

# MCJA Student Paper Competition Rules and Guidelines

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## Overview

The Student Paper Competition is designed to showcase original research and scholarly writing conducted by students at the undergraduate and graduate (master's and PhD) levels. The competition is divided into three categories:

- Undergraduate
- Master's
- Doctoral (PhD)

## Faculty Involvement

- Faculty may serve as co-authors or advisors on student papers.
- The student must be the lead author, completing the majority of the research and writing.
- The faculty member must verify and sign off on the student's contributions (see Submission Form Requirements below).

## Competition Categories

### Undergraduate Competition

- Open to current undergraduate students or those who graduated in May and are not yet taking graduate coursework.
- Accelerated students (enrolled in both UG and grad courses) will be classified based on the highest level of coursework completed and current enrollment (see classification rules).

### Master's Competition

- Open to students currently enrolled in a master's program or those who have completed undergraduate studies and are enrolled in summer graduate courses.
- Submissions may include portions of a master's thesis or independent coursework.
- A student who submits during their master's program may still compete in the Master's category even if they attend the conference later as a PhD student, as long as the work was completed during the master's program.

### PhD Competition

- Open to students currently enrolled in a PhD or doctoral program.
- Includes work completed independently, in research groups, or as part of dissertation research.
- If the lead author is a PhD student, the paper will be entered in the PhD competition, regardless of co-authors' levels.

## Student Classification for Submission

Students must indicate their academic classification at the time of submission. The classification is based on the status during the work's completion and submission, not the time of the conference presentation.

## Classification Guidelines

- If a student graduated in May and is not yet enrolled in graduate courses, they are classified as undergraduate.
- If a student graduated in May and is taking summer graduate coursework, they are classified as master's.
- Students enrolled in accelerated UG/grad programs are classified based on their highest level of course enrollment and majority contribution context.
- Class status must be declared on the submission site, with required documentation.

## Required Submission Form

Each submission must include a completed Student Paper Submission Form, submitted by the lead author. The form must include:

### Class Status Documentation

- Indicate academic level at time of research and submission.
- Include a screenshot of official enrollment status or transcript (see language from Student Travel Scholarship).

### Contribution and Authorship Statement

- Clearly state the percentage of contribution by each author.
- Describe what each contributor did.
- Confirm that the student is the lead author and responsible for the majority of the work.

### Faculty Sign-Off

- A faculty advisor and/or faculty co-author must sign the form to confirm:
  - The accuracy of the classification and contribution.
  - That the paper qualifies for the appropriate category.
  - If the student completed the paper entirely independently, the faculty must still verify and sign off on the submission.

## Important Notes

- Submissions will be disqualified if the classification, contribution, or faculty sign-off are not properly completed.
- Papers will be judged on originality, writing quality, analytical rigor, and clarity appropriate to the student's level.
- Awards will be given in each category (UG, Master's, PhD) based on the quality of submissions.