



Society of Petroleum Engineers

STUDENT PAPER CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

Reviewed January 2023

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Webpage: www.spe.org/en/students/contest



The Student Paper Contest is regulated by the Young Member Engagement Committee (YMEC), and changes to the program are ratified by the SPE Board of Directors. Both parties reserve the right to update and review the rules and regulation at any stage.

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Overview

The Student Paper Contest (SPC) is SPEs primary student competition to highlight an individual students' technical merit. Through the review of a technical paper, presentation and question and answer session, a panel of judges review sole-authored papers, and supporting presentation, to find the most innovative, relevant and well researched papers across SPE. The best presentations from the regional competition will be invited to the international round in order to determine our International Student Paper Contest Winners.

The rules and information in this document are to aid the participation and organization of Regional and International Student Paper Contests as part of the SPE International program. Other similar paper/presentation style competitions outside this program are not represented by the rules described in this document. Similar competitions can be run by SPE Sections and Chapters however these do not influence the applications or qualification process for participants of SPC Program. The official SPE Student Paper Contests can be found listed on the [SPC Schedule Webpage](#). Only participants in these events will be considered for qualification to the international round.

The SPE Standing Committee, the Young Member Engagement Committee (YMEC), is the ruling body on changes to the Student Paper Contest program. YMEC report directly to the Board of Directors who authorise any significant changes.

Updates

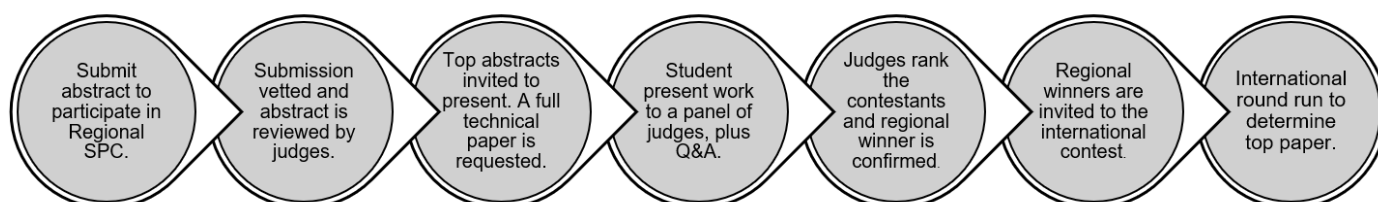
Following recent travel restrictions, the SPE Board of Directors have approved various changes to the Student Paper Contest which will place more importance on the Paper and the technical content of presentations given. In addition to raising the standards of the contest overall, these changes will allow a fairer comparison between physical and virtual presentations. Recent changes to the SPC Rules and Regulations will be highlighted in to reflect these changes.

SPE International reserves the right to update the rules and regulations at any time, but we will make all efforts to ensure participants and potential applicants are made aware of these changes.

For any questions or queries relating to this program please contact the SPE Young Member Programs Team at spc@spe.org or speak to your regional specialist who is managing your local SPC.

Competition Process

The basic overview for participating in the SPE Student Paper Contest is shown below, however more detailed specifics are detailed throughout the rules in this document.



