

How to Qualify for the GEORGIA SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR



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Eligibility

To be eligible for the statewide Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF), Georgia students in grades 6-12 must:

- 1) Conduct STEM research in compliance with the [ISEF Rules & Guidelines](#) (see below); **and**
- 2) Compete in a school fair and be selected by that fair to advance to the appropriate GSEF-affiliated [Regional Fair](#); **and**
- 3) Compete in the Regional Fair and be selected by that Regional Fair to advance to GSEF.

Regional Fair jurisdiction is determined by county; contact your [Regional Fair](#) Director for additional eligibility requirements. For guidance on which school and regional fairs a student should attend, including what to do if the student's school does not have its own school-level fair, see the [School & Regional Fair Participation Policy](#) on following page. ➔

Scientific Integrity: Students & Adults

The Georgia Science & Engineering Fair upholds the Society for Science's [principles of scientific integrity](#) and [Ethics Statement](#). Student researchers and their supporting adults are expected to hold themselves to the highest ethical standards and adhere to principles of honesty, transparency, and objectivity.

- Scientific fraud and misconduct are prohibited.
- Students must not fabricate data or images, plagiarize or present someone else's work as their own.
- Students must differentiate their own work from the work of others and cite sources.
- Students must respect confidentiality and intellectual property.
- Students' supporting adults must ensure students adhere to above.

Qualifying Research

To be eligible for competition in a Regional Fair and GSEF, projects must follow the [International Rules for Pre-College Science Research](#) ("ISEF Rules & Guidelines"), including completion of all required research forms and approvals.

Forms 1, 1A, 1B and a **Research Plan** are required for all projects. **Forms 1C** through **7** may be required depending on the type and setting of the research.

Projects involving any of the following must receive **official approval from a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) / Institutional Review Board (IRB)** before experimentation/survey/data collection begins:

 **HUMAN PARTICIPANTS** (including surveys)

 **VERTEBRATE ANIMALS** (including pets)

 **POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL AGENTS**
(including samples swabbed from common surfaces)

It is the responsibility of the student and supporting adults to know the ISEF Rules & Guidelines and evaluate the project to determine which forms and approvals it will require.

None of the following adults may serve on the SRC/IRB reviewing the project or provide SRC/IRB approval signatures on forms: Adult Sponsor (often a teacher), Qualified Scientist, Direct Supervisor, or any parent/relative of the student.

Students are advised to consult with an SRC at their school or Regional Fair to ensure compliance with rules and completion of required forms. The [Rules Wizard](#) and [Required Forms Guide](#) can help identify necessary forms and approvals.

Avoid these [Common Rules & Forms Issues in Georgia](#).

Team Projects

Students may do their research 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/Regional Fairs may use different categories; check with each fair for specific category options.)

Exhibits

All projects exhibiting at GSEF must follow the [GSEF Display & Safety Regulations](#). (School/Regional Fairs may have different regulations; check with each fair for specific rules.)

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](#).

Registration & Event Info

The 2025 Georgia Science & Engineering Fair will take place April 3-5, 2025 in Athens, GA. Students must complete all registration requirements **within three days** of qualifying for GSEF at their regional fair. Information about the GSEF event, including registration instructions, schedule, and attendance requirements, will be provided by the regional fair and posted to the [GSEF website](#) beginning January 2025.



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.

For more information about GSEF, visit www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/gsef.

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School & Regional Fair Participation Policy

To be eligible for the statewide Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF), Georgia students in grades 6-12 must 1) Conduct STEM research in compliance with the [ISEF Rules & Guidelines](#), and 2) Compete in a school fair and be selected by that fair to advance to the appropriate GSEF-affiliated [Regional Fair](#); and 3) Compete in the Regional Fair and be selected by that Regional Fair to advance to GSEF.

All eligible middle and high school students in the state of Georgia should have access to the Science and Engineering Fair System regardless of the type of school they attend, including public, private, charter, magnet, home, and cyber schools, in accordance with state and federal laws. Regional Fairs are supported, coordinated, and sustained by colleges/universities, school boards, RESAs, STEM organizations, and/or other stakeholders local to the geographic region served. They affiliate with the Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF) to become part of the science fair system and allow students to advance to the state-level fair.

SCHOOL FAIR

Students must exhibit at a school fair before being considered for a Regional Fair. Each Regional Fair has additional eligibility requirements; [contact your Regional Fair for details](#).

| TYPE OF SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDS | WHICH SCHOOL FAIR STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| | <i>A "participating school" is a school that offers a science fair in accordance with requirements set by the Regional Fair.</i> |
| Participating school | Students who attend schools that offer a science fair must exhibit at that school fair. |
| Non-participating school | Individual students who attend schools that do not offer a science fair should follow the instructions below for independent home or cyber school students. |
| Independent home or cyber school | Independent home/cyber school students must request to participate in the School Fair of the public school to which they would have been assigned according to their legal place of residence. The request should be made before October 1 st . If that school does not offer a science fair, the student must contact the next closest school within the Region of the student's legal place of residence, as measured by Google Maps shortest distance. If this second school also does not offer a science fair, contact the appropriate Regional Fair Director (see map) for further instructions. The decision of the Regional Fair Director is final. Attempts at "fair shopping" may result in disqualification. |
| Recognized home or cyber school group | A recognized home/cyber group of sufficient size* may elect to request that its own school-level fair (including a properly constituted SRC/IRB), be considered for affiliation with the Regional Fair of the Region in which it exists. The request should be made before October 1 st . Affiliation decisions are at the discretion of the Regional Fair Director. If the Regional Fair agrees to affiliate the new fair, students of that home/cyber school group may advance to Regional only through that fair; no individual student from that group may try to advance to any Regional Fair by any other path -- attempts to bypass this rule may result in disqualification of the individual and revocation of the group's affiliation. |

REGIONAL FAIR

Students must exhibit at a school fair before being considered for a Regional Fair. Each Regional Fair has additional eligibility requirements; [contact your Regional Fair for details](#).

| TYPE OF SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDS | WHICH REGIONAL FAIR STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND |
|--|---|
| Public, private, charter, or magnet school, or an affiliated home/cyber group | A student who attends any of these schools may exhibit only in the Regional Fair in which the school is located. |
| Independent home or cyber school | Student may exhibit only in the Regional Fair of the region in which the student's legal place of residence is located. |
| Recognized home or cyber school group whose fair is officially affiliated with a Regional Fair | Student may exhibit only in the Regional Fair with which their group's school fair is officially affiliated. |

A note regarding teams: Per ISEF regulations, if a project involves a team, then the assigned Regional Fair of the designated Team Leader is the only Regional Fair in which the team may participate. A team member or leader who moves out of a region after a project is completed, or nearly completed, may exhibit at the Regional Fair with the team, provided they have not done a subsequent science project at the new school and entered the project into any level of science fair.

Teams in which a team member attends school out-of-state: 1) may be eligible for competition in a Regional Fair; contact the Regional Fair of the in-state team member for clarification; 2) may be eligible to compete at GSEF provided the Regional Fair has selected the team to advance, but may be ineligible for certain awards; and 3) must designate a student who attends school in-state as the Team Leader.

Students may compete in only one ISEF-affiliated fair, except when advancing to a State Fair from a Regional Fair in that state.