

State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida

Judging Procedure

1. The SSEF Director and the FFFS Judging Committee determine the Judging Schedule. The Schedule includes: Registration, Briefing, Preview, Round One Judging, Consensus Meetings, Round Two Judging, Conferences, Round Three Judging, and Final Reports.
2. The SSEF Director appoints the Judging Chairperson who directs 26 Team Captains and 26 Team Coordinators who may be asked to serve every year if possible. There may be Co-Captains named if desired.
3. Judging Day begins with a meeting for all Judges including the Team Captains and Team Coordinators. The briefing explains the responsibilities of the Team Captains, Team Coordinators, and judges serving in each Category.
4. There are usually 13 to 49 Finalists in each of the 26 Categories. The object of the judging is to select students who are deserving of awards and recognition.
 - Place Awards (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th) are given to approximately 44% of the Finalists.
 - Premium Awards are those Special Awards “assigned” to a Place Award Winner.
 - Special Awards are given for special reasons and are judged by different criteria. Special Awards/Scholarships/Opportunity Awards are donated by businesses and organizations from the community and many send their own judges. Category Judges may be asked to select winners for certain awards tied to their Category.
5. ROUND ONE Judging is 2 ½ hours long and the purpose is to divide each Category in half. The Top half will be the Focus Group and the lower half will be the Orbit Group for Round Two Judging. After all the judges have arrived and the final number of judges available to judge has been determined, each Captain will be given a form indicating how many projects must be judged by an individual Judge during ROUND ONE. All projects MUST be judged at least three (3 times) during ROUND ONE. After an interview, the judge should initial the PROJECT TABLE CARD. SCORING: Judges are asked to use the Judging Sheet provided and judge assigned projects as a one-to-five (five is best) for each student judged in Round One. There is NO RANKING of projects during Round One.
6. After the results from Round One Judging are returned, the Captain is in charge of Focus Group re-judging in Round Two and the Coordinator is in charge of Orbit Group re-judging in Round Two.
7. ROUND TWO Focus Group judging results in RANKING all the Focus Group projects. Four-fifths of the Focus Group receives a Place Award. The remaining one-fifth will receive a Merit Award. Use the FOCUS GROUP Judging Form to help with this round of judging.
8. ROUND TWO Orbit Group judging involves re-judging the projects using non-traditional criteria as outlined on the ORBIT GROUP Judging Form. Ribbons of recognition will be given to the top students selected in this group after re-judging. It is expected that 3 or more (if available) Judging Team members volunteer to judge these students and offer encouragement and suggestions for future research.
9. In ROUND THREE, the top 13 projects in each Section (Junior/Senior) are further evaluated for Best-In-Fair Awards. Eight Senior Section students will be chosen (four from the Biological Sciences and four from the Physical Sciences). Four Junior Section students will be chosen (two from the Biological Sciences and two from the Physical Sciences). The eight Senior Section students will represent the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida as Ying Scholars at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in May. (If these students have already won a bid from their Regional Fair, that Fair will be given a choice to send an alternate.) *continued*

10. INTERVIEWING FINALISTS:

- Every Round One interview is **INDIVIDUAL** and **NOT** done by groups of judges. Some judges may feel they are not familiar enough with the particular field or specialty of some projects to ask pertinent questions. However, even if they are not an expert, a judge can still obtain information useful for evaluation through personal questioning of a student. Every student is interviewed three times by three different judges in Round One.
- Every interview should last ten (10) minutes, if total judging time allows. (150 minutes for Round One). There is no substitute for careful consideration of the student and his/her project and this is something that cannot be hurried. Even if a student is not in the running, he/she should be allowed to talk about the research for the educational experience involved. Ten minutes is a very small amount of time for such an undertaking. All students should leave feeling their research was acknowledged.
- In Round Two, every student should be interviewed at least once and preferably more whether they were selected for the Focus Group or for the Orbit Group. ***The two and a half hour time frame in the afternoon can be very long if a student does not receive any interviews during this time.*** Focus Group students should be interviewed extensively so the Judge can obtain a good grasp of what the student has done and what he/she knows about the research.