



RECF Robotics Competitions

Guide to Judging

2026-2027

Version 1.0

September 2, 2026

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Prefix

Welcome and Thank You

Welcome to the Robotics Education & Competition Foundation (RECF) Robotics Competitions!

RECF robotics programs provide a fun environment where creativity, teamwork, and innovation can thrive in the face of new challenges. Throughout the competition season, students will unlock their potential in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts, math and computer science.

RECF competitions get students excited about STEAM through hands-on learning, documentation, and competition. Students are at the center of everything we do, and they are encouraged to take ownership of their ideas while working collaboratively with teammates and solving real world problems.

As a volunteer judge or judge advisor, you have a unique opportunity to hear directly from the students about the successes and challenges they've experienced while they work with their teammates to solve a game's challenges.

Thank you for joining our community, and for sharing your time and skills!

About the RECF

The Robotics Education & Competition Foundation is a registered US 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that exists to spark interest in science, technology, engineering and math by engaging students in hands-on, sustainable, and affordable curriculum-based robotics programs.

Our global mission is to provide every educator with competition, education, and workforce readiness programs to increase student engagement in science, technology, engineering, math, and computer science. We see a future where every student designs and innovates as part of a team, overcomes failure, perseveres, and emerges confident in their ability to meet global challenges.

As a company, we embrace the core values of passion, integrity, and excellence, which we try to embody in everything we do.

Revision History

RECF may release updated versions of the document on the third Monday in the months of December and April, and unscheduled updates may occur as needed. For events occurring up to seven (7) days after the release of a new version, both the current version and the previous version are valid for use in qualifying events. Events occurring after those dates must use the most up-to-date judging materials and verbiage found in the current version.

Answers in the official judging Q&A system are effective immediately unless stated otherwise in the answer.

Version 1.0 - September 2, 2026

- Initial release
- 2.11 - Added “Judging Feedback and Confidentiality” section explaining more about judging feedback policies, and highlighting strategies teams can use to practice and improve notebooking and interview skills
- 5.5 - Increased guidance for judge collaboration in engineering notebook evaluations
- Appendix A - New judging format for RECF Inspire to align with other collegiate activities
- Judging Resources - Excellence award performance criteria changed from 40% to 50%
- Judging Resources - Added “3D Printing & Fabrication Award” and “Team Spirit Award” to the optional volunteer-nominated award category
- Judging Resources - “Team Interview Rubric” has been changed to “Design & Innovate Award Rubric” with new usage guidance
- Engineering Notebook Rubric and Design & Innovate Award Rubric reformatted for clarity and ease of use
- Coach/Student rubric guides created as learning tools for teams
- Overall guide edited and reformatted for clarity and usability

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Section 1: Introduction to Judging

1.1 Judging: Purpose and Mission Statement

Judging is an important part of Robotics Education & Competition Foundation (RECF) events. At events, teams of students showcase their knowledge and skills in designing, building, programming, and communicating, and exhibit their work during alliance and solo match play.

Through the judging process students have opportunities to practice written and verbal communication skills, and demonstrate the values outlined in the RECF [Code of Conduct](#) and [Student-Centered](#) policies. Some awards qualify teams to championship events.

Serving as a judge is an incredibly rewarding volunteer role—you will hear about what students have designed, created, and learned, and how they have grown as individuals and team members. By letting students share what they have learned and tell the story of their team's progress, you affirm that their efforts are meaningful, valuable, and worth listening to. Judges should conduct themselves with respect, compassion, and integrity towards each student and team.

This document details the processes and award criteria for judging to ensure consistent practices across events and across all regions so volunteers and teams understand what to expect from judging at an event.

This document provides the following:

- Descriptions of the roles of judges, judge advisors, and event partners
- Policies and procedures for the judging process
- Criteria and descriptions for awards
- Additional tools and materials to conduct the judging process

1.2 Judging Q&A System

All responses in the Q&A system (link coming soon!) should be treated as official rulings from the RECF Robotics Competition Judging Committee. The Q&A system is the only source besides this document for official rulings and clarifications, and is functionally an extension of the Guide to Judging. Q&A rulings are effective immediately upon release.

The 2026-2027 Judging Question & Answer System is coming soon!.

Before posting on the Q&A system, be sure to review the Q&A usage guidelines.

1. Please read and search the Guide to Judging and existing Q&As before posting.
2. Please quote the applicable verbiage from the latest version of the Guide to Judging in your question, including section number, if applicable.
3. Please make a separate post for each question or topic.
4. Q&A responses from previous seasons are not considered official rulings for the current season. Any relevant clarifications that are needed should always be re-asked in the current season's Judging Q&A.
5. Occasionally, the RECF may alter the wording of a question for clarity.

If there are any conflicts between the Guide to Judging and other supplemental materials (for example, judge certification courses, RECF Library articles, etc.), the most current version of the Guide to Judging takes precedence.

The Competition Judging Committee values community questions, feedback, and ideas to improve the judging process and our documentation. Please feel free to share those with us via your RECF Regional Support Manager or by emailing judging@recf.org.

1.3 Key Links and Documents

- [RECF Code of Conduct](#)
- [RECF Student-Centered Policy](#)
- [RECF Qualifying Criteria](#)
- [Commitment to Event Excellence](#)
- [RECF Engage Game Manual & Resources](#)
- [RECF Achieve Game Manual & Resources](#)
- [RECF Inspire Game Manual & Resources](#)
- Judging Q&A (link coming soon!)
- [Judge Advisor / Judge Training & Certification Course](#)
- [RECF Library](#)

Section 2: Judging Principles

2.1 Overview

The judging principles in this section outline an ethos that judges, judge advisors, and event partners should follow. Volunteer judges can have a tremendous impact on the students involved, and all judging volunteers must be able to interact with students and fellow judges rationally and respectfully. Volunteers who are unable or unwilling to abide by these principles should consider volunteering in other roles instead.

All judging volunteers should keep the principles in this section in mind.

2.2 Youth Protection

Judges must be mindful of student safety, and should work with at least one other judge in a public space such as a pit area.

- Non-public discussions with students must include a team adult
- Judges' questions should all relate to the team, event, or robot
- Judges should use age-appropriate language
- The judging process should be a positive experience for students

2.3 Team Conduct & Student-Centered Ethos

The RECF considers the positive, respectful, and ethical conduct of teams to be an essential component of the competition. A team includes the students, teachers, coaches, mentors, parents, and anyone else associated with the team.

- Teams should be student-centered
- Teams should follow the RECF Code of Conduct
- Violations of either policy should be reported to the event partner, who will pass them along to the RECF as appropriate
- Team behavior, positive or negative, affects teams' eligibility for judged awards
- Volunteers can report positive and negative behaviors using the [Field Note to Judge Advisor](#)

2.4 Confidentiality

The judging process includes discussions and written materials that concern teams. These must remain confidential.

- Conversations between judges must be private and confidential
- Judging information cannot be shared with teams, other event participants, or event staff*

- Judges should not retain notes, judging materials, or teams' notebooks after the event
- All judging materials and notes must be disposed of by the judge advisor after the event
- Interviews, discussions, and other parts of the judging process cannot be recorded

*RECF staff may need access to information about judging.

