



SMALL BUSINESS CASE COMPETITION

Case Competition Rules and Guidelines

- Each competing team will consist of three to five team members.
- To be eligible, each individual must be enrolled as a full-time student in the fall 2025 semester.
- Any university or college may enter up to two (2) teams total in the competition. No individual may compete on more than one team, and teams should NOT work together in their preparation. Teams may comprise both MBA and undergraduate students.
- The Problem Statement and Case will be released shortly after registration closes on Monday, January 19, 2026.
- There will be one (1) opportunity for teams to ask questions of the client described in the case problem. The first and only "Issuing" call will be held the week (January 26-30) after registration closes to answer any written questions submitted prior to the call. Questions for the client can be submitted ahead of time to Kelsey Lowy (kelsey.lowy@southstatebank.com) or Harrison Pugh (hpugh@business.fsu.edu). All questions and answers will then be emailed to registered team members, team faculty advisors, the client and case competition staff.
- Keep in mind that no individual or participating school is permitted to contact the client and/or their customers, vendors, etc. outside of the scheduled conference call. Depending on the needs of the client and case, participants may be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement.
- Be sure that the name, logo and any other indicator of the college, university or program is not verbally or visually presented at any time prior to or during the team's official presentation. Teams will be assigned a team identifier prior to the first issuing call.
- The team will use only their team identifier and individual names to introduce themselves during the issuing call, follow-up call, team presentation and Q&A session.

Each team will arrive at the Florida State University campus in Tallahassee, Florida, on Friday, February 27, 2026. Registration begins at 4 p.m., with a reception, dinner and introductory session starting at 5:30 p.m.

- Each team will be granted 15 minutes to present their analysis and recommendations. A brief introduction of team members will not count against your time limit. Each team member is expected to participate during the oral presentation.
- The live Question & Answer (Q&A) session will occur immediately upon the conclusion of each team presentation. Each Q&A session will last approximately 10 minutes.

- Teams will be scored based on their presentation and accompanying files (i.e., PowerPoint or similar presentation platforms). Teams are also welcome to use additional materials to support the presentation of their recommendations.
- Teams must be sure to document ALL sources of information by means of an end note slide with those citations/ references to guard against plagiarism. The list of sources does not need to be part of the verbal presentation, but it should be included with the submitted presentation deck.
- Teams may use note cards or cue cards to aid them during the presentation.
- Presentations should not be shared outside of the presenting institution.
- If for any reason a team is unable to participate after paying their registration fee, they will be considered ineligible, and a refund will not be available. However, in the event that the entire event is canceled due to unforeseeable circumstances, teams will be allowed to request a full refund.

Judging Criteria

The judges will base their decision on both the quality of content and the quality of presentation skills. Keep in mind that a case competition is designed to refine key business skills such as research, analysis, presentation, creativity and teamwork. Above all, teams should remember that this is a live case competition and the solutions presented should be viable for real-world implementation. Judges will be industry professionals, professors or other business leaders with knowledge of the factors influencing the case problem.

Teams should be dressed in business professional attire. During the Q&A session of the competition, teams will be asked questions related to the information they presented. There may not be wrong or right answers, but this gives the team an opportunity to demonstrate the depth of their analysis and recommendations. Part of a team's score will be based on the ability to concisely articulate well-reasoned responses to judges' questions. Other scoring factors will be as follows: understanding of case background, real-world viability of the proposed strategy, professionalism of the presentation and a logical flow of the whole presentation.

**FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ALL OF THESE RULES MAY RESULT
IN IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION.**

**ALL DECISIONS BY JUDGES AND CASE COMPETITION
OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.**

