



# Value of Industry Pharmacists (VIP) Case Competition Backgrounder

## What's Inside

Thank you for your interest in participating in the annual Value of Industry Pharmacists (VIP) Case Competition, presented by the Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) and the National Fellows Council (NFC). This Backgrounder serves as a guide for participating IPhO chapters on the expectations, activities, and submission requirements pertaining to this competition, and aims to equip chapters with the information and advice necessary to determine preparedness for participation.

This Backgrounder precedes the VIP Case Competition Guide, which will contain more information regarding the case description, competition rules, key dates, and resources.

**IPhO Professional Development Team**



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# Introduction to the VIP Case Competition



The Value of Industry Pharmacists (VIP) Case Competition is an annual professional development competition presented by the Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) and the National Fellows Council (NFC) that highlights the key roles and contributions of industry pharmacists within the drug development process, as well as provides student pharmacists with the opportunity to improve analytical, project management, and written and oral presentation skills. The VIP Case Competition offers chapters an opportunity to participate in an event on a national level that engages national members, encourages teamwork, and fosters leadership development within each chapter. This competition involves IPhO student chapters from across the nation and continues to grow each year. In the 2020-2021 cycle, more than 70 chapters registered to participate in the competition.

Each participating chapter's VIP Case Competition team will work towards creating a cohesive product development plan to bring a novel molecule to market. Chapter teams will have the opportunity to highlight their plans through key functional areas where pharmacists make significant contributions, including clinical development, regulatory affairs, medical affairs, and marketing.

The goal of this competition is to provide chapter team contributors with a professional development competition which results in participants' increased knowledge of key industry functional areas required to bring a new product to market and the vital role in which pharmacists play within these functions. By the end of the competition, teams will have created a cohesive drug development plan along with a presentation showcasing the drug profile.



# Participation Criteria

## A. Requirements

Chapter eligibility to participate in the VIP Case Competition requires that Chapters are in good standing including having a full complement of e-board members and compliance with chapter annual reporting. **As the competition grows more competitive each year, ALL participating chapter team members should be IPhO National Members.**

## B. Recommendations

- Designate 1 student representative (“VIP Case Competition Chair” or “VIP Chair”). In most cases, this will be an e-board member, if not please ensure that your VIP Chair is also a national member as they will be in contact with NFC and national student leadership.
- At least 8 participants from each chapter (2 dedicated to each functional area) from any pharmacy year are recommended; if the chapter team is less, Regional Student Officer (RSO) approval will be required.
- Establish connections with industry fellows and professionals for insight into drug development
- Connect with your IPhO faculty advisor and any other professors





# Overview of Activities

The following provides an overview of the key activities and deadlines along with their corresponding action items, from chapter registration to final submission. The work period of the competition spans the course of approximately **six months**. It is recommended that each chapter create their own timeline and goals based on the official deadlines set forth in the VIP Case Competition Guide. For exact dates, please refer to this year's VIP Case Competition Guide found on the national IPhO website as dates may vary from year to year.

Key Planning Process	Action Item
Chapter Registration on the IPhO Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The VIP Chair from each chapter will register on the VIP Case Competition page of the IPhO website. The Chair will be the point of contact for all communications from IPhO National.</li><li>• Dates for open registration will be announced via email from IPhO National and updated on the VIP Case Competition page.</li></ul>
Release of the VIP Case Competition Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The VIP Chair and team members will read the VIP Case Competition Guide for information on the case description, guidelines for submission, and resources.</li><li>• The VIP Chair will work together to establish communication methods, expectations, and goals.</li></ul>
Kick-Off Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The VIP Chair and team members will attend the kick-off webinar for a formal introduction to the case.</li></ul>
<i>Midpoint Submission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The chapter will integrate the work from each functional area to upload the Midpoint Submission to the chapter's Google Folder (see Section V.B).</li></ul>
Challenge Point Release Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The VIP Chair and team members will attend the midpoint webinar to receive a formal introduction to the Challenge Point scenario/question</li></ul>
<i>Final Submission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The VIP Chair will upload the Final project (video and slide deck) to the chapter's Google Folder (see Section V.C).</li></ul>
Winners Announced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep an eye out for notification of finalist status via email and any additional materials required for submission.</li></ul>



# Chapter Team Management

The VIP Case Competition is now nationally recognized by pharmacy school stakeholders, experienced industry pharmacists, fellows, and IPhO Student Leadership as a significant professional development competition that increases knowledge and application of industry functional areas in which pharmacists play an instrumental role in the commercialization of pharmaceuticals.

