



2021 HCC Business Plan Competition

Contestant Requirements and Competition Rules:

Business Idea

An idea for a proposed business or for the expansion of a startup or an existing business in the Greater Houston Metropolitan area.

Steps to Apply for the 2021 HCC Business Plan Competition:

- **Proposed & Startup Entrepreneurs – 3 Steps: Financial Webinar, Class/Program and Apply.**
- **Existing Entrepreneurs – 2 Steps: Financial Webinar and Apply.**

Who Should Apply?

Proposed - A business that is in the planning stages or has opened but has not yet produced revenue. Founder is planning to start the business within 12 months following the competition.

Startup - A startup is considered any business that is producing revenue but had not yet achieved six continuous months of net profit prior to the pandemic. Businesses that have been launched/opened, but are still in the process of proving the business model and management.

Existing - An existing business can range from a small business to a large enterprise. In either case the initial business model has been proven and, prior to the pandemic, they were operating for the most part profitably with positive cash-flow. The primary focus of the company is repositioning to adjust to the pandemic, adjusting the business model accordingly to get back on track to growing the business profitably. The HCC Business Plan Competition is for existing business entrants who:

- Own a business embarking upon a growth plan; or
- Own a business that needs a new course of action; or
- Own a business that needs a new business direction and/or new product line.



Take Steps to Apply:

Proposed and Startup Entrepreneurs - You may have already taken the required workshop and class/program but, if you have not, you can still sign up for the required financial workshop and class from now until 5:00pm January 29, 2021 and you must submit your completed HCC Business Plan Competition Application by 5:00 pm CST on January 29, 2021. [More information available on our Homepage.](#)

Existing Entrepreneurs - Take Just the Financial Workshop - You can still sign up for the required financial workshop (no class required) from now through the HCC Business Plan Competition Application Deadline by 5:00 pm CST on Friday January 29, 2021. (Workshops are on 1/14/21, 1/23/21 and 1/30/21). [More information available on our Homepage.](#)

Each contestant team must submit a fully completed application with their business idea within this time frame: January 8, 2021 through January 29, 2021 at 5:00 pm. Upon notification of acceptance, each team will be paired with their advisors and can begin working at once.

Teams

- **Team Leader must be an owner of the proposed, startup or existing business and have taken the prerequisite financial webinar. If the team is applying to develop a proposed business or further develop a startup business, then the team lead should also complete one of the prerequisite classes or programs, in the past or prior to the start of this year's competition group training sessions, which begin in late February. Team leaders for those teams applying to grow an established existing businesses need only take the required webinar.**
- Team may include from one to five persons, all of whom should be affiliated with the operations of the proposed, startup or existing business.
- Teams may not include outside business consultants or other individuals who are not involved in the actual on-going business as an employee. Teams may, however, consult with outside parties in research for their plan.

More about Applying

- Each contestant team must submit a fully completed application with their business idea within this time frame: January 8, 2021 through January 29, 2021 at 5:00 pm CST. Upon notification of acceptance, each team will be paired with their advisors and can begin working at once.
- Any HCC students applying must be in good academic standing. Students on academic probation are not eligible.



- All plan content must be the original work of the contestant team.
- Owners, partners, etc. are considered employees if they perform a substantial role in the operation of the venture.
- The business plan should be for a proposed business venture or for a startup or existing business that is embarking on a growth plan or a needed new course of action.
- The business must be located in the greater Houston Metropolitan area.
- If for a proposed business, the plan must address the entire business concept, including implementation.
- If for a startup or an existing business the plan must fully justify the change in direction and/or the planned growth.
- The venture may show intentions to license technology from or to another company for manufacturing and/or distribution purposes. Revenue streams from the venture should not be based solely on deriving revenues from the licensing of its own technologies.
- Proposals for the buy-out of an existing company, tax-shelter opportunities, real estate syndications, and other consulting projects and analyses are not eligible.

Participant Expectations

Contestant team commits to attend all 2021 HCC Business Plan Competition – Virtual Training Sessions (Six sessions). It is mandatory that one member from each contestant team must attend all virtual training sessions. All team members are strongly encouraged to attend as well.

Participant commits to:

1. Each team can meet with their advisors in between the training sessions to discuss and get feedback on their business concept. Many teams plan their own virtual meetings, phone calls and/or exchange emails at times convenient for all involved. Teams spend no more than 4 hours per month getting advice and feedback from their advisors. If you cannot attend a meeting you have scheduled with your advisor, you must let your advisor know in advance to reschedule. This is good business practice!
2. Provide one accurate email address and cell phone number;
3. Check email and phone messages on a daily basis;
4. Meet suggested interim benchmark dates

Your advisors will review your progress and guide you, but they will NOT write portions of your plan nor do any part of your research. You should allocate sufficient time during the period from February 23 through May 17 to meet interim benchmark dates which will be given to you at the first training session. The interim benchmark dates are designed to progress you towards the completion of your written plan due on May 10, 2021 and slide presentation and video due on May 17, 2021



Failure to meet these requirements can result in disqualification from the competition. By applying to the Business Plan Competition, every applicant agrees to meet the conditions of the contestant requirements.

