

Business Plan Competition Rules

Eligibility Rules

1. The HCC Business Plan Competition is open to proposed, startup and existing entrepreneurs who have taken one of the HCC prerequisite classes at HCC or one of our partner programs and to graduates of the HCC Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program:

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

Applicant Requirements

- Proposed & Startup Entrepreneurs – 3 Steps: Workshop, Class, Apply
- Existing Entrepreneurs – 2 Steps: Workshop and Apply
- 10,000 Small Business Alumni – 1 Step: Apply

*Startup=not yet achieved 6 straight months net profit

- **Class** – For proposed and startup applicants, one member of each team must complete either Small Business Management-BUSG 2309 (for college credit students), Entrepreneurship & Economic Development-BUSG 1307 (for college credit students), the Small Business Success Series by HCC or the online **Creating a Successful Business Plan Class (CASBP)** (for continuing education students).
 - ***EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE: Proposed & Startup Applicants who have previously completed one of the following, are NOT required to take the quick online class (CASBP) mentioned below: 1) BUSG 2309 Small Business Management; 2) BUSG 1373/1073/1307 Entrepreneurship & Economic Development; 3) University of Houston SURE program; 4) Houston Area Urban League Small Business University; or 5) Liftoff Houston Competition (completed all Liftoff training sessions and submitted a business plan).***
- **For Those Who Need the Creating a Successful Business Plan Class, click here to Register for the December or January Class. Commit to finishing the December class by January 30 or commit to finishing the February class by February 21. DO NOT Register for the February**

CASBP class, because it cannot be completed prior to the start of our competition training and therefore does not meet our requirements.

- **Proposed and Startup entrepreneurs, you will indicate the class you have taken or are currently taking in the application, and HCC will check your status and verify you have completed it by the required completion date.**
- **Financial Workshop for Small Business Launch & Growth – 1-Day – Understanding Cash Needs, Loan & Business Financials –HCC Ctr. For Entrepreneurship-9a-4:30p. Your Workshop Date Choices: – 1/14, 1/25 or 2/1. BPC Applicants Sign up for the workshop prior to submitting BPC Application! For existing entrepreneurs, HCC will check your status and verify that you have registered for the workshop prior to submitting your application and HCC will also check to verify that you have attended the workshop.**
- **Graduates of HCC’s Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program may also apply for the competition and are NOT required to take take the class, nor the financial workshop. HCC Goldman Sach 10,000 Small Businesses BUSG 2309; nor BUSG 1307, nor the Creating a Successful Business Plan class. Your completion of the 10,000 Small Businesses program is considered your prerequisite class. Although the workshop is not required for 10ksb grads, it recommended as a great refresher!**

Each contestant team must submit a fully completed application with their business idea within this time frame: January 1, 2020 through January 30, 2020. Upon notification of acceptance, each team will be paired with their advisors and can begin working at once.

HCC students applying must be in good academic standing. Students on academic probation are not eligible. Every team leader must either be an HCC Student who has taken one of the prerequisite classes or have graduated from the 10,000 Small Businesses program (For proposed and startup entrepreneurs, we encourage other team members to enroll in the prerequisite class, but it is not required). Teams can include from one to five persons, all of whom should be affiliated with the operation of the proposed 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.

2. The business plan should be for a new business venture or for an existing business that is embarking on a growth plan or a needed new course of action. The business must be located in the Houston area. If for a new business, the plan must address the entire business concept, including implementation. If for 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, franchise, 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. 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. Professionally bound hard copies may be submitted in addition to the electronic copy, but not instead of it.

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 May. Each finalist team will be given a maximum of twenty (20) minutes to present their plan followed by a maximum of (10) ten 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 ten (10) minutes after the presentation for equipment dismantling.

15. There is no requirement for a minimum number of finalists; reviewers and judges may determine that no plans are worthy of either finalist consideration or of prize awards.

16. Advisers will be assigned to work with the entrant teams. Each team must meet with its adviser(s) at least once a month, and no more than four hours per month. Advisers and entrants will be required to verify that all business plan content is the original work of the entrants, not the advisers. Advisers may advise, but not participate in, the creation or presentation of the business plan.

17. 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.