

Hult Future Leaders Challenge 2026

Frequently Asked Questions



The Hult Future Leaders Challenge gives students the opportunity to work on a real business brief from a leading organization. In 2026, Hult International Business School is partnering with LEGO® on a challenge connected to LEGO® NINJAGO® Legends.

Students are asked to create a new product or product line for teens aged 13 to 17. The idea could be a toy, digital or physical experience, merchandise line, branded collaboration or another suitable licensed product.

The challenge is designed to help students develop creative thinking, research, teamwork, communication and commercial awareness.

Important: This FAQ is the official student-facing guidance for the 2026 challenge. The Learning Hub contains the brief, weekly content, submission guidance and resources.

Quick links

- [Hult Future Leaders Challenge Learning Hub](#)
- [Hult Future Leaders Challenge Website](#)
- HFLC contact: futureleaders@hult.edu

1. Understanding the challenge

What is the Hult Future Leaders Challenge?

The challenge asks student teams to respond to a real business brief. For 2026, teams must create a new LEGO NINJAGO Legends product or product line for teens aged 13 to 17.

Teams should develop an original idea and explain:

- What the product or product line is
- Who it is for
- Why teens would want it
- How it connects to LEGO NINJAGO Legends
- How it could deepen engagement with existing fans
- How it could attract new fans
- How it could be marketed and distributed
- Why it could work as a commercially realistic idea

What exactly are students expected to do?

Students should work together to develop one clear, well-supported idea. They should research teen behavior and interests, consider how teens engage with fandom, and use that insight to shape their concept.

The final idea should not just describe an interesting product. It should also explain why the product is relevant to teens and how LEGO could bring it to market.

What is the product brief?

Create a new LEGO NINJAGO Legends product line for teens.

The concept can be:

- A toy
- A digital experience
- A physical experience
- A merchandise line
- A branded collaboration
- Another suitable IP licensing extension

The product should be desirable to teens, deepen engagement with existing fans and help attract new fans to the NINJAGO Legends IP.

Is there a specific product category students must use?

No. Teams can choose the format that best supports their idea. A concept could be physical, digital or a combination of both.

Does the idea need to be a physical product?

No. A digital app, online experience, event concept, merchandise line or other suitable product extension can be proposed. The idea must still be clearly explained and commercially realistic.

Do students need to build the product in real life?

No. Students are not expected to manufacture, launch or execute their idea in real life.

This is a concept and pitch competition. A clear presentation supported by visuals, diagrams, sketches or mock-ups is sufficient. A fully working prototype is not required.

If the idea is an app, does the app need to work?

No. Teams do not need to build a fully functioning app. They should explain the purpose of the app, its main features, the intended users and the experience it would provide.

Teams may include screen mock-ups, user journeys, wireframes or diagrams to show how the app would work. These visuals do not need to be functional.

Is the marketing approach product-led or story-led?

The brief does not require teams to classify NINJAGO marketing as product-led or story-led. Teams can explore both approaches and decide which is most relevant to their concept.

The important points are that the idea should connect clearly to NINJAGO Legends, appeal to teens and explain how it could deepen fandom or attract new fans.

2. Schedule and key dates

When did the 2026 challenge launch?

The 2026 challenge launched on September 30, 2026.

When is the first submission deadline?

The first submission deadline is **October 26, 2026**.

What happens after the first submission?

Hult professors will review the submitted ideas and select the semi-finalist teams.

Semi-finalists will be notified and asked to present their ideas live to Hult professors on **November 21, 2026**.

Finalists will then be selected from the semi-finalists. Finalists will be notified and asked to present their ideas live to LEGO on **December 11, 2026**.

Only selected teams move forward to the semi-final and final stages.

Does every team present live?

No. All teams submit the first presentation, but only selected semi-finalist teams present to Hult professors. Finalist teams then present to LEGO.

Is there another challenge iteration early next year?

For the 2026 cycle, there is no separate early-year iteration. The Hult Future Leaders Challenge runs once each year, with future cycle dates announced separately.

Are live sessions mandatory?

Regular live masterclasses are not mandatory. Recordings are uploaded to the Learning Hub within 24 hours of the session ending.

However, teams selected for the semi-finals or finals will be expected to take part in their live presentation stage.

What if a student cannot attend a live session because of school or time-zone commitments?

Students can watch the recording on the Learning Hub. They should check the Hub for the recording, session materials and any related instructions.

For time-zone questions, students should use the time and time zone shown in their calendar invitation as the authority.

How much time does the challenge require?

