

STUDENT PARTICIPATION PROSPECTUS

Your ideas. Your skills. Your opportunity to make a difference.

OPEN SOURCE STUDENT INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2027

Registration: November 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027 · Participation is free

Project submissions: April 1 – July 31, 2027 · Evaluation: August 1–20, 2027

Open Source Week: August 29 – September 4, 2027 · Prairieland Park, Saskatoon

01 / Your ideas belong on a national stage

What if a project you started for class, a school club, a university capstone, or simply because you wanted to solve a problem could reach an audience across Canada? The Open Source Student Innovation Challenge 2027 recognizes students who create useful, imaginative and openly shareable technology.

You do not have to be a professional programmer. We want to see what you made, what you learned, how your work benefits others and how you apply open-source principles.

What you can gain

A national platform to present your work; practical presentation and technical experience; a stronger educational or employment portfolio; opportunities to connect with educators and open-source professionals; eligibility for awards or recognition (details under development); and potential selection for the Saskatoon showcase.

Selection for an in-person showcase is not guaranteed. Travel and accommodation arrangements have not yet been finalized.

02 / Who can take part?

Four divisions welcome students enrolled at recognized Canadian institutions, including international students studying in Canada:

Junior Innovators

Grades 7–12 or equivalent.

College & Polytechnic Innovators

Students enrolled in colleges, technical institutes or polytechnics.

University Innovators

Undergraduate, master's and doctoral students.

Emerging Innovators

Eligible graduates of Canadian educational programs who graduated between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027.

Participation is FREE. Enter individually or in a team of up to four. All team members must belong to the same division, and each participant may enter only one project. Minors require independently verified parent/guardian consent.

03 / What kind of project can you submit?

Projects should meaningfully use or contribute to open-source technology. New builds, existing coursework, capstones, research prototypes and student club projects may qualify when they meet the official rules.

Linux and software

Applications, Linux utilities, educational tools and open-source services.

AI and data

Responsible AI prototypes, machine-learning tools and open data applications.

Cybersecurity and privacy

Authorized defensive security tools and privacy-enhancing technology.

Robotics and automation

Robotics, sensors, microcontrollers and automated systems.

Cloud and infrastructure

Containers, reproducible services, networking and deployment tools.

Accessibility and community impact

Assistive and public-interest technologies.

Environment and sustainability

Open monitoring, energy efficiency and environmental tools.

Open hardware and embedded systems

Firmware, electronics, schematics and documented prototypes.

Projects need not be commercially viable, but must demonstrate meaningful development beyond an unsupported concept.

04 / What does 'open source' mean here?

Open source enables others to understand, use, learn from and improve technology. Explain what you created, what you reused and how another person can inspect or reproduce your work.

A publicly accessible source-code repository or equivalent open technical documentation is required no later than July 31, 2027 at 11:59:59 p.m. Saskatchewan CST and must remain available through judging. Use appropriate licenses, credit contributors and document your dependencies.

Never publish credentials, private information, confidential research or proprietary material without permission.

Using AI responsibly

AI assistance is permitted with disclosure, but students must make and understand the principal technical decisions and demonstrate substantial original work. Projects largely generated by AI with minimal student contribution are not eligible.

05 / How your project will be judged

Projects are scored within their educational division, with expectations appropriate to students' experience and available resources.

Judging criteria

Innovation and creativity: 25 points; Open-source contribution: 25 points; Technical execution: 20 points; Real-world impact: 20 points; Presentation and communication: 10 points. Total: 100 points.

In a tie, judges compare the open-source contribution score, then innovation, then technical execution. Any remaining tie goes to an independent panel under a documented procedure.

06 / Awards and recognition

There will be awards or other recognition. Exact categories, prize values and any scholarships are still being developed; no particular amount is guaranteed.

Recognition also celebrates collaboration, experimentation, technical understanding, documentation, problem-solving and communication.

07 / National showcase

Open Source Week 2027 takes place August 29–September 4, 2027. The closing flagship is scheduled for September 3–4, 2027 at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon.

Selected projects may be invited to demonstrate prototypes, explain their work and connect with the wider technology community. An invitation does not automatically include travel, accommodation or financial assistance.

08 / Registration and submission: what happens next?

Student registration

November 1, 2026 at midnight through March 31, 2027 at 11:59:59 p.m. CST.

Project submissions

April 1, 2027 at midnight through July 31, 2027 at 11:59:59 p.m. CST.

Evaluation and finalist selection

August 1–20, 2027, inclusive.

