

What do you mean by virtual PRSEF? Students will use an internet connection to log in to the fair day platform to participate in the fair from their homes or from their schools depending upon the degree of remote learning being used by the school district at the time of the fair. No students or judges will be on-site at Carnegie Science Center for PRSEF. Judging will take place via video conferencing on Wednesday, March 24 and the Awards Ceremony will be livestreamed on Thursday, March 25.

Will there be interviews with judges? Yes. We plan to have the full complement of judges we have had in the past. Category judges and special awards judges (sponsor judges, scholarship judges, affiliated sponsor judges and ISEF judges) will conduct interviews on the day of the fair. Every student will have at least one interview with a group of category judges. Additional interviews will be scheduled based on interview requests from special awards judges.

When will the judge interviews take place? Interviews will be scheduled in 20-minute intervals between 8:30AM and 3PM on March 24. Students will have access to their fair day interview schedule before the fair. A few minutes before their scheduled interview, students should log in to the fair day platform and click on the video conferencing icon. They will be placed in the correct video conference room at the time their interview is scheduled to begin.

What will happen during the judge interview? As in the past, students will be given a minute or two to present their project to the judges. Judges will then ask questions and encourage the student to elaborate on interesting parts of their project. The video conferencing platform allows the use of both audio and video so judges and the student can see each other. Students are also encouraged to use presentation slides or a digital poster (as they would have used their tri-fold poster board at the in-person fair) to support them in their judge interview. These reference materials can be displayed to the judges using the share screen feature in the video conferencing platform or they can be uploaded before the day of the fair.

Do the students need to make a poster? The traditional tri-fold poster boards are not required or recommended this year. Instead, students will be required to submit a paper or set of presentation slides based on the templates available at www.PittsburghScienceFair.org. Please note the template for Senior Division (9th-12th grade) is different from the one for the Junior (6th grade) and Intermediate Divisions (7th and 8th grade). These materials must be uploaded to the fair day platform on or before March 15 so judges can prepare for their interviews. Students who wish to participate in the virtual project gallery must also submit a digital poster on or before March 15. Digital posters are not required for participation in the fair.

What will the students do while they are not being interviewed? Students will be able to enjoy additional programming including career conversations, interviews with STEM professionals, and engaging science videos when they are not presenting to judges. This programming will be live streamed on the day of the fair.

What is a fair day platform? The fair day platform is a computer application designed to assist with the execution of virtual science fairs. Students will be assigned a username and password which will be provided to the teachers before the fair. Students will use the fair day platform to upload files before the fair, view fair day content and participate in interviews with judges. The STEMisphere.org application you used to register for the fair and complete forms is **NOT** the fair day platform.

How do I get an interview with a special awards judge? The special awards judges will use the abstract books to select the projects they want to interview. Only students who submit an abstract before February 5 will be included in the abstract book and be eligible for special awards interviews. Additionally, students who wish to be considered for scholarship awards must complete the scholarship interest survey. The link to the scholarship survey will be provided to all Senior Division students and teachers by email in February.

Will there be a project gallery? Yes. The virtual project gallery will be an exhibition of student work organized by division, category and project ID. Rather than displaying a tri-fold poster board on a table at the fair as they have in the past, students will use digital posters in the virtual project gallery to share their work with other fair participants, family, and friends.

Participation in the virtual project gallery is voluntary – students will not be rewarded or penalized for their participation this part of the fair. Submissions to the virtual project gallery will not impact judging or the student's likelihood of winning an award in any way.

Students who wish to participate in the virtual project gallery must submit a digital poster in a single page PDF file on or before March 15. See www.PittsburghScienceFair.org for additional instructions.

What about ISEF? The Society for Science and Public has confirmed that ISEF 2021 will be held virtually. Students who wish to be considered for ISEF must submit a research paper and preliminary ISEF application to the fair director on or before February 26. See www.PittsburghScienceFair.org for an application form and instructions for the paper.