

Official Rules: The 2025 The Collaborative AI in Learning EdTech Challenge (“Contest”)

The Contest is subject to and governed by these Official Rules (the “Official Rules”). By entering or otherwise participating in the Contest, you agree to be bound by these Official Rules. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.

SPONSOR: Trustees of Boston University through its EVAL Collaborative, 595 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215 (“Sponsor”).

DESCRIPTION: This Contest is intended to identify promising K-12 EdTech tools that leverage Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) for their software product offering (“Product”) to assess and accelerate learning outcomes, rigorously evaluate them via randomized controlled trials (“RCT”), and promote independent academic research and meaningful educational impact. Participants will be evaluated on their readiness for independent research and commitment to improving K-12 education. The Contest seeks to bridge the gap between EdTech innovation and empirical validation, providing credible effectiveness evidence for AI-powered educational technologies.

CONTEST PERIOD:

- Phase One: submission deadline 11/14/2025 at 11:59:59 PM EST
- Phase Two: submission deadline 12/22/2025 at 11:59:59 PM EST
- Finalist Selection & Research Partnership Finalization: to be complete on or before 1/7/2026
- Winner Announcement: 1/9/2026
- Study Implementation (prize): Variable duration based on product type.

ELIGIBILITY: This Contest is open to all participants who submit entries and are United States based incorporated entities that meet the following requirements (each a “Participant”).

- All Participants must be at least “early stage” and have a minimum viable product **ready for deployment with real users**, demonstrated by at least fifty pilot users.
- If the Participant is mid-stage, they must have a product with an active user base of at least 500 users.
- If the Participant is advanced stage, they must have a scaled platform product with at least 10,000 users.
- **Operational Requirements:**
 - Research Collaboration Capacity: Ability to support 12-month RCT with dedicated liaison
 - Data Infrastructure: Systems capable of supporting research data collection protocols
 - Legal Compliance: Adherence to all applicable data protection laws (for example FERPA, COPPA, GDPR)
- **Product Requirement:** Products must be designed to improve K–12 student learning outcomes, demonstrated through measurable academic gains across content areas. Products may achieve this directly, by engaging students in learning experiences that enhance skills or knowledge, or indirectly, by improving instructional delivery, teacher decision-making, or other processes that support student achievement.
- Sponsor in its sole discretion shall determine if the Participant meets the above criteria.

Submissions:

Phase 1: Initial Application

- Online application portal with structured questionnaire
- Executive summary following provided template
- Basic company/team information
- Evidence portfolio and user metrics demonstrating product reach and outcomes\
- Theory of change and research readiness assessment

Phase 2: Detailed Proposal

- Comprehensive 6-page proposal:
 - Solution and Theory of Change: Detailed tool functionality and impact model
 - Learning Engineering: Data collection, analysis, and improvement methods
 - Safety and Ethics: Privacy, security, and responsible design practices
 - Equity and Accessibility: Inclusive design and diverse population support
 - Scalability: Technical infrastructure and sustainability planning
 - Team Readiness: Expertise, experience, and collaboration capacity
 - Supporting materials: demonstration video, research papers, user testimonials
 - Description of resources available for RCT participation

Phase Three:

- Virtual Product demonstration and technical review
- Research protocol design consultation
- Signed Research Agreement

Research Agreement: Research agreement must be signed consisting of the following (“Research Agreement”):

- Data access and sharing protocols
- Publication rights
- Timeline and milestone commitments
- Quality assurance and compliance requirements
- Technical support structure: Company designation of dedicated personnel responsible for all technical onboarding, platform troubleshooting, user support, and researcher/school staff assistance throughout the 12-month study period
- Agreement to be provided by Sponsor during final phase

IRB Approval: Participation in the Contest does not constitute engagement in human subjects research. All research activities conducted under the Research Agreement must be reviewed and approved by the Sponsor Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to implementation.

Data Protection and Privacy: In relation to the data shared in connection with this Contest or under the Research Agreement, Participants shall ensure that they and their Product complies with all applicable laws, which may include FERPA, COPPA, and GDPR, and Boston University’s institutional data security standards. Sponsor will not access identifiable student data except as approved by the IRB and agreed to in writing.

