



# DESIGN COMPETITION GUIDELINES

WORLD

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DESIGN  
ORGANIZATION

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 design competitions explained

The purpose of a design competition is to obtain new and original solution(s) to a given project theme or brief. To this end, individual designers (or teams of designers) enter their designs by **producing new solutions, never before produced or published created in response to the competition brief**. Pre-determined prizes are awarded that relate to the complexity and importance of the subject of the competition.

It must be noted that a common - and often the most economic way of resolving a design problem is through a contract with a carefully chosen designer(s), team, or company. However, there are occasions when the organization of a competition can also find a design solution and promote the value of design.

**A competition must not be viewed as a means to obtain professional work free of charge.**

Compensation must be a primary consideration for the competition promoter. The conditions and rules of competitions must leave no doubt in designers' minds that their entry is not submitted as an offer for the organisers to use their work for commercial purposes.

## 1.2 WDO's endorsement of competitions

WDO does not support activity that exploits professional designers or students of industrial design.

Organisers are free to initiate design competitions and to administer them as they see fit.

WDO recommends that its members understand these Guidelines in order to make an informed decision prior to participating in design competition events.

WDO strongly recommends that organisers observe the regulations explained within these guidelines and reflect these conditions within the published rules and competition management.

WDO also recommends that its Members communicate their relation to WDO by displaying the WDO logo prominently in their competition communications.

## 1.3 types of competitions

Organisers should observe all policy guidelines relating to competitions open to both professional designers and students, as well as, competitions open only to students and schools or colleges, explained herein. WDO recognizes two types of competition: **OPEN** competitions and **LIMITED** competitions.

# 2. OPEN COMPETITIONS

## 2.1 definition

An open competition is where any number of individual designers or design teams can enter. Open competitions must be restricted to particular categories of entrants, such as professional designers, design students, by age group. The categories must be adjudicated separately and must not be compared. An open competition is a way to obtain a large number of submissions for a given design brief. It is also a way to access a broad range of designers or design teams who would normally be out of reach.

## 2.2 jury

### 2.2.1 composition

- a) The jury for competitions must include minimum three people.
- b) The most qualified jury members must be appointed as a priority with experience according to the competition brief.
- c) The majority of the jurors must be professional designers.
- d) Jurors who are not practising designers must have expertise relevant to the competition brief.
- e) For competitions open to international submissions: jury members must represent a minimum of two different global regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, Oceania), taking into consideration the most qualified jury candidates.
- f) For competitions open to regional submissions: jury members must represent a minimum of two different countries within that region, taking into consideration the most qualified jury candidates.
- g) Juries must have the right qualifications, experience, and mix of nationalities as is necessary to ensure a diverse judging process. Trust in their competence and objectivity will encourage designer participation. For this reason, the name, profession/ job title, brief resume and nationality of each jury member must be published no later than one month following the call for submissions.
- h) Additional 'outside experts' may be approached for their specialist knowledge, after the call for submissions. Their details must be published alongside the jury.
- i) The organisers hold the right to substitute a jury member in case of illness or unavailability. This right must be communicated in the competition rules. Any changes must be communicated to entrants and publicly at the earliest time.
- j) Each jury member must agree, as a condition of their participation, he/she has not and will not participate in, consult, collaborate or be associated with any design submission(s) to the competition.

- k) The rules must state that no relative to the jury member (design firm, team, or family member etc.) is permitted to enter. Any involvement whatsoever will result in automatic disqualification from the competition.
- l) It is the responsibility of jurors to bring to the attention of the organiser any perceived, potential conflict of interest they may have.

