



AZSEF
ARIZONA SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR

AZSEF MENTORSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT

Mentorship is an important and valued part of authentic scientific research. Throughout the research process, students often seek guidance from teachers, researchers, STEM professionals, family members, and other experienced mentors. Effective mentorship encourages curiosity, builds confidence, and helps students develop the skills needed to become independent researchers.

The Arizona Science & Engineering Fair (AzSEF) believes that mentorship should empower students while preserving the integrity and authenticity of student-led research.

EFFECTIVE MENTORS:

- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking.
- Ask questions that help students develop their own ideas.
- Provide guidance while respecting student ownership of the project.
- Promote honesty, integrity, and ethical research practices.
- Foster an inclusive and supportive environment where all students feel valued.
- Respect the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of every student.
- Model professionalism and appropriate conduct in all interactions.

APPROPRIATE MENTORSHIP MAY INCLUDE:

- Help students refine research questions.
- Discuss experimental design.
- Explain scientific concepts or research methods.
- Teach laboratory techniques or engineering skills.
- Ask questions that encourage deeper thinking.
- Help students interpret data and consider next steps.
- Review written work and provide constructive feedback.
- Coach students as they prepare presentations or interviews.

INAPPROPRIATE MENTORSHIP INCLUDES:

- Select or assign a student's project topic.
- Conduct experiments or collect data on behalf of the student.
- Analyze data without the student's active participation.
- Write or substantially rewrite research papers, abstracts, or presentations.
- Create display boards or presentation materials.
- Make project decisions that remove student ownership.
- Misrepresent the student's contribution to the project.

EXPECTATION OF STUDENT OWNERSHIP

*Authentic research belongs
to the student.*

Students should be able to:

- Explain their research question.
- Describe how decisions were made.
- Demonstrate understanding of their methods, data, and conclusions.
- Communicate their work independently.
- Mentors should strive to develop confident, capable researchers rather than simply helping students produce stronger projects.

All students are required to disclose any mentorship, including paid mentorship services, as part of their project registration. Failure to disclose mentorship may impact eligibility or advancement.