

The iLaunch Competition Guidelines

Participants will be required to submit:

- A completed iLaunch application
- Budget for 10k
- A 3-minute pitch video
- A pitch presentation deck (no more than 10 slides)

Applicants should demonstrate their understanding of:

- The problem
- The target customer
- The proposed solution
- Customer validation and evidence
- Market opportunity
- Competition and differentiation
- Business/revenue model
- Go-to-market strategy
- Next steps and milestones

Applications will be evaluated to determine which startup ideas demonstrate the strongest potential to develop into viable startup companies.

The **top 10 participants/ teams** will advance to the live iLaunch Competition.

Each finalist will have:

7 minutes to pitch

3 minutes to answer questions from the judges

The live iLaunch Competition will be a public event bringing together students, entrepreneurs, investors, university leaders, mentors, industry experts, and members of the community to experience entrepreneurship in action.

Application Process

Applicants must upload all submission requirements by the deadline published on the Innovation Hub website.

Applicants are not required to have formed a legal business entity before entering iLaunch.

Mentoring Sessions

Each startup selected as an iLaunch finalist is **REQUIRED** to participate in designated mentoring and pitch preparation sessions prior to the final competition.

Mentors will provide feedback and challenge finalists to strengthen their businesses; however, the final presentation must represent the entrepreneur's own work and understanding of the business opportunity.

Prior Submissions to iLaunch Competitions

Ventures and teams that have previously participated in iLaunch may apply again unless they previously won **1st Place**.

Previous participants should demonstrate meaningful progress or new learning since their prior participation.

Types of Ideas/ Ventures

iLaunch is designed for startup teams, individuals, or formed entities. Nonprofit ventures may also apply when they demonstrate an innovative and sustainable approach to solving a meaningful problem.

Generally excluded are:

- Tax shelters
 - Real estate syndications
 - Franchises
 - Existing businesses that do not represent a new venture or significant new business opportunity
-

Team/ Individual Eligibility Requirements

Each participant on an iLaunch team must meet the following requirements:

- Applicants do **NOT** need to have formed an official company to compete.
- Each participant must be at least 18 years old.
- Teams may include students, alumni, faculty, staff, and West Texas Community entrepreneurs.
- Texas Tech University System students must be in good academic standing.
- Community entrepreneurs are encouraged to participate.
- Technologies based on university-developed or licensed technology are eligible.
- Faculty members, full-time employees, and contractors of TTUS must comply with applicable university disclosure requirements.

Starting Your Application

Step #1

Establish one team member as the dependable **Team Captain**.

The Team Captain will manage all communication, deadlines, logistics, and correspondence between the startup team and Innovation Hub staff.

Step #2

Review the iLaunch rules and application requirements before beginning your application.

Applicants should ask questions early and contact the Innovation Hub team if clarification is needed.

Create a profile on the designated competition platform and complete the iLaunch application.

The application will include:

- Application questions
 - Budget for 10k
 - 3-minute pitch video
 - Pitch deck
-

Step #3

Applicants are encouraged to participate in Innovation Hub seminars, workshops, and other available educational opportunities to:

- Learn the competition expectations
- Better understand customer discovery and validation
- Strengthen their startup concept
- Develop their pitch deck
- Improve their 3-minute pitch
- Prepare for the finalist selection process

Available workshop dates and resources will be posted on the Innovation Hub website.

Step #4

Don't miss the submission deadline!

Review the competition schedule and reserve important dates on your calendar.

If selected as a finalist, teams will be required to participate in designated orientation, mentoring, pitch preparation, technology check, and competition activities.

Submitting Your Application

Step #1: File Names

All submitted documents must clearly identify:

- Team Name
- Primary contact
- Year of submission
- Type of document

Applicants should follow the file-naming instructions provided through the iLaunch application platform.

Step #2: Format

Applications that do not include all required materials by the published deadline may be considered incomplete and may not advance for review.

The **3-minute video** must be submitted according to the video instructions provided through the application platform.

Applicants are responsible for reviewing all materials before submission.

Proofread your work.

Professional communication matters. Applications and presentations should be clear, concise, and free of significant spelling and grammatical errors.

Step #3: Content

A complete application should include:

- Completed application questions
- Budget for 10k
- 3-minute pitch video
- Pitch Preliminary pitch presentation deck

Rubrics, pitch guidelines, and other resources will be available through the Innovation Hub.

Pitch Deck Outline

Please find the presentation guidelines linked on the iLaunch Competition page.

Preliminary Round Evaluation

First-round judges may include:

- Entrepreneurs
- Innovation Hub mentors
- Investors
- Faculty
- Industry experts
- Innovation Hub representatives

Applicants will be evaluated using the official iLaunch Scorecard.

Eligibility requirements for the preliminary round include:

1. Submission of a complete application.
2. Submission of all required materials by the deadline.
3. Compliance with eligibility requirements.
4. Student participants must be in good academic standing.
5. Additional information may be requested during the review process.

