



## ***Old Dominion Association of Church Schools***

### **Important Changes to the ODACS Competition Rules for 2026-2030**

#### **1. GENERAL RULES**

- a. AACS and ODACS have adopted new language regarding the appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI for competition. The new language appears in the General Rules but also appears throughout the manual in different areas where AI could possibly be used. Schools will need to pay careful attention to annual updates from AACS and ODACS regarding AI policies.
- b. The definition of a Small School is 70 students or fewer in grades 4-12.
- c. Class AA and Class A divisions for Fine Arts competition will not necessarily be set for a full 5-year cycle. AACS will publish the cutoff each year in an annual update. For 2026, the divisions will be as follows: Class A, 60 or fewer students in grades 9-12; Class AA, 61 or more students in grades 9-12.
- d. Group categories will now earn double points for your school: 6 points for first, 4 points for second, and 2 points for third. Double points will be awarded at both Regional and State levels of competition. At the AACS National Competition, double points for group categories will be awarded to each state association.
- e. The term “worldly piercings” has been more clearly defined for contestants, sponsors, and judges.
- f. Several changes have been made to the Point Deduction and Disqualification page.

#### **2. BIBLE**

New language regarding the use of AI has been adopted for Bible Teaching and for Bible Preaching.

#### **3. BIBLE PREACHING**

For ODACS Bible Preaching competition, the sermon outline no longer needs to be in sentence form.

#### **4. MUSIC**

- a. For ODACS competition, semi-classical music composed before 1970 will now be allowed.
- b. AACS and ODACS have adopted new language regarding the use of digital music (i.e., scores on digital devices and digital downloads of scores).
- c. An accompanist must use an original copy of the score.
- d. A new category, Classical Guitar Solo, has been added for Level II and Level III.
- e. A new category, Hymn Playing, has been added for all three levels.
- f. For Orchestra/Band and All School Orchestra/Band, if a piano is included in the orchestration, the pianist must be a student.
- g. Organ Solo and Sacred Piano-Organ Duet have been discontinued for ODACS Competition.

#### **5. SPEECH**

- a. Oral Interpretation of Scripture has been added as a new category for Level I.
- b. AACS and ODACS have adopted new language regarding the appropriate and inappropriate use of AI for Original Persuasive Oratory and for Extemporaneous Speaking.

#### **6. ART**

- a. AACS and ODACS have adopted new language regarding the appropriate and inappropriate use of AI for all Art categories.
- b. An Artist's Idea Statement is now required for Level I.
- c. The infamous “40% rule” has been replaced with language requiring “evidence of artistic changes.” However, copying of existing artwork is still prohibited.
- d. The name of the Woodworking category has been changed to “Wood Furniture and Cabinetmaking.” The rules and judging form have also been updated in an effort to ensure that only furniture and cabinet making projects are entered in this category. A new form entitled “Required Elements Documentation” has been added to the required paperwork.

- e. Senior High groups who enter the Videography categories will now be eligible to advance to the AACCS National Competition. For ODACS Competition, because Videography is considered group competition, each Videography entry will require the participation of at least two students.
- f. The Photography Artist's Idea Statement has been updated to allow for the use of cameras on smart phones and other digital devices.
- g. The Statement of Originality no longer appears on the judging forms for Art. Since all three levels must now submit an Artist's Idea Statement, the signature on that form will be deemed sufficient.

## **7. ACADEMICS**

- a. The Algebra/Geometry category in Level III has been divided into two separate categories.
- b. For all Creative Writing categories, new language has been adopted regarding the proper and improper use of AI. For both regional and state competition, topics will be announced to students prior to the day of writing. For ODACS Competition, the time limits for writing will be as follows: Level I, 2 hours; Level II 2 hours; Level III, 3 hours.
- c. For all ODACS Science Fair projects, the new minimum lengths for the research papers will be as follows: Level I, 3 pages; Level II, 4 pages; Level III, 5 pages.

## **8. JUDGING FORMS**

- a. New judging forms have been added for Classical Guitar Solo and for Hymn Playing.
- b. An update has been added in the final box for both the Readers' Theatre and Choric Speaking judging forms.
- c. The Artist's Idea Statement and the Photography Artist's Idea Statement have been updated.
- d. A new form has been added to the required paperwork for Wood Furniture and Cabinetmaking – "Required Elements Documentation."
- e. The Art judging form has been updated.
- f. The Garment Construction judging form has been updated.
- g. An entirely new judging form has been published for Wood Furniture and Cabinetmaking.
- h. The Videography judging form has been updated.