

IN-ORBIT SERVICING AND MANUFACTURING 2026-27

RULEBOOK



UKSEDS
COMPETITIONS





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Document Information

Written By	Responsibility
Iwan Thomas	ISAM Co-Lead
Joel Cabrera	ISAM Co-Lead
Vincent Peters	ISAM Volunteer
Ali Haider	ISAM Volunteer
Anthony Smith	ISAM Former Team Lead
Verified By	Responsibility
Harry Price	Competitions Team Co-Leads
Tayeb Jasseh	
Approved By	Responsibility
Harry Szpuk	UKSEDS Chair

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1. ACRONYMS & REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1.1. Acronyms

Acronym	Description
ECSS	European Cooperation for Space Standardisation
ITT	Invitation To Tender
ISAM	In-Orbit Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing
UKSEDS	UK Students for the Exploration and Development of Space
PDR	Preliminary Design Review
CDR	Critical Design Review
TRR	Test Readiness Review

1.2. Reference Documents

1.2.1. Competition Documents

There are two other documents related to the competition to make a total of **three regulatory documents**. The three documents are as follows:

ID	Document	Description
ISAM-CH1	Challenge Document 1	Outlines Initial Proposal and work to be completed during the initial stage of competition.
ISAM-CH2	Challenge Document 2 (Not Released) ¹	Outlines Detailed Proposal and work to be completed in the later stage of competition.
ISAM-SOW	Statement of Work	Outlines the main deliverables teams shall be expected to deliver - the competition project requirements.
ISAM-RB	Rulebook (This Document)	Outlines the overall competition rules, funding, team structures and so on - the competition logistics.

¹ Detailed Proposal document will be released once the initial proposal stage of the competition has been completed.



1.2.2. Useful Reference Documents

No.	Document	Description
1	ECSS-M-ST-10C Rev.1	Space project management - Project planning and implementation
2	ECSS-S-ST-00-01C	Glossary of Terms - A list of commonly used terms in ECSS documents
3	UK Space Strategy	Current UK space strategy - Understand the current UK priorities for ISAM
4	ESA ISAM Strategic Initiative	Current ESA ISAM Priorities - Useful when considering the feasibility and viability of an ISAM concept
5	Space Industrial Plan	Space Industrial Plan - Policy document outlining the UK Space Agency's general strategy
6	Factories in Space	Factories in Space - This is a website to understand the ISAM ecosystem and market predictions
7	How commercial space dream is becoming a reality	This document provides a strategic and economic framework for new ideas to position In-Orbit Servicing and Maintenance as a key commercial opportunity within the evolving "Big Space" ecosystem.

1.2.3. Reference Links

1. [An overview of IOSM classifications for better understanding for students.](#)
2. [A paper on Commercial opportunities in LEO with focus on IOSM \[Page 17\]. For students to gain a better understanding of the commercial landscape.](#)
3. [An overview of IOSM classification based on market sizing](#)
4. [A paper on "In-Space Economy trends and area of economical interest" will be useful for students to explore concepts from an economic perspective.](#)
5. [A video covering entire landscape of IOSM and other possibilities](#)



2. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the UKSEDS In-orbit Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing (ISAM) Competition for 2026-2027. The commercial space sector is expanding rapidly, leading to an increased number of satellites in orbit. This growth presents significant challenges, including the management of space debris and the need to extend the operational life of assets.

ISAM is a critical field that addresses these issues by enabling the repair, refueling, assembly, and upgrading of satellites and other structures directly in space. ISAM is foundational to creating a sustainable and scalable in-space economy. The UKSEDS ISAM Competition is designed for students to develop innovative solutions in this emerging field. The competition challenges teams to think like a startup, combining technical concepts with commercial strategy to address a real-world need within the ISAM market.

2.1. Scope

This document explains the rules for the ISAM 25/26 competition iteration. It will describe key areas that participants are expected to abide by along with information that participants may find useful for finding and setting up a team.



3. COMPETITION RULES

3.1. Competition Authority

The ISAM rules are issued by UKSEDS annually. Official announcements by UKSEDS should be considered to have the same validity as these rules. UKSEDS reserve the right to alter the rules, clarify ambiguities and disqualify teams at any point from taking part in the competition, for safety reasons or otherwise. Teams that enter agree to comply with the rules, and report ambiguities or mistakes to UKSEDS at isam@ukseds.org.



4. CODE OF CONDUCT

In the code of conduct, participants refers to individuals or teams that are participating in a UKSEDS organised competition. By doing so, participants accept to follow the code of conduct as outlined below. Teams or individuals who are found to not follow the code of conduct, will be removed from participation with the potential penalty to be removed from further competition cycles.

