

International Olympic Case Study Competition for Undergraduate Students

2026/2027 Edition

Description, rules and timelines

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1. Introduction

The “International Olympic Case Study Competition (CSC)” is an annual competition organised by the IOC Olympic Studies Centre in collaboration with partner universities (the “Organisers”), and is offered in two categories for undergraduate and master’s classes:

1. [CSC for Undergraduate Students](#), under the academic lead of the European University of Madrid; and
2. [CSC for Master’s Students](#), under the academic lead of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.

This document describes the rules and timelines for the CSC for Undergraduate Students.

The CSC for Undergraduate Students is organised in English. It takes place in a classroom setting and consists of teams of students competing against other teams, first within their own university class, and then against classes from other universities with which they will be matched. The students play the role of agencies consulting for an Olympic Movement organisation on topics related to current strategic management challenges in international sport. The teams reaching the semi-finals will compete against university teams from all over the world and will be judged by independent professors involved in the CSC.

The teams reaching the finals will be given the opportunity to present either online or in person in Lausanne (Switzerland). All finalists will be judged by an international panel of subject matter experts representing the IOC/Olympic Movement and academia.

The CSC follows up the “Harvard Case Incident Method” and educates the students by problem-based learning. The competition is coordinated by the European University of Madrid (Universidad Europea de Madrid), which has broad expertise with Challenge Based Learning (CBL) methodology.

The CSC is organised so that a university professor¹ can use the case study in “regular” classes (strategic management or similar).

¹ In this competition we mean by “professor” any professor, teacher, or lecturer teaching a class.

2. Who can take part?

Any university with undergraduate (bachelor) classes that meet the following criteria:

- Students must be studying or be familiar with management issues, especially with a link to sport, such as sports management, sports economics, sports governance or similar fields.
- The CSC for Undergraduate Students is also open to students in sport sciences, sport sociology, sports media and communications, and sport political sciences.
- Students must have some knowledge of strategic management to properly apply the methods and tools needed for the tasks, such as stakeholder analysis, benchmarking, market analysis, evaluation and marketing, etc.
- Students must be enrolled in at least the second year of the degree course.
- A minimum of two teams per class is necessary to register to the competition. Each team must be composed of three to six students.

University professors wishing to benefit from the CSC for Undergraduate Students as an in-class learning resource without entering the competition can send an email to ceio-uem@universidadeuropea.es.

3. Why take part?

By taking part in the CSC, students will be exposed to the following learnings:

- applying theoretical concepts in practice
- identifying relevant and credible sources
- conducting research
- analytical, conceptional and strategic thinking related to challenging topics
- managing priorities
- developing scenarios and solutions and decision-making in conditions of uncertainty
- formulating practical suggestions from concepts
- teamwork
- acting professionally
- presenting in English
- time management/handling pressure
- written and oral presentation skills (media competency)
- intercultural and international communication and exposure
- knowledge of the Olympic Movement and its values.

In addition to the learnings, other elements of the CSC that may contribute to the students' motivation and experience are:

- real-life and topics linked to the current challenges of the Olympic Movement
- competition between teams and other universities from around the world
- clear and equal rules and a level playing field
- external assessment and feedback in semi-finals and finals
- international and intercultural experience
- opportunity to live a unique experience in Lausanne, the Olympic capital (for finalist teams only)
- under request (see [student registration form](#)), a participation certificate delivered to all participants.
- a diploma and IOC prize for the finalists who place first, second and third.

4. Organisation of the competition

The CSC for Undergraduate Students is organised with a **maximum of 24 universities** and structured in **three rounds**. Students work on a single task, which must be progressively improved throughout the competition thanks to the feedback received in rounds 1 and 2 (semi-finals). Round one is internal, ending in an internal university winner who will represent the university at round two (semi-finals). Each university can only register one class for round two.

Students play the role of representing an agency that serves as a consultant for an organisation belonging to the Olympic Movement. Participating teams must solve a task by using only publicly available information and sources and are not permitted to contact sports federations or other organisations.

During the presentations, the students are required to imitate a real business situation and show related skills (public speaking, choice of language, dress code, etiquette and politeness, communication and presentation tools, etc.).

