



AM Best's 2026 Student Challenge Handbook



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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

AM Best's 2026 Student Challenge (the Student Challenge) is an insurance solution-based competition designed to empower undergraduate and graduate students by taking them beyond the classroom. The Student Challenge promotes thought leadership and introduces students to careers in insurance, risk management, finance, accounting, and actuarial science.

The Student Challenge is part of AM Best's ongoing efforts to support the development of new talent in the insurance industry. The goal is to promote thought leadership and career development for students through competition.

AM Best supports a strong insurance sector and the development of individuals and future leaders.

TOP THREE SUBMISSIONS RECEIVE:



Interview
with
AM Best TV



Feature article in
Best's Review®
magazine



Recognition on
select
AM Best social
media channels



Academic
medal & trophy



Press Release



Prizes

PRIZES

AM Best's 2026 Student Challenge offers prizes of \$5,000 for the first-place individual or team; \$3,000 for the second-place winner; and \$2,000 for the third-place winner. Prizes will be divided equally among team members.

The prize(s) awarded through this contest are considered taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and may be subject to federal, state and local taxes. Winners are solely responsible for any applicable taxes associated with the prize. Depending on the amount awarded, a Form 1099-MISC may be issued to the individual or team members in accordance with IRS regulations.

The 2026 Student Challenge also offers faculty/institution recognition of \$5,000 to the college/university of the first-place winner. Money donated to a college or university would be considered a donation and would be at the discretion of the university to distribute to the department and faculty advisor(s) involved.

STUDENT CHALLENGE STATEMENT

AM Best invites student submissions that propose innovative solutions for managing insurance risks and strengthening the industry. Submissions must focus on one of the three provided topics in this handbook.

TIMELINE

1. Initial round submissions due via email – **Monday, October 6, 2025**
2. Initial round submissions reviewed by AM Best Rating Services staff, and three selected student teams notified via email of advancement to final round – **Monday, December 1, 2025**
3. Final round submissions due via email – **Thursday, January 22, 2026**
4. Voting Period by AM Best Rating Services staff – **Tuesday, March 17 through Friday, April 3, 2026**
5. Top three Finalists notified of winner via email – **Thursday, April 9, 2026**
6. AM Best's 2026 Student Challenge – Winner ("Winner") published in *Best's Review* – **Monday, June 1, 2026**

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

INITIAL ROUND SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Student teams are to submit an abstract of 750 words or less. The abstract must specifically address the Student Challenge Statement (see page 3) and outline the solution to the Student Challenge.
2. Abstracts and remaining application materials are to be submitted via email by Monday, October 6, 2025. Submission of all completed forms is required in order to advance to the final round.
3. Student teams that are selected for advancement to the final round will be notified via email on Monday, December 1, 2025. The selection will be done by the AM Best Rating Services staff, based on the characteristics of the submission.

FINAL ROUND SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Finalists are to submit a 5- to 10-minute recorded presentation (video or slides with voice over) that will further develop and refine their solution. These presentations will be posted on the Student Challenge website for viewing. Student team submissions will be reviewed and selected by an internal panel of AM Best Rating Services staff.
2. Final videos are to be submitted via email by Thursday, January 22, 2026.

REVIEW AND VOTING PROCESS

1. Submissions for the initial round will be reviewed and selected for advancement to the final round by an internal panel of AM Best Rating Services staff. Advancement will be based on the quality and potential of the submission.
2. Finalists will be notified of the results via email on Thursday, April 9, 2026 .

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Student team members must be currently attending the same college/university.
2. All student team members must be at least 18 years of age.
3. Each student team must have a faculty advisor from the team's college/university.

