

DRAPER DATA SCIENCE BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION 2023-2024



Be Part of the Data Economy and Help Transform the World!

“Data science will drive the greatest transformations of the next few decades. Business plan competitions tend to encourage and attract those people who are going to make those transformations. Melissa and I have found these competitions to be a magnet for progress and change.”

– Timothy Draper, October 2020

The University of Texas at San Antonio reserves the right to postpone, reschedule, or cancel the Draper Data Science Business Plan Competition for any circumstance under their discretion. In the event of cancellation, all materials submitted for the competition will be destroyed and will remain the intellectual property of the submitter.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

November 6, 2023	Online applications open.
January 26, 2024	Online applications close.
February 16, 2024	Selected finalists are notified.
February 23, 2024	Team deadline for accepting invitation to compete. <i>Participants may begin arranging their own travel. Additional details regarding the finals will be provided at this time.</i>
April 3, 2024	Finalist check-in session.
April 10, 2024	Finalists submit executive summaries and pitch decks.
April 12, 2024	In-person Draper Competition at San Pedro I. <i>Final pitches are given, and winners announced.</i>

The Draper Data Science Business Plan Competition at UTSA is designed for student entrepreneurs globally to advance business ventures that use data science to create value, with the potential to change the world in which we live and work. The competition considers data science broadly as a field of inquiry and application encompassing computing, mathematical, statistical methods and technologies in synergy with domain expertise. It utilizes big data sets to solve unmet problems.

Draper Data Science Business Plan Competition teams can win cash investments for use in their ventures, with up to \$75,000 in prize money:

- 1st place: \$30,000**
- 2nd place: \$20,000**
- 3rd place: \$10,000**
- Honorable Mention: \$5,000**
- Fan favorite: \$5,000**

**At the judges' discretion, an extra \$5,000 can be awarded to any team(s) as they see fit.
**Winners may be subject to tax laws, where applicable.*

ELIGIBILITY

To participate in the competition, all teams must apply within the submission window from **November 6, 2023, to January 26, 2024**. Any application submitted after this period will NOT be accepted.

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Venture Teams interested in competing in the Draper Competition must meet the following criteria:

- Be currently enrolled at an undergraduate level (two- or four-year institution) or be a current graduate student (Master's or Ph.D. program) at an accredited, not-for-profit college, in the US, Canada, or Mexico. Recent graduates, having been awarded their degrees in December 2023, are eligible to participate.
- All ventures must have at least two and no more than six members.
- The competition is for new, for-profit, independent ventures in the seed, start-up or early growth stages. Ventures with a social impact focus are eligible as long as there is a revenue-generating component to the venture. Ventures that qualify for **501(c) status are not eligible**.
- The team leader serves as the main contact for the team and must complete the team's application. The application must demonstrate that the team leader played a significant role in conceiving the venture.
- Ventures must be **student-created** and **student-managed**. All participants must verify student status at the time of application. Current students can provide an unofficial copy of their transcript or a current class schedule showing the enrollment term. Recent graduates can provide a copy of their diploma, original transcript, or other document proving their eligibility as of **December 31, 2023**.
- Team members must:
 - demonstrate commitment in moving venture forward.
 - play a primary role in developing the business strategy.
 - have key management roles in the startup venture.
- Each team must provide contact information for a faculty advisor/mentor at their school who is familiar with the team and the venture.

- Any faculty advisor/mentor is welcome, but not required to be present at the in-person finals. However, they will be contacted as part of the vetting process of teams.
- Ventures must be wholly owned by the team.
- An existing business is eligible only if, as of 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 2023, it has
 - received less than \$25,000 in funding, **and**
 - earned less than \$100,000 in gross revenue.

