

STEELCASE NEXT STUDENT DESIGN CONTEST

OFFICIAL RULES

The Steelcase NEXT Student Design Contest (“Contest”) begins September 8, 2026 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time (“ET”) and ends on February 26, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET (the “Contest Period”). All Submissions must be submitted by December 10, 2026 by 5:00 pm Pacific Time (“PT”) to be eligible.

Sponsor: Steelcase Inc., 901—44th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508 (“Sponsor”).

Eligibility

This Contest is open to individual undergraduate junior and senior level students, 5th year students enrolled into a 5 year Masters program, or Master’s programs where the student has no bachelor’s degree in design and/or experience), who are legal U.S., Canada, or Mexico residents or international students attending U.S., Canadian, or Mexican universities, physically residing in the United States, DC, Canada (excluding Quebec), or Mexico, who are the age of majority in their home state as of the start date of the Contest (each, a “Contestant”). This Contest is void outside of the United States, Canada, and Mexico, in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, U.S. Military installations in foreign countries, all other U.S. territories and possessions, and wherever else restricted or prohibited by law. Employees, shareholders, officers, directors, agents, representatives of Sponsor, the legal, promotion and advertising agencies of Sponsor, and their immediate family members and those living in their household, and each person or entity connected with the production or administration of the Contest, and each parent company, affiliate, subsidiary, agent and representative of any aforementioned entity, are not eligible to enter.

Limit one entry per natural person. Sponsor is not responsible for late, lost, delayed, damaged, misdirected, incomplete, illegible, unintelligible, corrupted, or postage-due entries. Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify false entries or entries suspected of being false. Only complete, valid submissions will be accepted. Sponsor will not verify receipt of entries. All entries submitted become the sole property of Sponsor and will not be acknowledged or returned.

How to Enter

1. **IMPORTANT:** This Contest will be a faculty-sponsored part of a program curriculum in the fall term, 2026 or an independent study project (a “Program”). Submissions (as defined below) may only be made by professors (“Professor”) overseeing a Contestant in a credentialed university or college Program. Submissions may be made on behalf of students participating through self-study (not part of a class curriculum), but the Submission must still come from the Professor as the sponsoring faculty. Only two Submissions may be made per university Program/studio. *Example: one studio with two professors may submit a total of two submissions. Two different studios with different class schedules and/or different instructors/students can submit two submissions for each studio.*
2. Students must work on this project individually.
3. This competition will be a faculty-sponsored part of program curriculum in the 2026 fall term or an independent study project that has a faculty sponsor we can correspond with.
4. When submitting an entry, it should be able to open or launch as a complete presentation for the judges, including the concept statement. **This should be one PDF.** It should not be individual files for the judges to navigate through. No videos, Prezi’s, Mural, or

PowerPoint formats will be permitted; however, embedded QR codes are acceptable to take judges to additional content if the student wishes to provide.

- a. **PLEASE NOTE:** Judges will be viewing on a computer screen. It is easier for judges to navigate multiple pages vs. creating a presentation “board” that is on one or two pages that requires the judge to zoom in on the screen to navigate/evaluate the content. That is not a good user experience for the judges. **Also note**, if you embed QR codes for the judges to navigate to additional content, consider not putting the most compelling content here as it requires a discretionary additional step by the judges. Consider this content to be supplemental.

5. 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.
6. **FOR FINAL SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS:** Each submission (2 per program**) must be emailed separately to design4next@gmail.com (please note: **this is a different email address** than has been used during the competition (this is going to a **gmail** account and is a third party email address to ensure identity of program is not revealed)

***Please note 2 per program = 2 per individually taught studios/classes. Example: one studio with two professors may submit a total of two entries. Two different studios with different class schedules and/or different instructors/students can submit two entries for each studio.*

