



# RSLSF RULES AND REGULATIONS 2026

*Please read these carefully.*

## **Sections:**

- A. General Fair Information (1-16)**
- B. Registration Requirements (17-19)**
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## **A. GENERAL FAIR INFORMATION (1-16)**

- 1) Students in Grades 7-12 under 21 years of age, attending school in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties are eligible.
- 2) All projects must have an Adult Supervisor familiar with the rules and regulations of the science fair. Please note: A qualified Scientific Supervisor is required for projects working with microorganisms. (see Safety #22)
- 3) The Science Fair Committee reserves the right to restrict entries to those that meet acceptable standards of merit in the respective categories. If there are more applicants than spaces available, schools may be restricted in the number of applicants they can send. Information for schools will be forwarded by email in a timely manner.
- 4) A project entered in a previous Rideau-St. Lawrence Science Fair is ineligible unless in the opinion of the Chief Judge, it has been significantly improved or modified. Documentation of the specific changes is required.
- 5) No more than 2 students may enter a joint project.
- 6) All projects must have a Logbook that records the process of the science fair project. The Logbook and the submitted summary will form part of the assessment of the project.
- 7) Exhibits must be designed and assembled by the students although advice may be obtained from any source. There is no limit to the equipment that may be bought or borrowed, but the exhibit will be evaluated only on the quality of the work done by the student. All assistance, references and any traditional Artificial Intelligence applications must be acknowledged. The use of any Generative Artificial Intelligence applications has specific requirements. [Click here for YSC Guidelines](#). Projects that are plagiarized or not sufficiently referenced may not be judged.
- 8) Projects may be a Discovery (Devise and carry out experiment), Innovation (Design and construct an application) or Study (Collect and analyze data) type.
- 9) Exhibits are divided into categories within each of 3 divisions.

### **(a) DIVISIONS:**

- Junior (Grades 7 & 8)
- Intermediate (Grades 9 & 10),
- Senior (Grades 11 &12)

(b) CATEGORIES: (Align with the Canada Wide Science Fair Challenges)

- **Agriculture, Fisheries and Food:** ensure food security, sustainability or competitiveness in agriculture, fisheries or food production.
- **Curiosity and Ingenuity:** improve our understanding or address a problem in an area of STEM not covered by the other challenges.
- **Digital Technology:** improve our quality of life or transform existing products and services through digital devices, methods or systems
- **Disease and Illness:** enhance our diagnosis, treatment or understanding of disease, or the management of physical or mental illness.
- **Energy:** improve our use of current energy sources, enable the transition to alternative energy sources, or reduce our energy footprint
- **Environment and Climate Change:** ensure the quality of water, air, soil or the diversity of living things, or manage the impact of climate change.
- **Health and Wellness:** prevent disease or promote physical, social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, occupational, or intellectual wellbeing.
- **Natural Resources:** ensure the sustainable management, use, reuse or recycling of Earth's finite or renewable natural resource.
- **Aerospace:** advance atmospheric or space science, aviation, or aerospace technologies, or enable humans to explore and live in space, on the Moon, or beyond.

- 10) If participation in a category is low, some categories may be combined. If there are too many entries in one category, it may be split. If in the opinion of the Chief Judge an entry has been placed in the wrong category, the exhibit will be moved to the appropriate one.
- 11) Registration must be completed by the deadline specified – **March 31, 2026**. There are no exceptions.
- 12) To be eligible, an exhibit must be set up by the date and time specified by the Science Fair Committee and must be left on display until the closing of the fair. While efforts will be made to prevent damage to the exhibits or injury to the participants or others, neither the Science Fair Committee, the sponsoring organization nor co-operating groups can assume liability for loss, damage, or injury.
- 13) The Science Fair Committee reserves the right not to award any prizes in any category or division, and the right to disqualify any exhibit for any infraction of the rules.
- 14) Judging will be based on the following criteria: scientific thought, originality, understanding, presentation, and aesthetics.
- 15) Contestants must be present during judging. If, in the opinion of the Chief Judge any exhibitor is causing any undue delay in judging, that exhibit will be disqualified.
- 16) Decisions of the Chief Judge are final.

**B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS (17-19)**

- 17) All registration documents are online.

18) To be eligible all the following items must be completed by **Tuesday, March 31, 2026**.

