

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

These guidelines apply to National History Day in Minnesota Regional/District contests and the Minnesota State History Day contest.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest may be defined as an interest (direct or indirect) between people that might affect, or might reasonably be thought by others to affect, the judging and/or outcome of an NHD contest. Minnesota History Day will take all practical and necessary steps to mitigate any identified conflicts and ensure a fair competition.

Judge Conflict of Interest Procedures

The Minnesota History Day program takes steps to identify and mitigate any possible conflicts of interest between participating students and contest judges.

- People affiliated with History Day students or schools are allowed to serve as judges.
- Judges are asked to disclose any relationships with History Day students or schools when they register.
- History Day staff will assign these judges to a different category/division from those students/schools with whom they are familiar.
- Judges review their schedule of entries before judging begins, but do not have access to school information. When conflicts are identified, event staff will switch judging assignments. It is not necessarily a conflict of interest for a judge to have previously evaluated a project as long as no additional consulting took place.
- Judges with conflicts will not be able to access results before announced to the general public.
- If a conflict doesn't become apparent until the interview, the judge will immediately notify the event coordinator. The judge will not evaluate and rank that entry.
- **St. Paul Public Schools:** *According to district policy, parents/guardians of St. Paul Public School student currently participating in History Day are not allowed to serve as judges at the St. Paul Public Schools District Contest.*

In order to minimize possible conscious or unconscious bias, no school will be included on the materials handed to judges or on the individual room schedules posted in competition areas. Judge are instructed to refrain from asking students about the school they attend. Students should also refrain from wearing clothing with school logos or including their school name when introducing their project.

Staff Conflict of Interest Procedures

By nature of the work that Minnesota History Day does with schools, staff members and mentors will likely develop relationships with students and teachers participating in Regional/District and State contests. While it is impossible to avoid all conflicts, we will make all reasonable efforts to assign staff members/mentors with close student/teacher relationships to jobs outside of the judge room or processing of results.

Access to Results and Competition Areas

- Staff will not give competing teachers or students access to results for their students in advance of when these materials are available to the general public.
- Staff will not allow competing teachers or students access to judge deliberation rooms while judges are discussing entries or ranking projects.
- Staff will not allow competing teachers, students, or judges access to tabulation areas while preparing results and will limit the number of people working on results to as few staff as possible.

Discussion and Evaluation of Entries

- Staff may advise on the impact of a rule violation on a project ranking, but will not make decisions in regards to a project's ranking.
- When it becomes necessary for a staff member or mentor to judge at a contest, they must review the schedule for possible conflicts. It is permissible for staff or a mentor to judge students with whom they may have had a singular interactions, such as providing advice at a Hullabaloo or having spoken to the student's entire class during a presentation.

**Please contact Minnesota History Day staff with any questions
about these guidelines.**