2.5 Impartiality

Judges must be aware of any biases they may have and avoid allowing those biases to influence their ability to impartially judge teams.

- Teams at an event should be judged on their merits and behavior at that event only
- Judging volunteers should not wear any team-branded apparel or accessories
- Judging volunteers should avoid real and perceived conflicts of interest, and must declare them before the judging process begins
- Judges cannot participate in interviews, notebook reviews, or deliberations for teams they have conflicts of interest with

2.6 Consistency

Engineering notebooks and team interviews must be evaluated under consistent conditions, whether judging is conducted in-person or remotely.

All teams must have an opportunity to interview for awards, regardless of performance, engineering notebook quality, or other factors.

2.7 Qualitative Judgement

Judges should apply qualitative judgment to award criteria when making final decisions on all judged awards.

- A score on a rubric is not an automatic disqualification for any judged award
- The highest rubric score does not necessarily determine the winner of an award
- Judges can consider scores, but must still deliberate and apply qualitative judgement when ranking teams for any award

2.8 Balance

No team can receive more than one judged award at an event. Performance awards (such as Tournament Champion), volunteer-nominated awards (such as Sportsmanship), or awards presented to an individual (such as the Volunteer of the Year Award) do not affect a team's eligibility to earn a judged award.

2.9 Integrity

Each award should go to the team that best matches the award description and meets the requirements of the award, while still respecting that no team can earn more than one judged award.

- Judged awards should not be reallocated based on performance awards
- Judges should not consider awards teams have earned at other events
- If no team at the event meets the criteria for an award, that award should not be given out

2.10 Independent Inquiry

All student work should be student-directed, whether they take inspiration from existing ideas or come up with an entirely original design or strategy. Independent inquiry means students are learning how and why things work, rather than accepting another source's results or solutions without question.

Judging should reward teams that show evidence of their own work in their notebook, team interview, and robot design.

2.11 Why We Don't Give Feedback About Judging

The RECF judging process includes comparisons between teams at an event to determine award winners. Providing feedback can cause issues including:

- Unintentionally harmful or discouraging feedback based on time limitations
- Arguments over whether or not judges made the "correct" decision
- Accidental sharing of confidential information about other teams

One judge's feedback may not represent the other judges' opinions or give the full picture. Teams should work with trusted adults to get feedback through practice judging sessions during a scrimmage, practice, or workshop, using the rubrics and other tools included in this document.

2.12 Judging and the Code of Conduct Process

As described in [section 2.3](#), the RECF considers the positive, respectful, and ethical conduct of teams to be an essential component of the competition. RECF game manuals require teams to adhere to the RECF Code of Conduct and the RECF Student-Centered Policy.

The goal of the Code of Conduct process is to protect the integrity of the event and judging process, not to have judges serve to enforce or police these policies. However, judges may be in a position to observe potential violations. Judges who encounter potential violations of these policies should report them to the JA, who will work with the EP and head referees to follow the [Code of Conduct Process](#). Judges should never inform a team that this process was initiated.

Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the Code of Conduct process, judges will not be updated about any results of that process at the event.

Section 3: Judging Roles & Timeline

3.0 Overview

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of judges, judge advisors, and event partners in the judging process to ensure a consistent judging process at all qualifying events. Coordination between the event partner, the judge advisor, and judge volunteers is crucial for the judging process to operate smoothly and effectively.

An effective judging panel is made up of a judge advisor and judges that bring a wide range of background experiences, knowledge, and perspectives.

Preparations for judging should start during the initial stages of event planning. The size of the event, the number of awards given out, the event agenda, and volunteer recruitment all impact the judging process. In the case of tournaments, judging should conclude on the last day of competition. In the case of leagues, judging must occur close to the date of league finals.

Exceptions to the volunteer age rules in this section should be rare, and require approval from the RECF RSM.

3.1 Judging Attire

All judging volunteers should dress appropriately for the role, such as wearing comfortable footwear and venue-appropriate attire. Judging volunteers should avoid wearing any team-branded clothing or accessories. Some events provide apparel or accessories to identify judging volunteers.

3.2 Managing Conflicts of Interest

As described in [section 2.5](#), it's important to avoid conflicts of interest as much as possible. Due to the sensitive nature of the RECF judging roles, those roles should be filled selectively rather than by a public sign up or walk-ups if possible.

Event partners should recruit judges from a variety of sources in order to mitigate conflicts of interest. When judges have a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and knowledge that they bring to the judging process, the end result is a better judging experience for both volunteers and teams.

Note: Any event that qualifies teams to the RECF World Championship should seek out judge volunteers who do not have any direct conflicts of interest with any team at the event (for example: parents or other family members associated with attending teams or team coaches would be considered to have direct conflicts of interest; this is not an exhaustive list). This is highly recommended for all events.

3.3 Judge Advisor Role Description and Requirements

The judge advisor (JA) is a volunteer who organizes and oversees the overall judging process at an event. They often help the event partner (EP) recruit volunteer judges before the event, and they train volunteer judges before and/or at the event.

- Facilitates deliberations and delivers final award winners to the EP
- Has zero or minimal conflicts of interest with teams at the event
- Is a [certified RECF judge advisor](#) for the current season
- Must be at least 21 years old and not part of a team competing at the event
- Assists the event partner with handling Code of Conduct and student-centered issues as necessary (see section [2.12](#) for more details)
- May serve as the “lead” JA help train a newer JA

3.3.1 Qualities of an effective JA

- Experience with the RECF judging process
- Confident, respectful, and professional leader
- Able to teach processes, then delegate and supervise the process
- Able to set their own opinions and preferences aside during deliberations

3.3.2 Pre-event tasks for JAs

- Become a [certified RECF judge advisor](#) for the current season
- Help recruit judges, considering conflicts of interest
- Train judges before and/or at the event
- Work with the EP to create a tentative schedule for judging
- Determine how team notebooks will be collected & managed
- Ensure that the EP will supply printed judging materials
- Coordinate & complete remote notebook judging before the event if applicable
- Coordinate & complete remote initial interviews before the event if applicable

3.3.3 Event-day tasks for JAs

- Train judges before and/or at the event
- Review the judging process and answer any questions
- Receive submitted engineering notebooks for in-person notebook judging
- Coordinate in-person notebook judging if appropriate
- Ensure judges sign in on the [Judge Volunteer Check-In Sheet](#)
- Group judges and assign each group a subset of teams to interview, managing potential conflicts of interest and separating judges with existing relationships; the judge advisor should not participate in team interviews unless a personnel shortage requires it
- Monitor team interview statuses and the event agenda to ensure judging is completed in time

- Collect [Field Notes to Judge Advisor](#) from event staff before final deliberations
- Guide deliberations for judged awards, including ensuring no team earns more than one judged award
- Record the results of all judged awards and communicate the list of award winners to the event partner and/or tournament software operator
- Have the tournament software operator print the award scripts for the award ceremony if needed
- Maintain confidentiality of judging deliberations and discussions
- Collect all judging materials and destroy them after the event to ensure confidentiality
- Delete copies of digital team notebooks, if applicable
- Return physical notebooks to teams, if applicable

3.4 Judge Role Description and Requirements

A judge is a volunteer who reviews teams' engineering notebooks and/or interviews teams about their processes, then deliberates with other judging volunteers to identify award candidates and select award winners.

