



2026 Illinois BioGENEius Guidelines

Eligibility and Registration

- All contestants must be currently enrolled in High School grades 9-12 and must provide current school ID or equivalent documentation upon request. Students may participate individually or in teams of up to three members.
- Projects must involve original research in biotechnology or related fields such as bioengineering, molecular biology, genomics, bioinformatics, or synthetic biology. Literature reviews alone are not sufficient - projects must include experimental or computational work.
- A complete registration package must be submitted online via google form by 10 PM on April 3, 2026, including:
 - Research project abstract (250 words maximum)
 - Poster upload
 - Signed permission slip and photo release form
 - Safety documentation for any hazardous materials or procedures
 - Mentor/supervisor contact information if research was conducted in a professional lab

Project Documentation & Presentation

- Contestants must submit both a detailed research paper and prepare a poster presentation. The research paper should follow standard scientific format and be 5-10 pages in length, including references.
- Poster specifications:
 - Recommended size: 48" wide by 36" tall
 - Should include: abstract, introduction, methods, results, conclusions, and references
 - A cardboard trifold display and clips will be provided if needed
 - Professionally printed posters are encouraged but not required

Judging Process

- Judging will take place **April 29 2026, from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM** at Portal Innovations, 400 N. Aberdeen St., 16th floor, Chicago, IL 60642
- Contestants must arrive by 8:30 AM for check-in and setup.

- Each contestant/team will deliver a 10-minute presentation followed by 5 minutes of questions from the judging panel
- Projects will be evaluated on:
 - Scientific Merit and Creative Ability (40%)
 - Project Execution (40%)
 - Presentation (20%)

Awards & Recognition

- First Place: \$1,500 cash prize
- Second Place: \$500 cash prize
- All participants will receive certificates of participation

Important Dates

- Registration Deadline: 10 PM Central Time on April 3, 2026
- Competition Day: April 29, 2026

Additional Requirements

- All research involving human subjects, vertebrate animals, or hazardous materials must have appropriate institutional approvals
- Participants grant organizers the right to photograph and publicize their participation
- For questions or clarifications, contact Ann Vogel at avogel@ibio.org.