“This competition changed the way I tackle design. It challenged me to explore beyond my comfort zone and encouraged me to be curious about the wider role of design”

RSA SDA Finalist 2019-20
At the RSA we believe in a world where everyone is able to create a better future. 2020 has brought into sharp relief some of the major challenges we face, from climate change to Covid-19 to continued racial injustice and structural inequality. But it’s also been a year of growing activism, social movements, hope and desire among many to set out on a different path.

What do we need to prioritise as we navigate the path forwards? How might we build a more sustainable, equitable and resilient world? What is the future we choose for ourselves and for our descendants? These are the types of questions that inspire the RSA Student Design Awards (SDA).

The enormity of the issues we face is daunting. But there is a renewed urgency and openness to tackle them. Amidst the disruption, this year has demonstrated that we, our institutions, communities, and businesses retain an impressive ability to experiment and adapt. Previously, in ‘normal times’, the pace and intensity of change and innovation we’ve seen in our neighbourhoods, workplaces and governments would have been deemed too risky, too disruptive or too resource intensive. And yet, we’ve seen that it is possible. Both imagination and experimentation are playing major roles in helping us to adapt and tap into our innate resilience.

There is a real opportunity to experiment in ways that radically shift thinking, overturn flawed assumptions and promote systemic change on a global scale. Through our briefs we invite you to be ambitious and look to new horizons; to take up Christiana Figueres’ call to action (featured in our Moving Pictures brief) and seize the chance we now have to choose a healthier future for us and our planet. Since 1924, RSA Student Design Awards participants have risen to the challenges of their times.

In this spirit of ambition, imagination and urgency, how might we provide access to quality health services for underserved communities? How could we harness social media to bridge societal divides? How might we ensure that everyone is guaranteed their human right to clean air? How can we encourage people and communities to think and act for the long term?

These are just some of the 2020-21 RSA SDA briefs, and we’re calling on you to unravel these issues and explore new possibilities. We can’t wait to see what’s in store this year!

Natalie Ortiz
Senior Designer, RSA

The RSA Student Design Awards is a global competition that challenges students to apply their skills and creativity to tackle today’s most pressing social and environmental issues.

The competition is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled at any higher education institution, college or university anywhere in the world. New graduates can also enter within a year of graduating, and we accept entries from individuals and teams. Responses to our seven open briefs can come from any discipline or combination of disciplines, and can take any form – from product, communication and service proposals to spatial and environmental solutions. There is also an animation brief. Submissions will be evaluated per brief by a curated panel of judges against the judging criteria in a two-stage process: shortlisting and interviews.

See the online toolkits for each brief and our recommended design resources, and sign up to our newsletter for details of free events and workshops.

**The 2020-21 briefs are brought to you by:**
Philips, John Makepeace, Twitter, Circular Design Lab, Biomimicry Institute, Centre for Ageing Better, The Long Time Project, Marketing Trust, and Legacy Funds to the RSA.

**With additional support from:**
Woodland Heritage, Build Up, NCR Corporation, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, Fibreshed Southeast and Southwest, Natracare, The Chartered Institute of Marketing and RSA Events.

RSA SDA Competition Pack 2020 - 21
Competition Timeline

26/08/20
Briefs Soft Launch
The 2020-21 RSA Student Design Awards Competition briefs go live on sda.thersa.org

25/01/21
Submissions Open
Go to sda.thersa.org to submit your proposal

10/02/21
Early Bird Deadline
Submit by 4pm GMT on 10 February 2021 for a reduced entry rate of £25

10/03/21
Final Deadline
Submit by 4pm GMT on 10 March 2021

March-May
Judging
Entries will be evaluated in a two-stage process: shortlisting and interviews

28/05/21
Winners Announced
Stay tuned for the big announcement!

29/06/21
Awards Ceremony
Join us to celebrate the 2020-21 RSA SDA Winners!
How might we design systems that provide seamless and cost-effective access to quality health services for underserved communities?
How might we design systems that provide seamless and cost-effective access to quality health services for underserved communities?

Background

• Lack of affordable, quality care is one of the most pressing global issues of our time. In 2015, in response to this ongoing crisis, all United Nations member states committed to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030.

• UHC is about ensuring that people are able to access quality health services, whenever and wherever they need them, without shouldering significant financial burdens. According to the World Health Organization, this should include provision for all essential health services, such as prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, health promotion and palliative care.

• Barriers to accessing health services include high cost of care, inadequate health insurance, lack of available services, or lack of culturally competent care. These barriers can lead to long delays, unmet needs, financial burden, preventable health issues and hospitalisations; all of which have the potential to dramatically impact people’s quality of life and physical and mental health.

• Furthermore, we live in a world of increasing health inequalities (defined as “systematic and potentially remediable differences in one or more aspects of health across populations or population groups defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically” (Starfield, 2001a)). Vulnerable communities are often the ones most drastically impacted by these inequalities, to the extent that their life expectancies can even be lowered as a result.

• In parallel, around the world the healthcare sector is facing significant resource constraints and challenges such as shortages of medical workers, facilities and equipment; all of which have been amplified by the impact of Covid-19.

• These challenges demand a systemic rethink that increases access to care for underserved communities whilst improving patient outcomes at a lower cost. This could include reimagining healthcare facilities, using advanced technologies such as AI and telehealth that can adapt to changing needs; and providing personalised care that addresses not only treatment but also encourages individuals to take a proactive role towards prevention and healthy living.

How to approach the brief

• We encourage ideas that shift from stand-alone solutions (such as products) to end-to-end systems. Proposals could incorporate aspects such as design of the environment, smart devices and personalised service. Think about how you could improve patient and staff experiences throughout their care journeys.

• Pay attention to ‘seamless’ access for underserved communities. Examples of these could include people living in rural areas with few transport links, or in areas with little or no connectivity, people with mobility challenges, migrants that don’t speak the official language and live in refugee camps, and/or people facing a specific health challenge, for example, a chronic illness.

• You might want to choose a community that you can access and with whom you could collaborate to identify a real, specific problem they are facing that you would like to address. This research should seek to understand their needs and identify ways in which your proposal could involve them in an ethical, responsible manner. Map the patient’s journey and consider how the system delivers care through diverse touchpoints.

• Co-design through conversations with the beneficiaries of your proposal, make sure you understand their challenges and ambitions. Try to talk to both professionals and people with lived experience (including family and friends who act as unpaid carers).

