



2025 Guidelines and Overview

University
of Portland



<https://www.up.edu/franzcenter/entrepreneurship/pilots-venture-competition.html>

Introduction

The Pilots Venture Challenge is hosted by the Franz Center for Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation at the University of Portland. The event is underwritten by generous donors to the University, and promotes competition, experiential education in entrepreneurship, and fosters new business development by focusing on student created, launched, and managed ventures. Students are provided with expert feedback on their plans and presentations.

Questions

All questions should be directed to Jon Down (down@up.edu), Director of Entrepreneurship.

Competition Overview

The Pilots Venture Challenge is a multi-day competition where student teams will present their plans for new ventures to a panel of judges in the preliminary round. The top 18 teams will advance to the final round. Teams in the final round will be randomly assigned to sessions 1, 2, or 3. To ensure fairness and consistency among judges, the prizes will go to the top ventures (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) in each session.

Cash Prizes and Other Opportunities

Cash Prizes for each final session are as follows:

1st Place: \$1000.00

2nd Place: \$500.00

3rd Place: \$100.00

All cash prizes will be awarded to the top individuals/teams in each session as outlined. Winning teams must submit a letter signed by all team members indicating the amounts to be dispersed to each individual. Each entity or individual will be required to provide a W-9 before receiving any prizes. All prize payments will be reported by the University on a Form 1099-MISC. Foreign applicants need to contact Jon Down (down@up.edu) to get exact requirements. Cash prize awards may be subject to taxation and are the sole responsibility of the entity or person to whom the awards are distributed.

Awards will generally be paid within 3 weeks of the competition, as long as all required forms listed above are submitted in a timely fashion and students have set up direct deposit with the University ([Click Here](#) for instructions).

Registration

All individuals/teams must register to participate in the Pilots Venture Challenge, unless they are involved in one of the courses which automatically registers students for the preliminary round.

Courses with automatic registration:

- BUS385
- ENT481

Once registered, teams will have access to the Pilots Venture Challenge Moodle site. The Moodle site will be used to communicate all relevant information and updates. Teams will also use the site to upload all required documents.

Contact Jon Down (down@up.edu) to register.

Expense Reimbursement (Up to \$500)

The Pilots Venture Challenge offers the opportunity for teams to obtain reimbursement up to \$500 of eligible pre-approved expenses incurred while developing and running experiments for all new ventures (see Pilots Venture Challenge Moodle site for form and instructions). This reimbursement is available only to applicants who have registered for the Competition prior to the deadline. See the Moodle site for instructions and forms.

The Use of Mentors

All competitors are welcome and encouraged to work with a mentor. However, a mentor cannot be part of the team and should not directly participate in the writing, direct editing, or specific development of any part of the submission. Mentors should provide advice and insights into the development of the plan, presentation coaching, and other general education interactions. Mentors are not required but are encouraged for the best learning opportunity.

Important Dates

Task	Dates
(optional) PVC Open Workshops: workshops are open to all students planning to participate in the pilot venture challenge and are intended to help students prepare for the Pilot Venture Challenge, especially students who are not involved in ENT481 or BUS385	9:00-10:30 am, Franz 121 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3/14/2025• 3/21/2025• 3/28/2025• 4/04/2025
Last Day to Register	April 11 th , 2025
Upload Preliminary Business Plans	The day before your preliminary presentation
Upload Final Business Plans	April 24 th , 2025 by midnight
Upload PDF of Final Presentation	April 25 th , 2025 by midnight
Pilots Venture Challenge Competition	April 26 th , 2025 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

PLEASE NOTE: ALL SUBMISSION DEADLINES ARE FINAL. LATE APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED, AND DEADLINE EXTENSIONS CANNOT BE GRANTED FOR ANY REASON. FAILURE TO SUBMIT BY THE DEADLINES NOTED WILL DISQUALIFY A TEAM FROM THE COMPETITION.

Special Situations & Accommodations

If you or any member of your team need to request approval for, or accommodation of, a special situation, the team point of contact person should contact Jon Down, Director for Entrepreneurship, via email (down@up.edu).

Participant/Team Rules

Team Composition:

- Teams: 1-5 current students (undergraduate or graduate).
- No non-student team members.
- Non-students can be involved outside the competition but cannot present or receive prizes.
- At least half the team must be University of Portland students.

Venture Eligibility:

- Early-stage, for-profit, or social ventures only.
- Excludes buyouts, expansions, real estate, funds, and franchises. (Contact for clarification if needed).
- Revenue limit: \$200,000.
- Capital raised limit: \$10,000.

Competition Rules:

- One team per person.
- Previous plans cannot be reused. "Significantly improved" ventures may re-enter.

Competition Format

Key Competition Dates & Procedures:

- **Registration Deadline:** April 11, 2025, by midnight.
- **Business Plan Upload:** April 24, 2025, by midnight (via competition website).
- **Presentation PDF Upload:** April 25, 2025, by midnight (via competition website).
 - Teams are responsible for ensuring presentation functionality, presentations should be able to be pulled up during the 5-minute transition time.
- **Live Presentations:**
 - 10-minute presentation (with slides).
 - 5-minute judge Q&A.
 - Mockups/prototypes are allowed.
 - All presentations are timed.
- **Preliminary Rounds:**
 - ENT481 & BUS385: In-class rounds.
 - Other teams: Contact Jon Down (down@up.edu) to schedule.
 - All teams advance to final rounds unless over the 18-team final limit.
 - If over the limit, preliminary round scores determine the teams that advance to the finals.
- **Finals:**
 - Maximum 18 teams.
 - Teams can revise plans/presentations based on preliminary round feedback.

Rubrics

Please visit the PVC Moodle Page to download the Pilot Venture Challenge Submission Checklist and Judging Rubrics. These documents are made available to help guide you in the development of your written plan and presentation.

Judging & Feedback:

- **Judging Process:**
 - Judges review and score business plans (rubrics on Moodle).
 - Judges score presentations using rubrics (on Moodle).
 - Plan and presentation scores are combined to determine winners (1st, 2nd, 3rd place).
 - Judges' decisions are final.
- **Business Plan Feedback:**
 - Judges provide scores and comments for each plan section.
 - Feedback is for educational purposes
 - Feedback is provided within one week after the competition.

Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

All submitted information is deemed the property of the participating teams and any licensors that it has. All our judges and staff are working professionals and investors who routinely evaluate business plans and protect the property of others in the process. However, they do not sign any non-disclosure agreements to participate in this competition. Teams are strongly encouraged NOT to provide any specifics or details that are considered to be intellectual property or the key to intellectual property. Any data or information discussed or divulged in the competition should be considered information that may enter the public realm, and students should not assume any right of confidentiality in any data or information discussed, divulged or presented in the competition.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Judges, volunteers, or UP faculty members may not have any vested interest, equity stake, or financial stake in any of the finalist companies. Any involvement by the previously listed parties that stand to gain financially or otherwise from the success of any finalist company is strictly prohibited. Any such associations will result in disqualification of the team and/or removal of that individual from his or her associated position with the competition.