**Instruction to Judges**

The attitudes and conduct of the judges determine the success of any Science Day activity. Therefore, it is vital that each judge understands thoroughly his or her duties and obligations. He or she should also have knowledge of all the requirements of the participants. All judges need to have a genuine interest in young people combined with a desire to offer encouragement and guidance in their efforts to pursue learning in the various fields of science.

- Students shall have an opportunity to present their project to two judges, one of whom (where possible) should be a K-12 teacher. This may be achieved as a team of judges or separately, with the scores averaged. Although judges should discuss the performance of the student, each judge shall score independently of the other judge and shall not reveal the scores to the other judge(s) or to the student. Only fair officials may inform the student of the scores or ratings after judging.
- Judges should introduce themselves upon approaching a student and attempt to establish a friendly rapport to help reduce the participant's tension.
- The student participant should first be asked to give his/her oral presentation of the project and then to answer questions about his/her work on the specific problem. It is also proper to ask questions within the discipline or subject matter involved at the student's level of learning.
- The participant should be put at ease, especially one who appears nervous during questioning. Judges should take an active part in the evaluation; silence may be interpreted as disinterest or boredom, which can have a very discouraging effect on the participant.
- Judges should feel free to question the participant on the materials and tools used, the methods of construction, terms used, the sources of information, and the amount and type of assistance enlisted in the preparation of the project.
- Judges are required to check through the abstract and research paper to determine their quality. A check of the references will assist in making a fair determination of the scope and depth of the literature research. The quantity and quality of the references should be taken into account to evaluate the student's research methodology.
- Judges should determine the span of sustained interest in the particular field of science, as well as the approximate amount of time spent in developing the project being evaluated. Some premium should be granted for considerably extended interest and effort to encourage this quality of persistence.
- Judges should note the number of subjects or specimens used. Is the number adequate to generalize to the larger group what the sample is intended to represent?
- Grade level of the student should be considered.
- Discussion and final scoring of the project should be at a considerable distance from the participant, since disclosure of scores is delayed until judging is completed. Do not hurry a judgment. Comments (1) indicating reasons for the rating and (2) making suggestions for improvement shall be written on the scorecard to be returned to the student after the event.

**Summary of Judging Ethics**

Judges shall:

- Have no prior involvement with project
- Adhere to Academy guidelines
- Avoid discussion of ratings with others prior to public release
- Listen carefully to student's complete presentation
- Be exceptionally courteous to all students
- Judge students against CRITERIA not against other students
- Consider age and grade level
- Evaluate theoretical and applied projects without bias toward either
- Provide written, constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement
- Not photograph students or projects during judging
- Seek written permission from students to photograph them
- Return judging cards to science day officials if (1) you know the student, (2) the project is out of your area of expertise or (3) there are language issues that impair communication

**Click here to view a sample judging card:** SD Judging Card

**Judges Registration and additional information will be available in January.**