



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the DC STEM Fair?

A: The DC STEM is the longest running student competition in the District of Columbia. The fair is consisting of an elementary (K-5) exhibition and a secondary (6-12) competition. The competition highlights and showcases the best and brightest STEM scholars in the district.

Q: Who is eligible to participate?

A: Any student enrolled in a DC public, charter, private, parochial, or DC-based educational program.

Q: Is there a difference between the exhibition and the competitive fair?

A: Students from grades K-5 will present their innovative STEM projects, with special awards being given to recognize their creativity and hard work. These young scientists, engineers, and mathematicians have put in tremendous effort and are eager to share their ideas and discoveries.

For our secondary level students, the stakes are even higher. These talented individuals are competing for top placements, with the chance to move forward and represent our community at International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). Their projects reflect a higher level of complexity and originality, and they have the opportunity to gain recognition on a global stage.

Q: Do I have to compete in a school fair to enter?

A: There is no pre-requisite to enter.

Q: How many projects can each school enter?

A: There is no limit on the number of projects a school or LEA can enter.

Q: How many students can work on a group project?

A: A group project should have no more than 4 members.

Please note: Each student is allowed only one entry into the fair, either as part of a group project or as an individual project.

Q: How will the projects be judged?

A: Secondary projects will be judged using the [ISEF Judging Rubric](#).

Student will undergo two rounds of judging: a virtual judging and an in-person day of judging.

Q: Is the fair in-person, virtual, or hybrid?

A: The fair will be held in person.

Q: Is the fair affiliated with any organizations?

A: Yes, OSSE is hosting the fair in partnership with the following organizations:

- Thermo Fisher
- Regeneron ISEF
- Naval Science Awards Program