

STUDENT
ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

Turn your smart idea into a great business

The Student Entrepreneur Awards can help students take the first step to commercial success

CLOSING DATE: 5th March 2027

Cruickshank

Grant Thornton

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office

Enterprise Ireland

Realising the potential of young entrepreneurs for over 40 years

The Student Entrepreneur Awards is at the forefront of developing entrepreneurship, giving young entrepreneurs a viable pathway to transform their smart ideas into commercial businesses. This is more than a business competition and can span across all faculties. It aims to stimulate entrepreneurship and to encourage students to start their own business. The competition is a great opportunity for ambitious and enterprising third level students to build a real-world business venture.

The sponsors, **Enterprise Ireland, Cruickshank, Grant Thornton and the Local Enterprise Office**, bring their expertise to the competition to support entrepreneurs in developing viable businesses and creating jobs. They provide expert guidance in areas such as intellectual property, market research, finances and technology development.

Reason to enter



Opportunity to become an entrepreneur

Students can create the businesses they want to work in with unique support from the Student Entrepreneur Awards.



Cash to fund their start-up business

€35,000 in cash prizes with the overall winner receiving €10,000.



Helps students stand out

Taking part in this prestigious award demonstrates the commitment to innovation and helps build your networks.



Expert advice and mentoring support

is available from Enterprise Ireland and the programme sponsors.

A great combination of cash prize and consultancy

With a great combination of cash prizes and consultancy, the Student Entrepreneur Awards can turn great ideas into a winning project, cash and even a business. Winners have access to vital funding and tailored expert advice from Enterprise Ireland, Cruickshank, Grant Thornton and the Local Enterprise Office.

Cash prizes to fund start-up businesses

€10,000
Overall winner

€5,000
Cruickshank High Achieving Merit Award

Cash prize sponsored by Cruickshank for exceptional business idea.

€5,000
Grant Thornton High Achieving Merit Award

Cash prize sponsored by Grant Thornton for exceptional business idea.

€5,000
Local Enterprise Office High Achieving Merit Award

Cash prize sponsored by Local Enterprise Office for exceptional business idea.

€10,000
Enterprise Ireland Merit Awards Fund

6 runner-up awards of €1,500

1 academic award of €1,000

Valuable mentoring to develop business ideas

- Overall business advice and mentoring from Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Office.
- Intellectual property consultancy and protection from Cruickshank.
- Business plan development from Grant Thornton.



Help your students to take the first step to business success

The Student Entrepreneur Awards are open to full-time registered third level undergraduate and postgraduate students on the island of Ireland. Entries can be from individuals or teams. Joint entries from different colleges are eligible but if the entry gets to the final stage one college must take the lead. You can help the students by acting as a Supervisor. The Supervisor is the academic who helps the student/s to develop the project. It is not a requirement for projects to have a Supervisor to enter the competition.

ENTRIES MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

The idea must have commercial viability and export potential.

- Students must own, control and manage their business Intellectual Property where applicable.
- Not for profit and social entrepreneurship applicants must operate in a commercial domain.
- Students must have an ambition to start their business in Ireland and base their headquarters here.
- The maximum number is five students per team.

HOW ENTERPRISE IRELAND CAN HELP YOU PROMOTE THE STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

We can:

- Deliver an online presentation to your college to outline the benefits of participating in the competition.
- Provide promotional materials including posters, flyers and social media assets.
- Provide €500 to support presentations or mini competitions organized by the college to prepare students to enter the Student Entrepreneur Awards.

To access our support services please email studentawards@enterprise-ireland.com

HOW TO ENTER

1

The first step is to produce a two minute video about the business idea. Shortlisted projects will be asked to develop a business plan that demonstrates commercial viability.

2

Create a video and submit your entry. We're looking for great ideas with commercial and export potential. The first step is to submit a 2 minute video.

The closing date for entry is Friday 5th March 2027.

3

Submit a business plan. The top 50 entries received will be shortlisted **by Friday 26th March 2027.**

The top 50 entries must submit a business plan by **Friday Apr 30th 2027**

Ten projects will go forward to the final. Students will present their idea to the judging panel on **May 27th and 28th 2027 in Atlantic Technological University Sligo.**

This two day long session concludes with the Student Entrepreneur Awards.

WHAT THE JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR

- Is there a market for the product or service / has it got commercial potential?
- What is the unique selling point?
- Has the team developed a proof of concept for their product or service?
- Have the students tested their product or service with real users in their target market?
- Does the team have an understanding of key financials

First Impressions count - tips for making a great video

Stage one of the Student Entrepreneur Awards competition is to submit a two minute video. This is an important opportunity for the students to present themselves as well as their idea. Remember, the judges are the people who can help them turn their idea into a business. It's important that students provide key information about their business idea. The clearer the information, the easier it is for the judges to identify the entries with real commercial potential.

HOW TO SELL THE BUSINESS IDEA TO THE JUDGES

BE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE IDEA

The judges are interested in the people as well as the idea.

BE IMPACTFUL AND CLEAR

With two minutes to tell the full story, clearly define the proposition in the first 30 seconds.

STAGE ONE OF THE STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS IS TO SUBMIT A TWO-MINUTE VIDEO

This is a vital component of the application process, the video will be referenced throughout each stage of the competition.

VIDEO REQUIREMENTS

1. Clearly defines the business proposition/business idea
2. Explains the problem it solves and how it works
3. Highlights how the idea is innovative
4. Identifies the target customer and explains why they would buy it
5. Highlights the idea's export potential

HOW TO STAND-OUT

IMAGINE PITCHING TO CUSTOMERS

Speak clearly with a level tone of delivery.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Do plenty of practice before making the final cut.

RECORD IN A QUIET PLACE

Choose a quiet place to record with no back-ground noise so the sound quality is good.

ASK FOR HELP

Ask friends or family members to give feedback during the production.

STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

KEY DATES

5pm, Friday
5th March 2027
Closing Date for two minute video submission

Friday
14th May 2027
Top 10 Finalists Announced

Friday
26th March 2027
Top 50 Finalists Announced and requested to submit business plans

Thursday
27th May 2027
Students exhibit and present to the judges at Atlantic Technological University Sligo

Friday
30th Apr 2027
Deadline for Top 50 Business Plans

Friday
28th May 2027
Winner announced and closing ceremony at Atlantic Technological University Sligo

Find out more, visit studententrepreneurawards.com

Enterprise Ireland