



State University  
of New York

Student  
Contests  
and  
Industry-  
Sponsored  
Projects  
Guidelines



**T**his handbook is intended to serve as the framework for FIT faculty, administration, and staff as well as fashion industry professionals in planning and conducting student contests and industry-sponsored projects. The handbook contains the official rules, guidelines, process, and procedures that must be followed. A link to the official FIT policy concerning contests approved by the FIT Board of Trustees in 2015 can be found at [fitnyc.edu/contests](https://fitnyc.edu/contests).

The Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for overseeing all aspects of student contests and industry-sponsored projects. All inquiries can be directed to Alex Nazarov, coordinator of Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects, at [contests@fitnyc.edu](mailto:contests@fitnyc.edu) or (212) 217-4051.

# Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects

## PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

### Concept and Proposal Development

Contest/project concepts must be submitted in their entirety in the form of a written proposal to the appropriate department chair and dean (or designee/s) for review. The [FIT Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects Proposal Form](#) can be found online at [fitnyc.edu/contests](http://fitnyc.edu/contests).

### Proposal Review

If approved by the dean, the proposal is forwarded to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration. If approved by the vice president for Academic Affairs (or designee), the proposal shall be submitted to other administrative FIT offices for further evaluation and comment.

The following units review the proposal to assess impact on college operations and required support:

- Communications and External Relations—to evaluate issues related to marketing and promotion and to assess impact and value of contest/project on brand and image
- Development—to ensure alignment of contest/project with fundraising activity of the college
- Finance and Administration—to review proposal for financial considerations

### Agreement Development

Upon receiving administrative approval, the contest/project proposal is deemed fully authorized and is next submitted to FIT's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) to develop a suitable legal draft instrument(s) incorporating the key provisions, terms, and conditions for the development of an agreement between FIT and the sponsor. Unless otherwise directed, all proposals should be forwarded to the OGC, to the attention of General Counsel Stephen Tuttle at [Stephen\\_Tuttle@fitnyc.edu](mailto:Stephen_Tuttle@fitnyc.edu). The proposal will then be assigned by the general counsel to an attorney for prompt attention.

Once prepared, the draft agreement instrument(s) is then circulated by the designated OGC attorney to the dean or designee and to designated contacts in each of the essential FIT offices for review and comment on the drafts. Assuming there are no internal objections to the form and content of the draft, the instrument is then sent to the contest/project sponsor for review and comments. (The extent of comments and number of revisions required will vary from agreement to agreement.)

### Execution of Agreement with Sponsor

In the absence of special arrangements, all agreements must be signed by the contest/project sponsor prior to signature by FIT or an affiliated entity.

### Authorized Signatures

All agreements for contests or industry partnerships must be signed by a party authorized to execute agreements on behalf of FIT and the FIT Foundation:

1. President of the college/president of the FIT Foundation
2. Treasurer of the college/chief financial officer of the FIT Foundation

### **Execution Prior to Effective Date**

All agreements must be submitted for execution prior to the start date of the contest/project.

### **Record Retention**

Unless otherwise required or requested, two (2) counterpart originals of the agreement shall be executed by the parties, with one original being retained by FIT and the other being provided to the sponsor for its records. The fully executed FIT original counterpart shall be retained in a central repository maintained by the Office of the General Counsel with a copy held by the Office of Academic Affairs. Digital copies of the agreement will be maintained in accordance with the college's records retention policy.

### **Distribution and Retention of Student Consents**

Student consent documents will be distributed to course instructors or faculty advisors, who will secure student signatures and return completed materials to the contest coordinator for scanning and filing in the Office of Academic Affairs. Course instructors or faculty advisors must carefully review these instruments to ensure that: (i) consents are timely received from all students enrolled and participating in the contest/project; and (ii) that the consent includes the student's signature, and does not otherwise have any marks that appear to edit the form. Any questions concerning the document should be brought to the attention of the OGC immediately upon detection.

### **Receipt of Revenue**

Both the amount and the process for the transfer of revenue to FIT or the FIT Foundation should be stated in the agreement. Payment to FIT or the FIT Foundation should be transmitted directly to the college's controller.

### **Accounting for Funds**

The controller will ensure that all payments and revenues are deposited and accounted for in the appropriate ledger and cost centers.

### **Financial Reporting**

The vice president for Academic Affairs (or designee) will have direct online access to all accounts in order to monitor revenue and expenditures. If requested, the finance office can provide regular reports on account status.

## Designation in the Agreement

Both the amount and the process for payments to FIT must be stated in the agreement. Payments to faculty advisors and students are covered in section IV below.

