

# BABSON COLLEGE

Babson Collaborative for  
Entrepreneurship Education

## Global Student Challenge

# 2026 GLOBAL STUDENT CHALLENGE OVERVIEW AND GUIDELINES

## OVERVIEW

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The Babson Collaborative invites students from member schools to participate in a team project that will expose them to the [UN Global Goals](#) and challenge them to think of these goals in the context of business opportunities. Participating students will apply their knowledge of opportunity identification and assessment, resulting in a feasibility analysis presentation of a **new** business concept. Each business concept should address one or more of the UN Goals in a way that could ultimately result in the creation of a new venture.

The Challenge is completed in two phases: a local university-based competition to determine the top-place student team(s), followed by a global competition among the top-placing teams from each institution. There is a separate Challenge for Bachelor's degree students and Master's degree students, but the same guidelines and deadlines apply to both Challenges.

Schools may implement this project in a variety of ways, including:

- Embed into existing entrepreneurship curriculum
- Extra credit project
- Group independent study
- Co-curricular activity
- Student entrepreneurship club activity
- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project

The Collaborative permits students to choose among any of the UN Global Goals; however, the home institution may narrow the focus if they wish. If academic credit is granted, the home institution is responsible for student assessment and granting of credit.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Students will utilize concepts learned in entrepreneurship classes at their university to explore a new business concept. The project is a real-world test of students' abilities to apply the lessons learned in their courses.
- Students will practice critical thinking while examining creative and innovative approaches to develop and act on opportunities to create value for stakeholders and society.
- Students will develop a more in-depth understanding of the world's most pressing and complex social issues, and how entrepreneurship can be a powerful force in tackling these issues.

## THE PROJECT

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The overall goal of the project is to assess the feasibility of a proposed business concept addressing one or more of the UN Global Goals. While not a complete business plan, the feasibility analysis presentation could serve as the basis for a more comprehensive study and business plan. The feasibility analysis presentation must include the following components, preferably in this order (see Table 1). The students need to clearly articulate their idea and the value for the customer. Expectations of presentation content are detailed in the judging rubric, available in the [Student Challenge Toolkit](#) on to the [Collaborative member portal](#).

**Table 1. Project Components**

1. Problem statement	4. Target market/Growth potential	7. Impact
2. Business concept	5. Value proposition	8. Validation of concept
3. Customer/Market	6. Revenue model	9. Presentation quality

## BUSINESS CONCEPT VS. EXISTING VENTURE

*This is a feasibility competition, not a venture competition. Teams should be pitching a new stand-alone idea for a business that could become a venture. It is acceptable for a team to pitch an idea they began working on prior to the Challenge, but they cannot pitch ideas for existing companies or spin-off ventures from existing companies (including their own).*

*It is not fair to present an existing business venture because it puts every other participant at a disadvantage.*

*See Table 2. for help distinguishing between a business concept and an existing venture*

**Table 2. Business Concept vs. Existing Venture**

	<b>Business Concept</b>	<b>Existing Venture</b>
<b>Stage</b>	<i>Exploratory, pre-launch</i>	<i>Operational, post-launch</i>
<b>Revenue</b>	<i>No revenue; financials are projections</i>	<i>Generating actual revenue</i>
<b>Customers</b>	<i>Hypothetical or potential customers</i>	<i>Real, paying customers</i>
<b>Operations</b>	<i>No active business activities</i>	<i>Daily operations in place</i>
<b>Legal Status</b>	<i>May not be registered or formalized</i>	<i>Legally registered entity</i>
<b>Product/Service</b>	<i>Conceptual or prototype stage</i>	<i>Final product/service available and in use</i>
<b>Team</b>	<i>Founders or idea originators only</i>	<i>Active team or staff managing business functions</i>
<b>Advisors/Investors</b>	<i>Having advisors and mentors is acceptable</i>	<i>Having investors signals that this is a formal/legal entity</i>
<b>Market Validation</b>	<i>Based on research, surveys, or assumptions</i>	<i>Based on real-world feedback and performance</i>
<b>Financial Documents</b>	<i>Forecasts and startup cost estimates</i>	<i>Actual financial statements and transaction records</i>
<b>Focus</b>	<i>Feasibility analysis and planning</i>	<i>Execution, scaling, and growth</i>

