Judging Instructions

Research and Creative Achievement Week (RCAW) is an occasion for the display, performance, and evaluation of student research and creative activity projects, whether originating solely from student(s) or carried out collaboratively with faculty.

Judges will evaluate and provide feedback for the presentations held at the Main Campus Student Center using a Qualtrics form. Judges should check the schedule for the time and location of the session you will be judging.

Volunteer judges are vital to the success of RCAW. Judges should understand their duties and obligations as supportive; familiarize themselves with the assessment criteria; demonstrate interest in the students' research; and offer encouragement and guidance through their feedback.

Procedures for Judging Podium and Poster Presentations

- At least two judges will judge each project.
- Judges should be exceptionally courteous to all students. The students should be put at ease, especially any who appear nervous during questioning. Moderators will be in podium presentation sessions to help with the discussion.
- During **podium sessions**, students will present their research and then answer questions.
- During **poster sessions**, students will provide a brief overview of the study displayed on the poster and then answer questions. Judges should listen carefully to the complete presentation.
  - Students should have an opportunity to discuss their projects with two judges. Other RCAW attendees may also be in the vicinity.
  - Judges should introduce themselves at the start of poster discussion sessions and attempt to establish a friendly rapport to help reduce the students' nervousness.
  - Judges should take an active part in the evaluation; silence may be interpreted as disinterest or boredom, which can have a very discouraging effect on the students.

- For individual presentations, students will give their presentations and then answer questions about their work on the project.
- For team projects, a team spokesperson will likely be designated to give the presentation. All team members should be able to answer questions pertaining to the project. If not addressed in the presentation, judges should ask each team member for a brief description of their contributions to the project and ask the team to address how they worked together.
- During discussion, judges may ask students questions about the materials and tools used and methods, terms used, sources of information, and the amount and type of assistance enlisted in the preparation of the project. It is also proper to ask questions within the discipline or subject matter involved at the students' level of learning.
- Judges should try to determine the span of the students' sustained interest in their particular field or discipline, as well as the approximate amount of time spent in developing the project. Some premium should be granted for considerably extended interest and effort to encourage the quality of persistence that is demonstrated.
- Judges should be constructive and productive in making their assessments. A balanced evaluation is needed to encourage students' future contributions. Outstanding, superior ratings should only be used for a well-executed, complete project.

Evaluation & Assessment

Scoring should be completed using the electronic judging form in Qualtrics, which will be emailed to you and will also be available with a QR code at the check-in counter. If you have a smartphone, you may find it convenient to access the judging form on your phone while you use a computer or tablet to participate in the judging.

- **Using the Qualtrics Form**
  - Password: **25RCAW25**
  - Includes rankings for the presentations based on the judging criteria and spaces for you to provide comments about the strengths and weaknesses of students' presentations.
  - Each judge will score independently of the other judge(s) but may confer with other judges.
  - Scores will be tallied, and questions resulting from vastly different scores may be referred to the judges for that session. An additional judge may also be asked to provide feedback.
  - "Winners" in categories will be determined by the rankings from the scoring.
  - We will collect all judging information from Qualtrics and send information to each student as feedback, so comments on each presentation are important!
- **Judging Best Practices**
  - Only RCAW officials may inform the students of the scores or ratings after judging.
  - Do not hurry a judgment. Provide constructive comments (1) indicating reasons for the rating and (2) making suggestions for improvement on the scoring form to be returned to the students after the event. Most importantly, comments (positive and negative) are important so that the students can use the feedback for improvement.
  - Evaluate students to CRITERIA (Described below), not against other students.
  - Consider the students' class levels when completing their evaluations.
  - Take into consideration independent vs. collaborative projects with a mentor. Mentoring of students and professionals alike is common and expected in

the university world of training and education. Although ECU expects all students to enlist the help of advisors and/or mentors for projects, students must demonstrate involvement in and contribution to the development and conduct of a project. Judges are directed to base their ratings on the level of the students' research involvement and contribution. Judges are cautioned to realize that a student's access to mentors may be limited. Judges are directed not to bias their ratings either for or against students with or without mentors.

- o Evaluate theoretical and applied projects without bias toward either.

Judging Criteria

The following section includes an interpretation of the various criteria on which the student's project or exhibit will be judged:

- A. Knowledge or Experience Achieved
- B. Effective Use of Methods or Medium
- C. Clarity of Expression and Response
- D. Questions Originality and Creativity

The minimum number of points for each overall rating is listed below in the table.

For a superior rating, an individual or team of students shall receive a minimum of 36 points based on the criteria. For an excellent rating, a minimum of 24 points are needed, for a good rating, a minimum of 12 points are needed, and for a satisfactory rating, 4 points are needed.

