

THIRD ANNUAL

Atlantic Undergraduate Policy Case Competition

Official Competition Rules and Rubrics - July 1, 2026

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ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMICS



*Atlantic Undergraduate
Policy Case Competition
Wolfville, NS*

2026

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I. Competition Overview

The Atlantic Undergraduate Policy Case Competition (AUPCC) is a written policy case competition that seeks to provide students with the opportunity to apply their course content to a real-world policy issue. Participants will improve their critical thinking, research, and formal writing skills, and connect with like-minded peers, faculty members, and judges at the forefront of their fields. The program will be held as an in-person event on the Acadia University campus, held on November 7, 2026. Monetary awards will be presented to those students whose submissions best exemplify effective policies, with a specific focus on impact, feasibility, and originality.

II. Eligibility

Undergraduate students from Acadia University, Mount Allison University, and St. Francis Xavier University are eligible to attend the 2026 AUPCC.

III. Team Requirements

Each participating university (Acadia University, Mount Allison University, and St. Francis Xavier University), may send a maximum of two student teams to the competition. Each team must be made up of 3 to 4 students from the same university. Each team is allowed to have one faculty advisor, who may also choose to be present at the competition. The faculty advisor's role will be to provide guidance about policy formulation (not content) and feedback on deliverables. The faculty advisor is not allowed to edit any team deliverables.

IV. Policy Topic

The 2026 AUPCC policy topic is **What policies can Atlantic Canada implement to ensure the protection of the environment, Indigenous lands, and waterways, in the age of AI development and industry?** This topic is purposefully left as broad as possible to allow students to propose a wide variety of solutions to more than one issue. Submissions may focus on anything relevant to the topic. All submissions and presentations will be judged by a panel of four experts.

V. Deliverables

Student teams will submit a poster containing their policy proposal on the selected policy topic, drawing on available data and academic literature. Proposals should also include relevant cost estimates for the stated policies and guidelines for policy implementation. Monetary awards will be presented to those students whose submissions best exemplify effective policies, with a specific focus on impact, feasibility, and originality. Each team must provide two deliverables during the competition: a poster (meeting size requirements), and a presentation (within time constraints). The names of all team members must be included on all deliverables. The proposal and presentation will be directly graded by the panel of judges. The poster will also be used for the public gallery on the day of the competition. For the



presentation, each team will have a fixed period to give their presentations and field questions from the judges panel.

A. Presentation

Each team will give a 15 minute, in-person presentation to a panel of judges. Presentations should be polished, engaging, and informative. This presentation must summarize the proposal represented in the poster, as well as provide a justification for the proposed implementation. Presentations should be as close to 15 minutes as possible. At the end of each presentation, the team will field an additional 10 minutes of questions from the judges. The question period is an opportunity for teams to display their understanding of their policy and will play an important part in the grading of the presentation. The rubric for judges can be found later in the document. If a team exceeds 15 minutes of presentation time, judges and organizers reserve the right to end a presentation at their sole discretion.

B. Poster

Posters will be presented by teams during the in-person public gallery. Additionally, the public gallery will provide teams with an opportunity to share their policy proposals with their fellow students, faculty members, guests, and members of the media. Students are encouraged to visit other teams' posters to familiarize themselves with their work and recognize the effort given by each team. However, it is expected that at least one member of each team will be available at any given time at their team's poster to field questions from public visitors. The poster will be printed by conference staff in advance of the competition. **Posters must be designed to fit a 36" x 24" sheet when printed.**

VI. Rubrics

Each team's presentation and poster will be considered in the judging process. Both deliverables will be graded according to the rubrics below. Teams may score a maximum of 72 points on their presentation and a maximum of 28 points on their poster. The individual scores from each deliverable will be added together, for a maximum score of 100. Teams will be ranked from highest cumulative score to lowest. In the event of a tie, judges will convene to resolve the tie.

A. Poster

Posters will be graded on a scale of 0-28 based on the following rubric. Each point earned will go towards the team's cumulative score. Each judge will individually score each team's poster. The average of the judges' scores will be the team's final score on each deliverable. Scoring from the judges will be anonymous. However, at the end of the competition, teams will be given their scoring sheets as well as collective feedback from the judges.