• Try to test your ideas early and get feedback, from both the target group and from experts. Be creative in the way you test ideas and include any learnings in your submission.
Partner Information:

Philips
Royal Philips is a leading health technology company focused on improving people’s health and enabling better outcomes across the health continuum, from healthy living and prevention, to diagnosis, treatment and home care. Philips leverages advanced technology and deep clinical and consumer insights to deliver integrated solutions. Headquartered in the Netherlands, the company is a leader in diagnostic imaging, image-guided therapy, patient monitoring and health informatics, as well as in consumer health and home care. Philips’ health technology portfolio generated 2017 sales of €17.8bn and employs approximately 74,000 employees with sales and services in more than 100 countries.

Judging Criteria

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

Social and environmental impact:
How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

Rigorous research and compelling insights:
How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people’s needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

Systems thinking:
What’s the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you’re exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

Viability:
Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

Creativity and innovation:
How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
A NEW LEAF

How might we utilise local woodland resources to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic activity?
How might we utilise local woodland resources to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic activity?

Background

• Around the world, woodland areas provide rich habitats and ecological networks, and play an essential role in the fight against climate change through the carbon they absorb as they grow.
• Trees can also be a valuable economic resource. The wood they produce is an important natural material for societies the world over, one that has evolved over millennia to be of unique strength, beauty and variety.
• A new engagement with our woodland areas offers an exciting opportunity to bolster the social, economic and environmental benefits they can provide to local communities. Sustainable manufacturing can generate a variety of employment and stimulate local craft.
• Over the hundred years or more it can take for trees to reach maturity, up to 90 percent of the smaller trees (10-35cm in diameter) are gradually removed to allow selected trees to spread their roots and canopy. These ‘thinnings’ provide high quality timber, ideal for new enterprises in rural areas, but their potential is under-utilised and undervalued.
• In contrast, unmanaged woodlands produce low-grade material only suitable for fuel, fencing, pallets and paper, whose short lifespan means that the carbon is released relatively quickly. Less than a fifth of woodland produce is currently used for sustainable, long-lasting products. Consequently, there is a high level of dependence on imported timber and products from the world’s diminishing forests.
• Currently timber growing and manufacturing are separate, with little or no connection between them. By reuniting the economic and cultural relationships between both the woodlands and their wildlife, and the local community and the manufacture of products, there is the potential to offer numerous benefits including meaningful employment and strengthened local identity. The combination of traditional and newer technologies could create new commercial opportunities for the production and sale of distinctive items.
• The brief calls for a multi-disciplinary approach. The judges will be looking for evidence of market analysis, business administration and manufacturing skills. You are encouraged to submit a joint entry in collaboration with those studying subjects other than your own.

How to approach the brief

• This brief asks you to tap into different perspectives to bring innovative approaches to the design, marketing and manufacture of products from woodlands, at the source or very near to the woodland itself. You should consider the specific product from woodlands and think about how this can be utilised.
• Successful entries will not only consider product range and market analysis but will also demonstrate how the manufacturing process could benefit local communities through employment, skills or community relationships.
• We are looking for surprising and innovative approaches to integrating manufacturing processes into a specific woodland context. This woodland can be anywhere in the world.
• Whilst creating your products we want you to bear in mind that wood products can help address climate change if they displace higher energy materials and are designed to have a long life, so that they don’t quickly release carbon into the atmosphere.

For purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

• A line of products that support innovative construction systems suited for the local environment
• A brand that incorporates powerful storytelling to promote woodland products and benefits to its bioregion, including wildlife and community
• An educational centre which enables the local community to create bespoke products that substitute steel or plastics

… and many more are possible
Partner Information:

John Makepeace
This Award is one of several initiatives by the designer and furniture maker, John Makepeace, to encourage a greater awareness of woodlands, their management, their potential benefits and the more imaginative use of locally-grown timber in products and buildings.

Woodland Heritage
Woodland Heritage was established as a charity 25 years ago by two cabinet makers keen to 'put something back'. A membership based organisation, the charity supports the resilient management of woodlands, the development and protection of the UK timber supply chain and the furthering of knowledge and skills within the forestry and timber sectors, as well as within the general public. Woodland Heritage recognises fine quality work using UK timber with annual awards open to professionals and amateurs. The charity also produces a Journal, runs the 'From Woodland to Workshop' courses and a Field Weekend each year, as well as supporting research into Acute Oak Decline for over ten years. HRH The Prince of Wales has been the charity's Patron since 2005.

Judging Criteria

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

Social and environmental impact:
How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

Rigorous research and compelling insights:
How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people's needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

Systems thinking:
What's the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you're exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

Viability:
Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

Creativity and innovation:
How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
How might we harness social media to bridge societal divides by supporting social connection, collective action and reducing polarisation?
Brief 3: Bridging The Divide

How might we harness social media to bridge societal divides through supporting social connection, collective action and reducing polarisation?

Background

• Social media has radically transformed how people, organisations, and governments connect and interact. As of 2020, more than 3.8 billion people all over the world use social media on a monthly basis (We Are Social, 2020). We live an increasing amount of our lives online, a trend that has only accelerated as a result of Covid-19.

• There is a growing recognition that social media has an important role to play in supporting collective action, knowledge sharing and enhancing social connection. Social media has helped bridge previously entrenched societal divides in multiple ways. Including: promoting imagination, transforming community justice, or creating a space for public discourse. Examples of this include the #metoo and #BringBackOurGirls movements, anti-racist ‘teach-ins’, and active engagement with radicalised communities by former hate group members.

• Social media has many positive aspects. Our priority should be to understand the ways in which social media can be used to promote tolerance and inclusion instead of division and exclusion. Areas of research currently include how social media can be manipulated by bad actors to cause harm - such as attempting to influence political processes, spread misinformation in response to Covid-19, or abuse or direct hateful conduct at other users or groups.

• Platform design, platform management and algorithmic design all have crucial roles to play in what content gets shared, and how users interact with social media. Transparency, explainability and consumer choice are increasing areas of focus for social media platforms. Some are beginning to look beyond a reactive response of limiting the impact of negative social media use, to promoting positive use as a cornerstone of a healthy society.

