

# WSO Policies

Revision (in red) approved by WSO board 1/4/25

Current bylaws of Washington Science Olympiad and WSO Policies are maintained on the WSO web site, with new WSO state board members and coaches advised to review by-laws and policies to ensure familiarity with how WSO business is conducted.

**Board Guidelines:** Protocol for board members communicating with coaches, students, parents, and other interested parties:

1. Be professional.
2. Questions regarding policy are to be referred to the State Director for clarification prior to releasing information that is not explicitly identified in by-laws or policy documents.
3. Policy changes must be made by a quorum of the Board and not subject to individual board member interpretation.
4. Board members should support WSO policy and other board members.

## Regional Boards

Each region in the state should have a regional board to plan and run the regional tournament/s. It is recommended that the board consist of at least 4 people:

- 1 state board member
- 1 businessperson
- 2 or more coaches or interested parties

## Registration

All teams must register by the identified deadline each year (currently January 15th). There will be no refunds after the registration deadline. Registration information – fees and discounts – is posted annually at <https://washingtonscienceolympiad.com/regform.pdf>, along with info on how teams must register.

## Tournament Schedule

By **mid-September** each year, the Board of Directors will create a WSO Unified Schedule of events to be followed by each tournament in Washington (including invitationals). Coaches will be given at least two (2) weeks to comment/suggest changes. The Board will finalize the schedule at the Fall meeting. Tournament Directors may only change the schedule by expanding opportunities for students to compete and with the approval of the State Director.

## Tournaments

Teams are expected to compete in their geographical regional tournament. If any/all regional tournaments are full, teams have option to register with another regional tournament on a space-available basis and with a

modified formula for teams advancing to the state tournament - see below (also posted on <https://washingtonscienceolympiad.com/coaches.html#advance>).

Despite possible early team registration, final registration is based on order of payment (with school/district PO same as payment). Subsequently, ONLY when a team has paid (or provided PO) are they officially registered. At that point, a WSO team # will be assigned, which will be used for any/all WA tournaments.

One school may advance only two (2) teams to the state tournament. Only one team from a school may advance to the national tournament (unless more than one team is allowed to advance to nationals).

Tournament tests will not be given back to students or coaches. Blank tests may be released at the event supervisor's discretion. In that case, the event supervisor will provide an electronic version to the Tournament Director who will forward it to the State Director for posting on the web site.

Closed events will have a sign posted stating whether the event is open for observation or picture taking. If closed, no entrance into the event other than team participants and no pictures allowed.

No electronic devices will be allowed into any event unless specifically stated by the rules. This particularly refers to cell phones and cameras – students are not to bring them into an event.

**Regional tournaments require each school to supervise an event or to provide event helpers to the regional director. This requirement may be implemented as part of the team registration process.**

## **Scoring**

Low score wins. (First place in each event = 1 point. Second place = 2 pts ... last place would be the number of teams attending in that division (N).) All event scores (excluding trial events) will be added together for the team's overall score. Lowest scoring team is first place.

If a team's performance in an event is impossible to score (e.g., all or most test questions left blank), the team will receive Participation points (N). Example: 12 teams competing. If a team submits a blank test, their score for that event is 12 [N=total # of teams competing]).

If a team doesn't enter an event, they earn No Show points of the total number of teams plus one (N+1). (Example: 12 teams competing. If a team doesn't show up to an event, their score for that event is 13 [12+1].)

If a team is disqualified from an event, they receive Disqualification points of the total number of teams plus two (N+2). (Example: 12 teams competing. A disqualified team would score 14 for that event [12+2].)

If competitor/s in an event or coach or parent or other person associated with a team is/are disqualified for cheating, unsportsmanlike conduct, or ethics violations, they will receive Ethical Disqualification points of the

total number of teams plus five (N+5). (Example: 12 teams competing. An ethical disqualification event score would be 17 [12+5]).

Event supervisors must have a method for breaking ties in their event. No ties are allowed (with the exception of Participation, No Show, Disqualification, and Ethical Disqualification ranking).

If teams are tied for tournament placing (overall team points), the Score Room will use the number of gold medals won by each team to break the tie. If this does not resolve the tie, silver medals should be counted. And so forth to 4 places for Regionals and 5 places for State.

If two teams are still tied, one event, which was previously chosen, will determine the winner. Whichever school won the event, will beat the other school in team standing.

