIR

800 University Way
Spartanburg, SC 29303

September 2023

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Greetings!

Enclosed you will find information you need for the regional fair competition. As of September, we will be conducting an in-person regional fair this year. If anything changes, information will be provided on our website, Facebook page, and through email. Please read the below information carefully and email Dr. Sinead Brien (sciencefair@uscupstate.edu) with any questions.

- The [rules and overall format](#) of the posters will remain the same. Projects that use human subjects, biological materials, or potentially harmful materials will still need to provide the appropriate paperwork for SRC approval (Grades 5 – 12). ISEF created a really nice rules wizard to help students determine what they need to do before they submit their paperwork to the SRC.
<https://ruleswizard.societyforscience.org/>
- Registration will be March 4th – 8th. All projects must be submitted by 5pm on March 8th, 2024.

Get up-to-date information at our [website](#) and [Facebook Event Page](#). The website contains many different forms of information (general information, calendar of events, forms, recent winners, and frequently asked questions). The Facebook page is intended to communicate information to both school coordinators and parents quickly, accurately, and efficiently. Please share these resources with the parents of students competing in the Piedmont Region III Science Fair.

If you have questions or would like to have someone discuss the Regional Science Fair with your teachers and/or students, Dr. Sinead Brien is available to meet with you and your teachers virtually to discuss the Science Fair. She will be available between October 1st and December 8th. Sinead can be contacted at sciencefair@uscupstate.edu

Timeline:

Now through January 5th	School Science Fair Coordinators indicate participation.
March 4 – 8th	School Science Fair Coordinators register winners online.
Tuesday, March 12th	Project Drop off: Projects can be dropped off from 12pm – 6pm. 6:00pm to 8:00pm – Only High School students should be present for interviews. Location: University Readiness Center Greatroom
Thursday, March 14th	Project Pick Up and announcement of Awards. Projects must be picked up by 7pm. Any project not picked up by 7pm will be disposed. The room will be used on Friday, March 15th for a campus event and must be cleared.
Saturday, March 16th	10:00am - Awards Ceremony in Campus Life Center Ballroom 310

General Information for Schools:

All Schools:

Each school may submit **up to, but no more than 24 projects.**
Schools that are K-8 or 6-12 can submit 16 projects for each grade band.

ALL PROJECTS, 1st through 12th grades, MUST CONFORM TO ISEF (INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR) GUIDELINES. See section below on [Rules, Regulations and Guidelines](#).

The [Judge's Score Card](#) is a good blueprint for crafting a competitive Science Fair project. Read it carefully and feel free to share it with all your teachers.

Elementary Schools Grades (1-4):

Elementary Schools are expected to host a local Science Fair to gain winners to compete in the Regional Science Fair at USC Upstate. Only individual projects can be submitted to the regional fair at the elementary school. No team projects please. Students are eligible for this Regional Fair if they are winners at their local fair.

Middle and Secondary Schools:

Middle and Secondary Level students (grades 5-12) may submit team projects (completed by two or three students—no whole class projects). Team projects will be judged with individual projects, not as a separate category. Names of all members of a team, with a team leader listed, should be identified when registering.

Middle Schools are expected to host a local Science Fair to gain winners to compete in the Regional Science Fair here at USC Upstate. Students are eligible for this Regional Fair if they are winners at their local fair.

For Secondary Level students in grades 9-12, a school fair is not required. If you have a promising young scientist or mathematician who will work with a mentor teacher and prepare a project, we welcome them to the Regional Fair.

All Middle and Secondary Level projects selected to compete in the Regional Science Fair must fill out ISEF Checklist Forms and have them available during project registration.

- 1. All students must fill out the 1A. Student Checklist/Research Plan Form.**
- 2. All teachers must fill out the Form 1: Checklist for Adult Sponsor Form.**

These forms can be found on the Piedmont Region III Science Fair website or on the ISEF website (<https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/forms/>).

All 9th through 12th grade students should plan to accompany their projects Tuesday evening from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. During this time, students will have the opportunity explain their work to the judges. Each of the students involved in the project are expected to be able to explain details about project. Project notebooks should have student's name clearly marked on the first page (cover page). In cases in which a student has been part of a larger research project, such as some of the Governor's School efforts, the student should be able to explain clearly the larger project, their particular contribution, and how that contribution was important to the larger project.

