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# E Squared Competition Rules

## Sponsored by Career Partners, Inc.

The purpose of the E Squared Competition is to expose high school students to real-life business situations both through training by local business people and through the team experience of creating a business venture in a competitive environment. The use of trainers with business experience will reinforce and add relevance to the academic curriculum. The E Squared Competition consists of teams of 4-6 students from Career & Technical classes designing new business ventures and developing business plans to support obtaining financing from the fictitious E Squared Venture Capital Group.

An assessment tool called the “**E Squared Investment Evaluation Rubric**” will be used by each judge. Participants should study carefully the weighting system used in the Evaluation Rubric. Return on investment (ROI) and the financial analysis of the proposed venture are of considerable importance.

The E Squared Competition is a significant part of each student’s spring curriculum. In addition to the opportunity to win the competition and substantial scholarship funding, all students will receive grades from their respective teachers.

**Note:** This, and all E Squared documents, are available on the **E Squared website:**  
[www.ESquaredCulpeper.com](http://www.ESquaredCulpeper.com)

## Rules, Requirements, and Guidelines

The competition requires teams to prepare a written business plan and make an oral presentation to a panel playing the role of the E Squared Venture Capital Group. While minor expenses may be incurred in preparing a business plan and oral presentation, no funding will be provided by Career Partners, teachers, or the school system. This limitation reflects the real-world limitations often found in creating a new venture and will stimulate each team’s resourcefulness.

### **Mini-Launch of E Squared**

Shortly after the start of second semester, there will be an assembly at each school attended by all participating classes. The purpose of the assembly is to introduce the E Squared Competition and provide the reasons why it benefits the students. This motivational event is to assure that all students hear the same message. Teachers will not introduce the program in individual classes.

## **Selection of Teams**

Teams of 4-6 students (5 is the targeted number) will be randomly selected at each high school from Career & Technical classes as selected by the Culpeper County School System's Career & Technical Administrator. Teachers will determine the number of teams based on the total number of students participating and will provide a slip of paper with each student's name. The CTE Administrator, a teacher or other staff representative, and a Career Partners board member will draw one name for each team and continue this process until all slips of paper are drawn. The process is totally random.

## **Kickoff Event**

This is a major event attended by all students from both high schools. Its purpose is to provide motivation, a sense of purpose, introduce business community members to the students (and vice-versa), and to provide team-building exercises.

## **Training**

Career Partners will sponsor workshops at each of the two high schools to help students gain a better understanding of creating and running a business. The trainers for these workshops are local business people with expertise in given areas. The goal is to enhance academic instruction by including a real-life business perspective. The lesson plans are prepared with the assistance of a high school teacher and are structured so that students learn how to create and present a meaningful business plan. Training includes workshops, in-class instruction by E Squared teachers and substantial coaching by local business people.

### **Standards for selection of workshop trainers**

- Workshop trainers must have general business knowledge as well as expertise in the specific subject to be taught.
- Workshop trainers must have enough business experience to draw on to provide real-life answers to questions the students might ask.
- Workshop trainers must be recommended by at least one member of the Career Partners Board of Trustees.

## **Coaching**

In addition to workshops, local business people will visit classes at teacher-selected times to work with the E Squared teams. The goal is to have two business people in the class along with the teacher. They will help teams individually and/or work with the entire class at the teacher's discretion.

## **Written Requirements**

### **Proposal**

Each team is required to submit a written proposal which explains the basic concept and scope of the business to be created. This will be submitted to a group of business partners who will accept, reject, or request modifications to the proposed business. Technical requirements include:

- A single page submission in Microsoft Word
- 12 pt Arial font – single spaced
- Submitted digitally only

## **Business Plan**

The business plan submitted **must** adhere to the format described in the E Squared document entitled E Squared Business Plan Template. Technical requirements include:

- For all planning purposes and spreadsheets it will be assumed that the business will be launched in January of the year following the competition.
- A single Microsoft Word document must be submitted both digitally and in printed form
- Primary text portions must be in 12 pt Arial font – single spaced.
- The following spreadsheets are required and must be embedded in the Microsoft Word document so that a single digital file can be sent to the judges via e-mail. Instructions for embedding are located in the 1<sup>st</sup> tab of the Financial Workbook.
  - Startup Expenses
  - Mortgage Schedule
  - Sales Projections
  - Five-Year Projected Profit & Loss
  - Five-Year Projected Cash Flow
  - Return on Investment
  - Breakeven Analysis (this is optional and is only valid if your company produces a single product)

## **Oral Presentation Requirements**

- All team members must participate
- May also use props, models, displays, etc.

## **Standards for selection of judges**

Panels of judges will play the role of venture capitalists and will judge each team's proposal on the basis of investment potential as presented in both written and oral form. Selection of these judges is subject to the following standards and restrictions:

- Experience in business management
- The recommendation of at least one member of the Career Partners Board of Trustees
- No connection to the school administration or teaching staff other than through Career Partners
  - For semifinals - After all E Squared participating students are identified and the semifinal judges have been tentatively selected, those judges will be sent a list of all students participating and will be asked to review the list and identify any conflicts (connections by blood or marriage). Semifinal judges will be assigned to avoid all conflicts.
  - For finals - No known connection by blood or marriage to any student in the final competition. Immediately after the finalists are announced, the business people selected to be finals judges will be contacted with a list of those students participating in the finals. If any proposed judge has a relative by blood or marriage competing in the finals, that judge will be deemed ineligible.

