

March 27, 2026



2026

Project Materials Guidelines

In addition to required ISEF Forms (grades 6-12), **ALL students will be required to submit the following as part of the online registration:**

1. Abstract
2. Project Board Image

DEADLINES

March 3, 2026 ~ Student **ONLINE ENTRY DEADLINE** on [zFairs](#).

- ALL required ISEF Forms (includes Research Plan as part of Form 1B)
 - NEW for 2026 – ISEF forms can be filled out within zFairs and digital signatures can be requested via email, directly from zFairs
- Abstract
- PDF or clear photo/image of the project board
- Registration Fee - \$30/student

March 20, 2026

Deadline to respond to comments or requirements from the Scientific Review Committee.

Deadline for parent or guardian signature on student's OSU Media/Photo and Hold Harmless waiver (sent to parent or guardian via email).

Project Board (required)

Students will need BOTH a physical display board to present during in-person judging interviews AND a project board image. Project board images/files will be previewed by judges ahead of judging day which is very helpful for the judges and facilitates a more productive interview.

PHYSICAL PROJECT BOARD

The Physical Project Board is often created using a typical tri-fold board system with contents attached to the board, or a board designed in PowerPoint and then printed in large format is also common. Physical project boards are displayed for judging and the Open House period.

Important - Regardless of format used to create it, the physical project board must meet display requirements. See last two pages of this document for the Display & Safety Checklist which further details the guidelines and requirements for the board and what is/is not allowed on the display.

The board must be no more than 30" deep and 48" wide.

NEW FOR 2026 --- HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

The Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) has **lowered** the maximum allowed height for a project board. ISEF now requires projects to be no taller than 94 inches (240 centimeters).

Height is measured **from the floor to the top of the project**.

For OSSEF 2026, projects height maximums of either 94" OR 108" will be allowed. Students who aim to go to ISEF should prepare project boards that are no taller than 94". The lower height rule will be fully implemented at OSSEF in 2027, unless changes are issued by ISEF.

For any prohibited items listed on the Display & Safety Checklist that are integral to the project, we recommend documenting them with appropriate photos and/or videos that can be displayed and shown to the judges instead of on the board itself.

Project Boards should include the following sections (at a minimum):

- Header with project title and student name(s).
 - **NO OTHER personal info on board (i.e. school name, grade, etc.)**
- Project Summary (avoid using the word "Abstract" on the board)
- Rationale, Question/Purpose
- Hypothesis
- Materials and Methods
- Data (Graphs, Tables, Figures)
- Results
- Conclusions

Students may add additional sections as necessary to adequately explain their work.

Style and content guidelines for project boards:

- All photos, graphs, charts, drawings, cartoons, graphics, clip-art etc. must be properly cited.
- If any images are generated or created by student, then one statement on the board saying "All images/graphics created by student" is acceptable
- If any images or graphics are created by someone else (including AI), must properly cite source.

PROJECT BOARD IMAGE

ALL students will be **REQUIRED to upload a PDF or photograph of the student's physical display board during OSSEF registration.** The project should be clearly visible in the image; not blurry.

Upload the image as a PDF or image file to zFairs under the **file type "Project Board Image" during registration.**

Abstract (required)

Students will be **REQUIRED** to **COPY** and **PASTE** their **Abstract** into the registration form.

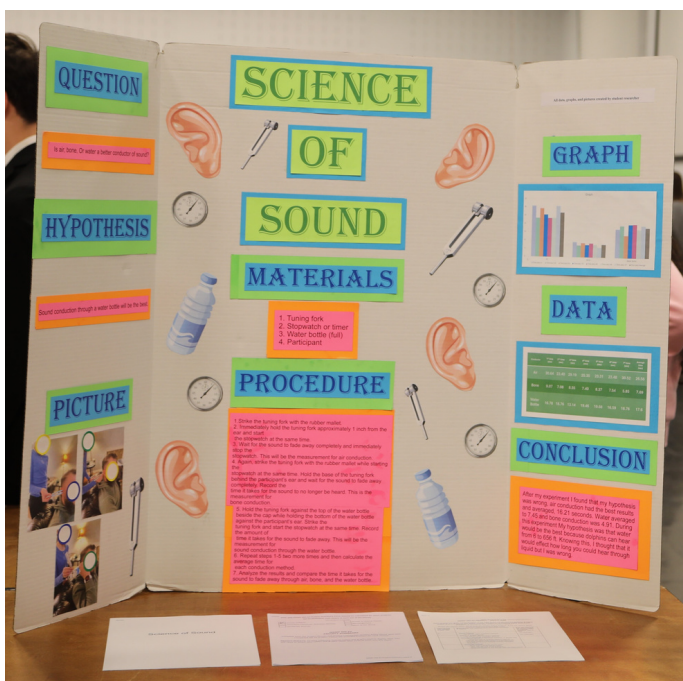
The Abstract pasted into the registration form should adhere to the following:

