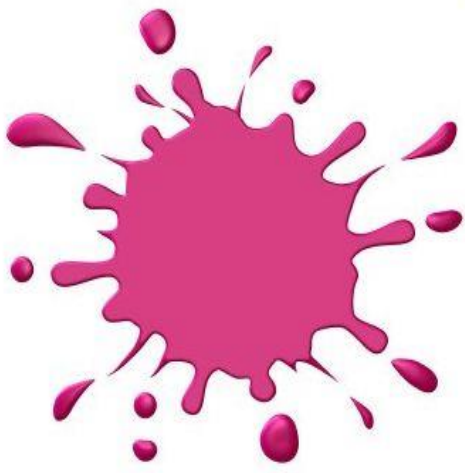




UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

Science Fair Guide



Contents

3: Getting started

4: Finance

5: Setting the date, time and venue

6: Media

7: Staffing

8-9: General stand information

10-11: Student and external stands

12: Judging and After the event

Getting started

There are many different ways to run a science fair and you should decide which way best suits your school, students and venue. You want each child to have a positive experience of working on the project and to feel a sense of accomplishment.

Questions to consider:

What is the name of your event?

What are your aims?

Will the students work on their science projects in school or at home with their parents?

If they will be designing it in class will it be during lessons or an after school club?

Will the student work in pairs/groups?

How many stands could you accommodate at your venue? This will determine how many projects you can accept

Will you be judging the projects?

Will you have other stands at the event?

What is your budget?

How many staff/volunteers will you need on the day of the event?

Finance

Aim to create a budget for the event as one of the first things you do as this will determine what you offer.

Things you may need to input into your budget:

- Printing –Project information sheets, visitor handouts, marking sheets, evaluation forms
- Promotion – Cost of creating flyers, media publications, external advertisers, freebies (balloons etc)
- Suppliers – do you need a marquee, additional cabling, tables, generators etc
- Presenters – Will you get any external suppliers to provide a show or a demonstration that need paying?
- Consumables – string, wet wipes, rubbish bags, hazard tape, tablecloths, resources to help students design their project stand
- Contingency – There's always something!

If you are looking to raise money you could consider charging for entry?

You could also provide a refreshment stand with food and drink and some chairs to sit down.

Would any local companies sponsor your event? You could offer them a stall or general promotion at the event. They may also be able to provide some prizes. Use the parents as good contacts for this or alternatively one of them might be happy to take this on and handle it all.

Are there any other sources you could try? For example charitable trusts, local community funds?

Setting the date, time and venue

Make sure you give yourself enough time to plan the event and be realistic about what you can achieve. Ideally you would be looking at 6-9 months.

Saturdays are always good if you are aiming for a community event that anyone can attend (this can also be used as a good advertisement for the school).

Investigate if there are any other events locally on that day to prevent losing any audience. Alternatively, you could link it to a larger local event or British Science Week, however, bear in mind that this may make it harder for you to book external companies.

Ensure you allow enough time for people to get to you and have a good look around. Doing it over lunchtime means you may be able to make more money on food.

Consider if you want an indoor or outdoor venue. If outside, factor in cost of marquees if necessary. Check with your insurers that you are covered to hold such an event on site.

It is nice to have someone opening the event to thank all the entrants for taking part and to tell everyone about what is happening during the day. Try and decide beforehand who will take responsibility for this.

Media

Who are you target audience? Will the event be open to all members of the public or just parents of the exhibitors?

Use your school website to promote the event and also consider the school newsletters, posters in the community and social media.

You may find it beneficial to create a media timeline with details of when and where you will advertise. You want to make sure you raise wide awareness but don't flood people with reminders.

Think about putting up posters in the local area with bold colourful print to catch the eye of the parents.

Encourage parents/staff to use twitter/Instagram to promote the event on the day as well.

Encourage parents to pass on the message.

Staffing

Consider first what you have to hand within your school. Your parents can be a huge source of help. You are likely to have parents from a range of STEM subjects who can either act as advisors/organising committee or host stands on the day.

Will you have school staff available to work out of hours? If not, consider asking parents to volunteer on the day. Give plenty of notice and chase nearer the time if you need more people.

Ensure all people helping know their roles and have a point of contact on the day for any queries. Consider creating a rota, ensuring that all helpers and staff get time to rest during the day.

