2027

ENERGY DISTRICT CUP RULES

Collegiate Design Competition

Official Class of 2027 Rules

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Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Definitions

BYOD	bring your own district
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
EUI	energy use intensity
HVAC	heating, ventilating, and air conditioning

Building systems	Major building equipment, controls, envelope components, and operational systems that affect energy use, comfort, performance, reliability, or facility operations. Building systems may include heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems, lighting, controls, building envelope, equipment schedules, and operational practices.
Competing team	Team that submits the required final deliverable package and final event materials by the applicable deadline and is eligible to present to judges.
Deliverable	A required competition submission, such as a report, spreadsheet, presentation, poster, team story, or photo. This document also refers to deliverables as “required materials” or “submissions” where appropriate.
District	A distinct campus, facility cluster, or developed area containing a group of buildings and energy loads served by shared or related energy infrastructure. For this competition, a district does not require a thermal district energy system.
Energy efficiency	Measures that reduce the amount of energy needed to provide building services, such as lighting, heating, cooling, ventilation, plug loads, water heating, and other building functions.
Energy portfolio	A prioritized package of energy measures that may include on-site generation, such as distributed solar, distributed wind where appropriate, or other generation technologies; storage, building energy efficiency; HVAC improvements; controls; demand management; electricity procurement; backup generation; reliability strategies; or resilience strategies.
Finalist team	A participating team that is invited by the organizers to submit final deliverables and present at the final competition event. Full-year teams become finalists by submitting a progress deliverable package that demonstrates sufficient progress and rules compliance. One-semester teams become finalists by completing registration and the required check-in submission for their small district use case, subject to eligibility and organizer capacity.
Full-year team	A team competing for the full academic year, from fall 2026 through spring 2027.
One-semester team	A team competing in the spring semester of 2027.
Participating team	A team that submits a complete registration entry through HeroX by the applicable registration deadline and meets eligibility requirements.
Reliability	For this competition, reliability refers to the ability of the proposed energy strategy to support dependable district operations and reduce exposure to energy disruptions, constraints, or service interruptions.

Resilience	For this competition, resilience refers to the ability of the proposed energy strategy to help the district prepare for, withstand, respond to, or recover from energy disruptions or operational constraints. Teams may discuss resilience where relevant to district goals, critical loads, backup generation, storage, energy management, efficiency, or operational planning.
Screening-level analysis	A conceptual analysis used to compare options, estimate relative cost savings and energy impacts, document assumptions, and support decision-making. Screening-level analysis is not intended to serve as investment-grade audit work, construction-ready engineering design, or a final implementation plan.

Competition Overview

Welcome to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Energy District Cup Collegiate Design Competition!

The Energy District Cup builds from the Solar District Cup model and challenges multidisciplinary collegiate student teams to develop practical energy proposals that consider multiple technologies and strategies rather than a specific solution for campuses or defined districts. These strategies may include distributed solar, distributed wind where appropriate, other on-site generation technologies, energy efficiency, building systems, storage, electricity procurement, and energy management.

Teams evaluate how energy is used, managed, generated, stored, and improved across a district, then recommend solutions that respond to the district's goals for cost savings, reliability, affordability, and long-term energy planning.

Students act as an energy planning team advising campus or district decision makers. Each team prepares a technical proposal that evaluates building energy performance, energy efficiency opportunities, building systems opportunities, on-site generation opportunities (including the potential for distributed solar and, where appropriate, distributed wind), electricity procurement options where on-site generation is not feasible or appropriate, costs, savings, affordability, and other financial impacts.

Teams may participate through one of two options: a full academic year option beginning in fall 2026 or a one-semester option beginning in January 2027. Both options use this rules document and conclude at the same final competition event.

Full-academic-year teams (referred to as "full-year" teams) address energy efficiency/building systems and on-site generation (including solar and, where appropriate, distributed wind), electricity procurement, and energy management for a larger real or realistic campus/district scenario, referred to in these rules as a "district use case" and which generally consists of three to five buildings. One-semester teams also address both focus areas for a smaller district use case, generally one to three buildings, with an emphasis on a preliminary, screening-level comparison of cost savings and energy impacts and whether the proposed strategy makes financial sense ("financial viability"), reliability or resilience considerations, and implementation feasibility.

For the 2026–2027 competition, full-year district use cases are expected to focus on campuses or defined districts with enough data (three to five buildings) to support the required analysis without requiring construction-ready engineering. One-semester district use cases are expected to be smaller, generally one to three buildings. Organizers may approve different scopes when the available data, district complexity, and expected analysis depth remain appropriate.

Each team competes against other teams in one of multiple divisions. Each division is structured around a district use case or approved student-defined district use case (referred to as "bring your own district" or BYOD). Division judging panels evaluate final technical reports and live presentations. The strongest submissions respond directly to the district's stated goals, identify cost-effective opportunities, demonstrate analysis supported by reasonable data, calculations, and clearly stated assumptions, and communicate a practical implementation path.

As competitors, students:

- Gain experience with real-world campus and district energy planning.
- Develop skills in energy efficiency, building systems, distributed solar and other on-site generation technologies, storage, electricity procurement, reliability or resilience, finance, and implementation planning.

- Engage with faculty, mentors, district representatives, and industry professionals.
- Practice communicating technical recommendations to decision makers and stakeholders.
- Compete to earn national recognition through division awards, a Quick Pitch award, and a Poster award.

The Energy District Cup invites teams of at least three students enrolled in accredited U.S.-based collegiate institutions. In this document, "collegiate institution" refers to any school of postsecondary or higher education, including but not limited to two-year schools such as community colleges, technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and graduate schools. There is no cost to register for or participate in the competition. If the final event is held in person, travel support may be provided, and a virtual participation option will be available for required judged components.

At a Glance: What Teams Must Do

1. Register through HeroX.
2. Work with an assigned district use case or approved student-defined district.
3. Analyze energy efficiency and building systems opportunities.
4. Analyze on-site generation opportunities - including the potential for distributed solar and where appropriate, distributed wind – along with electricity procurement, and energy management opportunities at a level appropriate to the district use case, recognizing that teams are not required to recommend on-site generation if another strategy is better justified.
5. Compare strategies based on cost savings, energy impacts, reliability or resilience, affordability, and whether and how the recommendation could realistically be implemented.
6. Engage with a representative from the team's own campus about energy planning goals and include the summary as an appendix in the progress/check-in submission and final report.
7. Submit the required progress or check-in materials and final competition materials through the organizer-designated submission system.
8. Present recommendations to judges and participate in final event communication activities.

