

# Qualifications for Participation in the GEORGIA SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR



Additional info at [www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/GSEF](http://www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/GSEF)

## Eligibility

Georgia students in grades 6-12 become eligible for the statewide Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF) by:

- 1) Conducting STEM research that complies with the [ISEF Rules & Guidelines](#) (see below); **and**
- 2) Competing in a school fair and being selected by that fair to advance to the appropriate [GSEF-Affiliated Regional Fair](#); **and**
- 3) Competing in the Regional Fair and being selected by the Regional Fair to advance to GSEF.

*Regional Fair jurisdiction is determined by county. For guidance on which school and regional level fair a student should attend, including what to do if the student's school does not have its own school-level fair, see the [Georgia Fair Participation Policy](#). Contact your [Regional Fair director](#) for additional eligibility requirements.*

## Rules for Research

To be eligible for competition in a regional fair and the Georgia Science & Engineering Fair, all projects must follow the [International Rules for Pre-College Science Research](#) ("ISEF Rules & Guidelines"). These rules delineate the forms, protocol, and approval process required for all students competing at affiliated regional fairs and GSEF.

It is the responsibility of the student and supporting adults to know the rules and evaluate the proposed project to determine whether it requires special forms and official approval **before experimentation begins**. This includes most projects that involve human participants, vertebrate animals, or potentially hazardous biological agents.

It is recommended that students consult with their local Scientific Review Committee (SRC) at the school or Regional Fair level to ensure they have followed all rules and completed all required forms. Students are strongly encouraged to use the [ISEF Rules Wizard](#) and [Required Research Forms Guide & Checklist](#) to determine what forms and approvals are required for the project.

## Most common rule violations:

- ♦ **Failure to receive SRC/IRB approval before beginning the experiment/survey.** Most research involving human participants (including surveys), vertebrate animals (including pets), and potentially hazardous biological agents (including unknown microorganisms swabbed from common surfaces) require approval by a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) or Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to experimentation.
- ♦ **Culturing in a home environment.** Potentially hazardous biological agents, including unknown microorganisms swabbed from surfaces, may not be cultured at home.
- ♦ **Adult Sponsor serving on SRC/IRB.** No Adult Sponsor, parent or other relative of the student, the Qualified Scientist, or the Designated Supervisor who oversees the project may serve on the SRC or IRB reviewing that project.
- ♦ **Missing or incomplete forms.** Review the [Required Research Forms Guide & Checklist](#) to ensure all forms required for your project have been completed and signed by all parties.

## Team Projects

Students may do their projects individually or as part of a team with up to three members. A team project may not be entered as an individual project, or vice versa, at any level of competition. All team members must meet GSEF eligibility. Teams may be represented at GSEF by one or more members; however, judges have the freedom not to consider a team if they have not had the opportunity to meet and interview all members.

## Project Categories

Students must select one [Project Category](#) during GSEF registration. (School and regional fairs may use different categories; check with each fair for specific category options.)

## Judging

The GSEF judging process emphasizes the student's ability to discuss the project effectively during an interview, as well as the project's demonstration of originality, creativity, imagination, discovery, and inventiveness. See the [GSEF Judging Criteria](#).

## The GSEF Event

The 2024 Georgia Science & Engineering Fair will take place April 11-13, 2024 in Athens, GA. Students must complete all registration requirements **within three days** of qualifying for GSEF from their regional fair. Information about the GSEF event, including registration instructions, schedule, and attendance requirements, will be provided by the regional fair and available on the [GSEF website](#) beginning January 2024.

All projects exhibiting at GSEF must follow the [GSEF Display & Safety Regulations](#). (School and regional fairs may also enforce these regulations; check with each fair for specific requirements.)



GSEF is a program of the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education & Hotel and an Official Affiliate of the Regeneron International Science & Engineering Fair and Thermo Fisher Junior Innovators Challenge.