Ubiquity Sustainability Challenge (USC)
Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ

The following are frequently asked questions about the USC. For more details, we strongly encourage you to read through the USC Rules and Regulations. If you have additional questions, please feel free to email Matt Robertson, Director of Admissions at m.robertson@ubiquityuniversity.org.

Who can enter the USC?

The USC is limited to Ubiquity University students.

How do you define "student"?

A student is defined as anyone who enrolls in and successfully completes at least one micro-course or full trimester course in the academic year in which the USC runs. For example, the 2019 USC round applies to the 2018/2019 academic year which is our September 2018, January 2019 and May 2019 trimesters.

Why do I need to participate as part of a team?

Ubiquity believes that collaboration is the key to success in the future. We want our students to experience working closely together in order to solve real world problems.

How big can my team be?

Teams are defined as no less than two members and no more than five.

What does my project or new business idea need to be about?

Your project or new business idea needs to be centered on one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Other than that, the details are up to you. It could be a one-time project you want to do in your local area, or an ongoing business concern that you think could scale.

Can this be an idea I have already been working on?

Possibly. However, we are looking for ideas that are early-stage, so if you already have an ongoing business that has annual gross sales greater than $15,000, or have already received outside financing greater than $20,000 you cannot use it for your submission.

What do I need to submit?

The following documents will be submitted on our UGSC Official Submission Page on our website. We will have samples up on the website for you to review prior to December 31, 2018.

1. Problem Statement: Statement should be built around one or more of the UN SDGs
2. Essay (500 Words): Detail your individual or team commitment to the achievement of your selected UN SDGs and the leadership characteristics you possess that you believe will help you achieve your goals
3. Product Ideation Framework: A report on how you developed your concept
4. Social Lean Canvas: A completed Social Lean Canvas that describes your thinking through the various elements of your idea (https://socialleancanvas.com/)
5. Market Test Results: A report on which data methods and techniques you used to test your idea in the marketplace and what the results were
6. Design and Monitoring Framework: A report on how you will monitor your progress and successes
7. Pitch Deck: An investor pitch deck

What are important dates I need to be aware of?

All deadlines should be considered 5:00 PM Pacific Time on specific dates referenced unless otherwise specified.

January 31, 2019, 12:00 PM Midnight – Deadline for teams to indicate their interest in competing for the 2019 UGSC Award.

May 31, 2019 – Deadline for submissions.

June 30, 2019 – Deadline for preliminary Judging Round. 10 finalists will advance and will be invited to pitch in person on a virtual video conference call to the UGSC Judging Panel.

July 19, 2019 – Finalist virtual video conference call pitch round.

July 31, 2019 – Award Recipient is notified.

September 1, 2019 - Deadline for team to form business entity. If no entity is formed, award will be divided equally among team members and distributed directly to those individuals.

September 2019 – Award Recipients will be featured during an event to be held in conjunction with the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2019 in partnership with participating UN agencies and/or co-sponsoring partners from the NGO, corporate, and multilateral institution communities.

How do you distribute the $25,000 Grand Award?

The $25,000 (twenty-five thousand) will be distributed to a non-profit or business entity that your team may set up. Otherwise, it will be split equally between all members of your team. In either case, Award Recipients will be responsible for all taxes that may apply in your home country.

How do you choose the Award Recipient?

The criteria used by these expert judges in their evaluation are:

- **Innovation:** Is the idea novel and does it present an original take on potential solutions?
- **Relevance:** Are the UN SDGs clearly and explicitly referenced and does the idea represent a solution that will directly impact the SDGs in question?
- **Populations Affected:** How many individuals or communities does the solution have the potential to positively impact?
- **Passion:** How driven and passionate are the teams about their idea or potential solution?
- **Probability of Success:** What are the chances that the project idea or business venture will be successful?
- **Scalability:** If successful, what is the potential for scalability?
- **Completeness and Timeliness:** Was the submission process followed and were all components submitted on time?

Judges will rank each element on a range between 0 and 100. Scores will be added to determine the Award Recipient Team. In the case of a tie, the judges will confer and select the final Award Recipients. Their decision will be final.

Who chooses the Award Recipient?

We are setting up independent judging panels for the preliminary round and a blue-ribbon panel who will judge the finalists on a video call. Our judges will have expertise in the UN SDGs, NGOs, social entrepreneurship, start-ups and/or businesses that embrace sustainable principles, or with general business experience.

Do I have to take all of the USC micro-courses to participate?

No. The micro-course series is optional. The series has been designed to help you learn more about business concepts that we believe you will find helpful, but taking them (or not taking them) won't influence the judges decisions. The only requirement is that you are a student of Ubiquity as described above.

What if I want to take all seven of the micro-courses?

You are certainly welcome to. If you take the entire series you will get a 20% discount off of the course package and if you successfully complete them all you will get a Micro-Certificate in UN SDG Impact.

What is intellectual property?

Intellectual property refers to ideas that are somebody elses other than your own. We want our students to create their own original ideas.

Can I get outside assistance?

If you do get outside coaching or assistance you will need to explain who you talked to, how much assistance you got from them and for what. Their help should not outweigh your own contributions. You may incidentally receive assistance from different Ubiquity personnel as part of your normal coursework in areas around business, etc., but you shouldn't try to contract with any Ubiquity coaches or other faculty for additional advice outside of your normal classwork.