Summary Timeline

Teams may participate through either a full academic year option or a one-semester option. Full-year teams begin in fall 2026 and submit a progress package in December. One-semester teams begin in January 2027 and complete a midsemester check-in. Both groups submit their final materials in April and participate in the final competition event in May 2027.

Target Date	Milestone	Applies To
September 14, 2026	Competition announced and team registration opens	All Teams
September 21, 2026	Informational webinar	All Teams
September 2026	District use case profiles and associated data made available; teams assigned to district use case divisions within one week of registration, where applicable	Full-Year Teams
Oct. 14, 2026 5 p.m. ET	Deadline for teams starting in the fall semester/quarter to complete registration; deadline to request a BYOD use case review	Full-Year Teams

Target Date	Milestone	Applies To
Dec. 17, 2026 5 p.m. ET	Deadline to submit progress deliverable package for full-year teams to receive feedback on rules compliance and design progress	Full-Year Teams
Jan. 14, 2027	Teams receive feedback on progress submissions	Full-Year Teams
Jan. 21, 2027 5 p.m. ET	Deadline for new one- semester teams to complete registration	One-Semester Teams
Mid-March 2027	One-semester teams complete a midsemester check-in submission or meeting, including preliminary efficiency/building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management comparison	One-Semester Teams
April 15, 2027 5 p.m. ET	Deadline to submit final deliverable package from all finalist teams	All Teams
April 29, 2027 5 p.m. ET	Deadline to submit presentation, poster, team story, and photo files from all finalist teams	All Teams
May 2027	Final competition event, including technical presentations, Quick Pitch, and poster session.	All Teams

Background

Campuses and districts face increasingly complex energy planning decisions. Facility leaders must manage aging building systems, rising energy costs, reliability needs, future load growth, on-site generation opportunities, and long-term capital planning. These decisions require professionals who can integrate technical, financial, operational, and stakeholder considerations across multiple energy systems.

The Energy District Cup provides students with applied experience at this intersection. The competition retains the core structure of the Solar District Cup, including real district use cases, multidisciplinary team structures, structured deliverables, mentor support, and professional judging, while expanding the scope to include energy efficiency, building systems, distributed solar and other on-site generation technologies, storage, energy management, and reliability and resilience considerations where relevant to district goals.

The competition is designed to support workforce development by preparing students for careers in campus energy planning, facility energy management, engineering, project development, finance, construction, building systems, distributed generation, and related energy fields. It also provides district partners with student-generated ideas that may inform future planning conversations. The Energy District Cup is a collegiate design competition; there is no expectation that submitted entries will be built or implemented by the students or partner districts.

The competition emphasizes the relationship between reducing energy demand through efficiency and meeting remaining demand through appropriate on-site generation, storage, electricity procurement, and energy management strategies.

The competition emphasizes practical decision-making, including how teams interpret technical and financial results and translate them into recommendations for campus or district decision makers.

Competition Process

Introduction

The Energy District Cup challenges collegiate student teams to analyze a campus or district use case and propose energy solutions that align with district goals. The strongest teams are often multidisciplinary, including students from mechanical, civil, or electrical engineering; building science; construction management; business or finance; town or urban planning; sustainability; engineering technology; communications; or related degree programs.

Teams work from either an organizer-provided district use case or an approved student-defined district use case. Each district use case provides a real-world context, including energy goals, site constraints, energy data, utility rate information, and planning considerations. Teams are also required to engage with their own campus or institution to better understand local energy planning goals and connect competition learning to their educational setting.

To keep the competition scope appropriate for different participation timelines, one-semester teams work with smaller district use cases and are expected to compare efficiency/building systems opportunities with on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management options at a screening level. Full-year teams work with larger district use cases and complete deeper technical, financial, reliability or resilience, and implementation analyses.

The competition organizers host online informational webinars, office hours, and learning content to promote team success. Content may include energy efficiency, building systems, on-site generation, storage, electricity procurement, financial analysis, energy management, district planning, reliability or resilience, and presentation skills.

Goal

The goal for each team is to develop a practical proposal that helps a campus or district reduce energy use and costs, improve reliability, and address district planning goals through energy efficiency, building systems improvements, distributed solar and other applicable on-site generation technologies, storage, electricity procurement, energy management and related strategies. Full-year teams must address both energy efficiency/building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management for a larger district use case, generally three to five buildings.

One-semester teams must also address both focus areas for a smaller district use case, generally one to three buildings, and should focus on screening-level comparison of cost savings, energy impacts, reliability or resilience benefits, and feasibility across the two focus areas. One-semester teams should analyze the assigned or approved small district use case as a whole, but they may recommend improvements for only the building(s), system(s), or site(s) that are the strongest candidates for action. For example, a team may determine that some buildings were recently constructed or upgraded and are not strong candidates for energy efficiency improvements, or that only certain sites are appropriate for on-site generation. In those cases, teams should briefly explain what alternatives were considered and why the recommended building(s), system(s), or site(s) provide the strongest fit for the district goals.

Teams must evaluate on-site generation opportunities where feasible, including the potential for distributed solar and, where appropriate distributed wind. Teams are not required to recommend solar, wind, or any other on-site generation technology if site conditions, utility constraints, cost, reliability needs, or district goals support another approach. Teams may recommend efficiency measures, building system improvements, energy management strategies, storage, backup generation, electricity procurement options, or a combined portfolio when justified by their analysis.

Winning teams are those that best meet the goals and constraints of their district use case, demonstrate credible analysis, identify cost-effective strategies, and communicate a realistic implementation approach.

How To Enter

Teams will use HeroX only to register. All other required competition materials—including progress submissions, check-in materials, final reports, presentations, posters, team stories, and photos—must be submitted through Canvas. All teams accepted to compete will receive access to Canvas and instructions on how to submit competition deliverables.

1. Go to the Challenge page at https://www.herox.com/energy-district-cupmailto:. Send any questions about HeroX to energydistrictcup@nlr.gov.
2. Create an account if needed, activate the account if prompted, and choose to solve or join the Energy District Cup challenge.
3. If joining an existing team, follow the platform instructions to join that team. Otherwise, register interest individually and establish a team before submitting the team registration entry.
4. By the registration deadline, the team captain must complete the registration form and submit the final registration entry. This step identifies the collegiate institution, expected team makeup, requested participation timeline, and whether the team requests an organizer-provided district use case or approval for a student-defined district use case.
5. Registration entries by team members at an eligible collegiate institution that are received by the September or January deadline are deemed participating teams. Teams that successfully complete a registration entry and meet eligibility requirements are accepted if space is available.
6. For teams requesting an organizer-provided district use case, competition organizers assign divisions no more than one week following receipt of a complete registration entry, where possible.
7. Up to five teams from a single school may submit a registration entry. Organizers may assign teams from the same school to different divisions if sufficient divisions are available.
8. Only one person per team may submit a registration entry. Other members can join the registered team through the competition platform. Team members may be added or removed from a team at any time, subject to eligibility requirements.

