

GENERAL REMINDERS

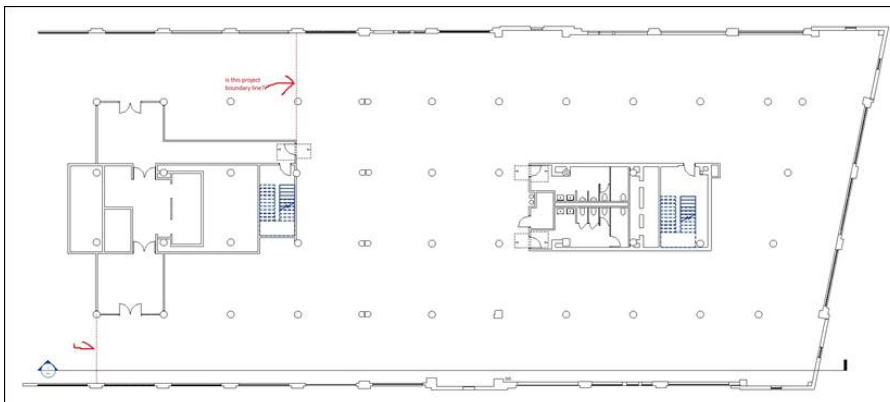
1. Professors will be responsible to self-jury their students and only submit the best two projects (2) per independently taught class/studio for judging in this competition
2. All final submittals are to be sent to: design4next@gmail.com All submittals are due by December 10th.
3. Submittals must be in PDF format and be **no greater than 24MB in file size** (no min/max on number of pages)
4. As a reminder, all student participants must be currently registered as juniors or seniors in their design program, 5TH year students enrolled into a 5-year Master's program, or in a Master's Program where there is no bachelor's degree offered or a master's program where the students have no bachelor's degree in design or other previous design experience.
5. Students must submit an entry as an individual, not as part of a team.
6. **All questions must be submitted by October 3rd**, and all questions must be submitted to: design4next@steelcase.com
7. Each student participating **MUST individually register no later than October 3rd** to be considered eligible. Students can register by going to this link: [STUDENT REGISTRATION LINK](#)
8. **If a student hasn't registered themselves via the link above and they are submitted into the competition as one of the two entries per independently taught class/studio, their project will not be considered eligible; therefore, please ensure each student participating registers themselves before the deadline of October 3rd.**

(NEW) Q+A QUESTIONS + ANSWERS – Questions submitted through September 26, 2025

Q: Which door is considered to be the primary entrance to this level?

A: **The primary entrance is the one plan-south of the elevator lobby. This provides good elevator lobby exposure.**

Q: Are the red dashed lines marking the project boundary? Are students not permitted to place spaces beyond these lines?



A: The red dashed lines on the plan are the project boundary lines for the space NEXT has rented. Students must provide demising walls in these locations and the space to the left of these boundaries are considered out of scope (NIC). Therefore, the main entrance into the NEXT space is plan south of the elevator lobby.

Q: We are curious about this portion of the design brief located on the first page of the Programming Information section. It states: “At NEXT Law Firm headquarters, located in New York, the office serves as the central hub for legal operations, collaboration, and client engagement. While the firm embraces a hybrid workplace model, attorneys and staff are encouraged to work from the office at least four days per week. This approach supports the firm’s belief that in-person collaboration strengthens mentorship, fosters trust, enhances knowledge sharing, and drives innovation—all essential to delivering exceptional legal service. Leaders from the firm’s New York headquarters and attorneys (Associates) from regional offices in Seattle, Denver, and Houston frequently visit the main office for multi-day working sessions. These visits are designed to deepen cross-office collaboration, align on firmwide initiatives, and engage with clients in the region. It is essential that visiting attorneys feel fully integrated and supported, with seamless access to the same technology, resources, and amenities they rely on in their home offices.”

