

# IFTSA Smart Snacks for Kids Product Development Competition RULES AND GUIDELINES

## BACKGROUND

The IFTSA Smart Snacks for Kids Competition challenges students to develop a fun and nutritious food or beverage product targeted at kids and/or teens. Products must abide by the USDA “Guide to Smart Snacks in School” recommendations.

Teams are empowered to use their imagination in the science and overall appeal in the creation of a novel product. A crucial component of a winning product is the team’s ability to relay the food or beverage “smart” qualities to both a technical and general audience.

## PURPOSE

- Provide students the opportunity to develop the technical and professional skills desired in as food professional
- Educate students about the product development process
- Provide an opportunity for students to practice science communication skills to both technical and general audiences
- Foster innovative thinking and creativity in the product development process from bench top to marketing of final product

## SCHEDULE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
February 1, 2024	Preliminary application deadline
March 1, 2024	Finalists notified
May 1, 2024	Finalist proposals due
July 16 - July 19, 2024	IFT FIRST in Chicago

## GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1. Products must abide by the USDA “Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools” recommendations and can be made using any type of equipment
  - a. A weight-by-weight breakdown of ingredients in the product must be listed in the proposal.
  - b. If the product is made with a healthy exemption listed in the guidelines, the exemption must be noted in the proposal.
2. Teams may not enter their product in more than one IFTSA competition. To preserve the integrity of this competition, the following limitations will be enforced:
  - a. Judges will not award extra points for the size of sensory panels or source of panelists. This rule eliminates the possibility of teams earning extra points for collecting more sensory data due to school size or geographic location. Teams working in an online virtual format will not be penalized for a lack of sensory data.
  - b. Since the focus of this competition is on food science skills in product development, Judges will not award points for the quality of graphics on packaging or other advertising materials.
  - c. Proposals from previous winners will not be distributed by IFTSA.
  - d. Competing teams will be informed only of the Judges’ comments, and not numerical scores, for their submitted product.
3. All written proposals must be submitted to the Competition Chair via the submission portal on IFT.org in pdf format by the deadline. The file name must be in the following format (without quotes): “Product Name.pdf”.
4. Penalties for violations will be determined at the Judges’ discretion. Judges will communicate their unanimous decision, which will be considered final, promptly to both the Competition Chair and the team captain(s).

## ELIGIBILITY

1. Each team member must hold Student Member status in the Institute of Food Technologists at the time the preliminary report is submitted.
2. Team members do not need to be enrolled at the same university.
3. Prior to the competition, each team member must be registered as a student (during the Fall semester) at the university they represent. (If participating in the finals at IFT’s Annual Event, the student need not be currently enrolled.)
4. Teams will consist of undergraduate students, graduate students, or a combination thereof.
5. More than one team from the same university may enter the competition as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.
6. All teams must be composed of a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of five (5) members.
7. Entries must be authentic and consist solely of the students’ original work. Professors may be consulted and referenced but may not be a major contributor to the actual work.



8. Industry support such as donation of ingredients or use of equipment is permitted and encouraged but may not be acknowledged by any team in the preliminary round. During the final round, sponsors may be acknowledged in the final slide of the oral presentation.
9. Projects from product development classes are **eligible** in the competition. Only original work done outside of class or projects will be allowed.
10. MS, Ph.D., or summer internship projects are **not eligible** in the competition.
11. During their term, the Competition Chair will be prohibited from participating on any competing team in this specific competition.

## PRELIMINARY ROUND PROCEDURES

### Application

Teams must submit their preliminary proposal in PDF format via the submission portal on IFT.org by February 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm CST.

### Preliminary Written Proposal

1. The file name must be in the following format (without quotes): "Product Name.pdf". Proposals received after February 1st will not be accepted.
2. The Preliminary Proposal is limited to three (3) pages or less, not including the following mandatory pages: one (1) title page, one (1) page for a photograph or visual illustration of the product, one (1) appendix page used at the discretion of the contestants, and reference page(s). Refer to page 6 for preliminary proposal requirements and pages 8-9 for content suggestions.
  - a. Appendix page examples include but are not limited to:
    - i. FMSA/HACCP plan
    - ii. Process flow diagram
    - iii. Nutrition label
    - iv. SWAT analysis
    - v. Ingredient functionality table
    - vi. Packaging
3. The report must be typed double-spaced with a minimum of 11-point Times New Roman font. All text and figures must be on 8.5 × 11.0" sized pages with 1" margins.
4. There is no specific required format for the title page, though it should include the title and date of the proposal to be submitted. Names of students and universities **should not** be identified on the title page.
5. When submitting the preliminary proposal via the submission portal on IFT.org, teams must provide the following information when prompted by the submission form:
  - a. Team members' names and IFT membership numbers
  - b. Donors of goods, services, or money (if applicable)
  - c. The name, address, phone number, and e-mail address of a contact person to whom all correspondence should be directed



- d. Name of the institution (i.e., university or school), name of product entry (i.e., proposal title), as well as the team’s advisor’s name and contact information
- 6. Names of students, universities, donors, or any other information pertaining to the team’s identity/origin is NOT acceptable in the Preliminary Proposal. (Dismissal will result if violation occurs.)
- 7. References: All references cited within the proposal must follow Journal of Food Science formatting and should be included at the end of the proposal. If a problem arises regarding reference credibility, a Judge may contact the Competition Chair for verification.
- 8. A separate cover letter from the Department Head or a professor, verifying authenticity of the work and the team’s compliance with the competition rules, **must be submitted** as a separate PDF document along with the preliminary proposal.