Teams requesting approval for a student-defined district use case must submit the required BYOD information by the applicable registration deadline. Organizers will review the proposed district for eligibility, appropriate scope, data availability, and alignment with competition requirements. Organizers may approve the proposed district, request revisions or additional information, assign the team to an organizer-provided district use case, or decline the BYOD request if the proposed district does not provide sufficient information for fair evaluation.

How To Win

Each team prepares a technical proposal for its assigned or approved district use case. Judges evaluate the team's written deliverables and final technical presentation. Judges will evaluate how well teams compare efficiency/building systems strategies with on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management strategies and justify the recommended approach based on district goals, land-use or site constraints, cost savings, financial viability, energy impacts, reliability or resilience, and feasibility.

Judges and reviewers may include professionals with experience in campus energy planning, building systems, facility operations, engineering, finance, project development, utilities, electricity procurement, resilience planning, or related fields. District use case representatives may also participate as judges or reviewers where appropriate.

The final event will also include a Quick Pitch and poster session. Quick Pitch and poster awards will be selected separately from the overall division awards.

Divisions and District Use Cases

The Energy District Cup has multiple divisions. Each division has a set of teams that compete against each other. Each division is structured around an organizer-provided district use case or approved student-defined district use case.

One-semester teams will compete only against other one-semester teams, unless otherwise specified by the organizers. One-semester teams will be assigned smaller district use cases, generally one to three buildings, and will be evaluated according to requirements scaled to the shorter competition timeline and smaller district size. Full-year teams and one-semester teams will not be directly compared for division placement unless organizers establish adjusted scoring criteria.

Full-year district use cases are expected to focus on smaller campuses or defined districts generally consisting of three to five buildings with manageable datasets, meaning enough information to support baseline understanding, screening or deeper analysis, cost comparison, and implementation discussion without requiring detailed audits suitable for making a final investment decision ("investment-grade audits"), construction drawings, or the process and requirements for connecting a system to the utility grid ("utility interconnection") studies. One-semester district use cases are expected to be narrower in scope, generally one to three buildings, with sufficient data to support both efficiency/building systems screening and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management screening.

Teams should address emissions or environmental impacts when they are included in the district use case goals or when they materially affect the recommendation. Emissions reductions may strengthen a proposal but are not a universal required scoring metric unless specified in the district use case profile.

District use cases should provide enough information for teams to reasonably evaluate whether distributed solar, distributed wind where appropriate, or other on-site generation technologies are feasible. Where available, use cases may include information about potential generation locations, interconnection points, utility constraints, the amount of generation the local grid can accommodate (hosting capacity), transformer or feeder limitations, and other grid or siting considerations. Teams are not expected to complete utility-grade interconnection studies. If proposed generation would operate while connected to the utility grid or send electricity back to the utility grid, teams should discuss interconnection and distribution considerations at a conceptual level using available information. If generation is proposed only for backup power during outages and would not operate in parallel with the grid, teams should explain that operating approach and focus on reliability, resilience, cost, fuel, operations, permitting, campus or community impacts, and implementation considerations. If on-site generation is not feasible or appropriate, teams may evaluate electricity procurement options that support district goals.

A district use case may include:

- Campus or district history and context.
- District goals related to energy efficiency, cost savings, reliability, resilience, emissions, long-term planning, facility operations, or other stated priorities.
- A map designating the boundaries of the district.

- Building list, building types, approximate square footage, and available energy use information.
- Twelve consecutive months of building or district-level energy data, where available.
- Electric utility rate schedule and, where available, relevant fuel cost information.
- Known energy efficiency, HVAC, controls, or building systems constraints or opportunities.
- Available information on rooftops, parking areas, open land, or other locations potentially suitable for on-site generation.
- Known reliability needs, resilience priorities, essential equipment or operations that must continue during an outage ("critical loads"), or energy management priorities.
- Relevant master plan, facility plan, capital plan, or future load growth information.
- Applicable local zoning and siting, permitting, building code, or interconnection considerations.
- Any district-specific request for proposals or related to decision-maker priorities.

Teams will not be penalized for missing data that are not provided in the district use case. Teams will be evaluated on how reasonably they use available data, identify data gaps, document assumptions, and explain how uncertainty affects their recommendations.

Competition Focus Areas

For the 2026–2027 competition, teams will work within the following focus areas:

Focus Area	Description
Energy Efficiency and Building Systems	Measures that reduce energy consumption or improve building performance, such as HVAC improvements, controls, lighting, building envelope improvements, equipment scheduling, operational changes, and other facility measures. Teams may use energy use intensity (EUI), energy use, demand, cost, comfort, operations, or other relevant metrics to evaluate opportunities.
On-Site Generation, Electricity Procurement, and Energy Management	Distributed solar photovoltaics, distributed wind (where appropriate), other applicable on-site generation technologies, battery storage, electricity procurement options that support district energy goals where on-site generation is not feasible or appropriate, energy management strategies, critical load support, reliability or resilience considerations, and related distributed energy strategies.
Reliability, Resilience, and Implementation Planning	How proposed measures support dependable energy service, critical operations, outage preparation or recovery where relevant, future load growth, and practical implementation. Teams should identify reliability or resilience needs described in the district use case, explain how those needs affect their recommended strategy, and discuss implementation timing, sequencing, or dependencies at a conceptual level. Teams are not expected to complete utility-grade grid studies, backup power designs, or detailed engineering analysis unless the district use case provides data for deeper analysis.

All teams must address both energy efficiency and building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management. The expected district size and level of analysis differ by participation timeline. Full-year teams complete deeper analysis across a larger district use case. One-semester teams complete screening-level analysis across a smaller district use case. Teams are not required to recommend on-site generation if it is not feasible or if another strategy

better meets district goals. Strong recommendations should be based on district data, site constraints, utility context, cost savings, financial viability, reliability or resilience needs, affordability, and implementation feasibility.

The competition requires conceptual planning and analysis, not construction-ready engineering design. Teams should provide enough technical detail to justify their site selections and recommendations, compare options, estimate costs and savings, and explain implementation considerations. Teams are not expected to complete investment-grade energy audits, construction documents, stamped engineering designs, or utility interconnection studies.

Campus Energy Planning Goals Requirement

All teams must engage with their own campus or institution to understand local energy planning goals. This requirement is intended to help students connect the competition to real facility planning contexts, even when their assigned district use case is not their own campus.