There is no fixed time commitment. After the launch, the weekly content and activities usually take around one hour per week. Teams should allow additional time to research, develop and prepare their submission, particularly as the first deadline approaches.

3. Learning Hub and resources

What is the Learning Hub?

The Learning Hub is the main online resource for the challenge. It contains:

- The challenge brief
- Weekly learning content
- Session dates and formats
- Recordings of live sessions
- Submission guidance
- Submission guidance and other resources

Visit the Learning Hub here:

<https://www.hult.edu/hflc/learning-hub/>

Is there a PowerPoint template?

No. We do not provide a PowerPoint template because we want teams to have room for creativity in the design and structure of their slides.

Teams should use the brief and this FAQ to decide how to present their idea. The Learning Hub Resources tab contains supporting resources and submission guidance.

Will new content be released during the challenge?

Yes. New content is released each week to help teams understand the brief, develop their ideas, conduct research and prepare their submissions.

Teams should check the Learning Hub regularly.

Will live sessions be recorded?

Recordings are uploaded to the Learning Hub within 24 hours after the event ends. Students should use the Hub for recordings and related materials.

4. First submission requirements

What must teams submit first?

Each team must submit a PowerPoint presentation explaining its idea.

The presentation must contain **10 slides or fewer** and should be clear enough for someone who has not heard the idea before to understand it.

Is the first submission a PowerPoint or a physical product?

The first submission is a PowerPoint presentation. Teams do not need to submit a physical product or a fully working prototype.

What should the first presentation include?

The presentation should explain:

- **The product concept**
 - What the product or product line is
 - How it works
 - What makes it different or appealing
- **The target audience**
 - Which teens the product is designed for
 - What those teens care about
 - Why they would want the product
- **The NINJAGO Legends connection**
 - How the idea fits the NINJAGO Legends world and identity
 - How it supports the existing IP
- **Teen relevance**
 - How the product fits teen needs, motivations and behaviours
 - How it fits into teens' everyday lives
- **Driving fandom**
 - How it could deepen engagement among existing fans
 - How it could attract new teens to NINJAGO Legends
 - How teens could engage with or express their fandom
- **Commercial potential and feasibility**
 - How the product could be marketed
 - Which channels, retailers or platforms could be used
 - Why the idea could be realistic to execute in the market

What format should the final submission be in?

The final submission should be a **PowerPoint presentation** with 10 slides or fewer.

Teams may develop the presentation using PowerPoint, Google Slides or Canva, but they must export the final version as a PowerPoint file.

Can teams submit a PDF instead?

The brief specifies a PowerPoint presentation, so teams must submit a PowerPoint file.

Does the 10-slide limit include the cover, references and appendix?

To avoid ambiguity, teams should treat the 10-slide limit as applying to the entire PowerPoint presentation, including the cover slide, references and any appendix slides.

The strongest presentations are concise and make the main idea easy to understand. Use short references on the relevant slides where possible.

Can references or an appendix be submitted as a separate linked file?

The main PowerPoint must be complete and understandable on its own. Do not rely on a separate linked file for essential content.

How detailed should each section be?

There is no fixed word count or required level of detail for each section. Each section should contain enough information to make the team's thinking clear and credible.

Use concise points, relevant visuals and evidence. Avoid filling slides with long paragraphs. The presentation should prioritize clarity, relevance and quality of thinking over the amount of text included.

Is a Business Model Canvas required?

No. A Business Model Canvas is not a required submission layout.

Teams may use Business Model Canvas thinking to develop the commercial side of their idea, but the final presentation should still address the challenge brief, including teen relevance, fandom, marketing, distribution and feasibility.

Can teams include a Business Model Canvas in their presentation?

Yes, if it helps explain the idea. It should be concise and relevant, and it must fit within the 10-slide limit.

A Business Model Canvas does not replace the need to explain the product, its target audience, its NINJAGO Legends connection and its commercial potential.

Is a financial plan required?

No detailed financial plan is required.

However, teams should show that the idea is commercially realistic. They may include reasonable assumptions about pricing, production, marketing, distribution or costs if those details strengthen the pitch.

Is a Bill of Materials required?

No. A detailed Bill of Materials is not required, particularly if the idea is digital or experience-based.

Teams may include basic cost or production assumptions if they help demonstrate feasibility, but they should not allow detailed financial modelling to replace the core idea and its relevance to teens.

Is there a fixed budget for the proposed product?

No fixed budget has been provided. Teams should make reasonable assumptions and explain how the idea could be produced, marketed and distributed efficiently.