INITIAL ROUND REQUIREMENTS

1. All entrants must be undergraduate or graduate students currently enrolled in colleges and universities that offer education in insurance, risk management, finance or actuarial studies. Participating colleges/universities are allowed multiple entries by individuals or teams of up to four.
2. Materials for submission include:
 - Abstract: maximum of 750 words outlining a solution related to the Student Challenge topics in Word
 - Completed and signed copies of:
 - Application Form
 - Video Contact Information Form
 - Submission Eligibility Form
 - Faculty Advisor Form
 - Media Release and Assignment Form
 - Résumé or curriculum vitae (CV) for each team member
 - Description of college/university program
 - External images included in this presentation must be appropriately credited and used in accordance with copyright laws.
3. Submissions that do not include the above-mentioned materials will not be considered.
4. Student teams must submit individual copies of the Video Contact Information Form, Submission Eligibility Form, Faculty Advisor Form, and résumé or CV. Only one copy of the abstract, Application Form, Faculty Advisor Form and description of college/university program needs to be submitted per team.
5. Abstracts and completed applications are due on **Monday, October 6, 2025**. All materials must be submitted via email to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com.
6. All entrants will be notified of their advancement status via email on **Monday, December 1, 2025**.

FINAL ROUND REQUIREMENTS

1. A 5- to 10-minute recorded presentation (video or slides with voiceover) that includes the following:
 - Brief personal introduction (name(s), college/university)
 - Overview of solution and how it works
 - Implementation strategies
 - What sets this solution apart from existing solutions
2. Written overview of solution (in Word), maximum of 500 words. The summary should include the following:
 - What the solution is and how it addresses the existing problem
 - What are the benefits/impacts of the solution
3. Completed and digitally signed individual copies of the Media Release and Assignment Form for each entrant.
4. Interview with AM Best TV:
 - Interview with AM Best TV will be scheduled for mid- to late April 2026.
 - Further details to be provided by Barbara Edwards, via email from Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com.
5. The content of the videos or slides with voiceover, written overview and interviews with AM Best TV will be used in AM Best materials, including videos, press releases and social media posts.
6. Videos and written overviews must be submitted via email to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com by **Thursday, January 22, 2026**.

General Requirements

1. The three finalists will be selected from three different academic institutions.

Submission Period

1. Final round videos or slides with voiceover and written overviews must be submitted via email to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com by **Thursday, January 22, 2026**.

Voting Period

1. Student team submissions will be reviewed and selected by an internal panel of AM Best Rating Services staff.
2. The voting period will be open starting on **Tuesday, March 17, 2026**.
3. Voting will close on **Friday, April 3, 2026**.

Winner Declared

1. The solution earning the highest score from our expert panel will be declared the Winner.
2. All Finalists will be notified of the results via email on **Thursday, April 9, 2026**.
3. Videos will be accessible on AM Best's YouTube channel and ambest.com after the Student Challenge closes.
4. The winning solution will be featured in press releases as well as an article in the June 2026 edition of *Best's Review*. Digital copies will be shared when available.
5. The winning solution will be featured on AM Best TV and various AM Best social media platforms, including LinkedIn and Twitter/X. If applicable, Finalists will be asked to provide their social media handles to be tagged.
6. In addition to a monetary prize, all Finalists will receive an academic medal to commemorate their success. The faculty advisor will receive a trophy to be given to the college/university to commemorate the success of the team. If applicable, Finalists will be asked to provide a mailing address where the medals and trophy can be sent.

Choose Your Contest Topic

Entrants must select one of the three themes below to enter.



For AM Best's 2026 Student Challenge, each team must select one of the three topics below to guide their research and final submission. Choose the topic that best aligns with your team's interests, strengths, and academic focus. Describe your innovative solution to one of the following three topics.

