



IDeA

Innovative Designs for Accessibility

2021 Program Guidelines

OBJECTIVES

The Innovative Design for Accessibility (IDeA) student competition challenges students to use their creativity to develop innovative, cost-effective and practical solutions to accessibility barriers for people with disabilities. The objectives of the program are:

- To create a culture of accessibility in Canada.
- To motivate students to think about accessibility issues and to include accessibility in their creation of social and technological innovations now and in the future.
- To develop cost-effective, practical and innovative concepts, programs, initiatives or designs that address everyday accessibility issues.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must be:

- Currently enrolled in the 2020-2021 academic year at a Canadian university which has recognized provincial degree granting power, or their affiliates.
- Studying in any program at the undergraduate or master's level on a part-time or full-time basis, including but not limited to:
 - Architecture, arts, business, computer science, early childhood education, engineering, industrial design, medicine, nursing, political science, psychology, sociology or social work.
- Canadian students, or international students studying at a Canadian university.
- Nominated by a member of the university faculty or administration (see "Submission Information" below).

COVID-19 UPDATE: Due to the challenges and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, students who were enrolled in any undergraduate or master's program on a part-time or full-time basis during the *2019-2020 academic year* are also eligible to apply for the 2020-2021 program. All other eligibility criteria above still apply.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

FORMAT

Students may enter the competition individually or as a team. The student or student team must submit their concepts, programs, initiatives or designs in one of the four streams outlined below. Stream 4 is a new, thematic stream introduced for the 2020-2021 competition.



STREAM 1: *Attitudinal/Systemic barriers*

Attitudinal barriers are behaviours, perceptions, and assumptions that discriminate against persons with disabilities. These barriers often emerge from a lack of understanding, which can lead people to ignore, to judge, or to have misconceptions about a person with a disability. For example, communicating with a person with a disability in a patronizing tone, or assuming they are incapable of accomplishing a task. **Systemic barriers** are policies, procedures, or practices that unfairly discriminate against individuals with a disability and can prevent these individuals from participating fully in a situation. Systemic barriers are often put into place unintentionally. A meeting conducted only in person that does not allow participation by phone or web conference is an example of a systemic barrier.



STREAM 2: *Architectural/Industrial design barriers*

Architectural barriers are elements of buildings or outdoor spaces that create barriers for persons with disabilities. These barriers relate to elements such as the design of a building's stairs or doorway, the layout of rooms, or the width of halls and sidewalks. Sidewalks or doorways that are too narrow for a wheelchair, scooter or walker represent an architectural accessibility barrier. **Industrial design barriers** are products that cannot be used by persons with disabilities because of their design. A jar that cannot be opened by someone who has a motor disability is an example of an industrial design barrier.



STREAM 3: *Technological/Communication barriers*

Technological barriers occur when the intended audience cannot use a given technology even with an assistive device. Technology can enhance the user experience, but it can also create unintentional barriers for some users. Technological barriers are often related to information and communications barriers. For example, websites that cannot be accessed using screen reading software provide technological barriers. **Communication barriers** occur when sensory disabilities, such as hearing, seeing or learning disabilities, have not been considered. These barriers relate to both the sending and receiving of information. If the print in an email or on a handout is too small to read, this is an example of a communication barrier.



(NEW) STREAM 4: *Virtual learning and distance education*

Virtual learning is an educational experience relying on technology, computers and the Internet to create an online learning environment. **Distance education** is an educational experience in which a student is not physically present in a classroom or at a school or institution. Virtual learning and distance education can provide solutions to students and educators living with disabilities, but they can also pose challenges that are not always understood by those administering the courses or those responsible for the technology or systems. Canadian university students working on accessibility solutions for virtual and distance education are encouraged to submit their projects in Stream 4.

Note that the best solutions address more than one accessibility barrier. If a project addresses multiple barriers, the student or student team should indicate in the first essay question of the application which of the four streams their project addresses and provide an explanation for each stream.