How to approach the brief

• Identify a societal divide or connection that is important to you. This might be advancing equity across personal identity characteristics (such as gender, race, class, sexuality, citizenship or more), or may mean addressing a specific toxic behaviour (such as hate speech), or advancing a critical agenda (such as mitigating global warming).

• Consider how social media affects that divide or connection. Through both the user’s actions and the platform design. For example, if your design challenge focuses on how misinformation spreads, you may choose to focus on the users sharing content or alternatively, look at the algorithms accelerating the sharing of that content. Decide which lens is the most effective to address your challenge. This could be reimagining what a user does or reimagining how a platform is designed.

• For example, Twitter introduced a sparkle icon located at the top of individuals’ timelines to more easily switch on and off the ranking algorithm to the simple reverse-chronological timeline. More recently, they began experimenting with a new prompt - when you Retweet an article that you haven’t opened on Twitter, Twitter may ask if you’d like to open it first. Other social media platforms have considered similar changes to algorithms or their products to reduce unhealthy conversation online.

• It’s also important to consider that individual users have agency in how they interact with social media. They can choose to repost misinformation without checking sources, or curate a newsfeed that only showcases similar perspectives. Individual users could instead choose to use social media in a positive way, for example creating spaces for critical engagement around complicated topics, or checking for news sources before reposting.

There is one award available for this brief:

Twitter Award of £2,000
• Identify examples of how existing engagement on social media contributes to advancing societal connection or deepening societal divide. For example, how Wikipedia currently uses a decentralised, volunteer-led system to verify information on its platform.
• Make sure you map out user interactions, online and offline, that are involved in either advancing a way forward or contributing to the problem. Consider the impact of these interactions on people that might not be on social media.
• Get feedback from the stakeholders you identify, and work with them to co-design and test a feasible solution.

For the purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:
• A browser plug-in that limits the speed at which information can be shared and changes how people interact with social media.
• A social media campaign that welcomes new people to engage in a challenging social justice conversation.
• A face-to-face game that encourages people to examine and promote constructive uses of social media.

...and many more are possible.

Partner Information:

Twitter
Twitter, Inc. is the best place to see what’s happening and what people are talking about. Their mission is to serve the public conversation. Every day, instances of breaking news, entertainment, sports, politics, big events, and everyday interests happen first on Twitter. Twitter is where the full story unfolds with live commentary and where live events come to life, unlike anywhere else.

Build Up
Build Up transforms conflict in the digital age. We use peacebuilding best practices, participatory methodologies and digital technologies to identify and address emergent challenges to peace.

We use digital technologies to build peace: we support peace innovators across the globe, working with local organizations to design and implement technology interventions for peacebuilding processes that address divisions in society. We transform conflicts that happen in digital spaces: we conduct research and interventions to address polarization on social and digital media in contexts across the globe.

We host a global community of practice around peace and technology, convened at an annual conference.

Judging Criteria

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

Social and environmental impact:
How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

Rigorous research and compelling insights:
How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people's needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

Systems thinking:
What's the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you're exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

Viability:
Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

Creativity and innovation:
How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
How might we ensure that everyone living in areas with poor air quality is guaranteed their right to clean air?
Brief 4: The Right To Breathe

How might we ensure that everyone living in areas with poor air quality are guaranteed their right to clean air?

Background

• If you are reading this from a city in a high-income country, there is approximately a 50 percent chance that you are breathing in air that exceeds World Health Organization guidelines for particulate matter pollution. If you are reading it from a city in a low or middle-income country, your chances are even worse; 97 percent of cities in these countries do not meet air quality guidelines. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, clean air should be considered a human right. However, over 90 percent of the world’s population is exposed to toxic levels of particulate matter (PM) on a daily basis.

• Air pollution is the world’s number one environmental health risk, with links to more than seven million deaths every year, of which 600,000 are children. According to the World Bank, air pollution is estimated to cost countries with the highest greenhouse gas emissions more than four percent of their GDP in health impacts.

• Air pollution is a global challenge. Pollution easily crosses city and national boundaries – even moving across oceans and hemispheres. In a world of far-flung supply chains, consumption choices in one place can drive production and pollution in others. The impacts of worsening air pollution are systemic, exacerbating climate change and affecting the water cycles, energy and food production.

• The sources of pollution can vary depending on context. Burning things - fossil fuels for cars, electricity, and industrial production, agricultural waste, or rubbish – is perhaps the most well-known contributor; but agriculture, land use choices, industrial processes, and other sources also contribute significantly.

• Although the Covid-19 pandemic initially precipitated a drop in air pollution around the world, these gains have reversed to pre-Covid levels in many areas as countries reopen from lockdown.

• However, we are beginning to see some positive action. Around the world there are initiatives that advocate and act for cleaner air. There are three broad, emergent types of approaches, these are:

  • Preventive: for example, farming equipment for better management of manure, traffic regulations, or bike-sharing schemes.

  • Reactive: algae walls in cities, or photocatalytic solutions for roads and pavements, sensors and filters embedded in street infrastructure, or affordable air purifying kits.

  • Futures generations oriented: ideas that harness circular design principles and citizen-driven initiatives and campaigns that influence policy such as the ‘Getting From PM2.5 to Zero’ campaign to establish the first citizen-driven Clean Air Act in Asia.

• Technology can also play an important role in combating poor air quality. AI is being put to use to gather data that can help people choose where they decide to live, or where to go for a walk. It can also help businesses and governments to integrate effective environmental solutions at all levels of their operation.

How to approach the brief

• Be open-minded, creative and inquisitive. Your intervention could be a piece of speculative design, a product, a system, a policy proposal, a campaign, a service or any combination of these.

• Identify a specific area of focus within this brief and think about who the audience is. For example, we know that lack of access to clean air disproportionately affects vulnerable communities, such as those living in poverty. We also know the hardest hit countries are found mostly within Asia, and the rapidly growing cities of Africa. You should also think about how the local context could impact on your solution, e.g. how does your proposal respond and relate to cultural values and dynamics, local economies etc?

• Consider the system: air pollution is a complex challenge that requires collective action from citizens, governments and the private sector. Understand both the local and the global factors and actors that impact on your chosen area.
For the purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

- A design for a building, or street furniture, or transportation that can positively impact on air pollution.
- A community-based air quality monitoring service.
- An action-oriented education campaign to build grassroots policy change at the national level.

… and many more are possible.