Topic	Background
1 Monitoring AI Risk and Claims Situation: Design a tool/process that allows (re)insurance companies to demonstrate to regulators, consumers, etc. that they are able to effectively monitor various AI programs/utilization through the claims process (or underwriting, policy admin, etc.)	Background: AI increasingly influences claims and underwriting decisions but there is a lack of oversight to help detect and prevent biases, errors, or unethical practices that could harm policyholders or undermine trust in the system. By enabling carriers' stakeholders to track how AI is used and its impact on outcomes, this monitoring fosters responsible innovation, regulatory compliance, and consumer confidence in the evolving insurance landscape.
2 Expanding Flood Coverage Situation: Design a solution that leverages public and private resources to increase the utilization of flood insurance in under-served markets.	Background: Developing solutions to increase the utilization of flood insurance in underserved communities is crucial because these areas are often more vulnerable to the financial and physical impacts of flooding due to limited resources and infrastructure. Without adequate insurance, residents face greater challenges recovering from flood events, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty and displacement. By improving access to, education and awareness of flood insurance, communities can build resilience, reduce long-term recovery costs, and better protect lives and property against the increasing risks posed by climate change.
3 Meeting the Needs of the Gig Economy Situation: Design insurance solutions for freelancers/gig workers/content creators including business interruption and professional liability exposures	Background: It is important for content creators to have proper insurance because their work often involves legal, financial, and reputational risks. Whether dealing with copyright claims, defamation lawsuits, equipment damage or data loss, content creators can face significant setbacks without adequate coverage. Proper insurance helps protect their income, creative assets, and ability to continue producing content in the face of unexpected challenges, offering peace of mind and long-term stability in a highly dynamic and competitive industry.

Note: If your team requires additional information to support your chosen topic, please contact Barbara Edwards at Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com to inquire about the availability of relevant AM Best data.

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Scoring Rubric



	1	2	3	4	5
Degree of innovation	Solution is not an innovative idea and is the same as a current product, process, service or business model	Solution is a minimally innovative idea that relies too heavily on a current product, process, service or business model	Solution is a moderately innovative idea that expands upon a current product, process, service or business model	Solution is a sufficiently innovative idea that expands upon a current product, process, service or business model	Solution is a transformative idea that leads to a new or significantly improved product, process, service or business model
Feasibility/practicality	The solution cannot be realistically implemented due to a complete lack of resources, support and/or feasibility	The solution is unlikely to be implemented and may be difficult to secure resources or support but may possibly be feasible	The solution could be implemented but may be difficult to secure resources and support, but is likely feasible	The solution is feasible and can realistically be implemented if proper resources and support are secured	The solution is feasible and can realistically be implemented with easily accessible resources and support
Comparison to existing products	Does not address the differences and similarities with existing solutions and competitors	Inadequately explains the differences and similarities with existing solutions and competitors	Satisfactorily explains the differences and similarities with existing solutions and competitors	Sufficiently explains the differences and similarities with existing solutions and competitors	Clearly explains the differences and similarities with existing solutions and competitors
Degree of impact	The solution provides no value to the targeted market; the solution does not address what value is created and for whom	The solution provides minimal value to the targeted market; it is vague as to what value is created and for whom	The solution provides moderate value to the targeted market; it is somewhat clear as to what value is created and for whom	The solution provides sufficient value to the targeted market; it is clear as to what value is created and for whom	The solution provides strong value to the targeted market; it is exceptionally clear as to what value is created and for whom
Implementation plan	No implementation plan in place for taking the solution to market	Minimally clear or unrealistic implementation plan in place for taking the solution to market	Satisfactory implementation plan in place for taking the solution to market	Sufficient implementation plan is in place for taking the solution to market	Clear and realistic implementation plan is in place for taking the solution to market
Overall presentation	Presenter/presentation does not clearly convey the value or feasibility of the solution	Presenter demonstrates minimal presentation and related skills and has minimal/poor visuals	Presenter demonstrates satisfactory presentation and related skills and has satisfactory visuals	Presenter demonstrates good presentation and related skills and has sufficient visuals	Outstanding presentation with comprehensive and engaging visuals
Student Challenge rules and requirements	Meets none of the Student Challenge requirements	Meets few of the Student Challenge requirements	Meets some of the Student Challenge requirements	Meets most of the Student Challenge requirements	Meets all of the Student Challenge requirements

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Student Challenge Application Materials



APPLICATION FORM FOR AM BEST'S 2026 STUDENT CHALLENGE

Deadline: **Monday, October 6, 2025**. Please email completed forms to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

TEAM MEMBER 1

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Major: _____

Type of Degree: _____ Graduation Year: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

College/University Name: _____

Program Name: _____

Faculty Advisor Name: _____

Faculty Advisor Email: _____

Student Challenge Submission Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

TEAM MEMBER 2 (IF APPLICABLE)

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Major: _____

Type of Degree: _____ Graduation Year: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

College/University Name: _____

Program Name: _____

Faculty Advisor Name: _____

Faculty Advisor Email: _____

Student Challenge Submission Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Application materials are listed under Initial Round Requirements (see page 5).

