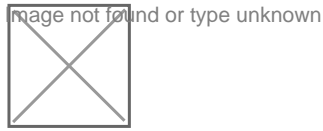


Q&A

Judging



Welcome to the official REC Foundation Question & Answer system for Judging. All registered teams can ask for official Judging interpretations and clarifications. This Q&A is the only source for official Judging clarifications, and the clarifications made here by the REC Foundation Competition Judging Committee (CJC) are considered as official and binding as the written [Guide to Judging](#).

- Please review the [Judging Q&A Usage Guidelines](#) before posting. This Q&A is only intended for specific Judging questions for the VEX IQ Challenge, VEX Robotics Competition, and VEX U Competition.
 - Please review the current season [Guide to Judging](#) before posting.
- For event, registration, or other competition support questions, please contact your REC Foundation Regional Support Manager.
- For questions related to game rules and interpretations, please navigate to the Official Game Q&A ([V5RC](#) / [IQ](#)) . Click the back button in your browser, then click the VEX Q&A Forum button.

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2037: Grace period for Guide to Judging Updates

17-Jun-2024

Hello, the new guide to judging states on page 3: "For events occurring up to seven (7) days after the release of a new version of the Guide to Judging, both the current version and the previous version of the Guide to Judging as well as printable judging materials are valid for use in qualifying events". Last season major changes were made mid season (such as the introduction of innovate forms), and it would be reasonable to assume major changes might happen this year. Will it be a requirement for Event Partners to contact teams with which GtJ the event will be using, or will teams know some other way?

Thanks in advance.

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

EPs should reach out to teams and let them know. That said, most Guide to Judging Updates after the August release are typically very minor changes, mainly integrating existing Q&As, so the impact on teams should be negligible.

2038: INDEPENDENT INQUIRY on the new Notebook Rubric

17-Jun-2024

Hello, there appears to be a contradiction in the INDEPENDENT INQUIRY section of the engineering notebook rubric.

The expert category contains the following statement "Notebook documents whether the implemented ideas have their origin with students on the team, or if students found inspiration elsewhere." This gives the impression that teams can still receive an expert rating even if they aren't using original ideas as long as they cite the source of their designs.

The proficient category contains the following statement "Team shows evidence of independent inquiry for some elements of their design process." This gives the impression that teams must be using original ideas on their robots in order to score points in this category.

Could some clarification behind this be given please?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

We will revisit clarifying this language in the August Guide to Judging Update.

To clarify, "Independent Inquiry" can include wholly original ideas that have their origin with the team. It can also mean teams taking ideas seen from outside the team, and adapting them for their own use.

The "Independent Inquiry" in the latter case would include having a rationale of why and how to implement that idea, as well as documenting an understanding how that idea and its implementation functions. This documentation demonstrates that the implementation of that idea is not beyond the skill level of the team.

Teams using an idea for a programming aspect or mechanism without demonstrating an understanding of how and why they work and should be implemented, could be viewed as the team using ideas originating outside the team that are not representative of the team's skill level / level of understanding, which can raise concerns about the student-centered nature of the implementation.

2039: Performance Metric Usage When Determining Excellence Award Winner

19-Jun-2024

Qualitative Judgement Judges are expected to apply qualitative judgment to award criteria when making final decisions on all Judged Awards. As such, a particular or overall score on a rubric is not an automatic disqualification for any Judged Award. For example, while completing the Engineering Notebook Rubric results in a quantitative score, Judges must still deliberate and apply qualitative judgement when ranking teams to determine the Design Award winner.

In the 2023-2024 Guide to Judging, the following is stated on page 19:

Excellence Award criteria, including performance metrics, are intended as a threshold for eligibility. Qualitative judgment on the part of judges is needed to discern an Excellence Award winner from among eligible candidates.

This verbiage does not seem to be in the 2024-2025 Guide to Judging.