- NO MORE than 250 words. Must be written in the student's own words.
- Summary of the project that includes a brief discussion of the question/rationale, hypothesis, methods, and results.
- Should NOT include student names or project title.
- Should not be divided into sections. An abstract should be written in paragraph form using complete but concise sentences.
- Is written in 3rd person view

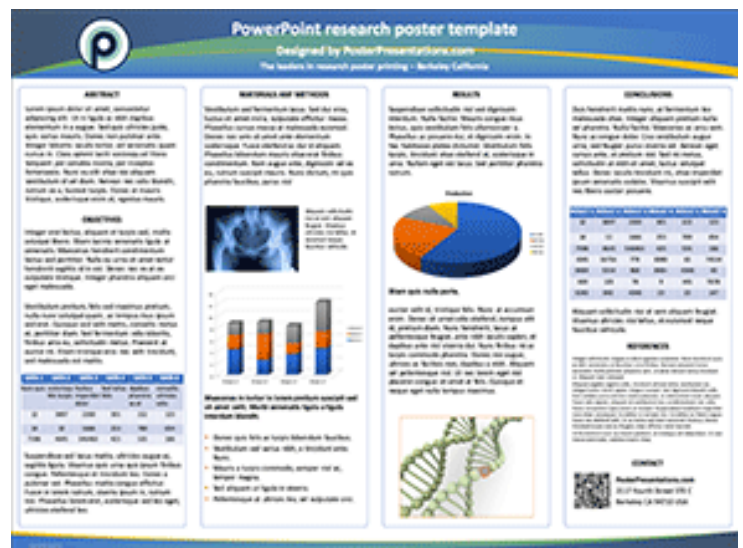
Tips on writing an abstract:

- Write a sentence making broad statements about the topic of research.
- Write the next sentence or two focusing more narrowly on the particular intent of the research.
- Write several sentences indicating the problem to be solved and the hypothesis/question posed.
- Write a very brief statement to describe the methodology employed.
- Write several concise statements indicating which variables were explored and compared and if the data obtained supported the hypothesis.
- These sentences summarize the results and discussion sections of the research paper.
- Write a sentence that gives the conclusion(s) of the research work and a statement of the direction for future research.
- Check if the number of words fit within the required word count.
- Review the abstract for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Examples - Project Board Images



Allowed: Photograph of physical display board



Allowed: PDF of computer-generated (often PowerPoint) poster or display.

Proper and Complete Credit for all Images, Graphs, Figures

ISEF has recently implemented more specific rules regarding how graphics, images, and figures are to be credited on student project displays. The below guidelines for OSSEF projects come from these ISEF expectations.

ALL graphics created by the student researcher(s) MUST BE properly cited individually (i.e. avoiding blanket statements of credit/citation).

Example statements to use for credit include:

- "Photo taken by student researcher"
- Image created by student researcher using [software or program name].
- Graph created by student researcher using [software or program name].
- Chart created by student researcher using [software or program name].
- Data Table created by student researcher.
- Logo created by student researcher.

ALL graphics NOT created by the student researcher(s) MUST BE properly cited individually. Avoid blanket statements of citation/credit.

If a graphic, icon, image, logo, etc. was obtained via the Internet, a URL or DOI (digital object identifier) should be provided. This expectation applies even if the license under which the graphic was obtained does not require credit or citation.

A citation must be provided alongside every graphic, image, table, icon, etc. or provided in a vertically displayed reference list and noted such that the citation can be matched to the corresponding graphic.

Examples - Properly Cited Graphics

Examples below are taken from the Regeneron ISEF D&S Graphic Credit Guidance document from 2025.

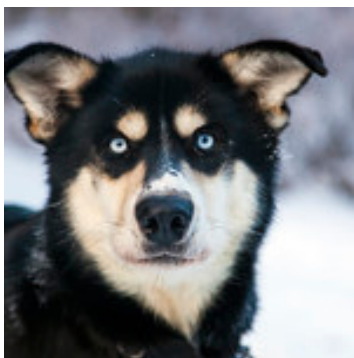


Figure 1: Lava the sled dog.
Note. From Lava [Photograph], by Denali National Park and Preserve, 2013, Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/denali-nps/8639280606/>). CC BY 2.0.

