



Casecomps.com Case Hosting Guide

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Introduction

What is a case competition?

Case competitions are events where teams of students work together to solve problems (commonly called cases). Cases are typically business related, but can include topics ranging from politics to technology. Examples of potential cases include “how can P&G increase profits”, “how should Walmart respond to competitive pressures”, or “who should GE acquire”. Non business related case topics could include “how can farmers increase crop yields”, “how can governments efficiently distribute wealth”, or “what should a sports franchise pay their top players”.

What do case competitions include?

Case competitions include planning, registration, kickoffs, Q&A, case work, presentations, judging, and reception phases. Length of time spent in each phase varies between local (hosted for a single university) and national (hosted for multiple universities) events. Below are details of how long each phase typically lasts, and what is included.

Phase	Local Event	National Event
Planning	Time required: one month. Activities: Finding rooms, cases, judges, and sponsors. Marketing your competition.	Time required: three to six months. Activities: Finding rooms, cases, judges, and sponsors. Marketing, planning initial activities, organizing lodging, and processing teams.
Registration	Time required: two weeks to a month, with one-to-two weeks to review applicants if necessary. Activities: Teams register for your case competition via casecomps.com, Google docs, or your preferred system. If your case is application based, ensure teams can submit resumes or other materials through your system.	Time required: two to six months, with two-weeks to a month to review applicants if necessary. Activities: Teams register for your case via casecomps.com, Google docs, or your preferred system. If your case is application based, ensure teams can submit resumes or other materials through your system.
Case kickoffs	Time required: one event. Activities: Introduction meeting to brief participants on the case, provide background of your organization's	Time required: one day to a week. Activities: Brief students on logistics for the competition, provide background, introduce stakeholders, and host fun activities to



	goals, introduce sponsors, and cover logistics.	engage your participants.
Q&A	Time required: one event, or digital question submission. Activities: Teams ask clarifying questions on the case or logistics.	Time required: one event, or digital question submission. Activities: Teams ask clarifying questions on the case or logistics.
Case Work	Time required: 4 hours to several months. Can be repeated over several rounds. Activities: Students work to solve your case.	Time required: 4 hours to several months. Can be repeated over several rounds. Activities: Students work to solve your case.
Presentations	Time required: 30 seconds to 20 minutes. Activities: Students present their solutions to judges.	Time required: 30 seconds to 20 minutes. Activities: Students present their solutions to judges.
Judging	Time required: 30 minutes to multiple weeks. Activities: Judges deliberate to determine the winner.	Time required: 30 minutes to multiple weeks. Activities: Judges deliberate to determine the winner.
Reception	Time required: 30 minutes to multiple hours. Activities: Review goals of the competition, give high level feedback, announce winners, and offer light refreshments	Time required: 30 minutes to multiple days. Activities: Review goals of the competition, give high level feedback, announce winners, and host a social event to celebrate everyone's achievement

Why host a case competition?

Hosting case competitions brings top students together to solve tough problems. Whether you are increasing your organization's brand, working with a sponsor to solve a real problem, attracting top firms to your school, or educating passionate students, hosting a case is a great way to engage top students.



What do I absolutely need to succeed in hosting a case competition?

Hosting a great case competition ultimately boils down having two main things: participants, and a business sponsor. Without participants to solve your case question, there can be no case competition. Without a problem to solve for a real business partner, be them a nonprofit searching for a way to alleviate poverty or a conglomerate searching for the best market to enter, there is no problem for participants to work through. After achieving both participants and a hosting organizations, everything else falls into place.

Case Competition Marketing

How can I attract participants to my case competition?

Attracting students to your competition is one of the most crucial parts of hosting your case. You cannot host a case competition without participants.

Local case competitions should engage student groups, send emails through every available mailing list, post on bulletin boards, and host classroom presentations to inform students of their event.

National case competitions need to utilize external methods to attract top students from across the nation. Engage national chapters of similar organizations, email advisers from other business schools, utilize contact lists from officials at your university, post on social media, and post your case on casecomps.com.

Casecomps.com leverages social media, a bi weekly mailing list, and our relationship with Poets and Quants to publicize case competitions.

We did not receive the number of teams we expected, and we are closing registration this week. What should we do?

Do not panic! Students are notorious procrastinators. The majority of teams register for cases on the final registration day.

To solve this challenge, consider pushing back your registration deadline by a week after registration closes. Many top case competitions do this to increase participation. This could yield surprising results.



Fees

Should I charge students to participate in my case?

Local case competitions generally do not charge registration fees. National case competitions typically charge registration fees ranging from \$200 to several thousand dollars per team. Fees are meant to cover large fees incurred while hosting national events, and are generally not meant to make a profit.

Locations

What events do I need locations for?

Locations are needed for the following stages of competition (events marked with an asterisk are only applicable to national events):

- Case kickoff room(s) including introduction rooms and activity rooms
- Q&A room
- Case team rooms (for researching and working collaboratively)*
- Team lodging*
- Judge lodging*
- Presentation rooms
- Reception area

Case Competition Kickoff

What kickoff events should I host as a local case competition?

Local case competitions typically host an event to introduce all participants to case organizers, distribute the case, and answer Q&A questions. Q&A related questions can be answered at the case kickoff, or within proceeding days.

What kickoff events should I host as a national case?

The sky's the limit! Participants plan months ahead of time to attend your event, and are giving time and money to participate - you should make it worth their while. The Champions case in New Zealand takes participants bungee jumping every year. The University of Denver hosts a skiing competition in parallel with their competition.



