Questions & Answers from the EdSim Challenge Informational Webinar on Wednesday, November 16, 2017

SUBMISSION

Audience

Q: How old is the target audience for simulations?
A: The target audience is students enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) programs. During the school year 2014 - 2015, 7.4 million secondary students were enrolled in CTE programs, as were 3.9 million postsecondary students and over 115,000 adult students. While the focus of the Challenge is on 14-18 year old high school students, the Perkins act does serve as low as 7th grade in certain situations. For more information on CTE students, please visit http://cte.ed.gov.

Q: Can concepts target one specific group of students (e.g., girls and women, students with special needs)?
A: You may focus on a specific group of students, but keep in mind that the scalability of the described simulation is part of the selection criteria.

Q: Do you prefer a specific game or it is possible to propose an application that can accommodate several games with different learning objectives and age ranges?
A: Please submit any concept you feel is most effective in delivering the learning content to CTE students based on the purpose and selection criteria of the Challenge. Keep in mind that your submission will be evaluated on your ability to move from concept to functional prototype within the timeline of the Challenge.

Educational Content

Q: Should the simulations focus on the technical skills embodied in certain industry sectors or cut across many 21st century skills, or both?
A: Simulations should transfer a combination of academic, technical, or employability skills. See the National Career Clusters Framework to explore specific career pathways, and take a look at the Employability Skills Framework for more information on the cross-cutting skills necessary for success in the labor market.

Q: Is the focus specifically on workforce-related skills, or are other immersive educational experiences eligible?
A: The Challenge is focused on the transfer of academic, technical, and employability skills. This encompasses a variety of skills and career paths, so please submit your best idea.

Q: Can a submission teach to learning outcomes or skillsets that are not in a specific career cluster, but apply more generally to several of them?

A: Yes, submissions can transfer academic, employability, or technical skills that apply to multiple career clusters. See the Employability Skills Framework for more information on the cross-cutting skills necessary for success in the labor market.

Q: Are there any career clusters that have any priority over any of the others?
A: No career clusters have priority over others.

Q: How important are the arts and humanities for this Challenge? Is the Challenge only focused on science?
A: No, the Challenge is not focused on science. Submissions may include the arts and humanities. Please submit whatever concept you feel is most effective in delivering educational content to CTE students.

Q: Are you looking for vocational training?
A: The Challenge is focused on the transfer of academic, technical, and employability skills. This encompasses a broad range of skills and career paths, so please submit your best idea.

Q: Can a submission include the career paths in the video on the EdSim website?
A: Yes, submissions may include the career paths included in the EdSim Challenge video but will be evaluated according to the selection criteria and will not receive preferential consideration because it includes career paths mentioned in the video.

Concept Maturity
Q: *Can entrants submit work that was created prior to the Challenge?*
A: Yes, but all submissions will be will be evaluated according to the selection criteria. The submission form will allow you to indicate the maturity of your concept, but the criteria do not preference existing products.

Q: What is the expected depth of submissions?
A: First round submissions ask for concepts for educational simulations. Please see the submission form to better understand the depth requested.

Q: Are you looking for a technical framework, content, or both?
A: The Challenge is seeking educational simulations that transfer of academic, technical, and employability skills. Please see the submission form for more details. Keep in mind that your submission will be evaluated on your ability to move from concept to functional playable prototype within the timeline of the Challenge.

Q: Does having a prototype increase our chances of being selected as finalists?
A: No, all submissions will be will be evaluated according to the selection criteria. The submission form will allow you to indicate the maturity of your concept, but the criteria do not preference prototypes.

Prototype Format / Platform
Q: Is there a preference on AR/VR technology versus a traditional computer?

A: No there is no preference; the Challenge is platform and hardware agnostic. Keep in mind that the selection criteria favor an engaging user experience that is on par with commercially available entertainment games.

Q: *How critical is it that the simulation be implemented within a 3D-animated environment?*
A: Please submit whatever concept you feel is most effective in delivering learning content based on the purpose of the Challenge, but note that the Challenge selection criteria emphasize both immersion and engagement.

