

WE21 Collegiate Poster & Rapid Fire Competitions

Application Instructions

Submission Website: <https://swe.org/awards/collegiate-competitions/>

Submission Deadline: June 15, 2021

General Information

The Society of Women Engineers welcomes submissions for the Collegiate Poster & Rapid Fire Competition. Subject matter is to be related to original research or work with an application in engineering.

- The abstract submission deadline is June 15, 2021.
- 40 finalists will be selected to attend the Society of Women Engineers Annual Conference October 21-23, 2021, currently planned for Indianapolis, Indiana. If in person, travel and conference support will be provided to the 40 finalists (details below).
- There will be 10 finalists in each category: Undergraduate Collegiate Poster, Graduate Collegiate Poster, Undergraduate Collegiate Rapid Fire, and Graduate Collegiate Rapid Fire.

Eligibility

- Must be a SWE member in good standing.
- Undergraduate and Graduate Collegiate members are eligible to enter. You must enter the category for which you are currently enrolled, either a Collegiate Member or a Graduate Collegiate Member.
- A student may participate as a finalist in either the Poster or Rapid Fire competition and may indicate their preference for one or both during abstract submission.
- Incomplete submissions or submissions that exceed word limitations will not be considered.
- A limit on number of times a student may be selected as a finalist will be enforced: students can only be a Rapid Fire finalists one time and a Poster finalist one time, in each the undergraduate and graduate divisions. This means a student could at maximum be a finalist four times, if they attended graduate school after completing an undergraduate program. These limits only apply to competitions at the Society's annual conference, not WE Local competitions.
- Past WE Local finalists/presenters are eligible to submit the same project supported by the same class, internship, program, or research grant for the following annual conference competitions. As a note, annual conference finalists are not eligible to participate in WE Local the following year with an abstract focused on the same project. However, if a student has multiple projects supported by distinct classes, internships, programs, or research grants, they can submit a different project for annual and the following WE Local.
- Limited one submission per person.

Specific questions concerning the Collegiate Poster & Rapid Fire Competition can be directed to researchcompetitions@swe.org.

Competition Details

- The **Poster Competition** is designed to emphasize the ability to deliver visual presentations.
- The **Rapid Fire Competition** is a 5-6 minute speaking presentation, designed to emphasize the ability to concisely and dynamically present technical information.

All entrants will be required to submit an abstract describing their work. The abstract should describe original research or project work with an application in engineering or science. This can be laboratory work, an engineering design project, an engineering implementation project, or a computer simulation or modeling project. It is crucial the work in your submission is original and is not a review in which you summarize the work of others. You can use a project you are working on alone, as an independent study project, or one you are working on with others. Research and projects completed at university or in work co-ops/internships are eligible. Work can be finished or can still be “in progress”. If the work is in progress, be sure to indicate in your abstract what has been completed and what conclusions have been reached so far and then what is planned.

There will be two submission categories, Undergraduate Collegiate and Graduate Collegiate. 10 finalists in each of the four categories: (1) Undergraduate Collegiate Poster, (2) Graduate Collegiate Poster, (3) Undergraduate Collegiate Rapid Fire, and (4) Graduate Collegiate Rapid Fire will compete at WE21.

All 40 finalists will receive a \$500 travel stipend to attend SWE’s annual conference, free Collegiate Member conference registration, and 1 ticket to the Celebrate SWE! Awards Banquet. The reimbursement form for finalists is located on the competition [webpage \(https://swe.org/awards/collegiate-competitions/ \)](https://swe.org/awards/collegiate-competitions/).

1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will be recognized at the Celebrate SWE! Banquet and receive a Certificate of Participation. In addition, the following awards with cash prizes will be mailed to the top 3 finishers of each of the four categories after WE21:

Awarded in each Undergraduate Poster, Undergraduate Rapid Fire, Graduate Poster, and Graduate Rapid Fire categories.

- 1st Place - \$300
- 2nd Place - \$200
- 3rd Place - \$100

Guidelines for Submission

Students interested in the Poster and/or Rapid Fire competition must submit one abstract for review. The abstract should give a clear indication of the objective, scope, and results of your research or project. An abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work. It is assumed that the reader is knowledgeable in the broad category of the topic, but not necessarily an expert in the specialty of the project. If selected for the competition, you would expand upon your abstract with a full poster or presentation.

The online submission form will consist of the following:

- Applicant Information
 - First Name
 - Last Name
 - SWE Membership Number
 - Academic Level: Undergraduate or Graduate
 - University/College
 - Date of Current Program Graduation
 - Contact Information: address, email, phone number
- Required Abstract Information
 - Title of Research
 - Author(s) Name – acknowledge all those who have participated significantly in the aspects of the research, not just the applicant
 - Abstract – limited to 250 words, text only format
 - Preference for Poster, Rapid Fire, or either competition (a student may participate as a finalist in only one, and may indicate their preference for one or both during abstract submission)

Abstract Selection Criteria

The same abstract criteria are used for both Poster and Rapid Fire abstracts. Finalist selection is based on abstract content. Scoring is determined by the rubric below. Judging is double blinded.

Abstract Criteria	Points Available
Title: Clear and understandable, summarizes abstract, interesting.	10
Context: Background on research or project area, gives context to the work how it fits in the larger field. Limits of the scope of the investigation/project. Answers “Why was this work undertaken?”	10
Objectives: Hypothesis, intent of work, or problem statement. Answers “What is this work trying to show? What is being proved or implemented?”	10
Methods & Results: Concise summary of experiments or project accomplishments. Summarizes key data. Answers “How the work was done? What happened?”	20
Conclusions: Interpretation of outcomes. Gives context to how the work the larger field.	20
Overall: Submission is structured as an abstract. Clear communication style, without typos or grammatical errors. Work is compelling, high quality, and rigorous.	30
Total	100

Scoring guide for abstract criteria

Full points	Criteria information included; easily apparent that each item of the rubric has been addressed; clear, easy to follow
Partial points	Criteria information included, but confusing, incomplete, or difficult for the judge to comprehend message
0 points	Criteria information not included

Guidance for preparing your abstract:

About writing an abstract:

An abstract is a concise summary of the research. A good, informative abstract acts as a surrogate for the work itself. That is, the writer presents and explains all the main arguments and the important results and evidence from the work. Abstracts are prepared to serve either or both of the following purposes:

- To acquaint a reader with research results without the need to read the entire article or hear a full presentation.
- Allow readers/supervisors/judges to review technical work without becoming bogged down in jargon or methods.

Tips for content:

- Briefly explain the context of your work. What is the objective? What are you aiming to demonstrate or prove? Why is your work important or significant for your field?
- If you need to reference to a type of test or procedure, try to restrict it to identification of method or type of process employed.
- State results, conclusions, or findings in a clear, concise fashion.

Tips for style:

- Assume that the reader has a good general technical vocabulary but try to avoid use of highly specialized words or abbreviations. Remember that they may not be an expert in the specialty of your work or even your field of engineering or science.
- Use past tense and third person in describing completed research, present tense when stating existing facts and what is included in the larger work.
- Proofread your work. Incorrect spelling and poor sentence structure will discourage interest in your project.
- Have an advisor, mentor, or colleague review your abstract. Provide the scoring rubric so they can give feedback on how well they understand your work. Reach out to members of your SWE section, GradSWE, or the Women in Academia group for review or support.

SWE Contact Information

Collegiate Research Competitions Coordinator (volunteer)

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