



Official Rules & Regulations

Innovation Competition

2016 Season

Version 1.0 • July 31 2015

OVERVIEW

The Imagine Cup Innovation Competition honors the most innovative, ground-breaking and appealing software built with Microsoft tools and technology.

The Innovation Competition may be structured differently based on the country/region you are representing. Please make sure to read your local country/region competition rules (if applicable) to better understand how to compete in this competition.

If you choose to compete in this Competition, then you agree that your participation is subject to the following:

- The Imagine Cup [Official Rules](#)
- The Imagine Cup Innovation Competition Official Rules and Regulations described below.

WHAT ARE THE START AND END DATES?

This Competition starts at 00:01 Greenwich Mean Time ("GMT") on 31 July 2015 and ends in July 2016 ("Entry Period") and will consist of three separate rounds as follows:

ROUND	START DATE (all times 00:01 GMT)	END DATE (all times 23:59 GMT)
Round 1 – National Finals	Varies by nation	23 April 2016
Round 1 – Online Finals	1 January 2016	16 March 2016
Round 2 – World Semifinals	23 April 2016	1 May 2016
Round 3 – World Finals	July 2016	July 2016

CAN I ENTER?

You are eligible to enter if you meet the eligibility criteria detailed in the [Imagine Cup Official Rules & Regulations](#)

HOW DO I ENTER?

To enter Round 1, visit www.imaginecup.com and register as instructed. You can begin submitting your round 1 entry once the national finals for your country opens. Submission requirements and deadlines for Round 1 vary from country to country but all will be concluded no later than 23 April 2016.

If there is no National Finals in your team's country, you may instead compete in our Online Finals. This is only open to teams in countries without a National Finals. On 1 January 2016 you can begin submitting your round 1 entry and the submission deadline is 16 March 2016.

Rules regarding the size of your team, your associates, the role of the team mentor, academic institution and national residency requirements, and other information can be found in the "Teams, Associates, and Mentors" section of the [Imagine Cup Official Rules & Regulations](#)

You cannot compete in the 2016 Imagine Cup if you do not participate in National or Online Finals.

HOW DO THE COMPETITION ROUNDS WORK?

Below is an overview of what to expect for each round of the competition.

Round 1 – National Finals/Online Finals

If the country or region your team competes in holds a National Final for the Innovation Competition, Round 1 will be governed by your national competition rules and those rules may be structured differently. Please make sure to review your national competition rules (if applicable) for a list of materials your Team is required to submit in addition to those requirements listed here.

In many National Finals you'll be invited to deliver the following materials:

- Live Presentation** of your project to a panel of judges at the National Final. This presentation should explain your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; and how you will bring your project to market.
- Innovation Software** usable by the judges in a hands-on evaluation.
- Innovation Software Instructions** document explaining how to use your software.

If there is no National Final in your team's country, you may choose to compete in the Online Finals which are run through www.imaginecup.com. For the Online Finals, you are required to submit the following materials:

- Project Proposal** to compete against other students from around the world in the Online Finals. This should be a Microsoft Word or PDF document no longer than ten pages, or a PowerPoint presentation no longer than twenty slides, which explains your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; and how you will bring your project to market.
- Innovation Software** usable by the judges.
- Innovation Software Instructions** document explaining how to use your software.

For both the National and Online Finals, requirements for the live presentation, project proposal, software, and instructions all appear later in these rules in the "Content and Technical Requirements" section.

Round 1 Advancement: Teams in the National Finals and Online Finals will be evaluated by judges using the scoring criteria given later in these rules.

Each National Final Innovation Competition results in one World Semifinalist team that advances to round 2.

The Online Final Innovation Competition results in two or more World Semifinalist teams that advance to round 2. The total number of World Semifinalist teams advanced from the Online Finals will be dependent on the merits of the entrants and the competitive needs of the World Semifinals.

Round 2 – World Semifinals

All World Semifinalist teams, regardless of whether they came from National or Online Finals, compete in a global round conducted online. All World Semifinalist teams are required to submit the following materials to www.ImagineCup.com within one week of being chosen as a World Semifinalist in their National Finals or in the Online Finals.

During this round, you will be asked to submit the following:

- Presentation Video** of your project in which your entire team appears on camera to deliver the presentation as if to a panel of judges. This presentation should explain your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; and how you will bring your project to market. Your video must be no longer than ten minutes and it may not have any edits or added visual effects. You may not move the camera during your presentation. In all respects it should replicate the experience of a judge sitting and watching your live presentation.
- Project Proposal** to compete against other students from around the world in the World Semifinals. This should be a Microsoft Word or PDF document no longer than ten pages, or a PowerPoint presentation no longer than twenty slides, which explains your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; and how you will bring your project to market.
- Innovation Software** usable by the judges.
- Innovation Software Instructions** document explaining how to use your software.
- World Semifinalist Survey** on our website, filled out by our team and containing important information needed to promote your team online including a team photo and screenshots/pictures of your project. This survey will be available as of 23 April 2016 and will only be accessible to World Semifinalist teams.

