ESSAY COMPETITION (ALL DIVISIONS)
SECME’s 6 National Competitions

- Engineering Design Competitions (3)
  - Mousetrap Car
  - Water Rocket
  - Vex Robotics
- Internet Science and Technology Fair (ISTF)
- Essay Competition
- eCYBERMISSION

Important Dates/Deadlines to Remember:

January 6, 2017
- **Certification** of Regional/District/State 1st place winners **OPENS** (for Host Universities only)

April 14, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- **Certification** of Regional/District/State 1st place winners (deadline)

April 14, 2017
- Certification of Regional/District/State 1st place winners **CLOSES** (Host Universities only)
- **Registration** for the 2016-17 SECME National Competition **OPENS** (School Coordinators only)

April 17, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- Elementary Mousetrap Car Written Report due
- First place winning essays due at the SECME National Office

May 3, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- ALL National winners will be notified
- Mousetrap Car **Technical Reports** are due at the SECME National Office (Middle & High school)
- VEX Robotics **Engineering Notebooks** are due at the SECME National Office (All divisions)

June 16, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- ALL Teams must be Registered for the 2016-17 SECME National Competition Finals
- Mousetrap car PowerPoint presentations are due at the SECME National Office
  - (only for Middle and High school teams advancing to the national competition)

NOTE: All announcements of changes and/or updates will be published in the monthly SECME Spotlight Newsletter
Dear SECME Educators and Competition Hosts:

Welcome to another exciting year of SECME Competitions. Our National Office Staff and Competition Task Force has further strengthened and enhanced this year’s competition opportunities for you and your students.

This packet contains Guidelines for the 2016-17 SECME National Competitions. These Guidelines serve as the framework for local, regional and/or state competitions. Technical assistance is provided by many SECME Member Universities or districts, which may coordinate and host SECME workshops for teachers to learn basic SECME competitions (Mousetrap car, Water Rocket, Vex Robotics) skills or other STEM content. Please contact your SECME Program Director or Member University partner for dates and locations in your area. If you’re unsure about this information, please contact our national office and we will be glad to assist - secme@coe.gatech.edu or 1-888-262-8307.

Our STEM education competitions are aligned to National Standards, which can easily be drilled down to your state standards which means, SECME competition activities are packed with math and science required skills. It has been demonstrated that over time, the academic performance of students participating in SECME is higher than those that do not.

We’re off…get your students geared up to wind-up their engines, launch their rockets, and program their robots!

Additionally, we encourage you to join us this summer for the 41st Annual SECME Summer Institute where you receive state-of-the art professional development and SEE THE NATIONAL COMPETITON IN ACTION!

Sincerely,

Michele Williams, SECME National Interim Executive Director
GENERAL INFORMATION

Competitions are a wonderful way for teachers to reinforce science and math skills with exciting, hands-on activities while challenging students to persevere and excel. SECME competitions are designed to expose students to a variety of real-world applications for science and math, while generating interest and excitement about college and careers in STEM.

Following are the 2016-17 SECME National Student Competitions Guidelines. Activities, deadlines and competitions at the Local/Regional/State Competition level are at the discretion of the Member University or Host Sponsor. We encourage participation at all levels or divisions (elementary, middle and high schools).

