

COMMON REASONS PROJECTS FAIL TO QUALIFY

The list below includes reasons students failed to qualify in 2022; however, the reasons entrants may fail to qualify are not limited to only these examples. After applications are submitted each year, a team of PhD scientists reviews each entry and performs an extensive rules check. When an Regeneron STS entry “fails to qualify,” the student is not eligible for awards. Entrants should also explore Task 3 of the application, and can email any questions to sts@societyforscience.org.

Human Research

- Student fails to obtain IRB approval before testing an invention, software or product, or conducting a survey.
- Human data was not properly deidentified before being shared with student, OR mentor or paperwork fail to corroborate student claims of deidentification.
- Student fails to upload a blank copy of survey used on human participants (if survey used in project).
- Student fails to upload a blank copy of informed consent document used on human participants, or does not share evidence of collecting informed consent (if informed consent required by IRB).
- Student fails to upload IRB documentation or proof of publication from mentor’s originating study.
- IRB is improperly constituted (school IRBs are ok, but teachers who oversee a project must not be part of the school IRB as this is a conflict of interest. Parents/guardians should not be members of IRBs governing their own students’ projects.)
- IRB paperwork not signed or checkboxes of IRB decision not checked.
- Dates on paperwork do not align with dates of student data collection.
- Student project diagnoses or treats medical conditions.

Non-Human Vertebrate Animal Research

- The source of vertebrate animal/human cell lines or tissues are not properly documented.
- Vertebrate animal/human established cell lines or tissue cultures were obtained from a commercial source and neither student nor project recommender provided a catalog number; or if obtained from a non-commercial source there is no documentation from supplier.
- Vertebrate animal sacrificed solely for student study.
- Student study involved pain or stress to vertebrate animals.
- Vertebrate animal’s habitat and/or food was altered without IACUC approvals (in order for a study to be considered observational, no factors can be altered in animal’s habitat).
- Student fails to upload IACUC documentation or proof of publication from mentor’s originating study.
- Student performs vertebrate animal research in a home environment.
- IACUC paperwork not provided.
- Dates on paperwork do not align with dates of student data collection.

PHBAs

- Student performs PHBA research in a home setting after June 2020.
- Student cultures microorganisms in a home environment.

Other

- Student’s research report fails plagiarism screening.
- Student fails to disclose personal relationships in the mentorship of their project, or other conflict of interest.
- Student or mentor fails to disclose payment for services.
- Student is not in their final year of high school.
- Student submits high school team project as individual work.
- Student does not meet residence or citizenship eligibility requirements.
- Student adheres to University requirements that are less strict than Regeneron STS requirements.
- Research Report exceeds 20 page limit, or attempts to deceive the spirit of the page limit.