



# MAKING YOUR COMPETITION GAME PLAN

As you've learned throughout the Academy, an excellent way to get your foot in the door in any industry is to participate in competitions. Entrepreneurship competitions put your ideas front and center while providing an excellent network of like-minded people and teams. Read through the breakdown of competition phases, then use the Competition Game Plan to break down a competition from start to finish. You can use your experience in this program, another competition, or practice using the plan for a future project.

## REGISTRATION

- You found a competition you are interested in and want to commit to entering. This is the registration phase, when you express your interest and intent to participate.
- Most often, a competition's website will have a form that a participant will fill out their contact information, school, age, etc. to ensure that they meet the requirements.
- Sometimes this phase will ask you to submit information about the **entire team** as well.
- If an **adult mentor** is required, registration often requires personal information from them or a trusted adult.
- During this phase, be sure to read the rules carefully, check the relevant dates and deadlines, and make sure you are prepared to commit.
- Some competitions will require a fee to participate, either up front or to attend an event. Consider with your mentor and team if you will participate in competitions with fees, how much you will be able to pay, and how you will fundraise money to participate.
- Most competitions will send you a confirmation of your registration submission and reach out to you with more details on upcoming dates and deadlines.

### What to pay attention to:

- Make sure you include ALL information needed. Some competitions will automatically throw out submissions if the team isn't registered correctly.
- **Double check** the eligibility criteria to make sure you meet what is required.
- Come up with a memorable name for your team or submission. If there is an option to create a team name or a title for your submission, make it something easy to remember.

### Ask yourself:

- What will be the most difficult part of the registration process for me in the future?
  - *Example: Finding a mentor with experience or interest in aerospace.*
- What does my ideal team look like?
- What type of competitions am I most interested in?



## COMPETITION & ACTIVITIES

- This phase includes a wide variety of activities and process that may be required or optional for participants. Depending on the competition, the activities phase can range from a day or two to months of events.
- This sub-phase includes all events, programs, and activities that are suggested or required for participants in a competition.
- Some competitions will have a required program as a mandatory component, and other competitions could have optional seminars with interesting guest speakers. Know what is **required** of you, what is beneficial, and how to use these events to your advantage.
- Many competitions will announce a common goal, problem, or challenge that the competitors must solve or address in a given time frame.
- Some competitions also include **mentorship** or team-building activities to help you through the initial training process.

### What to pay attention to:

- Use the resources provided! Many competitions provide examples, references or supplemental material online. Don't pass these up! Making sure your submission can reference and tie into the resources the competition managers have put together can give you a leg up!
- If the competition doesn't provide resources on something you're not sure about, seek them out yourself! Look for mentors, examples, and other online references that you can call out in your submission.

### Ask yourself:

- How much time do you have to devote to the competition and related activities?
- What are your goals for the competition (learn a skill, gain a mentor, etc.)?
- How will you focus your energy on activities that enhance your submissions and overall goals?



## SUBMISSIONS

- Using the rules, guidelines, and materials provided for each competition, submit your entry before the given **deadline**.
- Some competitions will have **multiple rounds**, with participants being invited to each subsequent round based on submissions.
- While most initial submissions will be submitted virtually, there is a possibility that later rounds will require a live submission or even a live event.

### What to pay attention to:

- Plan to get your submission in a week ahead of time. Sometimes you won't notice something that is missing, and the competition managers may be able to remind you about it if you get it in ahead of time.
- Watch out for **updates** from the competition managers about example submissions to help guide you on format and content.

### Ask yourself:

- What is required for each round of competition, and how best you can make the given deadlines?
- Who (you, mentor, teammate) will be in charge of checking for updates from the competition managers?
- How will the team decide when your submissions are ready to be submitted (when to stop tweaking the content)?

## JUDGING

- During the operations phase of the competition, judges will use certain criteria to break down the **strengths and weaknesses** of each entry.
- The judging criteria is typically available before the competition and can be used to guide your project.

### What to pay attention to:

- While all of the judging is done behind the scenes, make sure you understand the scoring **rubric** used to evaluate your submission before you get it in!
- **Review** your submission before you send it in as though you were a judge. Try to evaluate your submission objectively for each criterion in the scoring rubric. Or better yet, have a friend, coach, or teacher evaluate it for you!



### Ask yourself:

- Do you understand how the rubric works?
- What areas can you focus on for the best score?
- Who will review your submissions (act as a judge) before you submit your materials?

## AWARDS & POST EVALUATIONS

- After the challenge phase of the competition is over, winners will be announced. Typically, there is a specific **ceremony** or announcement for this.
- Certain competitions will have several winners, runners-up, honorable mentions, or fan-favorite submissions.
- Along with announcing the winners, some competitions will offer **feedback** to most participants, or at least the finalists, at this point.

### What to pay attention to:

- If you don't automatically receive feedback from the competition process, ask for it. In many competitions you'll be able to get some feedback from the judges about your submission that you can use in your next competition or startup endeavor.
- Conduct a self-review with your team and advisors to evaluate what you could have done better and learn from the experience. Doing a specific internal review is often the best way to learn from your mistakes and improve upon them for the future.

### Ask yourself:

- How will you and your team celebrate your accomplishments?
- When will your team and mentors sit down for a review of your experience and plan for the next competition?



## GAME PLAN

### REGISTRATION

What competition am I entering?

Competition Page Link:

Do I meet the eligibility requirements?      Yes      No

What is the deadline to register?

Is there a fee to participate?      Yes      No      If yes, what is the cost?

Who will I ask to be my mentor?

Will I participate solo or with a team?

If I have teammates, who will they be?

### COMPETITION & ACTIVITIES

What are my goals for this competition?

What types of activities or resources does this competition provide that I plan to participate in or use?



## SUBMISSIONS

**What types of submissions are required? What are the deadlines for each?**

*Example: Round 1 (August 15): 10-slide Pitch Deck,*

*Round 2 (January 25): 5-minute Recorded Presentation*

**Who on my team will be in charge of checking for communications and rule updates from the competition manager?**

## JUDGING

Do I understand the rubric and requirements?      Yes      No

If no, what do I need clarification on?



## AWARDS & EVALUATIONS

**When will me team, mentor, and I meet to discuss our evaluations and experience in the competition?**

**What would I do differently next time?**

**How we will celebrate our accomplishments?**