**Partner Information:**

**Circular Design Lab**
The Circular Design Lab launched in Bangkok early 2019 as a self-organised, volunteer and citizen-driven project focused on prototyping and delivering solutions to humanity’s big challenges. Last year, teams used systemic design as a process to work on systems change to reduce air pollution, waste management and unsustainable fast fashion. Today, the Lab team is running a ‘Getting from 2.5PM to Zero’ roadshow designed to raise awareness and support the coalition effort to pass the first Clean Air Act of Thailand, and one of the first in Asia. You can find out more at www.circulardesignlab.org and right2cleanair.com.

**NCR Corporation**
NCR Corporation (NYSE: NCR) is a leading software and services led enterprise provider in the financial, retail and hospitality industries. NCR is headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., with 34,000 employees globally. Since 2002, NCR has provided regular support for the RSA Student Design Awards and, again, are providing a paid placement with the User Centred Design (UCD) team located in the R&D centre in Dundee, Scotland. This multidisciplinary UCD team provides industrial and interaction design, usability and accessibility leadership for all of NCR’s industry areas. The winning student will be working alongside the award-winning design team on a future orientated and commercially relevant project brief.

**Placement Awards Details**
12 based in Dundee, Scotland. Remuneration: £4,600 (£3,600 as wage and £1,000 living away from home allowance). See page 34 for further information.

**WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities**
WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities helps create accessible, equitable, healthy and resilient urban areas for people, businesses and the environment to thrive. Together with partners, it enables more connected, compact and coordinated cities. The Center expands the transport and urban development expertise of the EMBARQ network to catalyze innovative solutions in other sectors, including air quality, water, buildings, land use and energy. It combines the research excellence of WRI with 15 years of on-the-ground impact through a network of more than 300 experts working from Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Turkey and the United States to make cities around the world better places to live. More information at www.wirosscities.org.

**Judging Criteria**
Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

**Social and environmental impact:** How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

**Rigorous research and compelling insights:** How have you combined your own first-hand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people’s needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

**Systems thinking:** What’s the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you’re exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

**Viability:** Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

**Creativity and innovation:** How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
How might we apply biomimicry to create textiles, processes or systems that enhance nature?
How might we apply biomimicry to create textiles, processes or systems that enhance nature?

**Background**

- Textiles play an essential role in our lives. Our clothes protect us and allow us to express ourselves, and textiles furnish our homes, workplaces, and transportation. The global textile industry was worth approximately $860bn in 2018.
- But our current textile industry creates huge problems for the environment. Textile sourcing and production involves amounts of resources and toxic chemicals, while the current “take, make, waste” model also leads to vast amounts of rubbish. This results in significant damage to ecosystems, including air, water, and soil pollution.
- And while the industry employs millions of people around the world, it is also responsible for poor labour conditions and exploitation.
- Circular economy principles encourage us to move from this linear system into a circular one where materials can cycle. To do this we should learn from nature, which already works in this way.
- Biomimicry is the practice of learning from and emulating nature’s designs, processes, and systems to create solutions that solve human challenges while supporting ecosystems and life as a whole. Biomimicry has a wide variety of applications, and can help us solve challenges in everything from textiles to architecture to city planning.
- Humans create textiles to have properties that we desire, such as stretch or waterproofing. There are natural materials that we can learn from here, for example beetle cuticles (or outer shells) are durable and waterproof; or bull kelp stalks stretch without breaking; and some cotton varieties come naturally coloured in autumnal hues.
- We can also learn from the way natural systems manage the flow of materials through our biosphere (soil, air and water) and use that to inform how we develop textiles. In nature, primary producers, such as plants, use energy from the sun to assemble common building blocks into a great variety of materials. Consumers capture energy from those materials, and decomposers eventually break any materials not converted back to energy down into essential building blocks and the cycle begins again.
- If we consider two materials that we regularly use in textiles today, we can reflect on how well (or not) they fit within these cycles of nature:
  - Polyester, for example, is a synthetic fibre derived from petroleum. Its production includes many toxic chemicals which were not designed to be next to our skin. When we wash polyester, microfibres leach from it into the water system. They do not naturally decompose and form part of the biosphere’s cycles. Instead they accumulate. This is true whether the polyester is virgin or recycled.
  - Wool is a naturally occurring fibre, with useful properties including flame resistance, flexibility and a water-resistant surface. Grown, of course, by sheep which graze and draw nutrients from the soil. Grazing lands can be managed sustainably and in ways that promote biodiversity. Wool can decompose and return its building blocks to the earth.

**How to approach the brief**

- Let nature be your guide. Nature has already figured out how to keep healthy ecosystems in a state of dynamic equilibrium. What lessons can you learn and emulate from nature to achieve a similar state of dynamic equilibrium within a fashion or textiles context?
- There are a broad range of areas for innovation within this brief, for example:
  - Ways to provide stretch whilst increasing or maintaining durability in natural fibre textiles.
  - Models that contribute to the longevity of textiles, such as designs that enable textiles to be made and remade to reflect the personality and shifting shape of the wearer, or the construction and weaving of cotton fibres in order to make them more durable or easier to launder.
  - Techniques for natural dyeing that enhance colour fastness.
  - Compostable textiles and models of composting collection and facilities designed for optimal...
effectiveness and soil health (ie how can composting facilities be more effective than recycling facilities, and how do we return nutrients to agricultural land?).

• Facilities and networks of local wool production that can support regenerative farming, provide access to markets and contribute to change in values around fashion.

• We encourage you to select a specific location for your work and consider how the biosphere conditions there can inform your project.

• We also encourage you to think about the social implications of your project - how would it benefit people and communities, particularly those close to your chosen location?

• Whatever the design intervention, we encourage you to incorporate design lessons from nature into your solution by emulating specific mechanisms in nature or nature’s deep patterns.

For the purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

• Nontoxic waterproof textiles inspired by nature’s methods for repelling water.

• A regional service model that helps farmers find markets and create value from their wool, and which invests in local breeds.

• An educational community-based model that allows people to ‘grow their own clothes’, connecting them more closely to what they wear and how it’s made.

... and many more are possible.

