

# IFLA 2025 Student Competition

## Introduction

The IFLA Student Landscape Architecture Design Competition has been an important part of the IFLA World Congress for some time.

One of the roles of the competition is to promote and encourage the evolution of the profession of landscape architecture through education.

Students have the opportunity to have their work reviewed alongside that of their peers from around the world. The discipline required to prepare a competition entry is a very useful exercise for students and helps them prepare for some of the rigors of professional life.

Students will be asked to respond to a specific topic, which is usually related to the overall Congress theme. This allows the students to address local issues, and to fit into the general expectations of the studio class or thesis requirements of their university.

It has also given much insight into what students are thinking about. What are they concerned about? How do they see the role of landscape architecture? How do they see themselves?

In every competition, it has been clear that students pay attention to both the natural and the cultural landscape. The most successful projects have been those in which the students have clearly understood their context, and have employed both a rigorous analytical method, as well as strong design principles and execution. Ecological crises, the shocking destruction of heritage landscapes, social inequities, and the overall relationship between people and their environment are issues that have dominated the submissions. There is typically a range of projects from practical and site-specific, to conceptual and experimental, and the submissions represent the broad spectrum of the profession of landscape architecture, with urban and rural subjects, and a wide range of scales. The graphic communication of the projects, not surprisingly, has rapidly evolved over the years, and indicates that university programs continue to lead in this area. Interestingly, many of the projects still demonstrate that students are continuing to develop their hand graphics as well.

## General terms

### Theme

*The IFLA WORLD 2025 congress in Nantes will take place in the context of global climate change, where adapting and building resilience in cities and territories requires profound and systemic transformations.*

*The profession of landscape architects plays a central role in these efforts, promoting urban approaches that prioritize living soils, biodiversity, and sustainable water management. It operates across all scales of metropolitan, agro-forestral, industrial or/and natural territories. It helps to anticipate environmental changes through participatory project approaches that make transformative dynamics accessible to inhabitants.*

*To support the transformation of territories, landscape architects develop nature-based solutions: to this end, they leverage all available sources of socio-environmental information, data systems and others digital tools. Combined with artificial intelligence, these tools now complement the survey and representation methods already at their disposal for their projects.*

The competition brief revolves around the theme of **Guiding Landscapes**, with an emphasis on the subtheme **Guiding Cities**.

The term "guiding" refers here to leading or directing towards a specific goal. The guiding landscape includes projects, initiatives, and strategies that place the landscape, in all its aspects and considerations, at the center of discussions, as a guiding thread.

This subtheme invites proposals that prioritize ecological sustainability and social inclusivity. Cities should be approached as ecosystems, where a balance between nature and the built environment is essential. Projects should incorporate strategies that enhance soil health, promote sustainable water management, and support biodiversity. Students are encouraged to demonstrate how participatory design is integrated, involving local communities to create spaces that reflect shared memories and foster social cohesion.

The competition has three categories of projects which include landscape planning, landscape design and applied research. The expected competition output, in each category, should be aligned to the subtheme **Guiding cities**.

## Instructions

- All entries should include identification and description of a problem or assignment.
- All entries should include a proposed solution based on the topic of the chosen category (categories below).
- The entries should emphasise the following factors but not limited to contextual landscape analysis of the biophysical elements such as built /natural, social factors, historical and cultural influences, environmental factors, ecology, biodiversity.
- Students are free to select the context and site of their projects.
- Students are free to select the scale of their project that is appropriate in conveying their planning strategies.
- Students are free to select any topic that needs an analytical planning approach.
- All entries, regardless category, should be aligned to the congress subtheme [Guiding cities](#).

## Submission requirements

**The official entry form** with the endorsement of the dean, director, or program head/chair. It should be saved as an uneditable PDF. The form must be filled out by the team leader and approved by his/her school, but the information of all other team members must be added.  
*The form is downloaded from the web page filled, and uploaded with the submission.*

**Proof of enrollment** : All team members must be enrolled in a program at the time of the competition's date of submission and each student must submit a Student Certificate.  
*The certificate will be uploaded through the submission form.*

**Project title** : A title that accurately reflects the content and thought process of the project.  
*This title will be filled in through the form, where applications will be made.*

**Project statement** : 150 words or less. The project statement must clearly state the goals and objectives of the project. Students should briefly explain the analysis outcome and methodology used for the planning and designing process.  
*This statement will be filled in through the form, where applications will be made.*

**Project narrative** : 300 words or less. Defines what kinds of data were collected and analysed. Explains the methodologies used in data collection and analysis. Describes how the data analysis was integrated with the design/planning guidelines.

