

Indiana Academy of Science
Emerging Scientists Research Competition
(Graduate and Undergraduate Students, Fellows, Interns)

Description

The purpose of this competition is to encourage and stimulate the research interest of Indiana emerging scientists (graduate and undergraduate students, fellows, interns) in their area of scientific interest, to facilitate an opportunity for emerging scientists to receive feedback from senior scientists, and to provide an avenue for emerging scientists to communicate their science and its broader impact to the wider interdisciplinary scientific community. This competition also provides an opportunity for emerging scientists to network with other emerging scientists in Indiana and with senior Indiana scientists from industry and academia. The Emerging Scientists Research Competition is designed to offer a recognized venue that enables emerging scientists to experience the research world and share their research results with others (emerging scientists, scientist judges, science educators, and others), and compete for recognition. Finalists will compete, and the winners will be recognized at the Annual Academy Meeting of the Indiana Academy of Science.

Eligibility

There will be two components to the *Emerging Scientists Research Competition* – a poster competition and an oral competition. The competitions are open to members of the Indiana Academy of Science who are classified as *student members* at the time of initial submission (register for student membership at www.indianaacademyofscience.org). Each trainee may opt to compete in only one of the two competitions. Undergraduate investigators (inclusive of undergraduate students, undergraduate interns, individuals in post-bac academic programs that are preparing for application to professional or graduate school, and high school students involved in supervised research in industry or college/university laboratories at the time research was performed) are eligible *only for the poster competition*. Post-baccalaureate investigators (inclusive of industry and academic interns, graduate students, medical/health professional students, medical or postdoctoral fellows, and/or interns) may choose to compete in either the poster or the oral competition.

Poster Competition

Participants will submit their poster under one of two categories: (1) Baccalaureate investigator or (2) Postbaccalaureate investigator. A participant or team of participants (if the work is collaborative with others and/or is part of a larger group project) may submit only one entry. If submitted by a team, one author must serve as the presenter, representing all the authors, and thus will be the entrant in the competition. Entries will be grouped by scientific section. Related smaller sections will be combined for judging to ensure a roughly equal number of entrants in each judging group.

Oral Competition

Participants will submit their oral presentation abstract under one of two categories: (1) Baccalaureate investigator or (2) Postbaccalaureate investigator. A participant or team of participants (if the work is collaborative with others and/or is part of a larger group project) may submit only one entry. If submitted by a team, one author must serve as the presenter, representing all the authors, and thus will be the entrant in the competition. Entries will be selected for the oral competition by the chairs of each scientific session based upon scientific novelty, completeness of the project, and appeal to a broad scientific audience. Consideration will also be given to spread out entrants from different institutions when possible.

Submission

Each applicant will prepare and submit an electronic personal data application and abstract by the deadline, following general Annual Academy Meeting abstract submission guidelines. Those submitting an abstract for a competitive poster or oral presentation will indicate such when uploading their abstract. Abstracts will be reviewed by the scientific section chairs. Submitters whose abstracts are approved will present a physical copy of their poster in person at the 141st Annual Academy Meeting on March 21, 2026, J.W. Marriott Hotel in downtown Indianapolis.

Poster Competition

At the poster session, submitters will be asked to deliver a no more than 5-minute presentation of their poster content to at least two judges and should be prepared to answer on-site questions as requested by the judges and other viewers. Winners will be chosen based on summed scores assessing the scientific content, poster aesthetic, and presentation. A detailed scoring rubric and presentation instructions will be emailed to all competition participants and will be available on the IAS annual meeting website. A 1st place winner will be chosen in each participating section (a 2nd place winner will only be awarded in categories with 10 or more submissions).

Oral Competition

For the oral competition, presenters will be asked to deliver a no more than 12-minute talk followed by answering 3 minutes of questions from the audience/judges. All participants in the oral competition will present in a common interdisciplinary session. Due to limited space in this session, oral competition presentation competitors will be selected based on their abstracts by the *Emerging Scientists Competition* Committee following approval of abstracts by the appropriate section chair/vice chair. Participants whose abstracts are not selected for the competition will be notified and given the option to be slotted for a presentation in their regular section session, to switch to compete in the poster competition, or to do both. A detailed scoring rubric and presentation instructions will be emailed to all competition participants and will be available on the IAS annual meeting website. As we anticipate no more than eight competitors, one 1st place winner will be chosen from among all the oral competition presentations.

Awards for both the poster and oral competition winners will be presented in person at the close of the 141st Annual Academy Meeting.

Judging

Judging for both the poster and oral presentations will be done by a panel of Indiana senior scientists representing disciplines defined by each section/group of sections across the physical sciences, biological sciences, and science education. The judges will evaluate each poster or oral submission based on the quality of the work, the significance of the contribution, and the clarity of the presentation. (*Expenses related to participation in the competition, including travel, are the presenter's responsibility*). For posters, the presenting author of the poster or a designated team representative from the research team must present the poster for judging at the 141st Annual Academy Meeting.

*If membership, meeting registration, or travel-related costs are prohibitive, please do not hesitate to contact the Director of the Indiana Academy of Science, director@indianaacademyofscience.org

Criteria for evaluating Poster Presentations

Posters will be evaluated on the following criteria (see judging rubric for more details):

1. Quality and relevance of the poster.
2. Content and layout of the poster.
 - a. All posters must be presented on a 4' wide x 3' high display board.
 - b. The title, name of author, institution where the research took place.
 - c. Poster layout should be in logical order, including text and graphics that explain the objectives of the research and why the research is important; hypothesis/statement of the problem; methods and controls; results; conclusions and future research; and references and acknowledgements.
3. Presenters should demonstrate a good understanding of the study (background and significance, methods, results, conclusions, future directions) in their 5-minute presentation and respond effectively and clearly to questions.

Criteria for evaluating Oral Presentations

Oral presentations will be evaluated on the following criteria (see judging rubric for more details):

1. Quality and relevance of the project
2. Content and organization of the presentation.
 - a. Scientific content should be presented in a logical order, including text and graphics that explain the objectives of the research and why the research is important; hypothesis/statement of the problem; methods and controls; results; conclusions and future research; and references and acknowledgements.
3. Presentation style should be engaging and understandable to a broad scientific audience.
4. Presenters should demonstrate a good understanding of the study (background and significance, methods, results, conclusions, future directions) in their 12-minute presentation and response to questions in the 3-minute Q and A.

Selection Process and Prizes

Based on the provided rubrics, the judges will evaluate the posters and oral presentations and select the top winners(s) in each section (or group of related sections). The winner in each group will receive a monetary prize and recognition at the 141st Annual Academy Meeting. Second-place winners in each poster section will also receive a monetary prize and recognition at the 141st Annual Academy Meeting. (Note: 2nd place winners will only be awarded in poster categories with 10 or more submissions.)

Additional Information

For additional information, clarification, or answers to questions please submit your question online [here](#) or send an email to director@indianaacademyofscience.org and include the subject line: Emerging Scientist Research Competition.