Selection Criteria:

- **Phase One.** During Phase One, members of the BU EVAL team will review the products and submission according to the following criteria:
 - Learning Impact: Tools that assess and accelerate K-12 learning outcomes with clear theory of change
 - Educational Practice: Support for K-12 teachers to enhance instructional practice
 - Learning Engineering: Commitment to evidence-based improvement and continuous data collection
 - Differentiation Focus: Design solutions that address opportunity gaps by supporting diverse learner needs and expanding access to effective instruction
 - Research Readiness: Capacity to provide technical support for rigorous evaluation while maintaining separation from research methodology, analysis, and publication processes
 - Research Independence Guarantee: Binding commitment to publish all results regardless of outcome companies acknowledged but not involved in research design, analysis, or publication
- **Phase Two.** During Phase Two, Sponsor will select a judging panel, and proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria, using a scale 1-7 (where 1=poor; 2=below average; 3=fair; 4=average; 5=good; 6=very strong/good; 7=excellent):
 - Solution and Theory of Change: Clarity of the product's purpose, educational value, and logic model linking activities to measurable learning outcomes.
 - Learning Impact: Evidence or potential to improve K-12 student outcomes, with defined and standards-aligned measures of learning gains.
 - Learning Engineering: Integration of data collection, analytics, and continuous improvement processes to strengthen product effectiveness over time.
 - Safety and Ethics: Adherence to responsible AI and data privacy standards, including safeguards for bias mitigation, security, and student protection.
 - Differentiation and Accessibility: Commitment to inclusive, adaptive design that supports diverse learners and instructional contexts
 - Team Readiness: Capacity, expertise, and collaborative structure to support large-scale implementation and evaluation.
 - Research Readiness: Preparedness for rigorous evaluation, including data-sharing capability, alignment with RCT protocols, and budget feasibility
- **Phase Three. Finalist Selection.** During Phase Three, Sponsor will select a judging panel and 3 finalists will be selected to present live pitches. Top-scoring applicants from Phase Two advance to Phase Three for final verification and selection. At this stage, entries are assessed to confirm their readiness for implementation in an EVAL-supported randomized controlled trial (RCT). Each product will be evaluated on the following criteria, using a 1–7 scale (1 = poor; 2 = below average; 3 = fair; 4 = average; 5 = good; 6 = very strong; 7 = excellent):
 - Technical and Data Readiness: The product demonstrates stable functionality, secure data systems, and sufficient infrastructure to support research integration and outcome measurement
 - Implementation Feasibility: The product can be reliably deployed in school or online settings under real-world conditions, with clear procedures for participant access, fidelity monitoring, and support.
 - Research Design Alignment: The product's proposed evaluation plan aligns with EVAL's research framework, including clear outcome measures and a feasible RCT implementation timeline.

- Ethical and Compliance Preparedness: The product adheres to all data privacy and protection standards (e.g., FERPA, COPPA, GDPR) and includes safeguards for responsible research participation.
- Partnership Commitment: The organization demonstrates readiness and willingness to collaborate with EVAL researchers and fulfill all requirements of the Research Partnership Agreement.

The winning Product meeting all selection criteria will be confirmed as **EVAL Research Partners** and invited to participate in a randomized controlled trial to evaluate product effectiveness.

CONTEST GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: All judging panels will consist of BU experts selected by Sponsor.

RESOLUTION OF TIES: In the event of a tie (i.e., multiple entries garnering the same highest score, in the sole opinion of the judging panel), Sponsor will assemble an additional judging panel (selected in its sole discretion) to judge only those entries that received the same highest score in the sole opinion of the original judging panel, according to the judging criteria (defined above). This process may be repeated by Sponsor as necessary until the tie is resolved.

ENTRY RESTRICTIONS:

The products and submissions must not contain material that:

- Violates or infringes another's rights, including without limitation, privacy, publicity or intellectual property rights, or that constitutes copyright infringement;
- That is false or misleading; and
- Is not created by your Company, unless cited.

PRIZE: Up to one winner will be selected to win a RCT Study, contingent on winner agreeing to and signing the Research Agreement. The RCT study provided as part of the prize is an in-kind research service conducted by Boston University researchers under independent academic oversight. No funds will be transferred to the winning organization.

RCT Study will consist of:

- **Comprehensive effectiveness evaluation tailored to product type (approximate retail value of up to \$156,300, please note that the final value will be based upon actual time and materials expense of performing the RCT).**
- **Independent Research Guarantee:** Research by EVAL Collaborative with full methodological independence.
- **Expert Educational Insights:** Access to detailed feedback from leading education researchers.
- **Marketing Partnership Rights:** Approved use of study results and EVAL research partnership in marketing materials through mutually agreed framework.
- **Comprehensive Validation Report:** Multi-dimensional impact assessment covering efficacy, effectiveness, ethics, equity, and environment.
- **Media Coverage:** Press release and conference presentation opportunities.
- **Network Access:** Introductions to education leaders and potential implementation partners.
- **Follow-up Support:** 6-month post-study consultation on scaling evidence-based implementation.