7. Naming of entries shall be “**SCHOOL NAME – STUDENT LAST NAME, STUDENT FIRST NAME**”.pdf. Your student’s name or name of school should **NOT** be listed within the presentation itself - only in the name of the file.
8. Submissions must come **FROM THE PROFESSOR** no later than 5pm PT on **Wednesday, December 9, 2026**.
 - Submissions received directly from students will not be accepted to ensure these are the approved submittals from each program.
 - If you are a professor that is sponsoring students who are participating through self-study (not part of your class curriculum) – the submission must still come from YOU as the sponsoring faculty.
9. The body of the email needs to contain the student’s best contact email address during the judging period (December 18, 2026 – January 22, 2026).
10. **BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR 2 SUBMISSIONS, please verify your students are available to travel on Feb. 22-24, 2026, for the in-person final judging/presentations at our headquarters in Grand Rapids if they are chosen as one of our five semifinalists.** All travel arrangements and expenses will be made and covered by Steelcase (only flights originating and returning domestically in North America - U.S./Canada/Mexico); however, the **student must be present to be considered. Failure to attend in person will disqualify your student.**

11. The submission is to be the equivalent of a design development presentation to your client, NEXT.
12. The student's goal, through your submission, is to convince NEXT that your design will provide them the work environment they need to meet their goals.
13. Students will receive information about the client, general program requirements, client's mission and interests via the competition website: [NEXT Website](#)
From this, students will know the type of space the client desires, what excites them and what their goals and needs are.
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.
15. Questions must be submitted **by professors only** via email at: design4next@steelcase.com Response times may vary; however, our goal will be to respond within 48 hours. The Q+A period begins on **September 21, 2026**, and the deadline for submitting questions is **October 2, 2026**.
16. All submissions are due at 5pm PST on **December 9, 2026**. Late submissions will not be considered.
17. All submissions need to be self-explanatory for the judges to evaluate. Only the semifinalists will have the opportunity to present their project to the panel. Judge's comments will only be provided to the semifinalists and honorable mention recipients.
18. Files should be in **PDF format** and be sized for easy review by our judges on a computer screen **(FILE SIZES SHOULDN'T EXCEED 24MB)**. **It is a better experience for the judges to review as a series of slides (in landscape format) versus submitting as one or two page "virtual boards" that must be zoomed in on for review.**
19. **PLEASE NOTE**, the examples of prior projects (semifinalists) shown on the NEXT website are both their original submission into the competition for (blind judging) and their final submittals for the (verbal) presentations delivered in person to the judges.

Submission Guidelines.

20. **Submissions must include the following (but not limited to):**
 - a. Design concept statement (max 250 words). This should **clearly articulate** your inspiration for the design, how it is reflected in your solution and how it meets the client's requirements.

- b. **A (heading) must be provided on the concept pages(s) of the submission and the student must be able to describe their concept in (one-to-five words) – no more.** Please note, this heading is only 1-5 words, the overall concept statement (description) can be a maximum of 250 words.
- c. Inspiration images that impacted your final solution. Images shall be compiled on a labeled, digital board.
- d. Clear explanation and visuals of how your research informed your Evidence Based Design solution.
- e. Show concept development process (**hand sketches, authentic/early bubble diagrams, concept models, etc.**) – **these are all VERY impactful for judges by communicating your iterative process to your final solution**
- f. Rendered floor plan with rooms labeled and furniture shown.
- g. Reflected ceiling plans are (**required**) for the **Community Hub – Reception & Welcome, Work Cafe and Reception areas**. Include a legend with ceiling heights identified.
- h. A **minimum of one elevation section** is required. We **suggest** you choose an area (not a room) that demonstrates your design intent.
- i. Perspective renderings (**minimum of 9, maximum of 15**). **A minimum of 6 renderings** must be full bleed (full page) renderings. **PLEASE NOTE THE SPACES THAT REQUIRE RENDERINGS ON THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT.**
- j. High quality digital images of furniture, finish materials and lighting selections per area. All selections must be labeled and coded back to the room location. Please place all images, with labels, on a digital board(s).
- k. Student developed graphic logo for NEXT will be incorporated holistically reflecting their brand and culture in the space as part of the submission.

