

**best practice  
paper:  
organising  
design  
award  
competitions**

**The aim of Design Award Competitions is to evaluate and recognise existing work created by designers. Design Award Competitions can play an important role in the field, serving to illustrate and define current design benchmarks that may influence future design projects, methodologies and outcomes.**

**Design Award Competitions differ from contract work or award schemes that ask for original (new) work, which at times, may constitute speculative practice.**

**This document, *Best Practice Paper: Organising Design Award Competitions*, was developed as a set of guidelines for Organisers to conceive of Design Award Competitions that are ethical and respect the integrity of designers, the design process and the value of design.**

A **best practice** is a way of doing things that—through experience—has proven to achieve a desired result, or has become a standard way of doing things. In the context of the work of the International Council of Design, **Best Practice Papers for Design** are intended to provide designers and related stakeholders with guidelines and information about an array of concepts, processes and methodologies to address relevant issues for the promotion of ethical design practice.

This document is part of a series that also includes the **ico-D Best Practice Paper: Serving as a Juror for a Design Award Competition**.

# LEXICON

**AWARD COMPETITION**—where recognition is given to existing work via an open application process. Other terms often used interchangeably with **Awards Competition: Award Scheme, Contest, Prize, etc.**

**AWARD COMPETITION BY INVITATION**—where recognition is given to existing work by a closed competition between applicants that were invited to submit work.

**AWARD COMPETITION FOR ORIGINAL WORK**—where recognition is given to new work—generally around a specific theme or problem statement. Can be open or closed to a select group of applicants. See page 14 for more.

**AWARDS CEREMONY**—An event or occasion planned to announce and celebrate the winners of the Award.

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**—the public announcement inviting entrants to submit their work (including theme, objectives and concept, the competition logistics, including timelines, the names of Jury members and all the terms and conditions of entry).

**COMPETITION RULES**—the Competition Rules document should include not only the Rules of Entry of the competition but all other regulations governing the Award including: Terms and Conditions, Fees, and any mandatory attendance.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS**—the time limit set for entrants to submit their work (should specify the timezone if there is a specific hour).

**DESIGNATED AWARD**—where recognition is given to existing work without a submission process.

**ENTRANT**—the Designer, design studio, client or other entity who is submitting work to the Competition.

**ENTRY**—the piece of design that it submitted for consideration, also called 'submission'.

**FACILITATOR**—the individual who is responsible for liaising between the Organiser, the Entrants and the Jury. This person may be an employee of the Organiser or not.

**INNOVATION**—this term is often erroneously used as a substitute for 'new' or 'different,' but innovation is much more impactful than mere novelty. Real innovation creates disruptive change, and this can only be measured over time based on sustained impact.

**INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AWARD**—an award competition is considered 'International' when the Jury is composed of representatives of least two of these six regions (North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania). Call for submissions must be published and available in at least three regions.

**JUDGING CRITERIA**—the elements on which the entries will be judged by the Jury as well as the relative importance thereof.

**JURY**—a group of expert individuals tasked with choosing the winning entries from among the submissions.

**JURY CHAIR**—a member of the Jury appointed by the Organiser (or by the Jury if the Organiser has failed to do so) to be the collective voice of the Jurors, cast the deciding vote and prepare the Jury Report

**JURY SECRETARY**—an individual appointed to keep a record of the activities of the Jury for posterity.

**JURY PROCESS**—the rules of the process by which the Jury will reach decisions (may include rules on voting, what constitutes a majority, how much time is allotted to each piece, etc.)

**JURY REPORT**—a written report produced by the Jury Chair that records all the important elements of the judging process for posterity.

**METADATA**—information about a file which is embedded into the file and can be read by a variety of software programmes. Copyright ownership information such as the name of the author or creator, copyright status, and copyright notice, can be embedded into electronic files as metadata. Many software programmes such as Adobe Creative Suite permit the user to embed their metadata as the file is created. Once the copyright management metadata is embedded, the file be tracked as it is distributed online.

