



eCYBERMISSION COMPETITION RULES

2022 – 2023

Welcome to the 2022-2023 eCYBERMISSION Competition! Please carefully review the competition rules and reach out to our Mission Control help desk if you have any questions. Mission Control is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (ET) Monday – Friday. Mission Control may be reached at 1-866-GO-CYBER (462-9237) or missioncontrol@ecybermission.com. For the most up-to-date competition rules please visit <https://www.ecybermission.com/CompetitionRules>.

I. Code of Conduct: Team Advisor and Student Responsibilities

A. Once a team registers for eCYBERMISSION, they agree that they have read and will adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

1. Team Advisors are responsible for the behavior and ethical conduct of their students, both inside and outside of the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to: interactions on the Message Board, CyberGuide Live Chats, social media, all NSTA staff, during investigations and interviews conducted by the team (see Section VI), Mission Folder content, and any events associated with eCYBERMISSION.
2. Team Advisors are responsible for verifying the eligibility of the team members. All team members must live in, or attend a school in, the state in which the team is competing, and all team members are U.S. Citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents of the U.S.).
3. Team Advisors and students are responsible for following safety rules and taking safety precautions throughout the entire experimental process including demonstrations at all levels of the competition. All teams are required to follow Lab safety protocols set forth by their school or classroom. If the team is not affiliated directly with a school we recommend the following as safety guidelines during work on their Mission Folder: [NSTA Middle School Safety Acknowledgment](#).
4. Students and Team Advisors are not permitted to use any item(s) that might be determined by their school district to be banned, prohibited, or contraband.

B. Team Advisors and students must review and understand these statements while participating in the eCYBERMISSION competition:

1. I understand the project my team members and I plan to work on (or are working on) must be original work and that the resources and references used in our project will be noted throughout our research. Additionally, all work on the project for the 2022-2023 competition began after April 1, 2022.
2. I will not give out any personal or identifying information without my parents' or guardians' permission, including, but not limited to, my name, email address, home address, telephone number, parent's work address/telephone number or the name and location of my school (other than the information required for registration).



3. I will tell my parent or guardian right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable. I will also tell my Team Advisor and ask them to inform eCYBERMISSION Mission Control.
4. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parent or guardian agrees to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my parent or guardian along.
5. I will treat other students, volunteers, eCYBERMISSION Staff, and Team Advisors with respect while participating in eCYBERMISSION. This includes always using appropriate language and never being rude or disrespectful when interacting on the Message Board, during CyberGuide Live Chats, social media, during investigations or interviews conducted by the team, or while attending any eCYBERMISSION event.
6. I will conduct myself ethically and in compliance with the eCYBERMISSION competition rules stated below when using the CyberGuide Live Chats, Message Board, social media, conducting investigations or interviews, or attending an eCYBERMISSION event.
7. I understand that if I do not follow the guidelines of this Code of Conduct, my team members and I may be disqualified from the competition.

II. Schedule and Deadlines

- A. The online registration period is open from August 15, 2022 through January 25, 2023. A complete team, two, three, or four students and a Team Advisor, must be registered and assigned to a team by January 25, 2023, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time, in order to compete in the 2022-2023 competition. After the registration deadline, teams may no longer register to participate in the current eCYBERMISSION competition unless the U.S. Army Educational Outreach Program (AEOP) deems it necessary to extend the end of the registration period.
- B. The competition work may begin any time after April 1, 2022, but registration will not open until August 15, 2022. Teams have until March 1, 2023, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time, to submit their Mission Folders (all components) on the eCYBERMISSION website. Mission Folder content and/or attachments will not be accepted by any other means. After this deadline, no other Mission Folders or Mission Folder attachments will be accepted. AEOP and eCYBERMISSION reserve the right to extend the deadline. Any changes to the deadline will be publicized on the eCYBERMISSION website and communicated through email and/or text communication.
- C. Virtual judging takes place March 15 –29, 2023 and the regional judging period takes place April 24 –28, 2023. Regional and State Winners will be notified by mid-May. All scores submitted by the Virtual and Regional Judges are final.
- D. The National Judging & Educational Event (NJ&EE) will be held in mid/late June 2023. NJ&EE is a week of educational activities and national judging. STEM-In-Action Grant recipients will also be invited to participate in NJ&EE.