As a result, the VIP competition has attracted more chapter interest than ever before; however, several considerations should be taken into account. This competition is a large undertaking that requires careful coordination and a healthy amount of participation from chapter members. However, balancing input from a chapter with many participants may be challenging since having a very large VIP Case Team can dilute the knowledge and application gained by each contributor. In order to improve submission quality year over year, we have added recommendations with regard to organizing team leadership, recruitment, and communication to maximize success.

## **A. Leadership Strategies**

### *1. VIP Case Competition Chair*

Strong leadership of the VIP Case Competition team is needed in order to organize the team, adhere to deadlines, and represent the team on the national level. As such, chapters should have one program leader such as a VIP Case Competition Chair, who will serve as the team leader and point-of-contact. Depending on the student chapter, this Chair could be a current e-board member, an additional executive board position, or another national member with pre-existing IPhO experience and well respected by the e-board. IPhO does not recommend that the current chapter president or Director of National Engagement (DNE) take on the responsibilities of a VIP Case Chair due to its expansive responsibilities.



# Chapter Team Management

The VIP Chair position requires significant commitment, excellent project management skills, and a foundation of industry knowledge that allows them to review, question, and synthesize all team members' work. The position entails the following roles and responsibilities:

- Serve as liaison between the chapter, national IPhO student leadership, National Fellows Council (NFC) leadership
- Communicate all updates and information regarding the competition to the executive board
- Required attendance at VIP Case Competition national webinars
- Ensure proper delegation and communication of competition-related tasks amongst all participants
- Keep the team on schedule to meet the Midpoint and Final Submission deadlines
- Make Midpoint and Final submissions

## *2. Functional Area Teams/ Departments:*

The VIP Case Competition focuses on four functional areas of drug development: clinical development, regulatory affairs, medical affairs, and marketing/ market access. Although cross-functional team work is encouraged and ultimately necessary for the overall development plan to be credible and congruent, each functional area ("department") will have a significant portion of the entire competition plan. Therefore, if resources are possible, we recommend that participating chapters create functional groups consistent with each of the four areas listed above. We recommend two to three VIP Case contributors to be assigned to each function/ department. If there are more members per department, the chapter can consider designating a head of each function/ department who will be responsible for reporting back to the chapter's VIP Chair regarding function/ department-specific assignments/ outcomes.





# Chapter Team Management



Figure 1: The competition is headed by National Student Officers and chapter consultants are supported by the National Fellows Council/ Community. Each chapter's VIP team may be organized as shown above.

1. Sean Harrison, PharmD, RAC, Associate Director Regulatory Affairs at Ionis Pharmaceuticals
2. Jake Kinley, PharmD, Cell Therapy Franchise Fellow at BristolMyersSquibb; Michele Muir, PharmD, US Medical Affairs Fellow at GlaxoSmithKline; Jessie Kim, PharmD, Global Regulatory Affairs Fellow at UCB
3. Jonathan Hu, Temple University, Class of 2022, NSO Professional Development

## B. Recruitment Strategies

### 1. *Recruiting Team Members*

Before the release of the actual case molecule, IPhO chapters can start preparing by reaching out to their membership to see which members are interested in participating. If your chapter does not have an up-to-date membership list, please ask your RSO. IPhO national members and executive board members who are interested should have higher priority in your chapter's selection process.





# Chapter Team Management

Team recruitment can take place through live meetings and online communications. Chapters can send out a survey (e.g. via Google Forms) to their members to gauge interest and knowledge of the different functional areas of individual participants. To ensure that team members are both diligent and prepared for competition participation, chapters can include a brief overview of the competition structure, anticipated time commitment, and benefits gained from participating in the VIP Case Competition. If your chapter participated in the past, it may be useful to send out a copy of the submission to those interested so that everyone is aware of the commitment expectations.

## *2. Team Size*

Although there is no limit on the number of team members a chapter can have, the chapter should consider how large of a team it can coordinate while remaining efficient and productive in producing a strong submission. Chapter VIP case teams with less than eight will need to get approvals from their RSO as they may find it difficult to complete the project due to the demands of each department's workload. Conversely, teams over twenty members should consider limiting their team to their national membership from becoming too large to manage.