Partner Information:

**Biomimicry Institute**

The Biomimicry Institute is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organisation founded in 2006 that empowers people to seek nature-inspired solutions for a healthy planet. To advance the solution process, the Institute offers AskNature.org, a free online tool that contains strategies found in nature and examples of ways they are used in design. It also hosts a Biomimicry Global Design Challenge and Youth Design Challenge to support project-based education; a Biomimicry Launchpad program and Ray of Hope Prize® for entrepreneurship to bring designs to market; and connects innovators through the Global Biomimicry Network. Participants who follow this brief may also be eligible to enter the Biomimicry Global Design Challenge.

**Fibreshed**

The UK Fibreshed is a network of regional grassroots organisations affiliated to Fibershed in the USA. They are defined by their geography and share a commitment to creating a regional, place-based textile system rooted in social and economic justice, enhancing the biosphere and soil restoration. You can find out more at fibershed.org.

This brief is also supported by the Eddie Squires Legacy Funds to the RSA

**Judging Criteria**

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

**Social and environmental impact:**

How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

**Rigorous research and compelling insights:**

How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people’s needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

**Systems thinking:**

What’s the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you’re exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

**Viability:**

Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

**Creativity and innovation:**

How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
How might we harness age-friendly design to ‘future-proof’ homes so they are sustainable, safe and inclusive places to live and enjoy?
How might we harness age-friendly design to ‘future-proof’ homes so they are sustainable, safe and inclusive places to live and enjoy?

**Background**

- We are living longer than ever before. Since 1990, global life expectancy has risen by over seven years. At the same time, ageing societies pose a challenge to our cities, towns and neighbourhoods, as many of the homes that we live in are not suitable for us to age-in-place.

- The likelihood of experiencing a physical impairment or disability that makes day-to-day life more difficult increases as we age. Inadequate and unsuitable housing is consistently prevalent and can exacerbate these issues, as well as magnifying the costs of health and social care for an ageing population. For example, just 9 percent of housing in England is suitably accessible.

- Shaping future housing design to be accessible and sustainable by default is a key solution. Homes should support multigenerational inclusivity, enhance life experience, and promote independence, health and wellbeing, while still satisfying basic functional and safety requirements. This is called ‘Age-friendly’ design, and it demands that we meet the needs of all, regardless of age or ability.

- Increased social inclusion and participation helps to reduce loneliness, depression and other mental health issues as people age, and is associated with generally improved health. ‘Age-friendly’ design also considers how we build age-friendly community, which The World Health Organisation advises includes education about ageing, intergenerational activities and respectful and inclusive services.

- ‘Future-proofing’ homes also requires us to think about our long-term relationship with the planet. Buildings and their construction together account for 36 percent of global energy use and 39 percent of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions annually. Our houses are often not set up to support sustainable living. They can be poorly insulated or inefficient, they can be built of unsustainable or resource intensive materials, and they can limit our ability to engage in sustainable activity, e.g. provide insufficient space to store bicycles.

- These challenges can be addressed in different ways:
  - Adapting and retrofitting: adjusting existing housing to mitigate potential hazards that can cause injury and falls (such as installing grab rails and level access).
  - Designing new housing models that are inclusive and fit for all in the future.

**How to approach the brief**

- We want to see innovative ideas which harness ‘Age-friendly’ design approaches. Proposals that support ageing-in-place from the outset. Homes should be built with the needs of all people who will live in them over their life course (200+ years), not just the first buyer. We do not want you to focus on design proposals that specifically target the elderly, but proposals that will be appealing to all.

- Your proposal should be explicit in its consideration of adaptability, either through a solution that uses retrofitting or adjustments, or for new designs that allow for adjustments and adaptations to be made.

- Focus on uncovering the everyday lived experience and needs of people in your chosen context. This can include social interactions and activities, personal hobbies, mealtimes, health and down-time. Map the users’ journey and consider how they interact with the environment through diverse touchpoints.

- Consider materials, processes and resources that will allow for reduced carbon emissions.

- Explore the driving forces of reduced health and well-being within your chosen context and analyse the impacts of this. What are the current societal obstacles individuals are faced with?

- Evidence-based design will strengthen your design proposal. This means looking at existing research and conducting primary research by speaking with stakeholders (end-users, designers, funding bodies). This will support a robust response to the brief.

- We are interested in a breadth of proposals from different design disciplines which aim to influence housing design. Your design needs to consider how best the home environment can be socially inclusive, sustainable and enabling for active ageing-in-place.
The successful entry will consider all of the above and seek to make a real-world difference through the designed proposal. How will your proposal reduce the increasing pressures on climate, health and social care?

For the purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

- An existing home that has been adapted and retrofitted to support an individual’s independence, connectivity and inclusion whilst in their own home environment.
- A new housing model that encourages support, multigenerational interaction and cohesion with their local community.
- A streetscape of homes that fosters community through encouraging neighbours to interact, socialise and participate in activities.

…and many more are possible.

Partner Information:

Centre For Ageing Better
The Centre for Ageing Better creates change in policy and practice informed by evidence and works with partners across England to improve employment, housing, health and communities. Ageing Better is a charitable foundation, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.

SDA Alumni Collaboration
We invited the RSA Student Design Awards Alumni community to propose a brief topic and vote on the suggestions. Faye Sedgewick, 2019 SDA Award Winner, submitted the winning topic: Age-Friendly Design.

Judging Criteria

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

Social and environmental impact:
How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

Rigorous research and compelling insights:
How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people’s needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

Systems thinking:
What’s the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you’re exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

Viability:
Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

Creativity and innovation:
How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
How might we encourage people and communities to think and act for the long term?
How might we encourage people and communities to think and act for the long term?

**Background**

- From climate change to Covid-19 to continued racial injustice, 2020 has been a poignant reminder that we need longer-term thinking to tackle the existential risks we face and create a better world for future generations.
- Currently, much of society isn’t geared up for longer-term thinking. Political terms and business plans only last around five years, and multinational agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, might only look 30 years ahead.
- Limiting our thinking to short timeframes leaves us ill-prepared for long-term risks like climate change. The result is that we often end up making choices which harm, rather than help, future generations. Our capacity to care about the future is crucial to our ability to safeguard it; we need to feel an emotional connection to future generations.
- There is growing interest in long-term thinking amongst communities, businesses and governments around the world. For example, in 2015 Wales became the first country in the world to introduce a law that demands public bodies in the country think about and detail the long-term impact of their decisions. Or, in Norway, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault preserves a wide variety of plant seeds in an attempt to ensure against the loss of plant species during a regional or global crises. In 1999, Longplayer, a 1,000 year long musical composition, began playing and can be heard at listening posts around the world, as well as at its main location in London.
- Despite modern-day struggles in thinking longer-term, some cultures around the world have long-termism baked into their beliefs, philosophies and cultures. Interesting work on long-termism is being done by communities including Māori, First Nation and other indigenous peoples, who are drawing on traditional teachings and knowledge.

