



# IEEE Signal Processing Society's

## *Terms and Conditions for the Signal Processing Cup (SP Cup) & Video and Image Processing Cup (VIP Cup) Student Competitions*

Official Terms & Conditions Document  
Version 1.2 Last updated 24 January 2024

# SPS Student Competition Terms & Conditions

*This document serves as the official Terms and Conditions for the SPS SP Cup and VIP Cup Student Competitions.*

**! IMPORTANT:** All team members must fully read and agree to the terms in this SPS Student Competition Terms and Conditions document in order to be eligible in any SPS Student Competition. By checking the agreement checkbox during team registration, all team members agree to all of the Terms & Conditions mentioned in this document.

**! IMPORTANT: [Judges and Team Supervisors]** The IEEE Conflict of Interest form must be completed before participating in the competition. Full information is included in this document on pages 2 and 3. The Conflict of Interest form can be completed at the following link: <https://www.ieee.org/about/compliance/conflict-of-interest/coiandpob.html>

## 1. Team Formation and Eligibility

### *Team Composition*

- Each team **MUST** be composed of: (i) One faculty member (the Supervisor) and (ii) At least 3 but no more than 10 undergraduates; *Optionally* (iii) At most one graduate student (the Tutor).
  - At least three of the undergraduate team members must be SPS student members at time of team registration.
- Further definitions of each team position are as follows:
  - Faculty (Supervisor): A faculty member or someone with a PhD degree employed by the university. *Postdocs and research associates are not considered as faculty members.*
  - Graduate Student (Tutor): A graduate student is a student having earned at least a 4-year University degree at the time of submission. *Please note: Tutors are not eligible to receive travel grants or prize money.*
  - Undergraduate: An undergraduate student is a student without a 4-year degree.
- Team members cannot be changed after the team registration deadline.
- At least one undergraduate team member must be in attendance (in-person) of the final round of the competition held at the respective conference (ICASSP or ICIP) to present the team's work.\*
- Students receiving the travel grant and prize payments **MUST** be active SPS members at time of team formation. Signal Processing Society membership can be added [here](#).

**\*Important notice:** Upon registering a team for the competition, the team must commit to at least one undergraduate team member representing the team by attending the physical competition and participating in the final round of the competition at the physical conference. Should a team not be able to participate physically (in-person) in the final round of the competition held at the respective conference (ICASSP or ICIP) for any reason, at any point in the competition, then the team must notify SPS Staff and organizers immediately. This will likely result in the team being ineligible to continue in the competition, therefore forfeiting their position in the competition. Teams must make every effort to attend the final round at the conference; visa issues *may* be an exception. *If all team members are unable to obtain visas, please be prepared to present proof of visa process, communication to obtain visa, as well as a visa denial. All eligibility decisions are at the discretion of the SPS Student Services Committee and competition organizers.*

Should a team be disqualified or forfeit their finalist position for any reason, the next team selected by the organizers may be contacted to compete in the final round, following the same rules listed above.

### *Team ineligibility (Further clarification)*

Specific team **ineligibility**, in addition to the above. *Any of these criteria will result in the team being disqualified/ineligible to continue in the competition:*

- Teams that are composed with 50% or more of its members being students who have previously participated on a finalist team of another SPS competition within the last calendar year are not eligible.
- Teams with the exact same member composition of a previously placed team in the top 3 of another SPS competition within the last calendar year are not eligible.
- Any team members who have placed in the top three teams of any SPS competition held during the previous conference and/or calendar year, i.e. a member from one of the 3 finalist teams of the 2023 SP Cup or 5-MICC (at ICASSP) will not be eligible to participate in the 2023 VIP Cup or 5-MICC (at ICIP).
- Team members cannot simultaneously participate in more than one competition at the same time.
- Team members cannot participate on more than one team at the same time.