## STUDENT TEAMS

- *An eligible team consists of 2 – 6 students at a current Collaborative member institution.*
- *All members of the team must be enrolled at the same educational level (e.g., all Bachelor’s students or all Master’s students).*
- *Each team will name one member to be the Student Team Lead; they will be the primary team contact for Babson.*
- *A student who is enrolled during the Local phase of the Challenge, but graduates before the Global phase may continue into the Global Challenge.*
- *Exchange students studying at a member school are welcome to participate.*
- *Cross-disciplinary teams are encouraged: we hope you will engage students from various academic disciplines.*
- *A team may be composed of students from different Collaborative institutions. See below for clarification on cross-institution teams.*
- *Once a team enters the Global phase (starting with the Semi-finals round), team members cannot change.*
- *Schools are expected to provide teams with support, guidance and coaching from faculty, staff, and/or local entrepreneurs.*

## TIMELINE

**Table 3. Timeline**

<b>SEP 16, 2025</b>	<p><i>Webinar: Joining the 2026 Student Challenge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recording will be posted to the <a href="#">Collaborative Member Portal</a></i></li> </ul>
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OCT 17, 2025	<b>Deadline for Schools to Register for the 2026 Student Challenge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize the <a href="#">2026 Student Challenge Registration Form</a></li> </ul>
NOV 18, 2025	Webinar: Babson Prototyping Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to students at all Collaborative member schools – you could use this event to help raise awareness about the Challenge and increase participation at your school.</li> <li>Open to five students from each member institution, as determined by that institution’s Champion</li> </ul>
FEB 10, 2026	Webinar: Business Models for Social Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to students participating in the Student Challenge; If your Challenge has not started yet, you could use this event to increase awareness/participation in the Challenge</li> <li>Open to five students from each member institution, as determined by that institution’s Champion</li> </ul>
FEB 23, 2026	<b>Deadline for volunteer judge(s) to register for Semi-finals jury</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Challenge Advisor will name 1-2 volunteer judge(s) to serve on a Semi-finals jury</li> <li>Details will be sent to Advisor</li> </ul>
MAR 11, 2026	<b>Deadline for Schools to complete their Local Challenge</b> <b>Deadline for Student Challenge Advisor to report Local Challenge participation</b> (the total number of students <i>and</i> projects from the beginning of your Local Challenge) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Utilize the 2026 Local Challenge Participation Form</a> by invitation. You will be receiving a password via an invitation email.</li> </ul>
MAR 30, 2026	<b>Deadline for Advisor to enter team(s) into the Global Challenge Semi - finals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Challenge Advisor uploads team(s) presentation(s). The link will be provided later.</li> </ul>
APR 6 – 20, 2026	Global Challenge Semi-finals round judging
APR 21, 2026	Global Challenge Finalists announced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Challenge Advisor and Student Team Lead will be notified</li> </ul>
APR 23, 2026	Webinar: Presentation Tips, with Babson College Professor Heidi Neck <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open only to Global Challenge Finalists</li> </ul>
MAY 11, 2026	<b>Deadline to enter team(s) into the Global Challenge Finals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Challenge Advisor uploads team(s) presentation(s). The link will be provided later.</li> </ul>
MAY 15 - 25, 2026	Finals round judging
MAY 28, 2026	Awards Ceremony (live, virtual): Global Challenge winners and runners-up are announced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Register here</a></li> </ul>
JUL 2026	Members of the first-place teams attend <a href="#">Babson Build</a> , a week-long Entrepreneurship boot camp on Babson’s campus in Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA
AUG 2026	Members of the 1 <sup>st</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> place teams receive cash prizes, sponsored by the Global Student Challenge Social Impact Patrons. Read more about the 2026 Patrons <a href="#">here</a> .

## PHASE 1: LOCAL CHALLENGE

*In the Local Challenge, the home institution determines most of the details; however, we provide suggestions for the deliverable (see below) and we require all participating institutions to meet all deadlines (see Table 3).*

*A qualifying Local Challenge must have a **minimum of five teams** competing. If fewer than five teams competed in the Local Challenge, your entry/entries into the Global Challenge Semi-finals will be rejected.*

### **LOCAL CHALLENGE DELIVERABLES (SUGGESTED)**

*In the Local Challenge, the home institution has autonomy; Babson offers the following suggestions:*

- *Schools are invited to use the same or similar presentation guidelines and judging rubric as used in the Global Challenge (available on the [Collaborative member portal](#)).*
- *Schools may establish the presentation length required for their Local Challenge, but the presentation length for the Global Challenge is **five minutes**.*
- *To enhance the student experience, we encourage live presentations made to a panel of faculty, administrators, entrepreneurs, and/or members of the local business community, followed by a live Q&A.*
- *Schools may require additional deliverables for the Local Challenge, depending on their academic requirements.*