During final deliberations, are judges allowed to use Qualification Rankings, Skills Challenge Rankings, and Autonomous Coding Skills Rankings as a way to aid judges in discerning an Excellence Award winner from among eligible candidates?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

During deliberations, Judges are allowed to use performance metrics, including scores, as one of the many factors that go into their qualitative judgement of final award winners.

How different factors are individually weighted relative to one another is something that is qualitative in nature and is a natural part of the deliberation process.

It is not the intent of the process outlined in the Guide to Judging for any score or metric to be an automatic deciding factor for any teams that meet award criteria. However, it is appropriate for that information, along with all other award criteria and factors, to be considered in the qualitative deliberation process.

2040: Restrictions on Award Ceremony Announcer

21-Jun-2024

Page 14, Guide to Judging:

JUDGE

- Conduct several tasks depending on the needs at the event, including:

[...]

- o Present awards to teams during the award ceremony

Page 15, Guide to Judging:

Once all awards are decided, the Judge Advisor takes them to the Event Partner and/or Tournament Manager Operator to be put into Tournament Manager.

From the list below, who is allowed to announce awards?

1. Judge Advisor
2. Judge
3. Event Partner/TM Operator
4. Referees and other volunteers

5. Someone who is attending the competition for the sole purpose of announcing awards

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

We have kept this open ended, as there are a number of different circumstances that are acceptable for announcing awards:

- Judges announce awards, as assigned by the Judge Advisor / agreed upon by individual judges.
- Judge Advisor announces all awards.
- Master of Ceremonies (Emcee) announces awards.
- Event Partner announces awards.
- Special guests or VIPs announce awards.
- Additional appropriate options for announcing awards that do not fall under the above categories.

This process is designed to be flexible to accommodate a myriad of different circumstances. Ultimately, this is a non-gameplay decision that would fall under the purview of the Event Partner under rule <T4> in the Game Manual.

2041: Is the Engineering Notebook Key Criterion for Think/Amaze/Build/Create a Blanket Criterion?

21-Jun-2024

Page 20 & 21, Guide to Judging:

The Engineering Notebook is consistent with the qualities demonstrated in the team interview and robot design.

If judges use this criterion as a way to eliminate a team from earning the Think Award, will this immediately remove them from contention from the Amaze, Build, and Create Awards?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

The goal of this criterion is to add a level of validation that the contents of the Engineering Notebook match the robot and programming code that a team has brought to an event. It is not enough that a team simply have submitted an Engineering Notebook - the Engineering Notebook should be a valid representation of the student work and be in alignment with the information presented during the Team Interview, the physical robot, and the programming code used at the competition.

While it should not be taken as an automatic disqualification from multiple awards, a team submitting an Engineering Notebook that is inconsistent with their interview and robot should raise concerns and be taken into consideration for awards which include this requirement as appropriate. Much of the extent of how this criteria may impact multiple awards is dependent on what content in the notebook is inconsistent, and the degree of inconsistency. For making this determination, the reasoning of the event's Judging staff will discern what is appropriate and inform qualitative judgements accordingly.

2042: Refusal to Take Photo

21-Jun-2024

Page 30, Guide to Judging:

Judges should consider taking a picture of each robot with the team number visible to help recall details about robot designs mentioned in their notes.

Participant Release Form:

Participant understands that photographs, videotapes, and other recordings will be made of participants at such Events, including the Participant.

Participant consents to those photographs, videotapes, and other recordings and the use thereof (i) as part of a record of the Event and (ii) in promotion of VEX, the REC Foundation and other Events. I further acknowledge that any works made by or for VEX ("Works") to be "works made for hire," under applicable copyright laws, and to the extent I have or may claim any rights in or to such Works, I hereby grant to VEX any and all such rights, including, without limitation, the right to use or sub-license these Works in any and all media, now known or later discovered or developed, and in all forms and for all purposes, including without limitation, advertising and other promotions for any VEX Events, without any further consideration due to me or any limitation whatsoever.

Scenario:

A Judge asks a team to take photos of their robot. The team respectfully declines.