Once the application submitted by the professor to take part in the CSC is accepted by the Organisers, he/she will receive a link and a password to download the task. The professor is responsible for further preparing and guiding the students. The task must not be shared with anyone who is not involved in the CSC.

4.1. Rules for round 1

- In this first round, the competition is held internally within each university class.
- Students have a minimum of two weeks to work on the task and must deliver a presentation document (PPT or equivalent) at least one day before the presentation. In addition, a PDF with further explanation of the project details must be included.
- The presentation will last a maximum of five minutes, followed by questions from the professor who is playing the role of the client.
- The professor in charge of the programme within the university grades the students and provides feedback.
- The winning team in this first round will represent the university in the semi-finals.

4.2. Rules for round 2 (semi-finals)

- Semi-finals consist of max. six groups of four teams to be established by the Organisers based on the following criteria:
 - **Playing time available:** Each participating university class should indicate a minimum of an eight-week window to enable the Organisers to find a matching university class (the larger the playing window offered, the better the chance to get matched).
 - **Time zone.**
 - Particular effort will be made to **mix nationalities**.
- Presentation date and times will be announced by the Organisers in good time.
- Some of the groups taking part in the semi-finals may be organised in a language other than English if there is a sufficient number of teams with the same native language.
- Teams start with a short introduction, followed by the presentation of their work in front of the jury, composed of one academic member of the European University of Madrid and a professor from another participating university class.
- Presentation time is strictly limited to 15 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of questions.
- Project content (60 per cent) and presentation skills (40 per cent) are assessed. General feedback is given by the jury, and the university professor can also give specific feedback to each team.

- The best team from each group qualifies for the finals.

4.3. Rules for round 3 (finals)

- Qualified teams from the semi-finals compete for first, second and third place in the competition in front of an international panel of subject matter experts representing the IOC/Olympic Movement and academia.
- Finals will take place at the end of March 2027 (exact date to be confirmed) in Lausanne, Switzerland. Finalist teams may participate either in person or virtually.
- For finalist teams attending in person, Organisers will cover two nights of accommodation and lunches for up to three students and one accompanying professor per team. Flights will not be covered.
- Teams must submit a one-page written summary and an infographic at least five working days before the presentation. In addition, a 25-page written report explaining in detail each proposed element must be included.
- Teams will present an enhanced version of the work they submitted for the semi-finals. Comments and recommendations provided by the jury must have been fully taken into account.
- Presentations will be followed by questions from the jury.
- Jury members will consider both the written submission and the oral presentation. Assessments will be based on the following criteria:
 - Written document
 - Accuracy in responding to the task
 - Clarity and structure
 - Quality of analysis and content
 - Oral presentation
 - Originality/innovation of the proposals
 - Practical applicability of the proposals
 - Communication skills and ability to answer questions from the Jury.
- Specific feedback, including team's scores, is given to each team by the jury.

5. Registration and timelines

For the 2026/2027 competition, the preliminary round runs from **1 August 2026 to 15 January 2027**.

The deadline for applications is **30 June 2026**. If there are still places available after this date, a second opportunity to apply will be open until 30 September 2026.

Semi-finals will be held from **1 December 2026 to 30 January 2027** and finals in **March 2027**.

6. Universities' responsibilities

The professor of the participating university class is responsible for overseeing the registration, establishing the teams, coordinating the playing times and ensuring the technical aspects are covered. Ultimately, the respective university professor (together with one back-up colleague) is the point of contact for the Organisers throughout the year.

Each university professor must:

- fill in the [university registration form](#).
- once the university class is accepted by the Organisers, ensure that each student has registered using the [student registration form](#) and share with the Organisers the list of students.
- identify a second professor or contact person who can replace him/her if needed for contact with the Organisers;
- plan a minimum two-hour preparation time with each participating class to explain the rules, build the teams, etc.;
- plan when to play the round 1 in class (max. 90 minutes needed) and share the task(s) with the students;
- ensure that all the technical aspects are arranged (room, video conference system (the use of Microsoft Teams is mandatory), etc.;
- make sure feedback time with the students is planned after each round;
- assess their own students and, when applicable, assess other university classes;
- submit the results of the winning team and their full names to the Organisers;
- be prepared to be invited to become a jury member in the semi-finals; and
- distribute the certificate of participation to the students who requested it, the diploma and IOC prize to finalist teams (to be sent by the Organisers after the finals).