**NATIONAL AWARD**—an award competition is considered 'national' when it is limited to one country or a region within one country.

**ORGANISER**—the person or organisation who is responsible for running the award competition, including setting the rules and regulations, financial management of the competition, logistics of the competition, etc.

**PRE-SELECTION COMMITTEE**—a Committee of experts put in place to reduce the number of submissions to a number that can be reasonably examined by the Jury

**PRIZES AND AWARDS**—prizes are awards given in currency whereas awards can be any form of recognition given to the winner or winners of the competition.

**REGIONAL DESIGN AWARD**—for the purposes of this document, the term 'Regional' refers to trans-national initiatives, including multiple countries from one geographic region. For an award competition to be considered 'regional', the jury must include jurors from at least three countries of that region, and call for submissions must be published and available in at least three countries.

**RIGHT OF ATTRIBUTION**—the right of attribution is considered a moral right of copyright holders. Moral rights for copyright holders include right of attribution, right to integrity (preventing prejudicial distortions of the work), right to have a work published pseudonymously or anonymously, etc. Some countries (the US, for instance) have very weak support for moral rights of copyright holders, but in other countries (ie, France) there is strong support for moral rights.

**SPECULATIVE PRACTICE**—Speculative practices (also called 'spec work') are defined as: design work (including documented consultation), created by professional designers and organisations, provided for free or for a nominal fee, often in competition with peers and often as a means to solicit new business. In harmony with ico-D's code of professional conduct for designers, ico-D recommends that all professional designers avoid engaging in such practices.

**STUDENT AWARD COMPETITION**—where recognition is given to existing student work or class work.

## CLARIFICATION

*Sometimes the term '**Design Competition**' can refer to a Design Award but sometimes it refers to a competition to assign a design contract. While it is possible to conduct a competition to assign design contracts in a manner that is fair to both designer and client, we suggest caution as often Design Competitions fall into the domain of **Speculative Practice**.*

*See our note on page 14.*

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# introduction

**The Organiser of any Design Award Competition will want to begin by establishing what the value of the Design Award is, and what it will bring to the field of design, as well as give broader consideration to all the stages and varied responsibilities that will be involved in its conception, planning and execution.**

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF DESIGN AWARD COMPETITIONS?

The main purpose of Awards, such as ‘Poster Design Award’, ‘Package Design Award’, ‘Interior Design Award’, ‘Product Design Award’, ‘Sustainable Design Award’ etc. is to recognise the merit of existing work, to raise standards of design and promote a better and wider use of design. Design Awards can recognise individual designers or design teams for their professionalism, talent and solutions to design briefs, or other entities, including clients, for their effective utilisation of design. The awarded projects can serve as case studies for the promotion of design capacity in a specific region, discipline or area of design, or act as a benchmark for the standard of design practice.

## STAGES OF AWARD COMPETITIONS

Stage	Responsible entity
Competition, Concept Structure and Planning	Organiser
Call for Submissions	Organiser
Submission of Entries	Entrants
<i>Pre-Selection Process (where applicable)</i>	<i>Pre-Selection Jury</i>
Final Judging	Jury
Notification to Entrants	Organiser
Awards Ceremony	Organiser
<i>Awards Exhibit (optional)</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
<i>Return of Materials (where applicable)</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
Communication of results to public	Organiser

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANISER

Before an Awards Competition is launched, it is the responsibility of the Organiser to clearly define the contract designers are entering into:

Concept structure and planning:

- competition concept and objectives
- presentation of entity organising the event
- competition rules
- competition timeline (deadlines for submission and dates for judging, announcement and, if applicable, awards ceremony)
- criteria for determining award winners
- composition of Jury

The Organiser is also responsible for:

- putting in place a pre-selection process and committee if needed
- Jury Selection and recruitment
- naming a Jury Chair
- naming a Facilitator
- establishing the decision-making process for the Jury
- establishing the protocol to adequately manage entries
- establishing the protocol to return, delete or dispose of work (and adequately communicating this to the applicants)

This document outlines recommendations for organising design award competitions consistent with international best practices. We try, where possible, to not only prescribe a way of doing things, but to explain the logic behind our recommendations. This document can help design organisations to find solutions that work for them while respecting the underlining issues. Above all, it is our intention to encourage design competitions that respect designers and elevate understanding of the value of design.