Q: *To what extent will the Challenge evaluate entries that focus on a game more than a simulation? Are there specific game genres preferred over others?*
A: There are no preferred genres. Submissions are not required to include game theory and will be evaluated according to the selection criteria, which favor an engaging user experience that is on par with commercially available entertainment games.

Q: *Is there a difference to which VR platform we design for? (i.e., HTC Vive vs. Samsung Gear VR)*
A: No, the Challenge is platform and hardware agnostic.

Q: *Is this bound to head-mounted displays or is it open to WEbVR, etc.?*
A: The Challenge is platform and hardware agnostic.

Q: *Are tangible user interfaces of interest of the Challenge?*
A: Please submit whatever concept you feel is most effective in transferring academic, technical, and employability skills to CTE students. Keep in mind that your submission will be evaluated according to the selection criteria.

Q: *Can we use a GPS app to have students engage in augmented reality?*
A: Please submit whatever concept you feel is most effective to transfer academic, technical, and employability skills to CTE students. Keep in mind that your submission will be evaluated according to the selection criteria.

Q: *Are solvers provided with any of the technology platforms?*
A: Finalists may receive in-kind prizes of hardware that they may use to develop their prototypes, but they are welcome to develop on any platform. Each of the five finalists will receive a Galaxy S7 Edge, a Galaxy Tab S2 9.7″, a Gear S3 watch, a Gear VR headset, and an Oculus Mobile software developer kit (SDK).

Q: *Will reviewers have access to common AR & VR hardware to interact with the submission?*
A: Initial submissions are concepts for educational simulations. Judges will review these submissions online; we cannot guarantee that they will have access to VR & AR hardware during this review. At Demo Day, finalists are expected to bring their own hardware to demonstrate their prototypes to the judges.

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Submission Format

Q: In which format should storyboards be submitted?
A: Accepted upload file formats for visual asset attachments include: .ppt, .pptx,.pdf, .mp4, .mov, .jpg, .png. There is a 50 MB max file size for uploads.

Q: Is the text of the submission is limited to 2500 words plus visual assets and additional assets?
A: Each response in the submission form has a specific word limit. Please see the submission form for more details.

Q: Can we submit a video that explains the concept? If so, is there a time limit on videos submitted?
A: Yes, you may include a video as an optional asset in the submission form. There is no time limit, though judges will be asked to spend roughly an equal amount of time reviewing each submission.

RULES, TERMS & CONDITIONS

Eligibility

Q: Could the Team Lead be a non-US resident?
A: If the Team Lead applies on behalf of a group of individuals, he or she must be a US citizen or permanent resident. Please see eligibility requirements in the Rules, Terms and Conditions for more details.

Q: Is the prize only available to companies in the United States?
A: A company must be registered or incorporated in the United States, and have a primary place of business in the United States to be eligible for the Challenge. You may also apply on behalf of yourself or a group of individuals, but the Team Lead must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Please see the eligibility requirements in the Rules, Terms and Conditions for more details.

Q: Can universities submit to the Challenge?
A: Yes, universities may submit to the Challenge if they are legal US entities registered or incorporated in accordance with applicable State and local laws. Please see the eligibility requirements in the Rules, Terms and Conditions for more details.

Q: Can an educational institution and a company submit one entry with the intention of collaborating on a prototype if selected as a finalist?
A: Institutions and entities may collaborate on their submission, but must designate a Team Lead to apply on behalf of **one** institution that will be responsible for distributing any prizes awarded.

Q: I teach adult students who are preparing for the GED exam, but my students are at a low readability level. May I still submit with them?

A: Yes, you and your students can submit as a team. Note that all team members must meet the eligibility requirements in the Rules, Terms and Conditions.

Q: Will the Team Lead receive and be responsible for distributing the prizes?
A: Yes, if the Team Lead applies on behalf of a group of individuals, all prizes will be distributed to the Team Lead, who will then be responsible for allocating prizes.

Q: Can an entrant submit more than one concept as separate submissions?
A: Yes, entrants can submit more than one concept as separate submissions.

Q: Can an individual join more than one team?
A: Yes, an individual may join more than one team.

Q: Can you add members to your team if you are chosen as a finalist?
A: Yes, teams may be modified throughout the Challenge by notifying the Challenge administrator at hello@edsimchallenge.com as soon as possible.