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Student Challenge Application Materials



APPLICATION FORM FOR AM BEST'S 2026 STUDENT CHALLENGE

Deadline: **Monday, October 6, 2025**. Please email completed forms to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

TEAM MEMBER 3 (IF APPLICABLE)

Student Name (Please Print): _____
Major: _____
Type of Degree: _____ Graduation Year: _____
Email Address: _____
Phone Number: _____
College/University Name: _____
Program Name: _____
Faculty Advisor Name: _____
Faculty Advisor Email: _____
Student Challenge Submission Title: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

TEAM MEMBER 4 (IF APPLICABLE)

Student Name (Please Print): _____
Major: _____
Type of Degree: _____ Graduation Year: _____
Email Address: _____
Phone Number: _____
College/University Name: _____
Program Name: _____
Faculty Advisor Name: _____
Faculty Advisor Email: _____
Student Challenge Submission Title: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Application materials are listed under Initial Round Requirements (see page 5).

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Student Challenge Application Materials



VIDEO CONTACT INFORMATION FORM FOR AM BEST'S 2026 STUDENT CHALLENGE

Please note that our preferred video contact methods are Microsoft Teams and Streamyard.

Student Name (Please Print): _____

College/University: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Student Challenge Application Materials



SUBMISSION ELIGIBILITY FORM FOR AM BEST'S 2026 STUDENT CHALLENGE

By entering, you represent and warrant to AM Best that your entry is original, has not been previously published, has not won any award, does not contain any material that would defame or otherwise violate or infringe upon the rights of any third party, including patents, copyrights, trademarks or rights of privacy or publicity, and will not violate any federal, state or local laws or ordinances.

You further represent and warrant that you have secured the requisite consent from any third party referenced in your entry. AM Best reserves the right in its sole and unfettered discretion to disqualify any entry that it believes does not comply with these official rules or that is not consistent with the spirit or theme of the Student Challenge. All entries become the property of AM Best when submitted and will not be acknowledged or returned to any entrant.

By signing below, I certify that I have read and understood the above statements and that I am 18 years of age or older.

Student Name (Please Print): _____

College/University: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Student Challenge Application Materials



FACULTY ADVISOR FORM FOR AM BEST'S 2026 STUDENT CHALLENGE

The faculty advisor's role is to acknowledge and approve the student team's participation on behalf of the college/university, and to confirm that all student team member(s) are currently enrolled students of the college/university. The faculty advisor may not contribute content to either the written report or presentation. The faculty advisor's primary responsibility is to provide guidance and direction to the student team throughout all levels of competition. The faculty advisor must be currently employed as a faculty/staff member by the student team's sponsoring college/university.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understand the role of the faculty advisor.

