SOME ADVICE FOR A*TS APPLICANTS

Originality of work

The judges realise that students may not have the appropriate apparatus or sufficient training to conduct research that is entirely original. However, try your best to be creative and innovative. For example, if you construct a machine or equipment, indicate the parts you designed yourself. If you followed up on the plans or ideas of others, show additional work that was done yourself.

Help on the project

Consult books, magazines, scientific journals, the Internet and people wherever possible. Remember to acknowledge and give the names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who have helped you.

Types of project

The project should be in a field of science that interests you and for which you have adequate equipment. Try not to go out of your way to source for expensive equipment as these do not necessarily lead to good projects. Remember that some of the best projects in history have been conducted using recycled or unwanted material. For engineering, a clear distinction should be made between gadgetry and a genuine invention. A “Rube Goldberg” device may be ingenious, but if it is inefficient, unacceptable to the potential user, or unreliable in function, it cannot really be considered a valuable creation.

Autobiography

Do not go into lengthy autobiographical detail about the development of your interest in science. This personal history, while interesting, does not prove anything about your present ability as a scientist.

History and the report

Consult literature pertaining to your research area, but do not use the literature as your report. It merely serves as a background for your own work. A report devoted to a complete history of cancer research, for instance, is not very suitable for this competition as it is too broad and well studied, leaving you little opportunity to express original ideas. Try to be more focused in choosing your research topic.