# organising a design award competition

## OBJECTIVES

**Each Design Award Competition has unique objectives. Thus the structure, format and mechanics of each Design Award Competition should reflect those unique objectives. For example, the organiser may wish to promote the design output of individual designers to promote regional excellence, or showcase the impact of design on a specific industry. Having a clear understanding of the objectives of the award is paramount to the success of the competition.**

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

As a starting point, most important questions to ask are:

**01 WHAT** is the purpose of the Award? What is the Award trying to change? Who is it trying to convince? Will it promote the profession, demonstrating design excellence? Will it promote designers? Perhaps the objective of the award scheme is to raise the design profile of an entity, or city. Or to promote the recognition of design's value to different targetable audiences. The next question is:

**02 WHAT** is being awarded? Is the intention to celebrate 'Designs', 'Designers' or 'Designing'? Finally:

**03 WHO** is being awarded? Is it the designer that is being awarded? The client? The business manager that has incorporated design into the business? Each of these variations will produce very different competitions, with different structures, criteria, jury compositions and processes. All of these questions need to be asked and clear answers established before beginning of the process of setting up the award.

### EXAMPLES: TYPES OF AWARD COMPETITIONS

The possible reasons for putting in place a design award competition are innumerable, as are the possible objectives. These are some examples of the most common types of award competitions out there.

#### Recognition of design achievement

Traditionally, practicing designers have seen design awards as a means to recognise the work of individual designers. These awards focus on the recognition of design achievement to enhance the individual designer's commercial stature and recognition of provision of good service to clients. This traditional format celebrates the design product or 'designs', and is usually based on a fairly superficial review of the visual attributes of the design submitted—graphic, product or spatial. The Jury, in most cases, reviews images—a process that is relatively quick and easy.

#### Recognition of design excellence

While recognition of good professional achievement can be effectively assigned to many submissions, excellence—by definition—can only be assigned to a very few. This type of award advances from focusing on 'designs' to considering the process itself, the 'designing'. The focus moves away from the visual aspects of individual products to the professional capacity of the designer.

Reviewing 'designing', the abstract, invisible design process, is far more complicated and time consuming, it requires a complicated effort to describe and evaluate objectives and processes through comparison of hard-to-collect-and-compare data and results.

#### Demonstration of impact of design

This format focuses on convincing an audience of the potential of design to achieve desired outcomes—whether economic development, social change, environmental protection, or other. Such efforts can be discipline specific—visual design, interactive design, product design, fashion design, etc., or sector specific—health, transportation, habitation, urban accessibility, etc. Such efforts are aimed at influencing very specific audiences—not designers—but governments, business sector leaders, media influencers, etc. The intention to impact very specific target audiences greatly influences the format and mechanics of the award scheme.

#### Awards that encourage work for a cause

ico-D strongly believes that the social, cultural and environmental responsibilities of professional designers are just as important as their economic and marketing capabilities. Design awards can be a way to value work that is for a higher cause.

# CONCEPT, STRUCTURE AND PLANNING

**Once the objectives have been clearly established, the Organiser must make a series of decisions to set the structure in place for the Award. These elements should be defined by the competition objectives and be built to support them.**

## ESTABLISHING JUDGING CRITERIA

Entrants should be made aware of the guidelines Jurors will base their decisions on to determine and select the works that are recognised. Criteria could include effectiveness, utility, innovation, originality, excellence, quality of execution, etc.

## PLANNING COLLECTION OF ENTRIES

Whatever the method of collection, whether it be digital, by mail/courier or physical delivery of the entries, the organiser is responsible for keeping an adequate record of identification of submissions, including the name and contact information of all entrants.

