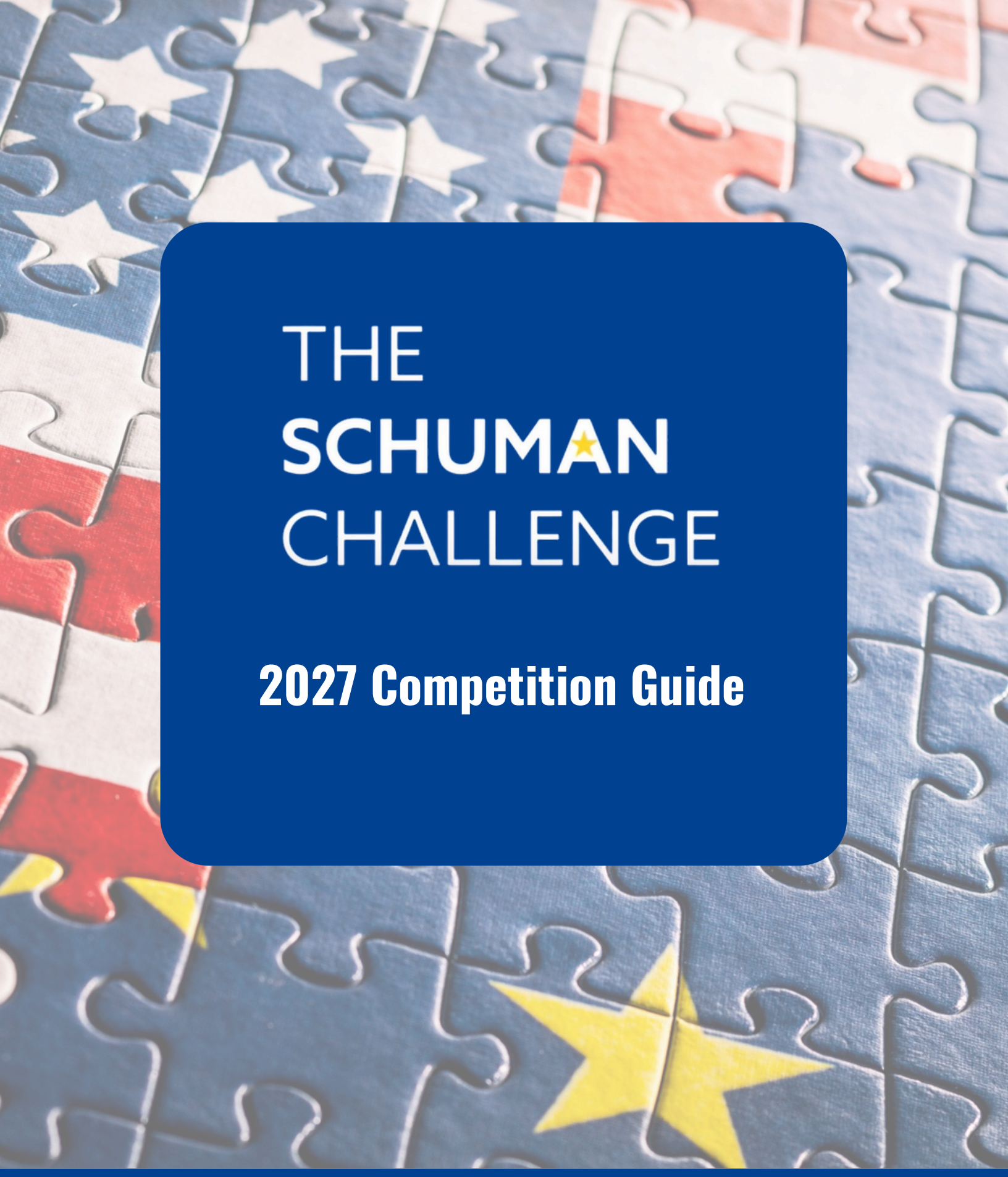


THE SCHUMAN CHALLENGE

2027 Competition Guide

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SCHUMAN CHALLENGE 2027

COMPETITION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY MENTORS, AND JUDGES

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OVERVIEW OF THE SCHUMAN CHALLENGE COMPETITION

We look forward to welcoming you to the **2027 EU Schuman Challenge.** The annual Schuman Challenge is the European Union's foreign policy competition open to all undergraduate university students in the United States. 2027 will be the second year of having a **preliminary round** which was piloted in 2026.

