

Intel ISEF-Affiliated Fair Judging Tips - 2007 [10/2006 Hanes]

Judging at Your Fair

Every Intel ISEF affiliated fair has its own methodology for judging projects at their fair. We provide the following tips and judging criteria as suggested aids in your process. The following points may be of value to you and your judges as they go out to review and score projects.

Judges

Examine the quality of the finalist's work, and how well the finalist understands his or her project and area of study. The physical display is secondary to the student's knowledge of the subject. Look for evidence of laboratory, field or theoretical work, not just library research or gadgeteering.

Judges should keep in mind that competing in a science fair is not only a competition, but an educational and motivating experience for the students. The high point of the fair experience for most of the students is their judging interviews.

Students may have worked on a research project for more than one year. However, for the purpose of judging, ONLY research conducted within the current year is to be evaluated. Although previous work is important, it should not unduly impact the judging of this year's project.

As a general rule, judges represent professional authority to finalists. For this reason, judges should use an encouraging tone when asking questions, offering suggestions or giving constructive criticism. Judges should not criticize, treat lightly, or display boredom toward projects they personally consider unimportant. Always give credit to the finalist for completing a challenging task and/or for their success in previous competitions.

Compare projects only with those competing at this fair and not with projects seen in other competitions or scholastic events.

It is important in the evaluation of a project to determine how much guidance was provided to the student in the design and implementation of his or her research. When research is conducted in an industrial or institutional setting, the student should have documentation, most often the Intel ISEF Form 1C, that provides a forum for the mentor or supervisor to discuss the project. Judges should review this information in detail when evaluating research.

Please be discreet when discussing winners or making critical comments in elevators, restaurants, or elsewhere, as students or adult escorts might overhear. Results are confidential until announced at the awards ceremony.