1. Can judges remove them from consideration for certain awards because of this refusal?
2. If the answer to #1 is yes, are judges permitted to inform them that if they decline, it can potentially affect their chances of winning an award?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Refusing pictures of the robot to assist judges on deliberations should not trigger an automatic removal from Judged Awards, but is anomalous and certainly raises questions as to why they would refuse. That can certainly be taken into consideration by judges, along with all other appropriate factors normally taken into consideration by judges at an event.

Universally speaking, teams should not be told they have been removed from consideration from Judged Awards, or why they may not have won an award. This would be an internal judging decision at the event and as such would fall under the Confidentiality Principle in the Guide to Judging.

2045: Clarification on Notebook Rankings for Excellence and Design Award

25-Jun-2024

Page 17, Guide to Judging:

Key criteria of the Design Award are: • Be at or near the top of Engineering Notebook Rubric rankings with a Fully Developed Notebook. [...]

Page 18, Guide to Judging:

Key criteria of the Excellence Award are: • Be at or near the top of Engineering Notebook Rubric rankings with a Fully Developed Notebook. [...]

Page 27, Guide to Judging:

Fully Developed notebooks are scored and ranked using the Engineering Notebook Rubric. They may be initially ranked according to their rubric scores, then top notebooks can be reranked according to further qualitative evaluation by Judges.

Notebooks can:

1. Be at or near the top of rubric rankings with no qualitative input.
2. Be at or near the top of rubric rankings after judges use qualitative input.

For a Team to be nominated for the Excellence or Design Award, do they have to fit scenario 1 or scenario 2?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

From page 8 of the Guide to Judging, under "Judging Principles". Emphasis added in **bold**:

Qualitative Judgement - Judges are expected to apply qualitative judgment to award criteria when making final decisions on all Judged Awards. As such, a particular or overall score on a rubric is not an automatic disqualification for any Judged Award. For example, while completing the Engineering Notebook Rubric results in a quantitative score, **Judges must still deliberate and apply qualitative judgement when ranking teams to determine the Design Award winner.**

From Page 27 of the Guide to Judging, in the Important Note box. Emphasis added in **bold**:

The Engineering Notebook Rubric is a tool for initial team notebook evaluations through quantitative comparison. The final determination of all award candidates and winners is done through further qualitative deliberation among Judges based on award descriptions and criteria. **As such, a team earning a particular or overall score on a rubric is not an automatic disqualification or threshold for any judged award.**

The rubric is a tool for helping judges to narrow down candidates and for organizing notes for individual notebooks to assist in the later, qualitative deliberations. **Since the qualitative input from judges is used for the final rankings, this is what should be used when determining the final rankings of award candidates.**

2049: Asking A Team To Fix Notebook Viewing Permissions

27-Jun-2024

Page 36, Guide to Judging:

Digital Engineering Notebooks should be freely viewable by the judges by using the link. Teams should ensure that permissions to view their notebooks are set to allow the judges to view.

Scenario:

Notebooks are due 2 weeks before the competition date. A team submits a DEN with a link before the due date. After the due date passes, the judges discover that the notebook's permissions is set so that it does not allow judges to view it.

1. Is the Judge Advisor allowed to contact the Coach to let the team know that they should fix this?
2. If the answer to #1 is no, does the answer change if the discovery happens before the due date?
3. If the answer to #1 is no, does the answer change if the discovery happens during the day of the competition? The Judge Advisor would be able to speak directly to the students on the team.

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

It is the responsibility of the team to ensure that their Digital Engineering Notebook (DEN) is viewable by the Judging staff.

The Judge Advisor is not obligated to check links and alert team coaches (likely via the Event Partner, as the Judge Advisor does not have direct access to team contact info).

If the Judge Advisor does wish to check links and help teams avoid having a non-working link, they will need to do it for **all teams** to ensure that every team in the event is being given the same opportunities and treatment.