## DETERMINING COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The International Council of Design vigorously defends the right of the designer to maintain ownership of their work. **It is considered unethical for a Competition Organiser to demand, invoke or claim ownership of copyrights or intellectual property rights of the submissions collected.**

### Right of Reproduction/Display/Exhibition

It is normal for Design Award Competitions to display winning work and sometimes even the submissions. This is acceptable as long as the intention to do so is clearly stated at the onset. It is unethical to demand transmission of ownership rights. Permissions should be explicitly obtained for display, exhibition or any other use of intellectual property, stipulating the length of time.

All works published must be credited to the Designer. It is unethical to deny the designer's 'right of attribution' (legal term for the right to have work duly credited). Any Metadata embedded in electronic submissions should be preserved as technologically possible.

### Protection and Return

The Organiser is responsible for the safety of all submissions received. This pertains to both the condition of physical objects received and the privacy and safety of digital work uploaded. Organisers should include in their regulations a statement regarding the handling of the submissions after they have been judged (i.e. erasing of digital file, disposal or return of physical submissions), the terms and conditions regarding charges for the return (where applicable) and the timeframe in which it will happen.

When the submissions received are physical products, Organisers are advised to insure them against loss or damage in handling, until they have been restored to the Entrants, if they are to be returned.

## MANAGING ANONYMITY

To ensure fair deliberation, the anonymity of Entrants in front of the Jury should be preserved. The Facilitator is responsible for maintaining a register of the Entrants and submissions and managing a system to track these ensuring the Jury does not see any identifying characteristics (signature or otherwise distinguishing mark).

## ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

A Facilitator should be appointed by the Organiser to coordinate between the Organiser, the Jury and the Entrants. This individual can be an Organiser representative or employee or a third party.

The typical duties of the Facilitator are:

- overseeing receipt of submissions
- receiving and addressing questions pertaining to rules of the competition
- processing the submissions after the submission deadline of the competition
- ensuring that submissions meet the rules outlined in the Call for Submissions.
- managing the flow of submissions to the Jury members
- keeping a register of all submissions
- ensuring the anonymity of the submissions before the Jury
- ensuring all submissions are returned (unless other arrangements have been agreed upon)

Consideration should be given to sharing any received questions and relevant answers with other competition participants, i.e., via a website.

To avoid conflicts of interest it is recommended that the Facilitator not act as a secretary to the Jury, nor take part in the Jury's deliberation in any way.

## ORGANISING VETTING AND PRE-SELECTION

### Pre-selection Committee

When the number of entries is so large as to make it necessary to convene a Jury panel meeting for more than two or three days, it is recommended to put in place a Pre-selection Committee. The organiser should appoint five or more Committee members. The majority of the Committee members should be practising professional designers.

The role of the Pre-selection Committee is to reduce the number of submissions to a number that can be reasonably examined by the Jury. They need to be provided with broad guidelines on which to base their recommendations, including:

- target number of entries that must be reached
- clarity of judging criteria scope (process to eliminate the submissions that obviously shouldn't make the cut)
- contingency plans for submissions with missing information or lack of clarity

- process to ensure that multiple Pre-selection Committee members see each entry (minimum of three)

Allowances should be made to allow the Pre-selection Committee to make suggestions to improve or expedite the pre-selection process including suggestions to reduce the number of passing entries if the quality of the pool is very uneven.

Care should be taken in cases where specialisation is required that the adequate expertise is also contained on the Pre-selection Committee.

### **MANAGING A HIGH VOLUME OF ENTRIES: PROBLEM WITH PRE-SELECTION**

The Organiser should be aware that if a Pre-selection Committee is used, the Jury does not see all of the work. There is the potential to eliminate innovative work too soon in the process. One way to deal with this is to reduce the volume of entries. This generally increases the quality of the overall award. Techniques for reducing volume include:

- increasing submission requirements
- limiting the number of allowed entries per person, for example limiting each entrant to one submission per category

### **CREATING A JURY APPROACH PLAN**

Once you have determined the categories of awards and the judging criteria, the next step is to translate this into a list of necessary skills and competencies required in the Jury. It is important to have more than one expert in each the required areas of expertise so that each category can be judged by several people. In cases where the Award has categories that require non-design skills (ie environmental science for sustainability, business for economic impact) then, the relevant experts should also be identified and approached.