*This will be filled in through the form, where applications will be made.*

**Posters (2 panels)** : 250 words excluding legend, notes, captions, and citations.

The panels must include the project title, research methodology with an illustrated link between the analytical findings and design outcome. Provide a range of drawings at various scales and diagrams that are appropriate for illustrating the project/guidelines.

**The project statement and project narrative must be incorporated into the first panel of posters.**

**Files** : All submission documents must be saved as a PDF and include the project title, but **with no mention of the project team or school**. When printed at 100% size, the final product must comprise a maximum of two (2) A1 posters (each one measuring 841 mm x 594 mm).

Projects consisting of many posters or of orientation other than what is specified in brief (2 posters, portrait orientation) will be disqualified. Any written text on the panel must be in English, except for a complementary translation of the project title into a second language. Projects with the description or written texts in a language other than English or exceeding the maximum words shall be disqualified. The entrants must ensure that all research data, images, photographs, and other material taken from other sources are correctly attributed. Source credits are not included in the word count. PDF files of posters must have a 300dpi resolution, each with a maximum size of **20 MB**. Larger files will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the authors/teams to guarantee that the final images and files are in the size and resolution adequate to their reading.

## Submission

The submission will be accepted only through link provided at <https://ifla2025.com/student-activities/student-competition>

## Eligibility

The competition is open to all enrolled diploma, undergraduate, and graduate students of Landscape Architecture, or studying landscape architecture in university programs not specifically identified as Landscape Architecture. Students from related fields participate as part of a team lead by a landscape architecture student, however not as a single individual. Broad interdisciplinary submissions are welcomed; however, the team must be headed by a landscape architecture student. Both individual and group submissions will be accepted, and for each student or group, only one entry is permitted.

Students must be enrolled in a program at the time of the competition's judging to be eligible. The number of members in each participating group shall not exceed five (5). Professional collaborators and associates of jury members, and their relatives up to the third degree, may not enter the competition. Students are prohibited from contacting any member of the jury prior to or during the competition process. Please direct any inquiries to [student@ifla2025.com](mailto:student@ifla2025.com)

**For applications from France:**

If you are student of Landscape Architecture (whether you are a team leader or a team member), you must be a FFP member (Fédération Française du Paysage).

## Entry fee

To participate in the competition an entry fee shall be paid per proposal. The payment is required at the end of the submission form. Registration fees vary according to the economic level of participants' countries of origin, using the classification established by the [World Bank Classification](#)

High / upper-middle income countries : 25 EUR

Low / lower-middle income countries : 15 EUR

## Important remarks

- Late submissions will not be accepted, and any potential extension of the deadline will be determined by the organizing committee. To stay informed of announcements or updated information, please visit the official website of the IFLA World Congress 2025 at [www.ifla2025.com](http://www.ifla2025.com)
- Submissions comprising more than two posters or featuring orientations other than the specified orientation will be disqualified.
- Any written text on the posters must be in English. Projects with descriptions or written texts in a language other than English or exceeding the maximum word limit will be disqualified.
- Entrants must ensure that all research data, images, photographs, and other materials taken from different sources are appropriately cited. The word count does not contain source credits and references.
- All digital files must have a resolution of 300 dpi. It is the responsibility of the authors to ensure that the final images and files have the appropriate resolution for readability. Projects must be submitted anonymously.
- Submissions should not contain references or indications about the authors' identities or institutions. The jury will disqualify any entry that fails to adhere to the requirement of anonymity.

- Please direct any inquiries to the 2025 Student Competition Organising Committee at [student@ifla2025.com](mailto:student@ifla2025.com). All communication with the organizing committee will be conducted in English.

## Jury

The jury members are selected by the IFLA 2025 Student Competition Organising Committee.

## Awards

The sponsor of the Student competition is Group Han Associate. Winners will be selected for each category and the details will be presented on the website <https://ifla2025.com/student-activities/student-competition>

## Exhibition and publication

During the judging period, the competition proposals may be exhibited anonymously by the organizer. The jury's verdict will be published in connection with the publication of the competition results. The results of the competition will be published on the organizers' websites. IFLA and the organizer have the right to publish all competition proposals on their websites and during the IFLA 2025 world Congress in Nantes.