Competition Divisions:

Competition in the Piedmont Region III Science Fair is open to public, private, and home school students in the following South Carolina counties: Cherokee, Chester, Lancaster, Spartanburg, Union, and York.

Divisions are: Elementary (grades 1-4), Middle Level (grades 5-8), and Secondary Level (grades 9-12).

If you are a traditional Elementary School, please enter your 1st through 4th graders as "Elementary", and your 5th graders as "Middle Level". If you are a traditional Junior High School, please enter your 7th and 8th graders as "Middle Level", your 9th graders as "Secondary Level." Typically, an elementary school would submit their 1st and 2nd place winners from the school fair in each of the six categories, for grades 1-4.

Scientific Categories:

Complete category and subcategory descriptions can be found here:

<https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/categories-and-subcategories/all-categories/>

Behavioral and Social Sciences

Biology, including

- Environmental Sciences
- Medicine and Health Sciences
- Plant Sciences
- Microbiology
- Animal Sciences
- Cellular and Molecular Biology

Chemistry, including

- Biochemistry

Computer Science, including

- Math

General Science, including

- Earth and Planetary Science
- Engineering: Electrical and Mechanical

Engineering: Materials and Bioengineering
Environmental Management
Energy and Transportation

Physics, including
Astronomy

Rules, Regulations and Guidelines for All Projects:

ALL PROJECTS, 1st through 12th grades, MUST CONFORM TO ISEF (INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR) GUIDELINES.

[The Society for Science & the Public](https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/forms/) oversees the [International Science and Engineering Fair](https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/forms/), with whom we are affiliated. All rules, regulations, and guidelines can be found on the SS&P-ISEF website:

<https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/forms/>.

Remember, projects at any grade level involving animals or humans must have adult oversight, and if subjects are human minors under 18 years of age, permission of parents must also be obtained. Live animal projects, including behavior-of-pets projects must have adult oversight and must be carried out in a humane fashion. Proper treatment of animals should be documented. **If there is any potential for harm to the researcher or participants, the science fair coordinator at the school must contact Chad Mueller to determine if the project needs to be reviewed by the Scientific Review Committee.**

The necessity of adult oversight (teacher, parent, practicing scientist or engineer) brings up the old problem of separating projects done by adults vs. those done by the student. An adult should review and approve the idea of the project and serve in a support role keeping an eye on things. If the project is to build a home weather station, then the student needs to build the station by himself. If the project is recording and predicting weather, using the weather station, then parents or others can help in the building, from which the student then takes responsibility for the use of the station. The student could then record weather data, make predictions, and compare their home forecasts with those of the newspaper or TV. Parental help is okay with credit given, and the notebook should have a page plainly stating the role of the associated adults.

Secondary Level Notebooks are essential to further competition. The notebook should be saved as a PDF and uploaded along with the digital project presentation. Put your title and name(s) on the first page of your notebook.

Notebooks are not required at the Elementary or Middle Level but are encouraged.

Projects that involve Human subjects, Animal Subjects, or Potentially Hazardous Materials: ANY project that involves human subjects, animal subjects and potentially hazardous material must be first evaluated by the teacher/science fair school coordinator. If there is **any risk** involved with a project, it must be approved by the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) **before** the student starts the experiments. The [ISEF forms wizard](#) can be used to help you determine which forms you need to complete. Any questions about these types of projects should be sent to Chad Mueller (cmuelle2@uscupstate.edu).

There are two blocks of time available for SRC review: between September 1st and December 1st and between February 1st and February 20th. The SRC will not review any projects submitted between December 1st and February 1st or May 1st and September 1st. The SRC will relay its decision to the participants within 2 weeks of the completed proposal submission. If a proposal does not include all of the required paperwork, the SRC chair will send it back to the students or teacher.

Elementary Projects:

Teachers/Science Fair School Coordinators should evaluate projects to determine if SRC approval is needed.

Middle and High School Projects:

If the project involves any risk to the participants and/or the researcher(s), students must submit their paperwork to the SRC committee. Applicants should include the following in their application package to be submitted by email to Chad Mueller (cmuelle2@uscupstate.edu), Chair of the SRC.