Points	Category	Criteria
2	Structure	Is the information within the poster conveyed in an effective manner? Does the poster's structure enhance your understanding of the policy?
6	Knowledge of the issue	Does the poster illustrate that considerable research was conducted to understand the issue addressed by the policy? Does the poster present a deep and nuanced understanding of the issue?
6	Justification	Does the poster provide significant evidence that the proposed policy is a strong solution?
4	Originality of the policy	Is the policy a unique and original idea? Have similar policies already been implemented or suggested?
6	Feasibility of the policy	Is the proposed policy realistic? Does the proposal take into account possible barriers to implementation such as funding? To what extent does the team effectively navigate these barriers to make their policy more viable?
4	Impact	Will the policy create the greatest impact possible for its targeted implementation? To what extent will the policy create a great positive impact given implementation constraints? As a note to judges: We encourage teams to pursue policy on a variety of levels, from municipal to provincial. Each policy should aim to have a significant impact for its scale.

B. Presentation

Presentations will be graded on a scale of 0-72 based on the following rubric. Each point earned will go towards the team's cumulative score. The average of the judges' scores will be the team's final score on each deliverable. Scoring from the judges will be anonymous. However, at the end of the competition, teams will be given their scoring sheets as well as feedback from the judges. **During presentations, a clock will be provided within view of the presenters and judges.**



Points	Category	Criteria
12	Timing	12 points if within 15:00. 3 points if longer than 15:00, but within a 2-minute excess of 15:00. Note, the presentation will be cut off after this excess by judges and/or organizers. If this occurs, the points allotted to the team in the timing category will be 0.
15	Delivery and Engagement	Is the presentation interesting and engaging? Is the team's delivery of the proposal easy to understand? Did the team seem to have completed adequate preparation? Do all members of the team contribute equally to the presentation? Do all members display an understanding of the policy proposal?
30	Content	Does the team present all aspects of their policy in a straightforward, logical way? Is it clear what the policy is, why it is a strong solution, and what barriers to implementation the policy may face? Is the policy a viable approach to the issue? Does the presentation meet the depth expected from a 15-minute presentation?
15	Questions	Are all members of the team prepared to answer questions from judges? Do responses provide new insights into the proposed policy? To what extent do teams expertly navigate questions and potential follow-ups from judges during the question period?

VII. Judges

The AUPCC deliverables will be judged by a panel of four experts in their fields. Judges will be announced in October 2026.

VIII. Dates and Deadlines

SEPTEMBER 10 – Competition is launched on participating campuses, team registration window opens, poster submission window opens, final competition schedule released

SEPTEMBER 25 – Team registration window closes

OCTOBER 14 – Participating teams announced

NOVEMBER 1 – Presentations must be submitted to organizer.



NOVEMBER 7 – In-person competition held at Acadia University

IX. Submissions

Posters must be printed on a 36"x24" sheet. **ALL POSTERS MUST be brought to the competition by teams.**

Teams will be asked to present using their own laptops. Projectors and timers will be provided by the competition. Additionally, **teams must send their presentation files to cairo.hamilton@acadiau.ca by the date listed in section VIII**, so that organizers can present from their own devices in the event of technical difficulties with a team's equipment.

X. Integrity and Misconduct

All policies and deliverables must be the original work of the student team members submitting them. A failure to meet this requirement may be classified as competition misconduct. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, submitting policies or deliverables used in another competition or in course work, and failing to cite resources used to create policies or deliverables (if requested by judges). Failure to uphold competition integrity may be grounds for disqualification from the AUPCC at the discretion of the judging panel.

XI. AI Usage

AI tools are permitted for use by teams, within limitations:

- AI tools can be used for idea generation, concept image creation, and the proofreading of human written text. Teams are highly discouraged from using AI to write scripts and generate deliverable text. Additionally, human ideas should be prioritized over those of AI tools.
- Evidence used to support the policy should come from sources independent of AI tools and should be independently accessible without the use of AI.
- The policy competition aims to measure the creativity, knowledge, and ability to deliver the policy of a human team to judges. Thus, teams are urged to prioritize human ideas and creations over those of AI tools. The judges will be marking policies based on creativity, effort, and viability, amongst other factors.



XII. Event Schedule

Saturday, November 7th, 2026

10:00AM – 1PM Check-in and Lunch (Provided)

1:00PM – 2:00PM Posters

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Presentations

5:15 PM – 5:45 PM Award Ceremony & Team Photos

XIII. Contact

Please field any question, concerns, or points of clarification regarding the AUPCC rules and competition to the organizer's email address: cairo.hamilton@acadiau.ca

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