## *3. Combining Chapter Teams*

In an effort to reduce burden, promote inter-chapter collaboration, and to prevent chapter drop out, **two chapters that each have teams of less than ten members** have the option of combining their members to form one larger team. Teams that wish to combine can indicate to do so on the registration form at the beginning of the competition. IPhO leadership will provide approval after review on a case-by-case basis. Combining members from two chapters to function as a larger team can potentially give the team more resources to compete at a higher level, but please note that the number of team members does not necessarily correlate to the quality of submissions.

More information on the combined option will be provided to interested chapters once registration begins through a team contract. The members of teams that wish to combine will ultimately be responsible for establishing meetings and team dynamics between the chapters.



# Chapter Team Management

## **C. Communication Strategies**

Effective teamwork and open lines of communication are required in order to coordinate with all the VIP team members and department heads. Establishing platforms for communication between the team members is crucial for setting the chapter up for success. Additionally, chapters can contact academic faculty and alumni industry pharmacists for advice during the competition.

### *1. Team Meetings*

In order to keep the team on track towards meeting deadlines, VIP teams should plan meetings with the team members to hold work or discussion periods. It is up to the discretion of each team on how often they would like to meet, but these expectations should be set from the beginning so that a routine and schedule may be established. As a guide, individual departments could meet once a week to work on their portion of the project, and entire team meetings could be held once a month for cross-functional collaboration and any updates or announcements for the team as a whole. In terms of online communication with the VIP team, teams can establish a shared folder (e.g. via Google Folder) for any working documents and competition-related information to stay organized and streamline submissions.



# Chapter Team Management

## 2. Network

VIP teams can also utilize the support from their chapter faculty advisor, professors, or any other connections with industry fellows or professionals. Obtaining expertise from industry professionals and seeking help from the chapter's network can help teams become successful in understanding practical challenges and considerations of drug development. This knowledge can be incorporated in the team's work to create a more compelling and in-depth presentation.

*The following includes a guide for **team meetings** with the entire VIP team, but the schedule can be adjusted to meet the needs of each individual chapter:*

Month	Meeting Focus
<b>September</b> Start of the competition & release of the VIP Case Competition Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present and discuss the VIP Case</li><li>• Familiarize members with their department team members and set meeting dates within each department</li><li>• Establish a realistic timeline for departments to follow</li></ul>
<b>October</b> Halfway to Midpoint Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow-up with each department on progress and any concerns</li><li>• Collect questions to ask faculty advisors or industry professionals</li></ul>
<b>November</b> Submit Midpoint Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalize and integrate submissions from each department</li></ul>
<b>December/ January</b> After Midpoint Submission & Midpoint Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss feedback from the Midpoint Submission</li><li>• Discuss the Challenge Point with the team and brainstorm solutions</li></ul>
<b>January</b> Halfway to Final Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow-up with each department on progress and any concerns</li><li>• Collect questions to ask faculty advisors or industry professionals</li><li>• Discuss plans for assembling the presentation (i.e. recording schedule, editing, etc.)</li></ul>
<b>February</b> Before Final Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalize and integrate submissions from each department</li></ul>



# Case Components

## A. Understanding the Therapeutic Area

The case will concern a theoretical drug entity with a specific indication. In order to develop an innovative and robust drug development plan, it is imperative that the team understands the pertinent therapeutic area and contributions of each functional area. Although the case may seem difficult at first, teams can break down the information and approach unfamiliar therapeutic topics using the following steps:

1. Develop a thorough understanding of the disease state
2. Research the drug class and current competitors on the market
3. Understand the fundamental roles of each functional area (department) and where their responsibilities overlap
4. Focus on an in-depth understanding of one's own department responsibilities
5. Periodically refer back to the VIP Case Competition Guide for guidance and direction on the therapeutic topic
6. Utilize the VIP Case Competition Guide as a starting point for **resources** on clinical research, regulatory documents, medical affairs, marketing, and background information on the therapeutic topic

## B. Midpoint Submission

Approximately halfway through the competition, each VIP team will submit a Midpoint Submission worth 15% of the final score. This Midpoint Submission consists of the team's answers to pre-set questions for each functional area to provide a high-level overview of the team's drug development process, and therefore is a crucial foundation for the Final Submission. To better prepare teams for the Final Submission, **the Midpoint Submission will be formatted as a stand-alone slide deck** (with no video presentation) and teams will **upload their submission to a Google Folder specific to their team** (created and shared by IPhO leadership).

Before submitting the Midpoint Submission, teams should consider meeting at least once before the deadline to follow up with all departments and verify that all the questions are answered properly. When compiling the Midpoint Submission, be sure to cite any references and allow the team ample time to turn in the work.