- Evaluates teams and/or notebooks to determine eligibility for judged awards
- Must work with a partner or group when interacting directly with students
- Meets the age requirement for the age level and program at the event:
 - RECF Inspire (collegiate) - Must be at least 21 years old
 - RECF Achieve (MS/HS) - Must be at least 20 years old and not an Achieve team member
 - RECF Engage (ES/MS) - Should be at least 18 years old; may be 16-17 if paired with an adult volunteer and youth protection is considered
 - RECF World Championship - Must be at least 21 years old

3.4.1 Qualities of an effective judge

- Has zero or minimal conflicts of interest with teams at the event
- Background in technology or robotics helps when evaluating technical awards
- Has passed some or all of the [RECF judge training](#)
- Able to work respectfully and professionally as part of a team
- Able to work with their peers to create a positive student experience
- Can consider the perspectives of others during discussions and deliberations

3.4.2 Pre-event tasks for judges

- Review the game description or video
- Communicate potential conflicts of interest to the judge advisor
- Review the one-page judging overview, rubrics, and award descriptions
- Complete some or all of the [RECF judge training](#) courses if possible

3.4.3 Event-day tasks for judges

- Participating in judging processes as assigned by the JA, including:
 - Evaluate teams' notebooks using the Engineering Notebook Rubric
 - Interview teams for judged awards
 - Observe teams in competition
 - Present awards to teams during the award ceremony
- Communicate potential conflicts of interest to the judge advisor
- Work with the JA and other judges to decide on award winners
- Hand in all judging notes and rubrics to the judge advisor at the end of the event
- Delete copies of digital team notebooks if applicable
- Maintain confidentiality of any judging deliberations and discussions

3.5 Event Partner Role Description and Requirements

An event partner (EP) is a volunteer who runs an event using the guidelines in RECF's policies and game manuals. They oversee the planning and operation of the entire event, including volunteer recruitment and providing support for the judges and judge advisor.

- Is a [certified RECF event partner](#) for the current season
- The EP cannot also serve as the JA or a judge at event
- Event partners may not recommend or assign judged awards to any team
- Handles Code of Conduct and student-centered issues as necessary with the support of the JA and head referees (see section [2.12](#) for more details)
- Must be at least 18 years old

3.5.1 Pre-event judging tasks for EPs

- Recruit a qualified JA
- Recruit enough judges to ensure interviews can be completed before alliance matches end (two judges for every 8-10 teams at the event is a good guideline)
- Work with the JA to create a tentative schedule for judging
- Work with the RECF RSM to ensure that all required awards are listed on RECFEvents.org
- Make or purchase trophies/certificates for awards
- Identify a secure, private, quiet room with adequate space for the judging panel to discuss and deliberate (the judges' room)
- Ensure that the judging panel has appropriate judging materials, including clipboards, pens, highlighters, sticky notes, copies of current judging documents such as rubrics and note-taking sheets, and other needed items

3.5.2 Event-day judging tasks for EPs

- Label the judges' room to prevent others from entering, and ensure the JA has access
- Ensure the judging panel has all needed materials

- Communicate any team or schedule changes to the JA
- Oversee entering of awards into the tournament software if needed, and ensure that no team will receive more than one judged award
- Work with the judging panel to present awards to teams during the award ceremony

3.6 In-Person Event Timeline Example

The table below is an example of how the in-person judging process might operate in parallel with the rest of the competition schedule during a one-day event. Judges should generally begin to interview teams as soon as possible. Engineering notebook evaluations and follow-up interviews should be concluded by the end of alliance matches at the latest.

Example In-Person Event Timeline			
TIME	EVENT ACTIVITY	TEAM ACTIVITY	JUDGES / JUDGE ADVISOR ACTIVITY
Early Morning	Check-In	Teams check in and hand in notebooks. Once inspected, teams may run practice or solo matches.	Judge orientation and training. Interviews can begin as soon as there are judges assigned to groups, and after any questions about the process have been addressed by the judge advisor. Interviews pause during the opening ceremonies / event meeting.
	Inspection		
Morning	Opening Ceremonies	Teams attend the event meeting.	Teams are interviewed during breaks between their matches.
	Alliance Matches	Teams are scheduled into alliance matches.	
Lunch Break	Lunch Break	If event is running behind, teams may run matches through this time.	Working lunch. Judges should take a break, discuss progress so far, and each group of judges can name top picks for awards so far. This is often also a good time for judges to work on evaluating engineering notebooks.
Early Afternoon	Alliance Matches	Teams are scheduled into alliance matches.	Finish team interviews and begin final deliberations. Judge advisor collects the final solo and alliance match rankings and any field notes. If additional interviews are needed, they should be completed during alliance matches.
Afternoon	Alliance Selection/ Alliance Pairings	Teams undergo alliance selection (RECF Achieve) or alliance pairings (RECF Engage) or have a short break before finals (RECF Inspire).	Final deliberations. Teams should not be interviewed during this time; decisions must be made with the data at hand. Judge advisor takes final award winners to be entered into the tournament software. All engineering notebooks should be returned to teams.
End of Day	Elimination/ Finals Matches	Teams participate in finals/elimination matches and receive awards. Some events may intersperse awards with these matches, others may have an awards ceremony afterwards.	Judge advisor collects judging materials, and clears the judges' room of any identifying information. Judges may be asked to read award scripts, present awards, or just be visible for teams at the closing ceremony.
	Awards / Closing Ceremonies		

Section 4: Awards

4.1 Overview

A wide variety of awards can be offered at each RECF event. Some are based on teams' performance at that event, while others are based on specific attributes demonstrated by teams. Award descriptions and criteria in the [Judged Award Descriptions & Criteria](#) list the criteria for each award. All judged awards consider team conduct and student-centeredness.

4.2 Award Types

The [RECF Qualifying Criteria for Robotics Programs](#) identifies the awards that qualify teams from local events to an event region championship or the RECF World Championship. The exact number of qualifying spots allocated to an event is determined by the RECF RSM for that region and can be found on that event's information page on [RECEvents.org](#).

RECF qualifying competitions can include several different types of awards:

4.2.1 Judged Awards

Judges, in coordination with the judge advisor, determine winners of these awards using the RECF judging process, award criteria, and rubrics. Teams must have completed an interview to receive a judged award. Most, but not all judged awards require the submission of a notebook.

4.2.2 Performance Awards

These awards are based solely on robot performance at the event. Earning a performance award does not impact a team's eligibility to earn a judged award.

4.2.3 Volunteer Nominated Awards

Event volunteers can nominate teams for these awards based on what they see at the event. **Alternatively, the awards can be determined solely by the judges.** The [Field Note to Judge Advisor](#) form and the award nomination forms can be used to submit award nominees and provide information to the judge advisor. There is no nomination process for other award types.

- The EP and JA should develop a process to determine the winners of these awards
- These awards can be given out at an event that does not include judged awards
- If awarded based on nominations, any of these awards can be given to a team that has earned another judged award at the event

4.2.4 Individual Recognition Awards

These awards recognize the contributions of a volunteer, mentor, teacher, or sponsor, and are determined by the event partner. Judges do not determine individual award winners. Event partners may create their own process for judging these awards if needed.

