SciFest@College 2026

Rules and Guidelines: Students

SciFest@College STEM fairs will take place in Dundalk Institute of Technology, ATU (Donegal, Galway and Sligo), SETU (Carlow and Waterford), TUS (Athlone, Limerick and Thurles), MTU (Cork and Kerry), TU Dublin (Grangegorman and Tallaght), DCU and St Mary's College, Derry between April and June 2026. Dates of SciFest@College STEM fairs are posted here as they become available.

Closing date for receipt of completed entry forms for SciFest@College 2026 is **Thursday 12 March 2026**. After you have submitted your entry form you should continue to work on your project until the day of the fair in your chosen venue.

How to Enter Your Project

1.   Log on to www.scifest.ie.

2.   On the SciFest@College menu click on Entry Forms.

3.   Follow the link to the online entry form; the entry form may also be accessed here.

4.   You do not need to complete the entry form in one go; you can save it and return to it later.

5.   To save the form click on the 'Save for later' button; you will be given a link to your form which you should bookmark or copy and save.

6.   All parts of the entry form must be completed; if you try to submit an incomplete entry form you will get an Alert message and the part of the form with missing information will be highlighted.

7.   When the form is complete click on the Submit button. Please have your form checked before you click on the Submit button; **once you click on the Submit button you will not be able to make any changes to your entry.**

8.   Everyone entering SciFest@College must sign a Participation Consent and Media Release form. If you are under 18 years of age your parent/guardian must also sign the form. Click here to download a copy of the form. Please return the completed form to your teacher.

9.   For information on how we use the personal data we collect from you as a participant in SciFest please see our privacy notice here. You can have your personal details deleted at any time by emailing info@scifest.ie.

Who Can Enter SciFest@College?

All second-level students, born after 1 May 2007 and attending school or being home-schooled in Ireland, including Northern Ireland, are eligible to enter. A student may enter only one project but a school may enter as many projects as they wish. Entries will be judged in the following categories:

Age Category:		Junior			Intermediate		Senior	
	RoI	1st Year	2nd Year		3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year
	NI	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14

Project Type:	Individual	Group (Max. 3 students per group)	

Project Category:	Physical Sciences	Life Sciences	Technology

Physical Sciences

This category includes projects in physics, chemistry, mathematics, meteorology, earth science, geophysics, space science, astronomy, computer science, engineering, etc.

Life Sciences

This category includes projects in botany, agriculture, forestry, horticulture, genetics, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, food science, environmental science, psychology, sociology, etc.

Technology

This category includes projects that directly apply scientific principles to solve a problem or improve an existing solution to a problem. Relevant areas include electronics, communications, aeronautics, chemical and electrical technologies, biotechnology, sound, robotics, etc. Projects in this category should normally include a working model or prototype.

If a project is entered in the wrong category the judges reserve the right to move the entry to the correct category.

NOTE

- A student <u>may not enter more than one project</u> in SciFest@College in a given year.

- A student <u>may not enter their project in more than one venue</u> in a given year.

- Each project must have a separate entry form

- Plagiarism is strictly prohibited – see <u>A Guide to Doing a SciFest Project</u>, p.18.

- Where a student carries out work in an institution other than their school and/or under the supervision of someone other than their teacher this must be acknowledged in the report book; the acknowledgement must include the name and contact details of the person providing the supervision and of the institution, if applicable.

- A student whose project has been accepted for exhibition and who subsequently finds that they are unable to exhibit their project should inform the organisers of their intention to withdraw as soon as possible but, in any event, <u>not later than two weeks before the date of the STEM fair in which they entered</u>. **Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the school's access to the competition being restricted in future years.**

What You Need to Bring with You on the Day of the STEM Fair

1. **Project Report Book**
2. **Visual Display**

For more information go to www.scifest.ie. On the Resources menu click on SciFest@College and then on How to write your Project Report Book and How to design your project poster.

NOTE:

➢ **The size of the display boards may vary depending on the venue; information on board size, etc. will be sent out by the relevant venue before the STEM fair**

➢ **Exhibitors are asked to refrain, where possible, from using brand names of firms/sponsors on their display board; reference to brands or firms should only appear in your Report Book**

Judging

➢ The judges' decision in all matters relating to the award of prizes will be final.

➢ The judges reserve the right to change the entry classification of a project where appropriate or to withhold awards in the event of projects not reaching a satisfactory standard.

➢ If a project has not adhered to all the rules and guidelines of this competition the judges have the right to withhold awards or exclude the project at any stage during the judging process.

➢ SciFest CLG reserves the right to rescind an award at any time subsequent to the making of the award if it is established that the project has not adhered to all the rules and guidelines of the competition.

Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition (YSTE)

Students awarded any of the prizes listed below in the StripeYSTE in 2026 or a previous YSTE **may not enter the same project in SciFest@College 2026**.

Main Awards	Category Winners
Young Scientist(s)	1st in Category
Best Individual or Group	2nd in Category
Runner-up Individual	3rd in Category
Runners-up Group	

Students who exhibited at the StripeYSTE 2026 or a previous YSTE but **who did not receive any of the awards listed above** are welcome to enter their project in SciFest@College 2026. However, such students are expected to have carried out **additional work on their project** before exhibiting it in SciFest.

Continuation Projects

SciFest encourages students to enter projects which are a continuation (continuation projects) of a previous SciFest entry. These projects must document that the additional research is an expansion of prior work (e.g. testing a new variable or new line of investigation, etc.). Increasing sample size and repeating previous experimentation with exactly the same methodology and research question are examples of unacceptable continuations.

Live Animals

As a general principle, studies involving live animals should not extend beyond observing the animals in their natural environment. Students whose projects involve studies of live animals must ensure that such studies are carried out in conformity with the statutory regulations. Please read Department of Education Circular: Use of live animals for scientific, educational or other purposes in schools. Guidance on acceptable practices can also be obtained here.

Health, Safety and Ethical Issues

Before a project involving potentially dangerous, pathogenic, toxigenic or allergenic organisms (animals/insects, plants or microorganisms) is undertaken a competent expert must be consulted to advise on health and safety issues. In general, normal laboratory rules and safety procedures must be observed at all times – see Safety in School Science, published by the Department of Education and Science in 2001, in particular, Chapter 3 of this document. The complete document may be downloaded from the Department of Education and Youth website here. Where projects involve human participants appropriate permission must be obtained and their wellbeing and privacy must be ensured.

Personal Belongings

SciFest will not accept responsibility for damage to, or loss of, projects or personal belongings. Exhibitors are advised to remove valuable equipment from unattended stands. Projects are the property of the exhibitors but project content and material may be used by SciFest for exhibition or publication.

Patents

If contestants have an entry that can be used commercially and for which they seek patents they should have it registered before the STEM fair. For more information on this please visit the Intellectual Property Office of Ireland website.

School Visits to SciFest STEM Fairs

The majority of SciFest@College venues are unable to accommodate school visits during SciFest STEM fairs so please check with the local organisers to avoid disappointment.

Supervision of Participating Students

Students are expected to attend talks and to participate in all activities organised for them on the day by the venue hosting the STEM fair.

Participating students must be accompanied by at least one teacher and <u>supervised at all times.</u>

Use of Photographs/Videos/Sound Recordings

By signing the Participation Consent and Media Release form students and parents/guardians grant to SciFest, or anyone authorised by SciFest, including SciFest partners and sponsors, the right to use any photograph/video/sound recording taken of the student while participating in, or in relation to their participation in, the SciFest programme. Such photographs/videos/sound recordings may include the name of the student, title of the project, prize information, name of school, etc., and may be used in print and online media, including on social media and the websites of SciFest, its partners and sponsors, and in related marketing materials, without media or use limitation. The photographs/videos/sound recordings remain the property of SciFest and will be stored as long as necessary to fulfil these purposes. SciFest is not obligated to use the photographs/videos/sound recordings in any way. Deletion of a photograph, video or sound recording may be requested by emailing info@scifest.ie with appropriate identification.

Publication of Awards

Details of award winners are published on the SciFest website after the event. Details include the title of the project, the name/s of the student/s, the name of their teacher and the school's name and address. It is a condition of participation in the programme that teachers and students/parents/guardians agree to the publication of these details.

Use of Project Material

SciFest retains the right to publish details of projects that have been exhibited in a SciFest STEM fair. This information may be used in print and online media, including social media and the websites of SciFest, its partners and sponsors. The information may also be used in related marketing materials, without media or use limitation.

Safety at a SciFest STEM Fair

- ❖ Live mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles or agar plates containing micro-organisms will not be allowed into the exhibition hall.

- ❖ Exhibitors will not be permitted to have dangerous equipment, explosive or irritant chemicals, naked flames or any pathogenic, toxigenic or allergenic organism (animals/insects, plants or micro-organisms) on their stand during the STEM fair.

- ❖ Exhibits must be safely designed and constructed.

- ❖ No sharp objects such as syringes or needles will be permitted in the exhibition hall.

- ❖ Exhibitors should behave responsibly and remain at their stands to speak to the judges and visitors.

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<u>Thursday 12 March 2026</u>