

Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair

Judging Policies and Procedures

Judging at the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair is conducted in a fair and ethical manner. Conflicts of interest are addressed, and the process of judging and final decision making is as transparent as possible while maintaining the integrity of the judging process. Effective policies and procedures are in place that are understood and adhered to by all involved. All of those involved in judging and in making winner selections do so with the best interests of the student participants.

The decisions of judges are final.

The Arkansas State Science Fair has established policies that address minimum judge qualifications for each level of judging as well as recruitment and selection of judges per judging tier. These policies also address how conflicts, perceived conflicts, or potential conflicts of interest are addressed and avoided.

The Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair has established an acceptable minimum number of judges per project to reach conclusions: The Arkansas Science and Engineering Fair will strive to have a minimum of two judges reviewing each project.

All Arkansas State Science Fair judges will be required to attest to a statement of ethics before serving that addresses 1) serving in the best interest of fair and just competition, 2) acknowledging any conflict(s) of interest, 3) refraining from any harassment of another individual, and 4) the requirement to decline any monetary payment or other considerations of value.

The Arkansas Science Fair Association and the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair Director and/or Executive Committee will not undermine or attempt to undermine the decision-making of the collective body of judges. This is particularly important if such leadership has a real or perceived conflict of interest via an association with student participants or a competing school.

The Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair has a written grievance policy and process to address concerns raised. This will be operational throughout the science fair process and will address concerns of conflict as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Each ISEF-affiliated regional fair should furnish a certain number of qualified judges from their region to the state fair to ensure fairness.

The Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair's policy regarding the naming of Intel ISEF finalists: a panel of 4-5 experienced judges from broad disciplinary areas will consider all top-place finishers in each disciplinary category for selection of the highest quality projects, which will then represent the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair at the International Science and Engineering Fair. This judging team will also select the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair's "Best in State" recipients, which may be

considered from both category winners as well as regional ISEF-qualifying projects (see below).

The Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair also welcomes students who have already qualified for ISEF from one of the state's regional ISEF-affiliated science fairs for competition. Because these students have already qualified for ISEF, they will not be considered for category awards – which then lead to ISEF-qualifying trips for selected projects. However, these students can compete for “Best in State” awards as well as special awards. The overall judging team described above will also consider and judge regional ISEF-qualifying projects for “Best in State” awards, and special awards judges will consider these projects for special awards.

The Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair will strive to assemble Category Award Judging Teams with the following qualifications: Category Award Judging Teams will consist of professional scientists. At least one member of each judging team will hold a terminal disciplinary degree. Other members must have one of the following qualifications:

- Have a minimum of six years related professional experience beyond receiving their B.A., B.S., or Master's degree, **OR**
- Have a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent terminal degree (D.O., Ed.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., etc.), **OR**
- Is a current graduate student with more than four years of doctoral-level research experience and/or who is within one year of doctoral dissertation defense.

Judges may include university faculty and scientists, industrial engineers and scientists, representatives of private and federal research centers and agencies, medical researchers, post-doctoral fellows, and senior graduate students. Affiliated science fair directors and elementary or secondary school teachers are NOT eligible to serve as Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair category judges, but may serve as special awards judges.

To avoid conflicts of interest, no Adult Sponsor, parent or other relative of the student, Qualified Scientist, or Designated Supervisor who oversees the project, may serve on the judging team reviewing that project. All judges will agree to disclose all conflicts of interest resulting from direct competitive, collaborative or other relationships with any of the students to the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair Judging Chair and Director, and to recuse themselves from judging any and all of the projects in the category for which these students are registered. Failure to disclose conflicts of interests will result in the disqualification of the student(s) from competition at the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair. In such cases, judges can be easily reassigned to a different category for judging. In addition, any contact between judges and students competing in other categories for which there is a conflict of interest, or with their judges, is inappropriate and will result in the disqualification of the student(s) from competition at the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair.

Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair Grievance Procedure

1. Purpose of the Procedure

It is the aim of the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair to ensure that student participants with a grievance relating to their participation in the fair can use a procedure which can help to resolve grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible.

Grievances will be accepted from student participants only.

2. Informal Discussions

If a student participant has a grievance about their treatment at the State Fair, they should discuss it informally with the director of the State Fair. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved this way.

3. Stage 1 – Statement of Grievance

If the student participant feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should put their grievance in writing to the State Fair Director.

4. Stage 2 – The Grievance Meeting

Within ten (10) working days the Director will respond in writing to the statement, inviting the student participant to attend a meeting where the alleged grievance can be discussed. This meeting should be scheduled to take place as soon as possible, and normally 5 working days' notice of this meeting will be provided to the student participant. They will be informed of their right to be accompanied.

Student participants must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting, but if for any unforeseen reason the participant, or the director, cannot attend, the meeting must be rearranged.

After the meeting the State Fair Director must consult with the ASFA President (or ASFA Executive Board, should the State Fair Director and ASFA President be the same person) and write to the student participant informing them of any decision or action taken, and to offer them the right of appeal. This letter should be sent within ten (10) working days of the grievance meeting and should include the details on how to appeal.

5. Step 3 – Appeal

If the matter is not resolved to the student participant's satisfaction, they must set out their grounds of appeal in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the decision letter.

Within five (5) working days of receiving an appeal letter, the student participant should receive a written invitation to attend an appeal meeting with the entire Arkansas Science Fair Association (ASFA) Board of Directors.

After the appeal meeting the director must consult with the ASFA Board of Directors and inform the student participant in writing of their decision within five (5) working days of the meeting. Their decision will be final.