

U21/PwC Innovation Challenge

Competition Handbook

2021



Competition Overview

Background

Universitas 21 and PwC, two globally-focused organisations, have come together to offer unique professional development opportunities for U21's network of graduate students. This alliance supports and prepares U21 students for the world of work by allowing them to consider and respond to real workplace challenges, overseen by PwC and judges from their client companies. The format of the competition is designed to help students develop presentation and communication skills as well as fostering critical thinking and expertise.

Why take part?

The challenge offers students the opportunity to apply their knowledge to 'real-world' situations and reflect on their own experiences via a short three-minute video. The videos are judged by PwC and their clients, who are leaders in graduate career development.

Deadlines

Challenge opens: **Monday 15 February 2021**

Deadline for registration (universities): **Friday 12 March 2021**

Deadline for video submissions: **Friday 2 July 2021**

Judging to take place: **Tues 27 July – Friday 20 August 2021**

Winners to be announced: **Week of 6 September 2021**

Eligibility

The competition is open to any registered graduate student in one of U21's member universities (this includes students from taught and research masters programmes, MPhils etc., and PhDs). It is the responsibility of each U21 university to check the registration status of any student that they send forward as a finalist for adjudication. Students on joint PhDs between two U21 members are eligible to apply.

Prizes (updated June 2021)

The continuation of the pandemic into 2021 has proved problematic for travel plans across the network. In light of this, U21 and PwC Middle East have had to make the difficult decision to review the prizes awarded in the 2021 round.

In the previous rounds first prize winners have been awarded a week-long expenses-paid trip to Dubai, courtesy of PwC. This prize was offered contingent on it being possible to deliver. U21 and PwC no longer feel that this is the safest or most sustainable option for our winners under current global circumstances.

To provide certainty to our winners, we will be offering three first prize winners virtual one-to-one career coaching sessions with the PwC Academy. This tailored experience will allow the winners to identify their career goals and receive expert guidance on how best to achieve them. Seven runners up will receive exclusive access to a PwC-approved online course.

All entrants will still have the opportunity to develop their presentation and communication skills in preparation for their video entry. The videos will be judged by PwC and their clients, who are leaders in graduate career development.

NEW FOR 2021: There will be a People's Choice vote to determine one of the three overall winners! You will be able to vote via the U21 website between Tuesday 27 July and Friday 20 August 2021.

Rules for submission:

- Entries to be submitted for final adjudication are limited to 4 per U21 institution and should be submitted to U21 via an agreed university contact. Students should not submit their videos directly to U21.
- Submissions must be via video format, either an MP4 file or .MOV. Files sent in any other format will not be accepted.
- Video presentations are strictly limited to 3 minutes and competitors exceeding this will be disqualified.
- Entrants will be judged on their presentation skills and they must feature in the video.
- Group submissions are not accepted.
- It is permissible to use a maximum of one slide per presentation.
- The 3-minute audio must be continuous – no edits or breaks etc.
- Presentations are to be spoken word only (e.g. no poems, raps or songs). No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted within the video recording.
- Props are not allowed.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.
- Group round winners and runners up will be expected to provide a report after the competition to reflect on their experience.

Intellectual Property:

By submitting an entry to the Innovation Challenge, students are acknowledging that their ideas/research will be made publicly accessible and shared with industry professionals. Videos will be uploaded to Vimeo and disseminated through the U21 website and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), and PwC's media channels. Student videos will be shared with PwC's clients (they will be notified which clients). Judges, reviewers, staff and the audience will not be asked to sign non-disclosure statements.

U21 and PwC may take stills, video and/or audio clips of the presentations, or copy material prepared for use in the presentation, for promotional purposes. If the student's presentation draws on work/research that is being/has been conducted under contract with an outside sponsor, they are advised to discuss the related contractual terms of confidentiality and intellectual property with their supervisor(s) before participating in this competition. U21 and PwC have the right to ask a student to withdraw from the competition if these conditions are not met.