## **COMPETITION RULES**

**The rules of the Design Award Competition should be clearly defined in advance and made available to all Entrants before they submit work. Within the general Design Award Competition Rules, information should be provided on all aspects of the competition.**

### **DESCRIPTION OF AWARD COMPETITION**

The description should include the objectives of the award competition, the theme or topics, targeted audiences, intended outcomes, social aims, a description of the organising body or supporting entity, and a history of the competition.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION**

The terms and conditions should include intellectual property rights such as permissions and rights of reproduction, if the work will be exhibited, and whether work will be returned, how it will be used and distributed. Legal conditions should be clear and legible to a layman and not clearly skewed in favour of the organiser.

### **FEES**

The disclosure of all fees should be in one place so they may be evaluated as a whole. There should be no hidden fees. Registration and entry fees, and possible stage exhibition fees, hanging fees, use of logo fees, catalogue/website/exhibition inclusion fees, ceremony participation fees, return fees and any other applicable fees should be clearly conveyed—together—in an easily understandable manner prior to registration. Importantly, organisers should clearly and prominently indicate all possible fees or charges resulting from an award, including charges for use of the award designation, right to display award (on website or other promotional materials), reference to award designation on packaging or product promotion. In addition, the organiser should clearly and prominently indicate any legal or financial limitations to award-winner utilising award designation.

When setting fees, it should be considered that high entry fees will limit the amount of entries as well as the quality and overall diversity and might undermine the credibility of the Design Award Competition.

### **ATTENDANCE**

It should be clear if the Entrants are obliged to attend at any point in the process to retain eligibility (for instance, awards ceremony, press conference).

### **RULES FOR ENTRY**

The rules should include eligibility, the number of submissions that can be made by one entrant, a statement of what materials are to be submitted (drawings, models, 3D renders, prototypes, actual products, photos, videos, etc.).

### **SPONSORS**

Any connection to sponsors should be explained clearly.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

It should be clearly defined what constitutes conflict of interest for your Design Award and how it would be addressed in deliberations. If a Jury member has a significant interest (financial or personal) in an entry or category, it is suggested that they recuse themselves from that particular deliberation.

### **MODES OF SUBMISSION AND RETURN**

Requirements for submissions should be provided, such as submission type (physical submission of work, visual depictions of work such as photographs or graphic depictions, or digital files);

format (physical dimensions and materials, or file format and size); and delivery instructions (including customs information, if relevant). The rules should specify if submissions will be returned and the conditions of return.

## **SUBMISSION CATEGORIES**

It is important to indicate what kinds of designs will be considered in the different categories. For example: in terms of product design, are visualisations of concepts sufficient, or are prototype-stage models sufficient, or are actually manufactured products required? In terms of visual communication, can unpublished work be submitted? Are there calendar restrictions, for example work published/manufactured after a certain date? It should be clearly defined whether the organiser or Jury have the right to re-assign submitted work to what they judge to be a more appropriate category.

Concepts, prototypes and manufactured products should not be compared. If several stages of design are accepted, they should be considered in different categories and awarded different recognition. The evaluation of completed designs that have been tested by the stresses of the marketplace is different from the evaluation of concepts or prototypes. The evaluation of student work conducted in the context of study is different from the evaluation of professional work. Each format requires different criteria and is deserving of a differentiated award.

### **Submission Caps**

It should be stated if each Entrant is allowed a limited number of submissions. We recommend that only one submission per Entrant be allowed in each category. When several submissions are allowed, the overall quality of the entries tends to diminish while the number of submissions becomes more difficult to manage.

### **Composition of Jury**

The composition of the Jury should be announced so that the scope and experience can be evaluated by the Entrant before they submit work.

