

Inclusive Judging Tips - Based on the GoSHackathon Platform

These tips are intended designed to support inclusive judging criteria for open-ended, creative problem-solving and/or team STEM competitions.

Background – This section should explain your demographic and reasoning for steps taken towards inclusion. Below is an example from the GoSHackathon event.

Many of our participants have never competed in a hackathon (or external school event) before. We have a large number of entries from low-socioeconomic areas and government schools. This demographic is what drives our event to be inclusive and accessible for all young people. We spread the scoring across different phases of the ideation process, allowing scores to accumulate, even if a team is not confident speaking in front of others or do not finish their solution.

The scoring matrix for judging is included in this document so you can familiarise yourself with the criteria before the day. Please note this is a confidential document, and not to be shared with participants.

Power of Observation – This section outlines the key stage of observation, with steps taken to increase inclusive practices through greater understanding.

The observation stage of judging is critical as many of our talented, vulnerable community members may not be comfortable, practiced, or possess the skills required to summarise their ideas or thought processes, especially around strangers and in an unknown environment. Please observe from a distance and take time to watch how teams interact and collaborate. Communication is not simply talking, teams may be messaging each other throughout or working on a collaborative document, appearing to be doing their own thing. Others may appear disinterested or distracted but are listening to every word. The observation stage is also the time you may notice the creativity and thought processes behind solutions that may not be obvious in the final pitch and/or prototype.

A team may have one participant that does all the work. Points should only be deducted here in the final teamwork scoring section (not across the board) and all team members should be encouraged and spoken to positively. We have young people entering the hackathon who are well out of their comfort zone, and who may have invisible differences. Just being there is an enormous step for them, even though they may appear apathetic. We regularly see these participants return the following year with increased confidence. Trust the long-term process.

Judging Criteria – The following are examples taken from the GoSHackathon judging matrix. The examples included are intended to identify different thinking methods and application of participants. The idea is that you will think about your own matrix and how you are identifying 'invisible talent' or rewarding innovative strategies and solutions beyond the final presentation of the solution.

1. Define the Problem

**look for evidence of documented problem and/or research as team may have covered this in their planning but are unable to explain verbally*

2. Solution process

**look for evidence of documented solution and/or steps taken, as team may have noted this in their planning but are unable to explain verbally*

3. Benefits & Innovation

**Innovation is doing something differently or better. At GoSH, unique perspectives & creative approaches to solutions are rewarded in this category*

4. Teamwork

**evidence of what team members contributed can be in the form of whiteboarding, post it notes, and/or planning*