Each team's coach will be provided with a hard copy of preliminary tournament results at the conclusion of the regional and state tournaments. Coaches will be provided an opportunity to challenge results by contacting the tournament director by 5:00 p.m. of the Monday following the tournament. Pending outcome of any challenges, results are official at 5:00 p.m. Thursday following the tournament. Final results will be posted on the WSO web site by 5:00 p.m. Friday following the tournament.

### **Awards**

Regionals – Top 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbons, top 1-3 places medals and trophies.

State – Top 5<sup>th</sup> place ribbons, top 1-4 places medals for events, top 3 places trophies.

New Team Recognition – All new teams in each division will be recognized at each regional tournament. If there is more than one new team/division at a tournament, the top-scoring new team will receive the registration credit toward the following year's registration.

### **\*\*Determining the number of teams that will advance from regionals to state competition:**

To determine the number of teams advancing from regional tournaments to the state tournament in each division, the following formula shall be applied:

*# of teams advancing to State tournament =*

$$\frac{\text{\# of teams accommodated at State}}{\text{\# of total registered teams in division}} \times \text{\# of teams in division at Regional tournament}$$

Resulting fractional numbers will be rounded down (.1 to .4) or rounded up (.5 to .9).

### **Example:**

If there are 79 B teams registered statewide and 20 B teams can be accommodated at the state tournament.

There are four regions:

Region 1 has 18 teams

Region 2 has 24 teams

Region 3 has 23 teams

Region 4 has 14 teams

Based on the formula above, the following number of teams should\* advance to the state tournament:

Region 1 will send 5 teams

Region 2 will send 6 teams

Region 3 will send 6 teams

Region 4 will send 4 teams

\*In years when rounding up results in more teams being eligible for State than the tournament is able to accommodate (as identified in the above example, where 21 teams should advance), the region/s with the greater number of teams will be given priority. In the example above, the following would be the actual number of teams that advance to the state tournament based on only 20 teams being accommodated:

Region 1 – 5 teams

Region 2 – 6 teams

Region 3 – 6 teams

Region 4 – **3** teams (even though the formula allowed for rounding up to 4 teams, with only 14 teams, this region has the fewest number of registered teams; therefore, the other regions are given priority in advancing to the state tournament).

**\*\*EXCEPTION based on tournament composition:** If any tournament has non-geographic teams registered, above formula will be changed as follows:

Within the tournament, local and non-geographic teams will be considered separately in determining # of teams advancing to state with any rounding-up issues resulting in a higher overall # of teams advancing going in the local region's favor.

For example, based on overall tournament registration, 6 teams would advance to the state tournament. Based on local vs non-geographical team #s (and accounting for rounding up), 2.5 local teams and 3.75 non-geographical teams would advance, then local teams would have 3 teams advance and non-geographical teams would have a **maximum of 3** teams advance.

In this example, the top three local teams will advance to the state. The top three non-local teams will advance only if they finish in the top 6 of the particular region under normal rule. If less than three non-local teams qualify for state, the remaining spots for state participation goes to the next ranked local teams.

### **Providing Information to Public/Teams**

The State Director will use the WSO web sites to provide information to the public and teams – primarily via <https://washingtontscienceolympiad.com/latest.html>.

### **Annual Meeting**

The annual membership meeting is an informational meeting at which time the previous competition season is discussed, dates are identified for the upcoming season (coaching clinics, invitational tournaments,

tournaments, and other events of interest), the unified schedule is drafted, members are provided opportunity for feedback, and new board members are elected. The date and place will be posted on the web site and coaches notified by email (in compliance with WSO By-Laws).

### **Associate Membership**

At this time the associate membership registration fee is equal to a team registration fee. Associate memberships are offered to businesses/individuals not specifically registered with WSO to participate in tournaments.

## Team Affiliation Policy (replaces former Home School Policy)

### ***A Team Endeavor***

Washington Science Olympiad (WSO) requires all participants in Science Olympiad competitions to participate as members of a team, not as unaffiliated individuals. There are three identified affiliations: Public School, Private/Charter School, and Home School. Teams are composed of anywhere from 1 to 15 students. Students may compete in a higher division than their grade level, but may not compete in a lower division than their grade level, with the exception identified by the National Science Olympiad that 9<sup>th</sup> grade high school students may compete on the team from the middle school that they most recently attended. Once a declaration of school affiliation has been made for participation in a regional tournament, students must remain on a team associated with that school for the remainder of the competition season. The only exception for changing schools mid-season is if the student's family moves to another school's/county's geographical boundaries.