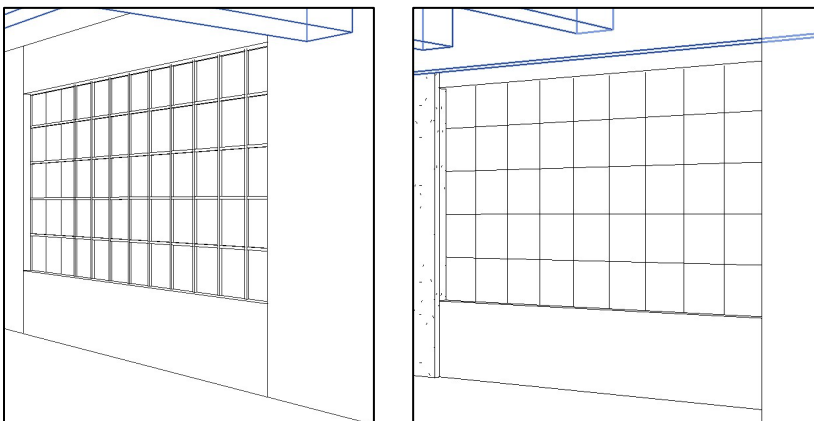
This information does not mention the LA branch, but reads as key data for the design. In the summary above, is the main office which attorneys from New York HQ and regional offices (Seattle, Denver, and Houston) intended to refer to the new LA office? Earlier, under the Design Drivers portion of the brief, it states “The office serves as the cultural and operational anchor—a central hub for collaboration, mentorship, and connection to firm identity. Legal professionals are encouraged to be in the office at least 3 days per week to foster deeper engagement, while maintaining flexibility for remote work as needed.” Is the reference to the New York office and its requirement for working in office four days a week meant to reference the culture in the home office (New York), which will be different in the LA branch, where in-office work is expected for three days a week?

A: Think of the other established offices (the three mentioned outside of the HQ location) as precedent for how the LA office will operate once up and running and 4 days is the norm across all office locations company wide.

Q: I have registered our program / university for the competition but have a couple clarification questions before I launch with the students. It looks like each student in the class is required to register, correct? But, at the end of the competition the university is only allowed to submit one project per session, for a maximum of two submissions. Is that correct?

A: We are glad to have you and your students participate in this year’s competition. Yes, each student participating in class needs to register via the link we have provided to register themselves. Then, at the end of the semester, you can submit (two students) per independently taught studio...if you have two studios with different students, you submit two each for a total of four submissions. If they are taught together, simultaneously, as one studio, you only submit two.

Q: Are the windows supposed to be same on all sides of the building? Some of the windows have mullions with thickness and others just have lines:

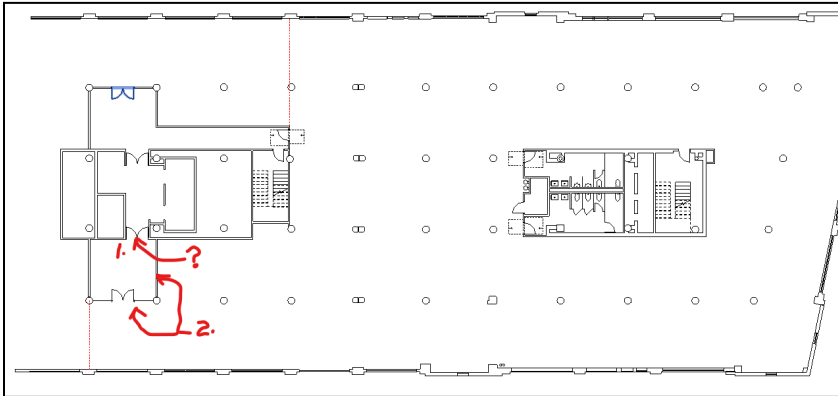


A: Assume all windows have mullions and use the thickness in the windows with them shown for all windows.

Q: Can students have the Steelcase architectural walls meet a window mullion or do all walls have to meet a wall?

