

Frequently Asked Questions

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General Competition

Q: Can our team compete in person if our students are attending school in person?

A: As stated on the TEAMS website, the competition will be held virtually this year due to COVID-19. The competition is designed so that each team member competes from a separate computer. Submissions for the design/build challenge will include photos, video, and an online submission form. Submissions for the multiple-choice exam will be made through an online testing system. All collaboration must take place through a video conferencing platform.

Q: What platform will team members use to collaborate? (i.e., zoom, google meet, etc.)

A: Any school-approved video conferencing platform is acceptable to use for team members to collaborate. Teams will need to establish and circulate the method/link(s) for videoconferencing to the team members and proctor prior to the start of the competition.

Q: Can the team coach serve as the proctor? If not, who can serve as proctor?

A: No, the coach may not serve as proctor. The coach's responsibility is to prepare the team for competition. Each team must have one proctor eighteen years of age or older. The proctor may reside with a team member.

Q: Is it possible for one individual to proctor more than one team?

A: No. Since the proctor must monitor the team through a video conferencing platform and all teams from the same school must compete at the same time, it is not possible for one individual to proctor more than one team.

Q: When is the last date that we can add a team? Is there a way to drop a team and receive a refund?

A: Registration closes on Friday, February 12, 2021. As stated in the TEAMS policies available on our website, registration fees are non-refundable.

Q: Can we set our own time schedule following the length of time requirements?

A: Yes. Each team can set their own time schedule for competition day, however all teams at the same school must compete on the same day at the same time.

Q: Can the multiple choice and design/build portions of the competition be completed on different days?

A: No. Both the multiple choice and design/build portions must be completed on the team's scheduled competition date. All teams from the same school must compete on the same day at the same time.

Q: What time can the competition begin? How much time should we allow for each portion of the competition?

A: Each team can set their own time schedule for competition day, however all teams at the same school must compete at the same time. Allow two hours and ten minutes to complete the design/build challenge and 90 minutes to complete the multiple-choice exam. Please refer to the Design/Build Challenge Instructions posted on the TEAMS website and in the coach account for a break-down of each section.

General Competition (cont'd)

Q: What is the earliest we can start our testing? Will the multiple choice and design/build portions be completed immediately after one another?

A: Coaches will set the schedule for their team(s) prior to competition day. Both the multiple-choice and design/build portions must be completed on the same day but may be spaced out at the coach's discretion.

Q: Are all teams participating the same week?

A: Each team selects a date within the competition window as their competition day. All teams within the same school must compete on the same day and at the same time.

Q: Are students judged individually or as a team?

A: The students are judged as a team. No individual student scores are given.

Design/Build Challenge

Q: Is the design/build challenge hands-on or an online simulation? Is any software needed to complete the challenge?

A: The design/build challenge is hands-on. No simulation software will be utilized. All team members will need to download the video conferencing software of their choice and set-up a Dropbox account in order to access the exam copies. It is recommended that participants complete this step prior to the exam date and test the video conferencing software in advance.

Q: How will the students work together virtually to create one device? Who will test the device?

A: The students will collaborate through a video conferencing platform. Each team member will independently create a prototype of their design using only the approved materials. Team members determine the best prototype and designate that team member as the representative to create a video of the final design test.

Q: Does the entire video conferencing session need to be recorded?

A: No. The only portion of the challenge that should be recorded is a video (no longer than 5 minute in length) showing the final solution.

Q: How will the challenge results be submitted?

A: Each team proctor will upload photos, a video, and an online submission form.

Q: Is a scoring rubric provided for judging of the design/build challenge?

A: A rubric is included in the challenge packet that is made available on your scheduled competition date.

Q: How are the structures presented for judging?

A: Each team proctor will submit the following for judging:

- One multi-page PDF of the photographic documentation of each prototype.
- One video no longer than five minutes in length demonstrating the final solution.
- One check-out sheet containing challenge data.

Q: How will you prevent adults from helping the students and insure the time limits are enforced?

A: Students, coaches, and proctors are all required to sign honor statements before participating in the competition. Proctors are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the submission by monitoring the participants and enforcing the time limits.

Q: Does each team member need a set of materials?

A: Yes. The coach should check with each team member to make sure they have access to the designated materials needed to complete the design/build challenge. The materials list is located in your coach account.

Design/Build Challenge (cont'd)

Q: Are coaches responsible for gathering and distributing all materials?

A: Items on the materials list are common household items which may be collected from home or purchased at a low-cost (often found at Dollar stores, etc.). The intent is that students will collect these materials on their own, although coaches may want to collect and distribute following any school guidelines. For the most part, materials may be reused, and in some cases, recycled. The materials list is a guideline for what may be used, not a requirement for materials that must be used during the challenge.

Q: Will competition materials be mailed to schools?

A: No. All printed competition materials will be provided digitally. Coaches are responsible for making sure each team member has access to the designated design/build materials from the materials list located in the coach account.