21. Prohibitions. Submissions may not contain any illegal, offensive, or obscene subject matter and any such Submission shall be disqualified without notification to Contestant. Contestants may not use third party trademarks, designs, or trade dress in their Submission. Contestants may not copy or otherwise plagiarize the Submission from any source, nor may the Submissions include third party copyrighted or patented material. Sponsor is not responsible for legal protection or clearance of Submissions in any form. Contestants shall indemnify Sponsor against any and all claims from any third party for any use by Sponsor of any Submission, in whole or part. If, in the sole discretion of Sponsor, a Submission, in whole or part, constitutes copyright infringement, trademark infringement or otherwise violates the rights of any third party, the Submission will be disqualified, and the Contestant will have no recourse to be reconsidered. Sponsor may request evidence that Submissions are an original work of authorship within the meaning of U.S. Copyright law at any time during or after the Contest Period.

PLEASE NOTE: We advise the LIMITED use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) for concept development, concept statements, inspirational images, etc. for academic integrity and the evaluation of original work. ANY use of AI to influence any of the aforementioned MUST be clearly cited in the submission with the source and date of inquiry clearly stated. All final renderings, RCP, mood boards, elevations, axonometric drawings, etc. MUST be original work and NOT generated through AI solutions.

Judging Criteria

Judging will be completed in two (2) rounds. All Submissions submitted during the Contest Period will be prescreened by submitting Professors to ensure Submissions have correctly met the Submission Guidelines above and meet with Sponsor's general standards and practices prior to any judging (each such Submission, a "**Qualified Submission**"). Judging of all Qualified Submissions will begin on or about December 18, 2026.

A panel of qualified judges and evaluators will evaluate each Qualified Submission on a **100-point scale as follows**:

1. **CONCEPT (10 POINTS)**: Did the student provide a clear concept statement with proof of how research informed design process as well as how the concept links to solving the client's needs.
2. **RESEARCH (10 POINTS)**: Is it clear the student exhibited evidence-based design reasoning with their design solutions.
3. **PROCESS (15 POINTS)**: Was the student's iterative design process clearly shown? Did their concept development process have supporting graphics with sketches, bubble diagrams, concept models, etc.?
4. **PLANNING AND DESIGN (30 POINTS)**: Did the student optimize the use of total built environment into their design solution, and did they incorporate their research? Are all of the program requirements met and are there any ADA code issues that were overlooked?
5. **PRESENTATION/GRAPHICS (25 POINTS)**: Overall presentation quality: visual submission and quality formatting and flow. Graphics, visuals, renderings, and sketches are well developed with no typos and easy to read.
6. **WILDCARD SPACE (10 POINTS)**: Uniqueness and creativity demonstrated in the addition and development of the wildcard space and communicating specifically how it benefits NEXT's objectives and the community.

Note: It is expected that **all** submissions comply with regulatory guidelines, adhere to green building principles and maintain the integrity of the building structure. As part of school jury process, **professor must review all plans to ensure they comply with planning guidelines/codes.**

The Contestants with the ten (10) highest point totals from the initial judging round will be deemed a Selected Contestant and will be eligible to win a Prize as described below. In the event of a tie, the tying entries will be rescored to determine a Selected Contestant.

The Selected Contestants with the five (5) highest point totals will be deemed a Semifinalist Contestant and will be eligible to win a Semifinalist Prize. In the event of a tie, the tying entries will be rescored to determine a Semifinalist Contestant. The Semifinalists will be required to present their Submission to the Judges on or about February 2026 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This date will be communicated to Semifinalists on or about January 22, 2026. After the Semifinalist Contestant presentations, the Semifinalist Contestant with the highest point total will be deemed the Top Winning Contestant and will be eligible to receive a Top Winning Contestant Prize. In the event of a tie, the tying entries will be rescored to determine the Top Winning Contestant.

Selection and Notification of Selected Contestants

On or about January 22, 2026, Selected Contestants will be contacted by a representative of Sponsor using the information submitted during the entry process. All Selected Contestants will be required to respond as directed to the email notification within 72 hours of attempted notification. Failure to respond timely to the notification may result in forfeiture of the prize and, in such case, Sponsor may select a contestant with the next highest score. Each Selected Contestant may also be sent an affidavit of eligibility / liability / publicity release ("**Release**"). Unless restricted by law,

each Selected Contestant will be required to complete and return the Release within the time period specified therein. An alternate Selected Contestant may be chosen from among the remaining eligible contest Contestants if a Selected Contestant: (i) cannot be reached; (ii) fails to obtain all signatures on the Release and to return the documents in a timely manner as required pursuant to these Official Rules; (iii) or cannot accept or receive the prize for any reason.