### **LOCAL CHALLENGE RECOGNITION**

- *Schools are encouraged to provide each student who participates in the Local Challenge with a certificate of participation (a template is available on the [Collaborative member portal](#)).*
- *Any additional recognition or prizes for top placing team(s) in the Local Challenge are at the discretion of, and funded by, the home institution.*

### **CROSS-INSTITUTION TEAMS**

*Teams composed of students from different Collaborative institutions are allowed and encouraged. This can take two forms.*

- **Students joining an existing Local Challenge:**  
*One or a couple students from School A join a team with students from School B and they participate in School B's Local Challenge. This may be most common when School A is not running the Challenge but their students still want to participate and School B is willing to allow them to join. Students would have to meet the standard requirements, including being enrolled at a Collaborative member school and being at the same level of education as the team they are joining.*
- **Creation of a New Separate Local Challenge:**  
*Schools work together to create a separate cross-institution Local Challenge consisting of teams that each include students from other Collaborative member schools. As with any other qualifying Local Challenge, there must be a minimum of 5 teams competing (each with 2-6 students). As with any other qualifying Local Challenge, this Challenge may send one team on to the Global Semi-finals unless there is large enough participation that allows them to send more (see **ADVANCING TO THE SEMI-FINALS** below). A Student Challenge Advisor from each school must be named. cross-institution Local Challenge. This Challenge exists separate from any other qualifying Local Challenge that a school may be running with their own students.*

## **PHASE 2: GLOBAL CHALLENGE**

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*The Global Challenge is conducted virtually, in two rounds: the Semi-finals and the Finals. The maximum number of teams that any institution can send into the Global Challenge is three for the Bachelor's Challenge and three for the Master's Challenge, based on the criteria outlined in this document. The top teams from the Semi-finals (as determined by juries) advance to the Finals to compete for the grand prize.*

### **ADVANCING TO THE SEMI-FINALS**

*Only Schools that conducted a qualifying Local Challenge may advance teams into the Global Challenge. A qualifying Local Challenge must have a **minimum of five teams** competing. If fewer than five teams competed in the Local Challenge, your entry/entries into the Global Challenge Semi-finals will be rejected.*

*The number of teams from each Collaborative member institution that may advance to the Semi-finals is determined by whether it is a single campus or multi-campus institution.*

- **Single-campus Institutions:** Each school hosting a Local Challenge with a minimum of five teams is entitled to send one team to the Semi-finals. For a Local Challenge that exceeds 20 teams, that school may send one additional team into the Semi-finals. For a Local Challenge that exceeds 30 teams, that school may send one additional team into the Semi-finals. The maximum number of teams that a Collaborative member institution can enter into the Global Challenge Semi-finals is three.
- **Multi-campus Institutions:** Schools with additional campuses in **different geographic areas** may hold multiple Local Challenges. The winning team from each Local Challenge is eligible to move into the Global Challenge Semi-finals. The maximum number of teams that a Collaborative member institution can enter into the Global Challenge Semi-finals is three. If a Collaborative member institution runs more than three Local Challenges, they will need to create their own criteria for selecting which three teams move into the Semi-finals.

Table 4. Entering the Global Phase of the Challenge: Example Scenarios

Example Scenarios	Bachelor's Local Challenge Teams	Master's Local Challenge Teams	TOTAL Number of teams (per institution) that may advance to the Global Challenge Semi-finals
<b>Single-campus Institution</b>			
	22	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Challenge: 2</li> <li>• Master's Challenge: 2*</li> <li>•</li> <li>• *Note: The Master's Challenge would have to exceed 30 teams to be able to send 3 teams into the Semi-finals</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-campus Institution (campuses in different geographic areas)</b>			
Campus A	6	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Challenge: 3 (1 from Campus A and 2 from Campus B)</li> <li>• Master's Challenge: 1* (1 from Campus B)</li> </ul> *Note: Campus A did not reach the 5 teams needed to qualify for the Master's Challenge Semi-finals
Campus B	26	10	
<b>Multi-campus Institution (campuses in different geographic areas)</b>			
Campus A	15	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Challenge: 3*</li> <li>• Master's Challenge: 2</li> </ul> *Note: the maximum number of teams that any institution can send into the Global Challenge is 3 for the Bachelor's and 3 for the Master's Challenge. The school must set its own criteria to get the total to no more than 3 for the Bachelor's Challenge
Campus B	20	0	
Campus C	33	18	
Campus D	9	0	

**ADVANCING TO THE FINALS**

Juries with representation from Collaborative member institutions will evaluate the Semi-finalists' presentations and select the top teams to advance to the Finals. Teams are encouraged (but not required) to continue to develop their business concept and presentation throughout the Challenge. Student teams that advance to the Finals round will have the choice to re-submit their presentation or to use the presentation they submitted for the Semi-finals round.