Teams should seek to speak with a representative from campus facilities, energy, sustainability, planning, operations, or capital projects. Teams should not request confidential data, make commitments on behalf of their institution, or represent that their competition proposal is endorsed by their institution unless such authorization is provided.

If a team is unable to secure a response after reasonable outreach, the team should document its outreach attempts and summarize any publicly available campus energy or facilities planning information reviewed.

Teams must include a Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary as an appendix to the progress deliverable or one-semester check-in submission and as an appendix to the final technical report. Teams do not need to include the full summary in the body of the technical report, but should use relevant insights to inform their discussion of planning context, implementation constraints, or real-world decision-making where applicable.

What To Submit

Full-year teams submit a progress package in December and final competition materials in April. One-semester teams complete a midsemester check-in and submit the same types of final competition materials in April, with requirements scaled to their shorter timeline and smaller district use case. Deliverables are submitted through Canvas or another organizer-designated submission process.

Deliverable packages are considered on time if they are received by the respective due dates and times posted by the organizers. Late submissions may be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be marked as late when distributed to reviewers or judges.

Progress Deliverable Package—Full-Year Teams

The progress deliverable package allows teams to demonstrate early understanding of the district use case, campus energy planning goals, preliminary opportunity areas, and initial analysis approach. Teams also include the Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary as an appendix. Teams that demonstrate progress consistent with the evaluation statements become finalists. Teams do not compete against each other to become finalists.

Teams must include a Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary as an appendix to the progress deliverable or one-semester check-in submission and final technical report. The appendix should summarize outreach to a representative from the team's own campus or institution, such as facilities, sustainability, energy management, planning, operations, or capital projects staff. If the team is unable to complete a conversation before the progress deliverable deadline, the appendix

should document outreach attempts, identify the offices or roles contacted, summarize any publicly available campus energy or facilities planning information reviewed, and describe the team's plan for continued outreach.

Progress Deliverable Package Content and Evaluation Statements

Content	Content Requirement Summary	Evaluation Statement
1. Executive Project Summary	A concise project overview describing the district use case, team approach, preliminary opportunity areas, and initial recommendations [PDF].	The team communicates its early approach clearly, concisely, and professionally.
2. Preliminary District and Baseline Analysis	Preliminary summary of district buildings, energy use, EUI or other relevant baseline metrics, site constraints, utility rates, data gaps, potential site or building alternatives considered, and available zoning, development standards, or land-use information relevant to the district use case [PDF or spreadsheet].	The team demonstrates a reasonable understanding of available district data, constraints, and assumptions, site considerations, and alternatives.
3. Preliminary Energy Strategy*	Initial screening of energy efficiency/building systems opportunities and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management opportunities [PDF].	The team identifies reasonable opportunities and explains which areas require deeper analysis.
4. Preliminary Evaluation Approach*	Description of the metrics, assumptions, and methods the team will use to compare the strategies identified in Section 3, including cost savings, affordability, financial viability where applicable, reliability or resilience, the order and timing of implementation ("phasing"), permitting, implementation timeline, interconnection where relevant, and implementation feasibility including campus or community stakeholder considerations [PDF or spreadsheet].	The team demonstrates a credible plan for comparing alternatives and evaluating cost effectiveness, reliability or resilience, permitting and interconnection considerations where relevant, and implementation feasibility.
Appendix. Campus Energy Planning Goals Summary	Brief summary of conversation(s) with the team's own campus or institutional representative about energy planning goals, constraints, and priorities [PDF].	The team demonstrates meaningful effort to understand real campus energy planning needs and connects those insights to the competition.

*Section 3 should identify and preliminarily screen potential strategies; Section 4 should explain how the team will compare those strategies in the final analysis, including feasibility considerations such as phasing, permitting, timeline, and interconnection where relevant.

One-Semester Team Check-In Submission

One-semester teams must submit brief check-in materials before the midsemester check-in meeting or review. Check-in materials may include a short slide deck, summary document, or organizer-provided form that confirms district scope, preliminary assumptions, early efficiency/building

systems opportunities, early on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management considerations, preliminary cost-savings comparison approach, and questions or support needs.

Content	Requirement
1. District Scope Confirmation	Confirmation of assigned or approved small district use case and building(s) included in the analysis. Teams should identify any alternative buildings or sites considered if applicable.
2. Preliminary Integrated Analysis Summary	Short summary of district understanding, initial assumptions, preliminary efficiency/building systems opportunities, and preliminary on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management opportunities.
3. Preliminary Cost-Savings Comparison Approach	Description of how the team plans to compare cost savings, financial viability where applicable, energy impacts, reliability or resilience benefits, affordability, and implementation feasibility across focus areas.
4. Questions or Support Needs	Optional list of questions, data gaps, or areas where organizer support would be helpful.
5. Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary	Brief summary of completed outreach or documented outreach attempts with the team's own campus or institutional representative.

Final Deliverable Package—Full-Year Teams

Full-year teams submit a final deliverable package that includes both energy efficiency/building systems analysis and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management analysis. Teams should identify the solution or portfolio of measures that best meets the goals of the district use case. Teams are not required to deeply analyze every possible technology; they should provide a justified, practical recommendation based on the district's needs, data, and constraints.

Content	Requirement
1. Technical Report	A written proposal that summarizes district goals, baseline analysis, energy efficiency/building systems recommendations, on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management recommendations, comparison of cost savings and energy impacts, financial analysis, reliability or resilience considerations, and implementation plan. The report must include the Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary as an appendix [PDF].
2. Technical Analysis Files	Spreadsheets, model outputs, energy production estimates, EUI calculations, savings estimates, assumptions, and other supporting files used to support the proposal [XLSX, ZIP, or other approved format].
3. Final Presentation	Slides for live 15-minute technical presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of judge questions, unless otherwise specified [PPTX or PDF].
4. Poster	Poster summarizing the district challenge, approach, recommendations, key metrics, and expected benefits, such as cost savings, energy impacts, operational improvements, reliability or resilience benefits, affordability, or implementation advantages [PDF].
5. Quick Pitch	A short presentation file or slide deck for a concise public-facing project pitch [PPTX or PDF].
6. Team Story and Photo(s)	A brief team story and one or more team photos for competition communications and outreach, subject to media permissions [DOCX/PDF and image files].
7. End-of-Competition Questionnaire	Completion of organizer-provided student and team questionnaire to support program improvement and workforce tracking [online form].