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW CAREFULLY

- Your 2016-17 student and teacher data must be entered electronically into the SECME National database prior to your Regional/State Competition.
- Only students active in a local SECME program are eligible to enter competitions.
- SECME Member Universities, Program Directors and School Coordinators are asked to distribute (or reference) these Guidelines to all (educators, parents, business/industry partners, graduate and undergraduate students) who will help prepare students for this year’s competitions or serve as mentors and/or judges. It is important that all fully understand the judging criteria for each Competition and their division.
- All entries are expected to be neat, original, and completed by the students.
- Elementary, Middle/Junior High, and High School students each will compete with other students at their respective levels.
- 1st place Regional/State winning student or student competition teams, as identified in these guidelines, will be eligible to compete in and/or attend the 2016-17 SECME National Competitions Finals.
- 1st place Regional/State winning students and/or student teams participating in Elementary Mousetrap, Water Rocketry, ISTF and Essay DO NOT travel to compete in the SECME National Competition Finals. National winners are chosen by score elimination. Scores from 1st place Regional/State competition winners will be submitted. The highest score from that competition will be the winning student and/or student team. In case of a tie, a tie-breaker will be in position.
- 1st place Regional/State Mousetrap Car winners (Middle and High School) and all Vex Robotics teams DO travel to the National Student Competition Finals to compete.
- SECME school coordinators should identify a chaperone (one chaperone per team) to accompany their teams to the National Student Competition Finals.
- Certification of Regional/State Competition Winners. SECME Member Universities (or Sponsors) that host a Regional/State competition must provide the SECME National Office information on their winning student and/or student teams. This CERTIFICATION is to be submitted electronically not later than Friday, April 14, 2017. Hard copy CERTIFICATIONS and/or emails will not be accepted. Regional/State winning essays must be saved as a PDF and submitted via email to: secme@coe.gatech.edu no later than this date as well.
- Engineering Design (Mousetrap Car) Technical Reports and VEX Robotics Engineering Notebooks are due at the SECME National Office on or before May 3, 2017. Technical Reports are to be sent via email to: secme@coe.gatech.edu.

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1 In the case of mixed gender teams, we encourage two chaperones (male and female)

2 Certification of winning students/student teams DOES NOT constitute REGISTRATION FOR NATIONAL COMPETITION FINALS. These are two separate and distinct processes.
Financial responsibilities for SECME Student Competitions

a. **SCHOOLS/SCHOOL DISTRICTS** are responsible for covering all expenses involved in conducting competitions at the school/school district level.

b. **MEMBER UNIVERSITIES** are responsible for:
   - Hosting regional/state competitions (including awards)
   - Travel expenses to the National Competition Finals: round-trip travel, including transportation to/from the airport for up to three student teams (three students per team) and one chaperone per team

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**Competition Requirements:**

Specific competition requirements are identified separately for each competition.

**Competition Behavior:**

**Unsportsmanlike Behavior**

Each student, teacher, chaperone, and parent works hard during the school year to prepare for competitions. To honor their hard work and dedication, as well as contributing to an exciting environment, unsportsmanlike behavior will result in disqualification of your team. Unsportsmanlike conduct will be determined by the SECME staff and/or competition judges.

**Collaboration:**

To foster collaboration and a knowledge sharing STEM community, all materials submitted to SECME for national competitions will become the property of SECME and may or may not be shared via the SECME website, marketing documents, presentations, etc. Materials include, but are not limited to, technical reports, engineering notebooks, pictures, technical drawings, etc.

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3 In the case of mixed gender teams, we encourage two chaperones (male and female)
**Special Note to Regional/District/State Competition Hosts**

Thank you in advance for hosting your Regional/State SECME Competition. Please contact our office as soon as your competition date is confirmed. If you are new to hosting a SECME competition, feel free to contact our office for guidance and/or technical assistance.

Remember that your CERTIFICATION of winning teams is due **April 14, 2017**. The certification link will be available in January 2017. After we receive all certifications, the 2016-17 SECME National Competitions scores for non-traveling teams will be posted on our website (www.secme.org) under “Resources and Forms” in the “Student Resources” section. We look forward to hosting your winning teams at the 2016-17 SECME National Student Competition Finals and working with you to enhance your local SECME program and competitions.
INTRODUCTION:

What makes you smile, gets you excited, makes you want to “do” something? What SECME activities that involve Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math do you find to be fun? Why are they fun? How can you make a living doing what you love to do? What kinds of careers use Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math? What level of education do you need to prepare you for these careers? This SECME competition will give you the opportunity to explore this year’s SECME National Student Competition theme “SECME: STEM Superheroes!”

