

Q&A

Judging



Welcome to the official Question & Answer system for Judging. All registered teams can ask for official Judging interpretations and clarifications. This Q&A is the only source for official Judging clarifications, and the clarifications made here by the Competition Judging Committee (CJC) are considered as official and binding as the written Guide to Judging.

- Please review the Judging Q&A Usage Guidelines before posting. This Q&A is only intended for specific Judging questions for the VEX IQ Challenge, VEX Robotics Competition, and VEX U Competition.
- For questions related to game rules and interpretations, please navigate to the Official Game Q&A

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3204: Engineering Notebook Rubric: Prototypes are documented

15-Aug-2026

In the Engineering Notebook Rubric, under Engineering Design Process – Develop Solutions and Prototypes are documented, to achieve exemplary, it states that 3 or more prototypes for a solution must be documented. Our question is: How broad does this definition go? Does it include CAD drawings, previous completed robot designs, or simply 3 separate, explicitly designed for prototyping designs for each solution. Overall, we are looking for more clarity, as the term prototype can be very vague, especially when used in this context.

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

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The rubric does not restrict "attempts at a solution" to only purpose-built physical prototypes. A previous complete robot design, a CAD drawing of a discarded mechanism, or an explicitly built test prototype can all count — as long as the notebook shows they are connected attempts at solving the same problem, not just three unrelated designs sitting next to each other.

The guidance repeatedly emphasizes that judges look for evidence of the Engineering Design Process — that the team tried things, learned from results, and improved. Three documented attempts that clearly connect (showing what changed and why) is the target, regardless of whether they are physical prototypes, CAD models, or prior robot versions.

In practice: what earns Exemplary isn't the format of each attempt, it's the visible thread between them — each one building on what was learned from the last. Three CAD iterations with no stated connection score no higher than a single build; three attempts (in any mix of physical, CAD, or prior-version form) that trace a clear line of reasoning from one to the next meet the standard.

3207: Prototyping criteria on the Engineering Rubric

17-Aug-2026

When looking at Engineering Rubric 2.0 there is a row on Prototyping:

Engineering Design Process – Develop Solutions (16 points)					
Prototypes are documented	The notebook shows continuous prototyping with three or more attempts at a solution that clearly connect to one another.	The notebook shows two or more attempts at a solution with a connection between the attempts.	A single build appears, with little sense of what preceded it.	No prototyping is documented.	

This is unclear. What counts as a "prototype"? Is it three iterations to the same mechanism? Or completely different mechanisms that could be used to accomplish the same task? Must all options be built out? Does CADing count?

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This is unclear. What counts as a "prototype"? Is it three iterations to the same mechanism? Or completely different mechanisms that could be used to accomplish the same task? Must all options be built out? Does CADing count?

We believe that Q&A #3204 answers this question. Please look at 3204: Engineering Notebook Rubric: Prototypes are documented

3209: Three Summary Submissions

19-Aug-2026

Could you clarify exactly what teams are expected to submit for the three summaries from a student/team perspective?

Specifically, are the Season Summary, Code Summary, and Credit Summary separate documents or forms, similar to the Innovate Form used in the past?

How and when should teams submit them to judges? For example, if they're separate documents should they be included at the front of the Engineering Notebook.

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How and when should teams submit them to judges? For example, if they're separate documents should they be included at the front of the Engineering Notebook.

Yes, they are three separate one-page documents, not a combined form like the old Innovate Form — a Season Summary, a Code Summary, and a Credit Summary, each its own page (Credit Summary can run longer if the source list is long).

At the event: Print each summary as a loose page and place all of them at the front of the engineering notebook — not bound in, not paper-clipped to the back, and not tucked in a pocket folder buried in the middle. This lets a Judge Advisor open the notebook and find them immediately to sort and route notebooks, without flipping through the whole thing.

After the event: The loose pages have done their job for that tournament. Rather than discarding them, transcribe or paste them into the notebook as a dated entry — an event recap marking what the team knew, built, and could do at that point in the season. Do this after every event.

During the season: Keep an appendix in the notebook collecting every summary submitted at past competitions this season, in competition order. The recap entries tell the season's story inside the main notebook narrative; the appendix keeps the original documents together for quick reference. By the last event of the season, the appendix should hold every summary submitted so far.

None of this changes what goes in a summary or how it's scored (see the Season, Code, and Credit Summaries for Judging article for that) — it's only a filing practice for where copies live before, during, and after an event.

