Discoveries Without Boundaries

HealthHack 2025

Student Pack

HealthHack Launch 2025

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our HealthHack event. This event offers an exceptional opportunity for University of Ottawa students to collaborate across disciplines and channel their creativity into developing innovative solutions to pressing health challenges.

Throughout the day, participants will engage in a dynamic process of ideation, problem-solving, and presentation. The purpose is not only to generate new perspectives on health-related issues but also to foster teamwork, critical thinking, and practical innovation. By the end of the event, each team will present its project to a panel of professionals, demonstrating both originality and feasibility.

The HealthHack event is designed to showcase the potential of student-driven ideas and to cultivate an environment where every contribution has the power to inspire meaningful change. Bringing together students from health sciences, engineering, business, social sciences, and beyond, the event highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in shaping the future of healthcare.

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The Concept Overview

HealthHack is a one-day health innovation sprint where students collaborate to address real-world healthcare challenges. It is designed not only as a competition, but as a learning experience that pushes creativity, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary teamwork toward projects that matter. By uniting students from health sciences, engineering, business, social sciences, and beyond, the event highlights the power of collaboration across fields.

At the start of the day, students are introduced to a set of carefully selected challenge themes that reflect pressing issues in healthcare. Each team chooses a theme that resonates with their interests and dedicates the day to developing a solution. Solutions may take the form of a concept, a campaign, or a prototype, but all must be original and created during the event.

What makes HealthHack unique is its dual emphasis on innovation and learning. While teams work toward a final pitch, the process encourages teamwork, critical thinking, and turning bold ideas into concrete, feasible proposals. More than a competition, HealthHack is an immersive platform to test creativity, expand perspective, and shape the future of healthcare.

The Themes

The themes of the 2025 HealthHack have been selected to capture some of the most pressing and forward-looking challenges in healthcare. Each theme invites participants to think critically and creatively, offering solutions that are both impactful and possible. Teams will choose one theme as the foundation of their project, shaping their ideas and final presentation.

Digital Health and Access

Technology continues to redefine how healthcare is delivered. This theme encourages participants to explore innovative ways of using digital tools to expand access to care, improve patient-provider communication, and reduce barriers related to geography, cost, or availability of services.

Preventive Medicine and Youth Health

Prevention remains one of the most powerful tools in improving population health. Under this theme, students are invited to design initiatives or tools that empower young people to make informed choices about their well-being. Projects may focus on health literacy, early intervention, or innovative methods to address risk factors before they escalate.

Sustainable Healthcare Solutions

As healthcare systems face increasing environmental and economic pressures, sustainability has become an urgent priority. This theme calls on participants to propose strategies that minimize waste, lower the ecological footprint of healthcare practices, and ensure that innovation supports both patient health and planetary health.

Rules Of The Event

1. Team formation

Teams consist of 4–5 students, with interdisciplinary collaboration strongly encouraged. Students may register individually; solo registrants will be placed into a team during the formation window. Team rosters are finalized by 1:45 PM.

2. Challenge Selection

Each team must select one of the official HealthHack themes as the foundation of their project.

3. Project Development

All ideas, writing, visuals, and mockups must be created on the day of the event. Previously built projects, graded coursework, or reused assets are not permitted as entries.

4. Use of Resources

Teams may use public, non-AI tools and open datasets with proper attribution. Any external references must be cited on the final slide. Generative AI may not be used for ideation, text, design, code, or slide creation. Utility features that only assist with formatting or spelling/grammar are acceptable. See the Policies section for full details.

5. Pitch Presentation

Each team delivers a 7-minute presentation (judges may allow 1 minute for Q&A). Final decks must be submitted by 4:30 PM—see Pitch & Submission Requirements for format and file-naming.

6. Conduct & fair play

Participants are expected to be respectful and inclusive. Harassment, discrimination, plagiarism, or violations of these rules may result in disqualification.

7. Judging

The jury's decision is final. Brief feedback may be provided after deliberation to help teams iterate beyond the event.

Judging Criteria

Projects at HealthHack will be evaluated by a panel of professionals according to four main criteria. Each team's presentation will be assessed on the following:

1. Originality and Creativity

Does the idea introduce something new and innovative?
Does it challenge existing approaches or provide a fresh perspective on a healthcare challenge?

2. Feasibility

Can this idea realistically be implemented with available resources, technologies, or systems?
Are the steps toward making it a reality clear and achievable?

3. Impact

Does the project have the potential to make a meaningful difference in healthcare?
Could it improve access, outcomes, or sustainability in a significant way?

4. Clarity of Presentation

Was the pitch delivered in a clear, structured, and engaging manner?
Did the team stay within the time limit while effectively communicating their idea?

Tie-break: Higher Impact score wins; if still tied, judges confer.

These criteria ensure that all projects are judged fairly and transparently, rewarding both creativity and substance.

How the Day Will Unfold

The HealthHack experience has been designed to guide students through a natural flow of innovation, from inspiration to execution. The day begins with a welcoming session where participants are introduced to the purpose of the event, the challenge themes, and the judging criteria. This opening moment sets the tone, ensuring that every student starts with a clear understanding of what lies ahead. Once the introduction is complete, participants will form teams and select the theme that best aligns with their ideas and expertise. From there, the energy shifts toward creation: students collaborate, exchange perspectives, and explore different approaches to tackling their chosen challenge. This stage of ideation and development encourages bold thinking, but also requires teamwork and problem-solving to refine raw ideas into a viable solution.

After the brainstorming and development phase, the focus moves toward shaping the project into a compelling presentation. Teams will polish their solution, organize their pitch, and prepare to communicate their vision in a clear and impactful way. The day culminates with final presentations before a panel of judges, who will evaluate each project for its creativity, feasibility, and potential impact.

The event closes with the announcement of the winners and the awarding of prizes, but the real outcome goes beyond recognition. Every participant leaves having gained valuable skills, new connections, and the satisfaction of having contributed to innovative ideas with the potential to make a difference in healthcare.

Awards

At the conclusion of HealthHack, the most outstanding projects and contributions will be recognized and rewarded.

Winning Team

The first-place team will receive special recognition by having its project featured on the DWB Journal of Health Innovation and on a science page. This distinction highlights the quality, originality, and potential impact of their work, giving their innovation visibility beyond the event. Cash prize (up to $500)

Prize Draw

In addition to the main competition, all participants will automatically be entered into a draw. One lucky student will be selected at random to win high-end wireless headphones (≈$300 value). This draw ensures that every participant has a chance to leave the event with a memorable prize.

FAQ

Do I need to prepare anything before the event?

No prior preparation is required. All projects must be developed during the event.

Can I choose who to work with?

Yes, you may form your own team, or you can be matched with other participants on the day of the event.

How many students are allowed per team?

Teams must consist of three to five participants.

What should I bring?

Laptop + charger, student ID, and personal items you need for the day. Details on any provided materials will be shared in the Team Challenge & Operations Pack (will be sent on October 23rd, 2025).

Can I use external tools or software?

Yes, as long as they are publicly available and properly credited. However, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is strictly prohibited.

Will food be provided?

Yes, lunch will be served, and light refreshments will be available throughout the day.

Acknowledgments & Contacts

Thank you to the **DWB Executive Team**, mentors, judges, volunteers, and partners who make HealthHack possible. Your time, expertise, and energy help students turn ideas into action. Special thanks to campus partners supporting space, logistics, and outreach.

Event Contact:

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*More detailed theme briefs, datasets, worksheets, pitch template, rubric, venue map, meals, mentors, and materials will be provided before the event. Meanwhile, please send us an email if you have any **questions** or **concerns**.*