III. Team Structure, Student, and Team Advisor Eligibility

A. Team Structure and Eligibility

1. To compete in eCYBERMISSION, participants must be part of a complete team. A complete team includes two, three, or four students competing for the same state or territory and one adult Team Advisor who is over the age of 21. (See Section III.C for Team Advisor Eligibility Requirements). Teams may be students from the same grade or students from different grades (6-9). Mixed grade teams will compete at the highest grade level represented in the team. For example, two 6th graders and an 8th grader may form a team, but will compete at the 8th grade level.

2. Since this is a web-based competition, there may be different situations regarding residency of students compared to where the school is located. The state the team competes for must be the state in which the school, organization or group is located, be it brick and mortar OR virtual. If a registered team is affiliated with a school, the team must register in the state that school is located in regardless of where the students reside. A team that is not affiliated with a school, organization, or group must register in the state the Team Advisor resides.

3. All team members must compete for the same state. Carefully read the following three scenarios to determine which scenario best fits your team(s):

- a) Students from the same state as their school must register in the state of their school at registration.
- b) Students who attend the same school but reside in different states may compete on the same team, provided that they compete in the state where the school is located, not where the individual students reside. Students may not compete for more than one state.
- c) Students all live in the same state, but the school is in a different state. The team must register to compete in the state in which the school is located.
- d) Students who experience a change in residency may continue to compete with their team virtually as long as they actively and significantly contribute to the final project.

4. As a courtesy to those who serve, the following rule applies only to dependents of active duty service members. Should a student of an active duty service member relocate after a complete team is registered (composed of two, three, or four students) and wishes to continue working with this team, they may do so as long as the student can significantly contribute to the team's overall project. The Team Advisor should be able to verify that the relocated student contributed significantly to the final project.

5. All students and Team Advisors who wish to participate must register and have a complete team prior to the close of registration. A Team Advisor may register more than one team. All registered teams must be complete and registered by the close of registration on January 25, 2023.

6. For competition purposes, the number of participants on a team is determined at 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the registration deadline date, January 25, 2023. Teams may not add or drop students after this time. If the team number falls below two students at any point after registration is completed, the team will become disqualified.

- a) If a team of three or four students loses a member due to extenuating circumstances (proof of circumstances may be required) team eligibility will be determined by eCYBERMISSION staff. Any team with less than two students and one Team Advisor will automatically be disqualified regardless of the circumstances.
 7. Each student must make significant contributions for the success of the team, be a full participant in the development of the Mission Folder, participate in regional judging, and attend NJ&EE in June in order for the team to compete for a national award. If the original team (all team members determined at the time of registration excluding any exceptions granted as determined by eCYBERMISSION) cannot attend regional judging or NJ&EE because a student is unable to participate, attend, or has left the team, the team will not be eligible to compete and will forfeit its ability to compete for a regional award or a national title. If a student or Team Advisor must leave before the completion of NJ&EE, the team must forfeit. The Team Advisor must be present at both regional and national judging for the team to be eligible to compete.
- B. Student Eligibility Requirement**
1. A team's competing region is determined by the address of their school/organization.
 2. Students must be officially enrolled in either sixth, seventh, eighth or ninth grade at a U.S.-based public, private or home school, Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS), or a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school abroad. Students residing in one of the U.S. Territories, DoDEA or DoDDS schools should use the proper registration code and should not use the "International" code unless their location is not represented.
 3. All U.S. Citizens (see Section III.B.3.a.1) and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) (see Section III.B.a.2) are eligible to participate in eCYBERMISSION. F1-Visa holders are not eligible for the eCYBERMISSION competition. Reporting U.S. Citizenship or LPR status is not required at the time of registration. However, only those students with a valid Social Security number or that are able to prove LPR status are eligible to receive an eCYBERMISSION award and advance in the competition. For administration of awards, competition winners must provide the Social Security number of the registered student and must be able to set up a minor-linked Treasury Direct Account (which will be kept confidential). eCYBERMISSION awards are distributed via U.S. Savings Bond Treasury Direct, a service of the U.S. Department of Treasury. Students without a Social Security number cannot be issued a U.S. Savings Bond.
 - a) The definition of a U.S. citizen from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website:
 - (1) U.S. Citizen:
 - (a) An individual born in the United States.
 - (b) An individual whose parent is a U.S. citizen.
 - (i) The Child Citizenship Act, which applies to both adopted and biological children of U.S. citizens, amends Section 320 of the Immigration and Nationality Act

(INA) to provide for the automatic acquisition of U.S. citizenship when certain conditions have been met.

