



International Leadership Association

International Student Case Competition Information Packet

28th ILA Global Conference

*Leadership in a Complex World:
Innovations, Ethics, and Regeneration*

28-31 October 2026

The Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto, Canada

<https://ilaglobalconference.org/>

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If, after reading this packet, you have questions related to the ISCC, please direct them to the ISCC coordinator, Kyle O'Dell, casecompetition@ilaglobalnetwork.org.

Remember, all teams must sign up for the ISCC and all team members must complete a conference registration form and pay associated fees.

Please direct questions about team signups, conference registration, or (as needed) group invoicing and setting up a pre-paid code group memberships and registrations to

Jennifer Porter at 1.202.470.4818 x 108 or conferences@ilaglobalnetwork.org.

Competition Goals

The ISCC, organized annually by the ILA Leadership Education Member Community, provides participating teams opportunities to:

1. Develop a real-world case and learn about the systemic leadership complexities associated with a selected social problem.
2. Comprehensively and collectively develop and articulate a deep understanding and proposed leadership solution to a problem you believe poses a significant societal challenge.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of leadership as it relates to contemporary social problems.
4. Work together as a team to articulate a grasp of how leadership theories and practice can be applied to impact a local, national, and/or international social problem.
5. Engage in dialogue with and receive feedback from attendees at the Global Conference to strengthen their analytical and presentation skills.
6. Compete in an international competition with other students.

Competition Overview

The first-place team in each division will receive a prize of \$1,000 USD, plus individual team members will each receive a complimentary 1-year ILA student membership.

Due to the urgency and interconnectedness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SDGs are the focus of the ISCC. This provides an opportunity for teams to engage in research and propose solutions for contemporary issues on a global scale.

Each student team will identify a significant contemporary social problem they would like to address within the SDG assigned to their Division. **For the 2026 competition, the following SDGs will be the focus:**

Graduate Division	SDG# 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
Undergraduate Division	SDG# 4 Quality Education

The team will conduct research to gain an understanding of how to frame the problem and its complex, systemic causes (i.e., economic, political, social, cultural, and individual factors). The team then analyzes and develops recommendations that they believe would mitigate or solve the problem, with attention to a leadership theory or theories and actions that can be applied. The case study and plan of action should be realistic and practical—and the suggested actions should not create other unintended problems that could be worse than the original problem.

The ISCC consists of three rounds:

- Round One - Executive Summary
- Round Two - Poster Presentation
- Final Round - Finalists' Presentations

Each round is further described in this document. Each round is judged separately, and the Final Round is comprised only of the three top teams in each division determined by the combined totals of their first- and second-round scores. Unique judges will be assigned to each round, and the winner will be determined solely by a team's performance in the Final Round.

In addition to submitting an Executive Summary before the conference, teams will attend the ILA Global Conference in Toronto where all teams will participate in a judged Poster Session. The top 3 teams in each division will be part of the Finalists' Presentations the last evening of the conference. Winners will be announced at the Saturday Plenary.

Teams are encouraged to integrate the conference theme into their case. If advanced to the final round, teams should weave learnings from their conference experiences into Final Presentations.

Important Deadlines (Times are EDT, the local time in Toronto)

Wed. 6 May	Team Signup Opens https://ila.memberclicks.net/2026-iscc
Wed. 23 September	Team Signup and final roster deadline. Sign up at: https://ila.memberclicks.net/2026-iscc . If making changes to the submitted roster, email conferences@ilaglobalnetwork.org
Thurs. 24 September	Individual team member conference registration deadline https://ilaglobalconference.org/registration/
Thurs. 15 October 23:00 EDT	Executive Summary (Round 1) due by Email to: casecompetition@ilaglobalnetwork.org .
Wed. 28 October Time TBD	Judging of hosted ISCC posters in Toronto (Round 2)
Wed. 28 October 23:00 EDT	Notification emails sent to teams advancing to the Finalists Round - (Sent to the team's contact person)
Fri. 30 October Time TBD	Finalist Presentations (Round 3)
Sat. 31 October Time TBD	Finalists recognized and winners announced at the Plenary session!

Competition Rules

Competition Divisions: The competition will consist of two divisions: Undergraduate and Graduate (Master and Doctoral). Teams including students from both divisions will compete in the Graduate Student Division.

Team Composition: Each team will be comprised of two to four students. Students may enter as a team representing their respective college or university, or individuals from multiple institutions may join together to form a team. Schools may enter multiple teams. All team members must be students at the time of competition. Recent graduates are not eligible to compete.

