



Student Entrepreneur National Competition

2024 - 2025 Competition Handbook



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KEY DATES

Date	Activity	Description
December 5, 2024	Nomination Deadline	Nominations must be received by 11:59pm EST
January 5, 2025	Application Deadline	Completed application forms and supporting documents must be submitted by 11:59pm EST
January 10, 2025	Round 1 Judging Complete	Judges will evaluate applications within their assigned league based on the judging criteria, independently ranking them to select the top (30) thirty student entrepreneurs
January 17, 2025	Round 2 Judging Complete	Judges will evaluate applications within their assigned league based on the judging criteria, independently ranking them to select the top (12) twelve student entrepreneurs
January 23, 2025	Finalist Announcement	Notifying the top (12) twelve student entrepreneurs to let them know they are finalists in the Student Entrepreneur National Competition.
February 5, 2025	Finalist Video Pitch Due	The top (12) twelve student entrepreneurs will submit a video pitch of up to 5-minutes in length
February 14, 2025	Round 3 Judge Evaluation Deadline	Judges will evaluate applications within their assigned league based on the judging criteria, independently ranking them to select the top (3) three student entrepreneurs
February 20, 2025	Finalist Announcement	Notifying the top (3) three student entrepreneurs to let them know they are finalists in the Student Entrepreneur National Competition
March 25, 2025	Finalist Announcement	Official announcement will be made on social media post will be released who the top (3) three Entrepreneurs who will be participating in the Final Round of the Student Entrepreneur National Competition
April 2025	Online Training	Online training and competition preparation. Exact dates to be confirmed.
May 6-8, 2025	Enactus Canada National Exposition	Final Round of Competition (Calgary, Alberta).

Student Entrepreneur National Competition

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

About Enactus Canada

Enactus Canada is a national charity that is shaping generations of entrepreneurial leaders who are passionate about advancing the economic, social and environmental health of Canada.

We rally the energy, ideas and passion of Canada's best and brightest students who see business as a way to address social issues. Guided by academic advisors and business experts, the student leaders of Enactus Canada create and implement community empowerment projects and business ventures in communities coast to coast.

As a global network of 33 countries, our community of student, academic and business leaders is enabling progress through entrepreneurial action.

About the Competition

The Student Entrepreneur National Competition is one of the largest national programs to focus solely on full time post-secondary student entrepreneurs in Canada. It recognizes and rewards student entrepreneurs from across the country for their dedication and ambition, while offering support to ensure the success of their business.

Since 1997, Enactus Canada has operated this competition to celebrate the commitment, determination and achievements of student entrepreneurs. This competition is open to full-time students at Canadian post-secondary institutions who are simultaneously operating their own business.

Are you a student entrepreneur?

Any individual who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk of a business venture is an entrepreneur. The business does not need to be a large-scale operation or even have employees; it simply must have demonstrated traction and provide a product or service to its customers. **The competition aims to recognize the top student whose business addresses a real gap in the market, providing an effective solution to a problem or a need, with the potential to scale.** A clothing company, event planning firm and a consulting company are just a few examples of businesses that have succeeded in this competition in the past.

Benefits of the Student Entrepreneur National Competition

The competition process is an incredible experience for any student entrepreneur looking to grow as a business owner, expand their company and learn from successful entrepreneurs that volunteer their time as judge for each round of competition. Benefits include:

- Cash prizes (\$10,000 prize for the national champion, \$4,000 for 2nd place, \$2,000 for 3rd place)
- Travel and accommodations for the top 3 finalists to compete at the 2025 Enactus Canada National Exposition in Calgary, Alberta, May 6-8, 2025
- Feedback to improve business operations
- Potential media exposure locally, regionally and nationally
- New and exciting marketing opportunities
- Opportunity to network with business professionals and successful entrepreneurs
- The opportunity to meet with, and learn best practices from, other young entrepreneurs

Eligibility Requirements of the Student Entrepreneur National Competition

To be eligible to enter this competition, a nominee must:

- Be a full-time undergraduate and/or graduate student at a Canadian university or college for the current academic year. Students must be enrolled full time in **at least two** of three semesters between May 2024 and April 2025 to be eligible for the competition.
- Be a founder and have at least 25% ownership of the company with no other individual or group with greater ownership and must be the individual primarily responsible for the business' operation.
- Have not been a previous National Champion of this competition or competed in the Final Round of the Student Entrepreneur National Competition in the previous school year

COMPETITION PROCESS

Nomination Process

Nominations for the competition must be submitted through a short online form found on our [Celebrate Student Entrepreneurs](#) page. Nominations and self-nominations will be accepted between October 23rd, 2024, and December 5th, 2024. A student entrepreneur meeting all eligibility criteria only needs to be nominated once before applying for the competition.