Q: How will teams receive the design/build instructions?

A: Team proctors will log into Dropbox before the start of the challenge to receive their design/build instructions. The proctor will make the instructions available to the team members.

Q: Is this part of the competition worth the same as in the past (i.e. one-third of the score)?

A: Yes, the design/build portion will be worth one-third of the overall score.

Q: How do you plan to address connectivity issues for students working from home?

A: We understand that connectivity can vary from home to home. We recommend that students ask other family members to be offline if a shared connection is an issue. If students typically need to visit a location to access online classes for school, they may want to consider doing the competition from that location if possible. If a team member loses a connection during the event, the proctor is responsible for keeping time and pacing the challenge according to the time requirements. If the challenge needs to pause due to connectivity issues, the proctor must keep track of starting and stopping points.

Multiple Choice Exam

Q: How will students view the scenarios and answer the related questions?

A: A digital copy of the exam will be released to the team via a Dropbox link so all team members have a copy of the scenarios and questions while taking the exam. All students will collaborate through a video conferencing platform to answer the questions. One team member will be designated to log into the testing system and submit the answers on behalf of the team.

Q: Does the multiple-choice exam need a proctor like the design/build portion?

A: Yes. A proctor will be monitoring the video conference while the teams are collaborating. The same individual may proctor both the multiple-choice exam and the design/build challenge.

Q: What procedures are in place for competition integrity?

A: Students, coaches, and proctors are all required to sign honor statements before participating in the competition. The scenarios and corresponding questions are randomized so each team will receive different versions of the multiple-choice exam. Proctors are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the submission by monitoring the participants. The internet must only be used to access the exam.

Q: How will the multiple-choice exam be judged?

A: The exam is administered by an online testing system. Answers are submitted directly into the testing system and are graded automatically by the system. One student will be designated to submit answers on behalf of the team.

Q: Are students allowed to use the internet to assist them with the exam?

A: Students use the internet to access the testing system and to access the video conferencing platform. The internet must not be used to reference answers.

Q: How has the multiple-choice exam been designed to accommodate the smaller team sizes?

A: The number of scenario topics has been reduced from eight to four as well as the number of corresponding test questions. High school teams will receive 40 questions instead of 80 and middle school teams from 40 to 32 questions. All teams will have 90 minutes to complete the test.

Each team will see four randomly selected scenarios from among the eight topics given. Each scenario will have a set of multiple-choice questions (10 for high school, 8 for middle school).

Q: What type of questions will the multiple-choice exam consist of?

A: The exam consists of math problems related to the scenarios.

Q: Will all team members be able to see the exam questions on their own computers?

A: Yes. Each student will be able to view the exam via a Dropbox link within a set window of time on their scheduled competition date. However, only one designated student will be able to log into the online testing system to submit the answers to the exam on behalf of the team.

Multiple Choice Exam (cont'd)

Q: How do we log into the online testing system? Do we need to download any software?

A: The designated team member will log into the online testing system website URL using their Online Testing Team ID (located in the coach account) and an assigned password. Both the website URL and password will be provided to teams before their competition date by TSA.

All team members will need to download the video conferencing software and set-up a Dropbox account in order to access the exam copies. It is recommended that participants complete this step prior to the exam date and test the video conferencing software in advance.

Q: What is the protocol if we lose internet connectivity during the competition?

A: A red symbol will appear at the top of the screen informing the individual that he/she has lost connection. The testing system will save all answers up until the time of disconnection. Close the browser to preserve the time remaining in the exam, and once the connection is restored, log back into the system to complete the exam. All answers given up to that point are saved.

Q: Will each team within each grade level be given the same exam questions?

A: No. All scenario topics and their corresponding questions have been randomized. Each team will receive a randomized version of the exam.

Q: Since the test is administered online, will the teams receive their scores instantly upon completion?

A: No. Teams will receive their scores after the competition window has closed.

Q: Do we have to use the full 90 minutes to complete the multiple-choice exam?

A: No. You do not need to use the full 90 minutes to complete the exam. However, the remaining time from the exam cannot be used as additional time to complete the design/build challenge.

Q: Are there still awards and rankings for the state competition?

A: Yes. The rankings will remain the same as in previous years with state-level rankings provided for each of the three competition components. Overall Best in State rankings are determined by combining all three of these scores.

Certificates will be given to the top three ranking teams in each of the three competition components. Banners will be mailed to the overall Best in State teams. Digital badges will be provided to the top three teams overall in each state to display on websites and social media.

Essay

Q: When is the essay due?

A: The essay must be submitted no later than Friday, February 26th.

Q: Where is the essay prompt located?

A: The essay prompt and grading rubric are located in your coach account. The essay prompt is also posted on the TEAMS website.

Q: How is the essay submitted?

A: The essay will be submitted by uploading it into an online testing system. The website URL and instructions for submitting the document will be provided no later than Monday, February 22nd.