



Texas A&M's First Student Business Plan Competition

STUDENT COMPETITION HANDBOOK 2020

#AggiePITCH

www.AggiePITCH.com

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McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship

**OPPORTUNITIES
MADE HERE.**

AGGIE PITCH IMPORTANT DATES UPDATED

Event	Date
Applications Open Online	Monday, February 17
Aggie PITCH Informational	Wednesday, February 19
Application Deadline	Friday, March 6
Finalists Notified	Week of March 30
Finalists Confirmed	Monday, May 11
Finalists Announced Publicly	Monday, June 1
Virtual Elevator Pitch Coaching Session for Elevator Pitch Finalists	Week of June 1
Virtual Professional Pitch Coaching for Pitch Finalists	Week of June 1
Aggie PITCH (Competition Day)	June 2020

WORKSHOPS

Informational

During the application period, the McFerrin Center will sponsor an evening informational on Wednesday, February 19th designed to help applicants review requirements for the application. In addition, we will go over the difference between the Full Pitch Finalists and the Elevator Pitch Finalists. For time and location, check the website at www.AggiePITCH.com.

Those selected as Full Pitch finalists will be required to attend a 1-hour individual pitch coaching session, which will be scheduled virtually the week of June 1. All Elevator Pitch finalists will be required to attend a separate pitch coaching virtual workshop also scheduled for the week of June 1. These sessions will be the only preparation assistance offered for the competition in June, and all finalists are expected to participate in their respective session.



WHAT IS AGGIE PITCH?

McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship is the hub and source of support for all entrepreneurial-minded Aggies. Aggie PITCH is designed to help us identify the best startup pitchers across campus, encouraging all Texas A&M students to explore entrepreneurship and learn how to deliver their business concept in the most compelling fashion. Aggie PITCH offers cash prizes to help you further develop your business – but more importantly – Aggie PITCH offers you the chance to showcase your business idea and potentially be considered for additional business plan/pitch competition across the nation. Many of these established competitions (e.g., S.E.C. Student Pitch Competition, Rice Business Plan Competition, Baylor New Ventures Competition, etc.) invite the McFerrin Center to submit Texas A&M’s best student team for their competitions, so we’re looking for the best of the best to emerge from Aggie PITCH!

All current Texas A&M students (including branch campus & A&M System schools) are encouraged to create and submit their business concept & plan via online application. After applications have been submitted, the McFerrin Center will invite judges with entrepreneurial expertise to review and score the online entries. Five finalists will be selected and privately invited to pitch their concept & plan at the Aggie PITCH event in June 2020, which will be evaluated and scored by a panel of prestigious entrepreneur/investor judges. An additional ten finalists will be selected to compete in the Elevator Pitch round during the Aggie PITCH event in June 2020. The Elevator Pitch round will be scored by the audience at large, with the top pitches also being awarded cash prizes.



WHY COMPETE?

CASH PRIZES!!! Finalists will compete for a portion of the largest prize pool ever offered in an entrepreneurial business pitch competition at Texas A&M University:

MORE CASH PRIZES THAN EVER BEFORE*

These cash prizes will be awarded to the individual participants listed for each winning team (full pitch and elevator pitch rounds). They are non-equity, non-ownership cash awards, to be paid through each student's TAMU account. Student awardees must be in good financial standing with the university, and are encouraged to utilize these funds in a manner consistent with their entrepreneurial goals.

Aggie PITCH offers cash prizes to help you further develop your business – but more importantly – Aggie PITCH offers you the chance to showcase your business idea and potentially be considered for additional business plan/pitch competitions across the nation. Many of these established competitions (e.g., S.E.C. Student Pitch Competition, Rice Business Plan Competition, Baylor New Ventures Competition, etc.) invite the McFerrin Center to submit Texas A&M's best student team for their competitions, so we're looking for the best of the best to emerge from Aggie PITCH!

*Cash prize amounts vary from year to year based upon sponsors



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Any registered student (undergraduate or graduate) at a Texas A&M System University is eligible to compete. A list of participating universities can be found here: <https://www.tamus.edu/about/universities/>

At least one member of an applicant team must be a currently-enrolled A&M student. Not every member of an applicant team must meet this criteria, but only A&M students may participate in the actual pitch contest. Anyone delivering any portion of the Aggie PITCH presentation must be a currently-enrolled A&M student as of the contest date.

Applicants do not have to apply as a team, and individual entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply. However, most successful applicants will need team members willing to share the effort of launching and growing a business, and who are all enthusiastic about making their collective concept a success. Teams should be willing to work together on all aspects of both the competition and the business itself.