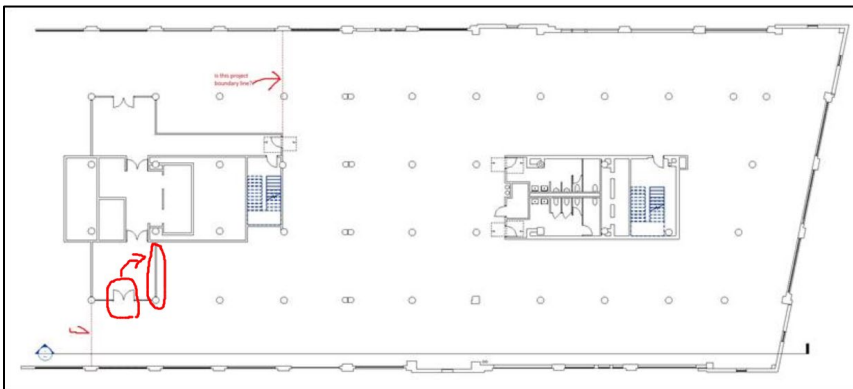
A: The preferred location is a wall or column; however, our walls come with “mini ends” with every product line to come off walls or mullions as standard. The reason being, very few walls are square and plumb, so the mini end expands and compresses to account for variations in the wall. It kind of acts like a shim, if you will, because our walls are always square, so it marries the two.

Q: Is the sub-lobby to the south of the elevator also considered part of the core space, or are students free to eliminate walls and doors south of those leading directly to the elevator lobby (door and walls #2)? I can hold this question until the official Q&A if it is not deemed appropriate at this time.



A: Door #1 cannot be eliminated. Door and walls #2 may not be eliminated; however, if your students would like to take advantage of this space for branding (which can be removed if they leave as a tenant), that is permitted. The location of door #2 can be moved if the student researches local codes and requirements and verifies if moving the door meets the local codes.

Q: Some of the students asked if they can change the location of the entrance from the southside glass wall to the east side wall.



A: The location of the can be moved if the student researches local codes and requirements and verifies if moving the door meets the local codes for egress.

Q: Is there a wall construction type you want to see for the demising wall between the NEXT law firm and the building occupant on the other side of the building? I suggested that we would want a 2-hour firewall between tenants, but other than that I did not have a specific construction to use. If there is something you are looking for in that situation, we will build the wall type per your specification.

A: We do not have a construction type we are looking for. Our recommendation would be to follow the local codes for compliance and construct accordingly...other than the wall meeting local codes, the students are free to construct however they wish.

Q: The program lists out 5 managers on page 27 within the office support staff, but then on page 30 there are only 4 listed as needing offices - is there one of the managers on page 27 that doesn't need an office? Or should we create 5 manager offices rather than 4?

A: Yes, there are five with manager in their title for the office staff; however, if you review the chart on page 28 you will see what type of space each receives. The one that doesn't receive an office is the Facilities Manager, they receive a 64 SF workstation. The other four receive a 150 SF office as indicated. Therefore, the numbers show on page 30 are correct.

Q: Would it be possible if we designed the cafe space with tech access that this would double as the multi-purpose/townhall area? This is what Meijer headquarters has accomplished.

I wanted to decipher if they required these spaces to also be separate or if they could function together at only the 500 SF, but I would make this more around 800 SF to accommodate other visiting partners.

A: Yes, this is permitted if the space created meets the stated and intended requirements for both spaces.

Q: Regarding item 14 in the official rules (see below), does the term "custom" refer only to those items which the student would design (i.e., reception desks, ceiling elements, unique screening elements, etc.), or can items be selected from a manufacturer other than Steelcase they do not fall into a category of items offered by Steelcase? Can you clarify if other light fixtures, or non-furniture elements from other sources may be included? From the statement below, we understand that all furniture and architectural solutions MUST be selected from Steelcase brands but are unclear about other elements. For instance, if a ceiling system such as a linear plank metal system or perforated metal tile system is desired, and it comes from another manufacturer, is that acceptable? Likewise, if there are larger signature / monumental light fixtures desired, may specialty lighting sources be utilized?

