

# NJSRS Judges Guidelines and Procedures

## Eligibility

Judges may include:

- University faculty and graduate students
- Industry STEM professionals
- STEM educators
- Qualified alumni and researchers
- PhD Candidates

Judges may not:

- Judge students they personally know
- Judge students from their own school, lab, or program
- Judge categories in which they have a direct conflict of interest
- Serve as judges if they are involved in organizing or competing in the fair

**All judges must complete a conflict-of-interest confirmation prior to the event.**

## Expectations

Judges are expected to:

- Arrive on time and remain for their full assignment block
- Adhere strictly to scoring rubrics
- Maintain confidentiality of scores and deliberations
- Evaluate projects solely on merit, not on student background or resources
- Be respectful, professional, and constructive during Q&A

## Project Assignment

- Judges are randomly assigned to projects within their category of expertise
- Each category includes three judges whenever possible
- Categories correspond to standard ISEF/JSJS-style divisions (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics & Computer Science)
- Judges will receive assignments, abstracts, schedules, and room locations at least 3 days prior to the fair

## Event Day Schedule

**8:00 - 8:30 AM** - Check in for students and judges

**8:30 AM – 9:00 AM** - Orientation for the judges

**9:00 AM - 12:00 PM** – Category judging in classrooms 100-110

**12:00 – 1:00 PM** – Lunch for students and judges (Lunch provided for judges.)

**1:00 – 3:30 PM** – Finals for category winners (Located in the auditorium)

**3:30 – 4:30 PM** – Judges' deliberation and final scoring

**5:00 – 6:00 PM** – Awards ceremony and closing remarks

## **Category Judging Procedures**

### **Presentation Format**

Each oral presentation includes:

- 10 minute oral presentation using slides
- 5 minutes of judge Q&A
- 3 minutes of audience Q&A
  - **Judges will step into the hallway and finalize their scoring during the audience Q&A.**
- 2 minutes of transition

Judges should focus questions on:

- Research motivation and originality
- Experimental design and methodology
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Limitations and future directions
- Student ownership and understanding

### **Scoring Process**

- Judges enter scores individually using the official scoring app
- Scores must be submitted promptly after each presentation

At the end of the morning session, judges will identify the category winner, who advances to the final round.

## **Grand Prize Judging Procedures**

- Category winners
- Each finalist gives a **10-minute presentation**
- **No judge or audience Q&A** during finals
- Judges score based solely on:
  - Scientific merit
  - Clarity of communication
  - Rigor and originality

A minimum of five judges will score all finalist presentations for consistency.

# Scoring System

## Scoring Platform

Judges will use an online scoring app integrated with Google Forms

- Submit rubric-based evaluations
- Automatically aggregate scores
- Reduce manual calculation errors

## Rubrics

- Presentation Scoring: Official JSJS Oral Presentation Rubric
- Judges must adhere to rubric criteria while applying professional judgment
- Final decisions are based on composite scores, not individual impressions

## Ethical Judging Standards

Judges must:

- Ignore student age, grade, or school (not disclosed)
- Avoid assumptions based on presentation style or resources
- Focus on student-driven work and understanding
- Flag suspected violations discreetly to organizers

Automatic disqualifications include:

- Fabricated or falsified data
- Plagiarism
- Unsafe research practices
- Undisclosed or unethical AI use

## Judging Debrief

### Morning Orientation

Before judging begins, organizers will:

- Review the schedule and judging flow
- Clarify scoring expectations
- Address last-minute questions

## Thank You

The NJSRS organizing committee sincerely thanks all judges for contributing their time, expertise, and mentorship. Your participation helps sustain meaningful, high-quality research opportunities for New Jersey students.

For questions prior to the event, please contact fair staff at [faircommittee@njsrs.org](mailto:faircommittee@njsrs.org). For questions on the day of the event, please contact the Judging Outreach Committee or event staff at check-in.