



2026 Guidelines

The Idea – Round One
Friday, February 27th by 5:00 p.m.

The Business Model/Plan – Round Two
Monday, March 23rd at 5:00 p.m.

The Presentations – Round Three
Tuesday, April 14th at 7:00 p.m.

The PITCH

-- Competition Guidelines for 2026 --

Competition Overview

The PITCH is a Shark Tank–style competition that gives Berry College students the opportunity to present their business ideas and compete for \$25,000 in total funding. Awards are distributed across multiple ventures, with the top prize winner receiving \$10,000.

The competition consists of three rounds, and the Center for Student Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Development (C-SEED) provides one-on-one support to help participants refine their ideas and prepare materials at each stage.

Participants may compete in one of two divisions: Scalable Venture and Start-Up Venture.

The competition is open to all full-time and part-time undergraduate students at Berry College.

The PITCH is sponsored by C-SEED and the Ninja Fund.

Scalable and Start-Up Venture Guidelines

The Scalable and Start-Up portions consist of three rounds:

The Idea (Round One) -- Participants must submit the official registration form that provides team member names and contacts, a brief overview of their idea, as well as a business model canvas. An overview of the Business Model Canvas can be found here: <https://www.strategyzer.com/library/the-business-model-canvas>.

Electronic submission of the registration form with the business model canvas is due by Friday, February 27th, by 5:00 PM.

Your overview should include the following:

- General description of the idea (a good, service, etc.)
- Apparent need for your idea -- The customer, client, and/or community's problem
- The potential value gained by using your good or service
- How your idea can have a positive impact on society
- For scalable ventures, your overview should explain how you plan scale your business to the next level.

All electronic submissions should be submitted via Microsoft Forms by 5 PM on February 27th, 2026.

All applicants will be notified by Friday, March 6th (by 5:00 pm) of the next steps in order to prepare for the next round of the competition.

Qualifying Pitch (Round Two) -- Applicants will develop their creative ideas using a modification of the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). This phase of the competition consists of an oral presentation and submission of supporting materials. All applicants approved from Round 1 will compete.

Round 2 will be held Monday, March 23rd, at 5:00 PM in Green 225.

All pitch decks (your presentation slides) should be sent to cseed@berry.edu and should be labeled with your team's name and the current pitch round pitch deck.
(example: C-SEED Team - Round 2 Pitch Deck).

Your Pitch deck should address the following areas, but is not limited to:

- The "customer" and their problem
- The product (a good or service) and its value proposition
- Your team that includes key personnel, key partners, and capital needs
- Marketing considerations such as production, placement, and promotion strategies
- Important activities and success metrics
- Projected revenue and expenses
- Your profit and exit strategies

Selected finalists will be notified by Friday, March 27th (by 5:00 pm) to prepare for the final round of the competition.

The Presentation (Round Three) --

Tuesday, April 14th at 7:00 PM in Krannert Ballroom

Finalists chosen from Round 2 will make a presentation to a panel of judges to pitch their idea. This will be followed by a question-and-answer period. The presentation should be a synopsis of the idea with the goal of persuading the panel of the worthiness of the opportunity. In other words, the presentation should clearly demonstrate why your idea provides value to a customer, client, and/or community and could become a viable business/organization. All awards will be based upon the final presentation and all submitted materials.

The presentation will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Quality and persuasiveness of the oral presentation
- Thoroughness and accuracy of any submitted materials
- Quality of answers during the question and answer portion of the presentation
- Level of professionalism

The official announcement of the winners -- both judges' and audience's awards -- will take place at the end of the evening's program. A reception will be held prior to the event for participants, judges, and VIP guests.

Need assistance? Come see us!

Located in Green Hall, Room 420

C-SEED Open Hours:

Monday.....9 AM to 5 PM

Tuesday.....9 AM to 5 PM

Wednesday.....9 AM to 5 PM

Thursday.....9 AM to 5 PM

Friday.....9 AM to 1 PM

If these times do not work for you, email cseed@berry.edu
to set up a scheduled meeting time.

If you have any questions about the competition or need
assistance, please contact The C-SEED at cseed@berry.edu.

Need professional attire? Visit the Career Closet!
Located in Green Hall, Room 420

Career Closet Hours:

Monday.....8 AM to 4 PM
Tuesday.....8 AM to 4 PM
Wednesday.....8 AM to 4 PM
Thursday.....8 AM to 4 PM
Friday.....8 AM to 4 PM

If these times do not work for you, please email nsalmon@berry.edu to set up a scheduled meeting time.