On or about March 31, 2026, all winning Submissions and the names and hometowns of Selected Contestants may be posted for viewing on the Steelcase web site. There is no value associated with this Prize. This prize is for entertainment purposes only.

Prizes

Selected Contestants. The ten (10) Selected Contestants will each receive one (1) Custom-ordered Gesture, Karman, Think, or SILQ chair (Approximate Retail Value (“**ARV**”): \$1,500.00 - \$2,000.00). All prize values in US Dollars.

Semifinalist Contestants. The five (5) Semifinalist Contestants will each receive an all-expense paid trip (details described below) to Steelcase University to present their project to the Judges, meetings with Steelcase executives and other learning opportunities.

Top Winning Contestant. The Top Wining Contestant will receive an all-expense paid attendance at the Steelcase University Learning Center in Grand Rapids, MI.

The Top Winning Contestant also will receive (i) \$2,500, and (ii) a \$2,500 contribution to the Contestant's school's design program or to a charity of their choice.

The other (4) Semifinalists will each receive (i) \$1,250, and (ii) a \$1,250 contribution to the Contestant's school's design program or to a charity of their choice.

ARV for each individual prize: \$5,000.00

Travel Details. The Semifinalist trip to Grand Rapids, MI includes coach airfare and 2 nights standard lodging at the JW Marriott Hotel in Grand Rapids, MI. Trip must be taken during the time indicated by the Sponsor. Departure flights will leave on the earliest date indicated and the return flights will be on the latest day indicated for the trip selected. Semifinalist Contestants must notify Sponsor of requested travel times at least ten (10) days in advance; otherwise, Sponsor reserves the right to alter the request to accommodate availability. No substitutions. In the event a Semifinalist Contestant cannot make the trip dates, the prize is forfeited, and that Semifinalist Contestant will not be entitled to the prize. No part of the trip is redeemable for cash. All meals and travel not expressly listed here are the responsibility of Selected Winners, including airport fees. No substitutions, except by Sponsor. If for any reason, the prize as listed cannot be awarded, Sponsor will substitute a prize of equal or greater value. Selected air travel for Semifinalist Contestant must commence from nearest major metropolitan airport. Airport transfers are not included.

Prizes may be awarded in the form of coupon(s) and/or gift card(s). Actual value of travel prizes may vary based on point of departure and airfare fluctuations. Once airline tickets and hotel reservations have been issued, they may not be changed, re-sold, endorsed, exchanged, transferred or in any other manner modified by recipient. Travel must be completed by the dates determined by the Sponsor. Travel arrangements are subject to availability and to the terms of conditions of the airline, the hotel(s), and/or tour operator(s). Semifinalist Contestants are solely responsible for any other unspecified expenses related to the travel prize, including without limitation meals, ground transportation, gratuities, incidental hotel expenses, excess baggage charges, upgrades and any and all federal, state, and local taxes on prize, including special airport taxes and fees. Semifinalist Contestants are not entitled to any surplus between actual retail value of prize and stated ARV and any difference between stated ARV and actual value of the prize will not be awarded. No substitution, transfer, or cash redemption of prize, provided however that

Sponsor reserves the right to substitute a prize with another prize of equal or greater value should the advertised prize become unavailable for any reason. Any and all activities related to the prize, including without limitation flying, are at the Semi Finalist Contestant's own risk and subject to whatever restrictions are imposed by the entities that govern the activities.