If you have any questions or need advice with any aspect of the competition, please contact connie.wan@universitas21.com

Information for Universities

Register your Institution

Upon registration you will obtain access to marketing material (including U21's branding collateral and guidelines) to help promote the competition, along with other advice and support needed.

You will need to register your institution in order to take part. This registration process will ask you to identify one named contact who U21 will communicate with and support. This contact will also be required to promote the competition to their respective students, and submit their videos on their behalf. The named contact will be notified (along with the student) of the outcome of the competition. Fill out the online registration form [here](#).

Notifying Students and Preparation

Universities will be able to access the challenge via our [website](#) as of 15 February 2021. It should be circulated as far in advance of the competition deadline as possible to ensure maximum participation. Students should also be given a link to the competition details and access to videos from previous rounds on the U21 website.

It may be useful for your university's named contact to seek assistance from interested individual academic or professional staff (e.g. from the Careers Office) for advice/guidance in preparing for shortlisting your university's 4 finalists.

To add value to the experience for the students, universities may also want to consider offering skills-focused training workshops or feedback sessions alongside this competition, to ensure a wider student reach. U21 can offer advice and provide

peer-to-peer support on how other universities have promoted and supported the participation of their students within the competition. Contact Connie Wan (connie.wan@universitas21.com) should you be interested in the development of skills training, preliminary long-listing process etc.

Progression

Each participating university is responsible for its own internal selection process to choose 4 entries to submit to the U21 competition. It is up to each institution to decide whether selection takes place by means of pre-recorded video presentations submitted by the students, or as a live session. The successful entries (max. 4 from each institution) must be submitted in video format to U21; these can be uploaded together with the submission form. These finalists will be put forward to PwC and their client base for judging and selection.

Selecting Your Judging Panel

To ensure a level of consistency across all internal heats, U21 recommends considering the following when selecting your judging panel:

- Ensure that your judging panel is balanced especially by academic/professional positions and discipline; the Innovation Challenge is open to those studying in all disciplines.
- Include three to five judges on your panel.
- Ensure that your judges follow the judging criteria on page 8.
- Consider including a professional, non-academic member of staff such as an individual from Marketing or Careers/Employability.

Tips and Suggestions

- U21 will be available to the universities' named contacts throughout the process if they have any questions or encounter any difficulties.
- It is the responsibility of the U21 institution to ensure that students are made aware of Intellectual Property implications and agree to their videos being disseminated on the U21 and PwC websites, social media, and to industry professionals.
- Consider providing your students with the appropriate filming equipment to ensure that they have the right means to film.
- Check the video submissions before you submit them; make sure that the video plays and that the sound on the finalist's submission is audible.
- All videos submitted to the U21 competition should be sent by the named contact in each university. Students cannot submit their own video directly to U21 for adjudication.
- While individual universities may give general advice to students on their entries, the ideas contained in the students' submission should reflect their own original thoughts and ideas.
- Your institution contact will be notified should one of your students be awarded a prize with further details of how they can claim their prize ahead of any wider announcement.
- Circulate information regarding the U21/ PwC Innovation Challenge People's Choice vote! Voting will take place via the U21 website between Tuesday 27 July and Friday 20 August 2021. A link will be forwarded in due course.

Feedback and reports

Entrants will be sent a short feedback survey. The named contacts at each university will also receive a similar survey which will be forwarded shortly after the announcement of the winners. The feedback received will go to inform following rounds of the competition.

U21 institutions taking part will also be asked for the following information which will be used to review and assess the competition year to year:

- Total number of students who submitted an entry to your institution
- Total number of students who benefitted from training as part of the Innovation Challenge
- What resources were you able to provide the students? (e.g. camera equipment, studio space, training)
- Wider impact of the competition on your institution (e.g. establishing relationships between departments/schools within your university, partnership with PwC etc.)

Information for Students

When and how to register

You will be able to access the challenge directly via the U21 [website](#) as of 15 February 2021. However, your own university will also announce a call for entry or expression of interest. When you receive this, get in touch with your university contact (not U21) to express your interest in taking part in the competition. If you do not receive such notification, contact Connie Wan via connie.wan@universitas21.com and you will be provided information of your university contact.

