



## John Molson MBA International Case Competition

**PRELIMINARY VERSION — SUBJECT TO CHANGE:** This document is the 2026 edition of the Competition Rules, provided for reference while the 2027 rules are being finalized. A first version of the 2027 rules should be available for download shortly. Please ensure you are using the latest version available for download on the competition website at [www.mbacasecomp.com](http://www.mbacasecomp.com).

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### 1.0 THE COMPETITION

The John Molson MBA International Case Competition (the “Competition”) is organized by a team of MBA students from the John Molson School of Business (the “Organizers”) with the support of student volunteers and a Board of Directors which includes senior executives from the Montreal business community. The 2027 Competition will be held in Montreal from January 03 to January 08.

### 2.0 ELIGIBILITY

The Competition is open to graduate schools offering an MBA or equivalent program deemed acceptable by the Board of Directors. A student who is enrolled in a graduate program at their school in the fall semester immediately preceding the Competition and who has not previously competed in any John Molson MBA International Case Competition is eligible to participate in the Competition.

### 3.0 TEAMS

Each team must be represented by four students and at least one coach. A fifth student may be included as an alternate at the discretion of the school. An alternate may only participate for his/her school in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Organizers. A team member who has been replaced by an alternate may only return to his/her team in a subsequent case. An alternate who competes for his/her team will not be eligible to participate in future competitions. Teams that do not have an alternate may, under exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Organizers, compete with three members for as long as is necessary for the Competition.

In the event there are an odd number of schools registered for the Competition, the Organizers will form a Team Global made up of four alternates. Alternates will be asked to volunteer during registration and will be selected at random from the pool of willing alternates. If possible, Team Global will be comprised of an alternate from a school based outside North America, with the other members from American and Canadian schools. An alternate may rejoin his/her team should this become necessary during the Competition. An alternate who participates with a team other than his/her own school will be eligible to participate in future Competitions.

### 4.0 COMPETITION FORMAT

The 30 teams will be assigned to five divisions by random draw, with each division to include at least two non-North American schools and at least one American school, if possible. Each team will compete with teams in their division one-on-one in five cases during the round-robin phase of the Competition.

Nine teams will advance to the semi-finals, including five divisional winners and four wild cards. Divisional winners will be the teams with the highest number of wins in their divisions during the round-robin. Wildcards will be the non-divisional winners with the highest match point accumulation during the round-robin. In the unlikely event that a non-qualifying team has more wins than a wildcard team, that team will replace the wildcard team with the lowest match point accumulation. (Please refer to the sections on Scoring, Match Points and Tie-breaking for additional detail).

The nine semi-finalists will be divided into three groups based on their match point accumulation during the round-robin. The first group will include teams ranked first, sixth and ninth in match point accumulation. The second group will include teams ranked second, fifth and eighth, while the third will include teams ranked third, fourth and seventh. The teams in each group will compete in a semi-final case with the winners advancing to the finals.

NOTE: Format is subject to change with the approval of the Academic Advisor of the JMSB International Case Competition, if the number of teams is less than 30.

### 5.0 CASES

There will be three types of cases used in the Competition:

#### 5.1 Regular Cases

Cases 1, 2, and 5, as well as the semi-final and final cases, will be traditional written business cases selected by the Organizers from those submitted to an international case writing competition arranged by the Organizers. These cases will be, to the best of their knowledge, unpublished and untested.

Teams will ordinarily have three hours to prepare a 25-minute PowerPoint presentation to a panel of judges. The presentation will be followed by a 15-minute question and answer period with the panel.

The cases will be released to the teams in two waves. Teams presenting second (Wave 2) will receive the cases 45 minutes after the teams presenting first (Wave 1) have received the cases.

#### 5.2 Short Case

Case 3 will follow a new short-case format, introduced in ICC 2026. In this format, students are challenged to analyze an issue or situation within a very limited time and deliver concise, high-impact recommendations.

Teams will have 60 minutes of preparation time to develop an 8-minute verbal pitch to a panel of judges, followed by a 10-minute Q&A session. Each team decides how many members will present during the pitch, but all members must be ready to answer questions.

Teams are allowed to prepare only one slide with pitch highlights, which must be readable and concise. There is no restriction on the number of words, but the slide must support the clarity of the pitch.

The case will be released to the teams in two waves. Teams presenting second (Wave 2) will receive the case 30 minutes after the teams presenting first (Wave 1) have received it.