### 2.2.2 duties of jurors

- a) The organisers must appoint a Chair for the jury otherwise the jury panel can elect a Chair amongst themselves and communicate their decision to the organisers. The Chair will act as the lead liaison on behalf of the jury and the organiser (to handle any disputes, keep time, ensure fairness etc).
- b) In the case where a competition has more than one jury panel (e.g. for more than one category) then the organiser, or each jury, will appoint a Chair amongst each panel.
- c) The organisers of the competition must have a clearly developed assessment process and this needs to be communicated well in advance to all jury members.
- d) If the organisers use a scoring mechanism as part of the assessment process, it must be clearly communicated to jury members well in advance. It is also recommended that the organiser seek feedback from the jury regarding these mechanism/processes to ensure continuous improvement is adopted.
- e) The final assessment process and scoring mechanism must be communicated by the organisers at the commencement of the judging process to each jury member.
- f) The jurors must agree to and attend all scheduled meetings of the adjudication process as required by the organiser, which can take place in person or electronically.
- g) No decision will be taken unless the jury is in full session.
- h) In the event that all members of the jury are not present, the organiser will consult with jury members present to determine the most appropriate decision-making process.
- i) The rules must state that the juror's decision is final and abiding, that no correspondence will be entered into (between jury and entrants) and that by participating in the competition, jury and entrants agree to this process.
- j) The competition organisers should maintain a written record summarising the voting results, to be included in a final written report as a record of the procedures, adjudication process and decision-making process. WDO encourages event organisers to keep such a record for transparency.

### 2.2.3 reimbursement of jurors

In the case that jury meetings are in person - considerations must be made well in advance e.g. return flights, accommodation, meals and a daily honorarium allowance or any other

applicable costs to be negotiated on an individual basis.

*Note to organisers:*

*Where an award is an annual event, the jury members should be changed on a regular basis.*

*Event organisers can consider inviting experts from the WDO community to participate as jurors, speakers and/or attendees. Please visit the WDO website for a listing of Board Members, Regional Advisors and Member organizations. WDO members have exclusive access to the membership roster through the Member section of the website.*

## **2.3 Responsibilities of the competition organizers**

- a) **The competition organisers must ensure the jury decisions and reporting are carried out according to the agreed process, but must not take part in the jury's duties nor decision-making in any way. The responsibilities of the organisers must be stated in the rules.**
- b) **The organisers must not make any assessment of the quality of design work submitted.**
- c) **The quality of the submissions alone must determine the jury's selection of the prize-winner(s). For this reason, the names of designers entering work to the competition must remain anonymous until the jury's choice is final and after the organisers have carried out any verification checks upon winning submissions.**
- d) **The organiser is responsible for passing all eligible submissions to the jury.**
- e) **The organisers shall ensure each design submission does not show any distinguishing mark or signature, and that each entry is presented to the jury anonymously e.g. allocated with an individual reference number in the order of receipt. The corresponding name and address of the competition entrant(s) are not disclosed, until the jury decision is final.**
- f) **The organisers will examine all the designs submitted by the entrants, determine whether they meet the rules and exclude those that do not. This includes deciding if late submissions are to be considered. If the organisers extend the submission deadline and permit late submissions, this must be communicated publicly.**
- g) **The organisers shall facilitate the entry submission process to ensure submissions meet the competition conditions and eligibility requirements as explained in the rules. The organiser shall also keep a register of all submissions.**
- h) **The organisers shall act as a point of contact between the entrants and the jury panel e.g. to facilitate questions and share the answers with all entrants. The organisers contact information and this role, must be made available within the rules.**
- i) **Cash prizes must be paid within one month of the announcement of the jury's decision(s). In countries where currency restrictions are in force, the organiser is responsible for arranging permission to remit the prize money to foreign participants.**

- j) For a competition open to international entrants, the organiser is responsible for handling any currency restrictions in force to ensure timely payment is made. The organiser is responsible for arranging permission to remit the prize money to foreign participants.
- k) The organiser is responsible to ensure timely return of submissions (unless otherwise communicated by the organiser within the rules, upon announcement of the competition).

## **2.4 submissions committee**

- a) Where a jury panel meeting will last for more than two days, the organisers may appoint a submissions committee of three or more members.
- b) The committee can assist the organiser's responsibilities as explained in section 2.3.
- c) The work of the committee must be limited to ensuring that the entrant's work submissions meet the rules explained in the call for submissions and the organiser's specified eligibility criteria.
- d) The committee must not be asked to judge the quality of any design submission. Their role is to assess the entrant's eligibility to enter the competition and provide this list of qualifying submissions to the jury.
- e) The names, titles, organizations and explanation of the committee's responsibilities must be published with the jury.

## **2.5. entrant eligibility**

- a) The organiser shall clearly state in the rules, upon announcement of the competition, to which category of individuals (designers, students, or other group) it is targeted and who is eligible to submit submissions for adjudication.
- b) The organisers must include a statement in the competition rules that explains: Individuals as well as any relative (colleague, design firm, team or family member) directly or indirectly concerned with the competition organization or adjudication are automatically excluded from competing, as well as excluded from carrying out, assisting or consulting in any way an entry to the competition. Any involvement whatsoever will result in automatic disqualification from the competition.

