

Tips for Proposers

The following tips will help to make your design more competitive. These tips were gleaned from review panel members for designs from the first year of the Competition.

1. It is important to start the process by reviewing recent ACRP studies and reports to get a sense of what topics have attracted the interest of the airport community. You can go to <https://www.nap.edu/author/ACRP/transportation-research-board/airport-cooperative-research-program> to search keywords to identify relevant studies and reports.
2. A literature review summarizes the key resources that you have reviewed on your design topic and critically evaluates and analyzes those resources. A literature review is far more than a bibliography. It provides a summary of those resources, provides an understanding of the state-of-the art in the subject area, and identifies existing knowledge gaps or processes where your innovative approach can contribute. Your literature review is the foundation for justifying your design and approach and for describing how it will meet an existing need or fill in a gap. The review panel will carefully consider the thoroughness and appropriateness of this section with respect to your chosen design topic. ACRP studies and reports directly address airport issues and needs and are a logical and expected first step in conducting your literature review.
3. A number of proposers have used an internal review process and you may wish to do this as well. Some proposers gave presentations on their designs/solutions to internal review panels or other external experts to seek advice and feedback. Some design classes with multiple teams participated in a class review of all team designs with other faculty and/or external experts present. Ask the reviewers to evaluate the proposed design using the Competition evaluation criteria as shown on the website. This process requires careful planning on the part of the student/team to ensure a timely review process.
4. It is important to fully describe the required interaction with airport operators and industry experts. Be sure to fully address the name, title and company/organization of the individuals contacted and to describe their expertise. Describe your interactions with these individuals and how they contributed to your design/solution. Include both positive feedback and feedback that helped you reshape your design solution. Be sure that the experts you consult have the relevant expertise/background to address the issue under consideration. A good strategy is to ask airport operators about the impact of your design on their particular airport. You will include a description of airport operators and industry experts who provided advice and feedback for your design process in Appendix C.
5. Many past successful proposers spent time at an airport with knowledgeable people who could help them better understand the stated problem.

6. Think as innovatively as possible. “Outside the box” solutions are welcome if they are viable.
7. Separate opinion from fact. Back up facts with citations as appropriate. Prove your conclusion.
8. The website provides many key resources for proposers. Be sure to refer to FAA Flight Plan goals.
9. Follow the Competition guidelines in completing your design! Some proposers have lost points for not doing so.
10. Use the proposed APA style for references and citations. The website is provided in the guidelines. If you choose not to use APA, be sure you use another standard style for formatting references for professional publications.
11. If you use a specific airport as a model for your solution, be certain that the issue you are addressing fully applies to that airport. For example, snow and ice removal is not the same issue at a Florida airport as it is in the Chicago area. If you are addressing weather-related pavement issues, the same kind of applicability applies.
12. It is important that your design is a well-written and well-presented document. Proofread carefully beyond automated spell check options prior to submission.
13. Faculty advisors are encouraged to help students plan to meet necessary milestones for the design process to ensure time for internal reviews and polishing of the final design.