The preliminary round will determine which ventures advance to the final competition.

A maximum of 10 ventures will advance.

Final Round Presentation

Part One: Notification

The Innovation Hub makes the final determination regarding which ventures are invited to compete as iLaunch finalists based on the evaluation scores.

The Innovation Hub reserves the right to include or exclude applications based on eligibility, completeness, competition requirements, and overall fit with the goals of iLaunch.

Finalist will be notified by email.

A maximum of **10 ventures** will be selected to move forward to the public competition.

Part Two: Confirmation

The Team Captain **MUST** confirm participation when contacted by Innovation Hub staff.

The team will be asked to confirm:

- Startup/company name
- Participating team members
- Primary presenter(s)
- Participation in required finalist activities

If a selected team does not confirm participation within the timeframe provided, an alternate startup may be selected.

Part Three: Pitch Deck Presentation Formatting Rules

Each venture advancing to the final round must prepare a final pitch presentation.

Final presentations should:

- Be submitted in the required presentation format
- Be submitted by the deadline provided to finalists
- Use clear, legible fonts
- Prioritize visuals over paragraphs of text
- Include supporting data where appropriate
- Include a concise use-of-funds slide
- Be tested during the designated technology check

Finalists are responsible for ensuring that videos, demonstrations, animations, and other presentation elements function correctly prior to competition day.

Part Four: Final Round Presentation Rules

Each team must have its completed presentation ready by the designated Tech Check.

Each finalist receives:

7 minutes — Startup Pitch

3 minutes — Judge Q&A

Teams are required to:

1. Have all registered presenting team members present at the required time.
2. Complete the presentation within **7 minutes**.
3. Participate in the **3-minute judge Q&A**.
4. Follow all presentation and technology requirements.
5. Participate in all required finalist activities.

The 7-minute pitch is a hard stop.

Finalists should practice accordingly.

The 7-Minute Pitch

Finalists should use the following as a guide when preparing their presentations.

Pitch Section	Recommended Time
Hook + Problem	:45
Customer + Market Opportunity	:45
Solution / Demonstration	1:15
Validation + Evidence	1:00
Competition + Advantage	:45
Business Model	:45
Go-to-Market + Next Steps	:45
The Ask + Strong Close	1:00
TOTAL	7:00

Finalists are encouraged to **tell a compelling story rather than simply move through a checklist of slides.**

The goal is to make the judges understand the opportunity and believe that the team can move it forward.

Team Introduction

Finalists will be introduced before the official 7-minute pitch clock begins.

A formal team slide is **not required**.

If the team's experience, technical expertise, industry knowledge, or personal connection to the problem provides an important competitive advantage, finalists are encouraged to briefly communicate that information during the presentation.

Judging Criteria and Evaluation Process

The iLaunch Competition is intended to reflect the real-world experience of entrepreneurs presenting startup opportunities to potential investors, partners, and business leaders.

A scorecard will be used during the preliminary and final rounds.

Judges will evaluate the quality of the opportunity as well as the entrepreneur's ability to demonstrate evidence, understand the business, and communicate a credible plan for moving forward.

Final-Round Evaluation

Final-round judges will evaluate each startup based on the following areas:

Problem + Customer — 15%

Does the startup clearly identify a meaningful problem and demonstrate a strong understanding of the customer experiencing it?

Solution + Value Proposition — 15%

Does the proposed solution effectively address the problem, and is the value to the customer clear?

Validation + Evidence — 20%

Has the team tested important assumptions and gathered meaningful evidence from customers or the market?

Market + Competition — 15%

Does the team understand its market opportunity, competitors, alternatives, and competitive advantage?

Business Model + Go-to-Market — 15%

Is there a credible path to generating revenue and acquiring customers?

Execution + Use of Funds — 10%

Does the team have realistic next steps, and would the funding meaningfully advance the startup?

Pitch + Q&A — 10%

Was the presentation clear, compelling, energetic, professional, and persuasive? Did the team demonstrate a strong understanding of the business during judge questions?

TOTAL — 100%

iLaunch Competition Event

The final iLaunch Competition will be held as a **live public startup pitch event** celebrating innovation and entrepreneurship.

The event will bring together students, entrepreneurs, investors, industry leaders, mentors, university representatives, and members of the community.

The final competition will include:

- Welcome and opening remarks
- Introduction of judges
- iLaunch finalist presentations
- Live judge Q&A
- Competition activities
- Judge deliberation
- Awards announcement
- Closing celebration

Guests are encouraged to attend, support the entrepreneurs, and experience startup innovation firsthand.

10 FINALISTS.

7 MINUTES.

\$17,500 ON THE LINE.

1st Place — \$10,000

2nd Place — \$5,000

3rd Place — \$2,500

Pitch It. Prove It. Launch It.

For additional information, application deadlines, competition dates, and resources, visit the Texas Tech Innovation Hub website.