All times are Saskatchewan CST (UTC−6). Registration and project submission are separate requirements. Students can work on their projects before the submission window opens.

How to prepare

Choose your project and team, document your own contributions, keep track of open-source components and licenses, test your prototype, and prepare a clear demonstration. An optional demonstration video may be up to five minutes long; accessible alternatives are available.

09 / Questions students should ask

Must I invent something completely new?

No. Eligible existing coursework and capstone projects may qualify if they satisfy the originality and open-source rules.

Do I have to use Linux?

Not necessarily. The Challenge welcomes a broad range of open-source technologies.

Can my teacher or supervisor help?

Yes. Mentorship is welcome, but the substantive student work must remain yours.

Can I participate from outside Saskatchewan?

Yes. This is a national Canadian initiative; showcase selection is a separate process.

10 / Why this matters beyond the competition

Open-source projects can become community tools, research starting points, educational resources and portfolio examples. When students share their work responsibly, others can learn from and improve it.

Canada benefits when more people can understand, create and shape the technology they depend on. The Challenge invites students to be creators, not only technology users.

11 / Information for teachers and mentors

Teachers, professors, project supervisors and student clubs can help students identify suitable projects, understand open-source practices and prepare clear demonstrations.

Educators should encourage student independence, respect the one-project-per-person rule and ensure required guardian consent is completed for minors.

12 / Stay connected

Visit https://linuxassociation.ca/student-innovation-challenge/ for registration, submission instructions, updates and the official rules.

Linux Association of Canada · Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada · info@linuxassociation.ca

The complete official Project Rules & Judging are included in the appendix that follows. The rules take precedence over this introductory guide if wording differs.

LINUX ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

OPEN SOURCE STUDENT INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2027

Official Project Rules & Judging

Approved project framework · English edition

FREE PARTICIPATION | REGISTRATION NOV 1, 2026 – MAR 31, 2027 | SUBMISSIONS APR 1 – JUL 31, 2027

01 Purpose and scope

The Linux Association of Canada (LAC) organizes the Open Source Student Innovation Challenge 2027 as a national educational initiative within Open Source Week 2027. The Challenge promotes student creativity, technical learning, responsible innovation, collaboration and meaningful open-source contributions. Participation does not guarantee an award, financial assistance or showcase selection.

02 Participant eligibility

Eligible participants are students enrolled at recognized Canadian educational institutions, including international students studying in Canada. Divisions: (1) Junior Innovators: Grades 7–12 or equivalent; (2) College & Polytechnic Innovators; (3) University Innovators, including graduate students; (4) Emerging Innovators: graduates of eligible Canadian programs between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027 inclusive. Eligibility is assessed as of March 31, 2027, subject to the stated recent-graduate rule. Proof of status may be requested securely. Minors require verified parent or guardian consent before registration is finalized.

03 Teams and entry limits

Participation is FREE. A person may participate in only ONE competing project. Individuals or teams of up to FOUR may enter. Every team member must be eligible and registered in the SAME division; mixed-division teams are not permitted. Teams identify one primary contact and each member’s contributions. Teachers, mentors and supervisors may advise but must not perform the substantive student work.

04 Official schedule

All dates use Saskatchewan Central Standard Time (CST, UTC−6), observed year-round. Registration: November 1, 2026 at 00:00:00 to March 31, 2027 at 23:59:59. Project submissions: April 1, 2027 at 00:00:00 to July 31, 2027 at 23:59:59. Evaluation and finalist selection: August 1, 2027 at 00:00:00 to August 20, 2027 at 23:59:59. Selected projects may be invited to the national showcase September 3–4, 2027 at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. Registration and project submission are separate obligations. Late entries are ordinarily not accepted; a consistent published procedure may address verified system-wide technical failures.

05 Eligible projects

Projects must demonstrate meaningful innovation, development or technical contribution involving open-source technology. Areas include Linux, software, AI, cybersecurity, cloud, robotics, automation, accessibility, embedded systems, open firmware, electronics, environmental and community technology. Original builds, improvements to existing projects, research prototypes, capstones, coursework and independent projects may qualify. Projects must demonstrate progress beyond a concept and are judged within their educational division.

06 Originality and intellectual property

Registered students must perform genuine, substantial work and identify their contributions. Properly licensed reuse and extensions of open-source projects are encouraged. Plagiarism, fabricated results, undisclosed third-party authorship or misrepresentation are prohibited. Participants retain ownership of their original intellectual property. LAC receives only the limited non-exclusive permission necessary to evaluate submissions and, with appropriate permissions, share approved project descriptions, images and demonstrations for Challenge reporting and promotion.