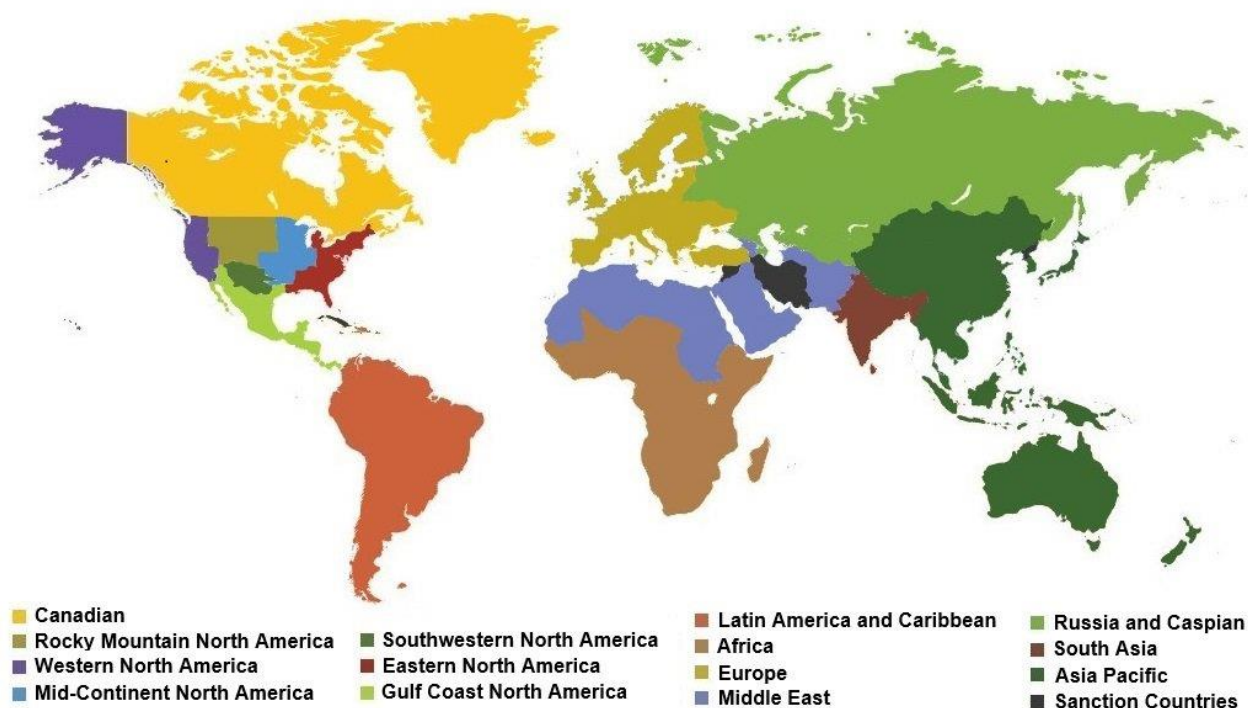
Regional Event Organization

Regional event dates, platforms and locations will be determined by SPE Staff in collaboration with SPE Regional Directors who are responsible for activities in those areas. SPE Student Chapters/Sections may be invited by SPE to host a regional contest or they may be stand alone events. Contests can be hosted as fully virtual events, physical events, or hybrid events (combined virtual and physical). Contests may also be hosted to accompany a major regional or SPE International conference. **The approach used for a specific Regional event will be made by SPE Staff in collaboration with the Regional Director(s) which represent that region.**

Currently, fourteen Regional Student Paper Contests are recognized by SPE, taking place as shown on the map below.

A [map of SPC Regions](#) can also be found on our website, but for any concerns about what region your university is represented by, please email spc@spe.org.

TIP: Please see [rule 2.8](#) for rules regarding which region students should apply for.



Dates and details for applying to individual SPC Regional Contests can be found at the SPC Webpage once they are confirmed; <https://www.spe.org/students/schedule.php>.

All students should participate in the SPC Region that covers the location of the University they are representing. Only participants that take part in the Regional Student Paper Contests listed can be selected for the International Round.

In the event that a contest or a division is not held in their assigned region, a student may request to participate in an alternate region. Any applications to participate in alternate regional contest must be

made to the Young Member Programs Team at spc@spe.org. This must be approved by the Regional Directors representing the SPC Regions involved and they reserve the right to decline any such requests.

The following explanations **will not** be considered sufficient to move to another contest; Failure to meet submission deadlines, being unaware of contest dates, matters of convenience, conflict or clash of timings.

Contest Rules:

1.0 Contest Structure

A regional contest is normally conducted in three separate divisions: Undergraduate, Master's and PhD.

- 1.1 Each contest division must have at least three contestants.
- 1.2 If there are entries from three or more eligible students for a division, that division must be held as part of the Regional contest.

1.3 Combined Divisions

If a Masters or PhD contest does not have the minimum number of entries of at least three students each, they can be combined to create a "Postgraduate" division. If there are still not enough applicants to run a combined Postgraduate division the Masters and PhD applicants should not be combined with Undergraduate division.