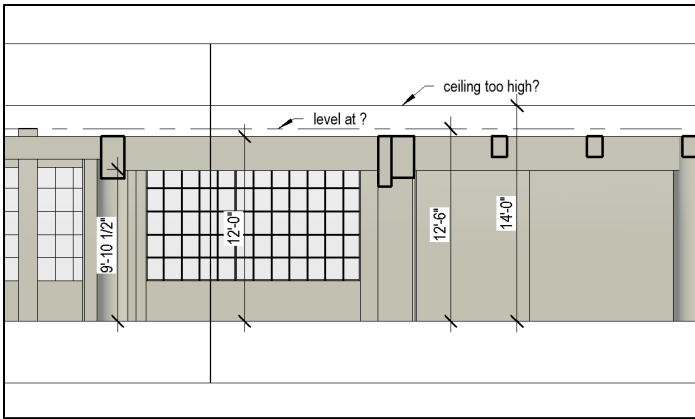
14. Students must use products (furniture, technology, and architectural solutions) available from the variety of all Steelcase Brands in our portfolio (including any Partner Brands) for the project. Students are allowed to have up to 20% of the project be "custom" as applicable for feature areas. However, custom applications should remain economically feasible as most clients do not budget for a completely customized project.

A: This requirement only applies to furniture elements which would include any built-in furniture elements like a custom designed reception desk which is expected. We do not want to see custom/built-in furniture solutions to exceed 20% of the overall solutions for the space. Students are free to use any ceiling system, lighting elements they wish to use; however, all solutions/choices should be indexed however the student chooses to do so.

Q: Are the "double" columns in the plan concrete as well?

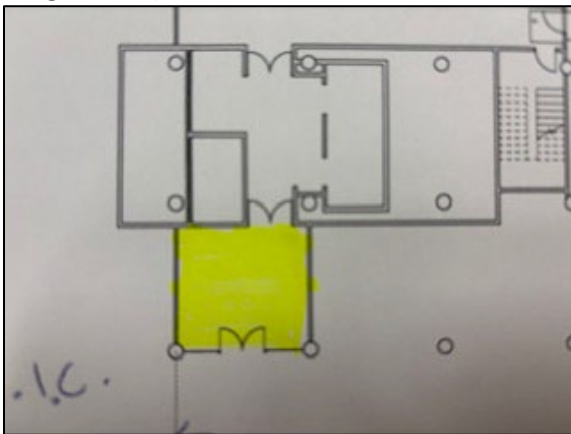
A: Yes, all columns should be considered concrete.

Q: What is the dimension between level 4 and 5 on the Revit model- it is not showing level markers and we want to confirm? The ceiling element in the model is at 14'-0", but we assume it needs to move down. Looks like we have 12' clear to underside of deck/ceiling (but the level marked is showing higher) and 9'-10-1/2" clear from bottom of existing beams to floor?



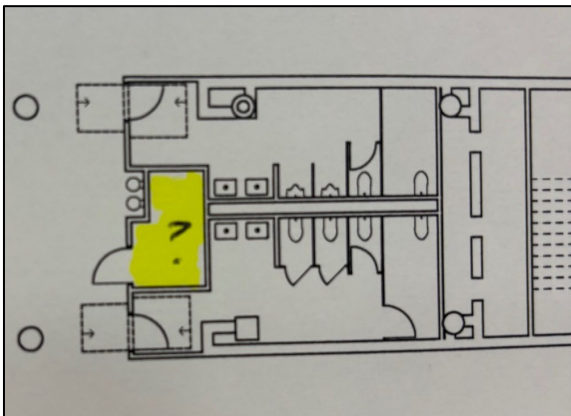
A: The actual slab to slab dimension is 12'- 0" and this is what should be used for the competition.

Q: Can we design the vestibule into the suite and use this square footage for furnishings or is this NIC? (see yellow in image below)