### ***Public School Students***

Public school students may participate in Science Olympiad only as members of a team that is formed in the local public school that they attend. Public school students may not opt to participate on another school's team, with two exceptions (1) Elementary school students may compete for the middle/junior high school they will attend; and (2) 9<sup>th</sup> grade high school students may compete for the middle school they formerly attended. Small schools should see the Science Olympiad National Policy on Small Schools for other options.

### ***Private or Charter School Students***

Private schools, "governor" schools, and charter schools may create Science Olympiad teams from any students in their student body, regardless of where their homes of origin are located. They may not solicit nor enlist either public school or home-schooled students on their teams.

### ***Home-Schooled Students***

#### **Definitions/Policies for Washington Science Olympiad:**

- Home-schooled students are defined by their filing a signed declaration of intent to homeschool with the superintendent of the school district in which the student resides (RCW 28A.200.010).
- Home-schooled students may be enrolled PART-TIME in a public school (RCW 28A150.350) or a private/charter school, as long as they are not reported as a full-time student by the school.
- Calendar age will be used to determine grade eligibility for Division B (grades 6-9) and Division C (grades 9-12). A student's equivalent grade will be determined by birth date as of September 1. Hence, a child who will be eleven years old on September 1 will be considered a 6<sup>th</sup> grader; a twelve year old is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, and so forth).

**Option 1 - Participation through a Local Public School:** Home-schooled students may compete on a public school team provided that the student lives within the geographical boundaries for that school and is NOT also a member of a home school team.

**Option 2 - Participation through a Home School Team:** A home school team will consist only of home-schooled students who live within the boundaries of two contiguous (side-by-side) geographic counties within Washington.

### ***Registering and Qualifying Teams***

WSO is responsible for registering and qualifying all Science Olympiad teams in the state of Washington. For a public or private/charter school Science Olympiad team, a roster signed by the principal of the school is considered proper validation of enrollment. For a home school team, a roster signed by the president of the home school association or the head of the independent home school is considered proper validation.

### ***Investigation of Team Qualifications***

If WSO suspects that a team is comprised of students who are not members of that school's student body or a home school team does not conform to WSO definitions, the State Director may ask the coach to provide verification of that team's qualifications as follows:

- A public, private or charter school student's qualification may be verified by some form of school identification, school roster, recent report card, evidence of residence in the school district or other similar documents appropriate to the situation.
- A home-schooled student's qualification may be verified by the student's annual notice of intent to homeschool and some proof of residency within the designated two contiguous counties.

The WSO State Director, tournament officials, or other WSO personnel will **NOT** contact individual students to determine school team validity. Team qualification complaints must be filed with the Tournament Director by 5PM Monday following the tournament. All inquiries will be forwarded to the WSO State Director to reconcile with the registered team coach, school principal, president of the home school association, or head of the independent home school by 5PM Thursday following the tournament.

### ***Sanctions for Non-Qualified Participation***

If, after investigation, the WSO State Director determines that a team or its members are not qualified, sanctions may be imposed that could include disqualification of a student team member, disqualification of a team coach, or disqualification of the team from a tournament. In the event of multiple cases of disqualification, the coach or team or school may be barred from future competition.

## WSO Team Conduct Policy

The goal of competition is to give one's best effort while displaying honesty, integrity, and good sportsmanship. Everyone is expected to display courtesy and respect toward tournament personnel and other teams (see Science Olympiad Pledges below). Teams are expected to make an honest effort to follow the rules and spirit of the event (not interpret the rules so as to provide an unfair advantage or dispute validity of rules). Failure by a participant, coach, parent, or team guest to abide by these codes, accepted safety procedures, or rules below, may result in an assessment of penalty points or, in some cases, disqualification of the team – either from the event, the tournament, or future tournaments.

The following items will be adhered to by teams registered in Washington and enforced by tournaments. Signatures on the WSO Roster-Ethics form indicate acceptance of this code of conduct. Infractions may result in disqualification from an event, tournament, or WSO.