Students and student teams must receive a nomination from a University Representative before they can submit their project. Projects will be submitted online at: https://portal.scholarshippartners.ca/welcome/idea_en/.¹

¹ By making an electronic submission, the student or student team represents and warrants that he/she has obtained all necessary consents, approvals, permissions, licences and other documents relating to the submission that may be required from the participants or any other third party to permit the uses of the submission or any part thereof as contemplated in these Rules, including, without limitation, any waiver of moral rights; (ii) represents and warrants that it is the owner of the Submission and grants the Competition Group and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada an unlimited, worldwide, perpetual, royalty-free, licence and right to publish, use, publicly perform the Electronic Format Submission in any way, in any and all media, without limitation, and without consideration; and (iii) agrees to release, indemnify, defend, and hold the Contest Group harmless from any and all claims, liabilities, and damages (including, without limitation, legal fees) related to the Submission, or usage of the Submission by the Contest Group in any manner; and (iv) waives any moral rights the Entrant may have in the Submission. For the purpose of this competition, all entrants will own any Intellectual Property or work products presented in their submissions.

Submissions must be made in one of the following formats:

- a. PDF Document:** A document submission must present the full details of the project which is to be considered by a selection committee and may not exceed 2,500 words. The document must be uploaded to the online submission form. Only PDF documents will be accepted. Students can choose to add graphics, tables and charts, but links to external videos or websites will not be considered.
- b. Video:** A video submission must present in full detail the project that is to be considered by the selection committee. The video submission must be a minimum of 30 seconds to a maximum of 3 minutes in total running time and uploaded to YouTube. The link to the YouTube video must be provided on the submission form.
- c. Website:** A website submission must present the full details of the project that is to be considered by the selection panel. A website must include a specified "Summary Page" that includes a brief (maximum 1,000 words) summary of the project. The student or student team is responsible for acquiring the server space on which each website submission is to be hosted. If the website has restricted settings, the information required to gain access to the website must be provided. The URL for the website must be provided on the submission form. Students can choose to add graphics, tables and charts, but links to external videos or websites will not be considered.

Only online submissions in the formats noted above will be accepted



CONDITIONS/RESTRICTIONS

- To make a submission, the student or student team **must** be nominated by a member of the university faculty or administration (University Representative);
- University Representatives will be required to provide the name and contact information of a senior administrator willing to confirm that the project is being endorsed by the university;
- Students must demonstrate that they have followed the inclusive design principles outlined in Appendix A;
- Students must demonstrate that their PDF document, video or website submission adheres to accessibility standards. Students can find information on how to make their PDF document, video or website adhere to accessibility standards by consulting with either the university accessibility office or <https://webaim.org/intro/#principles>;
- If students work as a team, they will be required to nominate one member to act as the team's delegate. This person will be the official point of contact for the team.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. The University Representative (member of university faculty or administration) begins the submission process by nominating the student or student team. Students cannot submit their project without being nominated by a University Representative.
2. The University Representative will register at https://portal.scholarshippartners.ca/welcome/idea_en/. University Representatives who have previously nominated a student will simply need to log in to the system using their email and password to make a nomination.
3. To nominate a student or student team, University Representatives will be required to provide the student's name and email address for each project endorsed. If nominating a student team, one student will be named as the team delegate. Email confirmation of the nomination will be sent to the University Representative once submitted.
4. Once nominated, the student will receive an email inviting them to complete the submission form, which will include four (4) short essay questions and the ability to upload their project. Confirmation of a successful submission will be sent by email to the student.

The submission period will close on April 30, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. (EST).

SELECTION

The selection of winners is made by an independent committee of accessibility/disability experts. Once complete, the selection committee's decision is irrevocable.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The submission:

- supports the objectives of the program;
- is concise, innovative and clearly demonstrates a solution to an accessibility issue;
- demonstrates that Canadians with disabilities were consulted and participated in co-creating and testing of the solution;
- demonstrates that the project is cost-effective and shows promise for practical application.