### **Awards and Prizes**

The form and number of awards and prizes should be clearly defined in the Call for Submissions, including details as to how and when they will be announced and awarded. It should be stated if the Jury has the discretion to withhold the awards or prizes and, in such case, how total prize money would be distributed. This could include other details such as the time and place of the Awards Ceremony as well as whether the costs to participate (travel and accommodation) are paid by the awardees or the Organiser. If the awarding of a prize is contingent on any additional factors, this should be made clear. The amount of the Award stated should be the amount which will be presented to the Awardee. If any amounts will be deducted for wire transfer, taxes, or any other fees, this should be noted clearly in the Competition Rules in advance of their submitting an entry.

### **Exhibition, Publication and Press**

Details should be provided about how the works will be promoted, including whether they will be published in an online exhibition, on social media or in press material, whether an exhibit will be mounted and whether a catalogue will be produced (digital or otherwise). It should be clearly indicated for how long the Organiser plans to use the work and under what use conditions. It is unethical

to demand transmission of ownership rights. Permissions should be explicitly obtained for display, exhibition or any other use of intellectual property, stipulating the length of time.

All awarded designs or designers within a same category should be treated equally in promotion of award winners for press materials and exhibition. Award publicity should not be contingent on fees paid.

## **LANGUAGE**

Regional Design Awards are naturally conducted in the relevant national language(s). All communications relating to International Design Awards should be available in English, at the very minimum. Any additional languages, including that of the organising country, are of benefit. If the original documents are produced in a language other than English, the quality of the English translation must be high to ensure comprehension by international participants who may not be fluent in English.

## **TIMEFRAME AND TIMELINE**

The length of time from the opening of entry submission to the final submission deadline will affect the quality of the submissions received. If enough lead-time is given, more and higher quality submissions will result. The timing of the Call for Submissions should reflect the scope of the project (Regional Awards need less time than International Awards). As a general rule, for International Awards, three (3) months between the Call for Submissions and the Deadline for Submissions is a minimal amount of time to expect quality submissions and a reasonable turn out.

# **JURY SELECTION**

**One of the most important challenges an Award Competition organiser will face is the selection and recruitment of Jury members. The composition of the Jury will impact the reputation of the competition and who decides to submit. This affects the quality of designs and the overall success of the event. When putting together a Jury, one should be aware of the practicalities of Jury deliberations as well as the possibility of biases.**

## **NUMBER OF JURORS**

To be effective, it is recommended that the Jury have an odd number of members (minimum of three). The Jury should reflect the scope and scale of the competition and take into consideration:

- the amount of time allocated to the judging process
- the number of entries expected to be received
- the process (technology and methodology)
- the assignment of Jury members to categories within their area of expertise

## EXPERTISE

For a Design Competition, the majority of Jurors should be design professionals. Depending on the subject of the competition, some could be non-design professionals with experience relevant to the criteria (for instance a specialist in environmental science or technology could be relevant for a competition on Sustainable Design). The expertise of the Jury should be relative to the discipline being judged (i.e. graphic designers should be judging logo competitions and industrial designers judging product design competitions). Professional abilities, and even celebrity, do not alone confirm the ability to be an effective juror.

When trying to determine the expertise of a potential Juror, possible indicators to consider can include:

- membership in a Professional Association (to find if there is a professional association in your region, you can refer to the ico-D Member directory)
- official accreditation (are they registered/chartered or otherwise qualified by a recognised body?)
- work experience
- peer recommendation
- recognition by industry (awards or other formal recognition)
- recommendation by organisers of prior juries

## JURY DIVERSITY

To ensure diversity of viewpoints and to minimise the possibility of entrenched biases, we recommend that the Jury composition be diverse and representative of the geographical region being covered. Thus, factors to consider in Jury selection should include:

- gender representation
- age distribution
- ethnic/religious/cultural representation
- geographical representation (especially in regional and international context)

## VARIABILITY

Where a competition is an annual (or recurring) event, we recommend that the Jury composition be altered from one competition to another. As a general rule, we recommend that less than half of the Jurors serve on consecutive juries. The reason for this is that there is always some element of personal bias. It is important to ensure relevance and vitality while maintaining continuity.