1. Actions and items (e.g., tools, notes, resources, supplies, electronics, etc.) are permitted, unless they are explicitly excluded in the rules, are unsafe, or violate the spirit of the event.
2. While competing in an event, students may not leave without the event supervisor's approval and must not receive any external assistance. All electronic devices capable of external communication (including cell phones) must be turned off – unless expressly permitted in the event rules – and placed in a designated location, if requested by the event supervisor.
3. Students, coaches and other adults associated with a team are responsible for ensuring that any applicable school, Science Olympiad, or WSO policy, law, or regulation is not broken. All Science Olympiad content (e.g., policies, requirements, clarifications, FAQs, etc. on soinc.org) must be treated as if it were included in the rules manual.
4. All pre-built devices presented for judging must be constructed, impounded, and operated by one or more of the 15 current team members unless stated otherwise in the rules. If a device has been removed from the event area, appeals related to that device will not be considered.
5. Only the identified team coach of record may initiate official feedback with an Event Supervisor or tournament personnel. Only head coaches may file an arbitration. Only the head coach may interact with the arbitrators. Decision of the arbitrators is final.
6. Feedback/interaction regarding event parameters or judging from parents or team guests with Event Supervisors, arbitrators or tournament personnel may be grounds for team disqualification from an event, the tournament, or future tournaments. Coaches are responsible for notifying students and parents of this rule.
7. Assigned team rooms will be utilized. Teams may NOT situate themselves in a non-assigned space. This is for security reasons as well as to be able to contact team personnel, as needed.

## Team Probation Policy

**Purpose:** The goal of probation is to help schools develop appropriate and sporting behavior from competitors, coaches, and parents or other guests of the school to allow continued participation in Science Olympiad. There are no differences in consequences for misbehavior by any one of individuals/groups associated with a team (with exception of divisional separation between B & C divisions from the same school – each will be considered separately).

Appropriate behavior from everyone at a tournament includes:

1. Respecting tournament staff, event supervisors, and other volunteers, especially when bringing up a possible issue.
2. Respecting other competitors and their belongings.
3. Knowing and following event rules and required safety equipment and procedures.
4. School spectators (anyone associated with a school) should not talk nor signal to their competitors and for open events, must remain in designated areas.

WSO realizes that coaching staff and student participation among teams competing for the same school (program) are flexible. **Therefore, sanctions/warning/probation resulting from one team need to be applied to the entire program (school), and cannot be avoided by changing head coach, removing students or parents.** It is beyond WSO or individual tournaments' means to enforce sanctions against individuals/teams; again resulting in sanctions/probation against the school (program).

Divisions are always treated separately; meaning that if a school has both B & C division teams, if a B division team has infractions resulting in probationary status, the Division C team/s will not be sanctioned.

### **Definitions:**

**DQ** = Disqualification (based on a team not abiding by event rules).

**EDQ** = Ethical Disqualification – this is a WSO-specific DQ that results from schools/teams violating **WSO Team Conduct Policy** which – minimally – adds 5 penalty points onto the team's event score. Considering the WSO Team Probation Policy, DQ & EDQ scores will impact school (program) probationary status.

**“Program”** – as used in this policy – refers to the school program. So that “School” and “Program” may be used interchangeably, referring to all teams competing for that school/division.

**“Sanctions”** refers to restrictions on a school resulting from warning/probationary status.

**“Unrank” or “Unranking”** means that probationary teams that have DQs/EDQs in a tournament (particularly a regional or state tournament) will be subject to lower ranking (e.g., ranked after all other competing teams) for that tournament.

Summary for Schools with DQ/EDQ Infractions (Annual Warning and Probationary Status)

1. **Annual Warning (AW):** Schools that receive a single **EDQ** or more than one **DQ** at a tournament are put on **Annual Warning** with WSO which is official notification that future adverse behavior will have consequences. Annual Warnings last for one year. Schools that have no DQ/EDQs in the year

following **Annual Warning** are officially off AW status and resume full membership entitlements in the subsequent competition year.

2. Schools on AW that receive one **EDQ** in that same competition year automatically go on **probation** and will be **unranked** at that tournament.
3. Schools on AW with any **DQ/EDQ** behaviors in the following competition year will be put on probation, where they are restricted to two teams for two years.
4. While on **probation**, any **EDQ** during those two years will have the immediate consequence of extending probation for an additional year. Depending on the severity &/or number of EDQs during probation – upon approval by the WSO board – will have the consequence of disqualifying the school from WSO tournaments for at least 5 years. Any **DQ** during probation will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the WSO board for consequence.

NOTE: NOT registering in the year following AW or Probationary status does not eliminate sanctions – they will carry forward in entirety to the next year that the school registers.