COMPETITION TASK:

All exploration requires going to where you have never gone before. This competition asks you to embark on a personal exploration and use your SECME experiences to guide you as you carefully research, plan, and deliver a well-written essay that reflects you have searched and discovered your own answers as to what STEMulates you in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Be prepared to have fortitude while you gather your information, resolve as you structure your essay, and diligence as you make your essay the best it can be.

PROCESS:

Be prepared to use technology to travel to places around the world and beyond.
Be prepared to broaden your world of possibilities.
Be prepared to think about your future in different ways.
Be prepared to explain how your personal journey of discovery has helped you...
Your exploration will be divided into five phases and your essay will be proof that your journey was successful.

**Phase 1: Interest Inventory**  
**Phase 2: Career Search**  
**Phase 3: Education Search**  
**Phase 4: Persuasion**  
**Phase 5: Essay Checklist, Form Completion, and Submission**

Be prepared to be vigilant in following all instructions. Only those entries that have been attentive to the SECME Essay Competition Guidelines will be considered for awards. Each essay entry is to be prepared and submitted by an individual student (not a team).

**WHAT DO YOU NEED?** A willingness to discover, access to the Internet, a *Planning and Building Journal* to write down all the information you find, and your imagination! Are you ready?

**SECME WebQuest and 2016-17 Student Essay Phase 1: Interest Inventory**  
It’s all about YOU!  
(and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math…)

What STEMulates your imagination? What SECME experiences are fun?  
Do you enjoy working with a team to build mousetrap cars? Balsawood bridges? Water bottle rockets?  
Do you enjoy creating the engineering drawing that shows the design that was used?  
Do you like the challenge of figuring out ways to build a “better” car or bridge or water bottle rocket?  
Do you like to do research on interesting science, technology, engineering, and math topics? Do you like to plan big projects?  
Do you love the roar of engines? Does forensic science excite you? Maybe you love computers or robotics. Ask yourself “What am I so excited about and would love to have a career doing every day; wake up thinking about it and go to sleep thinking about it, and never getting bored with it?” Whatever your answer is, that is your “passion” and that passion will help drive you to become successful at it.

1. Get out your *Planning and Building Journal* and answer these questions for yourself. Take some time! Don’t worry about going fast. Really search your memories and write down your thoughts…

2. Now, talk to your friends, your teachers, your relatives – ask them what they think you enjoy and write down their answers in your Journal (you might be surprised by what they say!).

3. Then do some Internet research. Below are some interesting links, but you are not limited to just these! Ask your teacher for help finding other sites to visit. Don’t have the Internet at home? No problem! Go to your local public library – and be sure to tell the librarian that you are doing research and ask for help! Take your time and have fun! Don’t forget to use your *Journal* to write down information – use as many pages as you want. You never know what you might need for the next phases of your exploration…

http://www.texascaresonline.com/  
http://www.discovere.org/discover-engineering  
http://www.greatachievements.org/  
http://stemcareer.com/  
http://www.onetonline.org/find/stem?t=0  
http://www.wisegeek.com/science.htm
SECME WebQuest and 2016-17 Student Essay Phase 2: Career Search
It’s all about YOU!
(and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math…)

On this next leg of your exploration, it’s time to find out what career just might be STEMulating for you! Let yourself be surprised by what you might find that you never even knew was a “job.” The links below are just a beginning. Ask for help to find other good Internet sites. And don’t forget to use your Journal to log all the places you go! You never know when you might want to check your Journal as you move through the next phases of your personal journey.

1. First visit the SECME Website (www.secme.org). On the green menu bar across the top, hover your mouse over “More” and click on “Gov & Industry Partners.” When you click on this link, you will see the seven (7) corporations that are major SECME sponsors. Click on each one to visit their Websites – have fun looking at all the cool things they do!

2. Plan to take a few days for this next step in your exploration: Go back to the green menu bar at the top of the website and hover your mouse over “More.” This time, click on “Other Alliance Partnerships.” There are many industries and government agencies that help to support your SECME program in many different ways. Find one that is familiar, click on its link, and explore its website. Then find one that you have never heard of before and explore it, too. Take a few days to explore all the links…you will be STEMulated by all the opportunities and information out there just waiting to be discovered!