- (a) Submitting the online registration form
- (b) Uploading (or emailing) a signed release and declaration form. If a student is participating from a school, the release and declaration forms may be collected by the teacher and brought to the fair. Students applying individually must upload them online by the deadline.
- (c) Uploading (or emailing) a brief synopsis or summary of the project in pdf format.
- (d) Uploading (or emailing) all required safety and/or ethics forms.

Note: If documents are emailed, an email receipt will be sent. If entrants do not receive a receipt, they should follow up in a separate email before the deadline.

19) A \$10 fee per project must be presented in-person on fair day together with any signed ethics forms and release and declaration forms. Participants will not be allowed to participate without a signed release and declaration form. **Any winning entry proceeding to the CWSF involving the use of human participation or animals must have completed ethics forms.**

### **C. SAFETY AND ETHICS (20-23)**

20) USE OF ANIMALS

Experiments with vertebrates and cephalopods are strictly limited. If the project involves live animals, the regulations of the Youth Science Foundation must be followed. Check the [Ethics Forms – Use of Animals](#) carefully. Follow the [10 Principles for the use of Animals in Pre-College Education](#). Subsequently [A Research Plan for Animals](#) must be submitted before the project begins and the [Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research Approval Form](#) must be completed and uploaded online. **Any project without the requested forms will not be considered for promotion to the Canada Wide Science Fair.**

21) PROJECTS INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPATION

(a) If your project involves people completing surveys, questionnaires, or any type of activity, you must read and understand [Ethics guidelines for human participation](#), complete and upload all required forms. **Any project without the requested forms will not be considered for promotion to the Canada Wide Science Fair.** All these experiments require a [Letter of Information for Informed Consent](#) and [Participation of Humans in Research Low Risk Approval Form](#) to be completed. Some require a signed [Permission Form – Informed Consent](#) form. There are additional requirements for experiments with significant risk. Please check Ethics forms required carefully.

(b) Projects involving ingestion of food or drink, defined as consumption through eating or drinking, are considered Significant Risk when they involve:

- articles not manufactured, sold or represented as food or drink for human consumption
- foods that contain additives exceeding the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) normally associated with those foods
- foods not considered to be basic or everyday foods and for which health benefits are claimed.

(c) Projects involving ingestion of licensed Natural Health Products and Energy Drinks are not permitted at the Canada Wide Science Fair or similar YSC events. These products are identified by a Health Canada Natural Product Number NPN) or Exemption Number (EN) and are listed in the Health Canada Natural Health Product Database.

(d) Projects that involve the consumption of alcohol or cannabis are not permitted at the Canada Wide Science Fair or similar YSC events.

## 22) PROJECTS INVOLVING MICROORGANISMS

If you are planning to work with microorganisms, you must work with a qualified scientific supervisor. You must read [Microorganisms Safety 2020](#) and complete [RSLSF Safety Form R2 2020](#) located on the Safety Page. This must be sent to the registrar before beginning the project.

## 23) PROJECTS USING ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL DEVICES

Mechanical devices must meet minimum safety standards and electrical devices must meet the minimum standards of the Ontario Electrical Code. Please read the [safety guidelines](#) and check the [Safety Page](#). If you have any concerns, please contact the registrar before the date of the fair. Your concerns and questions will be forwarded to the RSLSF Safety Committee.

## D. DISPLAY AND LOGBOOK REQUIREMENTS (24-26)

### 24) DISPLAY SIZE

Oversize exhibits are not eligible. All exhibits including accessories must be confined to a table or floor space not to exceed 0.8 m (30 inches) front to back, 1.2 m (48 inches) side-to- side, and 3.5m (12 feet) from the floor. Outlets for water, steam, compressed air or gas will not be available. Electricity will be provided. Please bring your own extension cord.

### 25) DISPLAY SAFETY

**Dangerous chemicals, flames, or explosives must not be exhibited. Lasers may not be used at the fair. Micro-organisms, including fungi, cannot be displayed; only pictures are allowed at the fair.** Mechanical devices must meet minimum safety standards and electrical devices must meet the minimum standards of the Ontario Electrical Code. Safety defects, as determined by the Safety Inspector, must be corrected or the exhibit withdrawn.

### 26) LOGBOOK

A logbook must be kept during the process of the experiment. This is a journal of progress. Not all experiments/models (especially unsuccessful ones) will necessarily be included in the final presentation but should be included in a logbook that can be shared as required. This is a record of all the work that was done for the project. See [Logbook Requirements](#). This can be displayed as an electronic file, or in a physical binder. **Any winning entry proceeding to the Canada Wide Science Fair must have a Logbook.**