The Schuman Challenge focus remains to be **foreign affairs** providing an opportunity for U.S. university teams to present and to defend transatlantic policy recommendations in front of a panel of judges from the diplomatic community. The preliminary round will take place online; the semi-final and final rounds will take place in-person at the Delegation of the EU to the U.S. in Washington, D.C.

Schuman Challenge students will conduct original research, cite sources accordingly, and be prepared to present and defend proposals for transatlantic cooperation in **the chosen topic for 2027:**
I*n recent years, there has been a shift in how the EU and the U.S. approach rapidly shifting priorities in economic cooperation, competition, and innovation. What mechanisms might be used to promote continued EU-U.S. economic security within this changing landscape? Choose from one of the following topics to develop your proposal:*

- *Energy policy*
- *Trade policy*
- *Building new supply chains*
- *Critical mineral needs*
- *Artificial intelligence*

To keep up-to-date with EU policy developments, all participants are encouraged to subscribe to the weekly **EU in the US Top 10** and follow the EU Delegation on **LinkedIn**, **Facebook**, **X** and **Instagram**.

Any questions you might have about these changes or the Schuman Challenge 2027 can be addressed to James Draney: **JDraney@wise-ny.org** or Khyla Duarte: **KDuarte@wise-ny.org.**

2026 Schuman Challenge finals judges



(*from left*) Javier Sancho Velazquez, *Head of Section, Global Innovation, EU Delegation to the U.S.*; **Adriana Brassart,** *Head of Press and Public Diplomacy, EU Delegation to the U.S.*; **Dr. Daniel Kliman,** *Senior Vice President, Global Power Shifts, German Marshall Fund of the United States*

COMPETITION STRUCTURE

The 2027 Schuman Challenge will take place in three rounds: a **preliminary round, a semi-final round and a finals round.** The winning team in the finals is awarded a study tour in Brussels. These are each described below.

SCHUMAN CHALLENGE PRELIMINARY ROUND

In the **preliminary round,** all teams present their policy proposals in a 'live' online format to a panel of expert judges. Teams can (and are advised to) use visual aids to support their presentation. The 10-minute presentation is followed by 10 minutes of Q&A from the judges. The **preliminary rounds will take place on February 10th,11th, and 12th, 2027.**

During their presentation**, each team will highlight their actionable proposals**. *At the 10-minute marks of both the presentation and the Q&A session, the student speaking will be allowed to finish their thought but will be cut-off after their sentence has been completed. Teams will receive a 2-minute warning from judges.* Following the presentation and Q&A session, judges will provide 5 minutes of feedback.

Prior to the preliminary round, each team **must submit their presentation/visual aids to W!se,** to James Draney: JDraney@wise-ny.org **and** Khyla Duarte: KDuarte@wise-ny.org. The **presentation/visual aids must be accompanied by a list of all the sources** used by the team in preparing their presentations. Additionally, **teams should include citations on their slides where appropriate.** The **text of the email submission must include the following statement:** *I certify on behalf of my Schuman Challenge team that the policy proposal and presentation prepared adheres to the AI and Academic Integrity policies described in the Schuman Challenge 2027 Competition Guide.*

To ensure anonymity of each team, faculty advisors should send these 2 files (presentation and list of sources) using the team's participation number as the file title (which will be communicated in advance). The sources cited should meet the protocol required by the university for a written assignment. **The deadline to submit the presentation and the list of sources cited will be announced once the dates for the preliminary rounds[1] are set.**

RULES FOR VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS

Teams will be assigned a presentation time on the designated preliminary round date and will be sent instructions to login to the Zoom session prior to this date.

