

# U21/PwC Innovation Challenge

Competition Handbook

2022

# 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. The format of the competition is designed to help students develop presentation and communication skills, foster critical thinking and expertise and develop an international network of peers.

## What will students gain?

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. As a result of taking part, students will:

- Develop their presentation and communication skills (to non-specialist audiences)
- Collaborate with other students globally on real-world, work-based challenges
- Develop creative and innovative approaches to problem solving
- Establish an international peer network for collaboration and support
- Establish their professional networks by being connected with PwC and their clients

## What's new?

This year's Innovation Challenge will focus on collaboration and team work to enable students to develop their problem-solving skills and personal/professional networks beyond the lifespan of the competition. The competition this year will have **2 phases**:

For the **Individual Challenge (Phase 1)**, entrants are asked to submit (to their university) a three-minute response to a challenge question via a video to the challenge. Each U21 member university will be expected to run their internal rounds of the competition as normal and submit up to **2 entries**.

The entries submitted by the universities to U21 will be put through into the **Team Challenge (Phase 2)**. U21 will group all these final entries into teams. These teams will respond to a second challenge question set by PwC, themed around [COP27](#). This will be communicated via an online briefing session which entrants must attend. The teams will work collaboratively on a response which they will then pitch to a judging panel consisting of representatives from U21, PwC and PwC's clients. All phases will be completed virtually.

The group with the winning pitch will receive career coaching sessions (virtual) with the PwC Academy as their prize.

## Prizes

There will be one winning team from the final pitches to the judging panel who will be awarded with highly-rated bespoke career coaching with the PwC Academy. All elements of the competition will take place online/remotely.

## Deadlines

Challenge opens: Wednesday 13 July  
Deadline for registration (universities): Fri 29 July  
Deadline for video submissions to U21: Fri 30 Sept  
Groups for team activity announced: Mon 10 Oct  
Final pitches to judging panel: 5-9 Dec  
Winners to be announced: Week commencing 12 Dec 2022

**NEW FOR 2022:** The **Team Challenge** phase of the competition is new for 2022. This is in response to previous cohort's feedback that they would have liked more opportunities to build an international network, and PwC's input in shaping the competition to better reflect the realities of the working world where we are often required to work as part of a diverse team.

## 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.

## Rules for submission:

- Entries to be submitted for final adjudication are limited to **2 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.
- Winners 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](mailto: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 13 July 2022. 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 2 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](mailto: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 **2 entries** to submit to the U21 competition. It is recommended that the selection takes place by means of pre-recorded video presentations submitted by the students. The successful entries (max. 2 from each institution) must be submitted in video format to U21; these can be uploaded together with the submission form. U21 will put these finalists into groups and they will participate in the second team challenge phase of the competition and compete to be crowned overall winners.

## 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 finalists' 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 in the winning group. You will be provided further details of how they can claim their prize ahead of any wider announcement.

## 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 13 July 2022. 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](mailto: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 2 entries to be put through to the team challenge phase.

## NEW FOR 2022

The Team Challenge phase of the competition is new for 2022.

If you have been successful in being put through to this phase, having been selected by your university, you will be assigned to a group where you will work as a team to respond to a further challenge question set by PwC. This will give you a chance to problem solve collectively across borders and build your own international network.

You will then have to 'pitch' your response to a panel of judges. This will take place 5-9 December 2022. Further details will be announced nearer the time.

## 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) - 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

See page 8 for the judging criteria.

# U21/PWC INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2022

## Competition Process



## **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 the week commencing 12 December. Note that the winning group will be required to put together a short report of their experience.

You will receive exclusive one-to-one coaching sessions with the PwC Academy. This is flexible and will be tailored to your development needs; PwC will be your point of contact. Coaching sessions will take place remotely.

# Information for Judges

The team challenge phase will require a judging panel to determine the overall winning team. This will take the form of a 'Dragons' Den/Shark Tank' style pitching session (virtual) where students will pre-submit their responses to a set question. It is anticipated that the pitches will be made over the period 5-9 December (half days) to accommodate different timezones. Judges will have the opportunity to ask questions and will be expected to complete a scoresheet based on the criteria below. Their scores will go towards selecting one winning group.

## 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](mailto:connie.wan@universitas21.com)**

For further information, contact:

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