Disclaimers

- The competition organizers reserve the right to disqualify any entry/team at any time, that in their judgment, violates the letter or spirit of the competition.
- UTSA School of Data Science and the Draper Competition Planning Committee assumes no responsibility to ensure the confidentiality of any information disclosed by teams before, during, or after the competition.
- Applications submitted to the competition are considered public. The documents may be shared with judges, advisors, future students, posted on websites, used for marketing purposes, etc.
- Participating teams should ensure that their documentation does not contain trade secrets or proprietary information.
- Participants agree to be photographed and recorded and allow UTSA free use of these images and a summary description of all executive summaries.
- All decisions regarding the competition rules, procedures, and processes are at the sole discretion of the competition organizers.
- The selection of the teams to compete on competition day and the selection of the winners are at the sole discretion of the Draper Competition Planning Committee and competition judges.
- Any team who intentionally initiates contact with any judge prior to competition day will be disqualified from the competition.
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APPLYING TO COMPETE

- All team ventures who wish to compete in the Draper Competition must complete the online application form.
- The application does not have to be completed in one sitting. Partially completed applications are saved and can be submitted by the stated deadline.
- Applicants can go back and forth between questions; however, all must be answered in order to submit. If an answer does not apply, please select “N/A.”

The application contains a total of fourteen (14) questions structured as follows:

Section I: Team Biographical Information

Question 1 – 7: Student team member information must include full names, email addresses, education level, race, gender identity, university/college, city, and state

Question 8: Student team’s faculty advisor/mentor information to include their full name, title, email, and phone number

Section II: Business Venture Proposal

Question 9: Provide name of business venture

Question 10: Identify sector/industry of business venture

Question 11: As a single PDF file, upload the business venture proposal that discusses:

- the business venture and product/service/concept (*max 50 words*)
- the application of data science tools/techniques in solving the business challenge (*max 200 words*)
- the competitive advantage created using data science tools/techniques (*max 100 words*)

Section III: Business Plan and 90 Second Pitch Video

Question 12: As a single PDF file, upload the venture business plan using the [Business Model Canvas](#) (BMC). A customized template is provided on the application form. The BMC is a tool that entrepreneurs use to track their progression from unproven concepts to viable ventures. This document also lays the foundation for the executive summary finalists will be required to submit prior to finals.

Question 13: Provide the YouTube link to a 90-second pitch video marked as “unlisted.” A short guide is provided for tips.

Question 14: Certify all team members are either current students and/or recent graduates as of December 31, 2023. Verification of enrollment for **ALL** team members will be required. Upon submission of the application form, all team members listed under Section I will immediately receive an email with instructions to provide proof of student status. For current students, a copy of the class schedule for the current semester or an unofficial transcript is acceptable. For recent graduates, either a copy of the degree/diploma showing the graduation date, or a copy of the unofficial transcript can serve as verification. A team's entry into the competition **WILL NOT** be considered until proof of status is received for all student members by the stated deadline of January 26, 2024.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Upon receipt of all application materials, including the confirmations of student status, the Draper steering committee will review team applications to select finalists. The review criteria are defined to match the content of the application form. Teams will be judged on the following criteria:

- Clear identification of problem statement,
- Novel technical approach to solving business challenge using Data Science tools and methodologies,
- Review of 90-sec video and Business Canva Model (BMC) documents.

INVITATION TO COMPETE OR WITHDRAW

Any ventures invited to compete will be notified on February 16, 2024, no later than 11:59 pm CST and will have until February 23, 2024, at 5:00 pm CST to confirm their participation. Confirmation will take place via email. Instructions will be provided to those selected, and additional information about the finals will be provided then. **Any invited team not confirming their participation at the finals by the deadline will be disqualified.** All finalists must be available **IN PERSON** at the UTSA School of Data Science on April 12, 2024, to pitch and participate in the final competition round for which they confirmed their attendance.

DELIVERABLES FOR THE COMPETITION FINALS

Three days prior to finals, participating teams must submit:

- an executive summary that provides a written narrative of the venture's Business Model Canvas (BMC),
- A venture pitch deck that will be used during final presentations.

Templates for both documents will be provided.

The Executive Summary

- May not include any information about a team's school (Omit reference in text, email, headers/footers.)
- Will be limited to two pages of consecutive text (No images may be included.)
- May include one additional page of images, graphics, and charts only
- Should address all the questions in the template (See below.)
- Must be submitted as a PDF document with Venture name as the file name (i.e., "VentureName.pdf")

The Venture Pitch Deck

- Company summary – in 1-2 paragraphs describe the problem the venture is addressing, the data science solution, product or offering, and identify the potential customers
- Problem Statement – What is the problem you are addressing and why do customers care?
- Market Size – How large is your total addressable market?
- Customer Analysis – Which customer segments are you targeting? Include who you are targeting first if you are addressing more than one.
- Product or Service Description – Describe the product or service you are selling.
- Product Development Status – What is the state of your product development? What else needs to be done to be able to go to market? What are the key milestones? (e.g., Do you have an MVP already? Do you have pilots? Do you have customers, etc.?)