3. Now that you have new information about many different industries and government agencies that are STEMulating, visit some websites that tell you about different careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. There are several listed below you can go to, but don’t stop there! Get some help to find other information. And, of course, don’t forget to use your Journal to keep a record of all the interesting information you discover!

http://www.aboriginalaccess.ca/adults/types-of-engineering
http://www.egfi-k12.org/
http://www.egfi-k12.org/#/cards/mechanical
http://www.egfi-k12.org/#/cards/computer
http://teachers.egfi-k12.org/resource-engineering-scholarships/
http://www.stem-works.com/
http://www.coolmath.com/careers.htm
http://www.maa.org/careers/
http://www.pbs.org/safarchive/5_cool/53_career.html
http://library.thinkquest.org/J0113274/index.htm
SECME WebQuest and 2016-17 Student Essay Phase 3: Education Search

It’s all about YOU!
(and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math…)

Your Journal should be pretty full of information now…

Look back at your notes from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of your exploration. Do you have some ideas about what you like to do and about some careers that just might be fun for you to pursue? SO, NOW WHAT? Time to explore how to get prepared for a STEMulating career! HOW? You need to think about what kind of education you are going to need. In this phase of your journey, you are going to visit universities across the country… prepare to be surprise about how different they are! Take careful notes in your Journal.

1. It’s back to the SECME Website (www.secme.org) homepage’s link. Hover your mouse over “More” and select “Member Universities.” If you click on the “Founding Universities” button in the upper right corner, you find the names of the six Deans and their universities that first met in 1975 to create SECME to encourage students like you to go to college and get degrees that would lead to STEMulating careers. That was 40 years ago! Can you imagine how many SECME students have been STEMulated over the past 39 years because these Founders of SECME wanted kids to explore STEMulating lives?

   1. Now go back one page to see the “SECME University Council Member Institutions.” You will find 42 universities that have engineering programs that support SECME! That’s A LOT of university engineering programs that are just waiting for you to get to know them!

   ✓ Get a map of the United States. Take time and click on the different university links. Find their locations on the map. What university is closest to you? What university is the farthest away?

   ✓ Most of the university engineering programs have interesting information and really fun summer programs. Explore the sites and see what you can find!

   ✓ What university engineering schools looks like a place you could see yourself in the future?

There’s tons of information at your fingertips – Enjoy! Don’t forget to take good notes! You’re almost ready to start your essay!

_________________________________
SECME WebQuest and 2016-17 Student Essay Phase 4: Persuasion
It’s all about YOU!
(and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math…)

You’ve done a lot of work. Time to put it all together and use your new knowledge to persuade the SECME Essay Competition Judges that you have figured out your destination!

In Phase 4, you will need to be diligent. You’ve gathered a good bit of research, and now you need to decide how you can use it. The competition judges want you to help them understand:

- what STEMulates your mind in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
- what your research has shown you might be a career you want to pursue
- and what your research has shown you might just be the right university to make that happen!

Don’t make the mistake of thinking that this phase of your journey will be easy. You will want to take your time and write several drafts before you submit your essay to the judges.

It’s ok to ask for help after you write your drafts. However, YOU need to make sure that your essay is in YOUR words! The judges want to feel like YOU are talking to them, not a parent or a teacher or a friend…YOU!

Others can make sure that your final copy is corrected so that it doesn’t have errors, but they should NOT express your feelings for you – they are YOUR ideas and reactions to what you have discovered during your exploration. And don’t forget to let the judges know if you were surprised by any information you found in your research – they will be interested to learn that your journey was a success. A successful personal exploration will be one in which you learned something about yourself – about what gets you excited and ready to go for your goals. You should NOT have known all of that before you started!!

So, it’s time to think, write, re-write, edit and then move on to Phase 5! Go ahead!

SECME: STEM Superheroes!
Congratulations! You have reached the end of your WebQuest and have finished the hard work of composing an essay that will persuade the judges that you have learned a great deal from your mission.