07 Open-source publication

A publicly accessible source-code repository OR equivalent open technical documentation is MANDATORY no later than July 31, 2027 at 23:59:59 CST and must remain accessible throughout judging. Software projects should publish relevant participant-created source code and suitable licensing; hardware projects may provide schematics, firmware, design files and assembly instructions. Documentation must explain how to understand, reproduce, build or evaluate the project. Identify dependencies, credit contributors and respect third-party licenses. Do not publish credentials, personal data, confidential research or proprietary material. Safety or legal limitations must be explained; LAC determines whether the available open material meets the requirement.

08 AI-assisted development

AI assistance may be used for research, brainstorming, debugging, testing, accessibility support, documentation and limited code generation. Material AI use MUST be disclosed, identifying tools, purposes and approximate scope. Students must personally make and understand the principal technical decisions, implementation and validation. Work produced primarily by AI with minimal meaningful student contribution is ineligible. Judges may question participants about architecture, code, methods and limitations. Knowingly concealing substantial AI use or falsely claiming AI output as independent work can lead to disqualification. No fixed AI-generated-code percentage applies; legitimate assistive technology accommodations are respected.

09 Safety, ethics and legality

Projects must comply with applicable Canadian law, institutional policies and safety requirements. Unauthorized access, deployment of malicious software, unlawful surveillance, unsafe physical demonstrations and improper use of personal information are prohibited. Defensive cybersecurity projects must use authorized controlled environments. Human-subject research must satisfy applicable ethics requirements. LAC may restrict demonstrations or reject unsafe or unlawful projects.

10 Required submission materials

Each submission must provide: title and division; registered team and member contributions; project summary and problem statement; solution and technical approach; open-source repository or equivalent documentation with applicable licenses; setup or reproduction instructions; evidence of functionality; impact and limitations; disclosure of AI assistance and third-party contributions; and demonstration materials. A demonstration VIDEO, if provided, may be no longer than FIVE MINUTES; accessible alternatives must be available. The portal will specify accepted formats and upload limits. Submitted links must remain accessible during judging.

11 Judging criteria

Eligible projects are scored out of 100 points: INNOVATION & CREATIVITY 25; OPEN-SOURCE CONTRIBUTION 25; TECHNICAL EXECUTION 20; REAL-WORLD IMPACT 20; PRESENTATION & COMMUNICATION 10. Judges consider age, division, experience, available resources and demonstrated learning rather than institutional prestige or project cost. Multiple qualified judges should score independently where practical.

12 Tie-breaking and conflicts

If total scores are tied, compare the OPEN-SOURCE CONTRIBUTION score first, then INNOVATION, then TECHNICAL EXECUTION. Remaining ties are referred to an independent judging panel using a documented procedure. Judges disclose conflicts of interest and must not evaluate projects with significant personal, supervisory or financial ties. Sponsorship does not confer authority to determine winners. Scores and decisions are documented.

13 Finalists and awards

Evaluation and finalist selection conclude by August 20, 2027 at 23:59:59 CST. LAC may then conduct eligibility checks and obtain permissions before public announcements. Awards or recognition will be provided, but award categories, values and any scholarships or prizes remain under development and are not guaranteed. Selected finalists may be invited to present September 3–4, 2027 in Saskatoon; participation does not automatically include travel, accommodation, funding or exhibition space.

14 Conduct and procedural review

All participants, mentors, judges and organizers must act respectfully. Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, cheating and deliberate interference are prohibited. LAC may investigate rule violations, request explanations and issue documented disqualification decisions. Participants may request review of procedural errors or conflicts of interest; technical scoring decisions remain final except for demonstrable administrative or procedural irregularities.

15 Privacy and consent

LAC collects only information reasonably required to administer the Challenge. Contact details will not be provided to sponsors for independent marketing without appropriate consent. Parent or guardian consent for minors must be independently verified before a minor’s registration is accepted; a checkbox completed by the student alone is insufficient. Public use of identifiable student names, images and work requires appropriate permissions. A published privacy notice must explain use, retention, security and contact rights.

16 Administration and amendments

The official Challenge website is the authoritative source of current procedures. LAC may clarify processes and correct errors fairly, but should avoid material changes to eligibility, deadlines or scoring after registration opens except where required by law, safety or circumstances outside reasonable control. Material changes must be published and communicated. The English and French editions express the same rules; any interpretation dispute is resolved by LAC in a fair and consistent manner.

Official website: linuxassociation.ca/student-innovation-challenge/ · info@linuxassociation.ca