COVID Information Commons Student Paper Challenge

COVID-19 has created societal challenges for communities around the world. More than ever before, collaboration and knowledge sharing have become key to accelerating the research response to the pandemic's widespread impacts. We invite students from higher education institutions around the world to leverage the resources available from the COVID Information Commons (CIC) to participate in the CIC Student Paper Challenge and join the scientific research community addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Full details about the Challenge can be found at https://bit.ly/cic-student-challenge.

Winning papers will have the opportunity to be published on the CIC website, added to the Columbia University Academic Commons, and presented at a future CIC event. Please contact info@covidinfocommons.net with any questions.

Key Dates

For Students:

- Student participation form due: Feb 15, 2021, 11:59 PM EST
- Title and abstract due: Feb 15, 2021, 11:59 PM EST
- Paper due: Apr 1, 2021, 11:59 PM EST
- Winners announced: May 2021

For Mentors and Judges:

- Mentor participation form due: Mar 1, 2021, 11:59 PM EST
- Judge participation form due: Mar 15, 2021, 11:59 PM EST
- Papers evaluated: Apr 2021

The Challenge

The COVID Information Commons (CIC) is an open website to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration across COVID-19 research efforts—in particular, the over 900 COVID Rapid Response Research (RAPID) projects and other COVID-related awards the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) has funded to date. Along with a curated collection of global scientific resources and datasets, the CIC website houses several advanced search tools that enable users to explore COVID research projects and learn about the frontiers of COVID-19 research while identifying collaboration opportunities and new topics for investigation.

Use the CIC search tools and resources to explore how research has evolved over the course of the pandemic and synthesize your findings and unique insights in a 4 to 5-paged, double-spaced paper discussing a specific trend or topic that could contribute to future discovery and innovation.

Eligibility

All undergraduate students are invited to participate in this challenge.

Example Approaches

We encourage you to write about any topic related to COVID-19 research that interests you. As just a few examples, your paper could discuss a potential cross-disciplinary area of study, a question based on the experiences of students during the pandemic, or regional and international differences in pandemic research. You may also analyze the coronavirus from a longitudinal perspective, incorporating information about past coronaviruses and the factors that have contributed to the severity or unique impacts of the current pandemic.

Here are some resources that may help you develop your paper:

- [CIC Research Explorer](#): Machine learning-generated visualizations of COVID-19 research
- [CIC NSF COVID Awards and PI Database](#)
- [Lightning talks and interviews with researchers](#)
- CIC Community webinars: [Recordings](#) and [upcoming events](#)
- [Global research resources](#): Datasets, groups and guides, and publications
- Office hours with mentors: Submit the participation form to receive updated information about dates and registration

You are also free to use additional resources. Please cite all sources used.

Evaluation Criteria

Papers will be evaluated by a committee of researchers and other experts on the basis of their [intellectual merit and broader impact](#), two criteria used by the NSF to evaluate project proposals. Papers should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the objectives, methods, and implications of COVID-19 research and make insights and recommendations that contribute to greater societal goals.

The top papers chosen by the evaluation committee will be published on the CIC website and shared throughout the global CIC community. Authors will also have the opportunity to present their papers at a future CIC event convening researchers and leaders from academia, government, industry, and non-profit organizations.

FAQs

Can students outside of the United States participate?

- Yes; all undergraduate students from all countries are invited to participate.

Is approval from a faculty advisor required for this challenge?

- No; however, you are welcome to consult with professors or researchers while writing your paper. Please include an acknowledgement paragraph at the end of the paper if you work closely with any particular researchers or experts on developing your paper.

Can students work on one paper as a team?

- Yes; teams should send one submission form with the names of the primary author and co-author(s).

How should the paper be formatted?

- The paper should be double-spaced throughout; in 12 pt., Times New Roman font; and 4-5 pages, excluding any notes and references.

How should citations be formatted?

- You are welcome to use any style provided that your citations are accurate and complete. We recommend Vancouver, Chicago, or APA.

Do the paper and sources have to be written in English?

- Yes; although English-translated sources can be used if properly cited.

Can the paper include graphics?

- Yes; all graphics should be explained and cited.

What should be included in the abstract?

- The abstract should be a few paragraphs summarizing your paper—the background for your discussion, your goals and process, and your overall insights.

Can I submit a paper I have already written?

- You must explain in your paper how you leveraged the CIC resources to develop your conclusions. You may use the CIC resources to build on past work.

Please contact info@covidinfocommons.net for any other questions.

Join the CIC Community

Interact with researchers studying COVID-19 and keep up-to-date with news and opportunities.

- Sign up for the CIC community newsletter
- Join the CIC Slack community
- Register for the next CIC lightning talks and Q&A webinar