## GLOBAL CHALLENGE DELIVERABLE

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Student teams submit a five-minute video presentation of their business concept based on the criteria outlined in this document, and must include the required components listed in Table 1. Rather than presenting a series of bullet points, presentations should illustrate and graphically reinforce major ideas and include the required components. Deliverable guidelines (detailed below) are very specific and must be followed precisely in order to participate. This is to ensure fairness and equity in judging. **Failure to follow guidelines may result in team disqualification.**

Expectations of presentation content are detailed in the judging rubric (available on the [Collaborative member portal](#)).

### Format

The presentation format is flexible, but judges need to be able to clearly hear all audio and clearly see any slides, graphics, video, etc. Judges must be able to view the presentations without a password.

### Language:

Since English is the shared language of Collaborative members, the presentations must be in English.

- **Visuals:** Slides and any text and visuals relevant to conveying the business concept must be in English.
- **Audio:** Voice-over translation (where the original voice is heard quietly while the English translation is prominent) and dubbing (where only an English-speaking voice is heard) are both acceptable as long as judges can clearly hear the audio. Using AI for narration is acceptable as long as the script is written by the team.
  - Judges may have an unconscious bias toward seeing and hearing a student team member presenting (vs an AI voice and/or avatar), but we will do our best to convey to them that this is permissible and allows us to increase access to the Challenge.
- **Subtitles:** All teams are welcome to include English subtitles if there are any concerns regarding clarity. Judges have found subtitles to be extremely helpful.

### Additional Guidelines

- All team members should appear in the presentation (whether this is a slide with their image and names or another format).
- Not all members are required to present: the preference is for **1-2 speaker(s)** to present the entire presentation. Transitioning between speakers can be distracting and not a good use of the limited time.
- Short video clips may be embedded to complement the presentation, but time used for the video must be limited to 30 seconds.
- Students must provide citations for any video, photographs, or other content that is not their own.
- Teams must state that the materials they are submitting are their original work.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student participants retain all rights regarding the use of their materials at all times. While presentations are shared with judges, the Babson Collaborative will not share presentations publicly without permission from the teams. Winning teams and finalists will have the option (but are not required) to have their presentation posted on the Collaborative member portal.

## GLOBAL CHALLENGE JUDGING

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Judges assess the team's articulation and evaluation of the project based on criteria outlined in this document and inclusion of components listed in Table 1, utilizing a detailed judging rubric provided by Babson. Judges are expecting a clear and compelling narrative; they are determining how well the team made the case for their idea and how well they met the content and delivery requirements of the presentation. They are looking for validation that the idea could become a business, but not looking for traction (measurable, real-world evidence that the startup is gaining customer adoption and market momentum). Judges will not factor in their own personal opinion of the idea and will remain mindful that context varies, and this is a global competition.

This is a feasibility competition, not a venture competition. Teams should be pitching a new stand-alone idea for a business that could become a venture. It is acceptable for a team to pitch an idea they began working on prior to the Challenge, but they cannot pitch ideas for existing companies or spin-off ventures from existing companies (including their own).

It is not fair to present an existing business venture because it puts every other participant at a disadvantage. If judges determine that it is presenting an idea for an existing business venture, the team will be disqualified.

See Table 2. for help distinguishing between a business concept and an existing venture

## SEMI-FINALS JUDGING

In the semi-finals round, we will form panels of judges who are experienced entrepreneurship faculty and administrators from Babson College and Collaborative member institutions. The panels will first review and score presentations individually, asynchronously, and provide valuable written feedback to teams. No one will judge students from their own school. Then the panel will meet in committee (virtually) to decide which teams to move into the Finals round. Judges will provide valuable written feedback to teams. We estimate the time commitment to be about six hours, over a two-week period in April (See Table 3. Timeline).

This is a volunteer leadership role which demonstrates a high level of service to our organization, which will be recognized in a certificate of appreciation from Babson College and recognition at our annual Student Challenge Awards Ceremony.