4.2.5 Custom Awards

While nearly all events choose to use standard awards, it is possible to give out custom awards using the tournament software. Events should ensure that teams understand that these awards will not qualify them to championship events.

4.3 Award Quantities & Precedence

A maximum of one copy of each award is given out at an event, except for the Excellence Award and Judges Award in accordance with the [RECF Robotics Qualifying Criteria](#). For the full list of judged awards, along with their descriptions, criteria, and other information, please see the [Judged Award Descriptions & Criteria](#).

The precedence of judged awards for RECF Robotics Competitions is as follows, and aligns with Appendices A, B, and C in the [RECF Robotics Qualifying Criteria](#). Volunteer-nominated, individual recognition, and custom awards do not factor into award precedence.

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Excellence Award | 4. Think Award | 7. Create Award |
| 2. Design Award | 5. Amaze Award | 8. Judges Award |
| 3. Innovate Award | 6. Build Award | 9. Inspire Award |

Section 5: Judging Engineering Notebooks

5.1 Overview

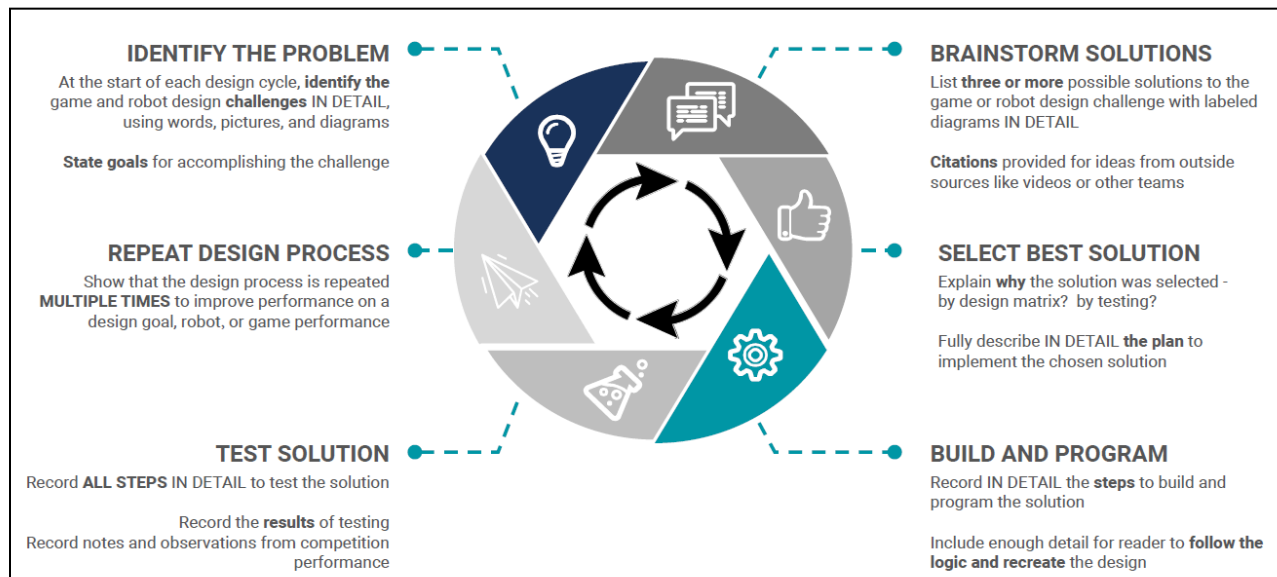
A team's engineering notebook is an original work written and organized by students on the team, and describes their engineering design process over the course of a season. The engineering notebook is evaluated using the Engineering Notebook Rubric as a sorting tool, with final rankings done qualitatively by judges. An engineering notebook can be a physical or digital document, and is required for many judged awards. A team's notebook and interview should be mutually supportive of one another.

Note: RECF Inspire does not follow the guidelines outlined in this section. Please see the [RECF Inspire Judging Process](#) for more information.

5.2 Engineering Notebook Purpose & Academic Honesty

5.2.1 Engineering Notebook Purpose

An engineering notebook is a resource for the team's current season, a reference for future seasons, and a record of the team's use of the engineering design process. It should describe the team's decisions and work in their own words. By following the iterative engineering design process—identifying a problem, brainstorming solutions, testing ideas, and refining their robot design—students encounter obstacles, successes, and setbacks that they should fully document. A strong engineering notebook goes beyond logging actions to explain the reasoning behind team decisions. The graphic below shows a simple engineering design process.



5.2.2 Entries Shouldn't Be Revised

Teams should not edit or replace old entries or create revised versions of content for specific events. New content should be created and added in parallel with the design process throughout the season. The notebook should be the team's authentic documentation, including misspellings, unsuccessful ideas, and real problem-solving as the design evolves.

5.2.3 Content Should be Created by Student Team Members

The engineering notebook must align with the RECF [Student-Centered Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#). Templates can guide younger students, but the goal is for students to independently organize and produce their own content. Adult involvement—such as adding content, rewriting entries, excessive direction, “cleaning up,” or organizing the notebook—is not permitted.

Teams should not use artificial intelligence / large language model (AI/LLM) programs or tools to generate, organize, enhance, or alter engineering notebook content.

The RECF Library includes several resources to guide teams as they create their engineering notebooks, and includes suggestions for formatting and organization.

- [Getting Started With Notebooking](#)
- [Engineering Design Process](#)
- [Engineering Notebook Basics](#)
- [Advanced Engineering Notebook Techniques](#)
- [Engineering Notebook vs Team Journal](#)

5.2.4 Outside Ideas Must be Credited

Teams must properly cite and credit all outside sources (e.g., websites, books, videos, or other teams/individuals) of materials or ideas. Notebook entries should describe how the idea or material was used, and the original content can be placed in an appendix as needed. Teams can include links or QR codes to external sources such as webpages or videos in their engineering notebook for their own reference, but judges should NOT access or evaluate them as part of the notebook review.

Teams from the same organization should not submit notebooks with shared or common content, as this makes it difficult to verify individual teams' work. Other teams' notebooks should be used solely for inspiration; teams must develop their own original formats, styles, and content.

5.2.5 Academic Dishonesty is a Violation of the RECF Code of Conduct

Claiming the work of others violates the RECF Code of Conduct and game manuals and may result in removal from judged awards and initiation of the Code of Conduct process as described in [section 2.12](#).

5.3 Engineering Notebook Format and Contents

5.3.1 Notebook Formats

Team members are responsible for their notebook's formatting, presentation, and organization, including numbering and/or dating all pages. Loose pages are not permitted, except for the Innovate Award Submission Form. Content and clarity is more important than sophistication of presentation or notebook length.

5.3.2 Notes on Engineering Notebook Content

Most notebooks will have similar formats and contents based on the criteria in the Engineering Notebook Rubric, but there are some things judges should consider when reviewing notebooks.

- The notebook should clearly show the team number.
- A descriptive table of contents can help identify entries and/or design process steps.
- Entries shouldn't be edited retroactively.
- The notebook should follow a team's progress through a season.
- Content should be created by students on the team for the current season, and not copy/pasted from other teams' or seasons' notebooks.
- Content should be properly cited/credited.
- Content should **not** be generated or filtered by generative AI.
- Content should meaningfully contribute to the record of the team's engineering design process.
- All extraneous content, cited content, or external resources (e.g., game manual excerpts, code printouts, white papers, other teams' test results) longer than roughly one paragraph should be limited to appendices. Judges are not expected to review the content in appendices.