Does the proposed product need a specific launch date?

No specific launch date is required for the proposed product. Teams may suggest a realistic launch timeline if it helps explain how the idea could come to market, but the competition deadlines are the important dates they must follow.

Does the product need to target a specific country or region?

No specific country or region is required. Teams may choose the market or markets that make the most sense for their idea.

If a team focuses on a specific country or region, it should explain why the product would appeal to teens there and how it would be marketed and distributed.

5. Research and developing the idea

What kind of research should teams do?

A strong presentation will usually combine several types of research, including:

- Consumer research and teen insights
- Teen trends and behaviors
- Competitor or comparable product research
- Examples from the toy and entertainment industries
- Recent product launches or brand partnerships
- Market, channel and distribution research

There is no single required research method or fixed checklist. Teams should use the research that best supports their idea.

Do teams need to speak with teens aged 13 to 17?

The brief encourages teams to speak with teens aged 13 to 17 for inspiration and insight into how they engage with products they care about.

Teams should use appropriate consent and safeguarding practices when gathering information from young people. They should avoid sharing identifiable personal information in their presentation.

What teen needs should teams focus on?

There is no single correct answer. Depending on the concept, relevant needs may include:

- Self-expression
- Creativity
- Belonging
- Personalization
- Social connection
- Collecting
- Entertainment
- Participation in fandom
- Discovery and exploration

Teams should identify the needs most relevant to their target audience and explain how their product responds to them.

What does LEGO expect teams to know about teenagers?

Teams are not expected to know one definitive set of LEGO research findings. They should conduct their own research using relevant public sources and, where possible, conversations with teens aged 13 to 17.

The most important point is to show a clear understanding of the audience and use evidence to support the team's decisions.

Can teams use public examples from other brands?

Yes. The brief encourages teams to look at real-life examples in the toy and entertainment industries, including recent product launches and brand partnerships.

Use these examples as research and inspiration. Teams must not copy existing products, designs or creative work.

6. Creative guidelines, AI and intellectual property

Can teams use LEGO or NINJAGO logos in their presentation?

Teams must use their own and public materials responsibly and must not copy or violate copyright.

They must not create new assets that reproduce LEGO branding, logos, trademarks, copyrighted characters or existing product designs. Teams must not use AI to create assets that copy LEGO branding or trademarks.

Can teams use AI generation tools?

AI agents may be used for research, brainstorming or other support, but any use of AI must be cited in the presentation. AI must not be used to generate images of LEGO models, LEGO or NINJAGO creative assets. Do not upload LEGO patented or proprietary products or materials into AI tools.

Can an AI-generated visual model be used if it does not include any logos or trademarks?

You may use AI generation tools to create a visual model of your concept, provided that the input and the output is original and does not copy or reproduce LEGO or NINJAGO logos, trademarks, copyrighted characters, existing products or other protected brand assets.

Even without using a logo, please make sure the design does not imitate an existing LEGO or NINJAGO product too closely. Your visuals should communicate your team's original idea rather than recreate official brand artwork.

Do teams need to create a physical prototype?

No. A physical prototype is not required. A well-developed concept supported by clear visuals is sufficient for the first submission.

How should teams approach copyright and intellectual property research?

Use public information to understand existing products, brands and market examples, but do not copy existing designs or creative assets.

Teams must develop an original concept and must not present another company's protected work as their own.

Who owns the idea after submission?

By submitting an idea, students grant LEGO the full right to use that idea. Students should read the submission terms before submitting and should contact futureleaders@hult.edu with any question about ownership, licensing or intellectual property.

7. Teams, schools and teachers

Can students from different schools form one team?

Teams must represent one registering school. Cross-school teams are not supported.

If a team needs to change its school or members, contact the HFLC team with the team name and the requested change.

What is the role of the teacher or counselor?

The teacher or counselor helps students stay organized, understand deadlines, work effectively together and access the available resources.

Teachers and counselors are not expected to create the idea for the students. The concept and presentation should be developed by the students.

Can different teachers support different teams from the same school?

Yes. Schools may organize support in the way that works best for them. Each team may have its own teacher or coordinator contact.

For changes to teacher or counselor details, contact the HFLC team with the relevant team names and the minimum information needed. Do not send unnecessary student data.

Can a team change its members or contact details?

Contact futureleaders@hult.edu with the team name and explain the requested change. The HFLC team will process the update.

What should teams do if their team name is inappropriate?

Team names should be respectful and suitable for an educational competition. The HFLC team may ask a team to change a name that is offensive, inappropriate or unsuitable for public use.