Specifically, these conditions are:

- (a) One parent is a U.S. citizen by birth or through naturalization;
 - (b) The child is under the age of 18;
 - (c) The child is residing in the United States as a lawful permanent resident alien and is in the legal and physical custody of the U.S. citizen parent.
 - (c) A former alien who has been naturalized as a U.S. citizen.
 - (d) An individual born in Puerto Rico.
 - (e) An individual born in Guam.
 - (f) An individual born in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- (2) Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) is defined as the following by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:
- (a) Any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the U.S. under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant. Also known as "Permanent Resident Alien," "Resident Alien Permit Holder," and "Green Card Holder".
 - (b) F1-Visa holders are not eligible for the eCYBERMISSION competition.

C. Team Advisor Eligibility Requirement

- 1. A Team Advisor must be at least 21 years of age.
- 2. Team Advisors must be one of the following: a teacher, coach, counselor, leader in a youth organization, or parent.
- 3. Team Advisors must have access to the Internet and an active email address in order to communicate with eCYBERMISSION staff.
- 4. Team Advisors can mentor as many teams as they choose, but must ensure that students are only participating with one eCYBERMISSION team per competition year.

IV. Student and Team Advisor Responsibilities

A. Student Responsibilities

- 1. Students should conduct themselves ethically and in compliance with the eCYBERMISSION competition rules and be mindful of online etiquette when interacting on the Message Board, CyberGuide Live Chats, social media, during investigations and interviews conducted by the team, Mission Folder content, and any events associated with eCYBERMISSION.
- 2. Students are only allowed to participate as a member of one team. Duplicate registrations are not accepted by eCYBERMISSION.
- 3. Students must do their own work on the Mission Folder and must not permit any person (other than student members of the team) to perform such work.

4. Each student must make significant contributions for the success of the team and be a full participant in the development of the Mission Folder.
- B. Team Advisor Responsibilities
1. Team Advisors are responsible for the behavior, safety, and ethical conduct of themselves and their students, both inside and outside of the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to Mission Folder content, CyberGuide Live Chats, Message Board, social media, during investigations and while conducting surveys, and while attending any eCYBERMISSION event.
 2. Team Advisors are responsible for demonstrating and encouraging respect and teamwork within their own teams and towards others in the eCYBERMISSION competition.
 3. Should a team qualify to travel to eCYBERMISSION's National Judging and Educational Event (NJ&EE) responsibilities for the Team Advisor include being responsible for the students at all times during NJ&EE beginning from when the team leaves their home until the time the team returns from the event (unless otherwise stated).
 4. For teams to be eligible to compete in eCYBERMISSION, Team Advisors must ensure and verify that all students on a team compete for the same state (see Section III.B.3 for clarification). A student may only be on one team, and that team may only submit one Mission Folder. Team Advisors must ensure and verify that all students on a team are eligible to participate (see Section III for eligibility requirements)
 5. Team Advisors must assist in validating their team if requested by eCYBERMISSION. Validation information is found in Section XI.

V. Mission Folder Contents and Requirements

- A. General
1. The Mission Folder content must be unique and all work on the project must begin after April 1, 2022. Students should identify a problem within the community and either investigate the problem through the use of scientific inquiry or design a solution through the use of the engineering design process and answer all of the questions in their Mission Folder.
 - a) Answers must be entered in the space provided or as an attached document. If answers are provided in an attached document, the answers must be in the same order as the online format and easily identified.
 - b) Each field must contain a written statement (for example, "See attached document.") in order to submit a completed Mission Folder.
 - c) Information about each of the processes can be found on the eCYBERMISSION website.
 - d) Teams are encouraged to reference supporting files, such as graphics, photos or tables for the Virtual Judges to review. Supporting files must be uploaded to the Mission Folder and must be clearly named and referenced in the text fields.

