



Terms & Conditions

September 8, 2026

Version 1.0



Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

Biological Technologies Office

675 North Randolph Street

Arlington, VA 22203-2114

SurgicalCompetition@darpa.mil

Table of Contents

Registration Eligibility	3
Award Eligibility	3
Disqualifications.....	4
Ownership, Rights in Your Submissions, Sharing	5
Government Furnished Information (GFI)	5
Organizational Conflicts of Interest.....	5
Disputes	6
Governing Law	6
Additional Information.....	6

Registration Eligibility

The DARPA Surgical Competition (DSC) is open to individuals and team members of all nationalities and of all ages with the following exceptions:

- All participants under 18 years of age require parental or guardian authorization.
- An individual, organization, or sponsor is not eligible to apply or participate if they are on the Specially Designated Nationals list.
- U.S. Government organizations and FFRDCs may participate in the DSC but are not eligible for prizes. To the extent there is a limit on the number of participating teams, the participation by Government organizations will not prevent non-federal entities from participating in the Competition. Government organizations that plan to participate in the DSC in any manner are encouraged to reach out to DARPA for clarification on these Terms.
- DARPA employees and support contractors, their spouses, dependents, and household members are not eligible to participate.
- Federal employees and contractors acting outside the scope of their employment should consult their ethics official and appropriate management before participating in the DSC. DARPA reserves the right to disqualify a participant whose actions are deemed to violate the spirit of the competition for any reason, including but not limited to, the violation of relevant laws or regulations in the course of participation in the Competition.
- To be eligible to win a prize in the Competition, each team must have registered to participate in the Competition in accordance with the instructions outlined herein.
- All individuals requesting to participate are subject to screening to confirm participation eligibility.
- DARPA reserves the right to disqualify a participant whose actions are deemed to violate the spirit of the competition for any reason, including but not limited to, the violation of relevant laws or regulations in the course of participation in the Competition.

Award Eligibility

- The DSC prizes are authorized under 10 U.S.C. § 4025, subject to the availability of appropriated funds for which the payment for prize purposes can be made. The Government reserves the right to withhold prizes to ineligible and disqualified participants.
- Tax treatment of prizes will be handled in accordance with U.S. Internal Revenue Service guidelines.
- To receive a monetary prize, participants must provide a U.S. social security or taxpayer identification number (TIN). Information on how to obtain a TIN is available

on the U.S. Internal Revenue Service website at www.irs.gov. Foreign nationals will be subject to the U.S. and local tax codes applied to prize awards.

Disqualifications

You may be disqualified from the Competition and forfeit any prizes you may be eligible to receive if DARPA reasonably believes that you have attempted to undermine the legitimate operation of the Competition, including:

- Providing false information about yourself during registration or concerning your eligibility;
- Breaching or refusing to comply with these Terms;
- Tampering or interfering with the administration of the Competition or with the ability of other participants to participate in the Competition;
- Determinations that you have failed to comply with the Competition Guidelines and/or Rules;
- Submitting content that:
 - a. Violates the rights of a third party
 - b. Is lewd, obscene, pornographic, racist, sexist, or otherwise inappropriate to the Competition; or
 - c. Violates any applicable law
 - d. Violates the U.S. Department of War Social Media User Agreement at <https://www.dodig.mil/Disclaimers/Social-Media-User-Agreement/> (the "Agreement"). Using discussion forums connected with the Competition constitutes your agreement to comply with the Agreement.
- Threatening or harassing other participants or DARPA, including their employees and representatives. Harassing behavior includes: offensive, threatening, and/or hateful comments directed toward an individual or protected class (gender, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, age, race, religion, ethnicity, or veteran status), the use or display of sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, taking unwelcome photos/videos, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, unwelcome sexual attention, and developing and/or promoting any applications designed to encourage any of these behaviors.
- The Government reserves the right to disqualify any individual or organization that brings discredit to the Government or whose actions could reasonably be expected to do so. This includes associations with an organization that might bring discredit to the Government.

