Science Talent Search - Frequently asked questions

Entering STS

How do I enter?
You need to obtain a copy of the current year’s handbook, read the instructions and guidelines carefully, then

• submit your entry online. Details for web entry are provided in the handbook and on the STS website.

I didn’t receive a handbook. Can you send me one?
Handbooks are mailed to all STAV individual members and subscriber schools during early February. Another book can be sent at a cost of $6.60. Alternatively, the handbook is available on the STAV website (www.stav.vic.edu.au: Student Activities/Science Talent Search)

Do I have to follow the yearly STS theme?
Do I have to do the set topics?
Each year there is a theme for the Science Talent Search, usually based on the National Science Week theme.

For Experimental Research, Games, Working Models and Inventions, Computer Programs – Games & Simulations, Science Photography and Video Productions you are encouraged to follow the year’s theme, however, if you wish you can choose your own theme and specific topic.

For Creative Writing and Posters – Scientific Wall Charts you must choose one of the set topics. The set topics are outlined in the current year's handbook and these are the ONLY topics that will be judged.

What happens if I don’t follow all of the guidelines?
You must follow all of the guidelines. No bursaries are awarded to students who do not follow the guidelines.

We know the project type and title but will be unable to provide the students names. Is it possible to enter with project type, age group, school and precinct and forward the names and project titles shortly after?
No, we must have student names and project titles at the time of entry. All details must be completed on the on-line entry form.

One of my students has changed the title of their project. Can you please alter your records?
We can, but you need to bear in mind that we get hundreds of these requests each year. We simply don’t have the resources to be continually altering the details you provided to us. If you MUST change a title, it’s best to do that by completing one of the Official Amendment forms enclosed in the Schools Packs. Phone calls to the office will almost certainly result in you being asked to put your request in writing.

One of my students has dropped out after entering. Can I get a refund?
No, the entry fee is to cover the costs of processing entries and general administration of the competition. It would cost us $6 to process your refund!

My child’s school is not willing to enter students this year. Can I enter my child as an independent entry?
No, you must have school support (volunteers for judging, etc). You will need to find a ‘supportive’ school and enter via there.

Can students work in pairs or groups?
Students can enter as “Individuals” or “Groups”. A group entry is 2 students. The maximum of two students cannot be exceeded under any circumstances.

The only exception is for the Class Research Project which is available to Lower Primary.

Can a student enter more than one project in the competition?
Yes, they can enter as many as they wish providing they are able to attend each appropriate judging venue, where necessary.

Can a student enter the same project in two different sections (eg. games & models)?
No, because they’re judged separately, often at different venues.

Can a student enter more than one project in the same section?
Yes.

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Does the size restriction on entries apply only to each individual entry or to the total size of a bulk school entry being couriered or posted?
It applies to each individual entry.

Can a year 4 student (Primary) enter a project in the Junior category, for example?
This is not encouraged because the student must compete against students much older & complete a project of higher conceptual level. It may be appropriate for high achievers; however, bear in mind that all projects are open-ended and allow students to extend themselves as much as they wish within their own age division. They can also submit more than one project in more than one section.

Judging and Presentation Day

I understand that I need to be a judge. The handbook mentions country judging but not the locations. Will there be a judging venue in my region?
All Special Judging Venues are located in Melbourne. Non-metropolitan entries can post their entries to STAV by the set date. Judges can nominate which Section they wish to judge. If you select posters/photography/videos/games/models/computers you will need to attend a Special Judging venue in Melbourne. If, however, you select Research or Creative Writing the projects will be sent to you to judge. So, if you don’t want to come to Melbourne you would be best to nominate one of these two categories.

My school only has one entry. Do we still have to provide a judge?
Yes you do. All schools entering must provide judges at the ratio of one judge to every 12 entries or part thereof.

We’re a metropolitan school. Can our judges be allocated to Creative Writing or Experimental Research so that they don’t need to attend Judging Day?
No, metropolitan schools are required to provide judges on the Special Judging Day. Only non-metropolitan schools can nominate Creative Writing or Experimental Research. The only exception is schools citing religious reasons.

I have to play in a final with my sporting team on Judging Day. Can I send my parents or a friend to submit my project on my behalf?
No, when you enter the competition you commit to the rules. One of the conditions for metropolitan students is that you attend Special Judging Day with your project, unless you have entered into Creative Writing or Experimental Research.

Our school is on the outer fringe of Melbourne. Are we classified as metropolitan or non-metropolitan for judging purposes?
Metropolitan is defined as within 100km radius of the GPO.

I can’t attend the Presentation Day ceremony and I won a Major Bursary. Can you please post my medallion?
No, special medallions are presented only to Major bursary winners who attend the Presentation Day ceremonies.

Why should I bother to volunteer to be a judge, or to come on to the STS committee? I’m already overworked.
All STS volunteers are “overworked”. However, without the support of generous volunteers, the competition will not run. End of story.

Why should I make the effort to ensure my bursary winning students write to their sponsor?
All prizes are funded by our sponsors. Sponsors like to feel that their money has been well spent. Showing appreciation in the form of a well written thank you note, or better still a personal thank you at Presentation Day encourages our sponsors to continue supporting the competition. This is direct feedback that reassures them that the competition promotes enjoyment of science.