PUBLICATION AGREEMENT: SPONSOR HAS THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH THE RESULTS OF THE RCT STUDY REGARDLESS OF OUTCOMES AND PARTICIPANT MAY BE ACKNOWLEDGED BUT NOT AS CO-AUTHOR.

GRANT OF RIGHTS AND PUBLICITY: By participating in the Contest, each Participant hereby grants and agrees to grant to Sponsor and its affiliates, and to their respective successors, licensees, assignees and other authorized designees, a perpetual, fully-paid, royalty-free, worldwide, irrevocable, non-exclusive right and license to use the Participant's entry, including the Product and any and all information submitted in the entry and recordings of the presentations, for the purposes of promoting the Contest or Sponsor, administering the Contest, performing the RCT Study, or any academic research surveys or studies.

PUBLICITY RELEASE: EXCEPT WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW, PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEST CONSTITUTES PARTICIPANTS' AND WINNERS' GRANT TO SPONSOR (WHICH GRANT WILL BE CONFIRMED IN WRITING ON REQUEST OF SPONSOR), AND THEIR RESPECTIVE SUCCESSORS, LICENSEES, ASSIGNEES AND THEIR DESIGNEES THE RIGHT AND PERMISSION TO PRINT, PUBLISH, BROADCAST, AND USE, WORLD WIDE IN ANY MEDIA NOW KNOWN OR HEREAFTER DEVELOPED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WORLD WIDE WEB, AT ANY TIME OR TIMES, THE PARTICIPANTS' AND WINNERS' ENTRY AND INFORMATION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, NAME, PORTRAIT, PICTURE, VOICE, LIKENESS, VIDEOS, PRESENTATIONS, OPINIONS, AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES WITHOUT ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION, COMPENSATION, OR, PERMISSION.

LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY AND RELEASE.

By submitting an entry or otherwise participating in the Contest, Participant understands and agrees: (i) to be bound by these Official Rules and by all applicable laws and the decisions of Sponsor which shall be binding and final; (ii) to waive any rights to claim ambiguity with respect to these Official Rules; (iii) to waive all of your rights to bring any claim, action, or proceeding against any of the Releasees, as defined below, in connection with the Contest; and (iv) to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Releasees from any liability (including, but not limited to, liability for defamation, libel, slander, invasion of privacy, infringement of publicity or any intellectual property rights, any property loss, damage, personal injury, bodily injury, death, expense, accident, delay, inconvenience or irregularity, and any indirect, incidental, consequential, special, punitive or exemplary damages of any kind even if the Releasees have been advised of the possibility of such loss or damages), costs and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable outside attorneys' fees) that may arise in connection with: (a) the Contest or any information provided by Participant in connection with the Contest, including but not limited to any Contest-related activity or element thereof, and the Participant's participating in the Contest, the receipt of marketing messages, participation or inability to participate in the Contest or in any parts thereof, (b) the violation of any third party privacy, personal, publicity or proprietary rights, (c) typographical errors in these Official Rules or any Contest-related materials, (d) acceptance, possession, defects in, use, misuse or inability to use a prize (or any component thereof), (e) any change in the prizing (or any components thereof) due to unavailability, or due to reasons beyond the Sponsor's control, including but not limited to by reason of any acts of God, any action(s), regulation(s), order(s) or request(s) by any governmental or quasi-governmental entity (whether or not such action(s), regulation(s), order(s) or request(s) prove(s) to be invalid), equipment failure, threatened or actual terrorist acts, earthquake, war, fire, flood, explosion,