If an Undergraduate, or Postgraduate division, is not possible due to low participation (less than three participants) the students may be allowed to present at an alternative region if the Regional Directors agree to this.

In the event of a combined Masters/PhD division it should be made clear to the judges which contestants are of what level within a merged category. This ensures that they judge each student accordingly to their level of ability, however **only one winner will result from a combined contest.** These winners will enter the division that meet their degree level in the international round.

TIP: Please see rule 7.2 for entry requirement changes for applicants per university during combined divisions.

2.0 Entrance Requirements

- 2.1 Contestants must be SPE Members in good standing at the time of application and still be in good standing at the date of the contest.
- 2.2 If the student has already graduated, it must have been less than 12 months before the Regional Contest. Thus, a student graduating in March 2022 must compete by March 2023. The student should only present work carried out at the educational level that corresponds with the division in which they are competing, regardless of whether they have gone on to a higher level of education. For example: A student who has earned a degree as an undergraduate less than twelve months ago, and has proceeded into a Master's degree, can still compete in the Undergraduate division but must only present work carried out as an Undergraduate. If a student wins within his/her division at a Regional Contest, he/she will compete at the International Contest within that same division and present work on the same topic which was presented at the Regional Contest.
- 2.3 Students are not required to be a member of an SPE Student Chapter in order to participate in the contest.

- 2.4 Students must be eligible to compete in their regional contest in accordance with the USA and EU Sanction laws which SPE operates by: <http://www.spe.org/about/laws.php>. Please note that Sanction Laws may impede a student's ability to accept SPE International prizes or continue to the international round even if they are successful at a regional level. Please note that Sanction Laws also apply to virtual events, though physical travel is not required.
- 2.5 All applications will be vetted by SPE Staff before consideration. Final rulings on questionable eligibility will be made by SPE. Please direct enquiries to spc@spe.org for any concerns.
- 2.6 Only one entry per student, per year (between ATCE's) will be accepted. Multiple abstracts or entries to the SPC within the same year will not be accepted.
- 2.7 A student may participate in SPC more than once across several years, and in the same category, as long as they still meet all other eligibility requirements and do so with new and previously un-presented paper as per Rules of Form and Content of Presentation/Paper (*Please see [rule 4.0 to 4.9](#)*).
- 2.8 Students must participate in their allocated region unless no contest is to be hosted in their own region during that SPC cycle. In the event of no contest being hosted an alternate region may be requested which will be clarified by SPE Staff. An individual's inability to participate in their region cannot be considered in order to avoid a university having an unfair representation across different regions across the overall contest.

TIP: Please see item 7.0 Selection of Contestants for related information.

3.0 Entrance and Participation Procedures

- 3.1 Each participant must adhere to the procedures and deadlines established by the contest host and that of this document.
- 3.2 **A full technical paper will be required in order to participate at the regional and international level of the contest.** Failure to provide this by the required deadlines will result in expulsions from the contest. Paper guidelines will be provided by SPE Staff if you are accepted to present at the regional level.
- 3.3 Students must provide all that is requested from them by the host Chapter/ Section or SPE Staff – this includes papers, videos, forms, applications etc. – by the deadlines provided. Failure to provide a form or paper that is asked of them by the deadline provided may result in a forfeit of their place in the contest.
- 3.4 For virtual and hybrid events, submitting a pre-recorded version of your presentation in advance of the contest is the preferred option. In the event of any connection issues your presentation can still be viewed by judges without impeding the overall contest and judges' questions can be quickly hosted on an alternative platform or phone line. Live streaming your presentation is permitted however, poor internet connection, failure to reconnect, or participate during your assigned timeslot in the agenda may result in disqualification from the contest. You must confirm your method of presentation with regional event organizers in advance of the contest by the deadlines given.
- 3.5 If a student is unable to participate in the international round, either virtually or physically, the next highest ranking contestant in the regional division will be asked to compete in the International as the region's representative. This should be done with enough notice to the student and SPE and will be accepted at the discretion of SPE.