4.1. Plagiarism through Artificial Intelligence

Participants agree to not use Large Language Models (LLMs) or equivalents to determine design decisions or determine the design process a team uses. LLMs may be used to help edit and improve existing text but must not be used to generate 'original' text. The use of LLMs to generate diagrams/images is strongly discouraged. All content produced by an LLM must be reviewed and should not just be copy pasted. Any use of generative AI in the production of deliverables must be declared within the acknowledgements of your report. Additionally, a log must be kept of all prompts and outputs produced in the usage of LLMs. If UKSEDS challenges the use of generative AI in any submission, the prompt log will be requested from your team as part of the review process.

Poor quality submissions and plagiarism which occur from the use of generative AI will incur the same penalties as those occurring without its use. Please ensure it is used as a tool to improve and refine written work, and fully understand its limitations across all applications before using it.

Teams may use Artificial Intelligence as part of their design, i.e. a computer based vision detection system which uses Artificial Intelligence for object tracking.

Participants should reach out to UKSEDS organisers to address any questions or concerns over Artificial Intelligence use.



4.2. Plagiarism through Reuse of Previous Work

The purpose of the competition is to give students the opportunity to develop their technical, team working, and project management skills. Participants agree to not reuse material from previous competitions and correctly reference and credit work. Teams are allowed to take inspiration from previous years, but must ultimately produce work that is their own. Work which is considered plagiarised will be investigated and a decision will be made by UKSEDS. Plagiarism could result in heavy penalisation or disqualification, and the decision is at the discretion of UKSEDS.

Participants agree that a significant majority of the work submitted was produced from members registered in the UKSEDS competition. Members not registered within the team are allowed to provide feedback and reviews to designs, but play no active role in the decision making being the design or analysis performed. Participants agree to contact UKSEDS organisers if they have any questions or concerns about what is allowed.



4.3. Conflict of Interest

Participants agree to not compete while being an active member of the UKSEDS Competitions team. Participants which are involved in UKSEDS in any capacity, even if not within the UKSEDS Competitions Team, , shall notify UKSEDS prior to competing, and a decision will be made regarding the conflict of interest. Any participant which is found to be a UKSEDS volunteer who has not declared the conflict of interest will be removed from both the competition and UKSEDS. The team they participated in will also be disqualified from the competition, with the potential to be disqualified for further competitions at the discretion of UKSEDS.

Participants should avoid engaging in any activities or relationships that could create a conflict of interest with their role within the competition. This includes personal or financial relationships that may compromise their objectivity, impartiality, or decision-making processes related to the organisation. Any conflict of interest should be notified to UKSEDS and clearly disclosed in the conflict of interest declaration within the competition registration form.

4.4. Unfair Advantage

UKSEDS organisers agree to share any information with all teams at the same time, or within acceptable margin, such that not one team or group of teams get an unfair advantage. Participants agree to not seek information from UKSEDS unofficially, and participants that are found to do so can be subject to the same consequences laid out in [point 3](#).

4.5. Respectful and Inclusive Behavior

All participants are expected to be friendly, kind, and respectful at all times, and to help create a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone involved. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, exclusionary, or disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to: threats of violence, insubordination, discriminatory, excessive, or inappropriate jokes or language, sharing sexually explicit or violent material, personal insults (especially those using racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive terms), unwelcome sexual attention, posting others' personal information, or encouraging any of these behaviours. Any complaints or concerns raised by UKSEDS, participants, or external parties will be handled in accordance with UKSEDS policies, which may include removal.



4.6. Social Media and Public Communications:

When discussing or representing UKSEDS on social media platforms or in public communications, please remember to maintain a positive and respectful tone. This includes being mindful of the content posted, respecting the privacy and confidentiality of others, and promoting a positive image of the organisation. Avoid sharing confidential, personal or sensitive information.

4.7. Social Events and Gatherings:

During in-person events hosted by UKSEDS (e.g. competition day), participants are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner, adhering to UKSEDS guidelines.

4.8. Professionalism and Dress Code:

Participants are expected to adhere to a professional and appropriate dress code for in-person UKSEDS organised events. Dress neatly and modestly, maintaining cleanliness and good personal hygiene. Dress codes may vary depending on the nature of the activity.

4.9. Safety and Security

Your safety and the safety of others are of utmost importance to us. Follow all safety guidelines, procedures, and instructions provided by UKSEDS or designated safety officer. If you notice any potential hazards or unsafe conditions, please report them immediately.

4.10. Compliance with Laws and Regulations:

Participants are expected to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. This includes but is not limited to health and safety regulations and data privacy laws.

4.11. Integrity

Participants must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.



4.12. Accountability

Participants are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves if any negative impacts occur towards any stakeholder of UKSEDS competitions.