7. Communication/Social Media Rules

The students, professors and participating university classes are encouraged to communicate about their participation in the CSC, using the official graphic provided by the Organisers. Any communication in connection with the CSC must nonetheless comply with the terms and restrictions of this Section and Section 8 below.

We encourage participants to use the hashtags **#OSCCSC** and **#OSCCSC26-27** for social media posts to connect with other participants.

Students may not publish any information about the content of the tasks or solutions on the internet or social media, as other student teams will be participating at different times.

7.1. Communication by the Universities

The Universities participating in the CSC may communicate (on their website, social media platforms or otherwise) about their participation in the CSC using the official graphic provided by the Organisers.

Note that communications may not create or suggest any kind of association (commercial, official, institutional or otherwise) between the Organisers, the IOC and/or the Olympic Games and a University or any third party.

The Universities are not granted any marketing rights or any right of association in any way with the Organisers, the IOC, the Olympic Games or the Olympic Movement, and are not authorised to use any Olympic properties (including the symbol, emblem(s), trademark(s), logo(s) or other designation(s)) or to engage in any communication that may suggest such an association.

If any content published by the Universities contains personal data of third parties, the Universities must inform these third parties about the intended use of such content, and if required obtain the necessary consent.

Should a University fail to comply with the above rules, the Organisers reserve their rights (i) to request the concerned University to immediately delete any communication related to the CSC, and/or (ii) to exclude the team(s) of the University concerned from the CSC.

7.2. Communication by the participants

The participants are not authorised to use the Olympic properties (symbol, emblem(s), logo(s) or other designation(s)), except as expressly authorised by the Organisers.

If participants (i.e. students and professors) wish to take pictures or videos during the CSC for the purpose of education and learning, or make references to the CSC on their personal owned and/or controlled digital platforms, they may do so provided that this (i) is for the purpose of promoting the CSC, (ii) is not used for any other promotional and/or commercial purpose, (iii) does not create or suggest any kind of association between the participant(s) or any third party and the Organisers, the IOC, the Olympic Games or the Olympic Movement, (iv) respects the rights of third parties, including their right to privacy or private information and intellectual property rights, any applicable laws, regulations and rules, and (v) does not expose the Organisers or any third party, or bring them into disrepute.

Furthermore, the participants' communication in connection with the CSC must not contain material/content, be made in a context, or depict or promote activity that is obscene, violent, discriminatory, illegal, offensive, threatening or otherwise contrary to the Olympic values of excellence, respect and friendship. If the pictures or videos contain personal data of third parties, the participants must inform these third parties about the intended use of such pictures and videos, and if required obtain the necessary consent from the third parties.

The participants authorise the Organisers, and any third parties authorised by the Organisers, to repost and/or share on their digital platforms the contents and posts of the participants related to the CSC. The participants agree that the content they post, share or publish on digital platforms in connection with the CSC can be removed at the first request of the Organisers if such content does not comply with the terms of Section 8 below, the social media platform(s) in question and/or applicable laws.

Should a participant fail to comply with the above rules, the Organisers reserve the right (i) to request the participant concerned to immediately delete any communication related to the CSC, and/or (ii) to exclude such participant from the CSC, without prejudice to any other remedy that the Organisers may have at their disposal (by law or otherwise).

7.3. Communication by the Organisers about the Universities and/or the participants

The Universities grant the Organisers all necessary licences, consents and permissions to use their names for (i) the purpose of promoting the CSC, including future editions (including on digital platforms, websites and any other media); (ii) internal or archival purposes; and/or (iii) otherwise for the purpose of promoting the activities of the Organisers, the Olympic Movement and/or the Olympic values.

The participants may be filmed, photographed and/or recorded by the Organisers during the CSC for educational, learning and promotional purposes. The participants authorise the Organisers to use their image (including their image, likeness, name, voice, etc.) for (i) the purpose of promoting the CSC (including future editions); (ii) internal and/or archival purposes; and/or (iii) otherwise for the purpose of promoting the activities of the Organisers, the Olympic Movement and/or the Olympic values.

