



Central New Mexico Science and Engineering Research Challenge

PRIMARY JUDGE CATEGORY CHAIRPERSON'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Attend, or have a substitute attend, the abstract review meeting held several weeks before the SERC.**
- 2. After receiving the list of judges in your category, call the judges to remind them of the SERC and confirm they plan to make it.** Pass on any needed information about the location of your category's meeting room, the time of the first meeting, name change from Science and Engineering Fair to SERC, etc.
- 3. Help recruit additional judges as needed and as you can.**
- 4. Lead the opening meeting and the caucuses for your category.**
 - Welcome the judges and thank them for attending.
 - Explain the process, schedule, and required outcomes for what they will be doing today.
 - ✓ Describe the scoring process (the score cards provide guidance, but the caucus results provide the final ranking).
 - ✓ Remind the judges of the written judging guidelines (including science vs. engineering process; individual vs. team scoring).
 - ✓ Remind the judges of the importance of being positive and encouraging when dealing with the exhibitors.
 - ✓ Remind judges to be aware that students come varying cultural backgrounds and have different English language skills. Judge the science!
 - ✓ Some students may answer interview questions with information they learned from interviews with earlier judges. This is OK. Learning is good. Feel free to ask students where or how they learned certain facts.
 - ✓ Explain that safety and other considerations may prevent exhibitors from having a working apparatus at the SERC and that exhibitors should not be penalized for this in the scoring.
 - ✓ In multi-year or multi-phase projects, judge what is new this year. If in doubt, ask the student to explain what is new this year.
 - ✓ Students are allowed, and encouraged, to seek outside help and/or mentors. However, the help should be acknowledged in the report or elsewhere.
 - ✓ One of our goals is to have the exhibitors feel they had a positive experience and feel good about science and engineering.
- 5. Organize the judges' assignments to make sure all exhibitors will be interviewed by the required number of judges (usually three). If there are any no-show judges, this may involve redistributing their interview assignments. It may be necessary to move some judges between the senior and junior divisions, or even between categories, to compensate for the no-shows.**

6. Answer any questions the judges may have. Remember, there are usually new judges each year. Don't assume everyone knows what to do just because there are a lot of familiar faces who have done this a lot of years.
7. **As much as possible, be available on the floor during the interviewing period to answer any questions the judges may have and help them with logistics as needed.**
 - Check that the judges remember to initial the project judging cards after each interview.
 - Check that the judges are filling out their scorecards and getting them turned in as needed.
 - Try to talk with as many of the top contenders as possible.
8. **After the interviews are complete, lead/facilitate the caucus to determine first, second, third, honorable mentions, and trips to the state fair (as appropriate) for your category.**
 - If your category does not have separate chairs for the junior and senior divisions, appoint an experienced judge to lead the caucus you are not leading.
 - Let all judges have a fair say, but keep the caucus moving toward a timely conclusion. The schedule typically has 45 minutes or an hour allotted for this process. The results of this caucus are needed before the afternoon judging activities can begin.
 - After the caucus, provide the needed normalizing information to the scoring staff so the final computer scores will match the caucus results.
9. **Senior Division Chairs:**
 - Decide if the first, and perhaps second, place winners in your category are worthy for consideration for trips to the ISEF.
 - Attend the lunchtime judge chairs' meeting.
 - If you have projects to be considered for the ISEF trips, get them on the list.
 - Be prepared to give a short summary of the project(s) you put on the list. This is easier if you are able to talk with the top contenders during the morning session.
 - Participate in the afternoon judging session to interview the ISEF candidates.
 - Attend the caucus after the afternoon judging/interview session to help rank the top projects for the ISEF trips and other top prizes.
 - Help complete the final list of projects to advance to the state fair.
10. **Junior division chairs:**
 - Attend the lunchtime junior division chairs' meeting to organize for the afternoon judging session. The goal is to select the top physical sciences and the top life sciences projects in the junior division and a winner of the ingenious research award. If you cannot attend this meeting, find one of your judges who will substitute for you.
 - Participate in the afternoon judging session to interview the candidates for the top prizes.
 - Attend the caucus after the afternoon judging/interview session to help select the top prizewinners.
 - Meet informally with the senior division judge chair in your category to discuss and coordinate how many junior and senior division projects should go to state.

11. Provide feedback to Karen Kinsman (kkinsman@unm.edu), Erin Garcia (scifair@unm.edu), Len Duda (ledudanm@gmail.com), Robert DeBlassie (rdeblas@sandia.gov), or Dick Bild (rwbild@aol.com) on ways you think next year's competition could be improved.

SOME JUDGING MYTHS

Make sure your judges know these are MYTHS!

- **No project/exhibitor can get a high score unless the project “works” in the presence of the judge during the judging process.**
 - ✓ This myth is especially prevalent among some engineering category judges. Though it would be nice (and fun!) to see all the gadgets work at the fair, safety protocols often make it impossible for the exhibitor to have all the needed chemicals, pressurized gases, projectiles, flames, etc. present.
- **If a project was entered the wrong category, it cannot win a top prize in that category.**
 - ✓ It would be nice if all projects were always entered in the perfect category, but the real world does not work that way. All projects should be judged based on the judging criteria on the scorecards. The projects/exhibitors that do the best job of excelling in meeting the criteria should win the top awards.