HRS Hackathon

Evaluation Criteria

January 2026

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One-line Summary for Teams

> *We will reward clear thinking, intelligent AI usage, strong collaboration, and product-quality outcomes—not just lines of code.*

Hackathon Evaluation Criteria

Total Score: 100 points

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1. Solution Approach & Thought Process (20 points)

What we are evaluating:
How well the team understood the problem and designed the solution *before* and *during* implementation.

Evaluation dimensions:

- Clarity of system architecture and component boundaries
- Mapping requirements → design decisions
- Trade-offs considered (time, scope, scalability, tech choices)
- Risk identification and mitigation
- Simplicity and pragmatism of the approach

Scoring guide:

- **18–20:** Clear architecture, well-justified decisions, thoughtful trade-offs
- **14–17:** Reasonable approach, some gaps or over-engineering
- **<14:** Ad-hoc design, unclear rationale, reactive execution

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2. Usage of Claude Code & AI Agents (20 points)

What we are evaluating:
How effectively the team used Claude Code as a **thinking and execution partner**, not just a code generator.

Evaluation dimensions:

- How prompts were structured and refined
- Use of Claude for:
  - Architecture exploration
  - Code scaffolding
  - Refactoring
  - Test generation (unit, integration, API)
  - Performance or security considerations
  - Documentation
- Evidence of iteration and validation of AI outputs
- Use of agents for parallel work (where applicable)

Scoring guide:

- **18–20:** Strategic, creative, and disciplined use of Claude Code
- **14–17:** Good usage, but mostly focused on code generation
- **<14:** Minimal or unstructured AI usage; AI output used without critical review.

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3. Team Collaboration & Work Allocation (15 points)

What we are evaluating:
How effectively the team organized itself and worked in parallel.

Evaluation dimensions:

- Clear ownership of:
  - Architecture
  - Backend
  - Frontend / UX
  - Testing
  - Integration
- Parallel execution enabled by AI
- Communication and coordination
- Ability to integrate work smoothly

Scoring guide:

- **13–15:** Well-balanced collaboration with clear ownership
- **10–12:** Some imbalance or bottlenecks
- **<10:** Poor coordination or unclear roles

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4. Final Working Solution & Demo (25 points)

What we are evaluating:
The quality, completeness, and robustness of the working application.

Evaluation dimensions:

- Coverage of functional requirements
- UX/UI alignment with provided specs
- System stability and correctness
- Basic handling of scalability / performance considerations
- Error handling and edge cases
- Overall polish of the demo

Scoring guide:

- **22–25:** Solid, end-to-end working solution with polish
- **17–21:** Mostly complete with some rough edges
- **<17:** Incomplete or unstable solution

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5. Presentation & Explanation (20 points)

What we are evaluating:
How clearly and convincingly the team explains *what they did* and *why*.

Evaluation dimensions:

- Clear storytelling (problem → approach → execution → demo)
- Explanation of AI usage and learnings
- Architecture walkthrough
- Honest reflection on trade-offs and gaps
- Time management and clarity

Scoring guide:

- **18–20:** Clear, confident, and insightful presentation
- **14–17:** Good explanation, minor clarity gaps
- **<14:** Disorganized or unclear presentation

Bonus Points (Optional – up to +10 points)

Awarded for:

- Exceptional testing strategy (automated + AI-assisted)
- Innovative agent usage
- Strong performance/scalability thinking beyond requirements
- Excellent developer experience (scripts, README, setup)
- Clear ethical and security considerations
- Clear articulation of solution limitations, and possible next steps to address those limitations

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Judge Scoring Consistency

Judges should ask:

- *Did this team think, or just execute?*
- *Did AI increase quality and parallelism?*
- *Is the system understandable and extendable?*
- *Would we be confident in evolving this product further?*