## **2.6. submission requirements**

- a) There must be no doubt about the way in which entries must be prepared and submitted, with appropriate information about format (e.g. electronic files, product models, drawings, etc.) sizes, limitations, and all other instructions, requirements and deadlines including dates and time must be stated in the rules.
- b) Clear submission requirement information will enable designers to compete on equal terms with a clear understanding of what is required of them and ensure the judges have a firm basis for evaluation and selection.

- c) There must be no entrance fee for participation in competitions, except in the case that the purpose of the fee is necessary to recover costs relating to expensive material provided to entrants, in which case the amount recovered must be as low as possible and stated clearly in the entrant policy and competition rules.
- d) The organiser must clearly state in the rules at the time of the announcement of the competition the quantity and intention of any catalogues, books, electronic media and exhibitions that are intended to be carried out by the organiser. The provision for payment (if applicable) for the use of the entrants work must also be explained for each.
- e) Any proposal to reproduce submissions in catalogues, books, electronic media, exhibitions etc., must be clearly stated in the rules in conjunction with the announcement of the competition, together with any provision for payment to the designer(s) for this purpose.
- f) It is the responsibility of the organiser to seek written agreement from each entrant during the entry process, to reproduce their work for the stated purpose (e.g. catalogue, exhibition etc.) explaining the timescale and intended recipients/ audience.
- g) The organisers shall include a declaration step in the entry rules, to be agreed by each entrant upon submission and to confirm:
  - i) The design submission has not been published prior to the competition, nor entered to another award or competition;
  - ii) The design is his/her or their (team/group) personal work;
  - iii) That any drawings or designs have been prepared by or under the supervision of the entrant;
  - iv) That the entrant(s) agree to abide by the rules of the competition as determined by the organiser and accept that the judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into;
  - v) That the entrant will provide all reasonable information and actual production samples of the entry (if required) for further examination and exhibition as required;
  - vi) The entrant acknowledges that the organiser's stipulated conditions for the return of work;
  - vii) That the entrant warrants that the information supplied in relation to the competition is correct and complete and that any personal information provided by the applicant will be used in accordance with the organiser's privacy policy;
  - viii) The entrant understands that their application, images and any promotional material relating to their application may be used by the organisers as explained in the rules (e.g. book, catalogue, exhibition etc.);

- ix) By submitting an entry, the applicant agrees to the rules explained in conjunction.

## **2.7. intellectual property**

- a) It is the responsibility of the competitor to protect his design intellectual property if he/she chooses, as it may be placed in the public domain, before its submission to the promoters. This advice must be stated in the rules.
- b) The payment of the prize money gives the organiser an option on the use of the prize-winning design(s) for a period of time (e.g. one year) with the timeframe starting from the day the jury has agreed on the competition winners. This must be stated in the rules in conjunction with the competition announcement, with the timeframe starting from the day the jury has agreed on the competition winners.
- c) The organisers must clearly state in the rules of the competition if the organisers intend to use the prize-winning design(s). The organisers must also include a detailed description of what the “use” will include for the period of time.
- d) The reproduction rights are subject to a payment of a fee or royalty to be negotiated with the individual designer or design team.
- e) If the organiser wishes to use of any design entered in the competition that has not received a prize, the organiser may do so provided this is clearly explained in the rules of the competition.
- f) The organiser may not alter, or amend in any way, the work submitted without the written agreement of the designer. The organiser shall explain this condition in the rules upon the announcement of the competition.
- g) The rules must state that the intellectual property shall remain the property of the competitor.

## **2.8. protection and return**

- a) The organiser is responsible for the safety of all submissions received.
- b) Organisers must include a statement in the rules to confirm whether submissions will be returned, and the terms and conditions regarding who pays for that and when it will happen.
- c) If the organiser fails to include a statement regarding whether submissions will be returned, and the terms and conditions regarding who pays for the return and when it will happen, they are obligated to fulfil all requests for return of work received within two months of the awards decision at the organiser’s cost, and fulfil those requests within two months of receipt.

## **2.9. anonymity**

- a) All submissions will be treated anonymously under review of the jury. The rules must state that designs submitted must not be signed nor bear any distinguishing mark, such as a logo.



