

## Guidelines

### Companies

Any Member of JA Europe sends a team. A Mini-company should not participate in the Competition more than once.

The number of official participants per JA Mini-company is limited to min. 3 and max. 5 students. A student may NOT attend as an official participant if he/she has participated as a member of a team in any of the past Competitions.

If additional achievers from the same mini-company attend the event, they may NOT participate in any part of the competition (during on-stage presentation, at the stand presentations, or during the interview).

### Age of Participants

Achievers representing their Companies in the competition must be at least 15 years old and no more than 21 years old as of the date of the JA Europe Competition.

### Language

The official language of the Competition is English. Teams who are not fluent in English are allowed to make use of an interpreter and/or a dictionary. The Competition is not designed to be a test of English. A good command of conversational English does not necessarily mean that team members are able to understand and convey quite complex business concepts in English.

However, a certain minimum level of English is expected. It does not have to be perfect but shall allow for normal/basic communication including a basic command of business terminology (such as revenues, costs and margin; and ability to explain the difference between them).

An important portion of the competition criteria relates to presentation skills, which includes making a first impression on an audience. It is difficult to expect good results if the audience needs to wait until the communication has been translated. Students who cannot speak English will also be disadvantaged at the networking events and will not be able to benefit from the opportunities this Competition provides to them. It is advised to have these facts in mind at the selection process for the Competition at the Member levels.

## Stages of the Competition

The Competition takes place during 2-3 consecutive days and includes the following stages:

- Submission of written Company Report (prior to the onsite part of the competition)
- Panel Interview with the Judges
- Stage Presentation – an oral presentation before an audience
- Interview at a Company Exhibition Stand – a trade fair exhibition settings

Each stage is assessed by the jury. A specific set of criteria has been developed to assess the companies in all stages. The criteria are published in the Criteria section of this website.

There is no winning formula. Each JA Mini-company is different and must use its judgment to decide how to best convey to the judges the information about the strength of its members' experiences and present appropriate elements of their unique story through the competition stages.

The Guidelines available in this section of the website provide guidance to the teams on how to prepare for and deliver their part in each stage of the Competition. They also explain to the teams what the mandatory parts of each stage are and what the rules for presenting each stage are. On the other hand, the Guidelines do not provide guidance on what facts the teams are supposed to present. It is up to the teams to choose the appropriate facts and convince the judges that they have met all judging criteria.

*Full competition guidelines & stage details can be found in PDF [here](#).*

### **Company Report**

Each mini-company is responsible for submitting the Company Reports in time to assure that the jury receive their copies and all necessary information for evaluating the company reports three weeks prior to the event. The report must be submitted in PDF format to the host Member through the participating Member office, at least four weeks prior to the Competition, unless otherwise agreed with the host Member. Detailed guidelines for all stages are available for download [here](#).

The reports of the top three companies will be published on the JA Europe website after the event. All remaining reports will be available to JA staff in the JA Europe library.

## **Panel Interview**

Each Mini-company will have an interview with its panel of judges, lasting up to 10 minutes (or up to 15 minutes in the case of teams with interpreters). The topics may range from points of clarification arising out of previous stages to more searching questions on the wider application of the understanding achieved through running their mini-company. The interview is an opportunity to get more information about and revise the opinion judges created on the team in previous stages. The interview is also an opportunity to motivate the students by giving them positive feedback on their achievements.

Detailed guidelines for all stages are available for download [here](#).

## **Stage Presentation**

The teams are expected to make a professional presentation of their product/service in the context of the value they have created and their experience.

Use of videos/multimedia – the jury will carefully consider how much the multimedia support or distract the overall presentation.

Hand-outs are allowed and they should be handed, in at least five copies, to the MC or to the support team during the rehearsals. The jury group secretaries will distribute them to the judges prior to the presentations.

The technology of the presentation (PowerPoint format is required this year) is not to affect the score the judges assign.

There will be an official time-keeper (for each parallel group of presentations if applicable) to ensure that students do not exceed the time allowed. The students will be ‘forced’ to interrupt the presentation at the end of their allocated time and leave the stage.

## **Company Exhibition Stand Interview**

The judges will interview the mini-companies that have been assigned to their group for up to 10 minutes per mini-companies.

# Criteria

The competition criteria require the students to demonstrate or explain their achievements in learning and their individual and group development as acquired while running a mini-company.

- Innovation, Value Creation and Entrepreneurship
- Product/Service Development and Customer Focus
- Financial Performance
- Objective Setting, Planning/Review, and Company Administration
- Ability to Demonstrate Achievements in Learning

In the criteria, judges will be looking for innovative approaches to meeting the challenges of running a company as well as for understanding of the value that the product/service brings to the market. They will also assess the impact of the ‘learning by doing’ experience. In scoring each criterion, judges will assess how well the mini-company performed against it and to what extent mini-company members have shown that they understand their performance and the business principles involved.

It is not expected that all criteria will be covered at every stage. Companies should consider how best to communicate their performance in each of the criteria across the different judging stages. For example, the members of one mini-company might give prominence to the mini-company’s financial performance during their stage presentation to strengthen their response to that criterion. The members of another mini-company may choose to emphasise the research and development of their product range as a key element of their stage presentation.

*Full criteria details can be found in PDF [here](#).*

## The Competition

The dual-purpose of the JA Europe Company of the Year Competition is to:

1. Demonstrate learning outcomes and impact of the Company Programme on the students and award those who have excelled in doing so.

2. Create visibility for the JA Network, recognizing the contributions of donors and volunteers as well as raising awareness towards potential supporters.

The competition is JA Europe's annual celebration of the achievements of its students and their Mini-Companies across Europe. It is also one of the key moments during the year when we can give important visibility to donors and partners and showcase JA to potential supporters.

The JA Europe Company of the Year Competition is not simply a business competition for young people. We attempt to balance the business achievements of each team as a whole with their members' individual personal development. Therefore, for a team to win this award, it is not sufficient just to run a financially successful Mini-company or to have created an exciting product or service. Mini-company members must also demonstrate that they understand how and why the Mini-company performed as it did and understand the differences and similarities between their mini-companies and the real companies on their markets.

The Judges will assess how the Companies succeeded in demonstrating the outcomes of the Company Programme. They will look for evidence that the mini-companies experienced the whole life cycle of a mini-company during the Programme year and learned from each phase of it as opposed to completing a business planning exercise only or achieving only a research and development stage of their project.

Judges will also look for evidence of innovation and the successful exploitation of new ideas in all aspects of running a Company. They will look for understanding that continuous improvement through innovation is essential to the success of a business.

## How the companies will be judged

The teams are evaluated based on how they have performed against the competition criteria. In the evaluation process, the judges assess, by assigning scores, to what extent the evaluated mini-company meets the competition criteria.

The evaluation of the companies is undertaken in stages against each of the criteria listed in the Annex B: Competition Criteria of this manual. The four stages are:

- Company Report
- Panel Interview
- On-stage Presentation
- Trade-stand Interview

At each stage of the competition, the judges make an assessment of the mini-company's performance against the criteria as revealed at that stage and score the mini-company performance. The scores will be amended (could be up or down) at each stage as the judges learn more about the mini-company.

Each criterion is given equal weighting.

It is not expected that all criteria will be covered at every stage. Companies should consider how best to communicate their performance in each of the criteria across the different judging stages.

Full guidance on the stages and criteria is presented in the Guidelines of this website. At each of these stages the judges assess all aspects of the Company performance against the Competition criteria.