### Proposal Evaluation

Proposals should be targeted at food industry professionals (food scientists, food engineers, plant managers, brand managers, etc.). Imagine that you are trying to pitch a new product to them to gain approval to move on to the next stage of development. Scoring will be determined by a minimum of three (3) Judges. Each proposal will be scored on a basis of 100 points, with the points to be distributed as shown here:

Preliminary Proposal Evaluations	100 points total
Product description Unique points that summarize or make up your elevator pitch for your product	20 points
Nutritional value and benefit nutrition label (accuracy), functionality, price	20 points
Commercialized process description Processing (methods), flow diagram, ability to scale, CCPs	20 points
Product safety and quality QAQC, Shelf Life, GMPs, HACCP/FMSA, allergies, functionality, FDA/USDA/EPA/etc. regulations	20 points
Creativity: Is it fun and innovative? Will it appeal to kids? Market potential, competitive framework, price/cost, sensory, packaging	20 points

### Judging

- 1. Judges will select a maximum of six (6) finalists.



2. Each competing team will be informed of their respective Judges' comments.
3. Each Judge will provide one to two sentences of feedback at a minimum.
4. Judges may not assign the same score to two different proposals they have judged, so that a clear ranking can be discerned.
5. The finalists will be selected as follows by the Judges and Competition Chair:
  - a. All point scores are converted into rank scores (highest score out of 100=1, second highest score out of 100=2, etc.)
  - b. Rank scores are totaled for each team (one rank score per judge).
  - c. The lowest six scores are designated as the finalists.
  - d. In the event of a tie, the two lowest rank scores will be added for each group and the team with the lowest score will advance. If this fails, the team with the highest average score will be selected.
6. Finalists will be notified of their status by March 1, 2024.

## **FINAL ROUND PROCEDURES**

Responsibilities of finalists include preparation of a final written proposal, an oral presentation, and a product defense with a tasting session.

### **Final Written Proposal**

1. Finalist proposals should be technical in nature and targeted at food industry professionals (food scientists, food engineers, plant managers, brand managers, etc.). They should contain information that would be pertinent to someone deciding to move forward with launching your product.
2. Finalists must submit their final proposal, in PDF format via the submission portal on IFT.org, to the Competition Chair by May 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm CT. The file name must be in the following format (without quotes): "Product Name.pdf". Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted.
3. The maximum length of the Final Proposal is fifteen (15) pages, including the Final Proposal's body text, references, diagrams, figures, tables, and appendices. This limit DOES NOT include: one (1) title page and one (1) photograph and/or visual illustration page.
4. The report must be typed, double-spaced, a minimum of 11-point Times New Roman font, with 1" margins on white paper. All text and figures must be on 8.5 × 11.0" paper.
5. There is no specific required format for the title page, though it should include the title and date of the proposal, as well as the team name and university name.
6. References should be added at the end of the proposal and must be in the Journal of Food Science format.
7. The Team may include additional headings/information. The detailed list of items above is not inclusive and may not be applicable for all entries — particular details may be included or omitted at the Team's discretion. However, if the Judges deem that applicable details are not included in the entry, the entry will be penalized accordingly. Team representatives should contact the Competition Chair to determine applicability.

<b>Final Written Proposal</b>	<b>75 points total</b>
<p>Product description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Product use and image</i></li> <li>• <i>Product formulation and ingredient/component functionality/ specifications</i></li> <li>• <i>Ingredient statement</i></li> <li>• <i>Consumer friendly product preparation directions (as applicable)</i></li> </ul>	15 points
<p>Nutritional value and benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nutrition label and nutritive value</i></li> <li>• <i>Claims (nutritive/quality) – must follow guidelines as outlined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as meeting Significant Scientific Agreement</i></li> </ul>	15 points
<p>Commercialized process description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Industrial commercialization plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Process description</i></li> <li>• <i>Process flow diagram</i></li> <li>• <i>Packaging</i></li> <li>• <i>Shelf Life prediction</i></li> </ul>	15 points
<p>Product quality and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complete HACCP plan</i></li> <li>• <i>HACCP plan summary – identifying hazards to be controlled, critical processing limits, monitoring procedures, verification and validation parameter</i></li> <li>• <i>Compliance to state and federal regulations</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify quality parameters</i></li> <li>• <i>CCP's (Critical Control Points)</i></li> <li>• <i>SOP's (Standard Operating Procedures)</i></li> <li>• <i>GMP's (General Manufacturing Practices)</i></li> </ul>	15 points
<p>Creativity: Is it fun and innovative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Appeal and relevance to children and/or teens</i></li> <li>• <i>Product novelty/uniqueness such as innovative, sustainable element</i></li> <li>• <i>Product storytelling</i></li> <li>• <i>Marketing plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Competitive framework</i></li> </ul>	15 points

