



Middle School Science Fair Paperwork Reference Guide

This document is intended to provide guidance about the rules and documentation for science fair projects that aspire to compete at regional or state competition that may lead to a nomination and an opportunity to compete in this Middle School national competition. Some areas of research require pre-approval and knowing this up-front as students are generating their project idea will help in the successful planning, documentation, and implementation of the project.

Science Fair Paperwork

The requirements and documentation procedures may vary dependent on your fair , but knowing these general requirements are important:

- Some projects require Pre-Approval by a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and/or Institutional Review Board (IRB), including projects that use:

•Human Subjects (including the use of questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, interviews, testing of Inventions, Apps, prototypes)
[Human-Subjects](#) ([Human-Subjects-IRB-Rules](#), [Human-Subjects-IRB-Rules/human-participants/](#) for more information. Please see more about the IRB below, the IRB process.)

•Vertebrate Animals ([Vertebrate-Animals-IRB-Rules](#), [Vertebrate-Animals-IRB-Rules/vertebrate-animals/](#) for more information.)

•Biological Hazardous Materials (Biosafety) ([Biosafety](#), [Biosafety-IRB-Rules](#), [Biosafety-IRB-Rules/biosafety](#))



- Use the Rules wizard <https://ruleswizard.societyforscience.org/> to determine what forms & approvals are needed before starting a project.
- The Society accepts Regeneron ISEF forms and/or local science fair forms.

What is an Institutional Review Board, IRB?

An Institutional Review Board (IRB), is a committee that must evaluate the potential physical and/or psychological risk of research involving humans. This IRB is intended to be formed at the school level. An IRB must consist of a minimum of three members including the following:

- An educator
- A school administrator (preferably principal or vice principal)
- A medical or mental health professional. This person must be knowledgeable about and capable of evaluating the physical and/or psychological risk involved in a given study.

Visit <https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/international-rules/roles-and-responsibilities-of-students-and-adults/#IRB>