4.0 Rules on Form and Content of Presentation/Paper

- 4.1 Only single-author presentation/papers are eligible, **jointly written, or co-authored papers are not permitted.** The definition of sole or single-author is a student that has written the presentation/paper independently even though other researchers or contributors may have been

involved in the project or subject matter. Researchers and contributors, such as supervisors or tutors who assisted the project, must be acknowledged as “Contributors” to the paper and presentation but not as an author.

TIP: If you are unsure if your paper is sole author or not please contact spe@spe.org to avoid disqualification at a later stage.

- 4.3 A presentation/paper should present, as completely as possible, the original work of the author in planning the investigation, performing the work, interpreting the results, and preparing the presentation/paper. **Submitting or presenting others work as your own, or work already presented in a Student Paper Contest, will result in removal from the contest.**
- 4.3 The subject of a presentation/paper must be related to petroleum engineering, which is defined as the application of basic and engineering sciences to the finding, development, and recovery of oil, gas, and other resources from wells.
- 4.4 A presentation/paper based on course work, including theses and dissertations, is eligible.
- 4.5 If selected to present at the regional level, you will be required to provide a full paper on your topic in preparation for the presentation. You will retain all rights to your paper. If you qualify to the international round you will be offered the opportunity to publish your paper in OnePetro, at which point copyright forms will need to be completed in order to distribute your paper. **Publishing your paper is not mandatory**, however a copy of your paper will be necessary in advance of the presentation for the judges to review. This is a requirement in order to present in both the regional and International SPC. Failure to provide a full paper by the deadline given for your contest may result in expulsion from the competition.
- 4.6 All papers will be checked that they meet the SPC Rules and Regulations including authorship, word count and [plagiarism](#) before we can confirm your place at the competition.

TIP: Technical content play a part in participants overall score, so it is important that contestants submit their paper with enough time for judges to review them in advance of the presentation. If you qualify to the international round, you will be allocated time to adjust your paper before publication and review for the international round.

- 4.7 At time of submission, the presentation/paper must not have been accepted for publication in any SPE peer-reviewed journal or presented at previous official SPE Regional Student Presentation/Presentation. (Papers presented at Student Presentation/Paper Contests sponsored by universities, SPE sections, or other organizations are allowed.)
- 4.8 The presentation/paper must be presented in the English language, the official language of SPE. All contestants that progress to the International Student Paper Contest must present in English.
- 4.9 Papers must be submitted in a typed form in English. The paper must consist of a minimum of 1,000 words of text, plus as many diagrams and supporting illustrations as necessary to clarify the subject matter. **The paper must not exceed 7,000 words equivalent of text and diagrams, with each diagram considered to be the equivalent of 250 words.**

*TIP: Word count includes everything in the main body of the text (including headings, images, tables, citations, quotes, lists, etc). References, appendices and footnotes **should not** be included in the word count. Applicants should be careful what they choose to add outside the main body of their text. If information integral to then understanding of your paper is not in the main body of your text it may result in a lower score in clarity and communication in your paper.*

SPE Staff are able to provide templates and guidance on writing your technical paper, please visit the [SPC Webpage](#) or email spc@spe.org for more information. For publication manuscript guidance SPC follows the same [formatting guidance](#) as all other SPE Publications.

- 4.10** The presentation may not exceed 20 minutes, less presentation time may be allotted to Regional contests, to a minimum of 10 minutes for the presentation, depending on the number of contestants per category. The time allowed for questions will be at the discretion of the moderator, questions will only be invited from the judging panel, not from the audience.

TIP: It should be made clear to the students who have been selected to compete that they will have between 10-20 minutes for their presentation and that the exact time they will have will be confirmed to them nearer to the contest date once final numbers and the schedule have been determined.

- 4.11** When presenting virtually you must adhere to the guidance and format requested by SPE Staff. Virtual Presentations should consist of a pre-recorded video, followed by a live videoconference Q&A session following the same time criteria as the physical contest. If any technical issues prevent your video from being shown live, it will be shared with judges directly and live Q&A will be hosted on an alternative platform. Judges will only be able to watch your video once prior to scoring your presentation. If for any reason a pre-recorded video is not possible a live videoconference will be allowed if permitted by SPE Staff in advance.