3223: Engineering Notebook Rubric: Contributors are identifiable

3-Sep-2026

In the Notebook Organization portion of the rubric it states for the contributors are identifiable section that the team number appears on the notebook, and all entries are signed or initialized by the student who wrote them. Our question: Would the existence of my name on the entries that I write count for said section instead of a signature? Additionally, do I need to add "SKERS" (our team name) to every page, or is the fact that it is on the cover satisfactory?

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

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Thanks for the detailed question — both parts have clear answers directly from the criterion wording.

On signatures: the criterion's standard is "signed or initialed," and its purpose is simply to let a reader tell who wrote each entry. A student consistently writing their own name on the entries they authored satisfies that standard — it doesn't need to be a stylized or cursive signature, just something in the student's own hand that identifies them as the writer. Initials, a first name, or a full name all work as long as it's applied consistently enough that a judge can tell who wrote what throughout the notebook.

On the team number/name: the criterion only requires that it "appears on the notebook," not that it repeats on every page. Having SKERS on the cover satisfies this — you do not need to add it to every individual page.

One practical note: since this section is about identifying contributors consistently across the whole notebook, it's worth making sure every team member who writes an entry signs or initials it the same way each time, since inconsistent or missing marks on some entries (rather than the marking style itself) are what would actually cost points here.

3229: Student Signature follow up to question 3223 - Digital Notebooks

10-Sep-2026

In Q&A 3223 you state:

On signatures: the criterion's standard is "signed or initialed," and its purpose is simply to let a reader tell who wrote each entry. A student consistently writing their own name on the entries they authored satisfies that standard — it doesn't need to be a stylized or cursive signature, just something in the student's own hand that identifies them as the writer. Initials, a first name, or a full name all work as long as it's applied consistently enough that a judge can tell who wrote what throughout the notebook.

My question is how does this work with digital notebooks?

After printing for an event is the team expected to go sign/initial every page or would filling in the name box on the vex notebook template be enough to satisfy the requirements?

Follow up question: If the notebook is required to be submitted digitally, does the team have to print the notebook, sign every page and then scan it?

Thank you,

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

Q&A Response — Contributors are identifiable: digital notebooks

The same principle from Q&A 3223 extends here, but the mechanics are different for a digital notebook — no printing, physical signing, or scanning is required.

The criterion's purpose is that a reader can tell who wrote each entry. For a digital notebook, that's satisfied digitally: filling in the name/author field on the VEX notebook template for each entry, or typing a name or initials at each entry, meets the "signed or initialed" standard the same way a handwritten name does on paper. There's no separate physical-signature step layered on top of the digital notebook — the team isn't expected to print the notebook, physically sign every page, and then scan it back in.

What matters, digital or paper, is the same as in 3223: consistent attribution across entries so a judge can tell who wrote what throughout the notebook — not the specific mechanism (wet signature, typed name, initials, or a filled-in template field) used to do it.

3258: Innovate Award

2-Oct-2026

Two questions regarding Innovate Award:

1. Are teams required to fill out an Innovate Submission form this year in order to be considered for Innovate?
2. If so, Is an Innovate form necessary to be consider for the Excellence award since teams need to be " a strong candidate for other Judged Awards."

Answered by Competition Judging Committee

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2. If so, Is an Innovate form necessary to be consider for the Excellence award since teams need to be " a strong candidate for other Judged Awards."

Are teams required to fill out an Innovate Submission form this year? No. Global Robotics & Science Foundation requires no Innovate form. Teams are considered for the Innovate Award through their Engineering Notebook and Team Interview. To be considered, a team needs:

A unique or uncommon design or strategy element that is actually in use at the event. Clear documentation of that element from concept through implementation. Independent inquiry and ownership shown through the design process. To meet all of the Design Award criteria as well.

Judges find the documentation by reading the notebook and listening in the interview, so teams don't need to file anything separate. A team proud of a novel feature can point judges to it in the Season Summary, the one-page overview that links to the notebook entries behind each highlight. The Season Summary is optional for this purpose and is not scored.

Is an Innovate form needed to be considered for Excellence? No. Since there is no Innovate form, its absence has no effect on Excellence eligibility. The Excellence Award requires that a team meet all Design Award criteria and be a strong candidate for other Judged Awards. That does not mean Innovate specifically. Any other Judged Award counts: Think, Amaze, Build, Create, Judges, or Inspire. Excellence also depends on the team's final Qualification, Robot Skills, and Autonomous Coding Skills rankings.