# Case Components

Each team will be assessed on their Midpoint Submission with feedback in the form of a score and comments to ensure that the work is headed in the right direction. This feedback is important in determining areas of improvement, and teams should consider setting up a meeting with the entire team or within each department to discuss how to proceed.

## **C. Challenge Point**

During drug development, industry pharmacists are often faced with many challenges on the road to approval. Therefore, the VIP Case Competition encourages student pharmacists to practice these critical thinking skills in the form of a Challenge Point.

The Challenge Point will present a drug development obstacle in a unique scenario that requires innovative thinking and solutions and will be announced during the Challenge Point Webinar in January. The Challenge Point solution will then be included in the Final Submission. At the Challenge Point Webinar, teams will receive a formal introduction to the Challenge Point along with any other updates to the case or rules.

Depending on the Challenge Point scenario, the solution may require cross-functional teamwork. Interdepartmental meetings are encouraged at this point to focus on successfully incorporating the Challenge Point into the Final Submission and creating a cohesive overall development of the drug from a company standpoint.

## **D. Final Submission**

After Midpoint Submission, the team should take time to ensure that the work is heading in the right direction by determining which components should be solidified in the Final Submission. Teams are encouraged to set up meetings with industry professionals across the various functional areas.



# Case Components

The final presentation is worth 80% of the score and is submitted in two parts: a video of the presentation along with the slide deck. To prepare for the Final Submission, each team should set a schedule for recording and editing in order to meet the final deadline. Additionally, professionalism is worth 5% of the total score, so it is imperative to upload and submit all materials as outlined in the Competition Guide. Similar to the Midpoint Submission, teams will upload their Final Submission to their Google Folder; please refer to the Competition Guide for further submission guidelines and dates.

When developing the final presentation, teams should be sure to showcase their critical and creative thinking, slide copy development, and attention to detail, as submissions will be evaluated based on the quality of their drug development strategy and analysis. To ensure that teams only focus on the most critical components during the presentation, **the Final Submission will be limited to 45 minutes**, with deductions if this is exceeded.

The Final Submission should emphasize the cohesion of functional areas and demonstrate how changes in one department drive changes in others. Be careful not to spend more time on creatively putting together your Final Submission at the expense of the depth of your submission. Identify those team members who are comfortable with the techniques of laying out slides to support your efforts.

VIP Case Competition Grade Distribution

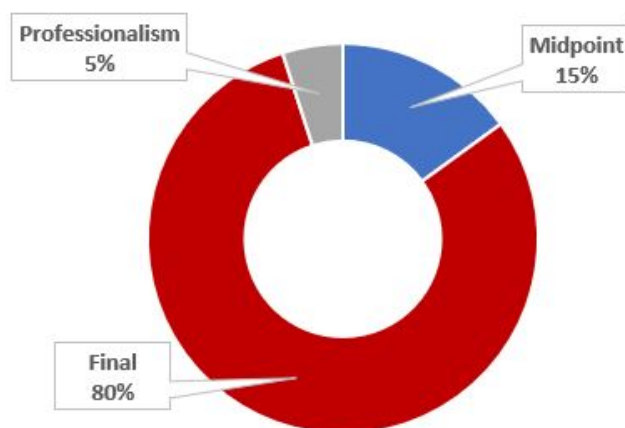


Figure 2: The VIP Case Competition grade distribution is weighted more heavily on the Final Submission (80%) than it is on the Midpoint Submission (15%) but also includes a Professionalism component (5%).





# Keeping on Track

One of the biggest challenges that chapters face is staying committed during the entire development timeline and ensuring that the VIP team is meeting various internal and program deadlines. Although the competition period may seem like a long time, there is a significant amount of planning and work that must be done in order to achieve the expected deliverables.

The VIP Case Competition Chair should be prepared to lead by example through his or her dedication and contributions to the project. Remember to keep the purpose and learning goals of the competition in mind to maintain commitment throughout the competition and to help the team finish with a strong Final Submission. Spread out the workload by utilizing the support of the Executive Board as well as the functional area department heads to delegate tasks appropriately. To maintain commitment amongst team members, be sure to remind members of the benefits of participation, be accommodating of schedules, and have realistic expectations.

The most important aspects of a successful VIP team are effective collaboration and communication since a collective effort of all team members will often achieve the best results. As the leader, the VIP Chair should include all members of the team and remember to reach out for additional support as needed. Additionally, the Chair should be available as a local resource to team members for any questions or concerns regarding the competition on the chapter level.





# Recognition

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