Before you submit your essay, be sure you carefully follow the instructions:

1. Go through the Essay Checklist and look over the copy of Judges’ Evaluation Rubric. Make sure your essay is the best it can be in all of the areas the judges will be assessing and that you’ve followed all the guidelines – YOUR ESSAY SHOULD REFLECT THE PRIDE YOU HAVE IN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND WRITTEN!

2. Make sure all the information is correct on the required cover page that is to be included when your essay is submitted.

3. Have your teacher submit your essay!

Good Luck with the judges – but you are already a winner because you’ve successfully completed a journey of personal exploration that you will remember for a lifetime!

** HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ESSAY **

To eliminate any formatting issues when opening and printing word processed documents, sometimes caused by different software versions and/or computer settings, all Essay entries MUST be saved in PDF format with all pages of the document in one file. The PDF file should then be emailed, as an attachment, to the SECME National Office at secme@coe.gatech.edu on or before the due date. Essays sent as MS Word (.doc) files or any other format other than PDF will not be scored. NOTE: To save a MS Word document as a PDF file, click the “File” button, choose “Save As,” name the file in the “File name” field, change the “Save as type” to PDF, then click the “Save” button.
Title: SECME: STEM Superheroes!

Student Name:
Grade:
School Name:
District:
Teacher’s Name:

2016-17 SECME Student Essay Competition: Checklist

☐ Required cover page is completed and attached
☐ Essay is 12 pt./New Times Roman Font
☐ Essay is double spaced and has 1 inch borders on each side
☐ Essay is 3-5 pages in length
Points Earned/Out of Points Possible

**Essay Organization (40 Possible Points)**

_____ /15 Writing demonstrates age-appropriate, thoughtful progression of writer’s interest in STEM to career interest and educational preparation needed to fulfill personal goals

_____ /5 Writing includes an original, age-appropriate introduction

_____ /8 Writing includes ideas that are fully developed and fully supported

_____ /8 Writing is logical and coherent as a whole

_____ /4 Writing includes an original, age-appropriate close

**Research (25 Possible Points)**

_____ /10 Writer explains how their SECME participation will help prepare them for a STEM career

_____ /10 Writing demonstrates attention to, and incorporation of, research required for this competition

_____ /5 Essay includes actual sources of their research

**Writing Style (20 Possible Points)**

_____ /10 The writer’s voice is strong, demonstrating the writer’s creativity

_____ /10 The writer’s voice is strong, demonstrating the writer’s reflection on his/her research for this competition

**Punctuation, Mechanics, and Mechanics (15 Possible Points)**

_____ /15 Essay reflects writer’s pride by being submitted as error-free as possible

- Writing is free of (age-appropriate) punctuation errors [5]
- Writing is free of (age-appropriate) sentence errors (misplaced sentence parts, subject/verb agreement, sentence fragments, run-ons, etc.) [5]
- Writing is free of (age-appropriate) spelling errors [5]

_____ Total Points Earned / Out of 100 Possible
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April 14, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- Certification of Regional/District/State 1st place winners (deadline)

April 14, 2017
- Certification of Regional/District/State 1st place winners CLOSES (Host Universities only)
- Registration for the 2016-17 SECME National Competition OPENS (School Coordinators only)

April 17, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- Elementary Mousetrap Car Written Report due
- First place winning essays due at the SECME National Office

May 3, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- ALL National winners will be notified
- Mousetrap Car Technical Reports are due at the SECME National Office (Middle & High school)
- VEX Robotics Engineering Notebooks are due at the SECME National Office (All divisions)

June 16, 2017 (on or before 11:59pm EST)
- ALL Teams must be Registered for the 2016-17 SECME National Competition Finals
- Mousetrap car PowerPoint presentations are due at the SECME National Office
  o (only for Middle and High school teams advancing to the national competition)

NOTE: All announcements of changes and/or updates will be published in the monthly SECME Spotlight Newsletter