5.3.3 Notebook Language

If the engineering notebook is written in a language that is not common for the region and judges fluent in the original language are not available, it is the team's responsibility to provide the original language version along with a translated copy. This should be brought to the event partner's attention as early as possible so they can inform the judge advisor and possibly find judges who are fluent.

5.3.4 Notebook Presentation and Length

Judges should evaluate the content of notebooks, not its length or how the information is presented. It is possible for many different types of notebook and different communication styles to present relevant content that explains the design process. Judges should make every effort to evaluate the contents of the notebook based on the Engineering Notebook Rubric, particularly if the submission is not in the native format of the notebook (e.g., a physical notebook that was scanned for a digital submission).

5.4 Notebook Submission and Handling

5.4.1 Notebook Submission Formats

The event partner determines the judging format for their event, and communicates the required format through the event page at RECFEvents.org. All teams must submit their notebooks in the chosen format, regardless of the notebook's native format. Teams with physical notebooks may be asked to upload a digital copy (PDFs under 250MB are preferred), while teams with digital notebooks may need to print them prior to the event.

If engineering notebooks are submitted digitally and evaluated before the event, judges must still have access to them during the event to support follow-up interviews and deliberations for awards that require notebooks. Judges are not expected to fully re-evaluate these notebooks.

Regardless of the format, all notebooks are evaluated by the judges according to the same award criteria and rubric.

5.4.2 Notebooks are Required for Some Awards

In the RECF Engage & Achieve programs, the engineering notebook is required for the Excellence, Design, Innovate, Think , Amaze, Build, and Create Awards, but is not a requirement for other awards. Teams are not required to submit a notebook to receive an in-person interview.

5.4.3 Handling Notebooks

Physical engineering notebooks are typically collected at team check-in or robot inspection at an event and delivered to the judge advisor. Digital engineering notebooks must be submitted via RECFEvents.org prior to the event's posted deadline.

Notebooks collected at an event should be returned directly to teams in their pit area or via some other controlled process; it is not recommended that notebooks be left unattended for teams to pick up. This should be done prior to finals/elimination matches, as some teams may decide to leave prior to the completion of the event.

5.5 Assessing and Ranking Engineering Notebooks

5.5.1 Sorting Engineering Notebooks

1. Judges perform a quick assessment of all the engineering notebooks and divide them into two categories: **developing** and **fully developed**. If it is unclear whether a notebook should be categorized as developing or fully developed, they should get another opinion or categorize it as fully developed.
 - **Developing** engineering notebooks contain little detail, have few drawings, and are not a complete record of the design process. These notebooks don't need to be scored on the Engineering Notebook Rubric, but should remain in the judges room until all notebooks are returned to teams.
 - **Fully developed** engineering notebooks contain a complete record of the team's design process, including complete and detailed drawings, test results, problems descriptions and chosen solutions.

5.5.2 Completing Engineering Notebook Rubrics

1. Judges score the fully developed notebook using the [Engineering Notebook Rubric](#).
 - If possible, the same judges who review a team's notebooks should be assigned to complete that team's interview. The engineering notebook and team interview should reflect one another; having the same judges evaluate both will give them a better understanding of the team and may prove insightful.
 - Judges should assign a proficiency level for each rubric criterion by focusing on relevant entries rather than reading every page.
 - It is recommended that each notebook be scored at least twice, ideally by judge pairs (often the same pairs that conducted the initial interviews) so that experienced judges may help train new judges and will help in finding relevant content in the notebook. The first few notebooks should be discussed together to calibrate scoring across judge pairs.
 - It is recommended judges take no longer than 10-20 minutes to evaluate each notebook. Higher age level events may require more time per notebook.
 - Rubric scores serve as a sorting tool but do not replace final qualitative judgment. The final determination of all award candidates and winners is done through further qualitative deliberation among judges based on award descriptions and criteria.
2. Any notebook that does not earn a score of two points or higher in all of the first four criteria of the rubric should be removed from consideration for the Innovate, Design, and Excellence Awards. For RECF Engage events (especially elementary), this threshold may be lowered to one point as students are still learning documentation fundamentals.
3. Judges can initially rank teams by their notebook rubric scores.

4. Final rankings of top notebooks must be determined qualitatively. Because judges may score notebooks differently, it is strongly recommended that multiple judges review each notebook and that overall consensus takes precedence over exact rubric scores.

5.5.3 Notebook Anomalies

The anomalies described below can be indicators that the team's design decisions are not student directed, the design is not original to the team, or that the engineering notebook is not a complete reflection of the student design process. Anomalies should be reported to the judge advisor for further consideration. For borderline cases, teams should be given the benefit of the doubt.

- Robot designs appear spontaneously, with no evidence of a design process. Sometimes this is obscured with a "first design" that does not fully bridge initial concept to final design.
- Entries stop weeks or months before an event with no record of progress, or entries do not begin until after a robot has been built.
- There are no records of failures, ideas that didn't work, or other paths that were explored or considered.
- Entries appear to have been crafted to create a specific narrative or story.
- The engineering notebook has information that is overly broad and not specific to the team. A notebook may have generic information about different drive trains, for example, but does not explain how the team decided upon and built their own design.
- The notebook contents appear to be a direct copy from another team from within or outside the same organization, contents from a previous season's notebook, or notebooks posted online by other teams.

Section 6: Team Interviews

6.1 Overview

Team interviews are timed conversations between a team and a group of judges, during which judges ask open-ended questions to learn firsthand from the team about their engineering design process. Teams that are finalists for awards may receive additional interviews as judges seek additional information. Teams are typically interviewed in their pit areas or by competition fields.

Note: RECF Inspire does not follow the guidelines outlined in this section. Please see the [RECF Inspire Judging Process](#) for more information.

6.2 Team Interview Guidelines

6.2.1 Scheduling Team Interviews

Initial team interviews can be conducted without prior notice or at a scheduled time chosen by the team (for example, using a sign-up sheet or first-come, first-served queue). All teams must be offered interviews under the same system, and teams cannot request specific judges—only an interview time slot. A recommended self-service approach is to assign teams to judge groups via a queuing system, with adjustments made for any conflicts of interest. Each initial team interview typically lasts 8–10 minutes (not to exceed 12–15 minutes) and should be equal for all teams.

All teams must have the opportunity for at least one initial interview. Teams may decline, but they will then be ineligible for judged awards (except volunteer-nominated awards, if offered). The judge advisor should clearly communicate the interview process and deadlines to all teams.

6.2.2 Interview Locations

Initial interviews may be conducted in several ways, but for the RECF Engage and Achieve programs, interviews should always be interactive conversations and not prepared presentations. Interview options include:

1. Pit area interviews: Judges visit teams in their pits with no fixed schedule. Judges can see teams at work, and quickly move through their list of teams to interview. If a team is difficult to locate, judges may approach them when they return from the competition field.
2. Hallway / quiet area interviews: Conducted in public spaces such as hallways, libraries, or cafeterias that may be quieter than the pit area.
3. Stationed judges: Judges are based at tables, with teams directed to them. The judge advisor can manage check-ins to balance workloads and avoid conflicts of interest.

