

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVE - HSNVC - MICRO-CREDENTIAL

The High School New Venture Challenge (HSNVC) micro-credential recognizes learners who demonstrate foundational competencies in innovation, entrepreneurship and real-world problem-solving. Through participation in the HSNVC program, students engage in experiential learning that includes identifying opportunities, developing and refining venture concepts, conducting customer discovery, collaborating with peers and presenting their ideas through written and verbal pitches.

This micro-credential certifies that learners have developed essential skills such as creative thinking, communication, teamwork, adaptability and early-stage venture development. Badge earners demonstrate the ability to move an idea from concept to prototype, articulate its value and respond to feedback—skills that are highly transferable to academic, professional and community settings.

The HSNVC micro-credential provides students with recognized evidence of college and career readiness, supports future applications and interviews, and highlights their initiative, leadership and capacity for innovative thinking. It serves as a meaningful academic supplement that validates the competencies gained through CU Boulder's statewide entrepreneurial engagement programs.

Eligibility

All Colorado high school and home-schooled learners

Delivery Mode

Hybrid of in-person and online delivery

Credit Status

Noncredit

Academic Level

- High school students

Time to Completion

Months

Fee

No

Requirements

To earn the High School New Venture Challenge (HSNVC) micro-credential, learners must complete the following program requirements:

HSNVC Registration and Eligibility Verification

- Register for the High School New Venture Challenge.
- Verify enrollment in a **Colorado high school** or **Colorado home-school program**.

Participation in HSNVC Programming and Experiences

- Engage in core entrepreneurial experiences including opportunity identification, ideation, customer discovery, teamwork and pitch development.
- Participate in HSNVC workshops, mentoring sessions or coaching opportunities offered throughout the competition cycle.

Submission of Required Venture Materials

Learners must prepare and submit the full set of HSNVC venture deliverables, including:

- A **venture profile** outlining the project concept and team information
- A **1–2 page executive summary** describing the problem, solution, market and impact
- A **4-minute video pitch** presenting the venture concept

Competition Participation & Demonstration of Competencies

- Compete in the preliminary round of the HSNVC.
- **Advance to the semifinals** based on judge evaluations of venture viability, innovation, clarity of communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Semifinals Presentation Requirement

- Deliver a **live presentation** of the venture to a panel of semifinal judges.
- Respond to judge questions, demonstrating communication skills, adaptability, and understanding of entrepreneurial concepts.

Learners who complete all requirements above and advance to the semifinals will be awarded the HSNVC micro-credential through CU Boulder's digital credentialing platform.

Criteria

To earn the High School New Venture Challenge (HSNVC) micro-credential, learners must demonstrate a defined set of entrepreneurial competencies and meet specific performance benchmarks within the competition. These criteria ensure the validity and rigor of the credential for future employers, academic institutions and professional audiences.

Minimum Benchmark Requirement

Learners must advance to the Semifinals round of the HSNVC based on judge evaluations of their submitted materials and preliminary-round pitch performance. Advancement signifies that the learner has met or exceeded competency expectations in venture development, communication, creativity and problem-solving.

Required Competencies and Demonstrated Criteria

1. Opportunity Recognition and Problem Identification

Learners must demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify a real-world problem or unmet need.
- Articulate its significance and relevance for a defined audience.
- Support the problem statement with evidence or reasoning.

2. Solution Development and Venture Viability

Learners must show competency in:

- Designing a clear, feasible solution tailored to the identified problem.
- Communicating a compelling value proposition.

- Describing potential customers or stakeholders.
- Showing early consideration of feasibility, scalability or impact.

3. Communication and Pitching Skills

To advance to semifinals, learners must successfully complete:

- A 1–2 page executive summary
- A 4-minute video pitch
- A live semifinals presentation to judges

Across all formats, learners must demonstrate:

- Clear, concise and persuasive communication
- Logical organization of ideas
- Confident delivery and audience awareness
- The ability to respond to judge questions, demonstrating strong communication skills, adaptability and understanding of key entrepreneurial concepts

4. Teamwork and Collaboration

Learners demonstrate:

- Effective collaboration within their team
- Shared ownership of ideas
- Professional behavior in interactions with coaches, mentors and judges

5. Creativity, Innovation, and Adaptability

Learners must demonstrate:

- Creative thinking in crafting novel or improved solutions
- Willingness to iterate based on feedback or new information
- Adaptability in refining their venture concept

6. Completion of All Required Deliverables

To be considered for advancement, learners must complete and submit:

- Venture profile
- 1–2 page executive summary
- 4-minute video pitch

These materials are evaluated by judges using standardized rubrics to ensure consistent measurement of competency.

Semifinals Advancement as a Performance Indicator

Learners who advance to the semifinals have successfully demonstrated proficiency across all required competencies as validated by external judges. This advancement serves as the minimum performance benchmark for awarding the micro-credential.

Assessment and Verification

Learners are evaluated by trained judges using standardized HSNVC rubrics measuring:

- Problem clarity
- Solution effectiveness
- Market understanding
- Communication quality
- Creativity and innovation
- Overall venture strength

Badge earners will have these competencies embedded in their micro-credential metadata to clearly communicate their verified skills to future employers, scholarship committees, and academic programs.

Skills

- Adaptability
- Business communication
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Customer discovery
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Market analysis
- Opportunity recognition
- Pitching
- Presentation skills
- Problem solving
- Professionalism
- Project planning
- Public speaking
- Storytelling
- Teamwork
- Value proposition
- Venture development