- Teams will report to their Schuman Challenge Zoom waiting room 15 minutes prior to their competition time.
- Students must have their cameras **ON** for the duration of the presentation.
- The designated faculty advisor is permitted to observe the preliminary round presentation of their student teams. No other observers are permitted. Only the **team members** can speak during the round.
- Faculty advisors must not speak at any time during their team's presentation. They must have their camera switched **off** during the entirety of the presentation and must not communicate in any way with the team once inside the presentation room. **Any violation of this rule will result in a penalty of 10 points.**
- Teams wait until the Lead Judge welcomes them and invites them to start their presentation.
- Upon completing their preliminary round presentation and judges feedback, teams will be asked to exit the Zoom room.
- W!se will notify the faculty advisor if their team advances to the semi-final round via email once all teams have competed.

[1] As the preliminary rounds will take place in front of a panel of judges, multiple dates will be announced. Effort will be made to accommodate needs where possible.

SEMI-FINAL ROUND

15 teams will qualify for the **semi-final round** which will take place in Washington, D.C. at the EU Delegation (2175 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037). Teams will give their presentations in front of a panel of 3 judges and can use visual aids (which might be onscreen or in printed form). Travel support to Washington, D.C., two nights' accommodation, and food costs when meals are not provided will be supported for the qualifying teams.

Prior to arrival in Washington, each team of 3-4 students will submit a one-page outline (up to 300 words) of the key arguments and policy recommendations they are planning to present in-person at the Schuman Challenge. This outline should NOT include any identifying information about their college or university. The outline must include their team number (communicated beforehand), a word count at the top of the page, and the names of the students. The outlines of the top 3 finalist teams will be published on the EU Delegation's website.

RULES FOR IN-PERSON SEMI-FINAL PRESENTATIONS

The presentations will take place in the conference rooms of the EU Delegation where a panel of judges will adjudicate. Once the session begins, each team will have a moment to introduce themselves (individual names only and no identification of their university), the judges will do the same, and then the timed session will begin.

During their **in-person 10-minute presentation, each team will highlight their actionable proposals that will be followed by a 10-minute Q&A session led by the panel of judges**. *Note that at the 10-minute marks of both the presentation and the Q&A session, the student speaking will be allowed to finish their thought but will be cut-off after their sentence has been completed. Teams will receive a 2-minute warning from judges.* Following the presentation and Q&A session, judges will provide feedback.

Each team will be given an arrival time to clear security at the EU Delegation. This will be approximately 30 minutes before the scheduled presentation time (and no earlier than 1 hour prior to this scheduled time). Upon arrival, teams will clear the security area of the EU Delegation and report to the Schuman Challenge competition waiting area. Teams will be escorted to their designated presentation room.

Faculty advisors are allowed to observe their team during the semi-final presentation. Advisors are not permitted to speak or signal/communicate in any way with their team once inside the presentation room. **Any violation of this rule will result in a penalty of 10 points.** Team members must wait until the Lead Judge welcomes them and invites them to start their presentation. Teams will be anonymized during the semi-finals. Participants and advisors are asked to avoid wearing attire or accessories that identify their university or university location during their presentations.

Of the 15 semi-final teams, three will advance to the final round.

FINAL ROUND

Three teams advance to the **final round** which also take place in D.C. at the EU Delegation after the semi-finals. The three teams give their presentations to a different panel of judges (including a senior EU diplomat).

RULES FOR IN-PERSON FINAL ROUND

On the evening following the completion of the semi-final round, teams will be given arrival times for the next morning at the EU Delegation. Buffet style breakfast will be served for students and their advisors. The three finalist teams will be announced after breakfast. The student teams will be escorted to holding rooms until it is their time to present. They may not watch the other finalists before their own presentations.

The presentations will take place in the press room of the EU Delegation where a panel of expert and diplomat judges will adjudicate. Once the session begins, each team will have a moment to introduce themselves (individual names only and no identification of their university), the judges will do the same, and then the timed session will begin.