**How to approach the brief**

- Be open-minded, creative and inquisitive. Your intervention could be a piece of speculative design, a product, a system, a service or any combination of these.
- It is essential to consider diversity and inclusion in your work. Think carefully about whose voices are included, who the audience is for your work and how it might reach a variety of people.
- You could focus on a specific site or community for your work. Pay attention to the culture of the audience or the place that you wish to focus on. Different cultures, languages and religions all have different approaches to time, which can inspire or influence the success of your intervention.

For the purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

- A piece of speculative design which produces rocks of the future, showing the impact of waste on the geology of the earth.
- A community project designed to create dialogue about the next 1,000 years of farming and the landscape.
- A way-finding and graphic installation in a town centre designed to take locals back and forward in time as they move around their hometown.

... and many more are possible.

**Background**

- Art, design and culture are crucial to cultivating long-term attitudes and behaviours. They inform our collective direction of travel, from the kinds of laws we make, to the technology we develop, to the way we think about our role in shaping the future.
Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

**Social and environmental impact:**
How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

**Rigorous research and compelling insights:**
How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people's needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

**Systems thinking:**
What's the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you're exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

**Viability:**
Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

**Creativity and innovation:**
How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?
Conceive and produce an animation to accompany one of the two selected audio files that will clarify, energise and illuminate the content
Brief 8: Moving Pictures

Conceive and produce an animation to accompany one of the two selected audio files that will clarify, energise and illuminate the content.

Background

• This brief asks you to create an animation that will reveal, illuminate and increase accessibility to the RSA’s unique content. Through RSA ideas, research and our 30,000+ strong Fellowship, we seek to build a world where everyone is able to participate in creating a better future. As part of this vision, the RSA Animates, RSA Shorts, RSA Insights and RSA Minimates film series were developed to bring big ideas to new audiences.

• Online audiences are savvy, easily bored and constantly bombarded with fascinating digital material. They’ll turn off very quickly if they are not engaged with the audio and visual imagery. Your work has the potential to be viewed by thousands of proactive and passionate RSA followers worldwide alongside the RSA Animates, RSA Shorts, RSA Insights and RSA Minimates.

• The audio clips for this brief are taken from the RSA's esteemed public events programme and we invite you to help us spread these powerful messages to a wider audience. The theme of acting with the future in mind is hugely important, we have an opportunity to decide how we choose to think and act in relation to the needs of the planet and in ways that respect the generations to come.

Audios

Category 1
The Future We Choose
by Christiana Figueres (excerpt length: 1:06, originally recorded in March 2020)
An urgent call-to-action from Christiana Figueres, architect of the historic Paris Climate Agreement. It is within our power to choose a healthier future for people and planet. But time is running short. We have the means. Now, we must seize the opportunity.

Category 2
How to be a Good Ancestor
by Roman Krznaric (excerpt length: 0:59, originally recorded in July 2020)
What legacy do we want to leave for future generations? Philosopher Roman Krznaric urges us to think long-term and consider how to do the right thing for our descendants by living within our planetary bounds.

How to approach the brief

• You must select one of the two categories, either ‘How to be a Good Ancestor’ or ‘The Future We Choose’ and you may not re-order the content or further edit the transcript in order to suit your work; however, you may add up to five seconds to the overall length of the audio clip if you wish to have an introduction or conclusion.

• Research the topic, the speaker, and think about the different ways in which you could tell a story with your animation that will enrich its content and increase accessibility. Try to avoid any stereotypes or obvious visual references. Instead use your insights to create deeper links between the content and your animation.

• Before you begin animating, ensure that you have an engaging concept. You are advised to spend a long time coming up with your concept to ensure that you develop and produce it to the best of your ability.

• Your submission should combine clarity, wit and attention to detail, aiming to make the content ‘come alive’ and introduce a new audience to the subject matter, and the work of the RSA and its partners.

There are three awards available for this brief:
• Marketing Trust Award of £2000 in memory of Mary Davies
• CIM Award of £1000
• RSA Events Staff Choice Award of £500
Partner Information:

The Marketing Trust
The Marketing Trust is an independent charitable trust which makes grants of financial assistance to charitable, volunteer, educational and other organisations for the purposes of training their staff, volunteers, young people and the general public in any or all aspects of marketing understanding and/or execution, and to appreciate the role of marketing in today’s society. The trust also funds research into aspects of marketing which will benefit business and society.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing
For over 100 years, The Chartered Institute of Marketing has been supporting, developing and representing marketers, teams, leaders and the marketing profession as a whole. As the largest professional marketing body in the world, CIM offers membership and career development, professional marketing qualifications, training courses and helps businesses grow with tailored support to enhance marketing capability.

RSA Events
The RSA Events programme is host to a range of world-changing talks, debates, and film screenings, all made available for free, for everyone. You can book to attend RSA Events for free, and you can also listen or watch the events live online. Find out about upcoming RSA Events by following @RSAEvents on Twitter or visiting thers.org/events. The RSA has a significant platform to showcase new work. The RSA YouTube channel has a loyal following of over 600,000 subscribers and the RSA Animate series has achieved international acclaim. In addition, the RSA has now launched its RSA Shorts series and the recent RSA Minimate series.

Judging Criteria

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

Rigorous research and communication
How did you investigate the audio subject matter? How did you go about the process of iteration, gathering and incorporating new ideas and feedback? How did you apply your research insights to most effectively communicate the speaker’s message and enhance the viewer’s understanding of the issues explored?

Aesthetic quality and originality
How does your animation engage and delight the eye? What did you consider in order to make the visuals striking and memorable? How have you applied a distinctive style, concept, storytelling approach or choice of visual metaphors to make sure your film stands out in a crowded online landscape, and reaches the widest possible audience?

Execution
How did you approach the planning and design of your animation? What have you considered and implemented to ensure the film is executed to a high technical standard? Have you considered the structure and pace of your animation? Does it flow and finish with a flourish?
Entry Requirements
(Briefs 1-7)

Open Briefs
The competition will open for entries via sda.thersa.org on 25 January 2021, and the final deadline for entries is 10 March 2021 at 4.00pm GMT.