Team Sign Up: Each team must SIGNUP by the deadline and provide the names of their team members by the deadline using this form <https://ila.memberclicks.net/2026-iscc>

Conference Registration: ISCC participation is included with conference registration so each student must complete a conference registration form and pay the appropriate registration fees by the deadline. ILA members enjoy substantial savings on registration! If your university is covering the costs with a single payment, have your administrator contact ILA at conferences@ilaglobalnetwork.org to set up a group invoice and pre-paid registration code.

Case Preparation: Teams may explore any public information source that would be accessible by any scholar, student, or professional consulting group. Teams may consult books or articles, search libraries, use the Internet, and so forth.

Assistance: Teams may be advised by faculty, coaches, or others prior to the competition; however, advisers, coaches, or others may not contribute to any of the team's products. Teams are free to receive verbal feedback on initial drafts and practice presentations. More information regarding team coaches is provided in this document.

Executive Summary: Teams will prepare and submit by the deadline an Executive Summary of no more than 2 single-spaced pages in Word (excluding cover page and references). The Executive Summary is Round One.

Poster Presentation: Teams will prepare and display a physical poster at the Global Conference. Exact poster dimensions are forthcoming. All members of the team should be present Wednesday afternoon and your team should be ready to share a 5-minute overview of your poster with ISCC judges as well as other conference attendees. The Poster Presentation is Round Two.

Finalist Presentations: After the first two rounds, the top three teams in each division will deliver a 10-minute oral presentation to a new panel of judges at an open session that other registrants may attend. Student teams should have a well-prepared presentation on their analysis of the situation; a laptop and projector will be provided.

Academic Integrity & Use of Artificial Intelligence

The ILA International Student Case Competition is committed to fostering original thinking, rigorous analysis, and ethical scholarship. All participating teams are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity throughout the competition.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

AI tools have become a common part of academic and professional work, and the ISCC recognizes their value as a research and productivity aid. Teams are permitted to use AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, or similar) for purposes such as literature searches, data summarization, and editing. However, the core analysis, recommendations, and conclusions presented in your submission must reflect the original thinking of your team.

Any use of AI tools must be disclosed in an appendix to your submission. This disclosure should identify the tool(s) used and briefly describe the purpose for which each was used (e.g., "ChatGPT was used to assist with initial literature search; Claude was used for grammar and editing review"). Submissions that include undisclosed AI-generated content will be considered a violation of competition integrity.

Academic Integrity

By submitting an entry to the ISCC, all team members attest that:

- The work submitted is original and was produced independently by the team.
- All sources, data, and references have been properly cited.
- Any use of AI tools has been fully disclosed as described above.

Violations of these standards may result in immediate disqualification from the competition.

Questions about what constitutes appropriate use of AI or other resources should be directed to the Case Competition Planning Team at casecompetition@ilaglobalnetwork.org prior to submission.

Summary of the Competition Rounds

Round One – Executive Summary: Teams will prepare an Executive Summary of no more than two single-spaced pages (excluding cover page and references). If you include an appendix on AI use (see above), it does not count toward the two-page limit. The Executive Summary must be emailed by the submission deadline **as a word document to casecompetition@ilaglobalnetwork.org using the subject line: ISCC [your team name] Round 1 Submission.**

Round Two – Poster Presentation: A visual Poster Presentation and presentation by all team members based on the case information provided in Round One, the Executive Summary. The Poster should highlight the most salient points from the research that each team conducted to prepare their Executive Summary, using both text and images. All members of the team should be present to present a 5-minute overview of your poster to ISCC judges and to respond to questions. Judges will have special badge ribbons; other conference attendees may stop by to learn about your case. Poster dimensions are forthcoming.

The top three teams in each division will advance to the Final Round.

The Final Round – Finalists’ Presentations: The top three teams in each division (Undergraduate and Graduate) will deliver a 10-minute oral presentation with the assistance of a visual slide presentation to a separate panel of judges followed by a question-and-answer period with the judges for up to an additional 10 minutes. The Final Round may be attended by other conference participants.

Guidelines: Round One – Executive Summary ***(Send via email by the deadline)***

An Executive Summary is a concise and impactful summary of the social problem or challenge being addressed. It highlights the specific framing of the problem, briefly summarizes the major points to be covered in reference to the problem, including the history and causes of the identified problem, and outlines the recommendations that will be offered to address the problem.

Although it is an abbreviated representation of the case/project to be presented, a judge should be able to acquire the information needed from the Executive Summary, i.e. Round One, to adequately prepare for the Poster Presentation, i.e. Round Two. Based on the Executive Summary, judges should have a fundamental understanding about the problem being addressed, the reasons it exists, and the actions being recommended to help mitigate it.

Your Executive Summary Should...