During their **in-person 10-minute presentation, each team will highlight their actionable proposals that will be followed by a 10-minute Q&A session led by the panel of finals judges**. A*t the 10-minute marks of both the presentation and the Q&A session, the student speaking will be allowed to finish their thought but will be cut-off after their sentence has been completed. Teams will receive a 2-minute warning from judges.*

Following the completion of the three finalist presentations, the judges will be escorted away from the press room to deliberate. They will return after reaching their verdict to announce their ranking of the three finalist teams. **The first-place team will win a victory tour to Brussels.**

BRUSSELS VICTORY TOUR (MAY/JUNE 2027)

The winning team are awarded a 4-5-day victory tour to Brussels, Belgium. Up to 4 team members and the faculty mentor can attend the Tour. All travel[2], accommodation, and food costs are met by the European Union for the duration of the trip. The timing of this trip will be discussed with the winning team but the trip will take place within 4-6 weeks of the finals in May/June 2027. During this trip, participants will visit a range of EU and U.S. institutions and think-tanks. They may also give their presentation to EU and U.S. officials in Brussels.

2026 Schuman Challenge Victory Tour



2 Return air tickets to/from a location in the U.S. (other destinations can be discussed. **Note that all passports arrangements are the responsibility of the participants.** The organizers can offer support and advice but cannot arrange visas/passports.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS: POLICY OUTLINE AND PRESENTATION

All participant teams should:

- **Propose concrete initiatives/measures for transatlantic cooperation: W**e recommend including specific proposals for EU-U.S. collaboration and explaining both the process by which the proposal would be implemented and the concrete benefits of the proposal. Avoid presenting overly broad proposals and talking in generalities.

- **Support their proposal with evidence-based analysis:** Teams should be prepared to present evidence-based analysis and explain why the best available evidence supports their conclusions.

- **Cite all external sources used in the one-page outline (semifinal round only) and presentation in a separate document to be submitted in advance of the Challenge**: Students caught plagiarizing will be disqualified.

- **Be prepared to answer questions:** Half of the session will be a Q&A period during which judges will challenge each team to defend its presentation. Judges will be looking for answers that reveal a thorough understanding of the subject matter, as well as of the argument put forward and its implications.

- **Work as a team:** All students should speak during their presentation and should plan to take turns. Teamwork is part of the assessment criteria. Students should share speaking time in a reasonable and equitable manner. Likewise, during the Q&A any of the students on the team may answer the questions posed by the panel but judges will consider whether a team is heavily unbalanced in terms of student engagement when assessing team performance. If you have any concerns that you wish to discuss or need to notify the EU Delegation for any special needs of the participants, please contact the organizers.

- **Consider their manner of delivery:** Effective communication, clarity of expression, organization, and persuasion will all be assessed throughout the competition.

- **Practice:** Hold practice sessions to present and defend your strategy in front of your Faculty Mentor.

To assist with your preparations, you are invited to watch the 2026 Schuman Challenge Information Session Webinar: https://zoom.us/clips/share/jWjww5SSQxy8bU0CEgg3Cg

Please note the following in preparing your policy outline and presentation:

- **AI Policy**: We recognize that AI is a prevalent tool in academic research today. Your policy recommendations should be ideas generated by your team, not ones generated by AI software. If your team uses AI for research purposes, you must cite any sources just as you would for other research tools.

- **Academic Integrity Policy**: Teams are expected to treat their Schuman Challenge deliverables as if it were an assignment to be submitted at their respective college/universities. As such, all competition materials such as team's policy proposal and script should be original.

Teams found to be in violation of the above policies will be **disqualified**. This holds true even if the violations are found after the competition.

GUIDANCE FOR FACULTY MENTORS

To support your teams, we suggest supporting the following activities:

- **Kick-off:** Begin by forwarding the competition materials to your students. We recommend you establish regular meetings with your students to give them feedback on their research, discuss the team's approach and argument, and set goals (research, writing, etc.) for the next meetings.

- **Drafting:** We recommend your students prepare a first draft of their intended presentation in good time for them to adapt according to your feedback.

- **Practice round:** Based on feedback from former faculty mentors, it is recommended that you hold at least one full-length (i.e. 20 minutes) "live fire" practice round, at least a week prior to the start of the competition, in which you play the role of judge and provide feedback to the students. You may use the official judging rubric included in this guide for your feedback.

Reminder: Your leadership and guidance are important for the success of your team, but under no circumstance should you conduct research or assist in the drafting of your team's oral or written presentation.

Certifying Academic Integrity of Policy Outline and Presentation: It is the responsibility of each faculty mentor to personally certify that the policy proposal and presentation prepared by their team adheres to the AI and Academic Integrity policies referenced above.

