

Keen Minds COIL Competition (KMCC) Student Guide

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Industry Partner: To be revealed

Version 2.03

Date 05/08/2026

This guide is a summary only. All students must read the full KMCC Rules and Operational Handbook, which contains the complete set of competition requirements. In the event of any uncertainty, the Handbook takes precedence.

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1. What Is KMCC?

The Keen Minds Competition is a two-stage, in-person international case competition designed specifically for students with no prior case competition experience. It provides a structured, professional environment where you will analyse a real industry case, develop strategic recommendations, and present your solution to a panel of judges.

The competition takes place at the Manchester Hyatt Hotel on 7 September 2026.

2. What to Expect on Competition Day

Case Release (48 Hours Before the Event)

- Case released to coaches at 09:00 UK time on 5 September.
- Coaches must forward the case immediately.
- You may begin analysing the case and conducting research as soon as you receive it.
- You may prepare digital and printed materials during the 48-hour period.
- Coaches may not assist after the case is released.

Laptop Setup

- Before the case window begins, organisers will carry out standardised laptop checks to ensure no pre-prepared digital materials are stored or accessible.

Client Briefing & Q&A

- Delivered by Clients.
- Approximately 15 minutes briefing + 15 minutes Q&A.
- Recording is prohibited.
- This is the only permitted contact with the client organisations.

Case Solving Window (On the Day)

- You will receive a hard copy of the case at 10:15.
- Refinement window runs 10:15–13:15.
- You may refine any materials created during the 48-hour period.
- All digital and printed materials are permitted.
- Coaches remain prohibited.
- Slide submission deadline: 13:15 UK time.

Divisional Presentations

- 10-minute presentation
- 5-minute Q&A
- All team members must speak
- You compete only against teams in your division
- You may observe presentations only within your division

Final

- Top team from each division advances
- You must use the same slide deck
- You may adjust delivery but not slides
- All participants may observe the Final
- All judges assess the Final

3. Core Competition Rules

Permitted During the 48-Hour Period

You may:

- Conduct research
- Prepare digital notes
- Build slide decks
- Create charts, graphics, speaker notes, templates
- Use USB drives, external storage, cloud storage

Permitted During the 3-Hour Window

You may use:

- Open-access internet
- Open-source textbooks
- Email systems and cloud storage
- Spreadsheet software
- PowerPoint
- Digital and printed materials created during the 48-hour period
- Free-tier AI tools (strictly limited)

Prohibited

You may NOT use:

- Mobile phones or tablets
- Paid databases
- External assistance
- AI for analysis, content generation, images, charts, slide structures, speaker notes, or research
- Uploading case materials to AI systems
- Contacting the case companies

4. Slide Deck Requirements

Your slide deck must:

- Be PowerPoint (.pptx) 16:9 format
- Contain no more than 15 slides, including appendices
- Be unnarrated
- Use a fictional consultancy name/logo if desired
- Contain only static graphics and basic appear/disappear animations
- Contain no videos, audio, hyperlinks, or AI-generated content
- You may not use external brand assets (logos, icons, images) unless you created them yourself.

All content must be fully visible within the submitted deck.

5. What Judges Look For

Judges evaluate your work using the official KMCC rubric. They assess:

- Problem Understanding & Diagnosis Clear identification of the core problem(s).
- Possible Solutions Range, relevance, feasibility, and innovation.
- Quality of Analysis Rigour, logic, evidence, and use of frameworks.
- Creativity & Insight Original thinking and fresh perspectives.
- Implementation Plan Practicality, clarity, timelines, resources, stakeholders.
- Risks & Mitigation Identification of risks and robustness of mitigation.
- Financials / Feasibility Realistic projections and budget awareness.
- Slide Deck Quality Clarity, professionalism, visual communication.
- Presentation Delivery Confidence, clarity, pacing, engagement.
- Q&A Performance Thoughtful, accurate responses demonstrating deep understanding.

There is no single correct answer — judges reward clarity, logic, and feasibility.

6. Time-Management Advice (3-Hour Case Window)

A suggested structure:

First 30 minutes

- Read the case carefully
- Define the core problem
- Agree your main hypothesis

Next 60–75 minutes

- Analyse options
- Test ideas
- Decide on your recommendation

Final 60 minutes

- Build slides
- Rehearse key messages
- Prepare for Q&A

Tip: Do not start building slides until your story is agreed.

7. Presentation Tips

- Start with a clear executive recommendation
- Use action-oriented slide titles
- Avoid long paragraphs
- Keep one key idea per slide
- Focus on feasibility and implementation
- Practise concise answers

During Q&A

- Listen carefully
- Answer directly
- Stay calm
- Support claims with logic
- Ensure every team member contributes

8. Honour Code Summary

KMCC operates under a strict Honour Code. You must:

- Work only with your registered team
- Respect the 3-hour time limit
- Avoid external assistance
- Use only permitted materials
- Compete fairly
- Uphold integrity at all times

You must not contact the case companies or any of their employees at any stage of the competition. This includes LinkedIn, email, social media, or any other direct or indirect communication

Decisions & Appeals

- All judging decisions are final. KMCC does not operate an appeals process for scores, rankings, disqualifications, or technical rulings.

Breaches of the honour code may result in penalties, disqualification, or institutional exclusion from future competitions.

9. Recording & Privacy

Recording Rules

You may NOT record:

- Case preparation
- Team presentations
- Client briefing and Q&A

Official recordings may be made by organisers during team presentations and social activities

Recordings will not include case preparation or private team discussions.

Data & Privacy

You must comply with:

- Website terms
- Privacy policies
- Data protection requirements

You may request access or deletion of personal data.

Technical Issues

KMCC cannot provide extra time for individual technical problems (e.g., laptop failure, connectivity issues). During presentations, judges may pause the clock, resume your presentation, or terminate the session depending on the situation. There is no guarantee of replay or rescheduling.

10. Competition Day Checklist

Before the case release:

- ☐ Stable internet connection
- ☐ Working laptop
- ☐ PowerPoint ready
- ☐ Shared working document set up
- ☐ Timekeeper assigned

During the case:

- ☐ Problem clearly defined
- ☐ Recommendation agreed early
- ☐ Slides structured logically
- ☐ Submission email prepared in advance

Before submission:

- ☐ File within 15-slide limit
- ☐ Final version saved
- ☐ Submitted before deadline
- ☐ Confirmation received

Stay structured. Stay calm. Stay ethical.