- Be presented as a WORD document (So any identifying information can be redacted) that presents your case in an organized, concise, and compelling manner.
- Be no more than two single-space pages. Note: If you include an AI usage appendix (see above), that does not count toward your two-page limit.
- Be written as a formal document.
- References should be in a consistent format as decided upon by each team.
- Be emailed to casecompetition@ilaglobalnetwork.org using the subject line: ISCC [your team name] Round 1 Submission by the deadline.

Executive Summary Guidelines:

- Write the Executive Summary after you have completed the analysis and decided on your recommendations.
Tips:
 - Make the summary concise and be sure to show why you've arrived at your conclusions.
 - Don't introduce any information that you do not intend to cover in the case competition.
- Clearly frame the purpose or the problem being addressed in a complete, concise sentence.
- Present the major points in the same order you intend to address them in your presentation. Organization is key for communicating your message.
- Summarize the recommendations in a clear, compelling manner. Inform your reader/judge directly but thoroughly about what corrective actions you will suggest. Avoid elaborating on each recommendation in your Executive Summary; that is the purpose of the full case presentation.
- Reread the summary carefully and ask yourselves:
 - Is our problem statement clear?
 - Did we include key recommendations?
 - Could our judge peruse this without missing the main points?
 - Are we creating interest in hearing the full case based on this summary?
- Proofread and edit.
- Make sure that the incorporation of external scholarly work is reflected appropriately in citations and references.
- Have someone not familiar with your case read the summary—a classmate, professor, staff member, etc. How did they react? What parts were confusing or unclear? Their reaction might be similar to that of a judge. Revise as necessary.

Round One (Executive Summary) Judging Criteria

Criteria	Points	Example
<p><i>Grasp of the Issues, Feasibility of Recommendations</i></p> <p>Do the team members have an understanding of all the facets: leaders, followers, and context? Do they correctly identify the problems before recommending solutions?</p>	20	12-14=Average Team 15-18=Above Average 19-20=Exceptional
<p>Articulation, Persuasiveness, Comprehensiveness</p> <p>Are the team members thoughtful about the problems, understand the feasibility of and believe in their recommendations?</p>	20	12-14=Average Team 15-18=Above Average 19-20=Exceptional
<p>Demonstrated Relationship Between Theory and Practice</p> <p>Do the team members demonstrate an understanding of human behavior, leadership theories, and the ability to apply them in the abstract and practically?</p>	20	12-14=Average Team 15-18=Above Average 19-20=Exceptional
<p>Awareness of the Complex Nature of Leadership</p> <p>Do team members understand what is possible and what is not? Do they have knowledge of the limitations and the responsibilities of leaders? Of the contexts?</p>	20	12-14=Average Team 15-18=Above Average 19-20=Exceptional
<p>Organization, How Well Presented</p> <p>Is the summary self-explanatory? Does it include all salient points, is not too dense, is readable and attractive?</p>	10	7 = Average 8=Above Average 9-10 = Exceptional
<p>Executive Summary</p> <p>Does the Executive Summary present a foundation for understanding the problem and contribute to the presentation? Do team members understand what an Executive Summary contains?</p>	10	7 = Average 8=Above Average 9-10 = Exceptional

Guidelines: Round Two –Poster Presentation

Overview: The Poster Presentations offer teams of students a forum to demonstrate their understanding of leadership and the systemic issues relevant to an identified social problem communicated in the Executive Summary. The poster itself serves as the story board, summarizing information and guiding the presentation.

Judges, identified by badge ribbons, will visit their assigned posters to hear the team’s presentation and ask questions. Other conference participants may also visit during the poster session to learn about your case and ask questions.

Your Poster Should:

- Meet the Measurement guidelines (forthcoming)
- Include your team name and the names of your team members
- Be easily readable and visually appealing

Poster Presentation Guidelines:

- Include all members of your team and be engaging
- Be approximately 5 minutes long

Round Two (Poster Presentation) Judging Criteria

After hearing the team’s presentation, judges will submit assessments based on the criteria on the following page. Scores and feedback for all participating teams will be emailed to the team contact person (preferably a Coach).

Criteria	Points	Specifics
Appropriate and Effective Framing of the Problem	15 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the problem being addressed framed in a manner that allows a focused, yet comprehensive analysis of its existence? ● Do team members understand the framing of the problem and why the specific framing is so vital to the plan they ultimately propose?
Grasp of the Issues and Systemic Nature of Analysis	20 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do team members demonstrate an understanding of all the factors underlying the problem—social, economic, political, contextual, individual (leaders, followers)? ● Do team members demonstrate a contextual understanding of the problem by incorporating a perspective from the host country? ● Do team members correctly identify the most pertinent causes of the problem before recommending actions?