#### 5.3 Live Case

Case 4 will be a live case in which senior management of an organization—whose identity is only revealed on the morning of the case—presents an issue the organization is currently facing and would like students to address. The company will make a 30-minute presentation to all students, seated with their respective teams in the main ballroom of the hotel, followed by a 45-minute question period. The Organizers will draw team names from a bowl and, time permitting, each team will have the opportunity to ask one previously unanswered question to the presenters.

Teams presenting first (Wave 1) will be escorted to their preparation rooms shortly after the conclusion of the question period. Teams presenting second (Wave 2) will be seated separately in the ballroom for 45 minutes under strict instructions not to discuss the case. Wave 2 teams will then be escorted to their preparation rooms.

Teams will have 2 hours and 30 minutes to prepare a 25-minute presentation to a panel of judges, followed by a 15-minute question period.

### 6.0 CASE PREPARATION AND TEMPLATES

#### 6.1 Case Preparation

Each team will be assigned a preparation room along with a Team Host who will supervise the team's preparation and resolve any issues that may arise. A team that has not arrived at the room at its appointed time will not be given additional time to prepare the case for that round. The participants are required to bring up to four personal laptops (minimum 2) equipped with MS Office. We recommend using the latest versions of the applications (2019 or later).

No internet access is allowed from the start of preparation to the end of the presentation phase of a case. Teams must disconnect laptops from Wi-Fi and put them in airplane mode. There will be no access to OneDrive or other cloud collaboration platforms. A USB flash drive (also known as a thumb drive, memory stick, or pen drive) will be provided for case distribution, collation of the team's PowerPoint, and collection of the final presentation. A digital copy of the case documents will be provided on the USB flash drive. Four printed copies of the case will also be provided.

Teams are allowed to bring a dictionary. However, cellphones, personal electronics, memory storage devices, programmable calculators, bags, backpacks, books, or other documents are not allowed in the preparation room. All forms of external communication by the four participants with their coaches or anyone outside of the team—other than the Team Host—are not permitted from the beginning of the case preparation to the end of the question-and-answer period following the presentation.

Teams must use PowerPoint for their presentations. For details on permitted PowerPoint and Excel templates, please refer to Section 6.2. Cue cards and personal notes are allowed for use during the presentations. No material prepared prior to the Competition is permitted.

At the end of their preparation time, teams must submit their presentation by transferring it to the USB flash drive provided by the Team Host at the start of the preparation. The USB flash drive must be passed to the Team Host before the end of the preparation time (3 hours for normal cases, 2.5 hours for the live case, and 60 minutes for the short case). The presentation file must be submitted in .pptx format to ensure it is accessible to the judging panel during deliberations.

The Team Host will then escort each team at their appointed time to a presentation room, where each of the two competing teams will, in turn, make its presentation to a panel of judges. A PDF copy of both presentations will be sent to the teams' coaches at the end of the day.

From the moment the team enters the preparation room until they leave the presentation room, no contact or communication of any kind is permitted between the coach(es) or the four competing team members and the alternate team members (if any). This restriction also applies during the team's presentation and Q&A session, ensuring that no form of communication or exchange takes place throughout the entire period.

#### 6.2 Templates

Teams may bring up to four identical USB flash drives for their own use, containing both PowerPoint and Excel templates. These drives are distinct from the USB drive provided by the team hosts for case distribution and collection, as outlined in Section 6.1.

### 6.2.1 PowerPoint Templates

Teams are permitted to use a PowerPoint file containing one ready-made presentation template during the preparation phase.

#### Graphics:

**Inbuilt Graphics:** Templates may include inbuilt graphics such as arrows, boxes, charts, tables, organization charts, and icons, created using only PowerPoint's built-in tools, except images. No images (external or inbuilt) are allowed, except for the school's official logo and photographs of the team participants.

**External Graphics:** The use of external graphics, video, audio, or any add-ons to standard PowerPoint features is not allowed. AI add-ons or AI features are also not permitted.

#### Texts:

The landing or cover slide template may include the university name, participant names, and team name. The agenda or contents slide may contain an itemized list of general sections. All other template slides should only include text in the header indicating the section title and may contain generic elements in the footer, such as page numbers, section names, or the team's name.

