**Rules FAQ**

Frequently Asked Questions about Seton Science Fair Rules

* [Where do I turn in my research plan and other paperwork to get pre-approval for my project?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#WhereSend)
* [How do I determine the "Start Date" of my project?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#StartDate)
* [If I conduct my study in a location other than school or home, do I need a Form 1C?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#1CNeed)
* [How do I determine if a chemical is hazardous?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#HazDetermine)
* [How do I find out the biosafety level of an organism?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#BiosafetyLevel)
* [Should all studies using water or soil collected from the environment be categorized as involving potentially hazardous biological agents?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#HazAllwater)
* [How can I determine if my laboratory is a BSL 1 or BSL 2 laboratory?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#LabCertAgency)
* [Can I order organisms from a biological supply house and be assured that they will be a BSL1?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#OrderOrganisms)
* [What is a blood by-product?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#BloodBy)
* [When do I need to get written consent?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#InformedConsentWhen)
* [How do I get informed consent if I do a survey on the Internet?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#InternetConsent)
* [Can I use my farm animal in my science project?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#FarmAnimal)
* [What is meant by "invasive" procedures?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#Invasive)
* [I’d like to do a study using extracted teeth from a dentist office.  What forms do I need?](https://student.societyforscience.org/rules-faq#teeth)

**Where do I turn in my research plan and other paperwork to get pre-approval for my project?**

All science fair related paperwork is to be turned in to the science teacher supporting your project. For junior high school, paperwork is submitted to the 7th Grade science teacher. For high school, paperwork is submitted to the science department through your science teacher(Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Advanced Lab Science). Seton School has a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and an established Institutional Review Board(s) (IRB).

**How do I determine the "start date" of my project?**

The start date of your project is when you begin to collect data for your experiment. This cannot be before project approval from Seton’s Science Department. Your science teacher will confirm this approval for each project. The literature review and the design of your study will occur prior to your start date.

**If I conduct my study in a location other than a school or home, do I need a Form 1C?**

A Form 1C is required for experiments or equipment use on projects in research institutions, commercial or college laboratories, government or industrial settings (i.e. machine shop, manufacturing facility), and medical facilities. The form needs to be completed by the supervising scientist AFTER you have completed your work.

**How do I determine if a chemical is hazardous?**

Ask your supervising adult and consult the Material Safety and Data Sheet (MSDS) for the chemical(s) you plan to use. Some MSDS sheets (e.g. Flinn), rank the degree of hazard associated with a chemical. Generally a rating more than 1 should be considered hazardous. It is possible that two or more chemicals ranked 0 or 1 when mixed can react and form a hazardous chemical.

**How do I find out the Biosafety level of an organism?**

Visit the website for the American Biological Safety Association at [www.absa.org](http://www.absa.org/) or the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) at [www.atcc.org](http://www.atcc.org/)

**Should all studies using water or soil collected from the environment be categorized as one involving potentially hazardous biological agents?**

No. Even though water and soil could contain potentially pathogenic organisms, studies involving these samples are considered potentially hazardous only when the sample is cultured. The use of a coliform test kit to determine the presence of coliform bacteria does not categorize the project as one involving potentially hazardous biological agents.

**How can I determine if my laboratory is a BSL 1 or BSL 2 laboratory?**

Seton School Science Lab is a BSL 1 Lab. Any experimentation performed in other labs must be identified as BSL 1 or BSL 2.   
The criteria are available for ISEF affiliated fairs as self-assessment checklists for laboratories serving as sites for BSL 1 and BSL 2 studies.  These checklists are available on the ISEF website. 

**Can I order organisms from a biological supply house and be assured that they will be a BSL1?**

No - both BSL1 and BSL2 organisms are available from these supply houses.

**What is a blood by-product?**

Blood by-products result from the separation of blood and can include red blood cells, plasma, Factor 8, etc. These products must follow the rules of Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents (PHBA), as their handling and use can require special safety precautions.

**When do I need to get written consent?**

Seton School IRB, after reviewing your research plan, will decide if you need to get documentation of informed consent (for adults), assent (for minors) and parental permission, or if only verbal consent is required. If written consent/assent/parental permission is required, it is documented on Form 4. If written consent is not required, the subjects must still give verbal assent/consent before participating in the study.

**How do I get written informed consent if I do a survey on the internet?**

If the IRB determines if written informed consent or parental permission is required, then:  
a) If the participant is 18 years of age or older, the survey must contain a statement of informed consent that those taking the survey can read and check a consent given prior to continuing with the survey. This "check" can be considered documentation of informed consent.  
b) If the participant is under 18 years of age, the parent/legal guardian must give permission by signing and returning a informed consent form to you. An informed consent form is available with Form 4. 

**Could I use my farm animal in my science project?**

Yes, farm animals may be used at a "non-regulated [research] site", i.e., farm or ranch using only standard agricultural practices.

**What is meant by "invasive" procedures?**

This includes all procedures involving entry into a living body by an incision, and/or by insertion of instruments, tubes, probes, etc. Injections for the health of an animal, as directed by a veterinarian, as prescribed by a veterinarian are not considered invasive (e.g., insulin, vitamins).

**I’d like to do a study using extracted teeth from a dentist’s office.  What forms do I need?**

If the teeth have been sterilized and there are no identifiers (patient’s name, etc.), the teeth do not need to be treated as potentially hazardous biological agents.  However, if the teeth have not been sterilized the project requires prior SRC review and approval and treated as a BSL 2 study.  You will need forms 2, 6A and 6B.  If the teeth can be identified with a specific person, the research must also be reviewed and approved by an IRB and you will need forms 4 and documentation of informed consent.