6.2.3 Judges Interview Students, not Adults

Judges should only talk to the student members of the team. If adults want to answer questions, politely remind them that the judges are there to interview the students. The purpose of the interview is for the student team members to explain their design process and answer questions judges may have about their robot, programming, or engineering design process.

6.2.4 Interview Questions

Some judge advisors create a standardized list of questions for judges to ask that are used for all interviews at that event, which can be helpful for new judges and for standardization. This should not be construed as a rigid script; judges should be free to ask follow-up questions based on student responses. Other events may not use common questions and instead allow judging teams to come up with their own questions to gather information from teams.

6.2.5 Considerations for Cultural or Communication Style Differences

Students have varying styles of interacting with judges during the interview process based on individual or cultural differences. Maintaining eye contact, speaking in a loud enough voice to be easily heard, engaging with other speakers, and other engagement norms may differ between students. Judges should do their best to give all teams an opportunity to share their design process during the interview, and should strive to not allow factors that are beyond students' control to bias their evaluation of the team.

Judges should avoid using humor or language that could be interpreted as disparaging. For example, "I can't believe you came up with this on your own!" might be intended as a compliment to the team but could be misinterpreted as the judges believing the team is violating the Code of Conduct by claiming work that is not their own. Judges should be very careful with their language and avoid statements that could be misconstrued.

6.3 Conducting and Ranking Team Interviews

6.3.1 Initial Team Interviews

1. The judge advisor assigns pairs/groups of judges to interview teams with which they have no conflicts of interest. The judge advisor will create a schedule based on the number of teams, available judges, and the event schedule.
 - Judges ask students open-ended questions about their robot and design process. Follow-up questions are asked as needed.
 - Teams can use their robot and its associated equipment, engineering notebook (if available), and code during the interview. However, in the RECF Engage and Achieve programs, judges should engage with students and their robot and not with audio/visual aids such as presentations or displays.
 - Judges should take notes using the Team Interview Notes form during interviews to support their evaluations and assist with deliberations.
 - Judges should take pictures of each robot (with team number visible) with attention to special features and/or of the team members to help judges recall details during later deliberations.
 - If judges are unable to locate a team's pit area, they should contact the judge advisor for assistance. Catching the team as they leave the field from a match is often the best way to track a team down.
 - Judges should remember that younger students communicate their ideas differently than older students. Judges should use age-appropriate language when asking questions and consider students' ages when evaluating student responses.
 - Judges can refer to the [Single-Page Outline of the Judging Process](#) for brief award descriptions and other useful information.
 - Judges should consider teams' teamwork, professionalism, interview quality, and conduct.
2. After each interview, judges should privately discuss their notes and observations.

6.3.2 Ranking Interview Candidates

Judges should rank teams for each event award as they conduct interviews. On the [Award Candidate Ranking Sheet](#), judges list the teams they interview on the left side and add all judged awards offered at the event from left to right, following precedence (qualifying awards first, then non-qualifying). The order of qualifying awards is defined in the [RECF Robotics Qualifying Criteria](#).

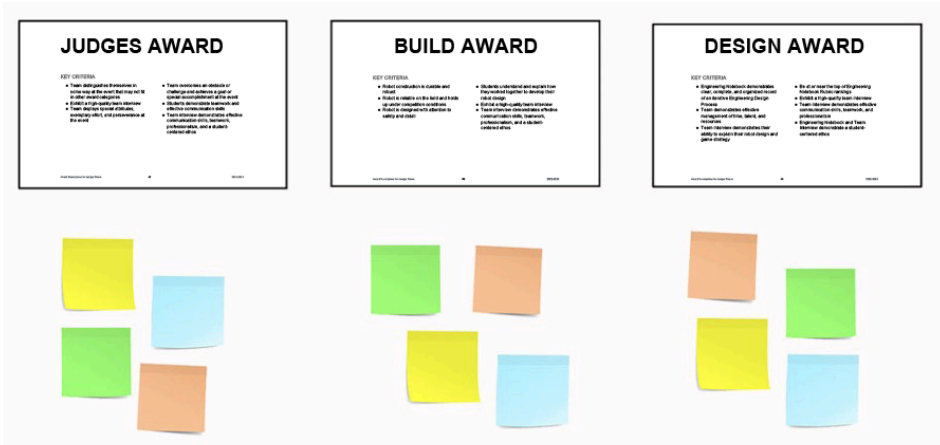
Judges indicate candidates by placing check marks. The first recommended team for an award receives one check; a stronger later candidate receives one check while the previous team gets a second check (making them 1st and 2nd, respectively). This process continues as interviews progress, creating a ranked short list of candidates for each award.

Below is an example of how this sheet might be filled out by one judge group that is assigned a subset of teams at a larger event. In this example the Build, Create, Think, and Judges Awards have been filled in below. This is a simple way for judges to preliminarily rank their recommendations as they go, with final rankings done after their set of interviews are completed.

TEAM NUMBER	THINK AWARD	BUILD AWARD	CREATE AWARD	JUDGES AWARD
	Effective programming and autonomous strategy	Well constructed robot with attention to safety and detail	Team has creative solution for engineering design or game strategy	Special Recognition
TEAM A		✓✓✓		✓
TEAM B	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
TEAM C	✓✓✓		✓	
TEAM D	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓

6.3.3 Identifying Initial Award Candidates

After interviewing their assigned teams, each judge group selects their top one or two candidates for each award (they do not need to nominate a team for every award). Judges then return to the judges’ room and share their nominations with the rest of the judging panel, often by placing team numbers on sticky notes next to the award descriptions in the [Judged Award Descriptions & Criteria](#). Color-coding by judge group can help organize the input (see picture below).



This creates a shortlist of nominees for each award. If there are many nominations, the judge advisor may ask groups to withdraw weaker candidates after brief discussion. The judge advisor then reorganizes judges to gather additional information through observations (matches, pits) and follow-up interviews to validate and rank the nominees.

6.3.4 Follow-Up Interviews

Award candidates should be cross interviewed by multiple groups of judges. The judge advisor will assign additional interviews as needed during the event. Follow-up interviews for any award contenders should be conducted without notice, preferably in the competition or pit areas. This allows judges to see the team in their workspace and does not give any team an advantage via prior notice.

6.3.4.1 Recommendations for follow-up interviews

- Group judges with relevant expertise for specific awards (e.g., programming experts for the Think Award).
- Re-group judges so they are not judging with the same individuals for increased insight.
- Focus questions on award-specific criteria.
- Do not tell teams which award(s) they're being considered for.
- Awards other than Design and Innovate do not have rubrics for the follow-up interview.

6.3.4.2 Follow-up interviews for the Innovate & Design Awards

Teams with strong notebooks and strong initial interviews are likely to be candidates for the Design Award and/or the Innovate Award. To give judges more information for comparison and ranking, the Design & Innovate Award Rubric (formerly called the Team Interview Rubric) should be completed for each team by the set of judges that conduct these follow-up interviews.

Section 7: Award Deliberation

7.1 Overview

Award deliberation is the last step in the judging process. In this step, judges work with the judge advisor and one another to select the best candidate for each award.

Award deliberations involve comparing teams to one another. The integrity of the judging process depends on all judges being able to speak candidly during this process, and what transpires during deliberations is particularly sensitive information. All judging deliberation notes and conversations must be kept confidential during and after the event.