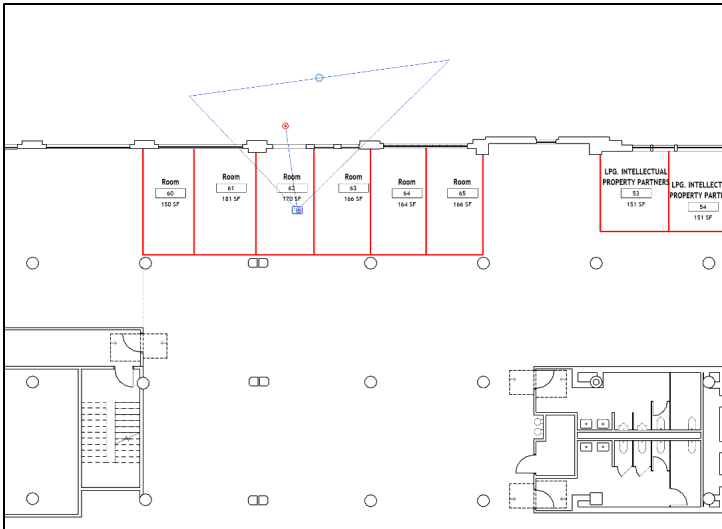
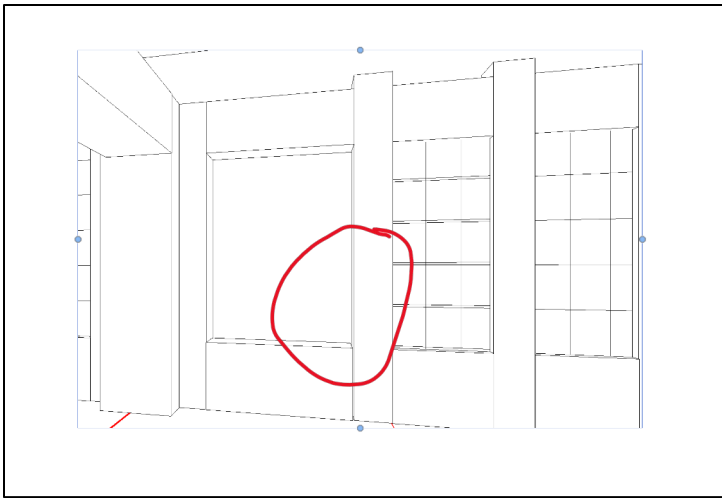
A: The vestibule should not be considered as part of the USF and is NIC. As mentioned on other Q+A shared in prior emails, the door location may be moved; however, not removed. If the student wishes to apply branding elements to the vertical surfaces of this area, that is permitted; however, furnishings should not be placed in this area.

Q: What is the function of this room and can we use it or assume it's a janitor's closet, etc. and part of the NIC core?



A: Consider this to be part of the NIC (core building elements) and should not be considered as part of the design for the competition.

Q: One of the walls appears to have a cut out for a window in Revit, but no curtain wall. Can we assume that we will add a window there? (see image below)



A: This must be an error in the Revit model. Consider this to match all other walls/windows.

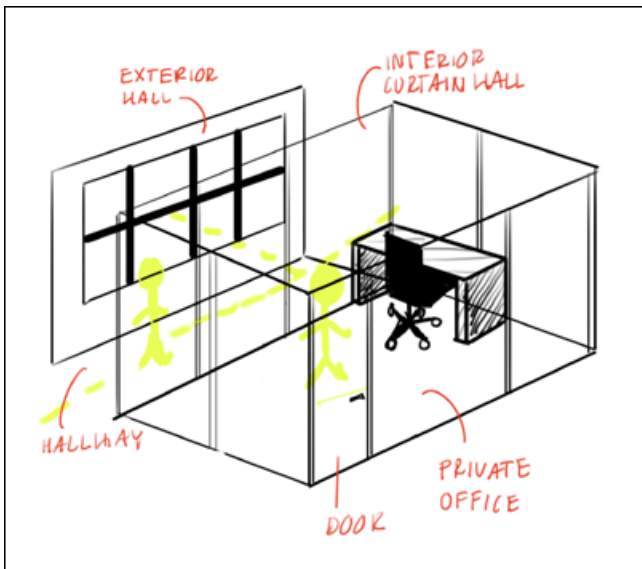
Q: If we design the 2 extra private offices to be used as huddle or focus rooms when not in use, do we still need to have 2 huddle and 2 focus rooms?

