Next Gen Tech 360 – Frequently Answered Questions

What is Next Gen Tech 360?

Next Gen Tech 360 (NGT 360) is a 7-month experience for high school students in teams of 3-5. Students develop an idea, attend virtual workshops with outstanding business and technology mentors from the Tampa Bay Area, and work to build a business model and working prototype.

Am I eligible to compete in Next Gen Tech this year?

To compete, you need to be enrolled in a Tampa Bay High School for the 2020-2021 school year and find a team of 3-5. This year's season will be entirely online, so each student should have access to a computer or some way to attend meetings and work with their team regularly. That's it! No business classes, no technical knowledge, and no experience needed.

I need an idea to apply! How do I find one?

Start with a problem. Look for a solution incorporating technology – software or hardware – and define your audience. Your first solution will change continuously as your business plan and product grow, so don't stress about getting it perfect now. No student should stop themselves from participating in NGT 360 because they are worried about their idea; changing problems and solutions along the way is part of the startup process!

Why should I compete in Next Gen Tech 360?

Good question! NGT 360 is a fluid program built to support your passions and help you develop your skillsets for taking this process to the real world. It's an experience to empower your drive to make the next big startup. The program offers opportunity to connect with fantastic mentors and make accomplishments along the way to build your resume, and a newly developing Ambassador Program will ensure that you have access to our mentor and resource networks for years to come. If you put in the work, top teams earn grant money and opportunities to pitch to investors like *Shark Tank's* Kevin Harrington! Many students earn internships directly from participating.

How will NGT 360 adapt to challenges of COVID-19 and monitor safety?

This year, Next Gen Tech 360 will be entirely virtual for the first year ever. However, this is a transition we have been planning for months and is a fluid change from our past virtual/physical hybrid model. Virtual programming means that every student in the Tampa Bay area will be able to compete and not have to deal with the challenges of transportation to workshops or scheduling in-person meetups with their team to work. There may be an opportunity to complete final

pitches physically with judges at the end of the season, but we will plan the decision that best ensures student safety.

I have no experience in technology development OR business. What do I do?

Next Gen Tech 360 is a learning platform for students of ALL experience levels! All you need to do is be ready to learn and excited to make your idea come to life – we'll help you understand the process and build the experience needed to succeed. Some of our most successful teams have come from no experience in these fields! Make sure to check out our application advice blog post from the 2018-2019 winning team, InSite.

How much time does participating in Next Gen Tech take?

The amount of time you put into your project is up to you! All teams will attend workshops and receive product development mentorships from October 2020 to April 2021, with a process for final pitch selection introduced at the end of the program. Successful teams find themselves meeting with their teammates to continue progress on at least a weekly basis, with individual contribution based on how team responsibilities are assigned.

What is new about the program this year?

With our switch to a virtual format, we are expanding accessibility to the entirety of Tampa Bay. In addition, we are now partnering with multiple online platforms and resources that will support your journey, such as Gnowbe for mobile learning and Pelocity for career assessment and advising. Many of these resources will stick with students as they complete the program, meaning that the NGT 360 Ambassador network will continue helping you beyond high school!

What advice do you have for completing the initial application?

Don't stress over it! The most important thing is that you have begun identifying problems that the market needs solved and you enter the program with an intellectual curiosity. Applications are to help us get to know you and your creative thoughts, not limit the pool of students that can benefit from working with NGT 360 mentors. Make sure you fill it out to the best of your ability before the deadline, and your idea will grow with time and mentorship.