

Regeneron ISEF 2026

Scientific Review Committee

Welcome

ISEF SRC 2026 Process
2027 International Rules
Q&A

Regeneron ISEF 2026

Scientific Review Committee

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Fair Statistics

- Total number of finalists: **1,727**
- Total number of projects: **1383**
- Number of affiliated fairs: **365**
- Number of countries, regions and territories: **67**

Regeneron ISEF 2026 Review Process

- SRC members and readers began the review in the beginning of February and concluded the process Monday.
 - Many emails sent to gather information, missing forms, etc.
 - We sent 43 Fail to Qualify notifications based on the documentation provided initially.
 - SRC had over 65 scheduled zoom interviews across several dates in April and onsite.
 - SRC had 24 projects that received red forms onsite.

Regeneron ISEF 2026 Review Process

1. The paperwork initially submitted to us is important.
 - a. Too often when a concern is raised is the first time we see documentation.
 - b. The more details in the research plan, the better.

2. It is important that we receive a response to emails and that students/fairs are looking for any correspondence.
 - a. Whitelist src@societyforscience.org if possible with your school.
 - b. We will be looking at alternative methods of communication – open to suggestions for ways that work.

Regeneron ISEF 2026 Final SRC Status

- 1383 Projects
 - 1338 Approved
 - 15 Failed to Qualify
 - 4 are guest exhibitors
 - 29 No Shows

Regeneron ISEF 2026

Final SRC Status

- **Failed to Qualify & Guests:**
 - Human Participant projects without appropriate IRB pre-review and approval
 - PHBA projects in the incorrect environment/
incorrect biosafety level
 - Individual vs. Team projects (converting midway)
 - Adding research not on the original research plan

Core Issues

- Lack of documented pre-approval, incomplete form 4s, and IRB conflict of interests.
- Work with PHBAs with inappropriate Biosafety Level conditions. (Even if the laboratory is a BSL-2 laboratory, if the student worked on an open bench, it does not meet the safety requirements.)
- Project plan does not accurately describe what the student actually did.
 - Human testing by the student researchers not clear
 - Overstating the work conducted by the student

Core issues

Other Areas of Confusion

- Parental permission – redacted informed consents are helpful (rather than a blank form)
- A team project cannot convert to an individual in the same year without a special SRC review.
- Many continuations not declared; if the study is informed by prior research in the same discipline then we err on asking for continuation paperwork.

Scientific Integrity Issues

Citations & Continuations

Our internal integrity checks found many issues with both citations and continuations:

- ~10% of projects had 2 or more citations that were found to be unverifiable
- ~40 requests for continuation paperwork were sent after review of prior project materials

Regeneron ISEF 2026 Educator Guide

On the Society website, we have posted a digital “Educator Guide” to support understanding of the International Rules.

- It is reflecting the 2025-2026 International Rules currently; will be updated this summer for 2026-2027
- Holding a symposia session at 1:00 pm to talk more about this Guide and to seek feedback on areas that need additional guidance or resources.

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2027 International Rules

Key Changes for 2027

Rules for All Projects, Documentation and Approval

1. Student researchers must have a Research Plan that includes:
 - a. Rationale
 - b. Research Question/Hypothesis(es), Engineering Goal(s), Expected
 - c. Outcomes
 - d. List of Materials
 - e. Procedures
 - f. Risk and Safety
 - g. Data Analysis
 - h. Bibliography

2026 International Rules

Human Participant Rules

Under Prohibited, #1 b. was edited to include #1 d.:

- Students are prohibited from **disclosing research data from their study and/or** from providing advice, diagnostic or medical information to participants ~~without direct supervision and involvement of a medical professional.~~

Under Rules, #2 and #6 were edited to clarify that written parental permission is required for minors.

2026 International Rules

Vertebrate Animal Rules

Under Prohibited Studies, #4 b. was added:

- b. For agricultural/aquacultural projects raised for food see “After Experimentation/Euthanasia” section.

2026 International Rules

Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents (PHBA) Rules

Under Prohibited Studies, #5 was edited to clarify the prion rule:

- All studies involving the use of prions or **commercially available** purified prion-like proteins are prohibited. This includes studies working with amyloid-beta (Ab), tau, alpha-synuclein, transactive response DNA-binding protein of 43kDa, amyloid fibrils, **and Huntingtin protein. Studies involving plasmids that contain genes encoding prion-like proteins are also prohibited.**

Under Rules, #8 was edited for clarity:

- Studies involving animal models that have been bred to express prion-like proteins, including but not limited to *C. elegans* and *Drosophila*, **are permissible in a BSL-1 laboratory, if the studies are behavioral only and do not involve lysing or dissection of cells or purification of proteins. Work involving the lysis of cells or cell lines and/or purification of prion-like proteins must be conducted in a BSL-2 laboratory, under BSL-2 conditions.**

2026 International Rules

Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents (PHBA) Rules

Under Prohibited Studies, #8 was edited:

- Students are prohibited from collecting water samples during a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB). Qualified personnel may collect the water samples and provide the student with the samples for testing. All water testing must be done in a BSL-2 lab, under BSL-2 conditions.

2026 International Rules

Tissue & Body Fluid Rules

Under Exempt Tissues, b. and d. were edited for clarity:

- b. Plant and **vertebrate ~~non-primate~~** BSL1 established cell lines and tissue culture collections (e.g., obtained from the American Type Culture Collection). The source and/or catalog number of the cultures must be identified in the Research Plan/~~Project Summary~~ and on ~~forms 6A and 6B~~ **Form 3**.
- **d. Collection and/or study without culturing of eggs, pasteurized milk or fresh/frozen meat and meat by-products obtained from food stores, restaurants, or packing houses. ~~and eggs or pasteurized milk~~**

2026 International Rules

Hazardous Chemicals, Activities or Devices Rules

Under CHEMICALS, #2 was edited.

- Projects involving chemicals that are listed as carcinogenic, teratogenic, or reproductive system damaging on the SDS must be conducted at an RRI or in a restricted access fume hood outside of the regular classroom (i.e. school lab). The qualified scientist and direct supervisor must have training in the usage, safe handling, and disposal of the chemicals.

Under DEA Controlled Substances, #2 was edited to remove marijuana, as it's federal designation changed.

- All studies using DEA Schedule 1 substances (~~including marijuana~~) must have the research protocol approved by DEA before research begins. Schedule 2, 3 and 4 substances do not require protocol approval by DEA.

2026 International Rules

Forms

- Student Support Disclosure Form (2A) – **NEW**
- Qualified Scientist Form (2B) – now 2B (instead of form 2)
 - Added question about scientist's role in student's research
- Regulated Research Institutional/Industrial Setting Form (2C) – Now 2C (instead of 1C)
 - Added question about scientist's duration of support
- Form 6B #1 was edited to add more tissue options
- Form headers were edited for clarity and consistency

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Questions & Answers

What questions do you have?

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Thank You!



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