- (1) The maximum allowable size for uploaded files is 10 MB each. Files NOT acceptable for uploading include, but are not limited to: .exe, .mdb, .scr, and .tif.
 - (2) It is the responsibility of the team to verify all allowable files are correctly uploaded and viewable to the public. School google documents are not viewable to the public and should be downloaded from the google drive/folder in Microsoft or PDF format and uploaded to the Mission Folder
 - (3) Teams cannot attach video files, but it is recommended that any videos that pertain to the Mission Folder be uploaded to a video sharing website and that the link to the video be provided in the Mission Folder.
2. Each team member must make significant contributions to the success of the team and be a full participant in the development of the final Mission Folder.
 3. While students are encouraged to seek guidance from parents, Team Advisors, friends, published sources, scientists, engineers, CyberGuides, other collaborators, and the Internet, the students must do their own work on the Mission Folder and must not permit any person (other than student members of the team) to perform such work.
 4. Teams must not copy the words or images of others, except as permitted in Section V.B: Use of Copyrighted Materials.
 5. The Mission Folder, as well as other communications submitted to eCYBERMISSION, must be written in English.
 6. A team may submit a project that they entered in another science competition (such as Christopher Columbus, FIRST Robotics, etc.) as long as research and experimentation for the Mission Folder began no earlier than April 1, 2022.
 7. Teams may develop prototypes including websites and apps. The total value of the prototype cannot exceed \$250 (U.S. dollars). For teams that develop a website or app as part of their project, please note that the website and/or app developed by the team is the prototype and the technology used to display the website or app is not considered part of the prototype.
 8. Teams may NOT duplicate or replicate a project submitted by another team in a previous competition year. Students may focus on the same problem, but submitted work must contain new research, new solutions and new outcomes.
 9. Failure to meet these requirements could result in the team being disqualified from the competition.
- B. Use of Copyrighted Materials**
1. Mission Folders must be the original work of the students. The word "material" as used in this section includes text, images and data included in the Mission Folder or otherwise published on the Internet.
 2. A Mission Folder may include supporting materials that were created by another person if an accurate citation of the quoted material is included in the Mission Folder. If citations are not included, this is a form of plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in the Mission Folder being disqualified. In addition, no Mission Folder may include material that was created by another person without permission to quote such

materials by the creator or owner of such intellectual property, such as unpublished documents or documents that explicitly state obtain permission to use, and a copy of such permission must be made available to eCYBERMISSION.

3. Quotations from materials printed in newspapers, magazines or books are permissible if an accurate citation is included.
4. No Mission Folder may include any trademarked material(s) without the written permission from the owner(s) of the trademarked material(s).

C. Previous Mission Folders Usage

1. Mission Folder Continuation
 - a) Teams may continue a project from a previous year.
 - b) All new work on the project must begin no earlier than April 1, 2022.
 - c) Significant new work must be documented including new experiments and/or engineering design process steps. New research includes new data collection, new resources, new experimental designs, and/or new prototypes. New results must be achieved.
 - d) If the work is the continuation of a previous year's project or the same topic, the Mission Folder from the previous year must be attached to this year's Mission Folder.
 - e) Failure to abide by these rules will result in team disqualification.
2. Mission Folder Topic Usage
 - a) Students may use the same topic as in previous years provided they were not Regional Winners in previous eCYBERMISSION competition years.
 - b) Teams must do completely new research and experimentation for the 2022-2023 competition. New research includes new data collection, new resources, new experimental designs, and/or new prototypes.
 - c) Failure to abide by these rules will result in team disqualification.

VI. Mission Folder Safety, Risk Assessment, and IRB Review and Approval

A. Risk Assessment

1. **It is recommended that all teams** complete the [Risk Assessment form](#) before beginning any testing to identify any potential risks and safety precautions planned.
2. The Team Advisor is responsible for ensuring that all proper safety measures were taken and will attest to such when submitting the team's Mission Folder.

B. Human Research Participants

1. When students conduct research with humans, the rights and welfare of the participants must be protected. Teams must follow federal guidelines to protect the human research participants and the team. Many studies will require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. It is the responsibility of the Team Advisor to ensure that all teams follow these guidelines and will attest to such when submitting the team's Mission Folder.
2. Studies Exempt from IRB Review/Approval
 - a) The following are the ONLY human subject type projects that are exempt from IRB pre-approval and informed consent:

- (1) When the testing of a student-designed invention, prototype, or computer application is done ONLY by the team AND where the testing does not pose a health or safety hazard.
 - (2) Data/record review studies where the data are taken from pre-existing data sets that are publicly available and/or published and do not involve any interaction with humans or the direct collection of any data from a human participant.
 - (3) Behavioral observations of unrestricted, public settings in which all of the following apply:
 - (a) The team has no interaction with the subjects being observed; AND
 - (b) The team does not manipulate the environment in any way; AND
 - (c) The team does not record any personally identifiable data about the subjects being observed.
 - b) Projects in which the team receives pre-existing data in a de-identified/anonymous format and complies with both of the following conditions:
 - (1) The professional providing the data certifies in writing that the data have been appropriately de-identified before being given to the team and are in compliance with all privacy and HIPPA laws, AND
 - (2) eCYBERMISSION ensures that the data were appropriately de-identified by review of the written documentation provided by the Team Advisor.
3. Studies Requiring IRB Review/Approval
- a) All human subject projects not listed above REQUIRE an IRB review and pre-approval and may require written informed consent/minor assent/parental permission. An IRB Approval form can be found [here](#).
 - b) An IRB form MUST be completed PRIOR to the start of testing including all signatures.
 - c) It is the responsibility of the Team Advisor to ensure that all teams follow these guidelines and will attest to such when submitting the team's Mission Folder.
 - d) Examples of studies requiring an IRB include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Subjects participating in physical activities.
 - (2) Subjects ingesting any substance.
 - (3) Subjects participating in any medical procedure.
 - (4) Subjects participating in any psychological, educational and/or opinion studies (surveys & questionnaires).
 - (5) Studies where a team member (or members) is/are the subject of the research and the study might pose a health risk.