- b) The name and address of the competitor shall not be disclosed to the jury and the organiser shall number each entry in order of receipt, before submissions are shared with the jury (as explained in section 2.3).

## **2.10. the brief**

- a) The organiser shall clearly define and explain the competition objectives, theme, topics and overall brief of the competition.
- b) Full information must be provided on all aspects of the competition, including the adjudication process and panel members.
- c) The complete and concise definition of the competition brief must be communicated in the competition materials shared with all entrants.

## **2.11. timeframe**

- a) The organisers must state clearly in the rules the key dates and deadlines for the entrants and jury members to follow, including for example, the competition announcement date, the call for submission deadline, the adjudication process timeframe and announcement date or awarding ceremony.
- b) Sufficient time to create work for the competition must be taken into consideration when setting the call for submissions timeframe.

## **2.12. prizes**

- a) The prize monetary amount must be substantially higher than the fee that would normally be paid for the same design project if it were undertaken as a direct professional commission. The organisers are required to research the amount payable for such a professional commission.
- b) The organisers must ensure the winner(s) receive their allocated prize payment within one month following the announcement of the winner(s).
- c) The organiser shall clearly define the number of prizes and their monetary amounts.
- d) If international participants are eligible to enter, the organiser must state the prize monetary amount in their local currency, and in US dollars and Euros as a guide.
- e) The rules must state that the prize money does not include remuneration for the use of designer's copyright.
- f) The design development fees are a separate budget consideration to be negotiated with the designer. The timeframe for this negotiation period must be stated in the competition rules.
- g) The terms and remuneration that apply to the use of design development work must be specified in the competition rules.

### **2.13. design development**

- a) When it is intended that a prize-winning or other designs are to be reproduced, produced or otherwise carried out, the competitor shall be commissioned to develop the design to the requisite stage. The organiser shall explain this condition in the rules upon the announcement of the competition.
- b) If it is not intended that the winning design be reproduced, this shall be clearly stated in the conditions and rules of the competition.
- c) If the successful competitor does not have the necessary experience or facilities available for the successful completion or production, or is unable to undertake such work within a reasonable period after the result of the competition has been announced, then a consultant or design organization may be recommended by the jury to collaborate with the competitor.
- d) The competitor must be present or consulted in any discussion, by any group, of ideas or development based on the entrant's design submitted. The fee for any development discussion will be negotiated with the organiser and the entrant.

### **2.14. report**

- a) The organisers should prepare a full report within onemonth of the judging process decision. This report must include the number of entrants, the names of the jurors, the names of the winners, and the comments by the jurors on the quality of work submitted overall as well as comments for the winning design submissions.
- b) If this information is publicly available on the Internet, the organiser should direct inquiring parties to this information on request.
- c) The organisers should include in their report high-resolution images of the winning designs (and other entrants as deemed appropriate by the organisers).
- d) If a chair, or chairs for multiple panels, is/are selected they should also submit a separate report to verify that the organiser has abided with WDO's guidelines for competitions.

### **2.15. publication of results**

All competitors shall be advised in writing of the prize-winner's names within two months of the closing date of the competition. If this information is publicly available on the Internet, the organiser will direct all competitors to this information.

### **2.16 exhibition**

- a) The extent to which the teaching staff may assist or participate in submissions must be clearly stated in the rules. If collaborative or group submissions are allowed, then this must be clearly stated.
- b) The organiser must include, within the rules, a clearly detailed explanation of their intentions to exhibit and/or publish and for what purpose.
- c) Entrants that did not win a prize hold the right to refuse exhibition or publication of their work.

The organisers must ensure that the rules of the competition at the point of announcement explain this in detail. The organisers may apply a deadline to confirm participation, e.g. one month following the jury's decision announcement.

## 3. LIMITED COMPETITIONS

### 3.1 definition

A limited competition is restricted to two or more individual designers or design teams selected and invited to compete by the organisers. A limited competition allows selected designers to compete on equal terms according to pre-set conditions and a targeted design brief. Organisers of limited competitions can provide entrants with a fee payment to participate. This type of competition can lead to an eventual contract to realise the winning design.

### 3.2 regulations

All regulations applicable to open competitions (explained in section 2.0 of these guidelines) apply equally to limited competitions and must be reflected within the limited competition rules, with the following additions/differences (explained in section 3.0)

### 3.3 fees

In a limited competition each participant shall be paid an equal fee in accordance with the work involved and according to the brief. Such a fee shall be substantially higher than the fee normally paid for the same design project if it were undertaken as a direct professional commission. The organisers are required to research the amount payable for such professional commission.