Application Process

Once nominated, a link to the online application form will be sent to the student entrepreneur by an Enactus Canada representative. This application procedure is a worthwhile activity for any entrepreneur as it requires the student to evaluate their progress, document their achievements, and clearly explain their company and its development.

When applying, the entrepreneur is asked to complete an online form that describes them as an entrepreneur and how their business operates. The student is also asked to include proof of registration as a full-time post-secondary student with documentation from their respective institution. Students are encouraged to be thorough when completing the application form.

The application form is based on the judging criteria for the competition (please refer to the “**Judging Criteria**” below). Judges will be using the official criteria to determine the finalist and ultimately the champions of the competition. As such, applicants should make themselves familiar with the criteria and the point values associated with each section to ensure their submission clearly and concisely addresses the judging criteria. All applications must be submitted through an online form found at <https://enactus.ca/student-entrepreneur-application-form/> by 11:59pm EST on January 5th, 2025.

Confidentiality

All information included in the application will only be reviewed by Enactus Canada staff and independent judges. All judges participating in this competition sign confidentiality agreements before beginning the judging process. All financial information will be kept strictly confidential, will be used solely for judging purposes, and will be destroyed when it is no longer required.

Should you be chosen to move on to the final round of competition, please keep in mind that the live presentations will be open to observers. Only judges, however, will receive copies of your written report and financial information, making it possible for you to ensure certain business and financial information remains confidential.

Code of Conduct & Truth of Information

At Enactus Canada, we believe in creating a positive and respectful environment for everyone involved—students, Faculty Advisors, staff, contractors, directors, volunteers, and judges (collectively, “Participants”). This Code of Conduct guides us all in upholding integrity and respect in all Enactus activities.

Participants in this competition must, while involved in this competition, abide by the Enactus Canada Code of Conduct and be willing to sign a Truth of Information document (included in the application form sent to all nominees) ensuring their commitment to the ethical regulations that governs all Enactus Canada programs and operations.

You can find the full Code of Conduct on our [Team Resources](#) page.

Please be advised that Enactus Canada reserves the right to change prize or competition structures without notice

JUDGING CRITERIA

About the Entrepreneur

1. ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT (10)

- How much perseverance and determination to succeed as an entrepreneur has the applicant demonstrated, while maintaining high ethical standards?
- How successful was the applicant in building an appropriate support system around them (partners, mentors, entrepreneurial groups or organizations, etc.), in order to fast-track their success?
- How well does the applicant understand the major risks that his/her business faces? How sound is their risk-mitigation plan?

About the Business

2. SOUND BUSINESS MODEL (10)

- How defined, sensible and realistic is this entrepreneur's vision?
- How innovative and useful is this business? Does it address a real need/market gap?
- How sound is the business model? Is the business generating social and/or financial returns?
- How well does the entrepreneur understand the market, the competition, and the customers?

3. TRACTION (20)

- How much momentum has this business achieved to date? What sort of supporting data does the entrepreneur have to prove progress?
- Traction can be backed by a variety of data, depending on the type of business*, such as:
 - Profitability
 - Revenues
 - Number of active / registered users
 - Amount of engagement / traffic generated
 - Partnerships / clients achieved

**For example, profitability and revenue traction would be relevant for consumer-based product/service-oriented businesses and more. Whereas, number of active / registered users, amount of engagement and or traffic generated traction would be relevant for information / software-based businesses such as online platforms or applications.*

4. SCALABILITY (10)

- How much potential to scale does this business have?
- How realistic and feasible is their growth strategy? Does it have a logical implementation plan?
- Alternately, how sound is their exit strategy?