PRIZES

FIRST PLACE PRIZE: The four best submissions will be awarded a first-place prize of \$5000 CAD and will present their concept, program, initiative or design at an innovation or accessibility themed conference. All travel expenses and conference fees for up to two students per winning team will be included in the prize.

SECOND PLACE PRIZE: The next four best submissions will be awarded a second-place prize of \$1500 CAD.

THIRD PLACE PRIZE: The next four best submissions will be awarded a third-place prize of \$1000 CAD.

IDEA ALUMNI NETWORK: As a finalist in the IDeA student competition, you will be invited to join the IDeA Alumni Network.



COMPETITION WINNERS

Competition winners will be contacted at the email address provided in their submission form. To receive the prize, recipients must complete an online acceptance exercise.

Delivery of prize: Following receipt of the online acceptance form, Universities Canada will issue a one-time payment to the winning students or student teams to the name(s) and mailing address indicated on the submission form. For winning student teams, the prize money will be divided equally among team members. The recipients will receive a T4A slip, for income tax purposes, from Universities Canada showing the full amount of the prize money paid to them during a calendar year.

Successful recipients of this competition will be responsible to report income from this student competition as required by the Canada Revenue Agency.

ADMINISTRATOR

Universities Canada administers the IDeA student competition, a national program funded by the Government of Canada's Employment and Social Development Canada. Universities Canada's mandate is to facilitate the development of public policy on higher education and to encourage cooperation between universities and governments, industry, communities, and institutions in other countries. For additional information, please visit www.univcan.ca/accessibility.

PARTNER

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Canada

In 2017, Employment and Social Development Canada provided the funding for a three-year national IDeA student competition through their Social Development Partnership Program (SDPP). The SDPP supports projects that (1) promote the development and utilization by the not-for-profit sector of effective approaches to address social issues and barriers; (2) promote the development, exchange and application by the not-for-profit sector of knowledge, tools and resources that sustain social inclusion for individuals, families and communities; (3) foster collaboration, partnerships, alliances and networks by the not-for-profit sector to address existing and emerging social issues; (4) recognizes and supports the ability of not-for-profit organizations to identify and address social development priorities.

CONTACT US

Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) student competition

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Telephone: (613) 563-1236 x 279

Email: idea@univcan.ca

PLEASE NOTE: If any of the submission requirements noted above are not met, your submission will be considered incomplete and will not be presented to the selection committee.

APPENDIX A

INCLUSIVE DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Inclusive design is a process for creating goods or services that work for everyone no matter the context. The inclusive design principles outline an approach that put people at the centre of the design process. The approach in the context of this competition includes the following steps.

1. A solution must address a **real-world accessibility problem** identified by **involving Canadians with disabilities**.
2. The **ideation** process must include consultation with the target user group. Creativity and design are valued for building programs or prototypes that address the problem.
3. **Implementation** requires consultations with members from the target user group to get feedback on the program(s) or prototype(s) to make iterative improvements.

These three steps can be viewed as an exercise in **empathy**: to feel motivated to remove a barrier faced by a person with a disability; **creativity**: to come up with as many solutions as possible; **rationality**: to build a solution that actually works for that person with a disability to overcome the barrier.

From a business angle, the solutions can be assessed on **human desirability**: how useful the target user finds the design to be; **technical feasibility**: how practicable it would be to build the solution; **economic viability**: how affordable would the cost to the user ultimately be.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

IDEO Inclusive Design Kit: <http://www.designkit.org/human-centered-design>

Floe Inclusive Design Handbook: <https://handbook.floeproject.org/>

Microsoft Inclusive Design Toolkit: <https://www.microsoft.com/design/inclusive/>

Making accessible videos: <https://medium.com/@krisrivenburgh/youtube-accessibility-how-to-make-accessible-videos-with-closed-captions-2208acf17eeb>

Making accessible PDFs: <https://helpx.adobe.com/ca/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html>

Making accessible web pages: <https://www.dreamhost.com/blog/make-your-website-accessible/>