### 3.4 anonymity

The names of all participating designers shall be made known via the design brief sent to all other participants when being invited to compete.

## 4. COMPETITIONS AND STUDENTS

- a) Competitions for students must not be regarded as a cheap way of obtaining design work. At a minimum, students must receive payment, prizes and publicity. Their intellectual property must be respected on terms which are reasonably comparable with those provided for professional designers of equivalent work.
- b) The main purpose of having students participate in competitions is to provide them with an educational experience. The competition must therefore add significantly to their understanding of professional design.
- c) Competitions may be arranged:
  - Exclusively for student participation, or
  - For both students and professionals of design.

- d) The regulations for open and limited competitions must be met as well as the regulations relevant to students participating.
- e) Students of design must be eligible to enter competitions on the same terms as professional designers, unless the competition is open to students alone. In this case, the competition must conform to the regulations and recommendations in the special sections 4.0 and 5.0.

## **4.1 competitions open to both professional designers and students**

### **4.1.1 regulations**

- a) The regulations for open or limited competitions (as applicable to the type of design competition), explained in sections 2.0 and 3.0 of these guidelines, as well as the regulations explained in this section (4.0) must be reflected in the rules and management of a competition open to both professional designers and students.
- b) The rules for competitions that are open to students and design professionals must clearly explain either:
  - i. Students and professional designers participate under the same rules and terms, with the same prizes, and are all equally included in the running to have their design work developed.

Or

- ii. There are separate rules and terms for student entrants to professional designer entrants. In this case, the rules must clearly explain the differences for each entry group, e.g. differences to:
    - Prizes (or monetary amounts)
    - Adjudication process
    - Eligibility criteria
    - Rules
    - Any other varying factor.
- c) The organisers must define any differences between design professionals and students in the rules at the time of the competition announcement, otherwise student participants compete on the same terms as design professionals, and are eligible for the same benefits, prizes and protection as the professional competitors.
- d) Before participating in a design competition, students must obtain prior agreement with their educational institute that covers the following:
  - The competition rules must be approached with the educational institute in advance, in case this affects the curriculum.
  - The allocation of prize money or other recompense between the student and educational institute must be understood, in the case of a win.
  - The intellectual property ownership of the entry between the student and the educational

institute must be established in advance, in the case of design development.

The organisers cannot be involved in any dispute in this context.

## **4.2 competitions open only to students and educational institutes**

### **4.2.1 regulations**

- a) The competition rules shall clearly define and explain the subject brief and the objectives of the competition; the brief shall be informative on all aspects of the competition.
- b) The extent to which members of the teaching staff may assist or participate in submissions must be clearly stated in the rules, upon announcement of the competition. It must also be clearly stated if collaborative or group submissions are accepted.
- c) The prizes for competitions open to students only, may vary according to the objectives/ complexity of the competition and the status of the organisers. The rules must clearly state the difference in prizes, including their monetary amounts.
- d) The copyrights and patents (Intellectual Property) of the student(s) will be respected if the competition includes a commercial or promotional objective.
- e) Any payment for commercial production or development of a competition entry must be comparable to a normal professional fee and negotiated with the entrant.
- f) Where the design competition requires physical submissions of work - all submissions selected for prizes shall be dispatched, carriage paid by the promoters, to the participants within two months of the announcement of the winner(s), or within twelve months if physical submissions are exhibited or otherwise publicised. Any divergence from this clause (f) shall be specifically stated in the rules.
- g) Competitions can be arranged so that they conform to and become part of a curriculum.

### **4.3 regulations to be observed by students and educational institutes**

- a) Students must enter competitions entirely of their own free will and be in agreement with the rules and brief of the competition, taking into account their curricula, timetables, available facilities and educational progress.
- b) All questions of possible allocation of prizes between a student and his/her school shall be in accordance with the terms and conditions explained within the competition rules, to be observed by students, schools and the organisers.
- c) In the event of a student entry receiving a prize and/or being selected for production, any allocation of the fee or other recompense between the student and the educational institute must be in accordance with a prior agreement or understanding established between the student and the educational institute. The organisers cannot be involved in any dispute in this context.