Abbreviated Rules for 2026

Alabama Science and Engineering Fair

1. Eligibility

- Open to students in grades 6–12.
- Projects must be selected through affiliated regional fairs.
- Each student may enter only one project, either individually or as part of a team (maximum of 3 members).

2. Research Rules

ASEF follows the **Regeneron ISEF International Rules** to ensure student safety, ethical research practices, and scientific integrity. Below are the key areas of compliance:

Human Participants

- **IRB Approval Required**: Any project involving human subjects (e.g., surveys, behavioral studies, medical testing) must be reviewed and approved by an **Institutional Review Board** (IRB) **before** experimentation begins.
- **Informed Consent**: Participants must be fully informed about the nature of the research, any potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time. All human participant studies involving minors (students under 18 years of age) must receive assent from the student participant and **written parental permission** from a legal guardian.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality**: Personal data must be anonymized or coded to protect participant identity. No identifying information should appear in the project display or report.

Vertebrate Animals

- **Humane Treatment**: Projects involving vertebrate animals (e.g., mice, fish, birds) must follow strict ethical guidelines to ensure humane care and minimize distress or pain.
- **SRC or IACUC Review**: All such projects must be reviewed and approved by a **Scientific Review Committee** (SRC) or an **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee** (IACUC) **before** starting. Students cannot work in an animal facility at a regulated research institutional unless they have been added to animal protocols before experimentation begins.
- **Prohibited Procedures**: No project may cause death, suffering, or significant harm to animals. Euthanasia is not allowed on vertebrate animals.

Hazardous Materials and Biological Agents

- **Safety Protocols**: Projects using chemicals, biological agents (e.g., bacteria, fungi), or potentially dangerous equipment must follow strict safety procedures.

- Any bacteria grown with unknown samples (e.g. swabbing a phone) must be sealed in a petri dish using parafilm, cannot be opened for any reason, including pictures, and must be disposed of properly.
- **Risk Assessment**: A detailed risk assessment must be completed, and appropriate safety measures (e.g., gloves, goggles, fume hoods) must be used.
- **Supervised Environments**: Experiments involving hazardous substances must be conducted in a regulated lab setting under qualified supervision with approval from a qualified scientist.

3. Forms & Approvals

- All students must complete the appropriate **ISEF forms** based on their project type and submit them on STEM Wizard.
- All students are required to do **Form 1, 1A, 1B, 3**
- **Depending on your project, you may need additional forms**

Form	When It's Needed
Form 1C	If research is done at a regulated institution (e.g., university lab)
Form 2	If a Qualified Scientist is involved in the project
Form 3	For projects involving hazardous chemicals, activities, or devices
Form 4	If human participants are involved
Form 5A/5B	For vertebrate animal studies (5A for home/school, 5B for institutions)
Form 6A/6B	For potentially hazardous biological agents or tissues
Form 7	If the project is a continuation of previous research

- Projects involving human/animal subjects or hazardous materials require **pre-approval** by an SRC or IRB.
- Forms must be submitted **before** any experimentation begins. Failure to get pre-approval will result in disqualification.

4. Display & Safety on Fair Day

- **Display Size Limits**: 30" deep × 48" wide × 108" high.
- **Prohibited Items**: No live organisms, open flames, sharp objects, or hazardous materials at the display.
- **Electricity**: No electrical outlets will be available for project demonstrations
- **Visuals**: All visuals must be appropriate and must not include personal identifying information (e.g., names, faces, addresses).
- **Poster**:
    - ALL graphics that are created by the Finalist MUST BE cited **individually** and include the program or software utilized to create the graphic using statements such as "Photo taken by Finalist," "Image created by Finalist using . . ."; Graph created by Finalist using . . ."; Chart created by Finalist using . . .";
    - ALL graphics not created by the finalist(s) MUST BE properly cited individually (APA format is preferred). If the graphic was obtained via the Internet, then a URL must be provided (digital object identifiers are acceptable in place of long URLs). **ALL AI use must be cited with prompts used**.