

Entrepreneur's Cup Rules & Guidelines

Overview

The Entrepreneur's Cup is a statewide collegiate business plan competition that empowers Oklahoma students to develop and pitch innovative business ideas. Designed to simulate the real-world process of launching a startup, the competition challenges all participating teams to research a market and prepare a 10-page business plan. Finalists advance to an in-person pitch presentation, and a 90-second elevator pitch.

For over 20 years, the Entrepreneur's Cup has helped build Oklahoma's next generation of entrepreneurs. This initiative is made possible through the generous support of our sponsors, including our title sponsor, Love's Travel Stops.

The Entrepreneur's Cup is administered by i2E, a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to growing Oklahoma's most promising innovative businesses and fueling statewide economic impact.

i2E, Inc. reserves the right to disqualify any team that violates the rules, regulations, or the spirit of the competition.

Divisions & Eligibility

The competition is open to all full-time or part-time undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at eligible Oklahoma colleges, universities, and two-year colleges, with a faculty or mentor advisor. Students who graduated the previous December are also eligible.

Division	Eligible Students	Focus
Small Business	Students from two-year colleges, regional universities, private universities without research components	Designed for "Main Street" ventures – customer-facing business with local or regional impact. May opt into the High Growth Undergraduate division.
High Growth Undergraduate	Undergraduate students from any eligible Oklahoma college or university	Focused on scalable ventures with unique ideas or technologies that show strong market viability and disruptive potential.
High Growth Graduate	Teams with at least one graduate student	Reserved for graduate-level teams.

Note: Enrollment verification is the responsibility of the student and their advisor. i2E, Inc. reserves the exclusive right to determine eligibility.

Team Composition & Advisor Role

- Teams must consist of **2-6 members**; one-person teams are not permitted.

- All team members must be enrolled at an Oklahoma college, university, or two-year college.
- Students are encouraged to form interdisciplinary teams that foster innovative thinking and problem-solving.
- Students from all majors, including those outside business and entrepreneurship, are welcome to participate.
- Each team must designate a team leader and an advisor.
- Advisors confirm student eligibility, enforce rules, and serve as administrative contacts.
- Advisors employed by a university must submit written policy if prohibited from receiving outside compensation.

Application & One-Page Summary Submission Requirements

- Submit the online application and one-page summary by the deadline.
- Save all materials as a single PDF file.

E3 Workshop Series

i2E will offer an optional, modified version of its flagship E3 Customer Discovery Bootcamp to help teams strengthen their business concepts and prepare for the Entrepreneur's Cup.

- This is a structured, four-week workshop series that meets once a week.
- Participation is optional and is not required to compete in the competition.
- Sessions will introduce best practices for starting a business, including customer discovery, customer segmentation, validating assumptions, and developing a go-to-market strategy. Teams will learn how to apply these practices to their business concept.
- Teams will also explore the competition process, business plan requirements, judging criteria, and what judges look for when evaluating business plans and pitch presentations.
- Teams are encouraged to participate in all four sessions to receive the full benefit of the cohort.

Note: Participation in E3 does not guarantee advancement in the competition or influence judging decisions.

Business Plans

All teams must submit a written business plan for an eligible new venture. Business plans should clearly communicate the business opportunity, market, strategy, financial outlook, and path forward.

Plan Submission Requirements

- Business plans must be submitted by the deadline as a single PDF file.

- Plans must be a new and independent venture in pre-seed, start-up, or early-growth stage.
- Business plans must be original work by official team members.
- Plans previously submitted to Governor's Cup, Love's Entrepreneur's Cup, or Entrepreneur's Cup are not eligible.
- Optional 3-minute max video outlining the teams business plan.

Format & Required Content

- Business plans may not exceed 10 pages, excluding the cover and table of contents.
- Teams may include up to 10 additional pages of appendices, for a maximum submission length of 22 pages.
- Business plans must Include:
 - A full management team roster, including any non-university team members.
 - Financial projections, including an 18-month projected income statement, and current balance sheet.
 - Investment needs, use of funds, and exit strategy.
 - Licensing terms, if the venture uses third-party technology.

