

Ways a STEM Fair Project Can Be Disqualified

Because CUSF is affiliated with the Intel ISEF, the rules and regulations used by CUSF must match those established for ISEF. Though they may seem pesky, these rules help ensure student safety and compliance with applicable international, federal and state laws.

I. The following is a list of things, based on the ISEF and CUSF rules that are not allowed. These *will* get the student STEM Fair project disqualified.

- Not growing microorganisms in a BSL 1 lab.
- Growing any microorganisms at home.
- Failing to complete and submit the required forms. Make sure that you have all the required signatures and be certain that your dates are correct. For example, if the student registration form says he/she started the project on November 1st, but you didn't get approval until November 15th, then we have a problem.
- Failing to get pre-approval if the project requires it.
- Do a project involving human subjects without getting pre-approval.
- Using children under eighteen without parent approval unless they are part of the family.
- Doing a project with hazardous chemicals, activities, or devices without a Designated Supervisor.
- A demonstration project. (If your project is simply showing how something works, it is probably a demonstration. Change it into an experiment by selecting and manipulating a variable.)
- Plagiarism, fabrication of data, or any other form of ethical misconduct.
- A project where a vertebrate animal has died.

II. No items can be displayed in front of the display board except the journal.

- The entire project display, including notebooks, pictures, gadgets, and papers, must fit within the required dimensions of 30" deep, 48" wide, and 108" tall (from floor to top).
- No living organisms, taxidermy specimens, preserved animals; human/animal body parts or body fluids are permitted on the display board
- No pictures showing vertebrate animals during laboratory procedures are allowed on the display board.
- **No food is permitted on the display board.**
- No raw plant materials, living, dead, or preserved are permitted on the display board.
- **No chemicals (including water), no hazardous substances or devices, highly flammable material, sharp items, or glass are allowed on the display board.**

Resolving problems with the project display is usually possible, but it is best to avoid violating any of the display and safety rules. Use pictures to show items not allowed on the project display board; it *will not* negatively affect the judging scores and it *will* make life much easier. The required items at the project in addition to the display board are a lab notebook. The student should bring their research report if they have one.