Intellectual Property

Q: How is intellectually property ownership handled? Does the entrant own all of their IP that they create for the submission or that they create throughout the Virtual Accelerator?
A: Entrants retain ownership of their submission, including any software, research or other IP that they develop subject to the license granted to the US Department of Education (ED). If a submission wins, ED retains a nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up world-wide license to any such invention or work of the submission throughout the world, in perpetuity, to demonstrate, reproduce, publish or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes and authorize others to do so. Please see the Rules, Terms and Conditions for details.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Commitment

Q: In regards to the "Commitment" criteria, are you looking for entrants to demonstrate they can take a concept through to the prototype phase?
A: Yes, the Commitment criterion evaluates the extent that the submission demonstrates an appropriate level of commitment and ability to move from concept to playable prototype within the timeline of the Challenge.

Q: Do we need to include developer(s) in our team?
A: No, teams are not required to have a developer at the time of submission, but submissions will be evaluated based on the team's ability to move from concept to playable prototype within the timeline of the Challenge.

Q: Is commercialization of product experience critical for an entrant?
A: No, product commercialization experience is not a requirement, but may help in addressing certain selection criteria.

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C H A L L E N G E

Q: Are entrants expected to deliver a playable prototype? Or will finalists be given support from outside developers?
A: During the Virtual Accelerator, finalists will be expected to develop their concept into a playable prototype by Demo Day. Submissions should demonstrate an appropriate level of ability to achieve this result.

Q: Is there a benefit to applying with an existing company? Will two individuals applying as a team be at a disadvantage?
A: No, there is not a benefit for existing companies, nor a disadvantage for two individuals applying as a team.

Implementation Strategy

Q: VR and AR technology is relatively new to the broader market, so what is seen as accessible to high school students?
A: EdSim is a future-reaching challenge. We want to see the best ideas irrespective of whether or not the technology is present in a majority of high schools. However, submissions will be evaluated based on the extent to which the submission considers the implementation challenges that schools face, such as cost, potential technological constraints, and the ability to integrate with existing and future technology.

Q: How important is the deployment cost and portability of the technology?
A: Implementation Strategy constitutes one of the five selection criteria, worth up to 5 out of 25 potential total points. This includes the extent to which the submission considers the implementation challenges that schools face, such as cost and potential technological constraints, including how to integrate with existing and future technology.

Q: When it comes to scalability, how many schools/teachers/students are you expecting to reach per finalist and for this entire challenge?
A: Finalists are not be required to distribute their prototypes to schools, teachers, or students during the Challenge, but note that the Challenge criteria emphasize both scalability and implementation strategy.

Q: How do you plan on getting these games into the hand of the end user?
A: The Challenge submission form asks entrants to address their implementation strategy.

Scalability and Expansion

Q: Can you talk more about the vision for open source components? Would a multiplayer function be regarded as an open source element?
A: ED seeks concepts with the potential to connect to other simulations and set the stage for a more competitive and robust marketplace for educational simulations. We encourage developers to make aspects of their simulations available through open source licenses and low-cost sharable components in order to increase access to CTE and educational simulations. Information on open source education technology and resources can be found on the Department Web site at http://tech.ed.gov/developers. Incorporation of multiplayer functions is

highly encouraged, but is not related to open source licensing, which refers to how the simulation can be edited and reused.

Q: Do you prefer open source or can entrants develop with closed systems?
A: Though we encourage development using open source components, we understand that some solutions may use proprietary technology as they seek to create an engaging user experience on par with commercially available entertainment games.

Learning Outcomes

Q: What sorts of statistical tests, K-12 standards, or empirical evidence are required of entrants?
A: No research or evidence is required to be presented in the submission. Submissions will be judged according to the selection criteria. Learning outcomes will be evaluated based on the extent to which the submission contains (1) clearly defined academic, technical, and employability skill-learning objectives; (2) a comprehensive description of the desired change or improvement in the user's knowledge and skills; and (3) an efficient mechanism to provide feedback to the user and instructor with respect to progress toward achievement of the learning outcomes. Entrants may wish to align their concepts with K-12 standards in order to further the ease of implementation in the classroom.