# GUIDELINES

## I. Philosophy and Guiding Principles

Contests and industry-sponsored projects, competitions, collaborations, and student projects are essential and important components of teaching and learning at FIT.

These activities are excellent examples of FIT's commitment to applied learning, providing students with opportunities to engage in research, critical thinking, and problem solving in combination with real-world assignments and deadlines set in a professional environment. Together with industry critiques, mentoring, and internships, these experiences connect students with professionals in the field under the guidance of FIT faculty and are, therefore, key elements of their overall curricular experience.

Sponsors benefit from their engagement with creative and innovative student talent and the expertise of faculty mentors. FIT offers a unique opportunity to engage students from across design, business, and liberal arts programs and schools, providing an interdisciplinary approach to an industry challenge.

Student contests and industry-sponsored projects are research based and offer valuable networking, scholarship, and employment opportunities as well as possibilities for internships and grants. They often require the integration of multiple skill sets and thus support the curriculum by demonstrating to our students the value of applying skills outside the confines of a specific course or learning outcome. Moreover, such work provides a platform to demonstrate the creativity and expertise of students and faculty.

Often, these initiatives are team based and allow for a broader dimension for interdisciplinary teaching and learning within and across departments, schools, and other institutions both here and abroad.

A carefully developed initiative best ensures valuable, rewarding, and productive outcomes for students and project sponsors.

## II. Developing a Proposal

It is a prerequisite for all student contests and projects involving industry sponsors that the process commence with a clearly articulated proposal addressing requirements outlined in Section III in order to evaluate a contest/project concept.

When there is consensus to participate in a contest or industry-sponsored project, and when the objectives and requirements are mutually satisfactory, FIT will prepare a suitable agreement between the college and the sponsor for signature. Contracts

between the college and industry sponsors are required for all student contests and industry-sponsored student projects, competitions, and collaborations **administered** through FIT.

Contracts and/or agreements will not be signed until the terms and conditions are reviewed to ensure that:

1. The contest/project has educational value;
2. FIT's brand/image is supported and protected;
3. The students' rights are protected;
4. FIT's financial, legal, and other interests are protected; and
5. The contest/project parameters are clearly articulated.

### **III. Student Contest and Industry-Sponsored Project Objectives**

Contests and industry-sponsored projects complement student learning outcomes. FIT encourages initiatives that reflect institutional priorities and create meaningful educational experiences for both students and sponsors.

Contest or industry-sponsored project proposals are most likely to be approved when they articulate opportunities for students to apply their studies and creativity to a design, business, or marketing challenge; to gain exposure to the professional world; and to network and receive industry recognition for their work.

FIT considers the following factors when evaluating contest and industry-sponsored project proposals:

- Educational value and relationship to FIT's mission;
- Appropriateness of the project and objectives to the curriculum;
- Interdisciplinary opportunities for students to engage with others outside their own major within the context of the contest;
- Project timeline and student workload;
- Financial resources required to undertake the project;
- Sponsor's commitment to actively engage with project participants; and
- Faculty member availability to mentor students.

**Benefits for the Students:** These may include monetary awards; travel/study opportunities; display, publication, or production of work; employment or internships; or some combination thereof.

**Benefits for the College and Participating Departments:** Recognition for educational and creative excellence and demonstration of support from the industries served by the college.

**Benefits for the Sponsor:** Engagement with progressive and innovative student talent; access to an environment where an interdisciplinary approach to design, business, and the liberal arts results in creative designs, plans, applications, or business approaches; and public recognition of the sponsor's philanthropic activities and support of higher education.

#### IV. Student Contest or Industry-Sponsored Project Requirements

FIT will determine with the sponsor whether the contest or industry-sponsored project will be open to all FIT students or to cohorts enrolled in a specific course or major.

In order to consider and evaluate the proposed contest or industry-sponsored project and prepare a written agreement that fully documents the initiative, the sponsor and designated FIT course instructor or liaison must develop and submit a written proposal using the [FIT Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects Proposal Form](#) found online at [fitnyc.edu/contests](http://fitnyc.edu/contests). A proposal must include the following:

