What are the Science Investigation Awards?

The UNE Science Investigation Awards (SIA) are an opportunity for year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students to answer that burning science question and to have fun with science in an area that interests them. Students will gain valuable skills, solve problems, work with other students, meet scientists, complete an assessment while having fun and, maybe even win a cash prize! This document is designed for teachers, to provide them with information to support their students in entering the event.

Please note: resources supporting this activity (investigation topic ideas, flow chart to complete a scientific investigation, judging criteria, and more) are available from: www.une.edu.au/grass/ by following links to Science Investigation Awards

The process

1. Students pick a science topic that interests them, pose a hypothesis, carry out experiments and work to answer their question using scientific methodology (it’s a lot like Myth Busters!).
2. Students then write up their research as a Scientific Report. Appropriate headings such as: Aim, Hypothesis, Methods, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion should be used.
3. Their findings are then presented as a Scientific Poster. Display boards for the poster will be provided by PICSE.
4. Students attend the event at UNE with their poster and report and are entered into the Awards for the chance to win cash prizes. At the event their project will be judged by scientists and industry representatives who select winners based on:
   • Scientific method;
   • Scientific reporting of investigation; and
   • Visual display

The Science Investigation Awards are a great way for students to show off and improve their science skills and get involved in real-life science. Students in the Year 7/8 section have the opportunity to undertake their project as a small team, with up to 3 members. Students in the Year 9/10 section must undertake their projects individually.

Some feedback from scientists judging the student projects from last year

We scored more highly for the following:

• Title that described the project immediately.
• The work was independent
• Good presentation but where the artwork did not detract from the science being described.
• Succinct summaries (methods, experimental etc) for project components – not too much text and a font that was easy to read.
• Hypothesis included with independent and dependent variables correctly described
• Control included
• Replication
• Data presentation to show variation but also used to show trends
• Results presentation with graphs, charts, tables etc.
• Conclusion – concise and referring back to hypothesis
• Understanding of limitations – what would be done better next time
• Where the research could be applied.