### Eligibility to serve on a judging panel for the Semi-finals

Judges must be experienced entrepreneurship faculty or administrators, ideally those who have judged such competitions before. Schools may find that judging offers helpful insights for advising their students in future years. Individuals (including Student Challenge Advisors) who have provided general guidance, advice, and instruction to your teams about participating in the Challenge are eligible to serve as a judge. Individuals who provided coaching to teams that have **not** moved into the Semi-finals are welcome to be a judge. An individual who is coaching a team that will advance to the Semi-finals may not be a judge.

## FINALS JUDGING

A committee of experienced entrepreneurship faculty and administrators from Babson College will judge final round presentations and provide each team with written feedback. Judges reserve the right to ask questions of any team before determining the winner.

## GLOBAL CHALLENGE RECOGNITION AND PRIZES

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### ALL SEMI-FINALISTS

#### Global Challenge Semi-finalists receive:

- Valuable written feedback from a panel of judges at Babson College and Collaborative member institutions
- Certificate from Babson College naming them as a semi-finalist in a global competition

### ALL FINALISTS

#### All Global Challenge Finalists receive:

- Valuable written feedback from a panel of judges who are entrepreneurship faculty and administrators at Babson College
- Special webinar on Presentation Tips with Babson professor, Heidi Neck
- Certificate from Babson College naming them as a finalist/runner-up/winner in a global competition
- Free Babson EdX course (with verified certificate)

### WINNING TEAMS

#### Winning teams and Runners-up ALSO receive:

- \$2000-\$3000 cash prizes sponsored by Global Student Challenge [Social Impact Patrons](#) (see below) to be distributed equally between members of the winning team, subject to all applicable withholdings, deductions, and other requirements of applicable law
- Opportunity to have your team and concept featured in a Babson College article, which will reach a global audience
- Consultation with Babson faculty members with relevant industry/sustainability expertise, to provide valuable feedback for taking your concept to the next level

#### First Place Grand Prize:

- [Babson Build](#) Scholarship\* for each member of the winning team
- \$4000-\$5000 cash prize sponsored by [Social Impact Patrons](#) (see below), to be distributed equally between members of the winning team, subject to all applicable withholdings, deductions, and other requirements of applicable law

\*[Babson Build](#) is a week-long entrepreneurship bootcamp on Babson's campus in Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA. The scholarship covers the program fee, meals, housing, group transportation during the program, and group transportation to/from Boston Logan International Airport. Airfare is not included. The Babson Build component of the grand prize is subject

*to change due to extraordinary circumstances. If there is a change, the Babson Academy is committed to identifying the best possible alternative of comparable value in approximately the same timeframe.*

## **ROLE OF THE ADVISOR**

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*Each participating Collaborative member institution names 1-2 Advisors to serve as the primary contact for the Challenge. This role is for any educator at the school and does not have to be the institutional Babson Collaborative champion(s). A student leader may serve as Advisor if paired with an educator as Co-Advisor.*

### **Student Challenge Advisor(s) will:**

- *Ensure adherence to all deadlines and requirements --this includes ensuring that the presentation does not exceed 5 minutes and that they are indeed presenting a new business concept rather than an existing business venture (See Table 2.). If judges determine that it is presenting an idea for an existing business venture, the team will be disqualified.*
- *Ensure that all members of any team moving into the Global Phase complete the Babson media release form and provide consent to share their video presentation on the Collaborative member portal (note: if a team member does not want to give consent, the Advisor must notify Babson by emailing [babsoncollaborative@babson.edu](mailto:babsoncollaborative@babson.edu))*
- *Convey the name/email of the Student Team Lead (primary contact for that team) when entering team(s) into the Global Phase*
- *Enter the team's presentation by the stated deadline (late submissions will NOT be accepted)*

## RESOURCES

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In addition to this overview document, the following resources are available on the [Collaborative member portal](#) and may be used by member institutions and shared with students.

**Table 5. Additional Resources**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Judging rubric</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Babson tips for pitching and improving your video voice</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Coaching guide</i></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Instructional webinar for Student Challenge Advisors</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Certificate template for Local Challenge participants</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Marketing template and branding guidelines</i></li></ul>

## SOCIAL IMPACT PATRONS

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Babson Collaborative [Global Student Challenge Social Impact Patrons](#) are donors with a shared belief in, and commitment to, the UN Global Goals. By sponsoring cash prizes, Patrons hope to inspire greater participation in the Global Student Challenge and help equip winners to take their business concept to the next level!

Thank you to our 2026 Social Impact Patrons:

- [Babson College Alumni Patron](#)
- [Babson Global Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership \(BGCEL\) at MBSC](#)
- [Ramón Mendiola Sánchez](#)
- [SAGE business](#)