- (6) Subjects test student-designed inventions, prototypes, applications, etc. This includes surveys conducted regarding potential use, review of the product and/or opinions regarding the project.
 - (7) Data/record review projects that include data that are not de-identified/anonymous.
 - (8) Behavioral observations that involve any interaction with the observed individual(s);
 - (9) Where the team has modified the environment;
 - (10) Where testing occur in non-public or restricted access settings; and/or
 - (11) Involves the recording of personally identifiable information.
- C. Non-Human Vertebrate Testing
1. **ALL** vertebrate animal studies REQUIRE an IRB review PRIOR to the start of the project including all signatures.
 2. The ONLY exception to this is as follows in regards to behavioral observations. Vertebrate animals are defined as: live, nonhuman vertebrate mammalian embryos or fetuses; tadpoles; bird and reptile eggs within three days (72 hours) of hatching; and all other nonhuman vertebrates (including fish) at hatching or birth.
 - a) A project is considered a tissue study and NOT a vertebrate animal study if the tissue is obtained from an animal that was euthanized for a purpose OTHER THAN the team's project. In these cases, teams may observe the vertebrate animal study, but may not have any direct involvement with the vertebrate animal experimental procedures.
 3. Studies involving behavioral observations of animals are exempt from prior IRB review as long as ALL of the following apply: there is NO INTERACTION with the animals being observed; there is NO MANIPULATION of the animal's environment in any way; AND the study meets all federal and state agriculture, fish, game and wildlife laws and regulations.
 4. If any of the animal(s) could be harmed in any way, the team must have a veterinarian review safe practices with the team and check the condition of the animal(s) prior to and after conducting the research and submit the certification of both to the IRB along with the IRB Review and Approval form. The student(s) cannot begin work on the project until IRB approval is obtained.
 5. If it is obvious that the animal(s) will not be harmed in any way students must submit an IRB Review and Approval form to the IRB. The student(s) cannot begin work on the project until IRB approval is obtained.
- D. DEA Controlled Substances:
1. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) regulates substances that can be diverted from their intended use to make illegal drugs. DEA controlled substances and their schedule number are available at the DEA website (<http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/schedules/>).
 2. The use of DEA-controlled substances is prohibited in the eCYBERMISSION competition.

- E. Drones
1. Studies involving unmanned aircraft systems/drones must follow all federal, state and local laws.
 2. Typically, a permit or registration of the aircraft will be required for certain sized drones/unmanned aircraft to be flown outside. Check the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) website for more details. (www.faa.gov/registration).
 3. If a permit is required, it must be attached to the Mission Folder.
- F. Prescription Drugs
1. Prescription drugs are drugs regulated by federal laws to protect against inappropriate or unsafe use. Special precautions must be taken when teams utilize prescription drugs in a project.
 - a) It is the responsibility of the Team Advisor to properly acquire the drugs from a doctor or pharmacist using a prescription written out specifically for research ONLY and NOT to an individual.
 - b) All prescription drugs used in a student research project must be kept in a locked cabinet, accessible by the Team Advisor ONLY, when not being used by the team.
 - c) Any unused prescriptions drugs must be disposed of in a proper manner by the Team Advisor.
 2. It is the responsibility of the Team Advisor to ensure that all proper protocols are followed regarding prescription drugs.
- G. Alcohol & Tobacco
1. The U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) regulates the production of alcohol and distribution of alcohol and tobacco products.
 2. The use of alcohol and tobacco are prohibited in the eCYBERMISSION competition.
- H. Weapons, Firearms and Explosives
1. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) regulates the purchase and use of firearms and explosives.
 2. The use of weapons, firearms, and explosives is prohibited in the eCYBERMISSION competition.
 - a) A firearm is defined as a weapon from which a projectile is fired by gunpowder.
 - b) An explosive is any chemical compound, mixture, or device whose primary purpose is to function by explosion. These include, but are not limited to, dynamite, black powder, pellet powder, detonators, and igniters.
 - c) Studies involving a fully assembled rocket motor, reload kit, or propellant modules containing more than 62.5 grams of propellant are allowed, but are subject to the permitting, storage, and other requirements of federal explosive laws and regulations.
 - d) Potato guns and paintball guns are not considered firearms or weapons unless they are intended to be used as weapons, but they must be treated as hazardous devices.