#### Animation & Exhibits/Annexures:

The use of animations and transitions is not permitted. However, manual animation by building slides (bringing in one bullet or element at a time) is allowed. There are no limits to the number of slides and exhibits a team may use in its presentation, but their relevance, clarity, and cohesiveness will be factors in the judges' evaluations. Teams may prepare additional exhibits or annexures at their discretion to anticipate questions from the judging panel, except in the short case, where only one slide is permitted.

### 6.2.2 Excel Templates

Teams are also permitted to use an Excel template during the preparation phase. The Excel template may contain integrated formulas, headings of rows and columns, and charts, but no other internal or external graphics are allowed in the Excel template. Teams must use only Excel's built-in formulas, without external add-ons, plugins, or third-party tools.

### 6.2.3 Template Usage and Compliance

The templates may be modified between the end of the presentation phase of one case and the start of the preparation phase of the next case. Both PowerPoint and Excel templates may be stored on the four USB flash drives carried by the teams. Templates may be randomly checked for conformity to the rules by the Organizers at any time during the competition.

Teams must work within PowerPoint or Excel templates without any third-party enhancements, internet access, plugins, or additional software. If a template or visual is found to violate these rules, it will not be permitted, and teams will be required to restart their presentation from a blank PowerPoint. Any use of non-compliant tools or resources will be considered an act of cheating, and penalties may apply accordingly.

### 7.0 CASE PRESENTATION

Teams may present in English or French. Teams must notify the Organizers of the language they select and will present in that language for the entire Competition. Teams are expected to make their presentations at the appointed time, and no extra time will be given to any team that is late.

Unless otherwise indicated, each team will have a strictly enforced maximum of 25 minutes to present, followed by a 15-minute question and answer period with the judges' panel. There will be a 10-minute break before the second team's presentation. The second team will not be allowed in the presentation room until after the question period for the first team ends. The first team may remain in the presentation room during the second team's presentation. The Organizers will set the order of presentation, and each team will present first at least twice during the round-robin phase of the Competition. Participants or coaches may record their own presentations; however, they will not be allowed to record any team presentations other than their own.

In the semifinal and final rounds, there will be three team presentations, followed by question-and-answer periods. The team in each group with the highest number of match points accumulated during the round-robin will have the option to choose whether to present 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in their group. The team with the second-highest match point total will be given the second choice. Similar to the round-robin phase, a team cannot attend another team's presentation until it has completed its own presentation and question period.

Each team member is required to participate in the team's presentation but not necessarily in the question period that follows. Teams may not interact with judges during the presentations, nor should there be any communication with the audience. The Organizers may record any presentation for the purpose of promoting the Competition.

### 8.0 LANGUAGE DURING CASE PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION

Participants at the competition come from around the world and speak a variety of languages. To ensure that all teams fully comply with the competition rules, it is necessary to limit the languages spoken at certain key times.

For any case, the only language allowed in the hallways – from the moment Wave 1 teams exit their preparation rooms until Wave 2 teams complete their presentations and leave their presentation rooms – is English.

For the Live Case, Wave 2 teams must also speak exclusively in English from the time Wave 1 teams leave the ballroom – where company representatives deliver their presentation – until they enter their own preparation rooms. During this same period, Wave 2 teams are strictly prohibited from discussing the case in any form, including speaking, using gestures or signs, or sharing notes taken during the presentation and Q&A with the company representatives.

### 9.0 JUDGES

Judges are members of the business community selected by the Organizers and the Board of Directors. Panels are constituted at the discretion of the Organizers and will include at least three judges, one of whom will be designated Lead Judge. The Lead Judge will chair the question period, lead the deliberations, prepare the evaluation form, and determine the result with the panel's support. Judges have a maximum of one hour to render their decision in the round-robin phase. Each team will receive a copy of its respective evaluation form. There are no deliberation time limits in the semifinals and finals. The judge panel's decision is final and not subject to review.

### 10.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

During the round-robin phase, the panel will evaluate each of the two teams and provide a numerical rating of 1 to 10 in five evaluation categories.

#### 1. Presentation (x1):

- Was the team's presentation well-organized, properly timed, and delivered in a professional manner?
- Was the team consistent and convincing in the role it chose to assume?

#### 2. Analysis and Development of Alternatives (x2):

- Did the team clearly identify the key issue(s) facing the company or individual?
- Were the alternatives both credible and creative?
- Did the team use relevant case data to support their alternatives?
- Were their assumptions clearly stated and realistic?