COMPETITION FORMAT

Once applications are submitted, they will be distributed by Enactus Canada to a panel of qualified judges. In Round 1 of the competition, Judges will independently rank all applications according to the judging criteria and will select the top thirty entrepreneurs. Applicants will not be notified if they are moving on at this stage. In Round 2 of the competition, judges will again independently rank applications according to the judging criteria. This time, they will select the top twelve entrepreneurs. We will be notifying all applicants, regardless of whether they advance to this stage or not.

These twelve finalists will then compete in a digital round of competition where they will have a recorded video pitch, up to 5-minutes in length, about their business to supplement their application form. The judges will independently rank according to the judging criteria and will select three finalists. The three finalists selected in the Third Round will compete live at the Final Round of Competition, held at the Enactus National Exposition in May 2025.

All 3 finalists will receive complimentary travel and lodging to the Enactus Canada National Exposition, taking place in Calgary, Alberta, May 6-8, 2025, where they will participate in a live competition as follows:

Final Round of Competition

The top 3 finalists will compete in the Final Round of Competition on during the Enactus Canada National Exposition from May 6-8, 2025 (Exact date and time still to be determined). They will deliver an 8-minute presentation to a panel of judges, followed by a 12-minute Q&A. They can share a slide deck during their presentation if they wish (optional, but highly recommended). They will be required to create a four-page annual report to present to the judges during the set-up period. More information pertaining to this is contained in the live presentation section of this handbook.

After the presentations, the judges' scores will be tallied to determine the winner. The winner will be named the Student Entrepreneur National Champion, receive a \$10,000 cash prize, and have their name placed on the coveted John Dobson Cup. The student entrepreneur who comes in 2nd place will win a \$4,000 cash prize, and 3rd place will win a \$2,000 cash prize.

Please be advised that Enactus Canada reserves the right to change prize and competition structure without notice

Participation at the **ENACTUS CANADA NATIONAL EXPOSITION**

The Final Round of Competition will take place at the Enactus Canada National Exposition. This event is for both student entrepreneurs and Enactus students. Enactus student teams present the results of their community outreach projects concurrently in a similarly structured competition to the Student Entrepreneur National Competition. Over 1,000 such participants attend the Enactus Canada National Exposition over a three-day period. It is a fantastic opportunity to network with the top entrepreneurs and business leaders of today and tomorrow.

Participation in this event is a benefit of being involved in the Enactus Canada network. The following are some important things to be aware of when attending Enactus Canada events.

Order of Competition

Presentation times will be randomly assigned before the competition and will be announced prior to the commencement of each round of competition.

Hotel/Venue Policy

If a student entrepreneur has a complaint lodged against them by any hotel in any city during an event hosted by Enactus Canada that involves repeated security violations, the offending student will forfeit all prize money, trophies and media attention, and will be asked to leave the competition at their own expense.

Observers

Upon approval from Enactus Canada, when not in competition, student entrepreneurs are invited and encouraged to attend any competition as observers.

Name Badge Policy

For security reasons, no one will be allowed to participate in any Enactus Canada event without displaying an Enactus Canada approved name badge at all times. Specifics on obtaining name badges will be communicated to students prior to all events.

LIVE PRESENTATION

Written Report for Live Presentation

The written report outlines all aspects of the business and explains how it has met the judging criteria. The report needs to cover each section of the judging criteria, providing results and documentation.

Please make your written report as professional as possible. Use photos, colour and/or diagrams to ensure you best showcase yourself and your business. Written reports are the first impression the judges will have, so please carefully proof read your report for errors and ensure that it does not exceed the size restrictions.

Written reports are limited to the following configurations:

- Four single sheets of 8 ½" X 11" or A4 size paper with print only on one side of each sheet.
- Two single sheets of 8 ½" X 11" or A4 size paper with print on both sides of each sheet.

Finalists should not use folders, covers, etc. in conjunction with their reports. Competitors should utilize standard binding methods (staples, spiral, wire, etc.) when assembling reports. Enactus Canada **does not** cover the cost of printing annual reports.

Gifts, samples, etc. cannot be given to the judges at any point before, during or after your presentation. Only your report and business card can be distributed to the judges during the set-up period. Competitors will be notified in advance as to the number of reports they are required to bring to the national competition.