It is highly recommended that this checking take place before the deadline, but if the Judge Advisor does wish to do this after the deadline (perhaps for late submissions), then the same ethos of equitable equal treatment for all teams should still be applied. Note that a team updating or changing a link to their notebook in some ways could be seen as

nullifying the deadline, so this should be done with extreme care so as not to interrupt the stated judging policies and procedures for the event.

2055: The Impact of Alternative Methods For Organizing a Notebook

1-Jul-2024

Page 25, Guide to Judging:

ENGINEERING NOTEBOOKS SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

[...]

- Each page/entry chronologically dated and numbered, starting with the first team meeting

Page 26, Guide to Judging:

Teams may utilize different methods for organizing their Engineering Notebooks. For example, some notebooks may be organized purely chronologically, while others might be organized into subsections based on topic. Depending on the submission format, this may complicate the efforts of Judges to evaluate notebooks. Judges should make every effort to evaluate the contents of the notebook based on the Engineering Notebook Rubric, and not be unduly influenced by the organization methodology chosen by the team, particularly if the submission is not in the native format of the notebook.

There seems to be a discrepancy between the two quotations listed above. Page 25 seems to state that pages should be in chronological order, whereas page 26 seems to state that pages can be in whatever order Teams want. Can clarification be provided regarding alternative organization methods?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Engineering Notebook entries should be chronologically dated, but not necessarily chronologically ordered.

For example, if an Engineering Notebook is organized with different sections pertaining to different aspects of the robot design, within each section entries may be chronologically ordered, but the notebook as a whole would not be strictly chronological.

2063: Rapid Relay <G4cii>: Borrowed Loaders Participating in Judging

17-Jul-2024

Note: I originally presented this question in the [Rapid Relay Q&A](#), but was informed that it should be asked here as it relates to Judging, which is out of scope of that Q&A.

Rapid Relay Rule [<G4cii>](#) provides that if a team is unable to field a three-student drive team:

For a given event, they may substitute in a Student from another Team to be their Loader for the duration of the event. This Student may only serve as a Loader for one Team at a given event, and will effectively become a member of the new Team for that event.

Let's imagine that Team A has students A1 and A2 at an event and Team B has students B1, B2, B3, and B4 at the event. Team A requests Team B allow one of their Students to be a loader for the event and Student B4 does so.

Should student B4 still participate in Judging with Team B (since that is the team they've actively contributed to)? -- or --
Should Student B4 participate in Judging with Team A (even though they aren't normally a member of that team)? -- or --
Should Student B4 not participate in Judging at all at the event (since <G4cii> lists them as "effectively [] a member of

[Team A] for that Event" and <G4> more generally implies that the remaining members of Team B should be able to go through Judging successfully without Student B4)?

Does the answer change at all based on whether or not initial interviews were conducted remotely prior to the event (when, presumably, Student B4 would have participated with Team B)?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Students who are temporarily serving as a drive team member for another team at the event in accordance with game rule < G4 > were not a part of their temporary team's design process, and as such should not participate in their temporary team's in-person interview.

Students who are temporarily serving as a drive team member for another team at the event in accordance with rule < G4 > are permitted to participate in their original team's in-person interview, as they were a part of that team's build / design process.

2064: Are Award Ceremony Announcers Required to Use Award Scripts?

17-Jul-2024

Guide to Judging, Page 14:

Have the Tournament Manager operator print the award scripts to be used at the award ceremony.

Are award ceremony announcers required to use the Award Scripts? How much, if any, flexibility is allowed?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Award Ceremony announcers are not required to use the Award Scripts. However, these scripts are provided to ensure that award descriptions are communicated accurately. It should also be noted that what is communicated should also not break the confidentiality of what was discussed by judges.

2071: Award Precedence

26-Jul-2024

What is the precedence of the Judges Awards?

I was looking in the Guide to Judging document for the award precedence and it directed me to the Qualifying Criteria document but I could not find it in there.

I have a past document that I created showing it but I want to make sure that it is correct. Below is what I have.