## JURY CHAIR

For smooth functioning, the Organiser should name a Jury Chair. The Jury Chair can be appointed by the organiser or selected by the Jury. The Jury Chair ensures that the selection process is conducted in a manner that reflects the competition rules, keeps the Jury deliberations moving ahead, in the case of deadlock may be given the deciding vote, and will be responsible for a report of the deliberations. It is best that a Jury Chair has substantial previous experience as a jury member.

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**In order to open the competition to Entrants in a just and fair manner, the Organiser must launch a call for submissions that includes the key information about the theme, objectives and concept, the competition logistics, including timelines, the names of Jury members and all the terms and conditions of entry. These should be communicated clearly and with precision before the Entrants submit work. The contents of the Call for Submissions should include:**

## THEME, CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES

The call for submissions should include an explanation of the competition objectives as well as the concept and structure that the Award will take and the themes that will be treated.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF JURY

The names of Jury members should be announced in the Call for Submissions, increasing the credibility and transparency of the contest, and more effectively promoting it.

As a matter of ethics and to avoid potential conflict of interest, it is preferable that all entrants be made aware of the composition of the Jury before they apply. Depending on how the Design Award Competition has defined conflict of interest and decided to address it, this might affect eligibility.

If eligibility to the competition is affected by the Jury composition, the Jury should be announced in advance.

## COMPETITION RULES

As enumerated on page 09.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

The Judging Criteria should be clear from the onset.

## TIMEFRAME AND TIMELINE

With the Call for Submissions, a timeline should be defined including:

- opening date of submission
- closing date of submission
- date pre-selection will be announced (if applicable)
- date award winners will be announced
- date of Awards Ceremony (if applicable)
- any other important deadlines, as the case may be.

# JURY DELIBERATION

**Ideally judging should be done in a face-to-face environment, permitting open discussion. In order for deliberations to run smoothly the organiser must consider the following points.**

## ATTENDANCE

All Jurors should attend all official meetings of the panel, whether they take place face-to-face or in an online environment. If absences are accepted, a clear definition of quorum for meetings should be established.

## JURY CHAIR

For smooth functioning, the Organiser should name a Jury Chair. If the Organiser of the Design Award Competition has not nominated a Chair, the Jurors should select a Jury Chair from amongst themselves. This individual is the collective voice of the Jurors and will represent them in questions and requests for clarification via the Facilitator.

## SECRETARY TO THE JURY

A record of Jury deliberations should be generated, concluding with a list of the total number of works considered in each category and a list of designs selected for recognition. This list should be signed by all Jury members.

## ADDRESSING QUESTIONS

Common or high-level questions should be included in a 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) or sent to all Entrants.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

All Jury members should be provided with a full set of documents describing the Rules of the Competition. International Jury members should be provided with an English translation of the full set of regulations.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

The Judging Criteria should be part of the initial Call for Submissions. The Facilitator should ensure that the criteria by which the entries are to be judged is clear and understood by all members of the Jury. The Judging criteria should not be changed once it has been published.

## DECISION-MAKING/METHODOLOGY

The Organisers should stipulate a decision-making process with the Call for Submissions. If they have not done so, the Jury should determine this before starting to deliberate. Issues that should be resolved include:

- is voting by a straight majority? Two-thirds?
- is a consensus expected? (and if so, what is the method of conflict resolution?)
- what is the maximum time allotted to each piece?

## INTEGRITY OF THE JURY

Jury decisions are final. No other entities or individuals should be allowed to alter the decisions made by the Jury.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As a matter of ethics, Jury members should recuse themselves from the deliberations and voting on submissions of their own work or that of their immediate family, firm, design team (designers with whom they collaborate on a regular basis) or their students.

## JURY REPORT

The Jury Chair will prepare a written report for the Organiser including:

- official record of the voting results
- judging process and experience
- issues and recommendations
- overall evaluation of submissions

## HONORARIUM/REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

We recommend that the organiser pay Jurors' travel, provide accommodation and per diems. An honorarium should be given to Jurors to acknowledge their professional work.

# ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARDS

## NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS

All Entrants should be advised of the names of the winners within a reasonable time (general rule: 60 days from completion of final selection). Winners can be announced under embargo to allow time to prepare public relations and communications as well as to produce a catalogue.

## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

All Entrants should be informed if the Organisers arrange a public exhibition (on-line or physical) or if they publish a printed catalogue of the designs submitted.

## AWARDS CEREMONY

If a ceremony is planned, it is recommended that the dates be announced early. If currency exchange, transfer, taxes or other fees are to be paid, the Organiser is responsible to ensure that the

amount that arrives to the Awardee is equal to the sum that was promised in the Call for Submissions. Winners can be informed of their prize under embargo so that they can make advance preparations to attend the ceremony.

## **AWARDS/PRIZES**

We recommend that Awards be distributed and that cash prizes be paid within one month of the public announcement. The Organiser is responsible for dealing with any currency restrictions in place in advance and for arranging permission to remit the prize money to foreign participants.

The whole value of what was promised in the Call for Submissions should be distributed to the winners. In the event that in a given category it was decided not to award a prize, the prizes may be re-distributed among the winners.

## **TRANSPARENCY AND DATA**

It is illuminating to make available data—per category—as to: number of submissions, number of submissions accepted (after review of submission requirements), number of works after pre-selection, number of awarded works, and number of award winners purchasing ‘award benefits’ in cases where additional charges are imposed. It is useful for such data to be provided over recent iterations of the event. Provision of such information is one way of differentiating between recognition of ‘achievement’ and ‘excellence’, the percentage of the former usually larger than the latter.

# other notes

**This document treats Design Award Competitions for existing work. There are other forms of design award competitions that ask for original (new) work.**

## AWARD COMPETITIONS FOR ORIGINAL WORK

Asking designers—or any other professionals—to work without pay is unethical. This is why Design Award Competitions for original work are more difficult to organise in a way that is manifestly fair. We do not address competitions for original work in detail in this document, but below you will find some notes on this issue.

In very rare circumstances, Design Award Competitions for original work are deemed ethical by the Council. In clear differentiation from Speculative Practice. If the purpose of the Award is to raise awareness on an issue, it is possible to structure an Award in such a way as to respect the integrity of the designer, on the condition that:

- Entrants are asked to participate on the basis of a theme with the purpose of highlighting a cause or issue (rather than a commercial objective)
- the competition does not generate a viable product or something that can be used as the basis for one (for anyone other than the designer themselves)
- every effort should be made to reduce expenses incurred by the Entrants: there should be no entrance fee, or the entrance fee should be minimal; entrants should not be required to submit physical samples of works until the final stages of judging; submission guidelines should be clearly communicated to mitigate disqualified submissions, etc.

A competition for original work will generally yield an exhibition or catalogue bringing awareness to a matter of public interest.

In competitions for original work, where a designer has spent time on a submission uniquely for the competition, all prizes should be given in every category.

## COMPETITIONS FOR COMMISSIONING WORK

Competitions to award a contract or commission are not considered Design Award Competitions for the purposes of this document. Though these generally fall under the category of Speculative Practice, it is possible to structure such a competition in an ethical way, if no unremunerated work is requested from the designer.

## STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITIONS

While most of the mechanics described in this document also apply for Student Design Competitions, there are several issues specific to the academic context that we do not address specifically here. These include:

- how students will be credited for their work on the competition and how it will be treated within the curriculum
- the issue of who profits from the work of the students (the same rules apply as to professionals, it is unethical to use or profit from unpaid student work procured during a competition)
- how the contest can advance educational objectives but also how the prize should not take precedence over the learning process
- extent to which the teaching staff may assist or participate
- clear and transparent communication regarding prizes, their allocation and how groups will be recognised if group projects are allowed

We encourage Educators and school administrators creating Student Design Competitions to use this document as a reference but to consider the above issues and others relating to their academic situation carefully.

Published by:

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