

# Suffolk University / Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Case Competition Official Rules



### **Rule 1: General Information**

The Suffolk University / Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Case Competition is an annual competition to allow university students to analyze real-world wealth management scenarios and propose a strategy to assist a client in formulating a wealth management strategy. Students initially submit a 5 page write-up which will be judged by academic and industry experts. Based on student write-ups, the finalists will be selected to present their proposed wealth management strategy to a group of judges. The winning team will be awarded at the final ceremony to be held at Suffolk University.

#### **1.1 Student eligibility**

All full time undergraduate students are eligible to engage in the case competition. Students need not be finance or business students, but must be interested in the process or wealth management and helping people to achieve their financial goals. Graduate students are not eligible for the competition.

#### **1.2 Student work presented**

All work submitted for the 5 page write-up along with the final presentation must be developed by the students on the team. No work from other contributors is allowed. This includes the faculty sponsors of the teams. Faculty members may provide guidance for students in helping students to know what kinds of things they should investigate and present, but all submitted work must be the students' work.

1.3 Plagiarism of any type will not be tolerated. Students who engage in copying the work of others without attributing the source will be immediately disqualified from the competition. This prohibition on plagiarism applies to all written and presentation materials used in the competition. All materials not generated by the students themselves must be attributed to some other source.

### **Rule 2: Team Composition**

Work by students may be submitted individually or collectively.

#### **2.1 Team composition**

Students engaged in the case competition must register as a team. Teams may be composed of one, two, or three students. Larger teams are not allowed. Team composition must be determined at the time of initial registration for the competition. Changes in team composition will not be allowed except under extreme circumstances.

#### **2.2 Team roles**

While it is acceptable for students to specialize in their roles on the team, it is expected that students will work together on the projects. While one team member may focus his/her efforts on the writing of the case, another may focus on the analytical portions of the case. But it is expected that students will all make a substantial contribution to the case.

#### **2.3 Team member eligibility**

All students on the team must meet the criterion for eligibility. Students need not be in the same department or even in the same school to work together on the project.

### **Rule 3: Faculty Sponsor**

Each team must have a faculty sponsor for the case competition.

#### 3.1 Faculty advisor

The faculty advisor should be from the institution at which the student(s) currently study. Ideally, faculty would be from a discipline which will allow them to provide useful feedback for the case. However, faculty from outside the business disciplines are allowed.

#### 3.2 Faculty sponsors of multiple teams

A faculty member may sponsor multiple teams. Some faculty may choose to have students engage in the case competition as part of a class that they teach. In this case, all submitted cases will be sponsored by this faculty member. In such a case, a faculty may sponsor twenty case submissions (or more).

#### 3.3 Faculty sponsor

The faculty sponsor may provide helpful feedback to ensure students are “on the right track.” However, faculty sponsors are responsible for understanding when their assistance is appropriate and when they are exceeding their role.

#### 3.4 Faculty meetings with student teams

While the hope is that faculty sponsors might provide useful feedback to the students, the case is a student case competition. As such, students may only need or want a minimum amount of interaction with their sponsor. The amount of interaction between the teams and the sponsors is up to the discretion of team members and the faculty sponsor.

### **Rule 4: Registration Process**

All teams must register for the case.

#### 4.1 Registration forms

To be eligible for the case competition, teams must fill out a form registering for the case. The form contains information about team members, faculty sponsors, the school of the students, the expected year of graduation for the students, etc. This form is available at [www.suffolk.edu](http://www.suffolk.edu).

#### 4.2 Submission of registration

Forms should be emailed to Stephen Caruso at [scaruso6@suffolk.edu](mailto:scaruso6@suffolk.edu). The subject line for all forms submitted by email must contain the subject: Suffolk-Merrill-Lynch-Case-Competition.

#### 4.3 Registration deadline

The registration deadline for the case competition is set at least three weeks prior to the actual case being due. This information will be provided on the Suffolk University web site.

### **Rule 5: Case Write-up Submission**

All teams will submit a 5 page write-up with their recommendations to the individual described in the case.

### 5.1 Components of the case write-up

The 5 page write-up should contain a brief listing of the major issues to be considered by the individual in the case. These may be issues of tax, savings, retirement, risk management, insurance, or whatever the students deem are key issues. We estimate that the case write-up will be approximately 2,500 words long.

### 5.2 Ancillary materials

The case write-up may contain graphs, pictures, or other helpful components to make the information conveyed by the students more comprehensive.

### 5.3 Use of software or other materials

While we recognize the benefits of using other software and materials for wealth management, we request that students generate their own graphics (for instance, in Excel) and recommendations. While we do not prohibit students from using such software for their analyses, we wish to make sure that the recommendations being made by the team are student recommendations, not recommendations from emoney or some other robo-advisor.

