

March 19-23, 2025

## Project Materials Guidelines

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In addition to required ISEF Forms (grades 6-12) or Elementary Forms (grades 4-5), **ALL students will be required to upload the following as part of the online registration:**

1. Profile Picture
2. Abstract
3. Virtual Project Board

Additionally, students *may* upload the following (not required):

1. Research Report

### DEADLINES

**February 10, 2025** ~ Student **ONLINE ENTRY DEADLINE** on [zFairs](#)

- Completed online registration including Profile Picture
- ALL required ISEF or Elementary Forms
- Abstract
- Media, Liability & Medical Release Form
- Registration Fee - \$30/student

**March 3, 2025**

**LAST DAY to upload Virtual Project Board, Research Report and/or update Abstract**

### Profile Picture (required)

Students will be **REQUIRED to upload a profile picture** as part of the online registration. This should be a current/recent photo taken from the chest up. There will be an area on the student registration where students may upload their photo.

Profile pictures will be used as part of the Virtual Project Showcase which replaces the in-person Open House previously held during Research Challenge. The Virtual Project Showcase will allow family, teachers, and the public to view student projects.

## Project Board (required)

**Students will need BOTH a physical display board to present during in-person judging interviews AND a virtual display board for the online project showcase.** There will be no in-person open house so the online project showcase allows family, friends, teachers, and other community members to view the projects. Additionally, the virtual boards will be previewed by judges ahead of judging day which is very helpful for the judges and facilitates a more productive interview.

### VIRTUAL PROJECT BOARD

ALL students will be **REQUIRED** to create a project board in PDF format and upload to zFairs.

**IMPORTANT:** A photo of the student's physical display board **IS NOT ACCEPTABLE** as the virtual project board required to be uploaded as part of registration. The virtual project board must meet the following requirements:

1. You can find virtual board templates and examples at this site:  
<https://www.posterpresentations.com/free-poster-templates.html>  
Once students have downloaded their preferred template, the file will open as a PowerPoint.
2. Students may use the personalized templates found on this site OR design their own template.
3. Students should create their board in PowerPoint or other design application and **MUST include (at a minimum) the following sections:**
  - a. Header with project title and student name(s). NO OTHER personal info on board (i.e. school, grade, etc.)
  - b. Abstract
  - c. Rationale, Question/Purpose
  - d. Hypothesis
  - e. Materials and Methods
  - f. Data
  - g. Results
  - h. Conclusions
4. Students may add additional sections as necessary to adequately explain their work.
5. Style and content guidelines:
  - a. All photos, graphs, charts, etc. must be properly cited. If created by student, then one statement on the board saying "All images/graphics created by student". If created by someone else (including AI), must properly cite source.
  - b. NO PHOTOS on board of any person other than student researcher(s).
  - c. NO QR codes or live links to other materials, videos, etc.
  - d. Use **12 pt OR LARGER standard font** (such as Times New Roman or Arial).
6. Once the board is complete, save as a PDF.
7. Upload the PDF to zFairs under the file type "Virtual Project Board" (students can upload during registration or return to their profile and upload before the project board upload deadline).

## PHYSICAL PROJECT BOARD

- Students must also prepare a physical project board to display during judging. This is the typical tri-fold “science fair” board or some other display board that meets the display requirements.
- The board must be no more than 30” deep; 48” wide; 96” from the floor to the top of project (or 66” from top of table). **NOTE: the 96” height requirement is NEW for 2025 (previously 108”)**
- **IMPORTANT:** 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.
- For any prohibited items listed on the Display & Safety Checklist, we recommend documenting them with appropriate photos and/or videos that can be displayed instead.

## 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.
- 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 sentences.

For more detailed instructions on writing abstracts please review this [presentation](#).

## Research Report (optional)

Students will have the option to upload a full report in support of their project board. The Research Report is not required but students may use it to provide further explanation of their project.

The Research Report will be viewable to the public as part of the virtual project showcase as well as during judging by both category and special awards judges.

We are not providing any guidelines for content and style of the research report with the following exceptions:

- Must be in PDF format.
- Must not include any QR codes or live links to other materials.
- Must not include any personal info other than student name(s).

Reports should be uploaded to zFairs under the file type “Research Report”.

*NOTE: a Research **Report** is different than the Research **Plan** that is required from all students as part of the required ISEF paperwork.*

# Virtual Project Showcase

An important part of Research Challenge is allowing students to share their work, not just with judges but also with their peers, families, and members of the public. We will be utilizing the **Virtual Project Showcase** to facilitate that purpose in place of our usual in-person Open House. Students should be sure to upload/complete all items so they have a completed profile to show off their hard work!

Below is an example of what each project profile will look like in the Showcase

The screenshot displays a 'Virtual Project Showcase' interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'sample' and a 'Category' dropdown menu. The main content area shows a project profile for 'Investigating Climate Change' by Sally Sample. The profile features a large central image of the student working with plastic bottles and a smaller profile picture of the student. Below the main image are three smaller thumbnails: a project board, a photo of the student, and a line graph. A red arrow points from a text box to the profile picture, and another red arrow points from a text box to the project board link. A third red arrow points from a text box to the project description.

Search sample

Category

Jeremiah

Finding the

W

JR-JCHEM-04

Sally S

Investigating Climate Chang

Junior Earth & Envi

ENVR-0625

### Investigating Climate Change

Sally Sample

**Profile Picture**

**Link will open PDF of Virtual Project Board**

**Abstract**

**PROJECT BOARD**

**Description**

For my project, I investigated climate change by adding different amounts of baking soda and vinegar, to simulate CO<sub>2</sub>, to plastic bottles and measuring the change in temperature for each bottle.