## Judging Procedure

- The winning team(s) will be determined by a panel of judges with business experience.
  - Panels of no fewer than three judges will be used in the semifinals.
  - A panel of six judges will be used in the finals. None of the six may have served as a judge in the semifinals.
- Judges will receive the written business plans along with the Evaluation Rubric several days in advance of the oral presentations. Judges will complete the business plan portions of the Evaluation Rubrics and bring them to the oral presentations.
- The scores awarded for the multimedia and oral presentation portions of the Evaluation Rubric will focus on the effectiveness of public speaking and presentation skills in support of the team's request for financing. It is also very important how well the team members respond to questions from the judges. The judges may ask questions of specific individuals on the team as well as the team as a group.
- Judges will individually score the teams and will not be aware of the scores of the other judges. They will enter a score between 0 and 10 for each element of the Evaluation Rubric.
- The scoring continuum headings on the Evaluation Rubric are clarified below:
  - **Exceeds Expectations** – the information is presented effectively and creatively; nothing more could be expected of an applicant.
  - **Meets Expectations** – the information is well presented. Though there may be a few minor problems or omissions, they are not significant. Creativity, however, is not shown to any great degree.
  - **Below Expectations** – the information presented does not meet minimum standards of acceptability.
  - **Little Value** – some major flaw(s) has been noted that damages the effectiveness of the proposal (this may be a major omission, a serious misstatement, poor writing or any other major flaw).
  - **No Value** – the information presented is of no value (does not help the proposal at all).
- Winners of both the semifinals and the final competition will be determined by averaging the total point scores assigned by each of the judges using the Evaluation Rubric. Averages will be carried out to the third decimal place.
- If a team misses a deadline (enforced to the exact minute), the team will lose 50 points from its final evaluation score for each day a deadline is missed. Teachers will record missed deadlines on the "Penalty Point Assessment Form" and will give this form to the Scoring Team on the day of the presentations. To avoid any possibility of prejudice, judges will not be made aware of any penalty point assessments.
- Judges will score each team as if it were requesting financing for a real-world project.
- If two or more teams are tied with the same final score, the panel will decide the winning team by selecting the plan having the highest realistic potential return on investment – notwithstanding the financials presented by the team.
- All panel decisions are final. No appeals will be considered.

## Presentation Day Procedures

### Semifinals and Finals:

- Prior to the presentations, teachers with teams in the competition will give the Scoring Team their Penalty Point Assessment Forms. The Scoring Team will enter the deductions in the E Squared Averaging Worksheet.
- Upon arrival for the oral presentations, the judges' completed Business Plan Rubrics will be collected. Judges will be provided copies of the Presentation Rubric.
- 40minutes will be allocated for each team
  - 15 minutes maximum for presentation (a 2 minute warning will be given)
  - 10 minutes maximum for Q&A by judges (a 1 minute warning will be given)
  - 10 minutes for the judges to critique the presentation. This is an important element in the learning experience. Judges are asked to provide as much guidance as possible so that the team can improve its business plan and oral presentation for the final competition. (a 1 minute warning will be given)
  - 5 minutes for judges to complete the Evaluation Rubrics while the next team sets up
- To assure accuracy, a Scoring Team of two people, one appointed by Career Partners and one by the Career and Technical Administrator, will use the E Squared Averaging Worksheet to compute total scores.
- After each team has made its presentation, the judges will give their Evaluation Rubrics to the Scoring Team.
- Teams or members of teams may not be present during oral presentations by other teams until their own team's presentation has been made.

### Semifinals:

- Evaluation Rubrics will be collected and scores will be tabulated before the end of the day.
- Approximate scores, in the form of a "Level" between 1 and 6 for each of the four scoring categories, will be given to all teams the day after the semifinals in order to help teams address weaknesses. These "Levels" can be interpreted using the following chart:

### **Semifinal Scoring Ranges**

	Possible Points	Scoring Level					
		6	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Written Business Plan</b>	10	8.333	6.667	5.000	3.333	1.667	0.000
<b>Market Analysis</b>	17	14.167	11.333	8.500	5.667	2.833	0.000
<b>Financial Analysis</b>	33	27.500	22.000	16.500	11.000	5.500	0.000
<b>Oral Presentation</b>	40	33.333	26.667	20.000	13.333	6.667	0.000

- Precise scores and the finalists will not be revealed to anyone other than the Scoring Team which is responsible for securing the Evaluation Rubrics. The Rubrics and scores will remain strictly confidential. All teams will then refine their business plans and oral presentation in preparation for the final competition. Those teams going to the finals will be announced no earlier than one week before the final competition.

**Finals:**

- After all presentations have been made, the judges will critique and comment on the presentations in general while the Scoring Team enters the verified score totals in the E Squared Averaging Worksheet which will calculate the judging panel average.
- The final average scores will be printed and given to the moderator who will announce the winning team.

**Scholarship Awards**

Substantial scholarship funding is made possible by Culpeper's very generous businesses and individuals. Career Partners and the E Squared Competition are operated entirely by volunteers; however, some minor funding is needed for administrative costs such as copying, printing, advertising, insurance, etc. A maximum of 5% of scholarship donations may be used for these expenses.

Each member of the winning team of the final competition will be awarded scholarship funding subject to execution of the "Career Partners Scholarship Recipient Agreement Form." This form is available on the E Squared website.