Support and guidance for Top of the Bench organisers

Top of the Bench (TOTB) is a national chemistry competition for students aged 14 16 to promote practical skills and teamwork in chemistry. The competition is one of our longest-standing school engagement activities. With the support of our members, we have been organising and running this for more than 20 years.

The competition takes place in two parts during the academic year.

September to January with the winning team from each heat progressing to the national final. The format of the regional heats varies in

spring each year. The 2024 final

Regional heats should be run between September and the end of January. The closing date for submitting school entries to <u>TOTB@rsc.org</u> for the national final is the

For the academic year 2023/2024, regional heats may be face

- 1. Schools cannot enter more than one regional heat competition.
- Only schools located within Local Section/postcode look up table can be found <u>here</u>).
- 3. The teams should have 4 students with the following composition:

England and Wales	Two students from Year 9 One student from Year 10 One student from Year 11
Scotland	One student from S2 Two students from S3 One student from S4
Northern Ireland	Two students from Year 10 One student from Year 11 One student from Year 12

- 4. Students must be in these school years for both the regional heat and the national final.
- 5. The winning team from the regional competition should be the same team that enters the

If your Local Section requires financial support to run their regional heat, they are welcome to apply for top up funding. Please complete this <u>Top Up Fund form for Local Sections</u> and return to <u>networks@rsc.org</u>.

The deadlines for applications are 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October. Please apply as early as possible for top up funding. Requests for retrospective funding are not considered.

If you have any questions regarding top up funding please contact <u>networks@rsc.org</u>.

Your regional heat should be advertised on your Local Section events page and your local Education Coordinator can promote your regional heat through their newsletters or local teacher events. Please contact <u>TOTB@rsc.org</u> to organise this route of promotion.

RSC interest groups and local sections organise many successful events each year. We ask volunteers organising face-to-face events when booking or hiring a venue (including making an internal booking if you work at the venue) for a TOTB heat, to please ensure one of the following is in place:

______ - ask the relevant authorised person at the venue to sign and send the

certificate to <u>networks@rsc.org</u>

_____ - Please provide the name and email address of

As representatives of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Local Sections must uphold our values of inclusion and diversity. Chemistry should be for everyone, and we are committed to promoting and supporting inclusion and diversity across our education activities. Further details about our <u>inclusion and diversity</u> <u>strategy</u> as well as the <u>Diversity data report 2022</u> can be found on our website. In 2020 we launched the findings from our <u>Chemistry for All</u> outreach study looking at the learnings from five years of outreach to widen participation.

participation in the competition, everyone should have the opportunity to take part. Local Sections are encouraged to communicate that their event

. Should you need advice

please contact <u>TOTB@rsc.org</u>

Please visit our <u>promoting inclusion and diversity</u> webpage for information on <u>making your committee</u> inclusive and diverse and <u>making your events inclusive</u>.

The demographic of the winning school is not in our control, however through positive action we can attract a more diverse range of schools and students to take part in the regional heats, potentially resulting in a more balanced representation in the national final.

To address the imbalance of school type in the competition we request

Hazards and risk must be considered, assessed and managed for all events run on behalf of the Royal Society of Chemistry which includes TOTB competitions. Please see our <u>risk assessment for events</u> webpage for information regarding risk assessments and how to complete the appropriate documentation for your event.

We ask that all communication with the schools is done electronically to align with the RSCs sustainability aims.

Please consider what information is appropriate to ask when registering students for the event and ensure you are not collecting any unnecessary data, for example only the year group of the students is needed, . Local sections can use an existing list of email addresses to contact schools about their TOTB competition. It is also possible for you to store contact details to invite schools to future TOTB competitions. You will need to include the sentence below in your communications to ensure the schools understand how they can be removed from your mailing list:

The Royal Society of Chemistry will contact you regarding future Top of the Bench competitions. None of the data we maintain for Top of the Bench will be used for marketing purposes or shared with third parties. If you prefer not to hear about future competitions, please let us know by contacting [insert Local Section email address]