Junior Earth & Environmental Sciences

JR-JENVR-0625

# Central New Mexico STEM Research Challenge

## DISPLAY & SAFETY REGULATIONS AND PROJECT SET-UP APPROVAL FORM

The following regulations must be adhered to by ALL Exhibitors. **Knowledge of Display & Safety requirements is the responsibility of the Student Exhibitor and Adult Sponsor(s).** The Display & Safety Committee may require students to make revisions to conform to the regulations. Any questionable items or safety concerns identified during inspection require review by the Display & Safety Committee Chair(s) and/or Research Challenge staff.

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>The project display DOES NOT have any of the PROHIBITED ITEMS as described below and on the other side of this form. Inspectors: be sure to complete BOTH sides of this form!</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Exhibitor name CANNOT appear on front of display board</b> but can be displayed on back of board, notebooks, etc. Exhibitor's school, grade, or any personal information SHALL NOT be displayed on the front of display board, notebooks, or other display items.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Display Dimensions and Construction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The exhibit is within 30" deep; 48" wide; 96" from the floor to the top of project (or 66" from top of table). ALL project materials fit within the given dimensions.</li><li>• The exhibit items and backboard are self-standing and stable, or secured to table.</li><li>• All items on display board are attached securely.</li><li>• All sharp edges on project are removed or protected. No tripping hazards are present.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>ALL images are PROPERLY cited.</b> This includes all graphs, photos, and other images on the project display, including any generated by AI. <b>IF</b> the student took/created <b>all</b> the images, one statement in a visible location on the board that states " <i>all images taken/created by Exhibitor</i> " is acceptable.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Display of photographs</b> other than that of the student must have a photo release signed by the subject, and if under 18 years of age, also by the guardian of the subject (these forms must be available upon request, but shall not be displayed) <b>OR</b> all faces are blacked out, covered, or otherwise obscured.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>LAPTOP COMPUTERS</b> – if a laptop is a part of the display, student must provide a laptop lock and demonstrate that it can be securely locked to the table. Laptops with no lock will not be allowed to remain on display.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Display & Safety Inspector Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 have been given a copy of the Exhibit Hall Map and know the Emergency Exit Plan.
- 3) I understand the initial inspection is complete, but a final inspection will be done before judging and regular checks are conducted throughout the Challenge to ensure continued compliance. I further understand that items may be removed from my display by Research Challenge staff at any time and without my consent if they pose a safety risk. (*Removed items will be photographed and held for student to pick up during project removal.*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (or representative if student not present)

**PLEASE LEAVE THE SIGNED FORM SO IT IS VISIBLE ON YOUR DISPLAY TABLE.**

## ITEMS NOT ALLOWED ON EXHIBIT

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	Living organisms, including plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	Glass (including light/heat sources)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxidermy specimens or parts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preserved vertebrate or invertebrate animals
<input type="checkbox"/>	ALL chemicals including water. Absolutely no liquids can be utilized in the project display	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flames and highly flammable materials. Any materials that were previously flame or fire tested.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plant materials (living, dead, or preserved) that are in their raw, unprocessed, or non-manufactured state	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any apparatus with belts, pulleys, chains, or moving parts with tension or pinch points that are not appropriately shielded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human or animal food	<input type="checkbox"/>	3D Printers unless the power source is removed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human/animal parts or body fluids	<input type="checkbox"/>	Batteries with open-top cells or wet cells
<input type="checkbox"/>	Soil, sand, rock, cement, concrete, and/or waste samples, even if permanently encased in acrylic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inadequately insulated apparatus capable of producing dangerous temperatures
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sharp items (examples: syringes, needles, pipettes, knives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any display items that are deemed distracting (i.e. sounds, lights, odors, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Items that may have contained or been in contact with hazardous chemicals (Item <b>may</b> be permitted is professionally cleaned and documentation for such cleaning is available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	All hazardous substances or devices (examples: poisons, drugs, firearms, weapons, ammunition, reloading devices, grease/oil and sublimating solids such as dry ice)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Drones or any flight capable apparatus unless the propulsion power source is removed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brand names, logos, copyrighted /trademarked images <b>UNLESS</b> integral to the project
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs or any other heat generating light source	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any apparatus or project material deemed unsafe by the Display & Safety Committee

## ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS

Note: when student is not at exhibit, all electrical power must be disconnected or switched off.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical power supplied to the project is standard 120 Volt, AC single phase, 60 Hz.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Power strips/surge protectors and extension cords must be UL-listed, in good condition, and unmodified.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical devices must be protectively enclosed. Any enclosure must be non-combustible. All external non-current carrying metal parts must be grounded.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Energized wiring, switches, and metal parts must have adequate insulation. Over-current safety devices (ex: fuses) must be inaccessible to anyone other than the student.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exposed electrical equipment or metal that may be energized must be shielded with a non-conducting material or with a grounded metal box to prevent accidental contact
<input type="checkbox"/>	An insulating grommet is required at the point where any wire or cable enters any enclosure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No exposed live circuits over 36 volts are allowed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There must be an accessible, clearly visible on/off switch or other means of quickly disconnecting from power source.

## LASER/LASER POINTER REGULATIONS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Any Class 1, 2, 3A, or 3R lasers are allowed to be used RESPONSIBLY. No other lasers are allowed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laser beams may not pass through magnifying optics such as microscopes and telescopes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lasers must be labeled by the manufacturer so that power output can be inspected. Lasers without labels will NOT be permitted.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of handheld lasers is discouraged.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lasers will be confiscated with no warning if not used in a safe manner.