

Call for Participation (updated: January 23, 2026)

# 2026 SDA SD Express Student Challenge

The SD Association (SDA), the world's leading organization for the promotion and development of SD memory cards, would like to stimulate the creation of novel uses of its latest standard for memory cards – SD Express! In collaboration with several universities around the world, the SDA is holding the SD Express Student Challenge

## Details:

Each participating student will be given the same development platform ([NVIDIA Jetson Orin™ Nano Super Developer Kit](#), plus an M.2 to microSD Express adapter with a microSD Express memory card) and challenged with developing an application utilizing the SD Express memory card. The type of application / project is completely at the discretion of the student and university.

Best 3 projects will be awarded prizes: \$20k, \$10k, and \$5k and have the opportunity to present project at one of the trade shows attended by the SDA.

## Summary of Rules:

- Each university will submit an application form with up to 5 participating students/projects, and 1 alternate. Students may enter as individuals or as teams.
- **Only fifty (50) Applicants may participate in the Competition.**
- If SDA receives more than fifty (50) Applicants, SDA will review and, if eligible, register Applicants in the order in which their Application Forms were received, on a first come, first served basis, and in the order in which Applicants are listed in the Application Form. For example, if a Qualifying University submits an Application Form with five (5) Applicants, and there are only two (2) available spots remaining, then only Project #1 and Project #2 on the Application Form will be reviewed and, if eligible, registered to participate in the Competition. As a result, even though the University submits an Application Form, there is no guarantee that the Applicants will be able to participate in the Competition.
- Currently up to 5 participants per university are expected, but if SDA has registered fewer than fifty (50) total projects for the Competition, then SDA may review and, if eligible, register Alternate applicants in the order in which their Application Forms were received, up to a sum total at most of fifty (50) applicants in the Competition.

## Questions/contact:

Please direct any questions or other correspondence to [help@sdcard.org](mailto:help@sdcard.org).

NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT NECESSARY TO PARTICIPATE OR WIN. Completed and signed Application Forms will be accepted only between February 1, 2026 at 8:00AM Pacific Time Zone ("PT") and April 30, 2026 at 11:59pm PT or until 50 Applicants are registered, whichever occurs first. Projects submission due September 15, 2026 at 11:59 PT. Entry limited to students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate studies at participating universities who are at least 18 years of age, residents of Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Taiwan, United Kingdom, South Korea, and the United States and any country that is the location of a Qualifying University's main campus, and selected to participate by a professor at a participating university. This is a skill competition. There are three (3) prizes available: one (1) First Prize of Twenty Thousand US Dollars (US \$20,000.00); one (1) Second Prize of Ten Thousand US Dollars (US \$10,000.00); and one (1) Third Prize of Five Thousand US Dollars (US \$5,000.00). Sponsor: SD Card Association, 2603 Camino Ramon, Suite 200, San Ramon, CA 94583. The full Official Rules can be provided in advance upon request.

- Students must be a registered student working towards an undergraduate or graduate degree at the accredited participating academic institution.
  - Students must use the provided development platform using the microSD Express connected to the M.2 slot (using the provided adapter)
  - Evaluation criteria:
    - Demonstration of value of SD Express in the solution
    - Creativity and originality of the application
    - Functioning project that can be demonstrated
    - Incorporation of new technologies like AI/ML, AR/VR, robotics, gaming, etc. directed at new potential consumer markets or other mass market products for SD cards
    - Clarity of submission
  - Student must document the project and submit a summary as the contest entry:
    - Short overview of the project with its main purpose + description of how usage of the SD Express card and its high-speed interface was crucial for its success (backed by numerical measurements/results).
    - Maximum of 3 pages content + 3 pages for appendix.
    - Signed by the supervising professor
  - Student/university will retain ownership of intellectual property, but must grant permission to the SDA to publish results as part of promotional activities per details in the participation agreement that must be signed by the participating university and Official Rules that must be agreed to by the participants.
  - Submit applications and project summaries to [help@sdcard.org](mailto:help@sdcard.org).
  - See Official Rules document for more details.
- ## Schedule:
- Registration period: Feb. 1 - Apr 30, 2026
  - SDA registration confirmation and platform supplied around 30 days from receipt of registration
  - Project completion and submission of project summary: September 15, 2026
  - Winners announced: on or around October 15, 2026

