# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## UK JUNIOR WATER PRIZE 2026

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## What are the Stockholm Junior Water Prize and UK Junior Water Prize?

The Stockholm Junior Water Prize gathers imaginative young minds from all over the world, encouraging their interest in water and sustainability issues. Each year, thousands of participants from around the globe join the national competitions in hopes of earning the chance to represent their nation at the international final.

The UK national competition is organised by The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM). The UK Junior Water Prize (UKJWP) inspires pupils passionate about STEM to develop solutions to real water problems and encourages students into careers in the international and UK water sector.

The UKJWP winner goes on to represent the UK at the international final of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, during World Water Week (23-27 August). National winners from over 30 countries travel to participate in a week-long cultural exchange programme and compete for the international prize.

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## Eligibility and judging

### Eligibility

All **UK-based** school students **aged between 15 and 20** years of age can enter the competition.

Entered projects must have been developed while still in **secondary school**. If students have just graduated from secondary school, but have not yet started university, they will still be eligible to enter the competition.

Individuals and **teams of up to two students** are eligible to enter.

### Judging

You will present your project to a judging panel of seven members from the UK water industry. The full judging process follows the below steps:

› Individual review of student reports based on project criteria, as outlined in this document.
› In-person jury day (shortlist only).
› Selection of national winner from the shortlist, based on both report and presentation scores.
› We notify the winner and runner up(s).
› Official winner presentation at CIWEM's Flood & Coast conference (9 June).

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## Prizes

### UK winner

› Travel and day-pass to attend Flood & Coast
› Trophy and certificate
› All-expenses-paid trip to Stockholm in August 2026 to compete in the international final of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize

### UK runner up

› £500 cash prize
› Travel & day-pass to attend Flood & Coast
› Trophy and certificate

### International winner

› USD $15,000 cash prize
› Trophy and certificate

### Diploma of Excellence

› USD $3,000 cash prize
› Certificate

### People's Choice Award

› Certificate

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## Developing your project: mapping the stages

We challenge you to develop an innovative yet practical solution to the water crisis on a local, regional, national or global scale, with the potential to improve **quality of life** by addressing: water quality, water resources management, water protection or water and wastewater treatment. Competition entries can be based in natural sciences or social studies. All projects must use **scientifically accepted methodologies** for experimentation, monitoring and reporting results, including statistical analyses.

1. **Choose a topic to research**
   Investigate something you are passionate about, something that interests you, or where you think you could make a real change.

2. **Decide on a hypothesis or key question**
   The hypothesis is an 'educated guess'. What do you think your results will achieve? Why is it important that you find this out?

3. **Research background information**
   It's time to discover what, if anything, has been done on this issue. What part of the existing research can help you with your experiments?

4. **Conduct experiments and research**
   This is where you might want to seek assistance from your science teacher or other experts to ensure you conduct accurate experiments and monitoring.

5. **Analyse your results**
   Take some time to carefully review all the data you have collected from your experiment. Use charts and graphs to help you identify any patterns. Did you get the results you had expected? What did you find out?

6. **Write your scientific report with results and conclusions**
   This is where you put it all together. You will find tips on writing the report later in this handbook.

7. **Present your project to the judges**
   If the judges shortlist your entry you will present your research to them, including answering the jury's resulting questions.

   **NB: please read the full handbook before you start working on your project.**

## Developing your project: jury recommendations

We strongly recommend that you **write up your report alongside the work** at each stage. This will keep your steps fresh in your mind, and it breaks up the writing into more manageable chunks.

You must **show that you were responsible** for conducting the research and writing the report.

Include a **problem statement and an explanation** showing how the project can contribute to a solution. Even if the project doesn't solve the problem, demonstrate how activities in the project can play a role in a solution.

Try to address a **cause-effect solution**: study the causes behind and solutions to the problem, as well as its environmental effects.

Development-oriented projects are welcome, but make sure that you refer to previous work and include an **explanation of any gaps** you are filling.

If you focus on raising awareness and / or creating a change in the way people manage water, document the **quantitative evidence** of what was achieved.

