



Idea Factory Competition Guidelines

2025-2026 Guidelines



Introduction

The Idea Factory is a college level poster competition for Salisbury University Students. Students will complete an online application and create a poster to enter the competition. Submissions will be judged by a panel of business and community leaders. The competition can be incorporated as a curricular or co-curricular activity for many economics, business, and engineering classes.

Eligibility Requirements

- All competitors must be college students (undergraduate or graduate) enrolled in Salisbury University classes.
- Students can compete individually or in a team of up to 3 total students.
- Winners are eligible to compete again, but must pitch a different idea. Non-winners are welcome to compete again, but are encouraged to improve their business idea or presentation.

Awards & Prizes

Cash awards will be provided to competition winners according to Table 1. Award announcements will be made in person at the event. Cash payments will be paid out as checks. Winners must complete the required paperwork within 60 days of the award announcement in order to receive their award. Non-claimed awards will be redistributed in a future round of the competition or to runners up in the existing competition at the discretion of the program administrators.

Table 1: Award Structure

Award	Prize
1 st place	\$3,000
2 nd place	\$2,000
3 rd place	\$1,000
Merit Awards	\$500 (10 total)
TOTAL AWARDS	\$11,000

For a winning team submission, the cash prize can be divided equally (rounded to the nearest dollar) among the members. Each member will need to complete the required paperwork.

Deadlines

Application Opens: August 25, 2025 at 12:01 AM

Final Deadline for Submissions: October 24, 2025 at 11:59 PM

Students can submit or update their materials at any point during this period. The system will be closed at 11:59 PM on the final deadline date. Students are encouraged to submit well before the final deadline to avoid internet connectivity or system problems. Late, mailed, or emailed submissions will not be accepted for any reason.

Submission Requirements

- **Online Application:** Students will complete an online application that includes a background profile, contact information, and key elements of their business idea.
- **Poster:** Students will create and upload a Poster into their application. Posters need to be printed prior to competition day in order to participate. Complimentary poster printing is available through *Poster Printing*.

Poster Instructions:

1. Reserve your poster printing appointment time by October 27th, by emailing posterprinting@salisbury.edu with the following information:

- Name
- Your request: to schedule a poster printing time for your Idea Factory Competition Poster.
- Requested day/time (see printing hours, below)
- Subject of your email: "Poster Printing request".

Printing hours:

Sunday: 2 – 10 PM

Monday: 6 – 11 PM

Tuesday: 1:30 – 10 PM

Wednesday: 6 – 11 PM

Thursday: 3 – 9 PM

2. On your appointment date, bring your file to Poster Printing in Conway Hall (TETC) 352. Prints are limited to one copy and take approximately 20 minutes to print. It's important to arrive on time for appointments. If you arrive late, you could lose your spot, get bumped to the waiting list, or risk not being able to print your poster.
3. Purchase a tri-fold display board (48" x 36" in size) at Wal-Mart or Dollar General.
4. Mount your poster onto a tri-fold board.

Questions? Contact Mike Camillo at - 410-677-0031

-For-Profit and Nonprofit Ideas: Not all problems students encounter have a for-profit solution. While the focus is on traditional business startups, students may submit a nonprofit business idea or a social enterprise in their pitch. However, nonprofit models must still be sustainable via grants, donations, or other funding sources.

- **Electronic:** All submissions must be made via the provided web-based information system. Submissions sent by email, mail, or other methods will not be reviewed.

Rubric

Question	Category	Areas to Consider	Point Value
1	Communication	The student tells a compelling story, uses effective verbal and non-verbal communication, and presents a high-quality poster to support their pitch.	20 pts max
2	Problem	Pitch clearly identifies a relevant problem and defines who specifically has the problem (market segmentation). Student can articulate the severity of pain points, root causes, and impacts using appropriate qualitative and quantitative references.	25 pts max
3	Solution	The solution is feasible, innovative or novel, and clearly described. Solutions should be viable from business, market, and technology perspectives. Solutions should solve root causes and address key pain points mentioned in the problem definition.	25 pts max
4	Market	Student demonstrates an awareness of relevant industry trends and can identify at least one major competitor as well as how their solution is differentiated or will effectively compete in the marketplace. Student articulates quantitative measures of market size, growth or other measures of market potential.	20 pts max
5	Money	Student presents a clear "Ask" and describes what those funds would be used for to mature their idea. Student is able to identify basic financial information such as pricing and major elements of startup costs.	10 pts max

Scoring

Applications and pitches will be evaluated by a panel of industry experts. A scoring rubric will be used to rank submissions. The top-ranking submissions will be evaluated further by the entrepreneurship team, and winners will be selected. All decisions made by the panel is final and scored rubrics will not be shared with competitors.

For Teachers

It is strongly recommended to incorporate this competition in the classroom as a learning activity in classes such as business, marketing, innovation, entrepreneurship, etc. Please contact Mike Jensen, Executive Director, mdjensen@salisbury.edu for resources or training materials. A competitive stipend is available for teachers incorporating experiential learning activities. See our website for additional information: Salisbury.edu/entrepreneurship.

Other Competition Rules

- Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, may be used as part of a student's creative process. However, all submitted text and narrative must be the student's own self-generated content. Stealing of other people's ideas or pitches is prohibited. Plagiarism (i.e. using someone else's written material without proper citation) or any form of intellectual property theft is prohibited.

Violations of these rules will result in a rejection of the application and all involved competitors will be permanently barred from competing in all future competitions for which the student would otherwise be eligible. This will apply to all team members on a team found to be in noncompliance even if an individual student team member was not directly involved in the violation. The competition administrator has sole discretion in making a determination without a right by the student or other stakeholders to appeal. By submitting an application, all competitors and their supporters agree to abide by these terms and conditions.