#### 3. Recommendations (x2.5):

- Did the team evaluate each proposed alternative effectively?
- Did the team use clear, well-substantiated criteria & relevant case data to justify their recommendation?
- Is the recommended course of action realistic, pragmatic, and consistent with the case data and their analysis of the current situation?

#### 4. Implementation (x3):

- Was the team's implementation plan realistic and achievable given the case data?
- Was the plan consistent with the team's analysis, conclusions, and recommendations?
- Did it include a reasonable timeline, with major milestones and mitigating measures for top risks?
- Did the team include cost estimates and/or financial projections that demonstrate financial viability?

#### 5. Question Period (x1.5):

- Did the team effectively defend, support, &/or build on its recommendations during the question period?
- Were the responses clear, concise, confident, and directly connected to the case data?
- Did team members collaborate well, supporting each other's answers without overstepping?

*Please note that some of the evaluation parameters mentioned above will not apply for the short case, as the short case follows a pitch-style presentation format. Participants, coaches, and judges are provided with the short case's criteria through email.*

Each category is weighted differently, and the relevant multiplier, when applied, will give the weighted score for that category:

| Category                                 |       |
|------------------------------------------|-------|
| Presentation                             | x 1   |
| Analysis and Development of Alternatives | x 2   |
| Recommendations                          | x 2.5 |
| Implementation                           | x 3   |
| Question Period                          | x 1.5 |

The weighted scores will then be summed to provide a cumulative score, up to a maximum of 100. The team with the highest cumulative score will be declared the winner of that match.

In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined using the following tiebreakers, in order.

- The highest Implementation Plan score,
- If tied, the highest combined Implementation Plan and Recommendations scores,
- If still tied, the highest combined Implementation Plan, Recommendations, and Analysis and Development of Alternatives scores,
- If still tied, the highest combined Implementation Plan, Recommendations, Analysis and Development of Alternatives, and Question Period scores,
- In the unlikely event that the teams have identical scores in all categories, the Lead Judge will decide the winner.

### 11.0 MATCH POINTS

For the purpose of determining the Competition's divisional and overall rankings, a total of 11 match points will be allocated to the two teams based on the differential in their cumulative score:

| Total Score                  |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Differential of 3 or less    | 6 match points to winning team  |
|                              | 5 match points to losing team   |
| Differential of 3.5-10       | 7 match points to winning team  |
|                              | 4 match points to losing team   |
| Differential of 10.5-20      | 8 match points to winning team  |
|                              | 3 match points to losing team   |
| Differential of 20.5-35      | 9 match points to winning team  |
|                              | 2 match points to losing team   |
| Differential of 35.5 or more | 10 match points to winning team |
|                              | 1 match point to losing team    |

In addition to their allocated 11-point split, the winning team will receive an additional 30 match points—except in the event of a 6-5 split, in which case the winning team will receive an additional 20 match points and the losing team will receive an additional 10 match points.

There is no match point allocation in the semifinals and finals. The judges will declare a winner in each of the semifinal contests and will also provide written feedback on each team's performance. The three winning teams will then participate in the finals. The judges' decision regarding the first, second, and third place winners will be announced at the closing banquet.

### 12.0 TIE BREAKING

In the event that two teams in a division have the same number of wins at the end of the round-robin, the divisional winner will be the team that won the contest between those two teams during the round-robin.

If more than two teams are tied, the winner will be the team with the best record in the contests among them during the round-robin. If the teams are still tied, the winner will be the team with the highest number of match points accumulated during the round-robin.

In the event that teams are tied for the last semi-final position, the semi-finalist will be selected by applying the following criteria, in sequence:

1. The winner of the contest between the tied teams;
2. The team that defeated the first-place team in their division;
3. The team with the highest cumulative evaluation score for Case 5;
4. The team with the highest cumulative evaluation score for each preceding case, in reverse order.

The same process will be applied to determine the ranking of the semi-finalists.

### 13.0 GENERAL

The Competition is intended to provide a valuable learning experience for participants by encouraging healthy competition and offering an opportunity to interact with future business leaders from around the world, as well as professionals from our local business community.

The rules may not cover every possible situation. Any questions regarding their application or interpretation should be referred to an Organizer or a member of the Board of Directors. It is expected that any issues or disputes will be resolved in the spirit of the Competition. There will be no tolerance for any team or individual participant who knowingly fails to abide by the rules.

#### **NOTE:**

In the event of a discrepancy between any document produced and distributed by the “Organizers” of the “Competition” and the Rules found on the website, the aforementioned Rules will take precedence.