

# IFTSA Undergraduate Research Competition

## RULES AND GUIDELINES

### BACKGROUND

Designed to showcase outstanding research at the undergraduate level, this competition seeks students engaged in independent research who are interested in presenting at the IFT Annual Event. Finalists will have the opportunity to network with industry and academic members.

### PURPOSE

1. To encourage and stimulate interest in independent undergraduate research in the area of food science and technology.
2. To provide an opportunity for undergraduates to organize and present their original research through oral and poster presentations.
3. To provide an opportunity for networking within IFTSA for undergraduate students as well as members of industry and academia.

### SCHEDULE

| Date                    | Event   |
|-------------------------|---|
| April 15, 2024          | Application submission deadline   |
| May 15, 2024            | Finalists notified  |
| June 1, 2024            | Finalists must notify the competition chair if they will be attending IFT FIRST |
| July 16 - July 19, 2024 | IFT FIRST in Chicago  |

### ELIGIBILITY

1. Any student member of IFT, as of April 1, 2024, who is an undergraduate student or who has not graduated prior to July 1, 2024, is eligible to compete.
2. Work must have been done individually by an undergraduate.
3. A signed letter from the Department Head or a professor verifying the originality of the student's work will be required. The letter and abstract must be submitted through the IFT.org submission portal before April 15, 2024, at 11:59 pm, CT.

## PRELIMINARY ROUND PROCEDURES

### Application

1. To enter the competition, students must be student members of IFT by April 15, 2024.
2. Students must submit an abstract of their research to IFT.org by April 15, 2024, at 11:59 pm CT. Abstracts must not exceed five hundred (500) words in length (titles not included), and should include the study objective, methodology, results, and significance and implications of results. At least five (5) pertinent references must be included. References are not included in the word count and must follow the Journal of Food Science citation style.
3. Two versions of the abstract must be submitted. One must include the paper title, as well as the name and address of the author. The second version of the abstract must only include the paper title (no universities' or institutions' names included). In both versions, no professors' names may appear as co-author.
4. A letter, signed by the student's Department Head or professor, verifying the originality of the work, must be submitted to IFT.org by April 15, 2024, at 11:59 pm. Letters should be submitted by the student via the submission portal before this deadline.

### Judging

Abstracts will be judged based on the criteria below and ranked as outlined in the supplemental Operations Document. Finalists will be chosen by a jury of at least three (3) IFT members representing academia, industry, and/or government as appointed by the Competition Chair.

| <b>Abstract Judging Criteria</b>  | <b>85 points total</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Adherence to rules of competition   | 5 points               |
| Explanation of objectives and background: research importance and relevance | 20 points              |
| Presentation and explanation of experimental methodology                    | 15 points              |
| Presentation and explanation of results                                     | 15 points              |
| Explanation and soundness of conclusions                                    | 15 points              |
| Professionalism, organization, and style                                    | 15 points              |

1. A total of six (6) finalists will be selected based on the abstract submitted.
2. Finalists will be notified by the Competition Chair by May 15, 2024, if they are selected.
3. If selected, finalists will present their research as a poster AND oral presentation at the IFT FIRST Annual Event.

## FINAL ROUND PROCEDURES

### Poster Presentation

Finalists will present their posters during the IFT FIRST Annual Event. Posters must be smaller than the display board provided by IFT (4 ft. tall x 8 ft. wide).

1. Finalists will present their research to judges, as well as other event attendees, during the 60–90-minute poster session.
2. The posters may include, but are not limited to, sections detailing
  - a. The purpose of the work
  - b. Experimental methodology/design
  - c. Results
  - d. Significance of the results
3. All text and images should be with high resolution and be clearly visible from a short distance.
4. Finalists are expected to stand by their posters during the poster session and be prepared to introduce their research for 3-5 minutes and answer the judges' questions.

### Judging

Posters will be judged based on the criteria below.

| <b>Poster Evaluation Criteria</b>                           | <b>45 points total</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Organization and presentation of content, data, and visuals | 15 points              |
| Professionalism and scholarship of presentation             | 10 points              |
| Explanation of objectives and background                    | 5 points               |
| Presentation and explanation of experimental methodology    | 5 points               |
| Presentation and explanation of results                     | 5 points               |
| Explanation and soundness of conclusions                    | 5 points               |

1. Posters will be judged by a jury of at least three (3) IFT members representing academia, industry, and/or government.
2. No judge may vote on research presented by a member of their institution; adjustments will be made for this factor.

### Oral Presentation

1. Finalists will present their research during the IFT FIRST Annual Event.

2. The presentation is limited to ten (10) minutes per speaker, plus an additional five (5) minutes to answer questions from judges.
3. The presentation should outline the scope of the research, study methodology and design, results, and significance of the results.

## Judging

Presentations will be judged based on the criteria below.

| <b>Oral Presentation Judging Criteria</b>  | <b>50 points total</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| Organization and presentation of content   | 10 points              |
| Professionalism and scholarship of presentation  | 10 points              |
| Explanation of objectives and background   | 5 points               |
| Technical problem solving: How does your research differ from literature? What innovation does your research bring to food science? What challenges came up during your research and how did you overcome said challenges? | 15 points              |
| Explanation and soundness of conclusions   | 5 points               |
| Ability to answer judges' questions  | 5 points               |

1. Oral presentations will be judged by a jury of at least three (3) IFT members representing academia, industry, and/or government.
2. No judge may vote on research presented by a member of their institution; adjustments will be made for this factor.

## AWARDS

1. All finalists will be awarded a \$600.00 travel and registration award to attend the IFT FIRST Annual Event in Chicago, IL.
2. Finalists must attend IFT FIRST to be eligible for the travel and registration award.
3. A certificate will be presented to each finalist, as well as the first, second, and third place awards (\$1,000, \$750, and \$500, respectively) during the IFTSA Closing Ceremony during the URC awards announcement.
4. Prize money will be delivered to the winners by mail following the IFT FIRST Annual Event.

| <b>Placement</b>      | <b>Award</b>  |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> place | \$1000, travel and registration reimbursement up to \$600 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> place | \$750, travel and registration reimbursement up to \$600  |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> place  | \$500, travel and registration reimbursement up to \$600 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , and 6 <sup>th</sup> places | Travel and registration reimbursement up to \$600        |

## NOTE

**Any team or team member that does not follow the IFT Event Code of Conduct will risk being disqualified.**

## QUESTIONS

Questions regarding competition eligibility, rules, and submission of abstracts and/or verification letters should be directed to the Competition Chair ([iftsa.unc@gmail.com](mailto:iftsa.unc@gmail.com)).