7.2 When to Consider Performance Data

Some awards directly reference teams' match performance and rankings, while others may use robot performance indirectly or as a comparison tool. Judges must base their final deliberations on the final, complete rankings and scores from alliance and solo matches only; elimination/finals performance is NOT considered for any award.

Judges should avoid over-relying on robot performance when selecting winners or finalists. Because circumstances vary at events, qualitative judgment and consensus are the best tools for determining how performance metrics show factor in for most awards.

7.3 Identifying Award Winners

1. After follow-up interviews, the judges who conducted them should provide a ranked list of the nominated candidates for their specific award. The [Final Award Nomination Ranking Sheet](#) provides a way to list the ranked awards and candidates for consideration. The ranked list should go deep enough so that if a top candidate were to be chosen for a higher award or removed from eligibility, there would still be enough alternative candidates to choose from.
2. For the Excellence Award, the winner must be selected from Design Award finalists who also meet performance and other judged award criteria. Winners should then be chosen by selecting the next top candidate in the ranked list of candidates, ensuring that no team receives more than one judged award. The judge advisor should reconcile all winners so each team receives their highest eligible award.
 - If information arises indicating a possible violation of the [Code of Conduct](#) or [Student-Centered Policy](#), the judge advisor must review the team's eligibility for judged awards. If the concern has merit, the award should be given to the next alternate in the ranking. For egregious violations, the judge advisor should consult the event partner and RECF Regional Support Manager.

For Example: Two forms are shown below. Figure 1 represents the award nominees prior to the Excellence Award being decided. Figure 2 represents the results after the Excellence Award has been decided.

Team A has been selected to win the Excellence Award. Team A was also the top candidate for the Design Award. Therefore, the next team in the Design Award ranking (Team B) will now win the Design Award and not the Innovate Award because the Design Award has higher precedence in the RECF Robotics Qualifying Criteria. Team D will become the Innovate Award winner. Team C, formerly third place for the Think Award, is now the Think Award winner since Teams A and B are earning awards of higher precedence. In the case of the Judges Award (Team E), that award winner is unchanged.

Excellence Award (Required Award)	Design Award (Required Award)	Innovate Award	Think Award	Judges Award (Required Award)
	1. Team A	1. Team B	1. Team A	1. Team E
	2. Team B	2. Team D	2. Team B	2. Team X
	3. Team C	3. Team E	3. Team C	3. Team Z
	4. Team X	4. Team Z	4. Team X	4. Team D
	5. Team Z	5. Team C	5. Team Z	5. Team Y

Excellence Award (Required Award)	Design Award (Required Award)	Innovate Award	Think Award	Judges Award (Required Award)
Team A	1. Team A	1. Team B	1. Team A	1. Team E
	2. Team B	2. Team D	2. Team B	2. Team X
	3. Team C	3. Team E	3. Team C	3. Team Z
	4. Team X	4. Team Z	4. Team X	4. Team D
	5. Team Z	5. Team C	5. Team Z	5. Team Y

Figure 1: Prior to Excellence Award Determination

Figure 2: After Excellence Award Determination

7.4 Entering Award Winners into the Competition Software

After all award winners have been identified, the judge advisor should work with the event partner to put those team numbers into the competition software. It may be helpful to print the Award Summary Sheet or Award Script report so the judge advisor can double-check that all award winners have been entered correctly.

7.5 Final Tasks for the Judge Advisor

Prior to the award ceremony, the judge advisor should:

- Make sure engineering notebooks have been returned
- Collect all judging materials including notes, rubrics, and ranking sheets
- Erase any whiteboard notes
- Make sure judges delete digital copies of judging materials including photos and engineering notebooks

After the event is over, the judge advisor should destroy all judging materials off-site.

Section 8: Remote Judging

8.1 Overview

Remote judging occurs when engineering notebook evaluations, initial team interviews, or both are conducted remotely before the event. It follows the same rules and guidelines as in-person judging. The main benefits are better utilization of volunteers who cannot attend in person and completing portions of the judging process ahead of time, which helps events stay on schedule.

The decision to use remote or in-person judging should be made collaboratively between the judge advisor and event partner, with the final decision resting with the event partner. The judge advisor must be comfortable with the chosen format. While remote judging can optimize volunteer resources, it typically requires more total volunteer hours and has limitations, such as the inability to inspect robots or observe body language.

Remote judging should occur as close as possible to the event—ideally within two weeks of the start date—to ensure judges evaluate teams and robots that closely represent what will be presented at competition. Any extension beyond two weeks requires approval from the region's RECF Regional Support Manager.

Note: RECF Inspire does not follow the guidelines outlined in this section. Please see the [RECF Inspire Judging Process](#) for more information.

8.2 Judging Principles Still Apply

All of the judging principles in [Section 2](#) still apply, and all teams must be judged using the same format (remote or in-person) to ensure consistency and eliminate format-based bias. All digital engineering notebook evaluations and team interviews should be conducted under similar conditions and time constraints.

8.3 Notebook Submission Deadlines

Team coaches must provide digital engineering notebook links, including the optional Innovate Award Submission Form, in their [RECFFEvents.org](#) account before the stated deadline for the event. The event partner and the judge advisor should set a deadline that gives the judges adequate time to review the digital engineering notebooks before the event.

It is recommended that the event partner and/or judge advisor check all links before the submission deadline, and give all teams equal opportunity to replace non-functional links, if possible. There is no obligation to notify teams if they have a non-functioning link. If it is decided to do so, all teams must be contacted in a consistent manner.

8.4 Remote Judging for Digital Engineering Notebooks

Digital engineering notebooks are judged remotely before the event.

- Teams upload links to their engineering notebook via RECFEvents.org. Judges and event staff cannot require any other submission method, specific file type, or additional requirements not listed in this guide.
- Notebook content is expected to change over time, including immediately before the event. However, it is not expected that judges will re-evaluate a notebook based on materials submitted after the initial evaluation.
- The event partner will provide a list of links to the judge advisor.
- Digital engineering notebooks must be freely viewable by judges via the provided link, with no special permissions or logins required.
 - It is the team's responsibility to ensure accessibility.
 - For particularly large notebooks that require downloading, the judge advisor or judges have discretion to allow or disallow it. Any downloaded copy must be permanently deleted at the conclusion of the event.
- The judge advisor will organize judges into groups to review each digital engineering notebook according to the engineering notebook evaluation process (see [Section 5](#)).
- Each digital engineering notebook should be evaluated by multiple judges to establish a ranking of finalist notebooks.
- The EP may need to provide computers and internet access to ensure that judges have access to all team engineering notebooks during the event.

8.5 Remote Judging for Initial Team Interviews

Initial team interviews are done remotely before the event, using the [Team Interview Notes Sheet](#) and [Award Candidate Ranking Sheet](#). Remote judging does not replace in-person follow-up interviews and deliberations on event day. Standard pairs/groups of judges will still need to conduct follow-up interviews of award candidates.