Ensure that you have ready access to video/filming equipment and have familiarised yourself with the rules (see page 3). Your university will set a shortlisting process in order to choose 4 entries to be put through to the U21 group round final.

NEW FOR 2021

There will be a People's Choice vote to determine one of the three overall winners this year. The vote will take place via the U21 website between Tuesday 27 July and Friday 20 August 2021. A link will be forwarded for you to share in due course – don't forget to share it with your friends and family!

Preparation

We recommend that you visit the '[Information for Students](#)' section of our website for an overview of the competition and guidance. Preparation for this competition is key. A few tips on how to prepare for the competition:

- **Research the challenge.** You want to demonstrate your ability to present a well-rounded argument. It's your chance to show them how much you know.
- **Consider what to include in your slide** (if using) There is nothing worse than having to stare at a redundant slide during a presentation – make sure it works for you!
- **Learn your 'script'.** It is better to have a structure in mind for what you're going to say. Writing it down will save you time and effort when it comes around to filming.
- **Practice!** Practice your script so that you become fluent – you are being judged on your ability to articulate your opinion and knowledge.
- **Think about how you want to present yourself.** First impressions count, make sure that you're dressed appropriately.
- **Watch the previous winning videos.** Get an idea of what makes a successful entry. Videos can be seen via the [U21 website](#).

Judging Criteria

On page 8 you will see the list of judging criteria which looks at both comprehension and content, as well as engagement and communication. Take note of this when you're preparing and practising your presentation.

Intellectual Property - IMPORTANT!

By submitting your entry to the Innovation Challenge, you are acknowledging that your ideas/research will be made publicly accessible and shared with industry professionals. Videos will be uploaded to Vimeo and disseminated through the U21 website and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), and PwC's media channels. Your video will be shared with PwC's clients (you will be notified which clients). Judges, reviewers, staff and the audience will not be asked to sign non-disclosure statements.

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N.B. PwC are not guaranteeing any job placements and are not acting as a recruitment agent, they will however be providing guidance and training on how to enhance employability skills and will share videos with key client judges who are looking for top talent.

What to do if you win

First of all - celebrate! You (and your institution contact) will be notified by U21 before 6 September. Note that the Winners and Runners Up will be required to put together a short report of their experience.

Winner

You will be contacted by PwC who will find a suitable time for you to undertake your one-to-one coaching. This is flexible, virtual and will be tailored to your career goals; PwC will be your point of contact.

Runners Up

Seven runners up will receive access to PwC-approved online training courses. The courses are aimed at helping you develop your skills so that you will be prepared for life in the workplace. PwC will contact you directly to provide you instructions on how to access the courses.

Information for Judges

Judging will take place over the period Tuesday 27 July – Friday 20 August 2021. Judges will be provided access to the submitted videos and will be expected to complete a scoresheet based on the criteria below. Their scores will go towards selecting two of the three overall winners. The third overall winner will be determined by an open People's Choice vote via the U21 website.

Judging Criteria

At every level of the competition each competitor will be assessed on the 8 judging criteria listed below (whether in local university heats or final group round). Please note that each criterion is equally weighted.

Comprehension and Content

- Did the candidate have a logical approach to answering the question? – i.e. familiarity with the background material, a set of key considerations.
- Did the candidate clearly explain their point of view?
- Did the candidate articulate the conclusions and recommendations clearly?
- Did the candidate provide adequate background information to illustrate points?
- Did the candidate spend adequate time on each element of their presentation – or did they elaborate for too long on one aspect or was the presentation rushed?

Engagement and Communication

- Did the presentation make you want to know more from this candidate and potentially employ them?
- Did the candidate convey enthusiasm for the challenge and genuine interest in the problem?
- Did the candidate capture and maintain your attention? (sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, confident stance)

If you have any questions or need advice with any aspect of the competition, please contact connie.wan@universitas21.com

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