

Plastics Innovation Challenge 2026

<https://engineering.nd.edu/innovationchallenge/>

- **Participants:** Open to all undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Notre Dame (including Saint Mary's and Holy Cross students who are in ND programs)
 - **Size:**
 - Minimum: Must start with at least 4 team members. If your team does not have 4 to start, we will help by adding additional individual(s) to your team.
 - Suggested Team Size: 6
 - Maximum: 7 (If you are above 7, you can split into 2 teams)
 - Composition: Multidisciplinary teams are recommended but not required
- **Registration:**
 - Begins on August 31st at 5 pm
 - **All registrations must be complete by September 7th at 11:59 pm**
 - Must include all members on the [Google Form](#) <editable until Sept. 7th at 11:59 pm>
- **Resources:**
 - Your team will be assigned a faculty mentor that you check in with your mentor ~1x per week
 - Other questions: Megan Snyder msnyde10@nd.edu
 - Optional Information Sessions: suggested that at least 1 member per team attend <snacks provided>

Date / Time	Optional Info Sessions / Office Hours / Events	Location
Tues, Sept 1st: 2:15-3:15 pm	Under Armour Information Session	217 Cushing
Thurs, Sept 3rd 7:30-8:00 am	Still Looking to be on a Team? Come to this session for additional team formation opportunities	512 Duncan Student Center (Career Center)
Thurs, Sept 3rd 8:00-9:15 am	Session 0 <Optional>: Challenge details - Meyers & Google Workshop on how to use AI Tools - Google Gemini	512 Duncan Student Center (Career Center)
Thurs, Sept 10th: 8:00 - 9:30 am	Innovation Challenge Office Hours: Plastic Usage, Life Cycle Cost Analysis, Where are plastics used on Campus (Prof Kyle Doudrick)	217 Cushing
Thurs, Sept 17th: 8:00 - 9:30 am	Innovation Challenge Office Hours: ND stadium operations, hospitality, event management & sustainability	217 Cushing
Thurs, Sept 24th: 8:00 - 9:30 am	Innovation Challenge Office Hours: ND stadium operations, hospitality, event management & sustainability	217 Cushing
Thurs, October 1st: 8:00 - 9:30 am	Innovation Challenge Office Hours: Pitch experts (preparing and delivering)	217 Cushing

- Required Breakfast and Learn Sessions:

Date	Breakfast & Learn Session (at least 1 member must attend)	Location
Tues, Sept 8th: 8:00 - 9:20	Session 1: Problem Discovery & Scoping - Professor Wendy Angst	512 Duncan Student Center (Career Center)
Tues, Sept 15th: 8:00 - 9:20	Session 2: Insight to Solution Ideation - Professor Sam Miller	
Tues, Sept 22nd: 8:00 - 9:20	Session 3: Business Model & Testing - Professor Mike Kitz	
Tues, Sept 29th: 8:00 - 9:20	Session 4: How to give a Pitch? - Professor John Henry	

- **Deadlines**

- Update your slide decks in your Team's Google Drive Folder using the template provided.
- Share the submissions with your mentor <so they get an email to review>

Date	Task:	Deliverable/ Outcome
Mon, Sept 7th: 23:59	Share Deliverable 1 Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	Team name, Team Members, What is the Problem you Propose to Tackle?
Mon, Sept 14th: 23:59	Share Deliverable 2 Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	How did you establish/ research the details of the problem? How will you continue to do this? Briefly outline your solution proposal - include a sketch if helpful, Who else should you speak with to develop a solution?
Mon, Sept 21st: 23:59	Share Deliverable 3 Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	How did you test your concepts?
Mon Sept 28th: 23:59	Share Deliverable 4 Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	Add business hypothesis and plan for developing pitch deck to slides
Mon, Oct 5th: 23:59	Share Deliverable 5 Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	Initial Pitch Slide Deck
Mon, Oct 12th: 23:59	Share Deliverable 6 - Pitch Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	Pitch Slides with Voice-over (up to 5 minutes)
For the teams continuing after fall break:		
Mon, Nov 30th: 23:59	Share Deliverable 7 - Final Pitch Slides with your Mentor in your Google Drive Folder	
December 4th	Teams will sign up to present their pitch to the judges	

- After the mid-semester pitch presentations, the judges will select a subset of teams to continue on for the remainder of the fall semester
 - All teams are invited to submit to the [McCloskey Business Plan Competition](#)
 - Teams that complete the final pitch at the end of the fall semester are eligible for prize money
- Prizes / SWAG
 - There are \$35,000 in prizes which will be divided into multiple awards of various sizes
 - Will be split evenly among all team members whose names are included on the final pitch deck
 - Prizes are taxable earnings
 - Under Armour SWAG will be provided to teams that are active participants at each stage of the challenge (attending sessions/office hours and submitting deliverables)
 - T-shirts - early semester / Hoodie - mid-semester /Backpack - end of semester