- For life science companies, outline your FDA approval timeline.
- Intellectual Property – What is the status of your IP (e.g., patents) and status of any IP licenses (e.g., if you are licensing your IP from a university)?
- Competitive Differentiation – Who are your competitors and why is your product better than the competition?
- Sustainable Competitive Advantage – What is the moat around your business?
- Sales and Marketing Plan – What is your plan to go to market?
- Company Management Startup – Show the current founders/managers of the company. Highlight those that are currently degree-seeking students.
- Advisors and Advisory Boards – Show individuals who are advising the company. (If applicable.)
- Financial Projections for 3-5 years (e.g., Revenue, income, and net cash flow)
- Describe amount of investment sought and use of funds
- Expected exits (IPO, acquisition) and potential acquirers. (If applicable.)

At the finals, a panel of external judges will assess all ventures on their viability, investing ability, and competitiveness. This final round will be judged by at least three judges. Finalists will be evaluated solely based on their performance at the time of presentation.

AWARDS TO WINNERS

After the competition, individual meetings will be scheduled with each winning team to discuss the award of their prizes and any other applicable reimbursement expenses. Competition prizes will be equally divided among all team members and disbursed to them by the School of Data Science.

Each final payout to students will reflect any cash prize earned by their team, in addition to their respective travel costs discussed below. **Applicable taxes will be deducted from the original prize amount.**

FOR UTSA STUDENTS ONLY: UTSA Disbursements and Travel Services will review a UTSA

student's fiscal record when processing their award. The award will route through the Scholarship Office within Financial Aid. If the student owes tuition and fees or has an unpaid balance to any state of Texas entity, the award will be applied to the student's balance first before any remaining funds are disbursed.

Also, any UTSA undergraduate or graduate student with a FAFSA on record, will have prize money counts towards their financial aid package. Winnings are considered "other financial assistance" or OFA. See definition of OFA in [34 CFR 685.102\(b\)](#) and [673.5\(c\)](#).) Any OFA the student receives due to postsecondary enrollment, no matter the amount, is considered when awarding a student their total financial aid package.

AVAILABLE REIMBURSEMENT

Travel costs, hotel accommodations, and meals will only be covered for participating teams traveling into San Antonio. **Any team local to the city is NOT eligible for any form of reimbursement.** Each team member is solely responsible for submitting their own reimbursement request with supporting documentation by Friday, April 19th, 2024, 11:59pm CST. No request will be processed past this deadline. Please note that disbursements (awards and reimbursements) can take up to 45 days (about 1 and a half months) after the end of the competition to be processed. **At that time, the School of Data Science will consider its financial obligations to all participants complete.**

Travel

For participating teams, travel reimbursements will be calculated as follows:

- Within San Antonio: Parking will be provided at the competition site. No other travel reimbursement will be offered.
- From Texas, and excluding San Antonio: \$200 per student on each team.
- Outside Texas, but coming from the contiguous 48 states of the United States, Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico: \$400 per student on each team.
- Outside the United States, and coming from Canada or Mexico: \$600 per student on each team.

Lodging

- Hotel accommodations for the duration of the competition will be arranged by, and at the cost of, the UTSA School of Data Science
- If any student declines accommodations provided by the UTSA School of Data Science, the student will be responsible for their own arrangements. These expenses will NOT be reimbursed, and the costs and fees associated with the school-issued lodging will be deducted from any reimbursement owed to the student.

Meals

Each participating team member traveling into San Antonio will be reimbursed in the following manner:

- Thursday, April 11th, 2024: Dinner only - at the rate of \$34;
- Friday, April 12th, 2024: Lunch only - at the rate of \$16;
Breakfast and dinner will be provided at the event.
- Saturday, April 13th, 2024: Breakfast only - at the rate of \$14.

As required by the State Comptroller, UTSA adheres to the GSA per diem reimbursement rates as the method for determining maximum meal rates.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Draper Data Science Business Plan Competition is hosted by The University of Texas at San Antonio School of Data Science. Please email draper@utsa.edu with any additional questions.