Experiments Using Human Subjects:

Examples of projects that are considered “human participant research” include:

- Participants in physical activities (e.g., physical exertion, ingestion of any substance, any medical procedure)
- Psychological, educational and opinion studies (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, tests)
- Studies in which the researcher is the subject of the research
- Testing of student designed invention, prototype or computer application by human participants other than student researcher
- Data/record review projects that include data that are not de-identified/anonymous (e.g., data set that includes name, birth date, phone number or other identifying variables)
- Behavioral observations that
 - involve any interaction with the observed individual(s) or where the researcher has modified the environment (e.g., post a sign, place an object).
 - occur in non-public or restricted access settings (e.g., day care setting, doctor’s office)
 - involve the recording of personally identifiable information.

1) Examples of Greater than Minimal Physical Risk

- a. Exercise other than ordinarily encountered in everyday life
- b. Ingestion, tasting, smelling, or application of a substance. However, ingestion or tasting projects that involve commonly available food or drink will be evaluated by the SRC which determines risk level based upon the nature of the study and local norms.
- c. Exposure to any potentially hazardous material.

2) Examples of Greater than Minimal Psychological Risk

A research activity (e.g. survey, questionnaire, viewing of stimuli) or experimental condition that could potentially result in emotional stress. Some examples include: answering questions related to personal experiences such as sexual or physical abuse, divorce, depression, anxiety; answering questions that could result in feelings of depression, anxiety, or low self-esteem; or viewing violent or distressing video images.

The following forms are required:

1. Checklist for Adult Sponsor (1), Student Checklist (1A), Research Plan/ Project Summary, and Approval Form (1B)
2. Risk Assessment (3)
3. Human Participants Form (4) or IRB approval form from an RRI and all applicable consents and survey(s)
4. Regulated Research Institution Form (1C), when applicable
5. Qualified Scientist Form (2), when applicable

Experiments Using Vertebrate Animals:

Vertebrate animals, as covered by these rules, are defined as:

1. Live, nonhuman vertebrate mammalian embryos or fetuses
2. Tadpoles
3. Bird and reptile eggs within three days (72 hours) of hatching

4. All other nonhuman vertebrates (including fish) at hatching or birth.

Exception: Because of their delayed cognitive neural development, zebrafish embryos are not considered vertebrate animals until 7 days (168 hours) post- fertilization.

The following forms are required:

1. Checklist for Adult Sponsor (1), Student Checklist (1A), Research Plan, and Approval Form (1B)
2. Regulated Research Institution Form (1C)
3. Qualified Scientist Form (2)
4. Vertebrate Animal Form (5B)
5. PHBA Risk Assessment Form (6A) –for all studies involving tissues and body fluids.
6. Human and Vertebrate Animal Tissue Form (6B) – for all studies involving tissues and body fluids.

Experiments Using Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents:

The following forms are required:

1. Checklist for Adult Sponsor (1), Student Checklist (1A), Research Plan, and Approval Form (1B)
2. Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents Form (6A) or Human and Vertebrate Animal Tissue Form (6B)
3. Risk Assessment Form (3)
4. Regulated Research Institution Form (1C), when applicable
5. Qualified Scientist Form (2), when applicable

*Prior approval for projects using hazardous chemicals, activities and devices is not required. The student researcher must conduct a risk assessment in collaboration with a Designated Supervisor or Qualified Scientist prior to experimentation. This risk assessment is documented on the Risk Assessment Form 3. All forms can be found at: <https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/overview-of-forms-and-dates/>

2022 Scientific Review Committee:

Chair:	Mr. Chad Mueller Instructor, USC Upstate, College of Science and Technology Division of Natural Sciences & Engineering cmuelle2@uscupstate.edu
Member:	Dr. Tamara Cook Assistant Professor of Nursing, USC Upstate, Mary Black School of Nursing
Member:	Dr. Scott Tanner Biomedical Scientist, Director of Infection Prevention, Henrico Doctors' Hospital
Member:	Dr. Katharine Welling Veterinarian
Member:	Dr. James Bunde Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, USC Upstate

Project Display:

NO PROJECT DISPLAY MAY CONTAIN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

(The Region III Scientific Review Committee is required by ISEF regulations to remove all banned materials. Projects uploaded to compete in the Regional Fair are screened after submission, and more vigorously screened during the judging.)