## 2. Final Round Judging Criteria for SPS Competitions

The judging for the final phase of the competition held live at the conference will be based on five equally weighted criteria, unless otherwise specified by the competition organizers in the Official SP Cup, VIP Cup, or 5-MICC Document / Call for Participation. Each of the three finalist teams will be scored on the five criteria and the team with the highest score will place 1st, the team with the second highest score will place 2nd, and the team with the third highest score will place 3rd in the competition.

The five equally weighted criteria are:

1. Innovation of the proposed approach
2. Performance of the first stage competition (by choosing the best submission, score as indicated on the website)
3. Performance of the last submission (second phase held live at the conference) separately on the dataset(s)
4. Quality and clarity of the final report
5. Quality and clarity of the presentation

Each criterion is scored with a 1, 2, or 3; the best team in each criterion will receive 3 points, the second best team will receive 2 points, and the third best team will receive 1 point. The final winning rankings will be based on the highest points awarded from the five criteria during judge deliberations at the end of the competition. Final rankings are ultimately decided by the judges, at their discretion.

## 3. Judge & Team Supervisor Participation and Conflict of Interest

Any judge or team supervisor participating in the competition must sign a Conflict-of-Interest Form agreeing to the following key points. Full information is on the Conflict-of-Interest Form.

Conflict of Interest concerns shall be disclosed and addressed in accordance with IEEE Policies 9.9 A, B, and C and IEEE Policy 4.4.H. - Eligibility and Process Limitations. Judges involved at any stage of the team rankings/scoring process for an SP competition shall be ineligible to judge/vote on the outcome of team rankings for the competition in which the conflict exists. Any real and perceived conflict of interest shall be avoided. Conflict of interest shall be defined as any relationships, professional or otherwise, that can affect impartiality and objectivity. Such relationships include, but are not limited to the below list. This list also applies

- a. faculty supervisor/student,
- b. faculty supervisor/post-doc,
- c. manager/employee,
- d. shared institutional affiliations,
- e. recent (less than five years) research collaborations or joint authorship,
- f. judge/team supervisor
- g. In the case of a conflict of interest, the judge should neither listen to nor speak in the discussion and should not vote on the team scoring/ranking process.

In our SPS Policies and Procedures (<https://signalprocessingsociety.org/volunteers/policy-and-procedures-manual>)

(Also mentioned above) **The IEEE Conflict of Interest form must be completed before participating in the competition.** The Conflict of Interest form can be completed at the following link:

<https://www.ieee.org/about/compliance/conflict-of-interest/coiandpob.html>

### Conflict Resolution Process

The Society leadership will create an ad hoc committee to handle each matter requiring conflict resolution.

1. **Composition.** The composition of each ad hoc committee will include area experts. The experts should be chosen based on mediation experience or subject area experience. All members of the ad hoc committee should be non-conflicted, e.g., no prior involvement in the situation, no collegial work relationship, etc. The committee may be augmented with the agreement of all members of the ad hoc committee. The committee will select its own chair.
2. **Process.** During the first meeting of the ad hoc committee, the committee shall create a timeline detailing the conflict resolution process, as well as determine any operational rules for the ad hoc committee's operation (e.g., length of final report; length of statement of dissent, etc.) The individual who brought the conflict matter forward shall be informed of the timeline. All discussions and information presented to the ad hoc committee shall be handled in a confidential manner.  
  
Decisions need not be unanimous; final outcomes may be determined by majority vote of the membership of the ad hoc committee. Dissenting members may include their dissenting opinion as part of the report; the length of such dissent will be determined as part of the committee's operational rules.  
  
After the ad hoc committee has determined its final ruling, the ad hoc committee chair shall be responsible for preparing a short report documenting the committee's findings. The report shall be provided to the individual who brought the conflict matter forward.
3. **Appeal.** If the individual who brought the conflict matter forward feels that the matter has not been adequately resolved by the ad hoc committee at the Society level, the individual may escalate the matter further to TAB or IEEE. The ad hoc committee report shall be shared with TAB and/or IEEE.