Finding a Case Competition

Can I write a case myself?

Of course! Given the open ended nature of cases, almost any question can become a case competition question. The minimum content of any case includes introduction of an entity (typically a company, organization, or concept), context, challenges the entity faces, and a question based on those challenges.

What if I want a more professional case?

Cases can be purchased or found. Three top case producers are listed below:

- MIT offers case studies¹ categorized by industry, and are often free to use
- Harvard Business Review produces industry leading case studies², but must be purchased for each team
- The Case Centre offers a wide variety of cases³ from nearly every industry

Interested in inspiring additional creativity? Host a separate case writing competition⁴ for students to create their own cases.

Case Work

How long should students do case work?

Cases range from short, four hour events, medium length 24 hour to 48 hour cases, long cases lasting a week, or longer cases spanning between a week and multiple months.

How can I help students succeed?

If students are working hard on your case, make sure to keep them energized! Caffeine and snacks are always encouraged if students are working nearby. Highlighters, writing utensils, paper and whiteboards help foster collaboration.

Hosting Q&A sessions, to make sure everyone has the same information, is also important. Providing clarity on points of confusion in your case, as long as you provide the same information to all teams, can make the case solving experience more enjoyable for all participants.

¹ <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/LearningEdge/Pages/Case-Studies.aspx>

² https://hbr.org/store/case-studies?referral=03791&utm_source=google&utm_medium=paidsearch&utm_campaign=dom_br_cases_elite&gclid=CjwKCAjw4sLVBRAIEiwASbIR-7E1pz4YRn7491dfpsNWYKy3D7hGKzteU9Dfir31ynFNgDfcm1Qt6RoCxlUQAvD_BwE

³ <https://www.thecasecentre.org/educators/ordering/whatsavailable/cases>

⁴ <https://www.thecasecentre.org/educators/casemethod/competitions/casewriting>



Judging

Where can I find judges?

Case competition judges are typically professors, representatives from sponsors, or subject matter experts. Ask people within your network to participate!

How should judges ask questions?

Judges can ask questions to teams during the presentation (unshielded), directly after the presentation (shielded), or a combination. Unshielded events allow judges to ask questions throughout the entire presentation. Shielded presentations include an allotted time for presentations to be uninterrupted, and separate time for judges to ask questions at the end of the presentation. Mixed presentations include shielded time at the beginning and/or end of presentations, and unshielded periods during the remaining portion of time.

How should I judge teams?

Teams can be judged through a paper and pencil judging rubric, or through a more elaborate technology system.

Local case competitions with small amounts of teams can be judged through simple printed forms similar to FSU's national sales competition rubric⁵, more complex forms like University of Colorado's ethics competition rubric⁶, or a mix like the Association of Supply Chain Management's judging rubric⁷.

Increased complexity of competitions (multiple rounds, more than 30 teams, and multiple judges) requires more sophisticated judging systems. Casecomps.com offers a judging system specifically built for large scale case competitions to create judge profiles, custom questions per event, and buckets to organize teams. Other options include Qualtrics, Judgify, or Award Force.

Should we share feedback with participants?

Competitions offer feedback to participants individually directly after presentations, or during the final award ceremony.

⁵ <http://csi.cob.fsu.edu/sales/icscmedia/casecompetitionjudgingrubric.pdf>

⁶ [https://www.uccs.edu/business/sites/business/files/inline-files/2015 UCCS Case Competition Score Rubric.pdf](https://www.uccs.edu/business/sites/business/files/inline-files/2015_UCCS_Case_Competition_Score_Rubric.pdf)

⁷ <http://www.apics.org/docs/default-source/case-competition/2017-2018-apics-case-competition-judging-rubric.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



Prizes

Do I need to offer a prize?

No, but students are working long hours on your case study. They should be striving for something, even if it is small or not monetary based.

What do prizes typically include?

Prizes can be monetary or opportunity based. Ideas of potential monetary prize amounts can be found below:

Place	Local	National
3rd	\$50 to \$500 per team	\$100 to \$5,000 per team
2nd	\$100 to \$1,000 per team	\$250 to \$10,000 per team
1st	\$150 to \$2,000 per team	\$500 to \$15,000 per team

Opportunity based prizes include jobs, internships, or resources for students to bring their case solution to life.

When do I award prizes?

Prizes should be awarded at the final award ceremony, or in the weeks preceding the final award ceremony if judges require more time to deliberate.

Sponsors

Why do I need a sponsor?

Sponsors provide funds necessary to book locations, offer prizes, compensate judges, and manage logistics.

In addition to funding, sponsors are a large reason why participants register for case competitions. Hosting a case with a well-known business, and optionally offering opportunity based prizes, attracts great participants seeking career opportunities.

What can I give in return for sponsorship?

Sponsors can optionally meet participants, receive their contact information, or show their brand.



Main sponsors will often contribute multiple judges, be excited to network with case participants, and receive participant information. These sponsors often contribute the most funds, and may have a significant say in case competition operations.

Lower tiered sponsors may want to expose participants to their brand through branded marketing materials, or may want to receive participant contact information and/or resumes for recruiting purposes. **Before finding lower tiered sponsors, confirm your main sponsor is ok with you sharing student information with other organizations.**

Where can I find sponsors?

Sponsors can be found by contacting school sponsorship associations, reaching out to your organizations contacts, or emailing recruiters directly.

Casecomps.com is excited to connect sponsors to local and national case competitions. Feel free to reach out to Michael Kokot (mkokot@casecomps.com) if you are interested in being connected to a sponsor.