## Authors ownership, right and copyright

The promoter has material ownership rights to the competition proposals. The proposers own the copyright and reserve the right to utilize their proposals. The competition proposals may be published in print and digital media, and for exhibitions, by the organizers (IFLA, French Federation of Landscape Architects), without providing the proposers with additional compensation.

## Categories

### Category 1 : Landscape planning

Human activities have put pressure on land resources, degrading natural ecosystems and contributing to climate change. In this context, cities and territories must be viewed as ecosystems, where balancing nature and the built environment is essential, and landscape planning provides the tools for sustainable management of physical, biological, and cultural resources. Proposals could include, for example, regional planning maps that emphasize these priorities.

#### Entry criteria

- Identification and description of the selected territory
- Territory analysis reflecting on physical, social, temporal, natural, historical, and cultural components and features
- Proposed solutions in the form of a landscape planning project, landscape planning guidelines, landscape policy initiatives, etc.

#### Judging criteria

- **Relevance to the competition theme**
- **Analysis and methodology:** Comprehensive analysis and adaptation of a relevant methodology to address key challenges, incorporating a participatory dimension
- **Integration of analysis results with the proposed solution**
- **Degree of achievement of project objectives:** How landscape planning strategies are used to address the issue
- **Innovative approaches to landscape planning:** The project must present forward-thinking and innovative methodologies in territorial planning
- **Clarity and originality of the presentation:** The submission must creatively and clearly communicate its objectives, strategies, and results

## Category 2 : Landscape design

Under this category, students can submit work for Landscape Architecture projects that are site-specific and address relevant questions in the Landscape field. This category aims to place emphasis on design formulation techniques, narratives, methodologies together with detailed studies of the associated subject matter for better curated experiences and taking relevant sensitive approaches.

The project topics could be, but not limited to, public / private projects of any kind and varying scales and landscape art or installations. The entries should emphasize on among others, the contextual site analysis of the physical elements, such as built / natural, and social, historical and cultural influences, and environmental factors, ecology and biodiversity.

### Entry criteria

- Identification and description of the site
- Contextual site analysis of the physical elements such as built / natural, social factors, historical and cultural influences, environmental factors, ecology, biodiversity, etc.
- A proposed landscape design solution, which can be in the form of public/private projects of any kind or varying scales

### Judging criteria

- **Relevance to the competition theme**
- **Analysis and methodology:** Comprehensive analysis and adaptation of a relevant methodology to address key challenges, incorporating a participatory dimension
- **Integration of analysis results with the proposed solution**
- **Degree of achievement of project objectives:** How the landscape approach effectively addresses both global and site-specific challenges
- **Innovative approaches to landscape planning:** The project must showcase forward-thinking and innovative methodologies in planning. Innovation in designed spaces, functions, and the proposed landscape experience should be evident
- **Clarity and originality of the presentation:** The submission must creatively and clearly communicate its objectives, strategies, and results



## Category 3: Applied research

Research topics can range from life sciences, ecology, sociology, to human behaviour and socio-psychology. There is a great scope for applying proven research theories into scientific-based and/or evidence-based designs. Under this competition category, students can submit scientific-based and/or evidence-based design projects related to the competition theme. This award will distinguish works that translate recognized research from the landscape architecture field into creative design solutions. A project may also be documented and assessed, providing information regarding how “successful” its design is in meeting the design aims. That is, providing quantifiable information and lessons that can be applied in similar sites and can perhaps also act as a case study. The focus should be on the extent of realisation of environmental, social and economic benefits. The expectation is a presentation of such case studies of existing projects; drawings may include original drawings of the project and analytical drawings of the current use.

### Research criteria

- Research aims, goals, context, and methodology, and its contribution to relevant design research field should be clearly explained.
- Scholarly resources such as books from academic publishers, peer-reviewed articles published in scientific journals, reports from research institutes, etc. must be used during research.
- Methods such as observation, survey, interviews, archival study, etc. must be demonstrated.
- References and citations must be stated using appropriate referencing

### Entry criteria

- Students are free to select the context of their proposals, as long as they align with the theme
- Proposals can be in the format of design guidelines, strategies, policies, or installations
- Proposals should include relevant graphic representation, including schematics, diagrams, and drawings

### Judging criteria

- **Relevance to the competition theme**
- **Appropriate research conduct with relevant methods** and compliance with ethical research standards
- **Connection between the research topic and the proposal:** How the research successfully informs and strengthens the project
- **Clarity, creativity, and originality** in presenting the research process, results, and proposal