Recommended full-year report outline:

1. Executive summary
2. District goals and planning context
3. Baseline energy analysis
4. Energy efficiency and building systems analysis
5. On-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management analysis
6. Cost savings and financial analysis
7. Technical reliability or resilience considerations
8. Implementation and feasibility
9. Recommended energy portfolio
10. Conclusion
11. References
12. Appendix: Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary.

Final Deliverable Package—One-Semester Teams

One-semester teams submit a focused final deliverable package for a smaller district use case, generally one to three buildings. One-semester teams must address energy efficiency and building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management, but the expected level of detail is scaled to the shorter timeline and smaller district size. Teams should compare the cost savings, energy impacts, reliability benefits, affordability, and implementation feasibility of efficiency/building systems measures and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management strategies before recommending a practical approach.

One-semester teams also submit final presentation slides, poster, Quick Pitch file, team story and photo(s), and the end-of-competition questionnaire.

Content	Requirement
1. Technical Report	Summarize district goals, baseline analysis, screening-level efficiency/building systems opportunities, screening-level on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management opportunities, cost-savings comparison, financial viability where applicable, reliability or resilience considerations, and recommendation. The report must include the Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary as an appendix [PDF].
2. Technical Analysis Files	Provide supporting calculations, EUI estimates, energy use/savings estimates, generation estimates, cost assumptions, and comparison of options [XLSX, ZIP, or other approved format].
3. Final Presentation	Slides for live 15-minute technical presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of judge questions, unless otherwise specified [PPTX or PDF].
4. Poster	Poster summarizing the district challenge, approach, recommendations, key metrics, and expected benefits such as cost savings, energy impacts, operational improvements, reliability or resilience benefits, affordability, or implementation advantages.
5. Quick Pitch	A short presentation file or slide deck for a concise public-facing project pitch [PPTX or PDF].

Content	Requirement
6. Team Story and Photo(s)	A brief team story and one or more team photos for competition communications and outreach, subject to media permissions [DOCX/PDF and image files].
7. End-of-Competition Questionnaire	Completion of organizer-provided student and team questionnaire to support program improvement and workforce tracking [online form].

Recommended one-semester report outline:

1. Executive summary
2. Small district use case and planning context
3. Baseline energy analysis for selected building(s)
4. Screening-level energy efficiency/building systems analysis
5. Screening-level on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management analysis
6. Cost savings and financial comparison between strategies
7. Technical reliability or resilience considerations
8. Implementation and feasibility considerations
9. Final recommendation
10. References
11. Appendix: Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary.

How Entries Are Scored

A qualified panel of three to five judges comprising professionals with relevant technical or industry expertise and representatives from district use cases or related industries evaluates finalist submissions. Judges review the final technical report, supporting files, and live 15-minute technical presentation. Quick Pitch and poster awards may be evaluated separately.

One-semester teams will be scored using the same categories but with expectations scaled to the smaller district use case and shorter competition timeline.

To support efficient and consistent review, each deliverable is aligned with specific evaluation criteria and reviewer or judge roles. Reviewers and judges may consider information across the full submission package, but teams should structure their deliverables so that required content is easy to locate. The deliverable crosswalk in Appendix G identifies the primary deliverables associated with each scoring category and indicates which reviewers or judges are expected to evaluate each component.

Overall division winners are selected using the following scoring categories:

Scoring Category	Weight	Description
District Goals, Planning Context, and Baseline Understanding	15%	Understanding of district goals, building/load baseline, EUI or other relevant metrics, constraints, available data, data gaps, and assumptions. Campus outreach may be considered where relevant to planning context.
Technical Solution, Analysis, and Reliability/Resilience	30%	Quality of energy efficiency/building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management analysis, including appropriateness of selected measures, credibility of results, consideration of

Scoring Category	Weight	Description
		reliability or resilience and critical loads where applicable, and quality of comparison between strategies.
Financial Performance and Cost Effectiveness	20%	Reasonableness of cost assumptions, customer savings analysis, affordability, financial viability, cost effectiveness, interpretation of financial model results, and comparison of options such as EUI reduction per dollar spent, cost per unit of load served, and relative cost savings across strategies.
Implementation and Feasibility	15%	Consideration of phasing, permitting, operations, maintenance, risks, how implementation could affect campus operations or the surrounding community, staffing or workforce considerations where applicable, and practical implementation.
Written Communication and Professionalism	5%	Clarity, organization, formatting, citations, grammar, and professional quality of the technical report and submitted materials.
Live Technical Presentation and Q&A	15%	Professionalism, clarity of presentation, persuasiveness, ability to answer judge questions, and ability to communicate advantages, disadvantages, and compromises among options to decision makers.

Judges use a 1–6 scoring scale as follows:

Score	Meaning
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Slightly disagree
4	Slightly agree
5	Agree
6	Strongly agree

Judges take the following steps and actions to ensure each finalist entry receives fair consideration:

1. Judges review assigned portions of the final deliverable package submitted by each team.
2. Judges assign preliminary scores using the scoring categories, descriptions, and scoring scale.
3. Judges attend or review each team's live technical presentation and question-and-answer session.
4. The judging panel convenes following presentations to discuss scores and determine division winners.
5. Winners up to first, second, and third places and optional honorable mentions are identified and announced. Individual scores are not released. Judges' feedback is provided to teams individually.

Quick Pitch and Poster Awards

The final event includes a Quick Pitch and poster session modeled as student communication and engagement activities. Quick Pitch and poster awards will be judged separately from division scoring.

These awards recognize teams that communicate their project clearly, concisely, and compellingly to a broader audience.

Quick Pitch presentations may be delivered live, submitted as a prerecorded video, or both, as specified by the organizers. If prerecorded Quick Pitch submissions are required, teams must follow the format, length, file type, and submission instructions provided by the organizers.

Event Component	Description
Quick Pitch	A concise project pitch, no more than three minutes, that explains the district challenge, proposed solution, key benefits, and why the recommendation is compelling. Quick Pitch presentations should reflect the team's overall recommendation, including how the proposed approach balances efficiency, on-site generation or electricity procurement, cost savings, reliability or resilience, and district goals.
Poster	A visual summary of the project suitable for a poster session, including the problem statement, approach, major findings, proposed solution, and key metrics.

Who Can Enter

The Energy District Cup invites teams with at least three students enrolled in accredited U.S.-based collegiate institutions to participate. Students must be enrolled in at least one class and must be pursuing a degree during the competition. Graduating during the competition period does not disqualify team members. To present to the judges at the final event, a student must either be currently enrolled or have graduated no more than one academic semester before the final event.