- I. Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents
 1. Research using microorganisms (including bacteria, viruses, viroid, prions, rickettsia, fungi, and parasites), recombinant DNA technologies or human or animal fresh/frozen tissue, blood, or bodily fluids may involve potentially hazardous biological agents.
 2. When dealing with potentially hazardous biological agents, it is the responsibility of the team and ALL of the adults involved in the project to conduct and document a risk assessment (using the recommended [Risk Assessment Form](#)) to define the potential level of harm, injury, or disease to PLANTS, ANIMALS, and HUMANS that may occur when working with biological agents. The risk assessment determines the biosafety level (BSL, see below), which in turn determines if the project can proceed, and if so, the laboratory facilities, equipment, training and supervision required.
 3. All projects involving potentially hazardous biological agents must be reviewed and approved BEFORE experimentation begins by the appropriate review board.
 - a) IBC (Institutional Biosafety Committee for studies done at a research institution) or school administration (for studies done in a school setting).
 - b) If a project is being reviewed by a school administrator, they must complete the [PHBA Permission Form](#).

VII. Mission Folder Submission

- A. Complete Mission Folders must be submitted by 11:59 PM EST on March 1, 2023.
- B. Once the Team Advisor submits the Mission Folder, it can be withdrawn by the Team Advisor if changes need to be made prior to the submission deadline of March 1, 2023. It must be re-submitted by the Team Advisor by the submission deadline, March 1, 2023, in order for it to be judged.
- C. Teams are not permitted to make edits, additions, or changes to their Mission Folders after the deadline.
- D. A completed Mission Folder contains answers to all Mission Folder questions, any required supporting files and must be electronically signed by the Team Advisor.
- E. If the work is the continuation of a previous year's project or the same topic, the Mission Folder from the previous year must be attached to this year's Mission Folder.
- F. Partial Mission Folders will be deemed incomplete and disqualified.
- G. Team Advisors will be asked to verify the start date of the project before a team can complete their Mission Folder.

VIII. Mission Folder Judging Phases

- A. State Winners and Honorable Mentions: Virtual Judging
 1. Team Advisors are required to submit Mission Folders prior to the submission deadline of March 1, 2023 (see Section VII for additional information).
 2. Once the submission deadline has passed, a panel of Virtual Judges will review the Mission Folders using the competition's judging rubrics. Once all Mission Folder

submissions are scored, eCYBERMISSION will contact potential State Winners and Honorable Mentions.

3. State Winning Teams must obtain a minimum average score of 300 during the virtual judging phase in order to be eligible for awards.

4. Potential State Winners and Honorable Mentions must be validated by the specified due date in order to be confirmed as a State Winner or Honorable Mention and be considered for regional judging, (see Section XI for validation process and information).

B. Regional Finalists: Regional Judging

1. The top three validated teams, see Section XI for validation process and information, from each region in each grade will be notified of their opportunity to compete at the regional level in late April.

2. The Regional Finalist teams will be required to test the system requirements of the selected platform for regional judging during a designated time prior to the beginning of regional judging. If a team does not test the system requirements prior to regional judging, the team is subject to disqualification or point penalty.

3. All team members and the Team Advisor must be present during regional judging to be eligible for a Regional Finalist award. If any team member is not present, the team forfeits the Regional Finalist award and is disqualified from regional judging.

4. Regional judging consists of a four-minute presentation (via video conference) followed by a four-minute question and answer session with the Regional Judges in order to help the judges determine Regional Winners and ensure that the team projects were completed by all participating team members. The Regional Judges will have reviewed the Mission Folders in advance of the live regional judging.

5. Announcement of the National Finalists will be made by eCYBERMISSION and AEOP.

C. National Finalists: NJ&EE and National Judging

1. The top validated team, see Section XI for validation process and information, from each region in each grade will be notified of their opportunity to compete at the national level in early May at NJ&EE.

2. National Finalist teams will receive a NJ&EE packet emailed to the Team Advisor. At that time, it is the team's responsibility to review and abide by the contents of the packet. The team will be required to submit all documents required for NJ&EE by the specified due dates.

3. All team members and the Team Advisor must be able to attend the entire NJ&EE.

4. National Finalist teams will need to prepare a 4-minute verbal presentation for the National Judges followed by a judge-led 10-minute question and answer session.