### **Probationary Status/Restrictions/Sanctions**

1. **Sanctions (probationary restrictions) are between the school and the WSO board – which may first be initiated by the regional board. Tournament Directors are NOT able to comment on nor correspond with coaches regarding probationary status.**
  - a. Tournament directors (including invitationals) will be made aware of WSO teams on AW or probation prior to tournament day. If final tournament scoring identifies an AW or Probation team as having a **DQ** or **EDQ**, the tournament/regional or WSO board will apply appropriate sanctions as laid out in this policy. At this point, no sanctions will be placed on the entire school. However, as stated above – going into the following registration and tournament year, WSO has no way of limiting restrictions to individuals associated with a team and, therefore, the school will incur restrictions placing the program on AW or probation.
  - b. Since tournament directors often do not have complete information with initial scoring to **unrank** teams nor provide current probationary status, AW/Probationary schools may need to connect with the WSO State Director following the tournament for confirmation of post-tournament status. As with WSO policy for tournament scoring, official results need to be finalized by 5PM Thursday following the tournament and posted to the WSO web site by Friday following the tournament. For any **AW/Probation** team, the State Director will provide team/school status prior to WSO release of official results to identify how the team or school may be impacted.
  - c. The State Director will track all behavior issues and **DQ/EDQs** and make relevant information available to tournament directors. This includes tracking which teams (and possibly schools) were **unranked** and may not compete in future tournaments during that competition year.
  - d. It is up to coaches to inform their students, parents, and guests of sanctions and possible future consequences. When there are multiple teams from one school, the coach must also notify other school coaches of probationary status.

2. Team restrictions once placed on **AW/Probation** during the current season:
  - a. During the same season a team is placed on AW, WSO will not sanction other teams from the school in that same year. In all WSO/regional board votes, coaches on the relevant board for that region/division may not vote.
  - b. Teams placed on **AW or probation** following a regional tournament may NOT advance to the next level of competition in that year (State &/or Nationals).
  - c. Once a team has been placed on **probation**, ALL teams from that school (and the SCHOOL) are officially placed on probation going into the **following** competition year, as well as the second year after probationary status is identified.
  
3. There will be two forms of sanctions:
  - a. **Annual Warning**
    - i. An Annual Warning is the first official sanction. There are no immediate consequences for an annual warning beyond the DQ/EDQ scores, but serves as notification further issues will have more consequences for the teams/programs involved.
    - ii. Programs may be put on Annual Warning any time during the competition year by a vote of the tournament's regional board following their misbehavior, even if not punished at the time.
      1. A board may put an out-of-region team on Annual Warning.
      2. Programs will have a chance to appeal to the state board, whose decision is final.
    - iii. **Programs that receive an EDQ at any tournament, will automatically be placed on an Annual Warning.**
    - iv. Programs that receive two or more cumulative **DQs** for safety or event violations during the competition season should be considered for **Annual Warning**.
    - v. Programs that receive a second EDQ will automatically be placed on full probation for that competition year. The **team** that received the **second EDQ** shall be **unranked** at the tournament they received the **EDQ**.
    - vi. Programs that receive **another DQ after** being placed on **Annual Warning** will be reviewed for probation by their regional board, or the state board (if it occurs at the State competition). The tournament staff will decide if the specific DQ while on Annual Warning should prevent the relevant team from being ranked.
    - vii. An Annual Warning will last from the date of issue until the completion of the equivalent tournament the next competition year, e.g., NW Regional B Tournament (or 365 days if the tournament is not held).
    - viii. Repeated Annual Warnings may result in being placed on probation by the WSO board.

b. **Full Probation**

- i. Even without being placed on AW, schools may be placed on **probation** based on gross behaviors in a tournament at any time by a vote of the regional or state board.
  - ii. Unless identified otherwise, probation lasts **two** competition years (in addition to the remainder of the current season) unless determined otherwise by the WSO board.
  - iii. Schools on probation may not register more than two teams for two years (or as long as on probationary status).
  - iv. **Receiving a DQ or EDQ at any tournament while on probation will cause the team to be unranked (e.g., will not advance to the next level of Science Olympiad tournaments).**
  - v. Receiving an **EDQ** while on probation will extend probation by a competition year.
  - vi. Programs that receive a **DQ** will be voted on by the state board as to whether to extend their probation.
  - vii. Repeated probation extensions may result in programs not being able to participate in WSO for a number of years at the state board's discretion.
4. Head coaches and the school administration shall be notified by the State Director by email upon being placed on AW or probationary status, or if continued probationary status, and expectations for getting off probation. No response from the coach or administration is necessary; the board decision is final.
5. At board discretion – as circumstances deem necessary - schools may be asked not to return to WSO indefinitely or for a specific period of time, if longer than the automatic 5-year ban.