

SJWP Mentor Guide

For Students:

Welcome to the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. By signing up for to participate you've taken a giant step towards improving water resources around the world. Competing in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize takes dedication, commitment, and hard work. However, you're not alone on this journey. If you're not participating with one of your teachers, we've prepared this guide to help you find a local mentor.

Mentors are industry or university water experts who can help you develop your project, provide guidance, and give feedback. Mentors won't do the work for you, but they may be able to find lab space, materials, designs, or relevant research papers. Think of your mentor as your advisor or coach.

As a mentee working with a mentor, you should be professional at all times. You should communicate goals and expectations clearly, promptly respond to phone calls or emails with your mentor, and do your best work. The mentor will be giving you their personal time, and is not being compensated.

You can expect that your mentor will point you in the right direction. They have years of experience, and may have even participated in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. They will be able to give you insights about project ideas, project planning, and how to analyze and present results. The exact nature of your relationship with your mentor will depend on how involved you wish to be with your mentor.

Ideally, the relationship between you and your mentor should be structured with weekly or monthly meetings. In between meetings you should work toward predefined milestones that you have agreed to work on with your mentor. The level of mentorship will vary depending on the type of project, and how much guidance you think you need. You and your mentor can decide on the best way to communicate with each other.

Setting goals is important. Preparing a winning entry to the Stockholm Junior Water Prize is a big task. You should work with your mentor to layout a timeline of goals and milestones for completing initial research, preparing and executing experiments, and preparing your presentation.

Finding a mentor:

There are many places to find mentors for the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. Several options include: asking your family if they know anyone who works in the water or environmental industry, contacting the engineering departments at local universities, or contacting local engineering firms. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask for mentorship. People love to give advice. It is important to be upfront about expectations and what you're asking of that person.

Do research and make a list of people to contact. If they cannot help you they will likely point you to someone who can. If you don't have a connection to the person you want to

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contact, you can cold call or email them. If you email them, you can send them the Stockholm Junior Water Prize mentor guide. Below is a sample email:

Hi [Fill in their name],

My name is [your name], I am completing in this year's Stockholm Junior Water Prize that is sponsored by the Water Environment Federation. I am searching for a mentor to help with my project, and based on my research I thought you might be a good fit. I would like to talk more with you to discuss the possibility of working together? What does your calendar look like for the following week?

*Thanks,
[your name]*

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For Mentors:

The Stockholm Junior Water Prize is the world's most prestigious water-science competition for high school students. Competition is open to all high school students, ages 15-20 and in grades 9-12, with water-science research projects. Any student who meets these criteria may enter, regardless of how they attend school. Students who are at public high schools, private schools, are homeschooled, or who have independent projects not associated with a school are eligible to compete. For more information, please visit: <http://www.wef.org/sjwp/>

The completion has three stages. Students participate at the state level. Winners of the state completions are then invited to compete nationally, and the U.S. winner competes in Stockholm with participants from around the world.

Students are dedicated and hardworking, but many often need mentors. Your role as a mentor for the Stockholm Junior Water Prize would be to provide your water-science insights to help a student prepare their research project. Your level of involvement with the student depends on how you and the student wish to work together. The student may be seeking advice about projects, how to find lab space, what materials to use, or how to present results.

You can expect that the students have completed relevant math and science courses, and have done a lot of preparation prior to seeking out a mentor. Students are not looking for someone to do the project for them. Rather, they are looking for coaching and advisement.

While there is no compensation for being a mentor, you can be assured of an enriching experience. You'll be helping develop the next generation of water professionals. Time commitments for being a mentor vary depending upon the student and their project. It is necessary to establish a routine meeting whether on a weekly or monthly basis. The student will work hard between meetings preparing any materials related to pre-defined milestones. Communicating expectation will lead to a fruitful relationship.

Thank you for considering mentoring a Stockholm Junior Water Prize participant. For more information, please visit www.wef.org/sjwp/ or email Stevi Hunt-Cottrell at shuntcottrell@wef.org.