5. National Finalist teams will also deliver a 4-minute presentation during the National Showcase.

6. If a team chooses to bring their prototype to NJ&EE, the total value of the prototype cannot exceed \$250 (U.S. dollars). For teams that develop a website or app as part of their project, please note that the website and/or app developed by the team is

the prototype and the technology used to display the website or app is not considered part of the prototype. Teams wishing to demonstrate a website or app during national judging will have the option of using either a computer or tablet they provide or using a computer provided by eCYBERMISSION. Cell phones are NOT permitted in the room during national judging. The total cost of developing a website or app prototype must not exceed \$250 (U.S. dollars). The Team Advisor must include an itemized list and receipts for the prototype as part of the registration process.

7. If the National Finalist Team is unable to represent their region at NJ&EE, the next highest scoring team in the region may be invited to replace that National Finalist Team. Additionally, replacement teams may have the opportunity to earn regional awards if they are chosen to represent the region at NJ&EE.

8. The team's Team Advisor is required to accompany all students through the duration of their travel to NJ&EE, and all students/Team Advisors traveling to NJ&EE must be traveling from and returning to the same point of origin as their team members at the same time. National Finalist students cannot travel without the Team Advisor to and from NJ&EE unless given express permission to travel with their parents.

9. Only travel to and from the team's state of origin for National Finalist Teams and their Team Advisor will be provided for arrivals and departures to NJ&EE.

IX. Disqualification

A. Disqualification of Applications, Entries, Participants or Teams

1. The eCYBERMISSION Staff may decide to disqualify a team or disqualify a Mission Folder if it is of the opinion that:

a) There is a violation of any portion of the rules. Violations include, but are not limited to, failing to submit required IRB Review and Approval and Risk Assessment Forms that are signed and dated prior to testing; falsification of student information; violating the eCYBERMISSION Code of Conduct (see Section I); a team consists of less than two completely registered team members; plagiarism; or inappropriate conduct or misuse of the eCYBERMISSION website or server by gaining access to areas that the user does not have explicit right to use or by using the server for purposes not related to the development and deployment of a Mission Folder. For example, a team, individual team member, or user will be immediately disqualified if the team, individual team member, or user gains unauthorized access to an area of the server other than the area designated for students or teams.

b) If a Mission Folder contains material that appears to violate any of the competition rules, eCYBERMISSION, at its discretion, may disqualify the Mission Folder in its entirety, remove the materials from the Mission Folder which violate such rules or requirements and/or withdraw an award that has been previously paid out to the team.

2. A final decision to disqualify a team or a Mission Folder may only be made by eCYBERMISSION and AEOP.

B. Disqualification of Virtual Judges

1. In order to avoid an actual or apparent conflict of interest, a Virtual Judge must not be closely related to team members or a Team Advisor of a team that the Virtual Judge is screening, evaluating or judging. Accordingly, no one may act as a Virtual Judge with respect to a Mission Folder of a team if he or she is closely related to any member or Team Advisor of that team or otherwise feels that they might be, or appear to be, biased. Parents and Team Advisors cannot also serve as Virtual Judges in the same competition year. Violations of this rule may result in disqualification for the team.
2. A final decision to disqualify or remove a Virtual Judge may only be made by eCYBERMISSION.

X. Competition Changes and Intellectual Property

- A. Extensions of Contest Deadlines
 1. AEOP and eCYBERMISSION may extend any competition deadline and will post any such extension on the eCYBERMISSION website.
- B. Ownership of Intellectual Property and the Rights and Duties of Parties
 1. A Mission Folder will remain the property of the submitting team.
 2. By submitting a Mission Folder, each individual team member grants eCYBERMISSION a perpetual, irrevocable, fully paid-up and royalty free right and license to use the Mission Folder in whole or in part for any purpose whatsoever, beginning with the submission of the Mission Folder and continuing until September 20, 2027.
 - a) Such right and license includes, but are not limited to: improving, modifying, making derivative works, enlarging, distributing and making such Mission Folder available for use by any person or organization.
 3. During such licensure period, eCYBERMISSION will also keep such Mission Folder on its website, or any successor website, and can distribute such Mission Folder to any person or organization in any manner.
 4. eCYBERMISSION shall have the right, but not the obligation, to take actions it deems appropriate to prevent misuse of a Mission Folder. The team members and their parent(s) or guardian(s) may take such steps or actions to prevent misuse of the Mission Folder, as submitted, as they deem appropriate.
- C. Finality of eCYBERMISSION Decisions
 1. Each decision made by eCYBERMISSION, with respect to any matter related to any eCYBERMISSION contest, shall, in all respects, be final and binding on the team member(s), their parent(s) or guardian(s), the school(s) and the Team Advisor, and shall not be subject to review.
- D. Modification of the Rules
 1. eCYBERMISSION and AEOP reserves the right to modify the rules to the extent that is fair and appropriate.
 2. Modifications will be posted on the eCYBERMISSION website.