Faculty Advisor Name (Please Print): _____

College/University: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

Student Challenge Application Materials



MEDIA RELEASE AND ASSIGNMENT FORM FOR AM BEST'S 2026 STUDENT CHALLENGE

By signing this form, I hereby grant A.M. Best Company, Inc. ("AM Best"), its affiliates, and such parties designated by them, the rights to display, publicly perform, exhibit, transmit, broadcast, reproduce, reprint, record, photograph, digitize, modify, alter, edit, adapt, create derivative works, exploit, sell, rent, license, otherwise use, and permit others to use my name, image, likeness, appearance, voice, professional and personal biographical information, and other personal characteristics and private information, and all materials and works, in whole or in part, created by or on behalf of myself or my team in connection with AM Best's 2026 Student Challenge (such materials and works, the "Materials") in perpetuity throughout the universe in any medium or format whatsoever now existing or hereafter created, including but not limited to, in and on magazines, newspapers, brochures and other print publications, electronic, magnetic, and optical media, motion pictures, television broadcast, cablecast, and satellite, home video and video on demand, radio broadcasts, display, point-of-sale, and other advertising and promotional materials, press releases, the internet and other digital transmission or delivery methods, mobile applications, websites, social media platforms and on any other platform, and for any purpose, including but not limited to advertising, public relations, publicity, packaging, and promotion of AM Best and its affiliates and their businesses, products, and services, without further consent from or royalty, payment, or other compensation to me. AM Best shall be the exclusive owner of all rights, including copyright, in the Materials. I hereby irrevocably transfer, assign, and otherwise convey to AM Best my entire right, title, and interest, if any, in and to the Materials and all copyrights and other intellectual property rights in the Materials arising in any jurisdiction throughout the universe in perpetuity, including all registration, renewal, and reversion rights, and the right to sue to enforce such copyrights against infringers. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, I hereby irrevocably waive all legal and equitable rights relating to all liabilities, claims, demands, actions, suits, damages, and expenses, including but not limited to claims for copyright or trademark infringement, infringement of moral rights, libel, defamation, invasion of any rights of privacy (including intrusion, false light, public disclosure of private facts, and misappropriation of name or likeness), violation of rights of publicity, physical or emotional injury or distress, or any similar claim or cause of action in tort, contract, or any other legal theory, now known or hereafter known in any jurisdiction throughout the world, arising directly or indirectly from the exercise of the rights under this form or the production, exhibition, exploitation, advertising, promotion, or other use of the Materials. I represent and warrant to AM Best that I am at least eighteen (18) years of age, and I have full right, power, and authority to enter into this Agreement and grant the rights hereunder. If for any reason, including incapacity, AM Best is unable to secure my signature on any document needed to apply for, perfect, or otherwise acquire title to the intellectual property rights granted to it under this form, or to enforce such rights, I hereby designate AM Best as my attorney-in-fact and agent, solely and exclusively to act for and on my behalf to execute and file such documents with the same legal force and effect as if executed by me and for no other purpose.

Student Name (Please Print): _____

College/University: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please direct all questions to Barbara.Edwards@ambest.com

AM Best's Student Challenge – Previous Finalists' Submissions



Winner: Tropical Storm Parametric Microinsurance Solution in Latin America and the Caribbean: UW-Madison – Wisconsin School of Business

Hernán Burgos and Alexander Porte's idea would provide coverage to low-income individuals and micro enterprises in LAC coastal regions using real-time meteorological data.

Finalist: Insurance Education Tool for New & Small Business - Florida State University

Tom Budz's idea would help small business owners understand their insurability before operations have begun.

Finalist: Dynamic Inventory Management App for Homeowners - University of Akron

Tausif Utchhash and Connor Donahue's proposed app would offer real-time assessments of personal property values and replacement costs to help homeowners maintain accurate inventories and coverage limits, while also providing claim submission.

Winner: Telemedicine Platform for Prescriptions – Florida State University

Hannah Youngblood's proposed platform would perform a comparative analysis of a consumer's prescriptions based on their insurance coverage and suggest the most cost-effective solution.

Finalist: TikTok as a Penetration Tool for Insurance – University of Wisconsin

Chris Lane and Madison Wescott were selected for their submission, which couples the pervasiveness of the quickly growing social media app with insurance awareness for younger audiences.

Finalist: Resilience Bonds for Risk Mitigation in the Energy Sector – University of Wisconsin

Siddarth Upadhyaya and Rail Minazetdinov's proposed resilience bond would support investment in the industry and resilient infrastructure, thereby mitigating commodity price risk by removing carbon-based energy sources.

Finalist: New Framework to Assess the Risk and Underwriting for Autonomous Vehicles – University of Wisconsin

Kevin Taheri and David Leemon's proposed framework would assess the risk, underwrite the policy and set prices of autonomous vehicles alongside manufacturers.