Spreading the Word via LinkedIn, X, Instagram or Facebook: Past faculty mentors, students, and university communications professionals have amplified their participation to the competition through personal social media and university websites. You may include **@EUintheUS**, **#SchumanChallenge** and **#EUForeignPolicy** in your posts and share accordingly with relevant administrators on campus.

Please remember to submit by email on behalf of your team the following:

- The presentation/visual aids and
- A list of cited sources

Both documents should named according to your team number. They must be sent to: **JDraney@wise-ny.org and KDuarte@wise-ny.org. The text of the email must include the following statement:** *I certify on behalf of my Schuman Challenge team that the policy proposal and presentation prepared adheres to the AI and Academic Integrity policies described in the Schuman Challenge competition guide, 2027.* **Deadlines for sending this email will be sent to you in advance.**

2026 Schuman Challenge winning team: Macalester College, Minnesota



SCHUMAN CHALLENGE 2027 JUDGING RUBRIC

EUROPEAN UNION

Judge: _____ Team Number: _____ Time: _____

EU Schuman Challenge Scoring Rubric for Judges:

Score	5	10	15	20	25
Description	Unsatisfactory to Poor	Fair/Needs work	Satisfactory/Good	Very Good	Outstanding/Excellent

	5	10	15	20	25	
Originality of Response • Demonstrates understanding • Innovative/creative • Feasible/Clearly stated • Acknowledges potential obstacles	Team's response is derivative and unoriginal.	Team's response shows some original thought but ultimately relies on common arguments.	Team has presented a sound argument that expands on existing discourse but does not break new ground.	Team's response is original, feasible, cost-effective, and implementable. However, there are some factors that were not considered fully.	Team has presented a unique and compelling argument that contributes meaningfully to public discourse on the topic.	
Quality of Research • Clearly explained planned research process / method along with what information the presenters seek to learn through field research • Appropriate/Thorough/Effective research process/method presented • Proper citation of sources	Team did not reference any sources or data.	Team referenced sources however their reliability and trustworthiness are questionable.	Team referenced trustworthy sources and backed their argument up with data.	Team identified and referenced key sources on the topic and backed their argument up with data.	Team identified and referenced key sources on the topic and backed their argument up with data while demonstrating critical thinking and data analysis.	

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	3	6	9	12	15	
Understanding of Issue • Clear and persuasive explanation of the background information & the history of the issue or root of the problem • Specific explanation of how the issue affects the quality of life, who is affected, and why it is significant and worth improving	Team does not understand the issue and cannot answer any questions satisfactorily.	Team is comfortable with the issue but is only able to answer simple questions.	Team fully understands the issue and can answer most complex questions satisfactorily.	Team fully understands the issue and can answer all complex questions satisfactorily.	Team demonstrates a mastery of the issue and can answer all questions asked completely and with nuance.	

Quality of Presentation
Delivery:
• Quality of delivery: presenter's eye contact / voice projection/body language/ demeanor.
• Presentation:
  ◦ persuasive and engaging
  ◦ coherent and logically organized.
• Clear demonstration of a collaborative and shared effort to produce an effective presentation.
	Team did not present coherently, and their presentation was not engaging. Major delivery issues.	Team presented coherently, but with substantial delivery issues and without confidence.	Team's presentation was clear and engaging with some minor delivery issues.	Team's presentation was clear, confident, and engaging and held audience interest. A few delivery issues were observed.	Team's presentation was flawless, seamless, persuasive, passionate, and charismatic.	

	4	**8**	**12**	**16**	**20**	
Question and Answer • Responses were relevant to the questions asked. • Presenters were prepared and demonstrated breadth of understanding and knowledge about the topic. • Quality of response to anchor questions	Team's response did not demonstrate any technical or creative knowledge.	Team is able to respond to topic questions but is only able to answer simple questions.	Team is able to respond to topic questions but can only demonstrate an intermediate level of understanding of the topic.	Team demonstrates subject matter expertise and offers several creative and original solutions in its response.	Team is able to demonstrate an advanced level of understanding of the topic and offer an innovative solution.	
					TOTAL (Maximum 100 points)	

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