

e-Fest: Where Undergraduate Startups Mean Business

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Giving student founders the opportunity to compete for seed funding and learn from experienced entrepreneurs

Undergraduate founders often reach a point where an idea starts to feel real. They may have talked with customers, tested assumptions, or built early traction, but they are still navigating what comes next.

e-Fest(<https://efest.biz/>) is designed for that moment.

Hosted by the Schulze School of Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas, e-Fest is a national undergraduate entrepreneurship competition that supports early-stage student ventures from colleges and universities across North America. Teams submit to an online judging round and receive feedback from experienced entrepreneurs, educators, and industry leaders who understand early-stage uncertainty.

Strong e-Fest submissions do not need to be polished or complete. Judges look for clarity of the customer problem, thoughtful reasoning, evidence of discovery or validation, and credible forward progress appropriate to a venture's stage.

To support teams throughout the process, the e-Fest team has developed a set of **clear submission tools and guidance** that outline expectations and help founders prepare strong pitch materials. These resources are designed to reduce friction and keep the focus on substance rather than performance.

Teams selected as finalists are invited to compete in person in Minneapolis and compete for a share of **\$250,000 in cash prizes**, while connecting with a national network of student entrepreneurs, mentors, and judges. This year's e-Fest is April 23-25.

As e-Fest approaches its 10-year anniversary, it

continues to offer a supportive, rigorous environment for student founders to test ideas, validate assumptions, and take meaningful next steps in their venture journey.

Learn more about the competition and submission process at **efest.biz**. Submission tools and guidance are available at [**https://efest.biz/competition-tools**](https://efest.biz/competition-tools) (<https://efest.biz/submit>) **Submissions close March 1.**