Excellence Design Innovate Think Amaze Build Create Judges Inspire Energy Sportsmanship

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

The precedence of most Judged Awards are found in the [Qualifying Criteria](#). That information will vary from program to program, and will be conveyed in the charts that will be added August 1st to the [Qualifying Criteria](#).

For awards that do not appear in this list, please use the following precedence:

1. Judges Award

2. Inspire Award
3. Sportsmanship Award
4. Energy Award

2074: Potential Discrepancy in Judge Training Requirement for Worlds Qualifying Event

31-Jul-2024

Guide to Judging, Page 11:

JUDGE

- Highly encouraged (but not required) to have passed the Judge Advisor / Judge Training & Certification Course for local qualifying events. Event Partners and Judge Advisors should encourage all Judges to be certified for Event Region Championship or Signature Events.

Guide to Judging, Page 13:

JUDGE

[...]

- Complete the Judge Advisor / Judge Training & Certification Course (highly encouraged but not required for local events; required for events that qualify teams to the VEX Robotics World Championship).

Page 13 clearly states that the Judge Advisor / Judge Training & Certification Course is required for events that qualify teams to the VEX Robotics World Championship. Page 11 seems to imply that Judges are encouraged, but not required, to complete the course. Can clarification be provided about this potential contradiction?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Thank you for finding this discrepancy. In the August update to the Guide to Judging, we will correct this.

The correct verbiage in the Guide to Judging should be:

Judges at all events are highly encouraged (but not required) to have passed the Judge Advisor / Judge Training & Certification Course.

Regardless of the qualification level of the event, Judge Advisors are required to have passed the Judge Advisor / Judge Training & Certification Course. For judges, it is highly recommended but not a requirement.

8/14/24 Note: This is a change from how this Q&A was originally answered.

2075: Why Does the Judges Award Not Have The Phrase "Key Criteria"?

31-Jul-2024

Guide to Judging, Page 21:

JUDGES AWARD

The **Judges Award** recognizes attributes Judges felt were deserving of special recognition. The Judges Award is a required award if judging is being conducted at an event. Optionally, a second Judges Award may be presented at an event at the discretion of the Event Partner and Judge Advisor.

Criteria to consider for the Judges Award are:

- Team displays special attributes, exemplary effort, or perseverance at the event.
- Team stands out to Judge volunteers as being deserving of special recognition.
- Team Interview demonstrates effective communication skills, teamwork, professionalism, and a student-centered ethos.

Every award except the Judges Award labels their bullet points as "Key Criteria". Is there a reason why the Judges Award has it written out differently?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Yes, there is a reason; other awards have multiple criteria that must be met in order for a team to be eligible for the award. The Judges Award has a few different criteria for judges to look for that are independent of one another and not all required for a team to be eligible for the award.

2086: Innovate Award Key Criteria Clarification

5-Aug-2024

Guide to Judging, Page 19:

Key criteria of the Innovate Award are:

[...]

This design element, strategy, or other attribute is unique or uncommon among Innovate Award candidates at the event.

I believe this Key Criterion has 2 interpretations:

1. The submitted attribute is unique or uncommon among other attributes appearing on a valid Innovate Award Submission Information Form at this event.
2. The submitted attribute is unique or uncommon among other Teams that submitted a valid Innovate Award Submission Information Form at this event.

Which interpretation is correct?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Interpretation #1 is correct.

This verbiage will be modified in the upcoming Guide to Judging update to clarify:

This design element, strategy, or other attribute is unique or uncommon among Innovate Award submissions at the event.

2090: Innovate Award Submission Sheet Placement & Lack of Contents Page

7-Aug-2024

Hello! Hope you are having a great start to the season!

The guide to judging says the following about the Innovate Award

The team must indicate to Judges where this aspect can be found in their Engineering Notebook via the Innovate Award Submission Information Form, placed behind their table of contents.

and the note says the following:

Submissions for the Innovate Award must be done using the Innovate Award Submission Information Form. This should be included directly after the Engineering Notebook's table of contents.

To confirm, if a team does not place their Submission Information form behind the table of contents is the team still eligible for consideration for the Innovate Award? Is this a best practice or a requirement for eligibility?