Online Entry
If you are unable to submit online, please contact us by email at sdaenquiries@rsa.org.uk. As you prepare your submission, please ensure that:

- You do NOT include your name, university/college or other identifying marks anywhere on your submission.
- None of your submission files exceed 10MB – this is the maximum size for each individual file/board when you submit online.

Submission Requirements
For all briefs EXCEPT the Moving Pictures brief, the submission requirements are:

1 x A3 PDF hero image with a 1 sentence description – a singular ‘poster image’ that conveys the essence of your project and includes your project title plus a 1 sentence description. For example: ‘Bare technology: a product and service design proposal to convert old computers (e-waste) into simpler, more straightforward, accessible computers for older people’. Your hero image should aim to bring your concept to life – make sure it is vibrant and engaging. Your 1 sentence description is very important, make sure you take some time to craft an impactful message.

1 x A3 written summary – a single A3 PDF page that summarises your big idea using the following format:

- Problem (50 words max). What is the specific problem you identified within the brief topic? Who experiences this problem, and how does it impact them?
- Process (75 words max). How did you investigate this issue and what were your key insights? What journey did you go through to get to your final proposal?
- Proposal (50 words max). What is your proposed intervention? How will it address the problem?

4 x A3 PDF boards outlining your proposal – 4 pages describing your proposal and responding to the 5 sections of the judging criteria. Number each board in the top right-hand corner, in the order they should be viewed by the judges. You may include relevant hyperlinks in your boards however we cannot guarantee this will be viewed by the panel.

For details on the submission requirements for the Moving Pictures brief, please see the Moving Pictures entry requirements and guidelines. Please note that late submissions will not be accepted, and all entrants are encouraged to submit their work in good time before the deadline.
Entry Requirements
(Brief 8)

Moving Pictures
The competition will open for entries via sda.thersa.org on 25 January 2021, and the final deadline for entries is 10 March 2021 at 4:00pm GMT.

Online Entry
If you are unable to submit online, please contact us by email at sdaenquiries@rsa.org.uk. As you prepare your submission, please ensure that:

• You do NOT include your name, university/college or other identifying marks anywhere on your submission.
• None of your PDF submission files exceed 10MB – this is the maximum size for each individual file/board when you submit online.

Submission Requirements
For the Moving pictures brief, the submission requirements are:

1 x animation file submitted in either MP4 or MOV format - the maximum file size is 60MB, and your animation must not exceed the original audio file length plus 5 seconds.

1 x A3 PDF hero image with a 1 sentence description – a singular ‘poster image’ that conveys the essence of your project and includes your project title plus a 1 sentence description. For example: ‘Age pride, an animation that highlights the negative stereotypes our western culture has of older people and argues that these views are wrong and outdated, emphasising the message that age really is just a number and is not what defines us.’ Your hero image should aim to bring your concept to life – make sure it is vibrant and engaging.

4 x A3 PDF pages of supporting material illustrating your development process – this could include further information about your concept and research process, scanned pages of your sketchbook, storyboarding etc (if applicable).
Entry Guidelines

1. Entrants working on the Moving Pictures brief must create an animation that visually communicates the audio excerpt. Animation is defined as a simulation of movement created by displaying a series of pictures or frames. The submission may be any type of animation, including digital or traditional animation like cartoons or stop-motion of paper cut-outs, puppets, clay figures and more.

2. Entries must use the full audio track in its current format (you may not change the order of the wording).

3. For the Moving pictures brief, the shortlist will include projects from both audio files. The panel will evaluate the submissions using the specific judging criteria for this brief.

4. All shortlisted entrants will be interviewed by the judging panel and the winners will be selected.

5. Entries must be submitted in either MP4 or MOV format.

6. The maximum file size is 60MB.

7. You are permitted to add up to 5 seconds of pauses before, during and/or after the original audio if desired. Your final animation must not exceed the following length: 1:04min for ‘How to be a Good Ancestor’ or 1:11 min for ‘The Future We Choose’.

8. If you use music and/or sound samples you must own the rights to use the material.

9. The decisions of the judges are final, and no correspondence or discussion shall be entered into.

10. The RSA reserves the right to refuse any entry in its sole discretion. No entry may contain unlawful or potentially libellous, defamatory or disparaging material.

11. The RSA also reserves the right at any time during the competition to remove or disqualify any film when it believes in its sole discretion that the entrant has: (i) infringed any third party’s copyright; (ii) does not comply with these Eligibility and entry guidelines; (iii) failed to obtain the necessary consents as set out in these terms and conditions.

12. Entries should be submitted via the RSA Student Design Awards competition platform by Wednesday 10 March 2021, 4:00pm GMT.

13. This is an international competition, open to current college/university students and new graduates within one year of graduation. Please see the Entry Rules for more information on eligibility requirements.

14. We welcome submissions from anywhere in the world, but all entries must be in English. A transcript of each audio file is available, and we encourage entrants to use free translation software to assist with their interpretation.

15. In order to enter a film, an entrant must upload their animation file to the RSA Student Design Awards online entry platform, which opens for submissions on 25 January 2021.

16. The entrant must be the original creator of the animation and must have obtained the necessary permissions for the inclusion of copyrighted music and/or images within the film. The film must not infringe the rights of privacy and publicity, copyright, trademarks or intellectual property rights of any person or organisation.

17. If the entrant uses any material or elements in the film which are subject to the rights of a third party, the entrant must obtain prior to submission of the film the necessary consents from such party to enable the RSA to use and showcase the animation. Such consent(s) shall be at the expense of the entrant. A non-exhaustive list of such material or elements include: name, voice and likeness of any person appearing in the film, location shot, eg specific building, any props and set dressings and any audio and/or audio-visual material which the entrant does not own.

18. By entering this competition, entrants agree that the RSA and our sponsoring partners may: (i) showcase their animations on their website and the RSA YouTube channel, as well as any other media in connection with the RSA Student Design Awards; (ii) use their names, likenesses, photographs, voices, sounds and/or biographical information and films for advertising, publicity and promotional purposes without additional compensation. Intellectual property rights of all entries submitted in the competition remain with the entrant.