Q: To what extent must the submission focus on development and research behind the game/simulation design?
A: No research or evidence is required to be presented in the submission. A successful submission will demonstrate an appropriate level of commitment and ability of the entrant to move from concept to playable prototype within the timeline of the Challenge. It should also contain (1) clearly defined academic, technical, and employability skill-learning objectives; (2) a comprehensive description of the desired change or improvement in the user's knowledge and skills; and (3) an efficient mechanism to provide feedback to the user and instructor with respect to progress toward achievement of the learning outcomes.

CHALLENGE FORMAT

Q: Will there be an additional application to more fully describe the proof-of-concept after completing the submission summary?
A: No. Entrants should describe their concepts according to the instructions on the Challenge submission form

Q: Can you explain the timeline for the finalist announcement and Demo Day?
A: Five finalists will be announced in Winter 2017, after which each receive $50,000 and enter the Virtual Accelerator to develop their concepts into prototypes in preparation for Demo Day. A date has not been set for the announcement of finalists nor Demo Day.

Q: How long is the Virtual Accelerator?
A: The Virtual Accelerator will last approximately four months.

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Q: The concept is due by January 17th and the prototype will be created in the Virtual Accelerator phase, correct?
A: Yes, concepts for educational simulations are due by 4:59:59 p.m. EST on January 17, 2017. Finalists who enter the Virtual Accelerator will develop their concepts into prototypes.

Q: What is the general time commitment expected of finalists during the Virtual Accelerator?
A: In addition to required attendance at Boot Camp and Demo Day, the time commitment needed by finalists during the Virtual Accelerator is dependent on the effort needed to develop their concept into a prototype.

Q: Will only the team lead be able to attend the Virtual Accelerator?
A: All team members are encouraged to participate in the Virtual Accelerator. Up to two team members may attend the in-person Boot Camp. We recommend that the Team Lead attend, but this is not a requirement.

Q: Does the Team Lead have to attend the in-person Boot Camp?
A: No, any two team members may attend Boot Camp.

Q: What will be taught in Boot Camp?
A: The agenda for Boot Camp is being finalized, and will include modules taught by experts focused on design, development, and innovation to help revise and improve submissions.

Q: What are the expected outcomes of the winner?
A: While we encourage the winner to fully develop and launch the winning solution, there are no conditions associated with the prize funds that require the winner to pursue any specific course of action following the Challenge. If the submission wins, ED will retain a nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up world-wide license to any such invention or work of the submission throughout the world, in perpetuity, to demonstrate reproduce, publish or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes and authorize others to do so.

Q: Ideally would you want to pilot this at several schools or even online learning institutions?
A: There is no requirement to pilot solutions with schools or online learning institutions, but entrants are encouraged to pursue these opportunities outside of the Challenge.

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS
Q: Is there a way to delete a submission so I can submit later when more materials are ready?
A: You may rescind your submission at any time by emailing hello@edsimchallenge.com.

Q: Where can I find the presentation from this webinar?
A: The webinar is archived on the Challenge blog here.

Q: Are the Terms & Conditions negotiable?
A: No, the Rules, Terms and Conditions are non-negotiable.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Will the Department fund broadband to all schools and children?

A: Access to high-speed internet access is crucial for millions of Americans, it remains out of reach for far too many. To address this issue, in 2013 President Obama has developed the ConnectED initiative, aiming to provide 99% of American students access to next-generation broadband by 2018. That connectivity will help transform the classroom experience for all students, regardless of income. As of June 2015, 20 million more students had been connected to high-speed broadband since its launch—cutting the connectivity divide in half.

Q: How many submissions were received in the last EdSim Challenge? Is this the same as the CTE Makeover Challenge?

A: This is the first EdSim Challenge. It is part of Ed Prizes, a series of prize competitions designed to develop innovations, products, and services to increase access to, and expand the capacity of, career and technical education. The CTE Makeover Challenge was a previous challenge under Ed Prizes to inspire schools to design makerspaces that strengthen career and technical skills through making. The Challenge received submissions from all 50 states and 10 winners received $20,000 each, as well as in-kind prizes valued at $375,000.

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