Company formation is not a requirement to enter, and teams at concept phase only are encouraged to apply. The submission of a winning idea will require creative, careful, and methodical planning, but you will find the application process is much less involved than a fully-developed business plan. Each applicant team should commit significant effort to both the written and video portions of the application, but having either an existing company or a mature business plan is not required.

All forms/types of business concepts are encouraged to apply. There are no restrictions on the type of business concept you are considering (e.g., technology-based, service, non-profit, etc.). The application will ask you to select an intended industry segment for classification purposes only.

The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship runs a number of programs throughout the year to help students develop and validate their business concepts (e.g., Raymond Ideas Challenge, 3-Day Startup, Workshops @ Startup Aggieland, etc.). These programs assist students in developing their ability to think in an entrepreneurial way, and practice competencies necessary to identify and successfully implement new business ideas now, and as they progress throughout their careers. If your business idea is not ready for application to Aggie PITCH, we invite you to get involved with any of our 25+ programs to further develop and validate your business concept:

<http://entrepreneur.tamu.edu>



COMPETITION PROCESS

Step 1: Team Up

Students self-organize in teams of up to five members maximum. As stated above, individual entrepreneurs are welcome to apply, but are strongly encouraged to align yourself with teammates who share your enthusiasm for innovation and entrepreneurship. Then, work together to identify the problems, opportunities, solutions, value propositions and business models for your potential customers.

Refine your concept to be able to deliver it in the concise manner required by the Aggie PITCH application. Consider creating a prototype of your solution (whether a physical model, illustration, or digital representation).

Confirm that, if chosen, you can make yourself (and your team) available for the Aggie PITCH competition in June 2020 on the Texas A&M Main campus.

Step 2: Submit

You have until 11:59 PM on the last day of submissions, March 6, 2020, to complete and turn in your entry. The application can be found at www.AggiePitch.com.

The application includes background information on your startup, in addition to several components of an Executive Summary. Those include:

- Business Summary
- Problem
- Solution
- Business Model
- Target Market/Size
- Customers – Current/Potential
- Competitors

Each startup will be required to also submit a 60 second video of your elevator pitch as a part of your application. Not all team members have to appear in the video. These videos will be judged to select the top 10 finalists to participate in the Elevator Pitch round during the final competition.



Step 3: Develop Your Presentation

The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship will evaluate all entries, and identify the top finalists as invitees for participation in both the Full Pitch and Elevator Pitch rounds.

The Startup Lead of each finalist team will be notified the week of March 30. Each finalist will be required to participate in either an individual pitch coach training session or elevator pitch coaching workshop (as applicable) prior to the final competition day in June.

The finalists will be promoted across campus and invited to the final event for presentation, judging, and awards in June of 2020. Teams who do not advance are still encouraged to attend the final competition!

If selected as one of the full pitch finalists, your team will be required to give an in-person pitch at the final event. Each team will be allowed up to 5 minutes to deliver their pitch, not including Q&A. Teams may choose to use all or less than 5 minutes to deliver their pitch. After 5 minutes or the conclusion of their pitch (whichever occurs first), each team will field Q&A from competition judges and the audience at large, which will be moderated by McFerrin Center Staff. Final presentations must be turned in prior to the competition in June.

If selected as one of the elevator pitch finalists, your team will be required to give an in-person Elevator Pitch not to exceed 60 seconds at the final event. There will be no Q&A during the elevator pitch round.

JUDGES & JUDGING CRITERIA

All entries will be evaluated by a screening committee selected by McFerrin Center staff and will consist of members of the business community, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, lawyers, bankers and Texas A&M faculty. The screening committee will identify five finalists, which then will be evaluated by a second panel of judges (on the day of the final competition) to select all prize-winning teams.

Judges will evaluate and be looking for the following components in each application & pitch:

- Is the startup addressing a significant problem?
- Is there evidence that customers will be willing to pay for their solution?
- Is the problem big enough to build a company around? What is the size of the addressable market?
- Will the solution/technology work? Is there evidence that the solution/technology is feasible and will actually solve the problem (e.g., lab results, field trials)?



- What is the competitive landscape? How are these problems being dealt with today, and does this startup have a significant, sustainable competitive differentiation?
- Is there any intellectual property (IP) or other defensible advantage? What is the status of IP ownership? Does the startup have access to a license or option to commercialize the IP? Are there other startups pursuing this market with similar IP?
- Is this team coachable? Would this be a team I could invest in and work with?
- Does the startup understand key milestones that need to be reached in developing this business?