Students and faculty advisors are not required to be U.S. citizens at the time of the competition. Judges, competition organizer staff, DOE employees, and national laboratory employees are ineligible to compete. Student interns, fellows, or other temporary student employees at DOE or national laboratories may compete if they are enrolled at an eligible collegiate institution, are not involved in competition administration, do not have access to nonpublic competition materials beyond those provided to all teams, and do not receive assistance that is unavailable to other teams.

Eligibility requirements:

- Each team must have at least three student team members.
- Each student team member must be currently pursuing a degree at an accredited U.S.-based collegiate institution.
- Teams may include undergraduate students, graduate students, community college students, technical college students, and students from other eligible postsecondary programs.
- Each team is encouraged to have at least one faculty advisor, but a faculty advisor is not required for participation.

Although any level of collegiate student is eligible, the scope is intended to be challenging for multidisciplinary teams of upper-level undergraduate students. Student participation may be integrated into a senior design or capstone project, elective or independent study course credit, an existing class, a seminar, a student club, or an extracurricular activity.

Final Competition Event

The organizers plan to conduct a final competition event that includes technical presentations, Quick Pitch presentations, and a poster session. The final event may be held in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format. Final event format, schedule, travel support eligibility, and participation expectations

will be communicated to teams no later than Feb. 1, 2027, subject to organizer and DOE approval. Participation in required judged components will be available virtually. Teams will not be disadvantaged in judging because they participate virtually. If an in-person final event is held, travel support, eligibility, and participation expectations will be communicated separately.

Each competing team will deliver a live technical presentation of no more than 15 minutes, followed by up to 10 minutes of judge questions. No prerecorded technical presentations are allowed unless approved by the organizers as an accommodation or due to documented circumstances.

The Quick Pitch and poster session provide additional opportunities for students to practice concise communication, engage with peers and industry representatives, and share their work with a broader audience.

Learning Content

Student team efforts are supported by online training videos, educational webinars, office hours, and resources presented or curated by the competition organizers. Self-paced educational content may be hosted in Canvas or another organizer-designated learning platform. Instructions for accessing the learning content are provided to student teams through the competition platform, direct emails, or live webinars.

Learning content may include:

- Competition rules, deliverables, and judging criteria.
- District energy planning and campus facilities decision-making.
- Building energy efficiency, EUI, HVAC, controls, and operational strategies.
- Distributed solar photovoltaic analysis and energy storage.
- Distributed wind and other on-site generation analysis.
- Comparing efficiency and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management strategies.
- Screening-level analysis for smaller districts.
- Cost savings comparison methods.
- Campus and facilities stakeholder engagement.
- Energy management, reliability, critical loads, and backup generation considerations.
- Financial analysis, customer savings, and cost-effectiveness metrics.
- Development planning, implementation, permitting, operations, and maintenance.
- Interpreting financial model results and translating them into recommendations.
- Site planning and community implementation impacts.
- Resilience and reliability considerations.
- Building science fundamentals.
- Poster and presentation skills.
- Career pathways in energy systems, buildings, facilities, project development, and related fields.

Student teams are encouraged to engage with faculty advisors and mentors for support, guidance, and consultation. Mentors may be teachers, staff, industry professionals, collegiate alumni,

professional society members, utility staff, emeritus professors, adjunct instructors, or faculty from other departments.

Competition Authority and Administration

The Energy District Cup is organized by DOE and the National Laboratory of the Rockies, which is managed and operated by the Alliance for Energy Innovation, LLC (Alliance), for DOE. Funding is provided by DOE. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of DOE or the U.S. government.

The Energy District Cup Class of 2026–2027 is governed and adjudicated by this rules document, which is intended to establish fair contest rules and requirements. The competition is designed and administered by competition organizers consisting primarily of DOE and National Laboratory of the Rockies staff. In the case of a discrepancy with other competition materials or communication, this document takes precedence. The latest release of these rules takes precedence over any prior release. The organizers reserve the right to change contest criteria, rules, timeline, platform instructions, and outcomes as needed. Competitors are encouraged to bring to the organizers' attention rules that are unclear, misguided, or in need of improvement.

Teams must follow both the stated requirements and the clear purpose of each rule. Attempting to avoid a requirement through a technical interpretation may be treated as a rules violation. Questions about these rules or the program overall can be directed to the organizer-designated competition contact.

Alliance does not claim ownership rights in any footage, data, audio, video, photos, graphics, images, written materials, or other content that teams make available to Alliance, including but not limited to entry form submissions; content shared via email, competition platforms, and learning platforms; progress and final deliverable packages; team stories and photos; posters; presentation files; relevant competition-related social media posts; and recordings of webinars and competition events. Media are owned by the submitting team or original rights holder unless otherwise provided herein or agreed in writing.

By submitting media, teams grant Alliance and DOE a non-exclusive, worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, fully paid-up, royalty-free, and transferable right and license, with the right to sublicense through multiple levels, to reproduce, adapt, copy, modify, create derivative works of, distribute, publicly perform, publicly display, digitally transmit, and otherwise use the media in any medium or format for competition, educational, outreach, and promotional purposes. Teams are responsible for ensuring that submitted photos and stories may be shared for these purposes.

Judges may not have personal or financial interests in, be an employee, officer, coordinator, or agent of any entity that is a registered participant in, or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor in this contest.

The Energy District Cup is a collegiate design competition. There is no expectation that submitted entries will be built or implemented by the students, their own campuses, or partner districts.

Partners

The Energy District Cup depends on partnerships to be successful. Partners may include district use case providers, software providers, industry associations, professional societies, utilities, campus energy and facilities professionals, and organizations that support student learning and workforce development. Partners will be acknowledged in competition materials as appropriate.

District use case partners provide real-world context that enables students to practice applied energy planning. Partner districts may provide goals, data, facility context, planning constraints, and feedback. Data shared by partner districts may be modified, simplified, or simulated by the organizers for competition purposes.

Appendix A. Resource List and Analysis Support

The organizers may provide separate resource lists, assumptions guidance, templates, and analysis tools to support teams. These resources may be updated during the competition to reflect available tools, technical guidance, and common team questions. If required templates or assumptions are provided, teams must follow the instructions issued by the organizers. Teams must document assumptions, inputs, formulas, and outputs clearly and cite sources where appropriate.

Appendix B. Submission Requirements for Competition Materials

File Name Requirements

Submitted deliverable package files must be named as follows:

- [DistrictUseCaseAbbreviation]_[SchoolShortName]_[DeliverableSection].[extension]
  - [DistrictUseCaseAbbreviation] is provided within the district use case profile.
  - [SchoolShortName] is your collegiate institution's commonly recognized and distinct short name, abbreviation, or acronym.
  - [DeliverableSection] is given in the Appendix C and D format requirements.
  - [extension] is PDF, XLSX, ZIP, PPTX, DOCX, JPG, PNG, MP4, or another organizer-approved format.