Updating Your Project: While you must make your initial submission of all the above materials within one week of being chosen as a World Semifinalist, you may upload newer versions of any or all of these materials up until the end of Round 1 on 23 April 2016.

Late-April National Finals: If your National Final happens after April 16 2016, you still have one full week to submit your materials after you are chosen as a World Semifinalist. This is the only exception to the 23 April 2016 deadline and is only applicable for teams whose National Final occurs less than a week prior to the 23 April 2016 deadline.

Round 2 Advancement: Teams in the World Semifinals will be evaluated by judges using the scoring criteria given later in these rules. Final selection of which teams advance to round 3 will

be based on the judges' scoring with consideration given to geographical diversity and to project differentiation.

Round 3 – World Finals

All teams who advance to round 3 will be brought at Microsoft's expense to the World Finals event where the last round of competition occurs. Information regarding transportation and meals can be found in the Official Rules in the "Travel Prize Conditions" section.

Round 3 competitors must bring the following materials with them to World Finals:

- Live Presentation** of your project to a panel of judges at the World Final. This presentation should explain your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; and how you will bring your project to market.
- Innovation Software** usable by the judges in a hands-on evaluation.

Winning Round 3: The judges at the World Finals event will choose first, second, and third place winners for the Innovation Competition. No team rankings below third place will be released.

HOW WILL ENTRIES BE JUDGED?

In every round, each entry will receive a score of 1-100, based on the following criteria. Entries are re-evaluated at each round on the basis of the latest version of the software so your continued development progress may raise your next score.

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project have a clear target market or audience • Does the project address a clear need, problem, or opportunity and is the solution clearly explained? • Is the project's purpose and basic functionality easily understood? 	15%
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project create a new category of product or service? • If there are similar products or services on the market, does the project clearly and meaningfully innovate beyond those existing products or services? • Does the project present a new and meaningfully improved way of accomplishing something? • Does the project include innovations in user experience? • Does the project include innovations in technical design and/or implementation? 	50%
Execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the project easy to use? • Does the project have a professional degree of production in terms of user interface, visuals, and audio? • Does the project perform well and respond crisply to input? 	20%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project make effective and appropriate use of the major features of its chosen platform(s)? Were there significant platform features or even platforms the project could have benefitted from but failed to utilize? 	
Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the team have a credible plan for getting their project to market in terms of business model, any required partnerships, or other factors? Does the team have any form of external validation for their project such as customer surveys, focus group tests, an active beta-test program, recommendations from subject-matter experts, or potential investors? Does the project have a reasonable chance of success in its appropriate market given the team's existing plan? 	15%

WHAT ARE THE PRIZES?

Round 1: Each National Final competition may offer prizes at the discretion of the local Microsoft subsidiary operating that competition. The existence, nature, and conditions of such prizes are subject to the rules of each National Final.

Round 2: Every World Semifinalist team who advances to round 3 will receive a trip to the Imagine Cup 2016 Worldwide Finals in Seattle, Washington, USA, in July, 2016, to compete at the World Finals. Trip includes round trip coach airfare from a major airport closest to each competitor's home, standard hotel accommodations, and select meals and activities. Associates to the team are not eligible for this travel prize.

Round 3: At the World Finals, the top three teams in the Innovation Competition will receive the following cash prizes. (Mentors and associates will not be awarded any portion of the monetary prize winnings.)

- First Place:** \$50,000 USD, to be divided equally among each officially registered member of the Team
- Second Place:** \$10,000 USD, to be divided equally among each officially registered member of the Team
- Third Place:** \$5,000 USD, to be divided equally among each officially registered member of the Team

CONTENT AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

All Innovation Projects must be developed using at least one product in the Visual Studio family and must be built to require any one or more of the following platforms:

- Windows
- Windows Phone
- Windows Azure

In addition to one or more of the above, you may also use other Microsoft platforms such as Kinect for Windows SDK, .NET Framework, XNA, Bing maps API, etc., as well as third-party game engines, libraries, and middleware provided you obey their licenses, but none of these are required. As long as your project requires Windows, Windows Phone, or Windows Azure to operate your project meets this requirement.

As a student, you can obtain free tools and software at [DreamSpark](#).