1. **NO** photographs or drawings of vertebrate animals in other-than-normal conditions. **NO** displays showing surgical techniques, dissections or necropsies. (A project investigating why local frogs are dying off is ok, a photographic presentation of your autopsy of a pet turtle is forbidden.)
2. **NO** portrait photographs, or displayed names and addresses. Items which clearly and purposefully identify the contestants are forbidden on the front of the display. However, photographs showing the contestant involved in doing the project are acceptable-faces do not need to be taped over. These are often important in helping friends, relatives, and others locate a project at the conclusion. Remember, no school logos on the front of the project.
3. **NO** Business cards, medals, or awards from previous school fairs.
4. **NO** Product LOGOS or BRAND NAMES. Brands can be differentiated by using "Brand A, B, C..."
5. **ALL LETHAL LIMITS AND CRUELTY PROJECTS ARE BANNED.** A dead cockroach in a 100% dead insect collection is legal; a project which asks what percentage of roaches will die at 20 degrees Centigrade, 30 degrees Centigrade, 40 degrees Centigrade, etc., is a Lethal Limits study, and will not be accepted. A project asking which bait catches which fish should release rather than cook the fish.
6. **NO Liability projects.** An intriguing study asks what percentage of drivers will swerve to run over a rubber snake. Unless you are willing to take legal responsibility for any and all wrecks generated, avoid such studies. Traffic projects in which the student is a passive observer are acceptable, such as "Do drivers speed up at a yellow light?"

Awards:

Local

Certificates of recognition, prizes and special awards will be offered by a number of organizations such as Converse College, National Audubon Society, Spartanburg Science Center, and the Rotary Club of Spartanburg.

[ASM International Foundation Award](#): A certificate and medallion will be awarded to the most outstanding exhibit in materials science and engineering. The winning project will need to use materials-related concepts, demonstrate some aspect of the materials paradigm, be clear in presentation, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the scientific method.

[Association of Women Geoscientists Award](#): Certificates, cash (\$30-\$100), and a science-related gift will be awarded to female students whose projects exemplify high standards of innovativeness and scientific excellence in the geosciences.

[Mu Alpha Theta](#): A certificate will be awarded to the project demonstrating the most challenging, original, thorough, and creative investigation of a problem involving mathematics accessible to a high school student.

[NOAA Award](#): A certificate, letter, and medallion will be awarded to a project whose research emphasizes NOAA's mission: to understand and predict changes in Earth's environment and to conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs.

[Ricoh Corporation Award](#): A certificate will be awarded to an individual or team whose principles and technical innovations offer the greatest potential for increasing our ability to grow environmentally friendly and socially responsible businesses.

US Metric System Award: A certificate will be awarded to the project that involves quantitative measures and which best uses the SI metric system for those measures.

US Stockholm Junior Water Prize Regional Award: Prize for environmentally-related projects.
 Water Environment Association of South Carolina: Best water-related project (particularly if it involved the environment).

Yale Science and Engineering Association Award: The YSEA Award is given to an 11th grade student for the most outstanding exhibit at a state or regional high school Science Fair in Computer Science, Engineering, Physics, or Chemistry.

Broadcom MASTERS: A certificate and invitation to enter the Broadcom MASTERS national competition will be awarded to students in grades 6-8 for mastery of S.T.E.M. principles. All applicable forms must be filled out to compete in the competition.

Science Fair Registration Information:

- 1) School coordinators are asked to fill out this form : <https://forms.office.com/r/tKdMjhrQu1> between now and January 5th, 2024 in order to indicate their school’s participation in the Piedmont Region III Science Fair.
- 2) Coordinators will be given instructions in February on how to register their school’s projects between March 4th and March 8th. PLEASE NOTE: Coordinators must register individual student winners and their projects for participation in the Piedmont Region III Fair in advance of the fair.