19. The entrant agrees that the RSA shall not be liable for any claims, costs, liabilities, damages, expenses and losses arising out of (i) the RSA’s use of the film; (ii) the entrant’s participation in the competition; (iii) technical failures of any kind including but not limited to problems or delays arising from software or equipment malfunctions or computer viruses; (iv) any events outside the RSA’s reasonable control.
Entry Rules

The RSA Student Design Awards is a competition run by the RSA, a registered charity in England and Wales (212424) and Scotland (SC037784). By entering the competition, entrants agree to comply with these rules. The competition is open to currently enrolled students and new graduates from anywhere in the world.

Our 2020-21 general requirements are:

**Eligibility**

1. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from any higher education institution, college or university are eligible to enter.

2. New graduates can enter within one year of graduating – anyone who has graduated in or after March 2020 is eligible.

3. Entries are accepted from both individuals and teams. Teams can comprise students from different courses and universities, and there is no set number of people that can be part of a team, but generally team entries comprise two or three people.

4. We accept entries that have been developed as college/university coursework, and we also accept projects that have been developed independently (outside of coursework) as long as the entrant meets eligibility criterion 1 or 2 above.

5. Entries must respond to one of the 2020-21 RSA briefs and must be the original work of the entrants.

6. Entrants may only enter one brief but may submit more than one response per brief. Each response is considered to be a separate entry and will require completion of a separate submission form and payment of the relevant fee.

7. Candidates who are contracted to work for a company after graduation may not be eligible for some industry placement awards.

**Submitting your work**

All entries must be submitted through our online entry system. The competition will open for entries via sda.thersa.org on 25 January 2021, and the final deadline for entries is 10 March 2021 at 4:00pm GMT.

If you are unable to submit online, please contact us by email at sdaenquiries@rsa.org.uk.

Please note that late submissions will not be accepted, and all entrants are encouraged to submit their work in good time before the deadline.

**Entry Fees**

There is an entry fee for submitting work to the RSA Student Design Awards. This fee is charged per entry, so it does not cost more to enter as a team. Entry fees should be paid online through our submissions form, via PayPal, credit or debit card.

Early bird rate – for entrants submitting their work before 4:00pm 10 February 2021, the entry fee is charged at the reduced early bird rate of £25 per entry.

Standard Rate – after 10 February 2021 and until the final submission deadline at 4:00pm 10 March 2021, the entry fee is £35.

Voucher codes – universities have the option pay for students’ entries. In order to do this, educators should visit the Educator page on our website and complete the web form to request a voucher code. It is the responsibility of the educator to distribute the voucher code to students, which they should then enter at the payment point when completing the online submission form. The RSA is under no obligation to refund payments except under the circumstance of technical error where refunds will be made at the RSA’s discretion.
There are six stages to the RSA Student Design Awards competition.

1. Briefs released – August 2020. There are a range of RSA Student Design Awards briefs to choose from, each focusing on a different social, economic or environmental issue. You can view all the 2020-21 briefs in the Design briefs section of the RSA Student Design Awards website.

2. Register your interest – from August 2020. Once you sign up to our newsletter, you will receive key updates and information from us. We’ll remind you about deadlines, keep you informed on the judging process and shortlisting, and let you know when the winners are announced. We’ll also send you invitations to free events and materials we offer participants to help you with your projects and your longer-term career development.

3. Develop your project – from September 2020. When you’ve decided which brief to enter, as a starting point, we recommend you review the supporting materials in the online toolkit for your chosen brief. You can find the toolkit from the individual briefs’ pages on our website.

4. Submit your work – January to March 2021. Once you have finished your project, submit your completed work to the competition through our online entry system. Make sure you submit it before the final deadline: Wednesday 10 March 2021 at 4:00pm GMT. You will receive a confirmation email when we receive your submission.

5. Judging – March to May 2021. Your work will be evaluated per brief by a curated panel of judges against the judging criteria in a two-stage process: shortlisting and interviews. The panel includes a diverse range of expertise related to the brief topic and the design industry. All judging sessions are facilitated by the RSA. During the first stage of shortlisting, the panel marks all the submissions anonymously and shortlists five to eight projects per brief. If your project is shortlisted, you are invited to the second stage, an interview with the panel, to present your work in more detail referring to the judging criteria. Once the panel has interviewed all shortlisted students, they deliberate and select the winner(s).

6. Winners announced and awards ceremony – May-June 2021. The winners of each brief will be announced publicly by the RSA in May 2021. Winners will also be invited to attend an awards ceremony on 29 June 2021, and their work will be displayed in the Winners section of the RSA Student Design Awards website.

The RSA reserves the right to withhold or divide any of the awards offered, and the panel may also award commendations. In all cases the judges’ decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into by the RSA.

Cash Awards
Cash awards allow the winning student to use their prize towards funding further study, travel to research design in other countries, equipment, business start-up costs or any other purpose agreed with the sponsor and the RSA. All awards must be claimed within six months of award and winners are required to write a short report for the RSA detailing how they used their award.

Placement Awards
Some awards enable winning candidates to spend time working in a consultancy or in industry on design related projects. Placement awards offer paid work experience and can be a valuable introduction into different fields, sectors and industries. Details of these awards are available on each brief and on the website. For students applying internationally, placement awards are subject to the entrant’s right to work in the UK.

RSA Fellowship
All candidates who win an award through the RSA Student Design Awards programme will be invited to join our Fellowship, with their first year sponsored by the RSA. As a Fellow, winners can connect to the RSA’s global network of Fellows, engage with RSA events and projects in their local area, access the RSA’s Catalyst fund, and make use of the restaurant, collaboration space and library at the RSA House in central London. More information about RSA Fellowship can be found at www.thersa.org/fellowship

Intellectual Property
The intellectual property rights (patents, registered designs, unregistered design right, copyright, etc) of all designs submitted in the competition remain with the candidate. If any sponsor wishes to make use of the work submitted in the competition, a license or transfer must be negotiated with the candidate. Whilst the RSA claims no intellectual property rights, it does reserve the right to retain designs for exhibition and publicity purposes and to reproduce them in any report of its work, the online exhibition and other publicity material (including the RSA Student Design Awards website).

In the case of work carried out during a placement award, different conditions will apply. Candidates should note that certain intellectual property rights (eg patents) may be irrevocably lost if action to register them is not taken before any disclosure in exhibitions, press material etc.