

National Schools Geology Challenge 2017

Rules & Guidelines for Regional Heats & National Final

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A: Competition Rules

1. The “National Schools Geology Challenge” is a Geological Society event, with initial Regional Heats held in the Regions, and the Final held at Burlington House.
2. Regional Heats are organised by the Regional Groups, involving schools within their postcode areas only. One school must take on the role of ‘host’ for the Regional Heat – this should be arranged between the Regional Group and the schools. Heats are usually evening events and ideally should take place by the end of February. (This allows for planning of the Final, which is generally in late April).

Once a Regional Group decides that they will definitely take part in the Schools Challenge they should contact the Geological Society to confirm their participation and pass on the date when their Regional Heat will be held.

3. Some Regional Groups may decide not to take part; or a Regional Heat may be cancelled at short notice. This does not mean that schools in this Region are prevented from putting forward a team. If this situation arises the school(s) concerned can either:
 - Contact a neighbouring Regional Group and request that they are included in that local Heat
 - OR submit a poster on a theme decided by Burlington House, as a ‘Direct Entry’. In the event that more than one school from a Region that is not holding a Heat would like to take part in the Challenge, the Geological Society will decide which school team should progress to the National Final. Schools should contact the Geological Society to make a poster entry in this way; the rules described in **sections B & C will apply**.
4. Schools should only apply as a ‘Direct Entry’ **if no Regional Heat is being held** by their Regional Group. If a Regional Heat is taking place, schools must first compete in the heat before progressing to the Final. Regional Groups will be notified of all teams that apply via ‘Direct Entry’ to the Challenge.
5. A maximum of 6 students are allowed in a school team. However for teams that progress to the National Final, it should be noted that no more than 4 students can take part in the quiz round.
6. Regional Heats must include a poster and presentation round. However the inclusion of a quiz is optional (but is good practice for the Final!). The host school and Regional Group should agree the theme for posters and presentations. Once confirmed, this theme must be used for both the Regional Heats and the Final for teams in this Region.

Previous themes have included:

Most inspiring geological location in the UK; Our geological hero; How geologists can save the planet; Geological events that shape our world

We suggest that the Regional Group arranges a meeting with the host school before the Heat to discuss the theme and plan the evening.



7. Judges:
- At Regional Heats:**
Judges should be selected jointly by the Regional Group and the host school. Note that members of staff from schools taking part are not allowed to be judges!
- At the Final:**
A panel of judges selected from industry and academia will be appointed by the Geological Society to assess teams at the National Final.
8. The Regional Heats **AND** National Final will be split into 3 stages and marked as follows:
1. 5 minute presentation on chosen topic (see **section B**)
 - **50% of total score** (2 individual marks, each constituting 25%)
 2. Poster to display on chosen topic (see **section C**)
 - **25% of total score**
 3. Quiz (if used - this is optional for Regional Heats) (see **section D**)
 - **25% of total score**
9. **Presentation Scoring:** Each school must make a presentation using the same geologically-themed topic at both the Regional Heat and the Final. Presentations will be awarded **two** individual marks between one (low) and ten (high):
- 1st Mark:** Based on the content of the presentation
2nd Mark: Based on the delivery by the speakers
10. Schools that win in Regional Heats are permitted to make minor changes to their presentations for the Final, following advice they receive at this stage. However they cannot change their theme after the Regional competition.
11. **Poster Scoring:**
Posters will be allocated a mark between 1 (low) and 10 (high) by each judge based on the following criteria:
- How well the chosen topic is displayed as a poster.
 - The effectiveness of the use of colour, images and text in the poster.
 - Evidence of investigation and/or original thought in the poster.
 - The best poster overall.
12. **The winning school to be that with the highest overall score (percentage).**
13. Please let the Geological Society know the name of the school team, teacher in charge, and topic (title) that should be included in the programme for the Final by **Friday 3 March 2017**.

B: Presentation Rules

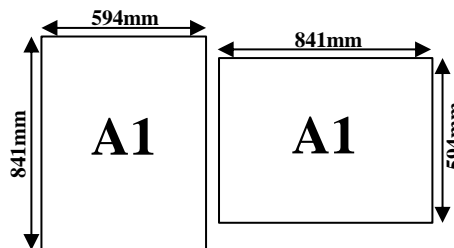
1. Presentations must be no longer than **6 minutes** (preferably only 5 minutes).
2. During a presentation, teams will be told when they have 1 minute remaining. Judges are entitled to deduct marks if a presentation exceeds 6 minutes.
3. All presentations must have a computer-based **slide-show** component.
4. Not all members of a group have to present the talk, but **at least 2** must do so.
5. A final slide with **key references** (minimum 2 and maximum 5) is required.
6. All presentations must include a **title page** and this must contain:
 1. The title of the project
 2. The name of the school of the students (and their logo if possible)

