



Seneca Engineering Competition 2025

Programming - FAQ & Rules



SEC 2025 - Rules & FAQ

Seneca Software Engineering Competition

Event Date: November 24–25, 2025

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1. Overview

The Seneca Software Engineering Competition (SEC) challenges students to design and build a software solution that addresses a real-world community issue. Competitors will develop a functional Minimum Viable Product (MVP) within a 6-hour coding window and present their solution to a panel of judges.

A detailed problem statement will be provided at the kickoff on November 24, 2025, along with any supporting datasets or resources.

1.1 Topic

The topic will be a real-life problem found in any professional industry which can be solved through the application of programming. The type of industries can include, but are not limited to, finance, health, transportation, manufacturing and construction. Although not completely needed, a team that is formed of students from more than one engineering discipline is advised, as it would help to develop a complete solution.

2. Eligibility

- Open to all Seneca College students in any program.
 - Note: A team consisting of only BSA (Bachelor of Software Engineering) students are eligible to continue to participate in the Ontario Engineering Competition (OEC) in January 2026



- Teams may consist of 1 to 4 participants.
- All team members must be present for check-in and the presentation.
- Each participant may join only one team.

3. Competition Format

Day 1 - Monday, Nov 24 (On Newnham Campus)

Room: TBD

- Kickoff & Q&A
- 6-hour coding period
- Submission of code & slides

Day 2 - Tuesday, Nov 25 (On Newnham Campus)

Room: TBD

- Live presentations
- Judging
- Awards & Closing Ceremony

4. Competition Standards

4.1 Facilities and Equipment

The Facilities and Equipment provided for the competition are:

Competition

One (1) large workroom, subdivided with partitions for each team or one (1) separate workroom per team

One (1) table per team

One (1) chair per Competitor

Internet connectivity

Power source for computers

Presentation

One (1) amphitheater

One (1) computer, containing the team's presentation file

One (1) digital projector

Whiteboard(s) and/or blackboard(s)

4.2 External Resources

The competitors are allowed to bring the following equipment with them during the Competition phase:

- Any background research conducted by team members prior to the competition
- Any textbooks, course notes or other reference material
- Each team member is allowed one computer
- Teams are allowed to bring their own slideshow templates for use in the competition.

- Templates may contain background images and a basic slide layout.
- Slides are to have no content.

4.3 Timeline

Pre-Competition

- At least seven (7) days prior to the competition, the FAQ & Rules will be provided to the competitors via email and online communication platforms

Competition Briefing

- The problem must be presented to all competitors at the beginning of the competition. The Competition Lead(s) must provide detailed explanations of what is expected from the competitors, both orally and in writing. The presentation of the problem will take no longer than fifteen (15) minutes.
- After the conclusion of the presentation, there will be a period of fifteen (15) minutes for competitors to ask the Competition Lead(s) any questions.

Competition

- On competition day, competitors will be provided six hours to develop their solutions, with code submission due by 8:00 p.m.



- After the code submission, competitors may continue to work on their presentation slides at their own pace. Presentation slides must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the same day, and only the submitted slides may be used on presentation day.
- All deliverables shall be submitted to the Competition Lead before the end of the allotted time. Competitors may finish before the end of the allotted time.
- All team members must be present and participate or be penalized by the judges
- In order to ensure that all competitors cease to work on the case solutions once the design time has ended, the competitors cannot include any material in their oral presentation which is not included within their submitted written reports or presentation materials.

Presentation

- After submission of the solution, teams will be provided a schedule of their allotted fifteen (15) minute time window of their presentation slot for Tuesday, November 25, 2025 on the evening of the Monday November 24, 2025
- Presentation order shall be determined randomly.
- There will be a panel of a minimum of three (3) judges
- Each team is provided a ten (10) minute time presentation time and five (5) minute QnA session from the judges
- The remaining time must be indicated to the competitors ten (10) minutes, five (5) minutes and one (1) minute before the end of the allotted presentation time.
- A visual countdown must be given to the presenters during the last thirty (30) seconds of the allotted presentation time.
- Teams who are cut-off will be penalized.

4.4 Programming Rubric

Strategy / Algorithm	Personalization & Adaptability Deliverable Compliance with Expectations User Experience Innovation & Creativity	/40
Code	Readability Dynamic Input / Flexible Coding Code Structure / Organization / Modularity Error Handling Code Reusability	/35
Presentation	Design Process and Justification Voice Articulation and Timing Visual Aids Response to Questions	/25
Penalties	Plagiarism Insufficient Citation (Presentation, Code) Documents Received After Deadline Absent Team Member	-50 -50 -50 -25
Total		/100



4.5 Allowed Technologies

- Any programming language, framework, or library is allowed.
- Open-source packages permitted if properly cited.
 - You may NOT use a library or open-source code to solve everything for you
- Pre-existing code not written during the competition is prohibited.
- Using boilerplate templates (e.g., React scaffolding) is allowed.

4.6 Use of Generative AI

The use of ChatGPT and similar AI systems, other than GitHub Copilot, is prohibited. If using AI-generated content, they must be cited:

- All AI-generated content must be cited in the README and/or code comments.
- Citations must include:
 - The AI tool used
 - The prompt or purpose
 - How the generated material was used
 - Blind copy-pasting of full AI-generated code without understanding it may affect scoring.
 - Failure to cite AI usage will result in substantial penalties.

For instructions on how to install GitHub Copilot, please see the [Copilot at Seneca](#) and [GitHub Copilot](#) page.



4.7 Restrictions

- No work may begin until the problem is released at kickoff.
- No bringing pre-built code, models, datasets, or scripts.
- External datasets may only be used if allowed and cited.
- Teams may not receive outside help during the competition.
- Violations may lead to disqualification.

5. Deliverables

Each team is required to submit, electronically, before the end of the design period, all required presentations and report files. Any reports will be made available to the judges before each team's presentation.

Deliverable Requirements are outlined below and will be shared again during Competition Briefing:

5.1 Code Repository

- Public GitHub repository link
- Must include:
 - Source code
 - README with setup/run instructions
 - Any dependencies and environment requirements
 - Proper citations for any external or AI-generated code

- Code must compile/run on judge machines following instructions in the README.

5.2 Presentation Slides

- PowerPoint format (.pptx)
- Max presentation time: 10 minutes
- Followed by 5 minutes of Q&A

6. FAQ

Q1. Can we brainstorm before the event?

Yes, but you cannot begin coding, designing architectures, or preparing reusable source files.

Q2. Can we bring templates or boilerplate code?

No pre-written code is allowed, except autogenerated scaffolding created during the event (example: create-react-app, Django startproject).

Q3. Can we use third-party APIs?

Yes, if:

- They are free or publicly accessible
- They are allowed by the judges
- They are cited in the README

Q4. Are laptops provided?

No. Please bring your own laptop, charger, and any peripherals.

Q5. Can we continue coding after 8:00 PM?



No. All coding must stop at the submission deadline.

Q6. Is the presentation live or pre-recorded?

Live (In-person). You may optionally show a pre-recorded demo during your presentation.

Q7. What happens if our code doesn't fully work?

You are encouraged to show whatever functionality you have and explain your design decisions. Partial solutions can still score well if well-designed and clearly communicated.

7. Code of Conduct

All participants must uphold professional and respectful behaviour.

Harassment, cheating, or misconduct will result in removal from the competition.

8. Contact Information

For any questions:

- Reply to the email
- Or post in the SEC 2025 Discord Server