In addition, all entries must meet the following requirements for the Live Presentation, Project Proposal, Innovation Software, and Innovation Software Instructions:

Live Presentation

The Live Presentation is a ten minute PowerPoint overview of your team and project accompanied by a live stage demonstration of your project. This presentation should explain your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; and how you will bring your project to market. The Live Presentation must meet the following criteria as well as any other criteria set forth by your National Final and/or the World Finals:

1. You are responsible for arriving with your software installed on suitable hardware for the demonstration.
2. Your presentation must clearly address each of the **Judging Criteria** outlined above.
3. The accompanying PowerPoint must be in the English language and you must conduct your presentation in English. If a translator is needed, you are responsible for procuring one. Please see the Official Rules for additional information on translators.
4. The project you demonstrate must be fully functional and implemented.
5. Any or all of your team members may participate in the presentation, but all are not required to participate. It's permissible for a single team member to deliver the entire presentation.
6. At the end of your presentation, the judges will have ten minutes to ask you questions.

Presentation Video

The Presentation Video is a video recording of your Live Presentation and must abide by the same requirements as the Live Presentation except that there will be no questions from the judges. In addition:

1. Your video must be submitted in WMV or MP4 formats and must be compressed to a file of no more than 1GB.
2. Your video must simulate the experience of a judge viewing a Live Presentation.
3. Place your video camera where a judge might sit and then perform your presentation to the camera.
4. You may not move the camera during the presentation nor may you edit the video in any way except to trim the beginning and/or ending so the video only includes the presentation itself.

5. It must be no longer than ten minutes in duration.
6. As in a live presentation, you may present slides and project demonstrations but you may not edit those elements into the video afterwards – they must all be used live during the recording.
7. You may approach the camera to demonstrate aspects of your project up close just as you might to a live judge.

Please note that if you give a live presentation at a National Final, you may record that presentation and use it in your World Semifinal submission if you wish, but you may instead choose to create a new video recording of your presentation before or after your National Final event and submit that instead.

Project Proposal

This is a Microsoft Word or PDF document no longer than ten pages, or a PowerPoint presentation no longer than twenty slides, which explains your project and your team: Who your team is; what your project does; who your project is for; what platform features your project uses; and how you will bring your project to market. It is the written equivalent of the Live Presentation in terms of the material it covers. Your Project Proposal must meet the following criteria:

1. Your presentation must clearly address each of the **Judging Criteria** outlined above.
2. Your document must be in English.
3. It must be no larger than 100MB.
4. It must be in either DOC, DOCX, PPT, PPTX, or PDF formats.
5. You may compress your document in a ZIP file for submission.

Innovation Software

We need to be able to use your app in order to judge it! The Innovation Software is defined as an installable and usable software project in the appropriate format for your chosen platform(s).

Innovation Software must meet the following requirements:

1. Your software must be in one of the following formats for installation depending on its platform.

Windows: A standard SETUP.EXE or an .MSI Windows Setup application to install your app on a Windows PC. If your project is a Windows App, submit it as an .appx app package file with all associated files required for installation, including the PowerShell script; you must also sign the app package by following the instructions given [here](#).

Windows Phone: A standard XAP or APPX setup file for deployment to Windows Phone devices.

Windows Azure: The web tier of your project must be deployed to Windows Azure and you must supply the full URL to your site and/or services. If your project includes Windows or Windows Phone client software then those components must meet the platform requirements above. If your project includes an embedded component then you must submit a console application that simulates the data flow and interaction between your web tier and the embedded device. The console application must be submitted as an *.exe.

In all cases, you may submit any or all of your files compressed in a ZIP file.

2. The app must be no more than 3GB. No source code is permitted and apps will be disqualified if they are submitted as development projects.
3. If your app includes and/or requires Kinect support you must include this as a requirement in the Innovation Software Instructions document.
4. If your app includes and/or requires touchscreen/slate capabilities, you must include this as a requirement in the Innovation Software Instructions document.
5. If your app requires internet access, you must include this as a requirement in the Innovation Software Instructions.
6. The installation process of your software must not require the internet to complete successfully. If you use ClickOnce you must ensure it includes your entire project and does not attempt to retrieve components from online.
7. It is acceptable to support multiple languages in your app as long as English is one of the represented languages.

Innovation Software Instructions

The Innovation Software Instructions document is an electronic document that informs the judges and prospective users how to setup and use your app.

The Innovation Software Instructions must meet the following requirements:

1. The instructions must be submitted as either a document in .DOC, .DOCX, .PDF, .PPT, or .TXT file formats or a graphic image as a .JPG file.
2. It must be submitted in English.
3. It must list all requirements for using the app such as Kinect, webcams, an internet connection, Xbox game controllers, guest account login/password, or anything else that a judge must have to use your software.