4.13. Openness

Participants should be open about any situations or decisions which could have an impact on the competition, other participants, or UKSEDS volunteer members. This can range from engineering risks to public engagement relating to the competitions. UKSEDS organisers shall communicate information in a fair manner across all teams so that no single team gains an unfair advantage. Further, any information which could impact the teams ability to compete in competitions shall be communicated in a timely manner.

4.14. Honesty

Participants should be truthful and exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



5. ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM STRUCTURE

The competition is open to university students and recent graduates who are also UKSEDS members. It has been designed to be carried out as a group project towards a degree, or by a UKSEDS branch team. If you do not fit in either of these categories, please email isam@ukseds.org to enquire about eligibility. A UKSEDS membership can be applied for at <https://ukseds.org/ignition/members/>.

There may be a maximum of **10 team members per team**, and **minimum of 2**. The names of the team members must be provided to UKSEDS with any changes reflected in the team monthly report to UKSEDS. There may be an additional limit on the number of attendees to the competition event. Additionally, the work should be demonstrable as being done by the team members, and not academic supervisors or other advisers. Students should refer to the Code of Conduct or email isam@ukseds.org with any questions or concerns they may have.

Tip: Team Structure

Due to the nature of the ISAM competition, it is advised that teams be composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds but also interests. As the competition takes on a more business format, structuring a team to reflect how a start up is advised. There are many organisational structures a team can form and it is advised that teams spend some time researching and implementing ways to help them work efficiently and effectively. An example team structure is provided in [Appendix RB-1](#).

Support: Finding Team Members

UKSEDS have an extensive network of contacts at branches and in departments at universities across the country and might be able to help find team members if it is proving to be tricky. Please get in touch with the team contact if you need some support in organising a team



6. DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Teams shall comply with all requirements listed in the Challenge Documents (ISAM-CH1 & ISAM-CH2). Teams may choose to comply (or identify and explain areas of non-compliance) with other applicable space standards, such as the ECSS standards.

7. COSTS AND FUNDING

There is no fee to enter the competition. Teams should source funding for the project themselves, via grants from their universities, student unions or departments or sponsorship. Teams shall keep accurate records of their spending for the project and show proof of spend via receipts from purchase. Any misrepresentation of funds that results in teams saving money shall be considered seriously. Grants may be made available through UKSEDS, and if so will be released throughout the year.

8. MENTOR MEETINGS

As part of the competition, teams will be expected to take part in mandatory mentor meetings. These meetings will be carried out virtually. A majority of teams should be present, where each member acts in a professional manner. Mentors must be acknowledged in the documentation submitted by participating teams. Additionally, any external help, such as advice from a friend outside the team or a professor at the team's university, must be disclosed as a **collaborator**, especially during the presentation in the final phase. As UKSEDS cannot monitor all outside influences, participants are strongly advised to limit such interactions to sources of **inspiration only**. Should participants still seek external guidance, they are required to notify UKSEDS. Failure to disclose such support will be considered **unfair conduct** and may result in heavy penalties or disqualification.

Appendix RB-1: Example Team Structure

An example Team structure is provided below. This is not considered the “best” organisation method as teams may find structures that better suit their skills. For a description of terms a good starting point can be found [here](#).

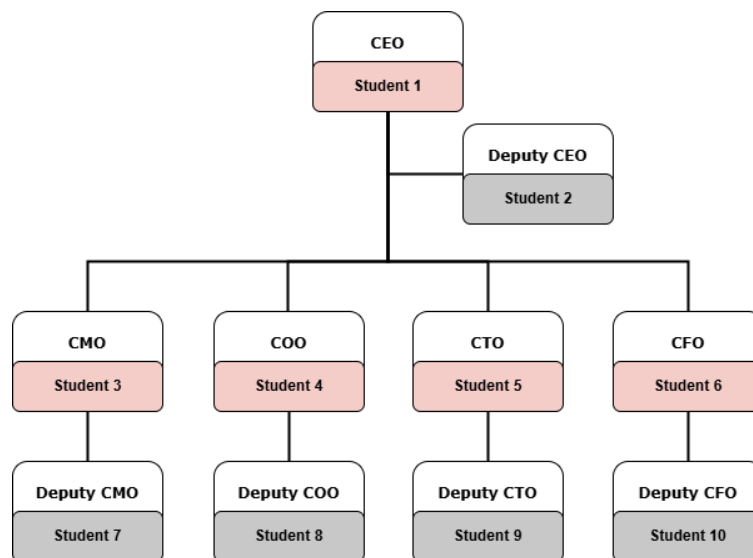


Figure RB-1: Example Team Structure

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