- Team participants can log into the meeting from a single location sharing a webcam, or from multiple locations.
- For youth protection, each participating team must have at least one adult representative (18+ and not a high school student) connected to the meeting and visible on camera for the entire interview. They should join before students arrive, and cannot participate in the interview.
- The goal of initial remote team interviews is to identify nominees for each award ([6.31](#)).
- Judges should work in pairs or groups.
- Interviews cannot be recorded by any party.
- Judge advisors should set up a method to collate judging notes to assist in final deliberations, and must have control of the notes for disposal after the event.

- Follow-up interviews for final award nominees ([6.34](#)) must be done in person to include team and robot observations at the event.
- In-person judges for follow-up interviews must not move teams from one award category to another based on follow-up interviews. Doing so would invalidate the initial deliberations of the remote judges and effectively restart the judging process without giving equal treatment to all teams.

8.5.1 Scheduling Remote Initial Team Interviews

8.5.1.1 Scheduling the Remote Judging Volunteers

1. The event partner should create a schedule of interview times and confirm availability with the judge advisor and remote judges.
 - It is recommended to complete all remote interviews a few days before the event to allow buffer time for any volunteer or technical issues.
 - If sufficient remote judges are available, interviews can run in parallel. A common setup uses a main “waiting room” where teams enter, are greeted and verified by the judge advisor or event staff, and then moved into breakout rooms for their interview. This approach prevents interruptions and ensures proper adult supervision is visible on camera.
 - 30 minute interview cycle times work well: 30 minutes allows ample time for teams to enter the remote judging environment; for remote judges to conduct an 8-10 minute interview; and for remote judges to discuss / compare notes, and fill out the [Award Candidate Ranking Sheet](#) before the next team arrives.
2. The judge advisor does not need to join every interview but should be available to handle any issues. If a remote judge cannot attend or experiences technical problems, the judge advisor should be prepared to step in to ensure interviews stay on schedule.

8.5.1.2 Scheduling the Teams

1. Teams should sign up for remote initial interviews via a clearly communicated first-come, first-served system.
2. The judge advisor may help schedule teams that miss the deadline into any remaining slots.

Appendix A: RECF Inspire Judging Process

A.1 Overview

The processes in this appendix replace Sections 5, 6, and 8 (Judging Engineering Notebooks, Team Interviews, and Remote Judging) for RECF Inspire events. RECF Inspire is less dependent on chronological engineering notebooks, and instead gives students an opportunity to practice concise technical writing and formal presentation skills in a format that is more in alignment with other college activities.

A.2 RECF Inspire Engineering Documentation

A.2.1 Design Process Abstract / Summary

No more than 15 pages including:

- A cover page that includes team number, team & organization name, and names of team members.
- Documentation covering the following topics:
 1. Brief team composition / background
 2. Engineering design process
 3. Key developments and milestones
 4. Testing and research, including methods that did not work
 5. Results and findings
 6. Appendixes / figures / charts
- The design process abstract should be submitted by a deadline determined by the event partner and judge advisor, up to and including a submission the day of the event.
- Teams can maintain an engineering notebook as supplementary material to help formulate the design process abstract, but judges are not expected to read through it. The engineering notebook is not formally evaluated, and is not required for awards.

The purpose of this design process abstract is to give judges a background on the team and their design to supplement information shared in the team presentation. While the quality and completeness of this abstract can be considered qualitatively, it is not quantitatively scored.

A.2.2 Documentation of Custom Parts

This includes conception, fabrication, and all iterations through their current implementation. This can be done in the engineering notebook or some other form of documentation that includes dates of development and the names of students involved in that development. This

is a separate document from the design process abstract. Teams may be asked to provide this documentation to robot inspectors and/or judges upon request.

A.3 RECF Inspire Team Presentation

Each team should prepare a design presentation of 10-15 minutes (standardized for each event and set by the judge advisor / event partner), which will be followed by a Q&A period with judges of no more than 10 minutes (also standardized for each event).

- This should cover the design process, including testing/debugging of any significant custom parts, robots' functionality, coding, and systems engineering. Showing interim steps, failures, redesigns, etc., helps show the unique work of the team as they worked to create their robot designs.
- The team is responsible for procuring any A/V equipment or visual aids needed for their presentation. The event should provide a source of electricity and a table for teams to place props and robots, and may provide a TV and/or projector. Available equipment should be outlined in the event information posted on RECFEvents.org.
- Judges may do walk-throughs of pit and competition areas in order to inspect robots up close, ask follow-up questions, and gather additional information as needed for awards. This is a recommended time for judges with specific backgrounds (fabrication, computer science, etc.) to engage specific teams for more details regarding information presented in the initial interview. For example, showing and demonstrating programming for the Think Award.

A.4 RECF Inspire Rubrics and Criteria

The presentations and written design process abstracts for RECF Inspire are not scored with rubrics. Award descriptions should be used as the basis for determining which team is the best fit for each award. The [Team Interview Notes](#) sheet provides a way for judges to take notes on different aspects of the team's interview.

Appendix B: Official Judging Resources

1. [Full Set of Judging Resources](#) - This PDF includes a single copy of each of these resources in a printable format.
2. [Judged Award Descriptions & Criteria](#) - This document includes award descriptions and key criteria for each award, and is useful in guiding judges' nominations and deliberations. Event partners / judge advisors may wish to print this document and tape the appropriate pages to a wall or whiteboard to guide the judges at the event. Not all events will give out all awards. Each judge advisor should consult with their event partner to determine which awards will be presented at an event.
3. [Single-Page Outline of the Judging Process](#) - Condensed overview of the judging process and the steps of a simple engineering design process
4. [Judging Single-Page Reference Sheet](#) - Interview tips and condensed overview of award criteria
5. [Award Candidate Ranking Sheet](#) - Worksheet for judging pairs/groups to track potential award candidates during interviews
6. [Final Award Nominee Ranking Sheet](#) - Worksheet for the judge advisor to track award nominees during deliberations
7. [Engineering Notebook Rubric](#) - Worksheet used to assess fully developed notebooks
8. [Design & Innovate Awards Interview Rubric](#) - Worksheet used to assess teams during follow-up interviews for the Design and Innovate Awards
9. [Team Interview Notes](#) - Worksheet for judges to use during team interviews
10. [Excellence Award Criteria Checklist](#) - Checklist of the minimum requirements for the Excellence Award
11. [Script for Award Not Given Out](#) - Script to be used during the award ceremony in cases where no team meets the requirements for a specific award
12. [Innovate Award Submission Form](#) - Team submission form for the Innovate Award
13. [Judge Volunteer Check-in Sheet](#) - Check-in sheet for judging volunteers, including disclosure of team affiliations
14. [Volunteer Field Note to Judge Advisor](#) - Form used to inform the judge advisor about positive or negative team behaviors at the field
15. [Sportsmanship Award Nomination Form](#) - Nomination form if this award will not be judged
16. [Energy Award Nomination Form](#) - Nomination form if this award will not be judged
17. [Team Spirit Award Nomination Form](#) - Nomination form if this award will not be judged
18. [3D Printing and Fabrication Award Nomination Form](#) - Nomination form if this award will not be judged
19. [Team Interview Tips and Sample Questions](#) - A set of sample questions for optional use by judges
20. [Coach\Student Guide to the Engineering Notebook Rubric](#) - A descriptive overview of the rubric
21. [Coach\Student Guide to the Design & Innovate Award Interview Rubric](#) - A descriptive overview of the rubric