## Frequently Asked Questions

|   | Question  | Answer   |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Is there a specific format for the application content?   | Yes. Please use the SDA's supplied Application Form. One Application Form per university. Each Application Form should include all the projects proposed by Students from this university.   |
| 2 | Who selects the Students that will participate in the contests from each university?  | Each university will present the 'Call for Participation' and any other related information to their potential faculties and students. Then the university will select up to 5 candidates using their criteria, and 1 optional Alternate. The university will submit to the SDA the candidates and the optional Alternate. If the Application Form complies with SDA's instructions and the Official Rules for the Competition, the 5 candidates on the list will be approved. If at the end of the registration period, SDA has registered fewer than fifty (50) total projects for the Competition, then SDA may review and, if eligible, register Alternate applicants in the order in which their Application Forms were received, up to a sum total at most of fifty (50) applicants in the Competition.  |
| 3 | <p>The necessary equipment will be provided, but will the university bear the cost of any other necessary jigs or materials, or can we discuss partial funding with SDA?</p> <p>...and what happens if the provided equipment malfunctions? Can we ask for a replacement?</p> <p>What happens with the equipment after the contest is over?</p> | <p>Each university will receive the agreed supplied equipment for each of the selected projects. The provided material is the only material supplied by the SDA. Please be prepared to bear the cost of any necessary jigs or materials other than the equipment provided by the SDA according to the University rules. Unfortunately, there is no additional support from SDA.</p> <p>The equipment provided by the SDA is new from its manufacturer. In case it is found to be malfunctioning or not functioning for any reason, the SDA may try to help, however, the SDA cannot guarantee the repair or replacement of it. SDA might ask to get it back, though.</p> <p>The equipment provided by the SDA is contributed to the university. After the contest is over, it may be kept by the university for future projects or disposed of, if not needed.</p> |
| 4 | What happen with the SDA's provided equipment in case any of the projects was cancelled before completion from a reason not related to the SDA.   | In case that an approved project is canceled, for any reason not related to the SDA, all the supplied equipment for such project shall be returned to the SDA in coordination with the SDA office after the cancellation happens and no later than September 15, 2026.   |
| 5 | Can the contents of this application be announced separately within the university or published in a paper? If so, can the necessary permissions be obtained from SDA?  | You may share the contents of the contest, such as the contest entries, within your university. You may also announce the contents of your university's application within your university. The final judging results will be announced by SDA, but you may also announce the results within your university or to the public. Ownership rights in the content of all the projects done within your university, including copyright and other intellectual property rights, will remain owned by the student(s) and/or the university. .   |
| 6 | If we want to give a demonstration to explain the project, is there an opportunity to do so before the September deadline?  | Participants are encouraged to create a video demonstration explaining/presenting their working project, with a link to the video in their project submission.   |
| 7 | Where can we obtain the specifications for the SD Express card (specification document) to create a project that makes the most of the features of the SD Express card?   | Generally, utilizing the high speed (random and sequential) PCIe/NVMe interface is the most important. You may download the <a href="#">simplified specification</a> (Physical Layer Simplified Specification) from the SDA public website. In addition, you may ask the SDA's helpdesk (helpdesk@sdcard.org) for any additional information, if needed.   |
| 8 | The final judging results will be announced on or around October 15 <sup>th</sup> , but when are the awards and prize money expected to be presented?   | The awards and prize money will be announced by SDA and presented in the SDA's website after all the winning entries and winners are verified, which we expect will be in October. The prize money will be transferred directly to the students. The details of the demonstration at the subsequent exhibition will be decided after the awards announcement, through consultation between SDA and the related university.   |
| 9 | Except for the application form, the Official Rules, and the Project's final report, are there any additional contractual or legal documents that the university or students are expected to sign?  | A formal agreement form will be signed between the university and the SDA before or at the time of the Application. The winners may also be asked to sign prize documents. We ask that you understand this and apply accordingly.  |