AAPG Imperial Barrel Award Program

Information for Prospective Participants

AAPG's Imperial Barrel Award Program (IBA) is an annual prospective basin evaluation competition for geoscience graduate students from universities around the world. University teams compete to win scholarship funds for their geoscience department and the international recognition that comes from competing or winning in the competition. The program is rigorous and contributes to AAPG's mission of promoting petroleum geoscience training and advancing the careers of geoscience students.

In this global competition, university teams analyze a dataset (geology, geophysics, land, production infrastructure, and other relevant materials) in the eight weeks prior to their local competition. Each team delivers their results and recommendations in a 25-minute presentation to a panel of industry experts. Students have the opportunity to use state of the art technology on a real dataset, receive feedback from an industry panel, impress potential employers in the audience, and win cash awards for their school. The judges will select the winning team on the basis of the technical quality, clarity and originality of presentation.

The IBA is a hands-on opportunity for students to experience the creative process and the high-tech science that is the foundation of the energy industry today.

Imperial Barrel Award Background

The Imperial Barrel Award was founded in 1976 by the Imperial College in the UK. The first "Barrel Award" was held as an MSc Petroleum Geoscience course in 1976, where students interpreted seismic from the North Sea using color pencils.

This program continued at Imperial College until 2007 when AAPG adopted the program concept. The AAPG program took the Imperial Concept and expanded it to incorporate new technology, new datasets, and include students from every section and region of AAPG. Almost every country in the world has been represented in the IBA.

"Barrel Award" competitions have provided students with a unique learning experience with real datasets from around the globe.

This program has evolved with technology, yet the key learning elements of the program remain true to the original concepts pioneered by Imperial College. IBA Teams must demonstrate:

- Evidence of rigorous and creative technical evaluations.
- The ability to work to a strict deadline.
- The ability to work effectively within a team.
- The ability to make decisions based on incomplete or inadequate data.
- The ability to give lucid oral presentations to a panel of senior industry experts.
The Program

Team Members
1. Teams should comprise no more than five students. Although this is a master's level students contest, other students (graduate and undergraduate) may be allowed. No team may have more than two doctorate students on their team. No Student should have more than three years of post-graduate experience.
2. Students must have full-time enrollment status in the school participating in the AAPG IBA program. Students should have no more than one-year cumulative professional petroleum exploration experience.
3. There may be special circumstances that allow exceptions to the above rules. Exception requests must be submitted to the local IBA committee and cleared before the delivery of the datasets for that event year.
4. The same team members must compete at the local and global competitions. Team members may not be changed between the local and global competitions. Team member substitutions may take place up to two weeks after the receipt of a dataset.
5. All students on the team must present only their own work or the work of their team members in their presentations. Each team member will speak equally during the presentation. The de facto language of the presentations in the Region, Section and Finals competition shall be English. AAPG is not responsible for supplying or paying for an interpreter for any competition.
6. No student is to compete in the IBA more than once.

Datasets
1. Only schools that participate in at least the local competition may retain the datasets as teaching tools.
2. Datasets are regional in scale, with 2D/3D seismic and well data (e.g. petrophysical logs, cores, core analysis results, pressures, fluids, well tests).
3. Team members may do a literature search. They may acquire further data OUTSIDE the Dataset Area (indicated by a red line in the Dataset Summary).
4. The IBA committee will provide one dataset to each school per competition year. Data will be provided to the participating schools eight weeks before their local competition.
5. Schools in possession of datasets from other sources are encouraged to donate them to the IBA technical library. After evaluation and acceptance, the dataset will be included in the normal dataset rotation. However, a school will not be allowed to use its own dataset because it may derive a competitive advantage from prior analytic experience.

Evaluation Goals
1. Complete a technical assessment of the petroleum potential of the basin/area.
2. Define the key plays, petroleum systems, leads/prospects, and risks.
3. Make recommendations on future exploration activity based on prevailing technical and economic conditions.

The Competition
Universities with enough qualified students and a willing faculty advisor may apply to participate in the program. Universities initially compete at the Region or Section level. The top team from each Region and Section competes in the Imperial Barrel Award Finals competition at the AAPG Annual Convention and Exhibition (ACE).

AAPG Sections and Regions through generous sponsors provide funding to offset reasonable travel costs, housing and some food for the local competitions.

AAPG and corporate sponsors provide funds for the Section/Region representative teams' (five students and one faculty advisor) transportation, housing, and convention registration at the ACE. Note that meals outside of those provided during the competition and other expenses (transportation not directly associated with the competition, personal amenities, spending money, etc.) are NOT covered by the AAPG or corporate sponsors.
1. Up to six Section teams and up to six Regional teams will present on the Friday and Saturday prior to the ACE before a panel of judges. Each team will be allowed 25 minutes for their presentations.

2. Finals awards will be presented on Sunday immediately prior to the ACE Opening Session.

3. The following awards are given to the participating teams in the finals:

   First: The Imperial Barrel Award (plus $20,000)
   Second: The Selley Cup (plus $10,000)
   Third: The Stoneley Medal (plus $5,000)
   Teamwork Excellence Award
   Innovation Excellence Award
   Honorable Mention: All remaining teams (plus $1,000 each)

**Deliverables from AAPG**

The school will receive the following:
1. IBA Welcome Letter from IBA Student Support Committee
2. Imperial College IBA Introduction Lecture.
3. The PowerPoint introductory lecture by Dr. Howard Johnson at Imperial College, explaining what the program is about and how to work the datasets.
4. IBA Rules and Operating Procedures.
5. Scoring Guidelines.
6. IBA competition dataset and project instruction.
7. The opportunity to request software that has been made available by several sponsors for teams to use in making their analysis.
8. Materials specific to the local competition and Annual Convention and Exhibition.

**Note to Faculty and students:**

The AAPG is unable to provide insurance to cover participants in the IBA program. Participating students and Faculty Advisors are expected to obtain insurance to cover injury, death, illness and loss or damage to personal property during periods of travel associated with the program. To be certain that this issue is fully understood and recognized by participants, all participants (team members and travelling Faculty Advisors) are required to sign the Imperial Barrel Award Release, Waiver and Indemnity Agreement (through online registration form) as a prerequisite to taking part in the program. Universities should submit their agreements through the electronic registration form before datasets are released. If signed agreements are not received from all team members and the Faculty Advisor in the manner above, the team is liable to expulsion from the program.

**Software- Please initiate license renewal or software requests well before the add deadline.** It may be too late to obtain either for the current contest. All schools should have their hardware and software in place before they receive their datasets. Many vendors are extremely busy with client license renewals in late December and early January. Schools and teams should not wait until December or January to verify or obtain a license for the software they wish to use. **NOTE:** Some schools already have licenses available through a vendor’s university program. Please verify this with your department. The IBA Committee has experienced requests for help with licenses only to learn that a school already has the software installed and available to them.
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