

# How to: Participate in a Challenge

*Challenges, often sponsored by business, provide students with the opportunity to compete for funding and scholarships while gaining hands-on experience in exploratory and applied research. By working with interdisciplinary teams to forward solutions to global issues, students who take up challenges can form networks across disciplines and locations and demonstrate inventiveness – key assets for building careers.*

## ❑ **Let Opportunities Find You**

### *Search on- and off-campus*

- » Get in the know by building a research network: sign up for relevant newsletters, mailing lists, and follow [social media](#) feeds since calls for applications to challenges are usually found online.
- » [Volunteer](#) with academically-focused groups, teams, or clubs to establish contacts who may connect you with open competitions, research challenges, and lesser-known opportunities, and provide you with relevant extra-curricular skills to complement your academic repertoire.
- » Check out past challenges and local winners to identify successful strategies: [Alberta Energy Challenge \(2016\)](#) | [One Health Challenge \(2017\)](#)

## ❑ **Find Strength in Numbers**

### *Building a team: diversity, awareness, communication*

- » Seek out students, mentors or professors with whom you share research interests and a propensity for innovative thinking; put a call out on social media, or ask around before/after lectures, or in campus clubs/volunteer groups to find others interested in tackling a challenge.
- » Research challenges can focus on interdisciplinary topics and require final projects to be in the form of a video, animation, or other creative digital format. A group with varied academic backgrounds and skill-sets will likely produce a compelling final product.
- » Reach a wide audience of potential collaborators by approaching a community or campus newspaper and offer to do an interview on your challenge of interest. Request the story include your contact information. This kind of publicity may generate team members and subsequent opportunities.

## ❑ **Apply!**

### *Success in many forms*

- » Apply for domestic and international competitions held by professional organizations, multinational businesses, and government agencies. Most challenges are one-time events with short deadlines but some recurring opportunities exist. For example: [Grand Challenges Canada](#) | [Sanofi BioGenius](#)
- » Experience in connecting, collaborating, and innovating with others through challenges can bolster your development and profile personally, professionally, and academically, even if you don't score the big prize.