

Student Symposium FAQ

1. What are the official rules for participation?

No purchase necessary, void where prohibited, see [Official Rules](#) for complete details.

2. What do the teams win?

Prizes are awarded to each member of the team.

1st Place:

- One-year (12 months) license to the SAS Academy for Data Science (SADs).
- One certification voucher (expires Dec. 31, 2022).
- One training voucher to attend a SAS training class in the format of your choice: Live Web, in person, or e-learning (expires Dec. 31, 2022).
- One SAS mug.
- Recognition: press release, highlight on the Academic Hub, digital badge.

2nd and 3rd Place:

- One certification voucher (expires Dec. 31, 2022).
- One training voucher to attend a SAS training class in the format of your choice: Live Web, in person, or e-learning (expires Dec. 31, 2022).
- One SAS mug.
- Recognition: press release, highlight on the Academic Hub, digital badge.

3. What are the key dates?

Sept. 30 - Dec. 21, 2020: Teams register to participate in the Student Symposium.

March 17, 2021: Final papers due. All registered teams will receive an email in December with instructions on how to submit their final paper.

April 5, 2021: Top eight teams are announced.

April 16, 2021: Video presentations due.

April 26, 2021: Top three teams announced.

4. Who is eligible to apply?

Students who are at least 18 years of age and enrolled as a part-time or full-time student at the time the entry is submitted. Teams must consist of two to four students and one advising faculty member (professor). The faculty member serves in an advisory role only. All work must be completed by the students. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. See Official Rules for complete details.

5. How do I participate?

Register your team online by **Dec. 21, 2020**. Note: On the registration form you will need to indicate a team lead. The team lead is the primary contact for your team and will receive all communications.

6. What data can I use?

You may use any publicly available data set that interests you, and also has real-world significance. This data set must be accessible by anyone. Data sets must be anonymized and not include any personally identifiable information or confidential information. When registering for this competition, you will need to include the name of the data you plan to use, as well as the URL where the data lives so that we can verify. After verification of your data, you will then receive an email (usually within two to three business days) with confirmation regarding your participation. Please see [Official Rules](#) for more details.

7. What software can I use?

You can either use **SAS OnDemand for Academics** software or **SAS® Viya® for Learners** via the internet. (A request will need to be made to SAS to upload data to the SAS Viya for Learners environment. Data must be less than 1GB and teams must allow five weeks for data to be available on SAS Viya for Learners.)

8. What should the final paper include?

Students are expected to write a paper that defines the problem, describes the analysis performed, and presents the results in such a manner as to be of use in business, science, government, education, health care, etc. Students will be judged on the broad accessibility of results, so papers should be appropriately technical, but still understandable to non-analytics audiences. The paper must be two to five pages in length. The written paper must be in English and contain the following components:

- Introduction.
- Data.
- Problem.
- Data Cleaning/Validation.
- Analysis.
- Visualization (graphs, charts, etc.)
- Generalization.
- Suggestions for Future Studies.
- Conclusion.

Optional: Teams may opt to include an appendix of up to two additional pages. The appendix will not count toward the two- to five-page length paper requirement. The appendix may include supporting details such as mathematical proofs, sample calculations (referred to in the text), supporting figures (tables, graphs, charts or images), data (raw, summary or data dictionary), lists of words, the questionnaire used in the research, a detailed description of an apparatus used in the research, etc.

9. Where can I find helpful tips for submitting my paper?

An email will be sent in December with detailed instructions on how to submit your paper.

10. Do all students need to be from the same university?

Yes, all students on a team need to be from the same university.

11. What criteria will be considered in choosing the semifinalists?

The evaluation rubric is on a 10-point scale and includes the following items:

- **Introduction.** Is the introduction appropriate, and does it provide a concise lead-in to the report given?
- **Data.** Is the source of the data adequately documented?
- **Problem.** Is the problem(s) clearly defined, and are objectives of the study precisely given?
- **Data cleaning/validation.** Is the data cleaning process adequately explained?
- **Analysis.** Were appropriate analytical methods used and adequately explained?
- **Visualization.** Are appropriate graphics and visuals provided?
- **Generalization.** Are results provided for a general, nontechnical audience?
- **Suggestions for future studies.** Are issues for future studies/different problem approaches given?
- **Conclusions.** Are conclusions concisely given?

12. Can I enroll as an individual?

No, this is a team competition.

13. Can I participate on more than one team?

No. Students may only participate on one team; however, a faculty adviser may serve as the adviser for more than one team.

14. Can I change or add team members?

Yes, but there is a maximum of four team members allowed. Send an email to academic@sas.com to request changes.

15. What is the role of the advising faculty member?

The faculty adviser should assist in the same context as would the major professor for a master's student working on a thesis. The faculty adviser can provide suggestions, advice, critique, review and serve as a coach. All work must be done by the students.