## Oral Presentation

1. Finalists will present a ten (10) minute live oral presentation followed by a ten (10) minute question/answer period
2. The oral presentation should be targeted at the general public. Consumers are demanding greater transparency about how their products are made and what ingredients are used to make them. Your presentation should focus on educating consumers on the information in your written proposal in a manner that generates understanding as well as excitement about your product. The presentation will be for the judges, but a live audience will be present.
3. A maximum of three (3) team members may participate in the presentation, but the entire team is invited to participate in the 10-minute Q&A.
4. A PowerPoint presentation is required. The Competition Chair is responsible for scheduling the timing of the oral presentation and product defense. The Competition Chair will provide finalists with details concerning the PowerPoint presentation (format, version, file size, etc.).
5. Time limits will be enforced. The Competition Chair will keep track of time.

<b>Oral Presentation Evaluation</b>	<b>75 points</b>
Presentation Quality	25 points
Product and process description	10 points
Communication and consumer education	10 points
Creativity: Is it fun and innovative? Will it appeal to kids?	10 points
Use of entire team to answer questions	10 points
Quality of answers to questions	10 points

## Product Sampling and Defense

Each team will defend their product concept individually before the panel of judges. During the defense, the team will present their product to the judges, and the judges will have an opportunity to ask in-depth technical questions. These questions will focus on aspects of the product mentioned in the oral defense and in the final proposal. The team, judges, and chair will find a mutual time that works for everyone. The defense will occur in person. Judges will not know the final scores or winners and will provide constructive feedback to each team.

1. Twenty (20) minutes will be allotted for each team. Teams will have a maximum of 5 minutes to present their product to the judges, focusing on technical aspects of the product and formulation. The remaining time will focus on an in-depth Q&A.
2. The following point breakdown will be used.

<b>Product sample evaluation and defense</b>	<b>75 points total</b>
Taste and Eating experience	45 points
Delivery on Claims	10 points
Technical Ability to Answer Questions	15 points
Oral Presentation and Reintroduction of product	5 points

### Judging

Final proposals will be scored based on **225** points, distributed as follows.

<b>Final Round Evaluation Total</b>	<b>225 points</b>
Final Written Proposal	75 points
Oral Presentation	75 points
Product Defense	75 points

1. A panel of preliminary judges will be selected from industry and academia with practical product development experience. Each preliminary proposal will be scored by a minimum of three (3) judges and maximum of five (5) judges.
2. A minimum of three (3) final judges and a maximum of five (5) judges, with practical product development experience, will be chosen from industry and/or academia.
3. Each judge may serve up to three (3) years.
4. Judge identities will remain anonymous until the final competition.
5. Judges are required to evaluate products by point totals as outlined, not personal preferences.
6. Rule breaches should not result in disqualification but will be left to the Judges to decide. Any rule breaches should be brought to the attention of the Competition Chair and Judges prior to the finalization of scores (prior to product evaluation). Rule breaches reported after the scores have been finalized should not be entertained.

### AWARDS

1. A total of six teams will make it to the finals. The 6 teams will all be judged against one another in the finals.
2. Each finalist team will receive a travel and registration reimbursement of up to \$1800.
3. The 1st place winner will receive \$3,000, the 2nd place winner will receive \$1,500, and the 3rd place winner will receive \$500.





Placement	Award
1 <sup>st</sup> place	\$3,000, travel and registration reimbursement up to \$1800 total
2 <sup>nd</sup> place	\$1,500, travel and registration reimbursement up to \$1800 total
3 <sup>rd</sup> place	\$500, travel and registration reimbursement up to \$1800 total
4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , and 6 <sup>th</sup> places	Travel and registration reimbursement up to \$1,800 total

## NOTES

- Copyright and trademark violations will not be tolerated. Teams who submit a product that features a character or franchise that they do not have explicit rights will be disqualified.
- Patent rights belong to the individual teams and will be handled according to university patent policies. IFT and IFTSA do not claim any responsibility or rights for product development ideas presented in this competition.
- The enforcement, review, and changes of these Rules and Guidelines will be the responsibility of the Chair of the competition and designated IFT Staff member. Failure to comply with any of the rules of the competition may result in disqualification.
- **Any team or team member that does not follow the IFT Event Code of Conduct will risk being disqualified.**

## QUESTIONS

- Please contact the IFTSA Smart Snacks for Kids Competition Chair via email at [iftsa.ssfk@gmail.com](mailto:iftsa.ssfk@gmail.com).



## Product Development Competition Checklist

Check off items as completed:

### **Items to be completed for entry in PD competition**

- Check IFT student member status for team.
- Check preliminary proposal format
- Submit a preliminary proposal (PDF) to the competition chair via the IFT.org submission portal by **11:59pm CT on February 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Items to be completed for PD competition finalist**

- Check final written proposal format
- Submit a final written proposal (PDF) to PD Chair via the submission portal on IFT.org by May 1st, **at 11:59 pm CT**
- Include team picture for finalist and competition promotion
- Prepare ten-minute oral presentation
- Check oral presentation format
- Prepare product for the product defense