Presentation guidelines – tips for a successful presentation

1. Make the presentation **attractive!** Ensure it uses lots of colour and that it contains many clear images. Don't just use default themes – design your own.
2. Text should only be relatively brief; bullet points or numbered points are essential. Also ensure you are not just reading off the slides. The text in these only serves as a guide to the audience; you must expand on the text.
3. You can use any slideshow software to make the presentation but Microsoft Powerpoint is preferable for compatibility purposes. Also, if you are designing the presentation on a Macintosh computer, please test it on a Windows computer to ensure there are no compatibility problems such as moving text or images.
4. When including diagrams or graphs, make it really obvious what the audience should see. For example, use arrows or circles to pick out/highlight particular aspects of an image or diagram.
5. The time limit of 6 minutes is **strict**. It is highly recommended that your group **practice the presentation** and time it to ensure it falls safely within the 6 minutes.
6. It is further recommended that one member of the group operates the presentation (i.e. changes the slides).
7. Please remember that having too many slides can cause issues with timing. The audience should have time (at least 20 seconds) to view each slide.

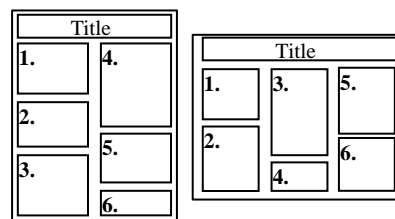
C: Poster Rules

- All posters should be **A1 size** (594 x 841mm) and can be landscape or portrait.
- Any font style can be used, as long as it is easily legible, but all main text on the poster must be **no smaller than size 14** (excluding references and image captions).
- Posters should include **at least 5 images or figures** (e.g. photographs, maps, diagrams, graphs etc.) and all must have figure captions (the text for these captions can be less than size 14).
- The **name** and/or logo of your school must be on the poster (text no smaller than size 14).
- All posters should include a **minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 key references** (the text for the references can be less than size 14). These should be written in a banner or in a dedicated text box at the bottom of the poster. There is no requirement to include references in the text, but it is completely acceptable to do so.
- An **abstract or summary** (no more than 250 words long) is required at the top of the poster. This gives a very brief overview of the content of the entire poster.
- If possible, ensure the poster is **saved as a PDF file**. We understand that printing A1 sheets can be expensive. Therefore we accept posters put together from 4xA3 sheets or as sections glued onto an A1-sized sheet. These do not have to be saved as a PDF file.



Poster Guidelines – tips for a successful poster

- Use lots of colour and images. Make sure the images are clear and relatively large if possible. In essence, **keep it professional but make it attractive!**
- Text should be not too brief. However, make sure to sometimes use things like bullet points to break up the text rather than just writing long paragraphs. Titles should be large and clear.
- Make the poster in Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Illustrator. Make sure you **define the size of the poster page prior to working on it**.
- When including things like diagrams or graphs, make it really obvious what someone viewing the poster should be seeing. For example, use arrows to pick out particular aspects of an image or diagram.
- Text should be broken up into numbered segments. **For example:**
 - Abstract/summary
 - Introduction
 - Geology of area studied
 - Importance of predicting earthquakes
 - Current research on prediction/Case study
 - Conclusions and/or implications





6. We don't advise making the entire background of your poster one single large image/photograph with text directly laid over it. This can cause two problems:
 1. the quality of the image usually suffers from being enlarged
 2. the text is not always very legible.

D: Quiz Rules

1. The quiz used for both the Regional Heats (optional) and the Final should be a pre-prepared PowerPoint presentation that is projected so that all teams can easily see it.
2. A 2017 quiz presentation (and answers) is available for those Regional Groups that wish to include it in their Heats. This can be emailed on request to the members of each Regional Group who are organising a Heat shortly before the date of the Heat. (See Section A, Rule 2 concerning passing on the date of a Regional Heat to the Geological Society).
3. Note that if the Geological Society quiz presentation is used, the style is that of a 'pub quiz' - ie teams record their answers on a sheet that is marked at the end. The quiz in the National Final will also be in this style.
4. The Judges should mark the quiz (teachers from competing schools not allowed).

E: Prizes for Regional Heats

1. Prizes may be awarded to the winners of the Regional Heats at the discretion of each Regional Group.
2. Please note the Geological Society policy on prizes: Each Regional Group can receive 3 free books as prizes for events of their choice in any one year, and can also buy up to 6 using Member discount in same year.
3. Using the allocation above, prize books can only be selected from the range of Geological Society of London (GSL) books (ie not those offered by other publishers such as Blackwells/Elsevier etc).
4. If a Regional Group chooses to award a different prize to the school team that wins their Regional Heat, this should be paid for by that Group using their annual funds.

F: Costs

1. Participation at Regional Heat level does not attract any funding from the Geological Society (prizes, venue/catering costs and travel claims (if applicable) are dealt with independently by each Regional Group).
2. However for teams that progress to the National Final the cost of travel may be claimed by each school party, after the Final. A maximum of £700 is available but please try to book train seats as far in advance as possible to reduce your claim. Please keep your receipts as evidence will be required!