Show that you read the **relevant literature** for your own understanding and orientation.

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## Project criteria

The **written report** is evaluated and judged based on four different criteria. The score for each criterion is multiplied by the factor it's assigned (3-5, indicated between brackets). This sets a **potential maximum score of 80 points** (a factor of 3-5 multiplied with the respective criteria score). During the interview, the jury will consider two additional criteria before making the final decision. **These two criteria do not alter the score**, but answers to the jury's question may alter their scores for the written report.

**Written report criteria (sets the score):**

**Relevance (5)**
› Does the project target an important challenge within the water environment?
› Is the project scientifically relevant (is it on the level of basic research and are the results applicable to real world implementation)?
› Can the project help improve quality of the environment and / or life?
› Is the project addressing a more local challenge or a broader one?
› Does the project increase awareness of water issues?
› Does the project integrate environmental and societal issues?

**Creative ability (4)**
› Is the project proposing innovative solutions to unsolved problems?
› Is the idea or project unique: i.e. it's never been done before or is innovative in its technology or approach.
› Did the student(s) take a creative approach to engagement, e.g. by working with key stakeholders in framing the research question, conducting the research, and / or sharing the results?

**Concept & methodology (4)**
› Is the problem well defined with a scientific or technical basis and appropriate to the identified challenge?
› Did the student(s) lay out and follow their experimental plan or process for research?
› If data were used, did the student(s) perform their analysis correctly, including any statistical analysis?
› Did the student(s) draw their conclusions from data, observations, and / or stakeholder engagement?
› Did the project address questions of cost, resource, training, or implementation if the project were to be scaled up?
› Did the project address any limitations or potential misinterpretations of data, or suggest any continued research needs?

**Subject knowledge & resources (3)**
› Is the student(s) familiar with literature and ongoing research in the field?
› Did the students provide adequate references and are they relevant?
› Did they identify how their project may differ from alternative solutions?
› How much help or assistance did the student(s) receive from others?

Continuing on any assistance, consider:
› Access to university faculty and / or laboratories
› Analysis done by student(s) or by others
› Access to training from other professionals
› Access to instrumentation
› If AI is used, do they explain how and do they reference the topic / procedure / section where it was applied?

## Project criteria

**Interview criteria (no scores):**

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**Practical skills**

› Has the student(s) made the exhibit themselves?
› Has the student(s) carried out the measurements, etc.?

› What help in preparing the presentation and / or display materials has been provided by parents, teachers, professionals etc.?

**Report & presentation**

› Does the student(s) present the work in a proper and informative way, both written, verbally and through their presentation and any supporting display materials?
› Is the content of the work well structured?
› Is the level of the text, illustrations, diagrams, and the language in the written report sufficient?

› Is the visual presentation appealing with any special qualities and personal touch?
› Is there a relationship between the display and text material?

## Writing the report

Please follow these guidelines as closely as possible. If there is anything that you do not fully understand, ask someone for help. This work could easily be considered university level work, so don't be afraid to ask!

**NB: if your work does not meet the submission requirements, it will not pass to review by the jury.**

### General instructions

Use capitalised and underlined headings for:

› Introduction
› Methodology
› Results
› Discussion
› Conclusion

Any subheadings should be in bold.

**Page limit** – Max. 20 A4 pages, including the preliminary matters as well as any figures, photos, tables, graphs, references, and appendices. The title page is not included in the page limit.

### Page size and layout

› Adequate margins.
› 1.5 spacing .
› Font: Aptos, 12 point size.

Page numbers on every page except the title page.

### Title page

You may design the title page as you wish, but it must contain the following information in an easily legible format:

› Text: "UK entry to the Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2026".
› Report title.

### Preliminary matters

These are the pages between the title page and the first page of the report and should include:

› Short bios of participant(s) – a brief section describing who you are, what year you're in at school, who (else) you worked with on the project, and what resources you used. Also include any information on how you used AI (if applicable).
› Summary – no more than one page of single-spaced text.
› Table of contents
› List of abbreviations and acronyms

Acknowledgements: it is important to indicate the extent of external help received.