Ownership, Rights in Your Submissions, Sharing

- Ownership: Self-funded teams retain all intellectual ownership and publishing rights.
- DARPA will not disclose the technical briefs or code bases submitted by participants outside the Government except where this information is handled by DARPA support contractors for administrative purposes and/or to assist with technical evaluation. All DARPA support contractors performing this role are bound by nondisclosure agreements.
- Sharing Your Information: Teams may be featured on the DARPA Surgical Competition website. DARPA will not disclose your contact information if you do not wish to share it with the public. Photos and text descriptions of Competition events may be posted on the DARPA Surgical Competition and other DARPA-affiliated social media sites.

Government Furnished Information (GFI)

Competitor responsibility for protection of DARPA Surgical Competition (DSC) GFI. Competitor teams qualified to participate in the DSC will be able to download, for the limited purpose of the DSC, datasets jointly owned by DARPA and the Uniformed Services University (USU), exclusively for research purposes in the DSC.

Competitors understand the USU datasets have been intentionally de-identified to ensure—to the greatest extent practicable—that there is no reasonable basis to believe that the data could be used to trace a specific identity or present a risk of harm to any individual. Notwithstanding, it is foreseeable that USU datasets may incidentally or unintentionally contain sensitive information and images (including facial imagery).

Therefore, as acknowledged by competitors in the DSC qualification process, competitors agree they will not intentionally attempt to re-identify data in the USU datasets, disclose USU datasets to any unauthorized third parties, or use USU datasets outside the scope of the DSC. This requirement applies to all members of a team.

Organizational Conflicts of Interest

DARPA is committed to ensuring fairness to all competitor teams. To avoid organizational conflicts of interest (OCI)¹ or the appearance of OCI, **all** DARPA Surgical Competition competitor teams with access to relevant data collected for the DSC must submit an OCI mitigation plan². DARPA will review all OCI mitigation plans. DARPA has sole discretion to determine whether an OCI mitigation plan is sufficient to avoid, neutralize, or mitigate an OCI. DARPA may disqualify competitors with an OCI.

¹OCI definition

An “OCI” means that because of other activities or relationships with other persons, a person is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Government, or the person’s objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be

otherwise impaired, or a person has an unfair competitive advantage. The three types of OCIs are biased ground rules, unequal access to information, and impaired objectivity.

²OCI mitigation plan

In the case of an OCI or the appearance of an OCI, an OCI mitigation plan must be submitted to demonstrate

- (1) measures to firewall individuals in the organization(s) in questions; and
- (2) measures to firewall DSC data from the individuals who would participate in the DSC competitions. DARPA will evaluate the adequacy of these measures to determine if the proposed measures sufficiently avoid, neutralize, or mitigate the OCI. An OCI mitigation plan that does not avoid, neutralize, or mitigate an OCI may result in disqualification from the competition. DARPA has sole discretion to disqualify any competitors.

Disputes

- Participation constitutes each Participant's full and unconditional agreement to these Official Rules and Terms and Conditions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the competition. Disputes of a score and the request for a retried assessment must be formally submitted to the IV&V Chief Judge within 1 hour of the assessment. If granted, retried assessments must be conducted on the same day. Upon completion of a retry or denial of a dispute claim the scores are considered final. The final scores and determinations are final and binding on all Participants.

Governing Law

- This Prize Competition is conducted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 4025. These Terms and Conditions are governed by and construed in accordance with Federal law. Any claims arising under or related to this Competition shall be resolved in accordance with applicable Federal statutes and regulations. To the extent permitted by law, jurisdiction and venue for any claim not otherwise resolved shall lie exclusively in the United States federal courts.

Additional Information

Questions regarding rules should be sent to SurgicalCompetition@darpa.mil. DARPA may modify the rules in writing at any time and for any reason, including the accommodation of a promising technical approach that would have been excluded by the rules. DARPA unilaterally reserves the right to cancel or modify the Competition at its sole discretion. All participants in the competitions of this Competition shall sign, as part of the registration process, the Event Participation Agreements.