We recognize that, consistent with real life situations, early-stage companies can be in very different stages of development. Aggie PITCH candidates will be judged on a relational scale, taking into consideration these criteria in context of the stage of development for each applicant.

All entries will also be evaluated for the Elevator Pitch round by the same screening committee and criteria. The screening committee will identify ten additional finalists to participate in this round, which then will be evaluated by the audience in June to select all prize-winning teams.

Elevator Pitch Guidelines

- Use of computer or audio-visual equipment in the room is NOT permitted.
- Distributing material, samples and/or prototypes is permitted.
- No PowerPoint slides or audio assistance is allowed. This is not available in an elevator, so it is not available for the competition.
- The elevator pitch is one minute. Speakers will be cut off at the end of the duration.
- Teams may use as many or as few presenters as they desire.
- ALL audience members are allowed to vote on the elevator pitch.

COMPETITION DAY – JUNE 2020

The final event in June of 2020 will be open to the public and include the following:

Welcome & Announcements

The welcome will serve as a welcome to all guests and judges. Pitch times for each team will be announced.

Full Pitches

All finalists will pitch to the same judging panel. Breaks will be included, and A/V will be provided. Once all finalists have pitched, the judges will turn in their scores to be combined for the final score for each team to determine the prize-winning teams.



Elevator Pitch Round

The finalists selected for this round will deliver their one-minute Elevator Pitch during the competition. The audience will then use an online polling system accessible via their smartphone to vote for the prize-winning teams.

Awards Reception

Following the tallying of scores and elevator pitch voting, all guests and participants are invited to join for an evening reception, where competition awardees will be announced.

(No) CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

As an applicant and potential competitor, you are responsible to protect any information concerning your plan that you share with advisors, team members, fellow participants of the competition and the attending audience. The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship takes no responsibility for unwanted disclosure in any of these instances.

Contestants should be careful about disclosing information concerning proprietary concepts. Competitors concerned about the protection of intellectual property may research intellectual property protection online or at Texas A&M University System or other libraries.

Neither Texas A&M University nor the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship takes any ownership in an idea or plan solely through application or participation in the Aggie PITCH competition. Likewise, neither Texas A&M University nor the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship ensures any confidentiality or nondisclosure conditions for any information submitted or presented in the Aggie PITCH competition. As with most business plan competitions, you are responsible for protecting your own proprietary information throughout the Aggie PITCH competition.

QUESTIONS

You may contact us and/or visit the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship website.

Email: McFerrin@mays.tamu.edu

Website: www.AggiePitch.com



FAQs???

- **I have a class project that I would like to develop into a submission. Is that OK?**

Yes. We encourage you to submit class projects. However, please be aware that it will probably require a good deal of effort to craft an idea entry from a class project, because you must translate the project according to the criteria listed on the entry form, and develop a pitch to convey this idea as a compelling business concept.

- **I can't describe my idea in the character limit. Can I make it longer?**

No. The character limits are the maximum. Please re-read it carefully, and work more on it. You can describe nearly any business idea if you use the right words. One of the intentional challenges of this competition is for students to convey their idea concisely and convincingly in the allotted word count.

- **Do I have to attend the workshop in order to enter?**

Attendance at the informational on February 17, 2020 is not mandatory but encouraged. Attendance could help to improve the quality of your pitch and assist you in meeting all requirements of the application, but you are certainly not required to attend. All candidates selected to be finalists will have a mandatory pitch coaching workshop or one-on-one session scheduled for them prior to the competition event.

- **Is attendance on Competition Day required?**

Yes, for all finalists. We require that at least one team member presents at Aggie PITCH. All team members are not required to be present, although it is recommended.

- **How will I be notified?**

All applicants will be emailed the week of March 30. This email will let you know whether you have been selected as a finalist, and will require your commitment to participate in Aggie PITCH.

- **Do I have to submit a video?**

Yes. If you would like more guidance check out the following link: <http://speakingppt.com/3-best-elevator-pitches/>

- **What is an elevator pitch?**

An elevator pitch is a short description of problem and solution with important details of how you intend to further that solution. For a deeper understanding of an elevator pitch, check out the following link: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/elevator-pitch.htm>



- **Does the video have to follow the script/guidelines of the written application?**

No. It does not have to follow the script/guidelines of the written application, but it should cover most of the same questions. This is your chance to be creative & compelling in a verbal explanation of your written application.

- **Do all team members have to appear in the video?**

No. Use your best judgment and creativity in delivering the video portion of your application.

- **How do I edit my entry?**

Up until the submission deadline, March 6th at 11:59 PM, you may use your [review](#) login to access your entry form(s) and make changes.