Files must be submitted through Canvas or another organizer-designated submission process. Platform file size limits and accepted file types will be communicated by the organizers.

Appendix C. Progress Deliverable Package Requirements for Full-Year Teams

Section	Format	Content Requirements
1. Executive Project Summary	PDF, up to 6 pages, plus optional title page	Summarize the district, team approach, initial goals, preliminary opportunities, and planned analysis.
2. Preliminary District and Baseline Analysis	PDF or XLSX, up to 10 pages if PDF	Summarize district buildings, energy use, EUI or other relevant baseline metrics, available data, data gaps, utility rates, and assumptions, potential site or building alternatives considered, and available zoning, development standards, or land-use information relevant to the district use case. Include early thinking on how the team will compare efficiency/building systems strategies with on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management strategies.
3. Preliminary Energy Strategy	PDF, up to 12 pages	For full-year teams, identify early opportunities in both energy efficiency/building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management. Explain which options appear most promising and why.
4. Preliminary Evaluation Approach	PDF or XLSX, up to 8 pages if PDF	Describe metrics, assumptions, and methods the team will use to compare the strategies identified in Section 3, including cost savings, affordability, financial viability where applicable, reliability or resilience, phasing, permitting, implementation timeline, interconnection where relevant, and implementation feasibility.
Appendix: Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary	PDF, up to 3 pages	Identify who the team contacted at its own campus or institution, summarize energy planning goals and constraints discussed, and explain how these insights inform the team's competition approach.

Appendix D. Final Deliverable Package Requirements for Full-Year Teams

Teams are encouraged to use headings that match the required deliverable sections and scoring categories so reviewers and judges can easily locate required information.

Section	Format	Content Requirements
1. Technical Report	PDF, up to 25 pages, plus title page and references	Summarize district goals, baseline analysis, energy efficiency/building systems recommendations, on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management recommendations, cost-effectiveness analysis, financial viability where applicable, reliability or resilience considerations, and implementation plan. The Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary should be included as an appendix and does not count toward the technical report page limit.
2. Supporting Analysis Files	XLSX, ZIP, or approved format	Provide supporting calculations, model outputs, energy production estimates, EUI calculations, cost and savings estimates, and assumptions. Include formulas where possible and label units clearly.
3. Technical Presentation	PPTX or PDF, 16:9 aspect ratio	Slides for a live technical presentation to judges. Technical presentations will be 15 minutes followed by up to 10 minutes of judge questions.
4. Poster	PDF, size and template instructions provided by organizers	Poster summarizing the district challenge, approach, recommendations, key metrics, and expected benefits such as cost savings, energy impacts, operational improvements, reliability or resilience benefits, affordability, or implementation advantage.
5. Quick Pitch	PPTX or PDF	Short public-facing pitch summarizing the problem, solution, and why the recommendation matters.
6. Team Story and Photo(s)	DOCX/PDF for story; JPG/PNG for photos	Brief team story, suggested length 150–300 words, plus one or more team photos with appropriate permission to share.
7. End-of-Competition Questionnaire	Online form	Each team member should complete the organizer-provided questionnaire to support program improvement and understanding participants' educational and career outcomes.

Appendix E. Final Deliverable Package Requirements for One-Semester Teams

One-semester teams complete both focus areas for a smaller district use case. Teams are encouraged to use headings that match the required deliverable sections and scoring categories so reviewers and judges can easily locate required information.

Section	Format	Requirement
1. Technical Report	PDF, up to 18 pages, plus title page and references	Summarize district goals, baseline analysis, screening-level efficiency/building systems

Section	Format	Requirement
		opportunities, screening-level on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management opportunities, cost-savings comparison, reliability or resilience considerations, and recommendation. The Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary should be included as an appendix and does not count toward the technical report page limit.
2. Technical Analysis Files	XLSX, ZIP, or approved format	Provide supporting calculations, EUI estimates, energy use/savings estimates, generation estimates, cost assumptions, and comparison of options.
3. Final Presentation	PPTX or PDF	Slides for live 15-minute technical presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of judge questions, unless otherwise specified.
4. Poster	PDF	Poster summarizing the district challenge, approach, recommendations, key metrics, and expected benefits such as cost savings, energy impacts, operational improvements, reliability or resilience benefits, affordability, or implementation advantages.
5. Quick Pitch	PPTX or PDF	Public-facing pitch, no more than 3 minutes
6. Team Story and Photo(s)	DOCX/PDF and JPG/PNG	Brief team story and one or more photos.
7. End-of-Competition Questionnaire	Online form	Each team member should complete the questionnaire.

Appendix F. Guideline for District Use Case

Student-defined district use cases for the “bring your own district” (BYOD) division must be located in a state or territory of the United States.

A district use case is a defined geographic area containing a collection of buildings served by one or more energy systems or utility accounts. The district should include buildings, loads, and potential opportunities for energy efficiency improvements, building system upgrades, distributed solar and other applicable on-site generation technologies, storage, energy management, and/or reliability improvements.

District use cases should provide enough information for teams to reasonably evaluate whether distributed solar, distributed wind, or other on-site generation technologies are feasible. Where available, use cases may include information about potential generation locations, interconnection points, utility constraints, hosting capacity, transformer or feeder limitations, and other grid or site considerations. If on-site generation is not feasible or appropriate, teams may evaluate alternative electricity procurement strategies.

Student-defined district use cases should be appropriately scaled to the team’s participation timeline. Full-year BYOD use cases should generally include three to five buildings. One-semester BYOD use cases should generally include one to three buildings and must include enough data to support both efficiency/building systems screening and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management screening.

If a one-semester use case includes only one building, teams should discuss why that building was selected and briefly identify other buildings or sites considered, where applicable.

BYOD requests for one-semester teams must demonstrate that the smaller district has sufficient data for both focus areas. A one-semester BYOD request that only supports on-site generation analysis may not be approved.

Organizers may approve, request revisions to, or decline a BYOD request based on scope, eligibility, available data, and alignment with competition requirements.

The use case for each district should include the following datasets, where available:

- Energy planning, cost savings, reliability, emissions, or operational goals of the district.
- A map designating the boundaries of the campus or district within which student teams are confined to developing their recommendations.
- Building list, including building names, use types, square footage, and approximate age, where available.
- Twelve consecutive months of electric energy consumption data, preferably interval data, for the buildings included in the district. Monthly utility data may be used when interval data are unavailable.
- Available natural gas, steam, chilled water, or other thermal energy use data, where relevant.
- Electric utility rate schedule and other relevant utility tariffs.
- Baseline EUI, or sufficient data to calculate estimated EUI, where available.
- Available information on HVAC systems, controls, major equipment, envelope conditions, operating schedules, or known efficiency opportunities.
- Available information on planned construction, load growth, building renovations, deferred maintenance, or campus master planning priorities.