Can schools take part if their examination period overlaps with the challenge?

Yes. Live attendance at regular sessions is not mandatory, and recordings are uploaded to the Learning Hub within 24 hours. Schools should plan enough time for students to research, develop and submit their presentation by October 26.

8. Registration and Team IDs

When did registration close for 2026?

Registration for the 2026 challenge closed on September 25, 2026.

Can a team register late?

No. Late registrations are not accepted after the September 25, 2026 deadline.

What is a Team ID?

A Team ID is the identifier assigned to a registered team. Teams may need it when contacting the HFLC team or submitting work.

Each team has its own Team ID. Team members should keep it safe and use the relevant ID when discussing that team's work.

When should teams receive their Team ID?

Team IDs are sent to teams before the first submission. Students and teachers should check the original welcome email and their junk or spam folder.

What should a student do if they cannot find their Team ID?

They should first check the email address used during registration, including the junk or spam folder.

If the Team ID still cannot be found, they should contact futureleaders@hult.edu from the email address used to register and include the team name. They should not send personal details about all of their teammates unless asked.

Can the HFLC team share another team's Team ID?

No. Team IDs and registration details should only be shared with the relevant team or authorized contact.

9. Registration confirmations and corrections

What should a team do if it did not receive a registration confirmation?

The team should check the email address used during registration, including the junk or spam folder.

If the confirmation cannot be found, contact futureleaders@hult.edu from the registering email address and include the team name. The HFLC team will confirm the registration status.

What if the wrong student email address was entered?

Contact the HFLC team with the team name and explain the correction needed. Provide only the minimum information necessary to identify the correction.

Each student should have their own correct email address on the registration record where required by the program process.

What if a teacher accidentally entered their email address for several students?

Contact the HFLC team and provide a clear list of the affected team names and the correct student email information through the approved channel. Do not include unrelated student data.

What if a team member needs to be added after registration?

Contact futureleaders@hult.edu with the team name and explain the requested addition. The HFLC team will follow the current process for verifying and updating team records.

10. Certificates, prizes and travel

Do students receive certificates?

Every student whose team submits the first presentation by the October 26 deadline receives an electronic certificate of participation.

Are there prizes?

The winning teams receive the following Hult scholarships: First place: \$15,000 scholarship to Hult. Second place: \$10,000 scholarship to Hult. Third place: \$5,000 scholarship to Hult. Participation does not guarantee a prize or scholarship.

Do students need to travel?

The 2026 challenge is fully online, and no travel is required for any standard challenge stage or presentation.

Do students need to attend a university or visit Hult?

No. The challenge is for pre-university students and is delivered online. Students do not need to travel to Hult to participate in the standard program.

11. Student information, photos and consent

How will student information be used?

Student information is used to administer the challenge and communicate with registered participants. The information is handled according to the program's privacy terms.

Will student photos be used?

Photos are used only when teams provide them and grant permission for their use.

Do not send photos of students without the appropriate permission.

Can students ask questions about privacy or consent?

Yes. Privacy and consent questions can be sent to futureleaders@hult.edu. Do not include unnecessary student personal information in an email.

12. Common questions about presenting

Will the semi-final presentation be live?

Yes. Teams selected as semi-finalists will be asked to present their idea live to Hult professors on November 21, 2026.

Will the final presentation be live?

Yes. Teams selected as finalists will be asked to present their idea live to LEGO on December 11, 2026.

Does every team have to present to LEGO?

No. Only teams selected as finalists present to LEGO.

Will presentation instructions be provided later?

Further presentation instructions will be shared with teams selected for the semi-finals and finals.

What if a team is not selected as a semi-finalist?

The first submission is the main required deliverable for every team. Only selected teams continue to the live stages.

Teams should focus on submitting a clear, original and well-supported presentation by the first deadline.

13. Contact and support

Where should students ask questions?

Students, teachers and counselors can contact:

futureleaders@hult.edu

When contacting the team, include the team name and explain the question clearly. Do not include unnecessary personal information, full team rosters or private registration records.

Where can students find the latest information?

The Learning Hub is the main source for current challenge content, weekly materials, session information, recordings, submission guidance and resources:

<https://www.hult.edu/hflc/learning-hub/>

What should students do if information in an email conflicts with the Learning Hub?

Follow the most recent official instructions on the Learning Hub and contact futureleaders@hult.edu if the conflict affects a deadline, submission format, eligibility or live presentation.

What should students do if they have a question that is not answered here?