Audio/Visual Presentation

Each finalist will have a twenty (25) minute time block. After the student entrepreneur is introduced, the structure of the time block will be:

Five (5) Minutes: Equipment set-up and written report distribution

Eight (8) Minutes: Live audio/visual presentation

Twelve (12) Minutes: Question and answer period

Only the student entrepreneur may participate in the presentation or answer questions from the judges. For the in-person Final Round of Competition, anyone, including faculty, family and employees may assist the student with set up or operation of audio-visual equipment. No participant may set up any equipment in the presentation room before they are formally introduced. All equipment must be self-powered or use electrical outlets inside the judging room.

Enactus Canada will provide the following equipment in each presentation room:

- One six foot or larger screen;
- One LCD projector;
- One AV table and/or cart; and,
- One extension cord.

Enactus Canada **does not** provide other equipment of any kind, such as computers, speakers, monitors, or TVs. It is the sole responsibility of each student entrepreneur to secure the use of any other equipment for the live Final Round.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Enactus Canada claims no responsibility for any compatibility problems or equipment malfunction. Competitors may wish to bring a personal LCD projector wherever possible.

Tech Checks

Students will have the opportunity to test their computer to ensure compatibility with the equipment provided in the competition room. They will be given 10 minutes each the night before or the morning of the competition to see the competition room and practice setting up. Details will be provided by the Enactus Canada National Office.

Equipment Failure

If presentation equipment ceases to operate because of a power failure in the facility, the competition will be halted until the problem is corrected. If the electronic equipment the student brings or that is in the competition room fails due to compatibility issues or malfunction, the time will continue to count down from the presentation time block.

Competition Room Access

Any Enactus Canada event participant is permitted to be in attendance during all presentations.

Media Policy

The official photographer/videographer and members of the media approved by Enactus Canada have full access to all presentation rooms at any time. This includes the use of lights and necessary equipment. All student entrepreneurs should be prepared for the possibility of members of the media taping or taking pictures of their presentations.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Competition Judge Selection Process

Judges are selected for this competition based on their experience and involvement with Enactus Canada. Past judges have been top business executives, successful entrepreneurs and Enactus Canada partner company representatives. Each round of competition has a different pool of judges who will have no prior knowledge of the student entrepreneur or their business. Prior to competition, students will not have access to the judges.

Prizes*

All 3 finalists will receive complimentary lodging and travel reimbursement to the National Exposition.

The Student Entrepreneur National Champion (1st) will receive a \$10,000 cash prize.

The Student Entrepreneur National Runner Up (2nd) will receive a \$4,000 cash prize.

The Student Entrepreneur National Second Runner Up (3rd) will receive a \$2,000 cash prize.

NOTE: See Appendix B for full Travel Policy for detailed breakdown of travel costs covered for students competing at Enactus Canada events.

Please be advised that Enactus Canada reserves the right to change prize or competition structures without notice

Presentation Development

Student entrepreneurs are incredibly familiar with their own business, but in developing a presentation the student must ensure that they are communicating the most important aspects of the business and are doing so in a clear and concise manner while adhering to the judging criteria.

When developing your presentation, it is important to ask for help from mentors, friends, family members and, if one exists on campus, an Enactus team. Asking an Enactus team for assistance is a particularly useful way to gather feedback. Most teams work directly with entrepreneurs and also have experience in delivering very similar presentations at the regional and national level.

Students are advised to contact Enactus Canada's Program Management staff members to help prepare presentations and/or connect students with an Enactus team in their community.

Contact Information

Please visit www.enactus.ca for more information or contact programs@enactus.ca with any questions.

Appendix A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does the application process work?

Those nominated/self-nominated for the award by December 5th, 2023, are contacted by Enactus Canada and are sent an official application form to be filled out and submitted to Enactus Canada before January 9th, 2024.

- Step One: Fill out the nomination form at <https://enactus.ca/student-entrepreneurs/>
- Step Two: Receive information package from Enactus Canada via e-mail. Carefully review information package, competition judging criteria, and application form. Contact Enactus Canada at programs@enactus.ca if you have any questions.
- Step Three: Complete application form including all required information at <https://enactus.ca/student-entrepreneur-application-form/>
- Step Four: Send in application by January 5th, 2025, 11:59pm EST.