## Writing the report (continued)

### Introduction

This section sets out your project in broad details. Describe the problem you studied and why it was important. Put your project in its scientific context, detailing the most relevant work done on your project topic by others. You are expected to understand the scientific context of your project.

### Methodology

In this section you must detail all the procedures you used: all methods and all materials.

### Results

Summarise your research results. Full results should be presented in the appendix at the end, as figures or tables along with an appropriate description.

### Discussion

This is an important section that the judges pay close attention to, so think about it very carefully. Include the most important analyses of your results and discuss how the results relate to the problem you were studying, how novel they are, and how they relate to the results of others working on similar projects.

Position your results in the wider scientific and / or social context and explain how your project contributes to improving quality of life and / or the environment.

If your project is completely novel, you may not be able to discuss your results in relation to the results of others. If so, you must discuss your results in the wider scientific and / or social context only.

### Conclusion

Your conclusions should be short and to the point. Do not discuss your results here.

### References

Providing references enables interested parties to access your source material, so you must include all necessary information. If you are familiar with the Harvard System, you may use it. Otherwise, we recommend you use this simpler method:

In the text, give references as numbers in square brackets. For example:

*"Smith [1] found that …, but other studies found the opposite [2, 3]."*

Immediately after the conclusion section you must list in detail all the in-text references you made. That list is numerical, using the numbers you used in the text.

How you present each reference depends on the type of publication:

**a. Book:**
[1] Surname, Initials (Year) Title of Book. Publisher's Name, City and Country (or State if USA) of publication.

**b. Journal or paper:**
[1] Surname, Initials (Year). Paper Title. Full Name of Journal Volume Number, First and Last Page Numbers of the Paper.

**c. Newspaper or magazine article:**
[1] "Our rivers are polluted", Daily Express (London, England), 5 June 2003, p. 6.

**d. More than one author:**
[1] Smith, AB, Jones, CD and Bull, EF (1996).

**e. Website:**
[1] Author (if any). Title of the site. URL (date accessed).

## Important information

### Closing date
Applications close **Tuesday 5 May, 09.00 BST**.

### Timeline
- › **5 May** Application deadline (NB: 9am).
- › **W/c 25 May** Shortlisted students present their project to the jury panel.
- › **29 May** We notify the winner and runner up.
- › **9 June** Winner announcement at Flood & Coast.
- › **22-27 August** SJWP Awards Ceremony held during World Water Week in Stockholm.

**NB: before you apply, please check that you can be available for the above dates.**

### How to enter
1. Start drafting your application on our website: www.zealous.co/ciwem/opportunity/ukjwp2026/.
2. Upload your report and complete the application form.
3. Submit your work and start preparing a presentation in case you are shortlisted.

### Additional resources
- › Find out more about the international round: *www.siwi.org/stockholm-junior-water-prize/*
- › When choosing a topic to study, you may find inspiration and avoid duplicate work by checking past winners: *www.stockholmwaterfoundation.org/stockholm-junior-water-prize/winners*
- › SIWI also collected some tips on presenting your work to the jury: *https://stockholmwaterfoundation.org/news/tips-for-better-project-presentations*

### UK winner: next steps
The UK winner will have to prepare the below additional materials for the international final:

- › 1-minute video pitch
- › Digital academic poster

The winner will receive guidance on the requirements around these materials.

## Application guidance

Your application is made up of two separate parts: your report and the application form. See below for the information you're required to provide in each part.

### Uploading your report
**NB: we only accept pdf, doc, and docx file types.**
- › **Title**: What is the title of your research project?
- › **Short description**: Include a summary – you can copy this directly from the summary included in your report
- › **Confirm**: all students applying are aged between 15 and 20 years old
- › **Confirm**: you understand that any students aged under 18 require parental / guardian consent to enter this competition.

### The application form
- › What is your date of birth?
- › Which school do you attend?
- › Who is your supervising teacher?
- › Supervising teacher's email address
- › Is anyone else applying as part of your team?
  - o Student 2 full name
  - o Student 2 date of birth
  - o Student 2 email address

Student 2 home address

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