## 4. Prizes for Finalists

The three teams with the highest performance in the open competition based on the judging criteria will be selected as finalists and invited to participate in the final competition at ICASSP (SP Cup) or ICIP (VIP Cup). The 1<sup>st</sup> place (Champion) team will receive a grand prize of US\$5,000. The teams placing 2<sup>nd</sup> (First Runner-Up) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (Second Runner-Up) will receive a prize of US\$2,500 and US\$1,500, respectively, in addition to travel grants and complimentary conference registrations for up to three undergraduate team members.

- Up to three undergraduate student members from each finalist team will be provided limited travel support to attend the conference in-person. In-person attendance of the physical conference is required for reimbursement.
  - Travel grant funds are offered on a reimbursement basis of up to \$1,200 for continental travel and \$1,700 for intercontinental travel; there are no exceptions.
  - Undergraduate team members receiving travel support must be SPS student members.
  - Funds will be issued by way of a bank transfer after the competition via IEEE's NextGen Expense Reimbursement (Concur) tool. *Detailed information on this step will be sent via email to the finalist team members that will be receiving reimbursement.*
  - Receipts are required for all expenses reimbursed under the travel support..
    - Prior to claiming your travel grant award, you must submit receipts of your travel expenses that are equal to or exceed the grant amount in order to receive the full travel grant payment. Travel expenses include: air fare, train tickets, hotel, visa fees, transit, meals, and conference registration. Receipts are required for all items and must equal to or exceed the total reimbursement amount.

**The receipts must show** form of payment used, name, date, and amount paid. Hotel reservation confirmations or bookings, invoices, or quotes for airfare are not acceptable receipts unless the proof of payment is also provided with the document.

- All travel expenses must be submitted through IEEE's NextGen Expense Reimbursement (Concur) tool. *Detailed instructions on how to create an account and properly input receipts will be shared with the (up to) 3 undergraduate members from finalist teams receiving travel support.*
- Complimentary conference registration for up to three undergraduate team members of finalist teams.
  - These complimentary conference registrations **cannot** be used to cover any papers accepted by the conference.
  - You must notify Jaqueline Rash, [Jaqueline.rash@ieee.org](mailto:Jaqueline.rash@ieee.org), via email of the three team members who have been chosen to receive complimentary registration. Provide the team member's Name and Email Address.
  - VISA: **Once registered for the conference**, each individual will have the opportunity to request an invitation letter **through the conference website** to be used for the visa application process. This is the **only** way to receive a letter; please follow instructions given on the conference website. *To prevent delays, please do not request an invitation letter via email to SPS Staff.*
- The finalist teams will also be invited to join the Conference Banquet and the SPS Student Job Fair, so that they can meet and talk to SPS leaders and global experts. Please note registration for the Conference Banquet and Student Job Fair is limited and based on availability. You must add these events to your registration. If you are unable to add these events, then maximum capacity has been reached. *There may be additional availability for the Student Job Fair, but not the Conference Banquet. If unable to add the Student Job Fair to your conference registration, you can inquire by emailing [Jaqueline.Rash@ieee.org](mailto:Jaqueline.Rash@ieee.org).*

Information on the Signal Processing Society's current student competitions can be found on the SPS website's [SPS Students page](#).

## SPS SP Cup and VIP Cup Terms & Conditions Agreement Form

This section is to certify that all members of the team have read and agree to all the above terms and conditions for the Signal Processing Society's student competition:

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] SP Cup [ ] VIP Cup  
(select one)

[ ] I/we certify that the team formation and all team members meet the eligibility requirements.

[ ] I/we agree to the Conflict of Interest procedures.

[ ] *If selected as a finalist team, I/we certify that the (up to three) undergraduate team members selected to receive travel support are SPS members.*

[ ] *If selected as a finalist team, I/we agree that all efforts will be made for at least one undergraduate team member to attend the in-person conference to present the team's work. .*

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Team

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Team Members

X \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_  
Team Member Signature on behalf of team Date