

Student Challenge U7+ Alliance

Theme for 2026: Global Anchor Institutions: Harnessing University Networks for Local Resilience.

Join us at Ashesi University in Ghana for the 4th Annual U7+ Student Challenge. Bringing together online and in-person sessions, this challenge will allow students from across the [U7+ Alliance of World Universities](#) to work together to create a framework for interconnection and sharing on sustainable development issues. It combines practice and theory while stimulating competitors' ingenuity.

Take a tour of Ashesi University's campus [here](#) and read on for more information about the challenge's structure.

Project Objectives

This challenge serves as a global platform for students to share ideas and propose solutions to challenges related to the 17 SDGs. It offers an inclusive framework for all students, regardless of background. Specifically, the challenge will:

- Inspire motivation and pride by helping students turn knowledge and skills into practical, real-world solutions. It applies structured ideation methods to develop innovations that address global issues.
- Strengthen teamwork and collaboration by forming diverse, inclusive groups across different disciplines.
- Support the development of adaptable, SDG-aligned projects through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates societal, social, and scientific perspectives.



Guidelines

1. Project Structuring

- Address a local issue related to one of the challenge themes.
- Teams can present a topic related to one of the chosen themes. Each team is eligible for only one theme in the competition.
- Each project must meet the following criteria :
 - 3 students per team,
 - Anchoring in the priority areas of the U7+ alliance (see resources : www.u7alliance.org)
 - Identify the beneficiaries of the project
 - Justify a multidisciplinary and gender approach
 - Benefit from the supervision of a university teacher.

2. Methodology

The challenge uses a project-based learning approach that promotes student autonomy and hands-on experimentation to respond to real-world contexts. It relies on multidisciplinary teamwork, with teams formed across universities to draw on varied expertise, perspectives, and cultures. Each team selects its own sub-challenge. Faculty mentors support the teams by sharpening their ideas and helping them access the resources they need.

3. Results

At the end of this challenge, students will be able to :

- Identify relevant actors and contexts to the studied situation,
- Analyze the situation under study from a systemic and interdisciplinary perspective,
- Proffer tangible, replicable solutions suitable for their selected context.
- Effectively communicate solutions to stakeholders,
- Demonstrate impact on the community,
- Produce prototypes, toolkits, frameworks, or digital media for their project.



Calendar

The challenge will take place in 5 stages.

1. University candidacy of interest: January 28, 2026, at 00:00 (GMT)

Universities willing to participate in this challenge are requested to register through the application form. (Email to be shared by the secretariat until February 18, 2024, at 00:00 (GMT))

2. Participant Selection and Team Creation: February 19 - 23, 2026

Stage 1 concludes with the selection of two to three candidates from each university who are then placed into a central pool and notified of their advancement. These students are organised into ten international teams, each consisting of three members, to ensure cross-university collaboration. Once formed, these teams select a specific sub-challenge to address and are paired with a mentor to guide their project development.

3. Virtual Sessions: March 2024, at 13:00 (GMT)

There will be two virtual sessions to present the pre-selected teams and their projects, and to ask questions about the practical organization of the event. The student team will also be expected to engage and conduct preliminary research to contribute to the U7+ Presidential Summit Communique. At this stage, teams must provide deliverables that meet the specifications defined in section 4, and must include: a PowerPoint presentation of up to 4 slides covering the team's presentation, the project, preliminary findings, the resources needed for its implementation, and the beneficiaries.

4. Submission of project deliverables for each team : March 31, 2026

To be valid, Deliverables must (i) address the specific problem posed in the Brief, (ii) be in a standard digital format, such as *doc, docx, pdf, ppt, pptx, key, odt, mp3, mpeg, mov, mp4*, (iii) be in English, and in general, comply with the conditions set by the 'Results' section.

5 Final at Ashesi University in Berekuso, Ghana : May 25-29, 2026

This final phase will consist of an oral presentation of the projects selected by the teams. Each team must prepare deliverables that meet the evaluation criteria and include a 5-minute oral presentation. The presentation will describe the project with, for example, the problem it addresses, the proposed solution, its impact, its economic model, or any other element desired by the team.

Costs

Ashesi University will cover all expenses :

- Airport transportation - Ashesi - airport and team transportation during their stay,
- Accommodation for 3 nights, meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner),
- Related to the venue and workshops for all composed teams (3 students and 1 Mentor),
- Any other site visits that might be organized as part of the challenge.

Ashesi does not cover expenses such as :

- Transportation to and from Ghana to locations other than those defined by the organizers,
- Travel and health insurance,
- Visa requests,
- Additional meals outside those provided,
- Any other supplements related to participants' stay in Ghana for the duration of the challenge or extra days beyond the Challenge.

Information

For any further information, please contact the Students' Challenge Liaison at the following email address: albert.bensusan@ashesi.edu.gh