HCC students applying must be in good academic standing. Students on academic probation are not eligible. Teams can include from one to five persons, all of whom should be affiliated with the operation of the proposed, startup or existing business. Teams cannot include outside business consultants or other individuals who are not involved in the actual on-going business as an employee. Teams may, however, consult with outside parties in research for their plan. Nevertheless, all plan content must be the original work of the contestant team. Owners, partners, etc. are considered employees if they perform a substantial role in the operation of the venture.

If for a proposed business, the plan must address the entire business concept, including implementation. If for a startup or existing business the plan must fully justify the change in direction and/or the planned growth.

Proposals for the buy-out of an existing company, tax-shelter opportunities, real estate syndications, and other consulting projects and analyses are not eligible.

Competition Rules

1. Each team and its team members may submit only one business plan to the competition.
2. Team size cannot exceed five (5) persons.
3. There is a required written Business Plan Format and all contestants are required to conform to it. The format will be supplied at the start of the competition in February.
4. The business plan and associated material must stand for the original work of each entrant. A signed statement shall accompany each submission indicating that the materials submitted are the original work of the author(s). Any team whose work is deemed not original by the judges will be disqualified from the competition and will be obligated to return any prize money (if awarded).
5. Due to the nature of the competition, we will not ask judges, reviewers, sponsors, staff or the audience to agree to or sign non-disclosure statements for any participant. By participating in the competition, entrants agree that neither Houston



Community College, nor members of the judging panel, sponsors nor their designate organization, assume any liability whatsoever for any disclosures of business plan information which may be made (whether inadvertently or otherwise) by any judge, reviewer, staff member, audience member or other individual connected with, participating in, viewing, hearing, or receiving information from the competition.

6. New proposed ventures cannot have generated sales revenues prior to the competition. Startup and Existing businesses must define and justify all growth and incremental revenues.
7. The venture may show intentions to license technology from another company for manufacturing and/or distribution purposes. Revenue streams from the venture should not be based solely on deriving revenues from the licensing of its own technologies.
8. The business plan and associated material may not contain fabricated information about (but not limited to) the following: backgrounds, experience and educational level of members of the management team, stage of product development, product performance claims, or market survey results. Plans describing business considered by the reviewers to be potentially immoral or unethical will be disqualified.
9. The Submitted business plan is limited to 30 pages of typed text, which includes the Executive Summary and financials but excludes appendices (see item 10 below). Cover sheets are not counted in total number of pages.
10. Summary financial data should include “pro forma” financial statements: a cash flow statement, income statement, balance sheet, break even analysis and funds required/used. These statements should include the year of inception and three subsequent years. Include an explanation of the offering to investors indicating how much money is needed, the expected ROI, and the proposed structure of the deal, i.e. stock, debentures, etc. Also, delineate the possible exit strategies.
11. Appendices should be included only when they support the findings, statements and observations in the plan. Because of the number of teams/plans entering the competition, reviewers and judges may not be able to read all of the material in the appendices. Therefore, the text portion of the plan should include up to 30 pages (including financials but excluding appendices) and must contain all pertinent information in a clear and concise manner.
12. Electronic submissions are required in a pdf format.
13. Plans will undergo an independent review after which the five Finalist teams



will be chosen and notified.

14. A maximum of the 5 highest scoring Business Plans will be chosen for the final competition. The finalists will present their Business Plans to a panel of judges in June. Each finalist team will be given a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes to present their plan followed by a maximum of ten (10) minutes for a question-and-answer session between the presenting team and the panel of judges. Each presenting team will have ten (10) minutes prior to its presentation for setup/preparation and five (5) minutes after the presentation for goodbyes and exiting.
15. Advisors will be assigned to work with the entrant teams. Each team must meet with its advisor(s) at least once a month, and no more than four hours per month. Advisors and entrants will be required to verify that all business plan content is the original work of the entrants, not the advisors. Advisors may advise, but not participate in, the creation or presentation of the business plan.
16. Training sessions will be available to entrants. Such sessions will cover the basics of business plans, financial indicators (e.g. ROI) and statements, obtaining capital and other relevant topics. Each team must be represented at all training sessions.

Business Plan Competition Application

After you have read the above rules for the competition and have confirmed that you and your team members are eligible, you can proceed to the online application.