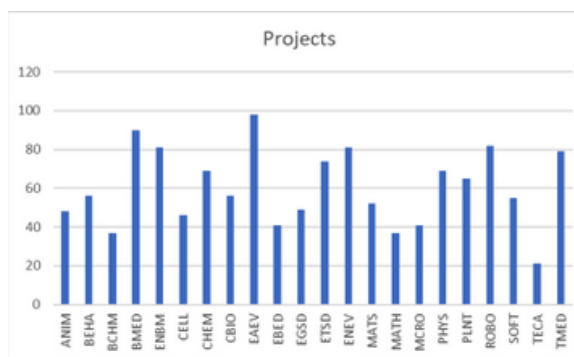


Figure 1: Number of projects per ISEF category.
Graph created by finalist, 2024.



Figure 1: Student Researcher Assembling Circuit
Image taken by finalist, 2024.

alternatively, as appropriate:

Figure 1: Student Researcher Building Circuit
Photo taken by student's teacher, Jane Smith, 2024.

PROJECT NUMBER:

OKLAHOMA STATE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR

DISPLAY & SAFETY REGULATIONS AND PROJECT SETUP APPROVAL

The below regulations must be followed by ALL Students. Knowledge of Display & Safety requirements is the responsibility of the Student Presenter and Adult Sponsor(s). Display & Safety Inspectors may require students to make revisions to conform to the regulations before being cleared for judging. Any questionable items or safety concerns identified during inspection require review by the Display & Safety Coordinator and/or OSSEF Director. The OSSEF Display and Safety Committee reserves the right to refuse display of items deemed potentially unsafe to the public.

Inspectors: Check each box on BOTH sides of this form after inspected and confirmed.

☐	The project display DOES NOT have any of the PROHIBITED ITEMS described on the other side of this form.
☐	School names, logos or sponsorships may NOT appear anywhere on the board.
☐	No materials such as published articles or other items intended for distribution to the judges/public.
☐	Display Dimensions and Construction: - The exhibit is within 30" deep; 48" wide; 108" from the floor to the top of project (or 78" from top of table). - The exhibit items and backboard are self-standing and stable. - All items on display board are attached securely. - All sharp edges on project are removed or protected. No tripping hazards are present.
☐	ALL images are PROPERLY cited. This includes all graphs, data tables, photos, clip art, and other images or graphics on the project display, including any generated by AI. IF the student took/created all the visuals on the board, one statement in a visible location on the board that states " <i>All visuals taken/created by Student/Researcher</i> " is acceptable. Citations can appear next to the visual or in a citation list with a notation for each visual.
☐	Display of photographs , other than that of the student, must have a photo release signed by the person(s) in the photo, and if under 18 years of age, also by the guardian(s) of the person(s) (release forms must be available upon request, but shall not be displayed) OR all faces are blacked out, covered, or otherwise obscured.
☐	All required ISEF forms for this project are on-site (not required to be displayed at the project table but if asked).

I certify that this project has been inspected and complies with all Display & Safety Requirements.

Display & Safety Inspector Team

Display & Safety Inspector Signature

Please note any changes made to and/or items removed from the display:

Student Acknowledgement: I hereby acknowledge that

1) I have been made aware of the display and safety requirements

2) I understand the initial inspection is complete, but a final inspection will be done before judging and regular checks are conducted throughout the Fair to ensure continued compliance. I understand that items may be removed from my display by OSSEF staff at any time and without my consent if they pose a safety risk.

Student Signature (or representative if student not present)

APPROVED PROJECTS WILL RECEIVE AN "OSSEF D&S APPROVED" STICKER THAT WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE BACK OF THE BOARD FOR EASY REVIEW.

This form will be kept by the D&S committee for recording purposes.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED ON EXHIBIT AT OSSEF

Photographs of these items are allowed as long as they are appropriate and not deemed offensive or inappropriate by Display & Safety inspectors.

☐	Food, liquids, plants, other living (or preserved) organisms.
☐	Human/animal parts or body fluids, including taxidermy.
☐	Sharp items, glass, pulleys, flying devices.
☐	Hazardous substances, their containers, waste, highly flammable or high temperature materials.
☐	Electrical devices with connected power (must be un-powered display only).
☐	Lasers other than Class 1, 2, 3A, or 3R lasers that are labeled as such by the manufacturer.
☐	Brand names, logos, copyrighted /trademarked images UNLESS integral to the project.
☐	Any apparatus or project material deemed unsafe by the Display & Safety Committee.