- Available information on critical loads, reliability needs, backup power, outage concerns, or operational continuity priorities.
- Potential locations for on-site generation, storage, or other energy infrastructure, including but not limited to rooftops, parking areas, open land, façades, mechanical rooms, electrical rooms, and other facilities or spaces.
- Available information about electricity meters, distribution feeders, transformers, interconnection points, or distribution system constraints.
- Development master plan, land ownership status, local zoning codes, permitting requirements, building codes, and other relevant development considerations.
- Summary of at least one conversation or documented outreach attempt with a campus facilities, energy, sustainability, planning, or operations representative about district goals and constraints.

Use Case Profile

Teams submitting a student-defined district use case must provide a narrative description of the campus or district use case, up to four pages including maps, figures, and graphics. The profile should include reference citations for data and other information sources.

Category	Information to Provide
District name	
Short name	
Location	City, county, state
District boundary map	Google Earth .kml file or equivalent map file
Campus or district goals	Energy cost savings, reliability, efficiency, emissions, load growth, operations, or other planning goals
Campus interview summary	Brief summary of conversation with facilities, energy, sustainability, planning, or operations staff
Building list	Building names, use types, square footage, year built, and major systems where available
Utility data	Electric interval data preferred; monthly utility data acceptable if interval data are unavailable
Thermal energy data	Natural gas, steam, chilled water, or other thermal energy use, where applicable
Utility rates or tariffs	Electric, gas, demand charges, time-of-use rates, or other applicable tariffs
Baseline energy performance	EUI or sufficient data to estimate EUI
Existing building systems	HVAC, controls, lighting, envelope, equipment, operating schedules, known issues
Planned growth or renovations	Master plans, new construction, renovations, deferred maintenance, or expected load growth
Reliability priorities	Critical loads, backup power needs, outage concerns, resilience priorities
On-site generation opportunities	Rooftops, parking areas, open land, façades, or other potential locations
Storage and energy management opportunities	Battery storage, controls, demand management, load shifting, operational strategies
Meter locations	Available meter information or reasonable assumptions

Category	Information to Provide
Authority Having Jurisdiction	The organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing land ownership, zoning, building codes, permitting, interconnection, and other regulations
Electric distribution system	Available feeder, transformer, hosting capacity, substation, or interconnection information
State and local policies	Incentives, energy policies, utility programs, or other relevant requirements

Appendix G. Submission, Scoring Criteria, and Reviewer/Judge Crosswalk

Appendix G.1. Deliverable Review Crosswalk

Required Submission or Component	Primary Purpose	Evaluation Criteria Supported	Primary Reviewer/Judge Role
Registration Entry	Confirms eligibility, team structure, participation timeline, and district use case request	Eligibility and administrative completeness	Competition organizers
BYOD Request, if applicable	Confirms student-defined district has sufficient data and appropriate scope	District goals, baseline understanding, feasibility	Competition organizers; technical reviewers as needed
Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary	Documents team engagement with its own campus and understanding of real energy planning goals	District goals, campus planning context, baseline understanding; implementation feasibility	Progress reviewers; final technical judges
Progress Deliverable Package, Full-Year Teams	Demonstrates early progress, rules compliance, district understanding, preliminary strategy, and analysis plan	District goals and baseline understanding; preliminary technical solution; preliminary financial and implementation approach	Progress reviewers
One-Semester Team Check-In	Confirms one-semester teams understand the smaller district use case and have begun comparing efficiency/building systems and on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management	District understanding; technical approach; cost-savings comparison plan	Competition organizers; technical reviewers as needed
Final Technical Report	Provides the team's complete written proposal and primary basis for technical scoring	All main scoring categories	Final technical judges
Supporting Analysis Files	Provides calculations, assumptions, model outputs, cost/savings analysis, EUI estimates, generation estimates, and other supporting technical evidence	Technical solution and analysis; financial performance and cost effectiveness; reliability or resilience and feasibility	Technical judges; financial reviewers as needed
Final Technical Presentation	Allows teams to present their recommendation and respond to judge questions	Live technical presentation and Q&A; technical solution; feasibility; professionalism	Final technical judges
Poster	Communicates project summary, approach, recommendation, and key metrics visually	Poster award criteria; communication quality	Poster judges or final event reviewers
Quick Pitch	Communicates the project	Quick Pitch award	Quick Pitch judges or

Required Submission or Component	Primary Purpose	Evaluation Criteria Supported	Primary Reviewer/Judge Role
	problem, solution, benefits, and value in no more than three minutes	criteria; communication quality	final event reviewers
Team Story and Photo(s)	Supports outreach, student storytelling, and program communications	Not scored for division placement unless otherwise stated	Competition organizers and communications team
End-of-Competition Questionnaire	Supports program improvement, workforce tracking, and DOE reporting	Not scored	Competition organizers

Appendix G.2. Scoring Criteria Crosswalk

Scoring Category	Primary Materials Judges Should Review	Notes for Teams
District Goals, Campus Planning Context, and Baseline Understanding	Technical report; district use case materials; Campus Energy Planning Goals Outreach Summary	Make district goals, baseline energy use, EUI, constraints, and assumptions easy to find. Teams are evaluated on the quality of effort, documentation, and connection to real-world energy planning context, not on whether campus staff were able to provide detailed or confidential information.
Technical Solution, Analysis, and Reliability/Resilience	Technical report; supporting analysis files; final technical presentation	Clearly separate efficiency/building systems analysis from on-site generation, electricity procurement, and energy management analysis, explain how they compare, and address reliability, resilience, or critical loads where applicable.
Financial Performance and Cost Effectiveness	Technical report; supporting analysis files	Include cost assumptions, savings estimates, affordability considerations, financial viability, and cost-savings comparison across strategies.
Implementation and Feasibility	Technical report; final technical presentation; supporting analysis files as needed	Explain phasing, operations, maintenance, risks, permitting, interconnection only where relevant, campus or community implementation impacts, staffing or workforce considerations where applicable, and practical implementation considerations.
Written Communication and Professionalism	Technical report; submitted final materials	Use clear organization, citations, formatting, labels, units, and professional writing.
Live Technical Presentation and Q&A	Final technical presentation; judge Q&A	Present the recommendation clearly and be prepared to explain assumptions, trade-offs, and decision-making.