Contact futureleaders@hult.edu with the team name and a clear description of the question. The HFLC team will provide guidance based on the current program information.

Additional Office Hours FAQs

Can teams create new characters?

Yes. Teams can create new original characters for their concept. New characters must be created manually and must not be generated using AI.

Can teams use existing LEGO sets or minifigures in their presentation?

Teams may refer to existing LEGO sets or minifigures to explain research, provide context or compare their idea with current products. The proposed concept must be original. Do not copy, redesign or present existing LEGO products, minifigures, characters, logos or trademarks as your own creative work.

Can teams include videos in their PowerPoint?

Yes. Teams may embed videos, including stop-motion videos, in their PowerPoint presentation. Videos must support the idea, remain appropriate and fit within the 10-slide presentation. The main idea must be understandable without relying entirely on the video, and the presentation must still be submitted as a PowerPoint file.

Can the presentation address the content of the NINJAGO show?

Yes. Teams may discuss the show's content, storytelling, characters, episode duration or other aspects of how fans engage with NINJAGO. These points must support the proposed product or product line. The submission should not be only feedback on the show. Teams must explain how their insights lead to an original idea that would appeal to teens, deepen engagement with existing fans or attract new fans.

Can the proposed idea be connected to periodic events, a movie or a series?

Yes. The product or experience can be connected to periodic events, a movie, a series or another format, provided that it is clearly connected to LEGO NINJAGO Legends and meets the challenge brief.

Can teams collaborate with other companies?

Yes. Brand collaborations are supported. Teams should be original and should avoid proposing companies that LEGO has already worked with. The presentation must explain the purpose of the collaboration and why it would help reach or engage teens.

Is the challenge focused on LEGO as a whole or on NINJAGO?

The challenge is focused on the LEGO NINJAGO Legends sector. Teams should make NINJAGO the central focus of their product or product-line concept.

Is there a platform where teams can combine their ideas?

There is no official platform for teams to combine their ideas. Any groups or platforms that exist for students to collaborate with other teams are not affiliated with Hult.

How long can the semi-final and final presentations be?

The semi-final and final presentations must be no longer than 8 minutes.

Are the semi-finals and finals held in person?

No. Both the semi-finals and finals take place live over Zoom. They are not held in person.

Are Office Hours recorded?

No. Office Hours are not recorded. If a team misses Office Hours and has a question that is not answered in this FAQ, email futureleaders@hult.edu.

What is LEGO looking for in the submissions?

The strongest submissions provide a clear explanation of the product, strong teen relevance including consumer needs and motivations, a clear explanation of how the product could drive fandom and attract new teens to LEGO NINJAGO Legends, and a commercially promising and feasible idea.

How can teams decide whether to redesign an existing product or create a new one?

Consider whether the existing product still meets customer needs, whether there is an unmet opportunity, the strength of the existing product's brand recognition, the cost and feasibility of a redesign, and whether a new product would offer something meaningfully different. Either approach can work. The presentation must explain why the chosen approach is relevant to teens and commercially realistic.

How can teams distinguish long-term brand loyalty from temporary nostalgia?

Look at evidence such as continued engagement over time, repeat purchases, interest in new products, participation in fan communities, willingness to pay normal prices, interest among younger audiences and whether the trend continues after the initial nostalgic moment. Long-term loyalty is more likely to involve sustained engagement and interest in the brand's future, not only renewed interest in older products.

What should teams combine with Google Trends?

Google Trends measures search interest, so it should be combined with other evidence before drawing conclusions about sales. Useful sources include public sales or market data, retailer rankings, product reviews, social media engagement, surveys, interviews, website traffic, pre-orders and industry reports. If sales data is not available, use several public indicators together and explain the limitations of the evidence.

Final checklist for students

Before submitting, make sure that your team:

- Has created one clear product or product-line concept
- Has explained why teens aged 13 to 17 would want it
- Has shown how it connects to LEGO NINJAGO Legends
- Has explained how it could engage existing fans and attract new ones
- Has used relevant teen, market or competitor insights
- Has explained how the idea could be marketed and distributed
- Has considered whether the idea is feasible to execute
- Has created a PowerPoint presentation of 10 slides or fewer
- Has used original work and public materials responsibly
- Has avoided copying copyrighted work
- Has cited any AI use and has not used AI to generate presentation images, LEGO models or new characters
- Has reviewed the submission guidance in the Resources tab on the Learning Hub
- Is ready to submit by October 26, 2026

Good luck, and unleash your imagination and creativity!