XI. Award Terms and Validation

A. General Award Terms

1. eCYBERMISSION will adhere to all applicable tax laws and regulations relating to the payment of awards, including any applicable required withholding. All taxes on awards, if any, will be paid by the winners.
2. All winners must complete validation before presentation of awards, see Section XI.E for validation process and requirements.
3. Parents and/or guardians of the awardee's will, upon request by the eCYBERMISSION team, open a Treasury Direct account (minor-linked account) to process the U.S. Savings Bonds awards. Treasury Direct is a service of the U.S. Department of Treasury.
4. Students and Team Advisors who do not provide correct and complete information by the deadline provided are seen as refusing to comply with the rules and regulations of the competition and are forfeiting their and their teams claim to an award.
5. If incorrect personal information (e.g. Social Security number, Treasury Direct Account Number, etc.) is provided to eCYBERMISSION that leads to the inability to purchase the Savings Bond, it is the responsibility of the award recipient (or parent/guardian) to contact eCYBERMISSION within one year of winning in order to rectify the situation.
6. There is a one-year statute of limitations on receiving awards. Any claims made after one year of winning the award will not be honored, and the winner will forfeit any and all awards.

B. State Awards

1. First Place State Winning Teams will receive up to \$1,000 U.S. Series EE Savings Bond (Matured Value) per student. Teams must successfully complete student validation in order to receive their award.
2. Second Place State Winning Teams will receive up to \$500 U.S. Series EE Savings Bond (Matured Value) per student. Teams must successfully complete student validation in order to receive their award.
3. Honorable Mention (Third Place State Winning Teams) at each grade level will receive Honorable Mention recognition. Teams must successfully complete student validation in order to receive their award.

C. Regional Awards

1. All Regional Finalists Teams will additionally receive up to \$1,000 U.S. Series EE Savings Bond (Matured Value) per student.
2. First Place Regional Winning Teams will additionally receive up to \$2,000 U.S. Series EE Savings Bond (Matured Value) per student.
3. All students and the Team Advisor on the original State Winning Team that advances to the regional level must be present and participate during regional judging in order for the team to qualify as a possible Regional Winner. If any student or Team Advisor is not present, the team will be disqualified and will forfeit the Regional Finalist Award.

4. Students on teams that score First-Place in regional judging will attend NJ&EE as a National Finalist, paid for by eCYBERMISSION. This year's NJ&EE will be mid/late June, 2023. Exact location, dates, and times will be announced later.
- D. National Awards
1. First Place National Winning Teams will additionally receive up to \$6,000 U.S. Series EE Savings Bond (Matured Value) per student.
 2. Every National Finalist must contribute to their team's national competition preparation of the team's display and presentation, as well as every team member and Team Advisor participate in the entire duration (every activity and event) prior to and during NJ&EE. Teams who do not meet these requirements cannot attend NJ&EE and are ineligible for National Awards.
 3. If National Finalists are not able to attend NJ&EE and therefore cannot make a complete team, the remaining team members will not be allowed to compete, and ALL team members will be asked to forfeit their regional award.
- E. Validation Process and Information
1. First, Second-Place, and Honorable Mention (Third Place) Winning Teams, at the State Level of competition, will be subject to validation as a legitimate team.
 2. Validation of the team includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Review by eCYBERMISSION of the Mission Folder for any rules violations.
 - b) Collection of student Social Security numbers by eCYBERMISSION with the assistance of the Team Advisor to confirm that award recipients are U.S. Citizens or LPRs (see Section III.B3 for more information).
 3. If a team cannot be validated per competition rules, then ALL team members on that team will forfeit their position as a First, Second Place, or Honorable Mention Winner.
 4. If a member of the team does not have a valid Social Security number, that person forfeits their monetary award.
 5. If a First-Place Winning Team at the State Level is not legitimate, then the Second-Place Winning Team may have the opportunity to earn the First-Place State Level Awards. If a Second-Place Winning Team at the State Level is not legitimate or moves into the First-Place position, the Honorable Mention Winning Team may advance into the Second-Place position.