Roles you may require:

- People to set up and take down. Allow at least an hour dependant on your stands
- Someone to guide students/organisations to their table to help them set up if necessary
- Have someone counting people in, this is useful data for evaluation
- Car park attendant
- Rubbish collectors
- People to direct visitors
- Staff to cover refreshment stand
- Media person – to take photos, although be aware of any students that do not agree to this. Have a sign up at the venue stating that you may take photos or videos and to let you know if you do not wish to be on camera.

Remember to thank everyone at the end!!

General Stand Information

It is helpful to create a floorplan of the space available to determine the number of stands you can accept. We suggest you measure your space and do a to-scale plan on a piece of paper. Allow a 6ft x 2 ft table per stall but do check requirements in advance as some may need more space and some may need no tables. Ten stalls can make a good science fair, more if you have space and time. Remember some may have to drop out close to the event so it may be wise to book an extra couple but make sure you can accommodate everyone if they all do turn up.

Always ensure the fire exits are not blocked in any way.

Remember to ask stall holders if they need access to power, water etc so you can plan where to put them. Make sure you have enough extension cables and consider whether outside cable needs protected (e.g if driven over). Make sure inside cable is stuck down to the floor to avoid trip hazards. Additionally ensure there is enough power available if it is an outside venue and whether you will need to consider getting a generator.

If you have anything 'gory' (like pig heart and lungs/eyeballs for example) – consider having this say in a corner with warning sign in advance (children often love this! And it gives squeamish children and adults a chance to look away)

If stalls use table cloths, remember small children may pull or trip on them. Consider attaching them to the table legs to remove any 'flapping' bits.

Have you completed a risk assessment? Ask each stall holder to risk assess their stall and send it to you in advance. You may want to seek advice from a local scientist in assessing these.

Do you have sufficient first aid provision?

If there is anything where hands may get contaminated, provide access to hand washing facilities near this stand or at least antibacterial hand gel.

Any stands that use water consider a piece of taped down carpet underneath to catch any spills.

Consider stringing off/taping off any corridors you are not using so as people have less space to get lost in (bear in mind fire exits).



Student stands

We have two separate documents with lots of guidance about helping the students produce a project. One of them is for a teacher led project and another for a parent and child led project. The only thing that we ask in return is for some information regarding how many projects were eventually completed and whether it was teacher or parent led. Please let us know if you would like a copy of any of these.

External stands

If you are hoping to have stands from external companies/individuals ensure you contact them well in advance. These could be your local University, local council, parents with STEM backgrounds or your local secondary school.

Consider professional bodies that support STEM subjects as a source of linking you with outreach STEM ambassadors.

Consider approaching local STEM companies to see if they have a public engagement/outreach team who may have a stall that they could bring.

Ensure all stand providers consider the age of the attendees and that it is age appropriate.

Have stands that are interactive - children love to get 'stuck in' to an activity – even if it is as simple as looking down a microscope or looking at (touching with gloved hands) some pigs lungs!

Consider having freebies such as things to colour in, stickers (which you can make with labels), quizzes. You can often find these online. If you can get balloons from organisations/companies these are also often welcomed.

You could also consider a presentation/show. Use the internet to find local companies that provide science demonstrations but be aware this will add an additional cost.

Create a list of stall holders with email contact, whether they have returned their risk assessment, power and water requirements.

Although you will not be leaving children alone with stall holders, clarify any DBS requirements your school may have ahead of time.

Create a guide for presenters giving them info such as where to park, what time to arrive, what is expected, info about claiming costs (or not), your photograph policy, a map of the school if necessary.



Judging

You may or may not decide to mark the stands and have a winner. If you decide to include marking then plan ahead who will be doing the judging. An independent person within a STEM background is ideal. You will need a briefing document for them to guide them on their scoring/judging. Tell them what the aims of the competition were and how the entrants were briefed. Make sure the competition guidance and judging guide takes into account the range of ages of your children who will enter.

Think about producing certificates for all the project participants so they all feel valued even if they didn't win.

Announcing winners at the end is a good way to ensure you have a crowd of attendees at the latter end of the event. This is also your opportunity to thank everyone for taking part in doing the projects and helping on the day.

After the event

It is always a good idea to evaluate the event after to decide if it has fulfilled its aim and goals that were set at the beginning as well as whether it is financially viable to do again.

This is also a good opportunity to see if the skills gained by doing the project have helped the student's knowledge of STEM and hopefully inspired them.

Send thank you letters to companies that were involved.