Ineligible or Disqualifying Conditions

- The following types of ventures are not eligible: buyouts, expansions, roll-ups, real estate syndications, tax shelters, franchises, geographic distribution licensing, corporate spinouts, consulting projects, analyses, or nonprofit ventures.
- A venture is not eligible if it has:
 - Secured more than \$250,000 in investment capital.
 - Generated over \$100,000 in gross revenue before the current academic year.
- Plans previously submitted to Governor's Cup, Love's Entrepreneur's Cup, or Entrepreneur's Cup are not eligible.

Licensing & Intellectual Property

- Use of licensed technology is allowed only with written approval.
- A permission letter from the IP owner or university is required, or the plan will be disqualified.
- Licensing terms must reflect current market conditions and be incorporated into the business plan and financials.

Prohibited Content

- Plans must not include fabricated information regarding:
 - Team members' backgrounds, experience, or education
 - Product development stage or performance claims
 - Technology ownership or licensing
 - Market research or survey results

Pitch Presentation

Finalist teams will present their business concept in person to a panel of business leaders, entrepreneurs, and investment professionals.

- Eight teams from each division will advance, for a total of 24 finalists:
 - Small Business
 - High Growth Undergraduate
 - High Growth Graduate
- Each team will have 15 minutes to present, followed by 10 minutes for judges' questions and feedback.
- Finalist teams will also participate in a separate 90-second elevator pitch.
- Only official student team members may present and participate in the presentation.
- Presentation slides must be saved to a thumb drive or accessible through the cloud for quick retrieval.
- Teams must arrive at least 30 minutes before their scheduled presentation time.
- Teams may display product samples or prototypes, but giveaways are not permitted.
- Judges will not consume food or beverage samples.
- Teams may invite guests to attend their presentations; however, competing teams are not allowed to observe.

Judging & Awards

Judges include entrepreneurs, service providers, and investment professionals. Judges evaluate written business plans and pitch presentations according to the competition's established judging criteria. All judges' decisions are final.

Finalists receive cash prizes and trophies.

Teams will compete for a share of **\$260,000 in cash prizes and scholarships.**

Finalist Awards

Award	Prize Amount
Finalist Team	\$1,500
Finalist Advisor	\$1,000

Note: 24 finalist teams total (8 finalist teams per division).

High Growth Undergraduate & Graduate Awards

Awards below are presented in each division.

Placement	Team Prize	Advisor Prize
1 st Place	\$30,000	\$2,500
2 nd Place	\$20,000	\$2,000
3 rd Place	\$10,000	\$1,500

Small Business Awards

Placement	Team Prize	Advisor Prize
1 st Place	\$25,000	\$2,000
2 nd Place	\$15,000	\$1,500
3 rd Place	\$8,500	\$1,000

90-Second Elevator Pitch Awards

Award	Prize Amount
90-Second Elevator Pitch Awards	\$2,000

Note: One winner per division (3 winners total). Winners will present their 90-second pitch on-stage at the awards ceremony.

Confidentiality & Media

Participants acknowledge that i2E, Inc. and the judges are not responsible for any disclosure of information contained in the submitted business plan. Participants grant i2E, Inc. the right to photograph and record for publicity and marketing purposes.

Scholarship Opportunity

Students participating in the Entrepreneur's Cup are eligible to apply for a scholarship. Recipients will be announced at the awards luncheon. Additional details, including application requirements and deadlines, will be shared as they become available.

Expenses

There is no cost to enter or participate in the Entrepreneur's Cup.

- Finalist teams are responsible for arranging their own transportation and, if needed, overnight accommodations for in-person competition events in the Oklahoma City metro.
- Meals and other travel-related expenses are the responsibility of participating teams unless otherwise specified by i2E.
- Each finalist team will receive a \$1,500 finalist award, an increase of \$500 from previous years to help offset travel-related expenses. There is no separate travel stipend.