Thank you for your service as Science Fair Coordinator. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sinead Brien

Director, Piedmont Region III Science Fair
 USC Upstate, School of Education, Human Performance, and Health
 800 University Way
 Spartanburg, SC 29303
 Office: 864-503-5507
sciencefair@uscupstate.edu

Sample scorecards can be found on the next two pages of this document

Piedmont Region III Science Fair Judges’ Score Card

Elementary and Middle School Projects

					← Project numbers
					1. Scientific Thought – The Problem (10 Points) Is the project title in question format or imply a question to be answered? Is the problem/purpose clearly and concisely stated? Is there a comprehensive review of related research included? Is the hypothesis based upon the review of related research and stated in “If...then” format?
					2. Scientific Thought – The Design (10 Points) Are the procedures listed, appropriate, logical, organized, and thorough? Are the materials appropriate and listed in a way that the project can be replicated? Do the project procedures demonstrate a long-term commitment by using multiple trials? Does the project use and identify the manipulating/responding and/or dependent/independent variables correctly?

					Does the project specify the control and experimental groups used?
					3. Scientific Thought – The Results (10 Points) Does the project show the results of multiple trials? (3 or more) Are the results accurate and complete? Are the data tables and graphs accurately identified and labeled? If needed, are the results of individual trials and averages included? Is an interpretation of the tables and graphs included? Is there a discussion/summary of the results? Does the project show considerable time commitment in the objective analysis of the results?
					4. Scientific Thought – The Conclusions (10 Points) Are the conclusions based upon the stated hypothesis and results? Does the project show considerable time commitment in the interpretive analysis of the results? Do the conclusions address the following: The status of the hypothesis after the study. Practical applications. What was learned? How the present study relates to earlier studies cited in the review of related research? Sources of error and limitations. Suggestions for improvement. Suggestions for future studies.
					5. Scientific Thought – The Concepts, Ideas, and Principles (10 Points) Are the scientific concepts, ideas, and principles clearly developed, explained and used correctly? Are the scientific concepts, ideas, and principles appropriate for the student's grade level?
					6. Acknowledgements/References (10 Points) Does the student clearly show use of related research and prior studies? Is a bibliography of necessary references listed and available? Has the student acknowledged help they received from others? Are acknowledgements clearly stated?
					7. Creative Ability (10 Points) Does the project show original thinking or a unique approach? Does it demonstrate ideas arrived at by the student?
					8. Thoroughness & Clarity (10 Points) Does the project tell a complete story? Does it explain what the student did and learned? Does the project show considerable time commitment overall? Are all parts of the project presented in a logical order? (Top middle – Title; from left to right - purpose, review of related research, hypothesis, procedures, materials, results, discussion of results, conclusions, and acknowledgements/bibliography).
					9. Dramatic Value (10 Points) Are all parts of the project attractive and neatly done? Is the font size and style easy to read? Does it catch your attention? Do you really want to look at the project further? Are illustrations and/or photographs used appropriately? Is proper emphasis given to the most important ideas?
					10. Technical Skill (10 Points) Does the project show good craftsmanship by the student? (Legibility, Layout, etc.) Is the written and presented material both organized and accurate? Has the student used correct grammar and punctuation? Have computer-generated text, graphs, tables, illustrations been used correctly?
					Totals (out of 100)

ISEF Judging Guidelines For Senior High Projects

Project numbers:					
I. Research Question (10 pts)					
Clear and focused purpose					
Identifies contribution to field of study					
Testable using scientific methods					
II. Design and Methodology (15 pts)					
Well-designed plan and data collection methods					
Variables and controls defined, appropriate and complete					
III. Execution: Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation (20 pts)					
Systematic data collection and analysis					
Reproducibility of results					

Appropriate application of mathematical and statistical methods					
Sufficient data collected to support interpretation and conclusions					
IV. Creativity (20 pts)					
Project demonstrates significant creativity in one or more of the above criteria					
V. Presentation (35 pts)					
a. Poster (10 pts)					
Logical organization of material					
Clarity of graphics and legends					
Supporting documentation displayed					
b. Interview (25 pts)					
Clear, concise, thoughtful responses to questions					
Understanding of basic science relevant to project					
Understanding interpretation and limitations of results and conclusions					
Degree of independence in conducting project					
Recognition of potential impact in science, society and/or economics					
Quality of ideas for further research					
For team projects, contributions to and understanding of project by all members					
Totals: (out of 100 total points)					