unusually severe weather, hurricane, embargo, labor dispute or strike (whether legal or illegal), labor or material shortage, transportation interruption of any kind, work slow-down, civil disturbance, insurrection, riot, or any other cause beyond Sponsor's sole control, or as otherwise permitted in these Official Rules, (f) any interruptions in or postponement, cancellation, or modification of the Contest, (g) human error, (h) incorrect or inaccurate transcription, receipt or transmission of any part of the entry (including, without limitation, the entry information or any parts thereof), (i) any technical malfunctions or unavailability of any websites, or any telephone network, computer online system, computer timing and/or dating mechanism, computer equipment, software, or Internet service provider, or mail service utilized by any of the Releasees or by an entrant, (j) interruption or inability to access the Contest, any website, or any other Contest-related web pages (in either direction), or any Internet online service or cellular service (as applicable) due to hardware or software compatibility problems, (k) any damage to Participant's (or any third person's) computer or wireless device (as applicable) and/or its contents related to or resulting from any part of the Contest, (l) any lost/delayed data transmissions (in either direction), omissions, interruptions, defects, and/or any other errors or malfunctions, (m) any late, lost, stolen, mutilated, misdirected, illegible, delayed, garbled, corrupted, destroyed, incomplete, undeliverable or damaged entries, (n) any wrongful, negligent, or unauthorized act or omission on the part of any of the Releasee, or any of their agents or employees, and/or (o) cancellations, delays, diversions or substitutions or any act or omissions whatsoever by the air carrier(s), or other transportation companies, hotel(s), or any other persons providing any of these services and accommodations to passengers including any results thereof such as changes in services or accommodations necessitated by same, (p) lost, stolen, damaged, delayed, or misdirected baggage or (q) lost, late, stolen, misdirected, damaged or destroyed prize (or any element thereof). All winners hereby acknowledges that the Releasees have neither made nor are in any manner responsible or liable for any express or implied warranty, representation or guarantee, express or implied, in fact or in law, relative to a prize or any component thereof.

Sponsor reserves the right to cancel or modify the Contest if fraud, technical failures or any other factor beyond Sponsor's reasonable control impairs the integrity of the Contest, as determined by Sponsor in its sole discretion. Proof of attempting to participate in the Contest is not considered proof of completion of such. False and/or deceptive entries or acts shall render Participants ineligible. Sponsor may change, cancel, or modify the Contest or these Official Rules at any time without prior notice.

The judges, Sponsor and its affiliates and officers, donors, case study participants, directors, trustees, employees, and agents (collectively, "Releasees") are not responsible for: human error; technical malfunctions; failures, omissions, interruptions, deletions or defects of any computer equipment, servers, providers, or software, theft, tampering, destruction, or unauthorized access to, or alteration of, entries; entries or prize claims that are late or incorrect or incomplete; any requests which are late, lost, stolen, misdirected, mutilated or postage due; or any combination thereof.

BY PARTICIPATING IN THIS CONTEST, PARTICIPANTS AGREE THAT THE RELEASEES WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE OR LIABLE FOR ANY INJURIES, DAMAGES, OR LOSSES OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR PUNITIVE DAMAGES TO PERSONS, INCLUDING DEATH, OR TO PROPERTY ARISING OUT OF ACCESS TO AND USE OF ANY WEBSITE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CONTEST OR THE PRIZES. WITHOUT LIMITING THE FOREGOING, EVERYTHING REGARDING THIS CONTEST, INCLUDING THE STUDY, RESEARCH SERVICES, AND ALL PRIZES, ARE PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF

MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, OR NON-INFRINGEMENT.

CHOICE OF LAW: Void wherever prohibited or restricted by law. These Official Rules and the Contest shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, United States, without regard to conflict of laws principles, and any and all claims, lawsuits, or disputes relating in any way to the Contest must be raised and resolved exclusively in the Federal or state courts located in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, United States.

TAXES: All Federal, state, local and any other taxes are the sole responsibility of each Participant. Upon request by the Sponsor, the winner agrees to complete and submit any and all forms, agreements, and information that the Sponsor requires in order to be able to issue the prize in accordance with applicable Federal, State, local and any other laws or regulations.

MISCELLANEOUS: The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of these Official Rules will not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision. In the event that any provision of these Official Rules is determined to be invalid or otherwise unenforceable or illegal, the other provisions will remain in effect and will be construed in accordance with their terms as if the invalid or illegal provision were not contained herein. Sponsor's failure to enforce any term of these Official Rules will not constitute a waiver of that provision. Entrants agree to waive any rights to claim ambiguity of these Official Rules. In the event there is a discrepancy or inconsistency between disclosures or other statements contained in any Contest-related materials or privacy policy and/or the terms and conditions of the Official Rules, the Official Rules shall prevail, govern and control and the discrepancy will be resolved in Sponsor's sole and absolute discretion.

PRIVACY INFORMATION: By participating, you agree and acknowledge that the information you provide may be collected, stored, used, and shared in accordance with Sponsor's Privacy Statement (found [here](#)) and these Official Rules.

LIST OF WINNERS: Information about the winner is available by mailing a written request for the information to: Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development C/O Ola Ozernov-Palchik, 2 Silber Way. Boston, MA 02215