What are the qualifications to enter?

To be eligible to enter this competition, a nominee must:

- Be a full-time undergraduate and/or graduate student at a Canadian university or college for the current academic year. Students must be enrolled full time in at least **two of three** semesters between May 2024 and April 2025 to be eligible for the competition.
- Be a founder and have at least 25% ownership of the company with no other individual or group with greater ownership, and must be the individual primarily responsible for the business' operation
- Have not been a previous National Champion of this competition or competed in the final round of the Student Entrepreneur National Competition during the previous school year

What must an applicant include in their submission?

The application is made up of questions that follow the judging criteria used for all rounds of the competition. An application form will be provided to nominees in their application package. Student entrepreneurs are encouraged to be creative and innovative with their answers and to contact the Enactus team on their campus to support all applicants from their school through the process. The application process includes:

- The completed application form (provided via email to all nominees)
- Signature for the Truth of Information Release/Proof of enrolment as a full-time student at a Canadian

post-secondary institution

- Supporting 1-minute video pitch (optional)
- Another supporting exhibit of the entrepreneur's choice (optional)

How many student entrepreneurs can I nominate?

You can nominate as many student entrepreneurs as you would like. Finalists are chosen based on the quality of their application, not on the number of nominations they receive.

Why should I nominate a student entrepreneur (or myself if I am a student entrepreneur)?

It is important to recognize the success of student entrepreneurs. This competition provides a forum for student entrepreneurs to grow, develop and showcase their businesses.

For Enactus teams; nominating, engaging, and supporting student entrepreneurs can be beneficial as it can be the foundation for exciting Enactus projects.

What if the company has multiple founders?

This is an individual competition focused on the student as an entrepreneur, not solely the company the student owns. If the company has multiple founders, only one student entrepreneur will be eligible for that business. Please note that each competing student must still meet all eligibility criteria, specifically the criteria that states that the applicant **be a founder and have at least 25% ownership of the company with no other individual or group with greater ownership and must be the individual primarily responsible for the business' operation.**

Is the application confidential?

Information contained in the application will be reviewed only by the Enactus Canada staff and independent judges. All judges sign confidentiality agreements before beginning the judging process.

ENACTUS CANADA TRAVEL POLICY

Students participating in the Student Entrepreneur National Competition will be reimbursed for their direct travel expenses to the Enactus Canada National Exposition. Travel expenses will be reimbursed by Enactus Canada if reasonable, appropriately documented, properly authorized and within the guidelines of this policy.

Airfare

Travelers are expected to book the lowest-priced airfare available. Students traveling to Enactus Canada events must have their flight and travel to and from the hotel pre-approved. Please get an estimate and email it to your contact at Enactus Canada. Reservations should be made as soon as travel plans are approved to receive advance purchase discounts. Reimbursements will only be given for the pre-approved amount so if there is a discrepancy, reimbursement will be issued for the pre-approved amount only.

Ground Transportation

Participants should use the most economical mode of transportation when going to and from air, bus and rail terminals. Expenses will be reimbursed only for travel to and from the hotel in the destination city. Students will not be reimbursed for travel to and from the airport in their home cities without special permission.

Lodging

Students will be booked in their own room for the duration of their participation in the event and sent a hotel confirmation number. Rooms will be billed directly to Enactus Canada. Enactus Canada pays for rooms and taxes only. All charges for additional hotel services such as room mini-bars, paid TV programming, phone services etc., will be the student's personal responsibility. Upon check-in students will be required to present a credit card to cover any additional charges.

Meals

Meals will now be covered on a per diem basis, with the amount to be communicated by Enactus Canada closer to the event. However, some meals or snacks may still be provided during the events.

Incidentals

Please note that any incidentals occurring while a student is participating in an Enactus Canada event will not be covered by the Enactus Canada. These may include, but are not limited to the following; parking tickets, taxis (unless this is for ground travel from the airport/train/bus to the hotel and has been approved prior to incurring the expense), towing charges, vehicle breakdowns, etc.