Scoring with judging criteria for Podium and Poster Sessions

Criteria	Superior	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory
Knowledge or experience achieved	10-9	8-7-6	5-4-3	2-1
Effective use of method/medium (including teamwork if applicable)	10-9	8-7-6	5-4-3	2-1
Clarity of expression and response to questions	10-9	8-7-6	5-4-3	2-1
Originality and creativity	10-9	8-7-6	5-4-3	2-1
Range of scores	**40-36**	**35-24**	**23-12**	**11-4**

A. Knowledge or Experience Achieved (considering student's academic level)

- Has there been a correct understanding and use of discipline terms?
- Is there evidence of an acquisition of in-depth knowledge through the research and/or creating the project?
- Do students show evidence of knowing what the underlying principle(s) is (are)?
- In brief, have they actually learned content through their study, research and/or creative activity?

- Check the references (if appropriate) to assist in making a fair determination of the scope and depth of the literature research. Where appropriate, the quantity and quality of the references should be taken into account to evaluate the student's research methodology.
- Where applicable with some creative activities, have the students created the aesthetic or artistic experience that they intended? Have the students achieved something that is meaningful and advances human understanding of the topic or issue at hand?

B. Effective Use of Methods or Medium

- Do the students have a clear-cut idea of the purpose of their projects, or is it something thrown together and manipulated?
- Did the students choose an appropriate method or medium? Have they collected an appropriate amount of information?
- Where appropriate, is the number of subjects or specimens adequate to generalize to the larger group that the sample is intended to represent?
- Are students aware of other approaches or theories relative to this problem or project?
- Is there evidence of both contemporary literature search and fundamental survey of knowledge with results?
- Have students been thorough in the methodology?
- Have students analyzed results in a logical manner and drawn valid conclusions?
- Where applicable with some creative activities, has the student chosen an appropriate medium for which to express their views and advance audience understanding of a topic?
- Is the use of the medium innovative and specifically appropriate for the topic at hand?

Teamwork (this section applicable only in the case of multiple presenters)

- All team members must be present to be considered as part of the judging process.
- Each team should appoint a team leader to coordinate the work and act as spokesperson. However, each member of the team should be able to serve as spokesperson, be fully involved with the project, and be familiar with all aspects of the project.
- If not addressed in the presentation, the judges should ask each team member for a one or two sentence description about their contributions to the project.
- The final work should reflect the coordinated efforts of all team members, and some description about how the team worked together should be provided.

C. Clarity of Expression and Response to Questions

- Do the students explain the project and their findings concisely and well?
- Do the students answer questions from the audience or judges in a professional and convincing manner?
- Judges should try to weigh evidence of a student's nervousness – does it impact their clarity of expression and ability to answer questions? Listen carefully to a students' presentations for understanding of basic ideas, principles, and results.
- Have the students expressed themselves well in all written material, such as the abstract and presentation visuals? Judges might consider asking students about the words or terminology used in the abstract and presentation to validate that the students clearly understand their use and that students actually carried out the research and/or created the project. Judges may also ask what specific knowledge or information came from specific references from the literature.
- Do the students' presentations make a visual impact and express clarity graphically? In the case of posters, is the physical display neat and sufficiently definitive to act as a stand-alone summary of the student's entire project?

- Note misspelled words and weak or imprecise grammar.
- Do the research and/or the creative project presentations (talk or poster) include the components or parts expected of a standard project? Do they follow an accepted form of reporting given the student's discipline?
- Where applicable with some creative activities, what impact did the activity have on the audience? Was the audience engaged? Did the project excel in communicating meaning, symbolism, beauty, and even controversy (if appropriate) to observers?

D. Originality and Creativity

- It is true that the approach may not be new to the judge, but is the problem, approach to the problem, or activity developed in a particularly significant or unique manner?
- Have students used a new approach to an old subject?
- Have students provided a unique presentation or organization of materials?
- Does the project show evidence of critical thinking skills? Does the project show evidence of originality and creativity relative to the standards of the student's discipline; whether it is the use of technology, the development of a survey device, the use of an archival collection or statistical database, the design of experimentation, or use of a creative activity medium?
- Is there evidence of initiative? Place a premium on the ingenious uses of available materials. Collections and manufactured apparatus can be creative if they are assembled and used to achieve, show, or support a stated purpose or provide effective comparison with previously collected or published data. Has a creative medium been used in an innovative way?
- Where applicable with some creative activities, did the work communicate a depth of understanding and perspective on an issue that is unique and not commonly seen or heard? If the project addresses a well-known idea, did the students bring something new to its presentation? Was there evidence of significant thought and reflection behind the creative project?

Thank you for serving as a judge at the 2025 Research and Creative Achievement Week!