

SIOP Student Consulting Challenge

**Virtual Case Competition
April 6-14**

*Open to students in graduate programs
related to I-O psychology.*



**SIOP ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

NEW ORLEANS • April 29-May 2, 2026



The Host

This year's host is SHL. SHL is a global leader in talent assessment and people analytics, providing a wide range of solutions designed to help organizations hire, develop, and mobilize their workforce effectively.

Founded over 45 years ago, SHL specializes in psychometric testing, behavioral science, and transparent AI.

The Competition

1. Each team will be comprised of students from 4 universities. Students will be assigned to teams by the competition organizer.
2. Each I-O psychology-related program may nominate 2 students to participate.
3. Students will work and present their findings virtually.
4. Students will meet online when they start Monday, April 6, at noon. They will have the week to work on proposals, and will email their proposals to the judges by Sunday, April 12.
5. Judges will review the proposals on Monday, April 13.
6. Each team will complete a forty-minute presentation on Zoom on Tuesday, April 14.
7. Projects will be judged by representatives from the host organization and SIOOP members who work as consultants.
8. The first place team will receive \$2,000 and the second place team will receive \$1,000. They will also be recognized at the 2026 SIOOP Annual Conference. Prize funding is generously supported by Minnesota State University OERG and SHL.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dan Ravid at University of New Mexico, dmr@unm.edu.

[Nominate a student or register before 5 p.m. ET Sunday, March 22.](#)

Prize Sponsors



Consulting Challenge Rules

1. The competition is limited to students in master's and doctoral programs in industrial-organizational psychology.
2. Students will work and present their findings virtually.
3. Each university is allowed to nominate 2 students to participate in the competition. Self-nominations are permitted. Students who have competed in the Consulting Challenge in the past are not eligible to compete again this year.
4. There will be up to ten teams.
5. The registration deadline is **5 p.m. ET Sunday, March 22**, but team spots may fill before this deadline.
6. Participants will be announced on **March 30** via email.
7. Each team will be comprised of students from 4 universities.
8. The competition organizers will assign students to teams. Every attempt will be made to balance teams according to doctoral/master's, time zone, etc.
9. Student participants may not consult with faculty, alumni, or students from any academic institution regarding the case, analysis, or presentations.
10. During the competition, students may not communicate with anyone at the host organization other than the host or anyone designated.
11. Teams may not collaborate with other teams or share their results before judging is complete.
12. Teams must turn in their proposals (no more than 15 pages) by no later than 10 p.m. ET on Sunday, April 12.
13. Teams will have 40 minutes to present their proposals and answer any questions on Tuesday, April 14.
14. The organizers will post presentation times early Tuesday morning.
15. Projects will be judged by representatives from the host organization, business consultants, and the competition organizers.
16. Teams will be assigned to one of two virtual judging rooms. At the end of the first round of judging sessions, one team will be selected from each judging room to participate in the finals. The finalists will present their proposals to the judges who did not see the team present in round one. The two finalist teams will be announced at 4:00 p.m. ET on April 14.
17. Winning teams will receive a cash prize (to be split evenly among team members) and will be recognized at the 2026 SIOP Conference. Prize funding generously supported by OERG and SHL.

Sample Themes from Prior Competitions

Company X is seeking a vendor who can:

- Provide a comprehensive summary of the current challenges related to recruiting millennial MBAs. Provide an action plan for recruiting MBAs to this Fortune 50 corporation.
- Help identify and implement steps needed to transition from a publishing company with a traditional print media culture to a company with a 'digital first' culture.
- Identify drivers of engagement for production employees. Identify best practices for improving engagement in our facility.
- Develop a training program that will help our managers plan for the changes associated with a retiring workforce. Consider issues like retirement programs, succession planning, hiring, health insurance, business performance, and training.
- Anticipate the problems and benefits of transitioning our employees from working at home (during Covid) to working back in the office.
- Assess job applicants' perceptions of our brand and recommend a variety of possible steps we could take (depending on the result of the survey) to attract young people to our business.
- Identify best practices for engaging and supporting new supervisors during their first 3-6 months. Focus on employees who have worked on the line and are promoted to supervisor.
- Identify trends in talent assessment. How might these trends impact our business and strategy?
- Create a program to shape attitudes and behaviors, creating a more inclusive work environment.
- Identify the key drivers of turnover for production employees. Recommend changes for retaining employees.
- Outline the major steps we will need to take to introduce a new enterprise management software package. How do we get people ready for the change? What are the next steps?
- Understand best practices in onboarding employees and recommend changes to our current program.

Proposals

Proposals are limited to 15 pages and usually include:

- a. Executive summary
- b. Information about your team members
- c. Overview of relevant literature/best practices
- d. Action plan

- e. Budget and timeline
- f. References

Judging

Judges will evaluate teams on:

- a. Quality of the proposal - Judges will focus most heavily on the overview of relevant literature, best practices, and the action plan. Less emphasis will be placed on the budget/timeline.
- b. Quality of the presentations - Clarity, persuasiveness, ability to answer questions, and slides.

Schedule (all times are Eastern Time)

Monday	April 6	
	12:00 p.m. (noon)	Students convene online with the host and the Consulting Challenge Coordinator
		Teams are announced
		A case overview is presented by a representative of the host organization
	1:00 p.m.	The case and any relevant data are emailed to all contestants.
		Work begins
Tuesday	April 7	
	10:00 a.m.	The host holds a general Q and A session regarding the case.
Sunday	April 12	
	10:00 p.m.	Students email their proposals to the Consulting Challenge Coordinator.
Monday	April 13	Judges review proposals.
Tuesday	April 14	
	8:00 a.m.	The presentation order is announced via email.
	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Judging starts and takes place in two virtual rooms.
	4:00 p.m.	The top two teams are announced, and these teams re-present their proposals to the panel of judges who did not see the presentations in round one.
	5:00 p.m.	Judges convene to discuss proposals and presentations.
	5:30 p.m.	The winning team is announced.