- 4.12** The format of virtual presentations will consist of your presentation slides as the sole visual element, and your unaltered verbal presentation as the sole audio element. In order to ensure fair comparison between physical and virtual presentations, if the submitted video does not meet with guidelines by the deadlines given, this may result in expulsion from the contest.

- 4.13** Videos will only be shared with SPC Judges unless permission has been given by the participant to allow for wider distribution. Participants will maintain all rights to their presentation and paper and can withdraw permission to share at any time, even if prior consent has been given. If successful at the regional level, participants will be offered the opportunity to publish their paper in OnePetro, at which point transfer of copyright to SPE is a requirement for publication.

TIP: SPE Staff are able to provide best practices on how to record your video which is also available on the SPC Webpage.

5.0 Financial Assistance for participants

Student should be encouraged to approach their sponsoring Section and/or local companies to apply for financial assistance for the costs of travelling to the Regional Qualifier contests. SPE International cannot provide any funding for regional contest travel. Funding for International Participants may vary year on year and cannot be guaranteed.

6.0 Selection of Judges and Moderators

The host group / SPE Staff are responsible for:

- Selecting a “review panel” to review abstracts where a contest is open-applications (not applicable where Chapters submit representative candidates).
- Selecting judges to review abstracts and oral presentations on the day of the contest.
- Providing a non-voting moderator for the presentations.
- Ensuring all judges and moderators are up to date with contest procedures and rule updates.

The following guidelines apply to the selection of judges for the contest:

- A minimum of three and a maximum of six judges should participate for each division of the contest. It is recommended to recruit more than the minimum number of judges to account for potential drop outs.
- Preferably an odd number of judges should participate in case of a tie break situation.
- It is recommended to have only one judge per university where possible to address any (perceived) conflicts of interests.
- Judges in the undergraduate division must hold at least an undergraduate degree in engineering or applied science. Judges in the master's division must hold at least a master's degree. Judges in the PhD division must hold a PhD degree.
- A balance among representatives from different technical disciplines including research, production, management, and education should be considered in selecting the judges.
- Each judge must be a member of SPE.

7.0 Selection of Contestants

- 7.1** No more than two contestants can be from each Student Chapter or university for each division of the contest.
- 7.2** In the event of combined divisions, two contestants may be from the same chapter/university for each degree category. For example: In a combined Master's/PhD Division, two contestants from a student chapter/ university may present Masters papers and two from the chapter/university may present PhD papers.
- 7.3** In contests of open applications, students of that region shall receive notification of the call for abstracts and the deadline by which they must submit their abstracts, and any other necessary forms, and who to submit them to. The review panel then must choose from the abstracts which contestants will proceed to the regional contest to compete. Abstracts will be submitted to the review panel anonymously to protect members of the review panel from potential conflicts of interest. In contests of open applications, the review panel shall confer via phone or email to select the finalists to present at the contest, as well as the alternates should a finalist be unable to present.
- 7.4** Some SPE Chapters may decide host their own preliminary contest in order to determine which two students may represent their university in the regional contest in order to adhere to rule 7.1. In these cases, Chapters of that region shall receive notification of the call for abstracts and the deadline by which they must submit their two candidates, their abstracts, and any other necessary forms, and who to submit them to. Chapters may then host their own paper contests or applications to select their two candidates for the regional contest.

8.0 Judging of Presentations and Selection of Winners

Judges must use the official SPE Student Paper Contest Judge Score Form to determine the ranking of their contestants. These forms can be accessed by emailing spc@spe.org or your Regional Activities Specialist. These forms are use for evaluating contestants' presentations and must adhere to the following procedures:

- Following each presentation, judges must score each speaker on the **Official Judges' Score Form**, retaining copies of all sheets until the session is completed. Based on the scores the judge will rank each presentations in order of preference. This ranking should be recorded on the **Judges Ranking Sheet** and given to the Moderator. In the event of a tie score the judge should determine which they prefer to rank higher.