Furthermore, if a team has no Table of Contents in their notebook, would they still be considered for the award if it is placed at the beginning of their book? Or would they be ineligible due to the lack of a contents page?

Cheers,

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Hello! Hope you are having a great start to the season!

Thank you! We hope you are having a great start to your season as well!

The next update of the Guide to Judging will change the verbiage to the following:

Submissions for the Innovate Award must be done using the Innovate Award Submission Information Form. This should be included immediately after the **cover page** of the team's Engineering Notebook. In the case of physical notebooks, this form can be printed out and placed in the notebook. For digital notebooks, this form can be scanned in and included.

The location of the Innovate Award Submission Form is a requirement. Using a single location for teams to place information, and where judges should look for that information, will help streamline the Innovate Award submission process.

2119: Supplemental materials

4-Sep-2024

On page 14 of the Guide to Judging, Judge Advisors are advised to "Confirm with the Event Partner that judging staff will have all appropriate and current judging materials and documents, including team lists and match sheets from the event's Tournament Manager operator. **These documents cannot be modified or replaced with unofficial versions.**" (bolding mine)

Is the supplementation of official documents with forms created by a JA allowable so long as such documents are used in conjunction with the original documents? Is there a point where supplementation is unacceptable? The following are examples of supplemental documents I've seen.

- A flowchart reminding judges of the steps to conducting the interview, questions that the judge team has agreed upon, how to conclude the interview, and which official forms to fill out after the interview.
- A rubric created by the JA for second interviews that lists the criteria for the specific award and place to score each criteria.

- A rubric created by a JA for second interviews with suggested questions for specific awards and a place to score each answer to those questions.
- A reference sheet breaking down the notebook rubric language, providing examples of what might constitute a minimal entry and what might be a fully developed entry, and listing some scoring considerations to use when differentiating teams.

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Is the supplementation of official documents with forms created by a JA allowable so long as such documents are used in conjunction with the original documents? Is there a point where supplementation is unacceptable?

We anticipate that some Judge Advisors will create supplementary documents specific for their events. In some cases, this makes sense and assists the judging process at the event. In other cases, these supplementary documents may fundamentally change how judging is conducted, which would not be permitted.

Let us examine your examples in order:

- A flowchart reminding judges of the steps to conducting the interview, questions that the judge team has agreed upon, how to conclude the interview, and which official forms to fill out after the interview.

This would be permitted, as it does not change how judging is conducted.

- A rubric created by the JA for second interviews that lists the criteria for the specific award and place to score each criteria.
- A rubric created by a JA for second interviews with suggested questions for specific awards and a place to score each answer to those questions.

These would not be permitted, as followup interviews are meant to be qualitative and not tied to any specific rubric scores. The use of such rubrics that are not public to teams also creates transparency issues - we do not permit the creation of rubrics beyond what is publicly available to teams in the Guide to Judging for this reason.

- A reference sheet breaking down the notebook rubric language, providing examples of what might constitute a minimal entry and what might be a fully developed entry, and listing some scoring considerations to use when differentiating teams.

This also would not be permitted. As described, this is functionally an additional rubric for the Engineering Notebook.

Speaking very broadly, the reason for the prohibition of custom rubrics and scoring documents is to help provide consistency in judging across events in our programs. Both volunteers and teams have the same official resources available to them. While the specifics of judging individual teams must not be made public, having all judging documents public provides a level of transparency for the judging process for all participants.

2123: Robot Modifications During Tournament

7-Sep-2024

If a team shows at inspection a robot that has 25in arms (both sides) to accomplish the "touch the field perimeter" rule during autonomous skills matches, but they totally remove those arms for driving skills and teamwork matches. Is that modification legal during the tournament?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

It appears you are looking for a game Q&A - this Q&A exists for answering questions solely related to Judging.

Please see these links for the game Q&A pages:

[V5RC High Stakes Q&A](#)

[VIQRC Rapid Relay Q&A](#)