### 5.4 Cover sheet

Each case write-up should include a cover sheet. This sheet is not counted as one of the five pages for the case. The cover sheet must contain information about the students on the team, contact information for the team lead (email address), the school(s) of the team members, a team name if applicable, and the faculty sponsor of the team.

### 5.5 Appendix

The case write-up should be 5 pages long. However, the case may also include technical or non-technical appendices.

### 5.6 Deadline for submission

The deadline for submission will be posted on the Suffolk University web site. Cases should be submitted in pdf format only. Cases in other formats will not be evaluated. Cases should be emailed to Stephen Caruso at [scaruso6@suffolk.edu](mailto:scaruso6@suffolk.edu). The subject line for all forms submitted by email must contain the subject: Suffolk-Merrill-Lynch-Case-Competition.

## **Rule 6: Case Write-up Judging**

All submitted cases will be evaluated by a panel of academic and industry judges.

### 6.1 Cases will be read by a panel of judges

The case write-up will be evaluated by a panel of judges from academia and industry.

### 6.2 Judging criteria

Case write-ups will be evaluated based on professionalism and neatness as well as based on content. Cases with a unique approach will receive higher rankings than cases with an obvious approach to the case. The write-ups should consider the factors suggested in the case.

### 6.3 Students will be informed of the case decision

The team contact will be informed by email of the decision of the judges. This decision will be made within two weeks of the submission of the cases.

#### 6.4 Finalists

Teams with outstanding case write-ups will be invited to present their wealth management recommendations at the final case competition. The presentation date will be posted on the Suffolk University web site. The case competition is an all-day event and presenters should plan to spend the day at Suffolk. In addition, the competition is open to other students and faculty from local universities. Sponsoring faculty may attend as well, although they are not required. Students will have 48 hours from the time that they are informed that they are finalists in which to respond and confirm that their team is available to present their case in the final competition. Students should email Stephen Caruso at [scaruso6@suffolk.edu](mailto:scaruso6@suffolk.edu) to inform him that they will make a presentation in the final competition.

#### 6.5 Finalist Prizes

Northwestern Mutual has generously provided funds for all finalists to receive an award for each team.

#### 6.6 Judges

The ultimate decisions of the judges are final and not subject to appeal.

### **Rule 7: Finalist Presentation Judging**

All presentations will be evaluated by a panel of academic and industry judges.

#### 7.1 Presentations

All finalists will make a presentation to the judges and public. Students will be given 12 minutes to make a case presentation to the judges at the case finals event. Teams may co-present any materials they wish. Presentations should be informative and meet the requirements of the case. Students are expected to use Microsoft Power-Point or some other easily utilized presentation software. While students may use other software, it is up to the students to ensure that the technical details of such software may be met at the presentation. Students will be selected to make their team presentations in a random order. They will know the order in which they present on the day of the competition. Students may attend any presentation that occurs after their own, but may not attend presentations prior to their own presentation.

#### 7.2 Finalist Presentation Content

The finalist presentations should contain a summary of the 5-page write-up along with more easily understood materials presented in the form of graphics, photos, or any other materials that may help the audience to understand the result. As with the case write-up, all material must either be student generated, or must be attributed to the source. Plagiarism will disqualify a presenting team.

#### 7.3 Finalist Presentation Details

This event will be held in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor commons of Sargent Hall at Suffolk University. The finals competition is open for observers from other universities. The date for The Case Competition Finals will be posted on the Suffolk University web site. Finalists are required to send their finalized slides and presentation materials to Stephen Caruso at [scaruso6@suffolk.edu](mailto:scaruso6@suffolk.edu).

#### 7.4 Prizes for the top three presenting teams

Northwestern Mutual has generously provided funds for all the top three presenting teams.

#### 7.5 Judges

Final presentations will be judged after the finalists all present. The judges will announce their decisions approximately one half hour after the final presentation concludes. The ultimate decisions of the judges are final and not subject to appeal.

#### **Rule 8: Awards for finalists and the top three presenting teams**

Northwestern Mutual has generously provided funding for the awards to be presented to the top performers in the case competition.

##### 8.1 Awards for finalists

All finalist teams will receive an email inviting them to present on the day of the case competition. The team members are responsible for providing the appropriate contact information for the students on each team. The cash award will be mailed to students after the completion of the event.

##### 8.2 Awards for the top three presentations

To encourage excellence in the competition, teams making the top presentations will receive an award of \$1000 for first place, \$600 for second place, and \$400 for third place. These awards are on a per team basis. The award will be mailed to students after the completion of the event.