- Based on the judges ranking, a score is allocated to each contestant per judge. For example, in a contest of 10 people the top ranked place will get 10 points, and the lowest ranked will get 1 point. Each judge will complete a ranking form which will be given to the Moderator after all presentations have been viewed.
- Each judges' ranking score is recorded on the **Official Moderator's Score Card** by the Moderator at the end of the contest to collate the ranking scores.
- The Moderator(s) will check the results with SPE Staff or the Judges (if no staff are available) to confirm the top participants. The result should be agreed by the panel of judges before being announced.
- There is no provision for tie votes; ties must be resolved by the judges.
- Winners are to be named as follows:
 - If there are six or more contestants in the division, first-, second-, and third-place winners shall be named.
 - If there are four or five contestants in the division, only first- and second-place winners shall be named.
 - If there are only three contestants in the division, only a first-place winner shall be named.
- Judges individual scores will not be shared to participants, however Judges feedback or ranking can be provided to students where appropriate to assist them with the continuous development of their presentation skills.

The first-place winners of each division from each SPE Regional Student Paper Contest will automatically qualify for the International Student Paper Contest to be held in conjunction with the Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition. The contestants shall follow the submission format and schedule of the conference as provided to them by SPE's Young Member Programs team at spc@spe.org.

9.0 Awards and Funding

- 9.1** Funding for participation in regional paper contests will not be provided for by SPE International. Sections and Chapters are encouraged to source sponsorship to cover costs of running the program.
- 9.2** Prizes: For the first place Regional contestants, SPE International will invite them to participate in the ATCE International Round. All regional winners will be awarded \$1,000 USD. ATCE Registration will be complementary and winners will be listed on the SPE International Website. Some additional funding may be available for Travel to ATCE, details of which will be confirmed each year. All regional winners will be offered the opportunity to be published in OnePetro. It is up to the regional host discretion whether further awards, honourable mentions, and honorariums, if any, for contestants not achieving finalist status, but worthy of recognition.
- 9.3** Presentation of Awards: SPE will provide certificates to each participant in the International Student Paper Contest. SPE can provide a template for regional certificates for hosts. Awards and certificates should be presented by an SPE Officer or Director, a member of the SPE Young Member Engagement Committee, or a representative of the host group.
- 9.4** Prize amounts: If the host group decides at their discretion to award cash prizes to the top ranked contestants. SPE recommends that prize amounts are allocated as follows:
- In case of three ranked positions in a division:
 - First place should receive 50% of prize money
 - Second place 30% of prize money
 - Third place 20% of prize money

- In case of two ranked positions in a division:
 - First place should receive 60% of prize money;
 - Second place 40% of prize money.

- In case of one ranked position in a division:
 - the first place should receive all of the prize money

10.0 Responsibilities of Host Group

Where relevant, SPE will notify the SPE Section or Student Chapter of its opportunity to host the Regional Student Paper Contest. The host group assumes responsibility for the conduct of the contest and for adhering to the rules laid out in this document. The first task is to determine the date, time, and site of the oral presentations.

The contest should be conducted in connection with an SPE technical conference or regional meeting whenever possible. In such cases, SPE suggests that:

- The oral presentations be held within the same week and preferably integrated into the conference program rather than appended onto the beginning or end of the conference.
- The decision on the date, time, and site of the presentations should be discussed with the chairperson of the Conference Program Committee.
- The host group may add an amount to the conference fee to cover contest costs.
- Consideration should be given to providing all contestants and judges with complimentary tickets to award/presentation functions.
- The host group for the conference has the option to arrange for assistance with travel and accommodation expenses for contestants if appropriate.
- Contestants should be afforded the status and privileges of other authors presenting technical papers at the conference, including complimentary registration at the conference/exhibition.
- The host group should maintain the professional standards of SPE International events and the SPE Code of Conduct.

For any queries or concerns with the rules and procedures featured in this document please email spc@spe.org for more information.