



RICE BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

Jan. 16 Info Session





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Basic Eligibility

You are initially eligible if your startup:

- is student-driven, student-created and/or student-managed
- has at least **two** current or very-recently graduated student founders or management team members, and **at least one of those students is a current graduate degree-seeking student (Masters, PhD, MBA, JD, MD, etc.)**
 - “Current” means enrolled in school now
 - “Very-recently graduated” means graduated after August 1, 2024
 - Startup must have a graduate-level student on the team
 - Same goes for competing—at least two students; at least one grad student



Basic Eligibility (con't)

You are initially eligible if your startup:

- has not raised more than \$250,000 in equity capital prior to July 1, 2024
- has not generated revenue of more than \$100,000 in any 12-month period prior to July 1, 2024
- is seeking funding or capital (or will be in the next 12 months)
- is a potentially viable investment opportunity
 - We are looking for early-stage companies, businesses, startups
 - We are not looking for projects, ideas, concepts



What we look for in an application

1. All questions answered fully

RBPC website -> Compete -> FAQs -> What's in the application

2. An executive summary that:

- gives a full view of your startup
- addresses all the main points of your business

RBPC website -> Compete -> Eligibility -> page 7 of Eligibility and How to Apply doc



What we look for: executive summary

- a. **Company summary** – in 1-2 paragraphs describe the problem the startup company is addressing, the technology solution, product, or offering, and who are the potential customers
- b. **Customer analysis** – explain who the potential customers are and what problem you are solving
- c. **Customer/market validation** - what evidence do you have that customers will pay for this product
- d. **Market analysis** – describe the market size, targeted segments and potential market share
- e. **Product or service** – Describe current state of development of the product or service and any technology validation to-date (i.e., what evidence do you have that the technology works)
- f. **Intellectual property** – provide a status of patents, licenses, or other IP (if applicable)
- g. **Competitive differentiation** – explain the competition and show what makes this startup better than competitive alternatives
- h. **Company founders, management team and/or advisor**– include brief bios of the startup founder to show how this team has the expertise to successfully launch this startup (including relevant experience)
- i. **Financials:** show 3-5 year projection of revenue, profit and cash flow
- j. **Amount of investment** you are seeking and use of funds



Screening process

- RBPC director reviews each application for eligibility
- Each application is viewed 3 times by screeners
- Screeners rate each app on 5-6 criteria; we take the average
- Screening criteria is similar to what's in the exec sum (see p. 7-8 of Eligibility and How to Apply doc)
- Apps reviewed again, looking at ratings, to identify those that would make good competitors
- Selections are made across 5 sectors (usually 12-12-6-6-6)
- Applicants cannot get screening results



Why an app may not be rated highly

Low ratings may result when the applicant:

- Does not give enough info
- Does not show they are a viable business venture
- Is not realistic or makes outlandish claims
- Does not have an online presence (LinkedIn, website, social media, etc.)
- Does not have an academic advisor; or advisor does not know about them
- Is not affiliated with a department, institute or resource on campus (if there are such offerings available)

But you can address these issues with a little time and effort!



Q&A

Any questions about the application process?

Any questions about the application itself?



Resources and Reminders

- Most questions can be answered by checking the RBPC website: www.rbpc.rice.edu
- Read the website Compete section: Eligibility and How to Apply document
- Check the FAQ -> Application questions and Exec Summ template
- Start your application now to get familiar with the platform
- If you can't find the answer, contact me at rbpc@rice.edu
- Applications are due **January 27, 2025 at 11:59 PM**
- The RBPC is in-person April 10-12, 2025 in Houston, Texas



Q&A

Top tip: Get on the application site *now*, create a profile, and start your application.

If you wait until the due date, you may run into problems and I may not be available to help.

If you get any error messages when you try and submit the application, email me at rbpc@rice.edu



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Thank you very
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