In particular, the participants understand and accept that the semi-final and final rounds of the CSC may be recorded and displayed live to all the CSC participants (and the video may remain accessible online), and that they (and their presentations) may appear on such videos. The Organisers may share a link to access the recorded videos of the semi-final and final rounds to all Universities and participants (including those of future editions), who must agree not to forward such link to any third party.

In addition, the participants understand and agree that other participants may film, photograph or record them for their own uses in accordance with the terms of the “Communication by participants” section above. The Universities and the participants authorise the Organisers, and any third parties authorised by the Organisers, to repost and/or share on their digital platforms the contents and posts of the Universities related to the CSC.

8. Presentations

The content produced and developed by the participants within the framework of the CSC (in particular the presentations) will remain the property of the participants. However, the participants reaching the semi-final and final rounds will grant the Organisers all necessary licences, consent and permissions for the Organisers to use their presentations (including all content contained therein) for (i) the purpose of promoting the CSC (including future editions); (ii) educational, internal and/or archival purposes; and/or (iii) otherwise for the purpose of promoting the activities of the Organisers, the Olympic Movement and/or the Olympic values.

The participants reaching the semi-final and final rounds understand and agree that their presentations (in whole or in part) may be displayed live and then remain available online. The participants must therefore ensure that their presentations do not, and that their use by the Organisers for the purposes mentioned above will not, infringe on the rights (in particular intellectual property and image rights) of any third party.

If the content produced and developed by the participants within the framework of the CSC (in particular the presentations) contains personal data of third parties, the participants must inform these third parties about the intended use of such content, and if required obtain the necessary consent.

9. Guidelines concerning the use of artificial intelligence tools

The OSC acknowledges the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in academic activities. While AI can significantly enhance effectiveness in academic work, innovation and impact and reduce potential language considerations, use of AI tools must be balanced with ethical considerations and academic transparency and integrity. Based on the above, these guidelines provide a framework for the appropriate use of AI tools by the participants of the Case Study Competition and aim to enable the opportunities that AI brings to academic work while ensuring that:

- 1) the work remains the product of the teams' own intellectual endeavours, and
- 2) there is a protection against potential risks.

All participant university teams must comply with the following guidelines:

1. Transparency and acknowledgement

- AI assistance disclosure: Any use of AI tools, including for drafting, proofreading, summarizing, or data analysis, must be explicitly acknowledged in the documents delivered by participant university teams.
- Authorship integrity: AI-generated content should not replace the original thought and critical analysis expected from agencies. AI should be a tool for assistance, not a primary source.

2. Data protection and privacy

- Sensitive information: AI tools must not be used by to process sensitive, confidential or proprietary data.
- Compliance with Data Laws: Ensure compliance with all relevant ethics, data protection and privacy laws and regulations, particularly when handling personal data.

3. Intellectual property (IP) and originality

- Respect for IP rights: Use AI responsibly by not infringing on intellectual property rights. This includes avoiding the generation of content that mimics proprietary works.
- Plagiarism prevention: Participant university teams are responsible for the originality and integrity of their work. They are responsible to verify via an appropriate plagiarism online tool that AI-generated content included in the final report does not result in plagiarism.

4. Ethical use and bias awareness

- Ethical considerations: Be aware of and address any ethical implications and/or national ethics requirements of using AI in research.
- Bias and accuracy: Recognise that AI tools may have inherent biases or accuracy limitations. Participant university teams should critically evaluate and corroborate AI-generated information with other relevant sources.

10. Secretariat

All information related to the CSC, including the tasks of the previous editions, are available [here](#).

For organisational questions, please contact:

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11. Legal Disclaimer

By taking part in the CSC, the participants and Universities acknowledge and agree that the Organisers and their affiliates (including their respective directors, representatives, officers, employees, agents, partners, subcontractors and licensors) shall in no way be responsible or liable for any losses, costs, expenses or damages suffered by the participants and/or the Universities in connection with the CSC.

The participation of the Universities and the participants in the CSC (including the rules and terms applicable to the CSC) shall be governed by, and interpreted in accordance with, the laws of Switzerland (without reference to principles of conflicts of laws).