License

By entering, Contestants are granting Sponsor and its affiliates a worldwide, royalty-free, perpetual, unrestricted, irrevocable and fully sub licensable right and license to consider, display, re-post, disclose, use, re-use, reproduce, modify, digitize or enhance, adapt, change, publish, translate, create derivative works from, distribute, re-distribute, publicly perform and/or display Contestant's Submission (in whole or in part) and/or incorporate all or part of the Submission in other works, all in any form, format, media or technology now known or later developed or invented. CONTESTANTS WILL NOT BE PAID FOR THEIR SUBMISSION or for granting Sponsor any of these rights. Additionally, while Sponsor will seek to post the Submission in the form as provided at the time of entry, Contestants agree that due to technical limitations, Submission may be altered from its original form. Sponsor shall have no liability as to posting of Submissions. By entering the Contest, Contestants agree to waive all claims to and shall receive no royalties of any kind now or in the future from Sponsor for use of their Submission and represent and warrant that no other party is entitled to claim royalties from the use of the Submission as set forth in these Official Rules. Contestants may not resell, assign or transfer any of their rights under these Official Rules.

Publicity

Sponsor reserves the right to use the entry Submissions to the Contest for publicity purposes prior to or after the Contest Period, in any media, and to use the name, likeness, and hometown name of any Contestant, including all or part of Submissions throughout the world, without any compensation or prior review unless specifically prohibited by law.

Conditions

Contest is subject to these Official Rules. By participating, Contestants agree to be bound by these complete Official Rules, including Sponsor's terms of use (<https://www.steelcase.com/terms-of-use/>) and privacy policy. Contestants agree that the decisions of Sponsor are final and binding; and agree to waive any right to claim ambiguity in the Contest or these Official Rules, except where prohibited by law. Taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of Selected Contestant, and Contestants may be issued an IRS Form 1099 for the ARV of any awarded prize. This Contest is void where prohibited or restricted by law, and subject to applicable federal, state provincial and local laws.

Release

Contestants and Professors agree to release and hold harmless Sponsor, its attorneys, affiliates, together with the respective directors, employees, officers, licensees, licensors and agents of each, including without limitation, their respective advertising and promotion entities and any person or entity associated with the production, judging, or administration of the Contest (collectively, the "Releasees") from any and all liability, loss or damage arising from or in connection with awarding, receipt and/or use or misuse of prize or participation in any prize-related activities. Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify any Contestant or Professor it finds to be tampering with the entry process or the operation of the Contest or violating these Official Rules. The Releasees shall not be liable for: (i) late, lost, delayed, stolen, misdirected, incomplete communications or affidavits, regardless of the method of transmission; (ii) telephone system, telephone or computer hardware, software or other technical or computer malfunctions, lost connections, disconnections, delays or transmission errors; (iii) data corruption, theft, destruction, unauthorized access to or alteration of entry or other materials; (iv) any injuries, losses or damages of any kind caused by the prize or resulting from acceptance, possession or use of a prize, or from participation in the Contest; or (v)

any printing, typographical, administrative or technological errors in any materials associated with the Contest, including these official rules. Sponsor disclaims any liability for damage to any computer system resulting from participating in, or accessing or downloading information in connection with this Contest, and reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel, modify or suspend the Contest should a virus, bug, computer problem, unauthorized intervention or other causes beyond Sponsor's control, corrupt the administration, security or proper play of the Contest. Sponsor may prohibit a Contestant from participating in the Contest or winning prize if, in its sole discretion, it determines such Contestant is attempting to undermine the legitimate operation of the Contest or undermine the purpose of the Contest in any way by cheating, hacking, deception, or any other unfair playing practices of intending to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass third parties, any other players or Sponsor representatives. Use of any automated system to participate is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate disqualification. Disputes regarding these Official Rules and/or this Contest will be governed by the internal laws of the State of California in the United States. Any and all legal actions or claims arising in connection with this Contest must be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction within the United States. CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE THE WEB SITE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE CONTEST OR THE PETITION PROCESS MAY BE IN VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS AND WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEST. SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, SPONSORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SEEK REMEDIES AND DAMAGES (INCLUDING ATTORNEY FEES) TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW, INCLUDING CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

Privacy

All personal information collected by Sponsor will be used for the administration of the Contest and in conjunction with these Official Rules. Please refer to Sponsor's privacy policy located at <https://www.steelcase.com/privacy-policy/> for important information regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by Sponsor.

Official Rules. For a copy of these official rules, please visit: [NEXT Website](#) until 90 days after the end of the Contest.

Winners List. For names of prize winners, available until 90 days after the end of the Contest Period, log on to [NEXT Website](#)

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