<p>Awareness of the Complexity of Implementation</p>	<p>15 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do team members demonstrate an understanding about the feasibility (what is possible and what is not) and potential impacts of the recommended actions? ● Do team members demonstrate an understanding about the need for leadership and the responsibilities of leaders and others in implementing their recommendations? ● Do team members demonstrate an understanding of the contexts in which the actions should be implemented?
<p>Application of Leadership Theory</p>	<p>20 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do team members demonstrate a grasp of applicable leadership theories and are they able to employ them in addressing their specific problem.
<p>Articulation, Organization, and Presentation</p>	<p>15 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do the team members speak about their theories and conceptual frameworks in a clear and understandable manner? ● Do team members present their arguments in a coherent and compelling manner? ● Is the overall case and the recommended actions easy to follow and understand?
<p>Poster</p>	<p>15 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are the visuals self-explanatory? ● Do the visuals include all salient points? ● Is the information readable, visually appealing, and not too dense? ● Does the presentation incorporate appropriate visuals?

Final Round – Finalists’ Presentations

Overview: The Finalist Presentation, i.e. Final Round, allows only teams who advanced from rounds One and Two to formally present their case to a new set of judges, incorporating all they have gathered from attending the conference. Although these said incorporations are expected of students to be made in the final round, the final round is judged independently from Rounds One and Two. The Finalist Presentation should stand on its own as the judges and audience members won’t have read the Executive Summary nor visited the Poster Presentation.

Each division—undergraduate and graduate—will have their own room, judges, and audience. Each room will have a laptop and projector. Each team should arrive by the time noted in the email notification and bring their clearly named presentation on a thumb/flash drive so it can be quickly loaded and launched.

Finalist teams will each have a total of 20 minutes: 10 minutes to deliver a formal presentation in front of an audience, and 10 minutes for questions. Student teams should have a strong, prepared presentation on their analysis of the situation.

Final Round Finalists' Presentation Judging Criteria

At the conclusion of all the presentations, judges will compile scores using the Final Round Criteria and rank order the teams based on their Finalist Presentations to determine the final results of the competition.

Final Round Criteria	Weight
<p>Presentation Substance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do team members demonstrate a grasp of applicable leadership theories and are they able to employ them in addressing their specific problem? ● Do team members incorporate theory and research to construct relevant and persuasive arguments? ● Are the arguments adequately supported by evidence? ● Do the arguments demonstrate a systemic understanding of the problem? ● Is there evidence that teams participated actively in the ILA conference? 	50 points
<p>Presentation Structure and Organization of Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the information and arguments organized logically and coherently; does the information flow from point to point in a coordinated manner? ● Are the main points of the case easy to identify and do they reasonably build off each other? 	30 points
<p>Presentation Style and Articulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do team members deliver the presentation in a manner that is clear and understandable? ● Do team members articulate their arguments in a compelling and persuasive manner? ● Do team members appear passionate and knowledgeable about the social issue they've identified? 	20 points

Guidelines for Team Coaches: Helpful Tips

Teams may be advised by faculty, coaches, or other individuals prior to the competition; however, advisers, coaches, or other individuals may not contribute to any of the team's products (i.e. Executive Summary, Poster, or Finalist Presentation). Teams are free to receive verbal feedback on initial drafts and practice presentations. Listed below are some helpful tips and expectations for team coaches in helping to prepare their respective teams for the International Student Case Competition.

-Coaches should follow up with team members to make sure they each complete a conference registration form by the deadline.

-Coaches are allowed to and should be actively involved in guiding their team's problem statement, analysis, and recommendations relevant to their present case.

-Coaches should ensure that the teams are framing problems in a manner this is consistent with the competition's expectations.

-It is the expectation that team coaches ensure that student teams conduct a systemic and thoughtful analysis of the problem, and that they provide recommendations that are both doable and advantageous.

-Coaches should also make sure that students are applying leadership concepts in a manner that is consistent with the leadership theories they support; thereby advising students to be explicit in recognizing the concepts and theories being utilized.

-Finally, while coaches should help students prepare the oral defense of their projects where needed, coaches SHOULD NOT do the work of the student teams.

Coaches should make sure their teams are strategic in their conference participation; attending those sessions that will be most helpful as they continue to develop their case.

It is preferred that coaches serve as the main contact person for the teams, monitoring their email accordingly. Additionally, team coaches should make sure students are "present" and prepared for the competition.

It is the intention of the Leadership Education Member Community to conduct webinars leading up to the conference that further illuminate these helpful tips to ISCC coaches.

If you have questions related to the ISCC, please direct them to the coordinator, Kyle O'Dell, via email at casecompetition@ilaglobalnetwork.org.

Remember, all teams must sign up for the ISCC and all team members must complete a conference registration form and pay associated fees. If your university is covering their membership and registration fees, you may contact conferences@ilaglobalnetwork.org to set up a group invoice and pre-paid code for your students.