A: Students need to fulfill the program requirements and quantities as stated. Consider that the program requirements were developed to accommodate all conditions that need to be address in the workspace and therefore, the need to be able to accommodate both multiple huddle and focused activities at the same time. Once all the requirements have been met, if a student wishes to add anything that may do so.

Q: Huddle rooms are described as a “relaxed, semi-private setting” but under construction they are described as “Enclosed with acoustic treatments, glass or solid partitions, and camera-conscious finishes to ensure privacy.” Can you clarify the level of privacy these rooms need?

A: The level of privacy was meant for acoustical privacy – hence the enclosed room with wall – however, the need for visual privacy isn’t an issue to glass wall with full transparency would be appropriate for these settings.

Q: Many spaces in the program are required to be adjacent to a window. Must these rooms be directly flush with the exterior wall, or can they instead be positioned along the perimeter with a glass wall facing outward, separated from the exterior windows by a hallway? See illustration below:



A: Providing such a corridor would be very unusual for a law firm to implement in their workplace. Though this is very typical for other market sectors, this is not something that has been adopted in the legal workplace as they most likely wouldn't provide this valuable real estate along the glass for a full-length corridor. If this was to be implemented in a few areas based on unique space planning constraints, it would be acceptable if the student can defend their design intent and design decision for doing so.

Q: I noticed that the questions for this week arrived this morning in my inbox. In the past, we did not receive those until Monday, so we had the full day on Friday and the weekend to submit questions. I am wondering about the cutoff next week as this will make a significant difference next week especially if I receive questions from students during the day on Friday. Do we have all day through October 3rd to get questions sent in, or is the cut off really October 2? I want to be clear so we can follow directions.

A: Your students will have the complete day next Friday, October 3rd to submit questions and we will provide the responses and publish the final Q+A the following Monday.

Q: It says reflected ceiling plan required for Community Hub – Reception & Welcome and Work Café, Multi-purpose / Town Hall, does that mean they are not REQUIRED for every other space?

A: Correct, those are the only (required) RCPs for submission for the competition; however, some programs require their students to do RCPs for the entire space – which is also acceptable. You can review the projects from last year on the NEXT website for reference if helpful.

Q: Do the square footage allocations for each space have to be exact?

A: For the individual workspaces (ie: offices and/or work stations), yes, exact size. For the other spaces, please note, we provide a range...students should remain within this range as closely as possible. Some of the spaces provide a (+/-) which allows for variances for these spaces to accommodate for flexibility.

Q: Do new construction walls and/or partitions need to extend to the ceiling deck like the existing Interior core walls?

A: They do not; however, if they do not extend to the ceiling deck the students will need to demonstrate how they are putting a ceiling and/or cap on these spaces to help maintain acoustical privacy for these spaces.

Q: Do we need multiple views of a space rendering or just one?

A: For each space that has a required rendering, only one view is required and we suggest choosing the view that best tells the story of that space; however, if the student wishes to provide more views of that space that is permitted.

Q: What does "full bleed rendering" mean?

A: Full bleed means full page (ie: maximizing the page with the full rendering)

Q: What is the required height of the plenum space?

A: We do not have a required height for this, student may make assumptions here.

Q: Can we use any type of STEELCASE furniture within the space? (Collections/materials, etc.)

A: Any Steelcase brand, any Steelcase owned company, or any Steelcase partner brand (not Steelcase owned) is permitted. If you can find this company (or product) listed anywhere on the Steelcase website, it is allowed.

Q: Are there any limitations considering technology that can be put into the spaces?

A: No technology limitations; however, the only considerations would be local codes/requirements for power, etc.

Q: Do we have to explain the design behind the logo?

A: This is to be determined by the student. If it is self explanatory, maybe no explanation is needed. If they want to show the logo development/iteration; that helps tell a story. However, I would caution spending more time on the actual space design and requirements versus time on the logo.

Q: For the reflected ceiling plans, are we only putting lighting in the specific areas noted in the official rules document - community hub, work cafe, and reception area? More so, do we add the lights on the plan that already exist?

A: You are welcome to use the existing lighting plan and show that in the RCP; however, the existing may be disregarded and a new lighting plan developed if this better meets the students' design intent.