The 2016-17 SECME National Student Competition Finals dates and host university will be announced in January 2016 or as soon as possible.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Local/Regional/State Competitions

If you have any questions, or need help in these specific areas, please contact:

- **Engineering Design (Mousetrap Car):** the Engineering Faculty Consultant or Minority Engineering Program Director at the Member University which sponsors your Regional/State competition

- **Engineering Design (Water Rocketry):** the Engineering Faculty Consultant or Minority Engineering Program Director at the Member University which sponsors your Regional/State competition

- **VEX Robotics:** SECME National Office ● secme@coe.gatech.edu

- **ISTF:** Bruce Furino ● Bruce@istf.ucf.edu

- **Essay:** SECME National Office ● secme@coe.gatech.edu

- **eCYBERMISSION:** eCYBERMISSION Mission Control help desk ● MissionControl@eCybermission.com and/or 1-866-GO-CYBER; 1-866-(462-9237)

The SECME National Office is always here to help. We can be reached at secme@coe.gatech.edu

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1. **Can we purchase mousetrap kits from the SECME National Office?** No; SECME no longer sells mousetrap kits. Instead SECME has adopted and encourage scratch-build designs to foster more creativity and innovation. Car kits can be purchased at the following places:
   1. Pitsco
   2. Midwest Supply company
   5. [www.sciencekit.com](http://www.sciencekit.com)


2. **Our team won our Regional/State Competition but one of the team members is unable to attend National Competition Finals. Can we replace him/her?** YES. A student team member can be replaced with another SECME student. The replacement student should be able to participate in the competition, in particular, the team interview as outlined in the guidelines.

3. **Our team won our Regional/State Competition but one of the team members is unable to attend National Competition Finals and we are NOT able to replace them. Can we still come and compete with two team members?** You will be allowed to come to the National Competition to participate and get “the experience” but any team without 3 team members are not eligible to place in the competition.
4. **Can parents/family members attend the National Student Competition Finals?**  YES. Parents and family members are always encouraged to attend SECME events. Transportation, meals and lodging will need to be secured by the individual family members. The Host University is only responsible for meals and lodging for the 3-member student teams and the authorized chaperone(s). A listing of local hotels will be provided.

5. **We are the 1st place winning team from our Regional/State Competition. Do we send in our Technical Drawing and Report prior to attending National Competition Finals?** Email your Technical Report (PDF format) **only** and physically bring your drawing with you to National Competition Finals.

6. **We have an active SECME program at our school but there will be no Regional/District/State Competition in our area this year; can my students compete in the National Competitions?**  YES.

   - **Engineering Design (Mousetrap Car) and Vex Robotics:** Winning Regional/State teams travel to the National Student Competition Finals to compete. In the absence of such it will be your responsibility to raise the travel funds to send your 3 student team and chaperone to the National Student Competition Finals to compete. Please contact us at secme@coe.gatech.edu for additional guidance.

   - **Essay:** SECME programs can host a “local” Essay Competition and submit the winning essay to the SECME National Office for entry into the National Competition Finals

   - **ISTF:** All students can participate in the Internet Science and Technology Fair (ISTF) competition

   - **eCYBERMISSION:** All students can participate in the eCYBERMISSION competition.

**Concerns and Complaints** - Please complete and submit the Competition Grievance Form to the Local/Regional/District/State Competition Host. Grievances should be handled at the local level.

Note: Please follow any additional instructions or procedure that maybe implemented by your local (Local/Regional/District/State) Competition Host.
SECME Student Competition
Grievance Request for Review by Judges

Competition Host ________________________________________________________________

School ____________________________________________________________

District ________________________________________________________________

Team Name ______________________________________________________________

SECME School Coordinator/Teacher Leader __________________________________________

Preferred Email __________________________________________________________

Telephone ______________________________________________________________

Competition Rule or Procedure in Question ________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Specific Concern __________________________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

(Use back or 2nd sheet if needed to document fully)

Submitted by ____________________________________________ (Name)

Date ________________________________________________________________

SECME 2016-17 Competition Guidelines