1. Description of the contest or industry-sponsored project theme, including goals and objectives to be met through this activity.
2. Complete description of contest/project rules/guidelines and itemization of submissions to be judged.
3. Description of judging criteria.
4. General composition of the judging panel. (No member of the judging panel may be a member of the faculty of the department participating in the contest.)
5. Timetable for contest or project, including any promotional and marketing communications activity.
6. Adequate time must be planned in order to develop and execute the agreement between the college and the sponsor, to announce the event and conduct initial meetings with students, and to permit sufficient time for students to develop their concepts and prepare their submissions.
7. To ensure and maximize student participation and success, the timetable should take into account FIT's academic calendar. The fall semester begins in late August and ends in mid-December. The spring semester begins in late January and ends in mid-May. **Deadlines for submitting a completed proposal are May 1 for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester.**
8. Contact information for the sponsor's liaison with the college.
9. Contact information for the sponsor's in-house public relations and marketing representative or outside public relations and marketing consultant, or both.
10. Ways in which the sponsor plans to interact with the students during the life of the project.
11. Description of the sponsor's financial support for the contest or industry-sponsored project, which may include:
  - a. awards to winning students:

Awards vary depending on (i) the complexity of the contest or industry-sponsored project, (ii) the sponsor's stature in the industry, and (iii) whether the sponsor

requests that we deviate from the college's policy concerning student ownership of work (as described below).

The existing minimum for student awards is **\$5,000**, which can be divided among winners at the sponsor's discretion. Awards are to be sent directly from the sponsor to the winners, who are responsible for the payment of applicable taxes, if any. Students may also be required to complete paperwork to facilitate payment.

- b. materials and resources for student use in preparation of designs and/or presentations;
- c. stipend for the faculty advisor(s); stipend is to be sent directly from the sponsor to the faculty advisor(s), who is/are responsible for the payment of applicable taxes, if any; faculty advisor(s) may also be required to complete paperwork to facilitate payment.
- d. optional costs associated with the presentation of awards or a reception if the event is to be held at FIT; and
- e. related travel, and shipping and handling expenses, if any.

**The college charges an administrative fee of 10% of the prize money.**

## **V. Student Awards/Ownership**

In accordance with the college's [Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects Policy](#), **students are the sole owners of works created as a result of participation in student contests and industry-sponsored student projects.** Students are eligible to receive prizes or monetary awards in connection with their participation in such contests or industry-sponsored projects. Subject to the monetary requirements described above in **Section III: Student Contest and Industry-Sponsored Project Objectives** and **Section IV: Student Contest or Industry-Sponsored Project Requirements**, the amount of these awards is determined by the contest or project sponsor. Compensation to students for the purchase of the rights to their work must also conform to standards set forth by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

**Assignments of Rights and Waivers:** While students are the sole owners of their work, there are some cases where contests or industry-sponsored projects require students to relinquish the ownership of rights to their work to the college or to the contest/industry sponsor as a requirement for participation. In these instances, students are required to sign a suitable consent and release form, in which they acknowledge, among other things, that they are relinquishing their rights: (i) to know, before or after, if the college or sponsor is using their work; (ii) to approve the college's or sponsor's use of their work; and (iii) to sell their work to anyone else in the future. In addition, students may be required to waive any privacy rights to the work that they create in class. Students who do not wish to waive their rights will not be required to share their work with



the industry sponsor. In all cases, students must achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

**Royalties:** All royalties that result from the sale of student coursework during and after the time they are enrolled at FIT belong to the participating students.

**Post-Graduation:** Any agreement regarding the ownership of student work after the student graduates from FIT will be negotiated between the student and the industry sponsor.

## **VI. Public Relations and Marketing Communications**

It is the responsibility of FIT's Division of Communications and External Relations to direct an institutional marketing and communications program that is consistent with the overall objectives of the college in order to enhance image and build the FIT brand.

Therefore, any promotional plans (including advertising, marketing, media outreach, and special events) that relate to the contest or industry-sponsored project must be coordinated in a timely manner with FIT's Division of Communications and External Relations for approval prior to execution. Minimum advance notice for review of plans or materials is seven (7) working days; for filming on campus, ten (10) working days; and for holding a related special event, fifteen (15) working days.

Proposals should include articulation of any anticipated or potential activities such as:

- Email marketing campaigns, posters, or other on-campus promotional communications
- Development of print materials, display signage, or other collateral
- Website development and/or other digital initiatives, including the use of social media
- Use of FIT name and/or logo on any surface and in any form
- Use of sponsor logo on FIT properties

All inquiries from those businesses interested in becoming a sponsor should be addressed to:

Alex Nazarov

Coordinator of Student Contests and Industry-Sponsored Projects

Fashion Institute of Technology

Office of Academic Affairs

227 West 27th Street, Room C913

New York, NY 10001-5992

[contests@fitnyc.edu](mailto:contests@fitnyc.edu)

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