
RIBA President's Medals 2021 Guidelines and requirements

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) is now welcoming nominations for the 2021 RIBA President's Medals from schools of architecture worldwide.

Awarded since 1836, these are the RIBA's oldest awards and continue to this day to embody the Institute's leading objective, enshrined in its founding charter, namely

"the general advancement of civil architecture [and] promoting and facilitating the acquirement of the knowledge of the various arts and sciences connected therewith; it being an art esteemed and encouraged in all enlightened nations, as tending greatly to promote the domestic convenience of citizens, and the public improvement and embellishment of towns and cities."

Throughout the history of the institute, the RIBA President's Medals have continuously celebrated the contribution of architecture to societal betterment by rewarding innovation and competence. As such, entries for these awards are expected to demonstrate:

- a thorough and original analysis of the brief;
- a comprehensive and coherent treatment of the chosen subject(s);
- the exercise of independent critical reasoning;
- an understanding of how architecture has social purpose with public benefit and delivers sustainable development.

This year, the RIBA is inviting schools of architecture worldwide to nominate, out of work produced by students enrolled in the 2020/21 (or most recently completed) academic season, the following:

- up to TWO design projects as individual entries for the 2021 RIBA Bronze Medal
- up to TWO design projects as individual entries for the 2021 RIBA Silver Medal
- ONE dissertation as an entry for the 2021 RIBA Dissertation Medal

The RIBA will convene judging panels tasked with awarding one medal and up to three commendations in each of these categories. In addition, the judging panels of the Bronze and Silver Medals will select the winners at Part 1 and Part 2, respectively, of the Serjeant Awards for Excellence in Drawing and of the RIBA Awards for Sustainable Design.

Schools will define their own criteria and processes to select their selected entries, which are then expected to be put together jointly by the author nominee(s) and the tutor(s) who supervised their development.

Entries may have been produced jointly by more than one author; in case an award is made to such an entry, all nominees will be equally acknowledged and the award will be shared.

The content of each entry must have been produced by the nominee(s) or used with permission. To this end, each entry must be accompanied by the completed 'PM2021 Entry Check List' and 'PM2021 Entry Release Form'.

Dissertation Medal submissions

The Dissertation Medal judging panel welcome submissions that explore diverse subjects, methodologies and presentations. Subjects might, for example, include:

- studies of significant buildings and architects;
- examinations of specific places, generic spaces, and everyday urban conditions;
- representations of architecture in the visual and literary arts;
- research into alternative architectural and related art practices;
- wider social, cultural and theoretical investigations;
- historical studies.

Methodologies might, for example, include:

- primary archival research of buildings and their historiographic interpretation;
- critical and reflexive engagements with design (such as design-writing and performative methodologies);
- qualitative and ethnographic/interview-based research methods;
- fine and visual art interactions;
- philosophical, ecological, aesthetic interpretations;
- critical histories of technology.

The judges welcome imaginative, speculative and innovative investigations and interpretations of all kinds, which focus on the importance of the written word to communicate ideas about architecture and the built environment. However, formats might also include portfolios of writings, exploration of language and content through multi-media presentations, and other approaches to discourse which premeditate extended, structured thinking. Whatever the methodology and presentation format adopted, they should be appropriate to the subject being explored, and should positively contribute to its analysis and communication.

Dissertations must have been written in, or translated into, English as part of a RIBA Part 1 or Part 2 qualification (or equivalent, in the case of professional qualifications in Architecture not validated by the RIBA). Dissertations produced as part of academic qualifications such as Masters or PhD programmes are not eligible.

Bronze and Silver Medals submissions

Entries for the Bronze and Silver Medals must have been produced during the most recent academic year and as part of, respectively, a RIBA Part 1 or RIBA Part 2 course (or equivalent, in the case of professional qualifications in Architecture not validated by the RIBA).

The Bronze and Silver Medals judging panels welcome submissions that explore diverse subjects, methodologies and presentations, and will assess each entry in respect of:

- the architectural ambition and extent of innovation;
- creative vision as reflected in all aspects of the design proposal, including the detail;
- fitness for purpose not only in response to the brief, but also in addressing wider concerns such accessibility and sustainability;
- the effectiveness of the design proposal in relation to its context;
- the quality of the spatial experience it offers to individuals and the community;
- the suitability of its structural and servicing systems;
- the selection and detailing of materials.

Whatever the methodology and presentation format adopted, they should be appropriate to the subject being explored, and should positively contribute to its analysis and communication.

Guidelines for submitting entries

Entries must be individually saved on a cloud storage platform (such as Dropbox, WeTransfer, Microsoft OneDrive, Google Drive, etc.) and a link to download the content must be emailed to presidents.medals@riba.org. Each entry must contain:

- Entry Check List, Entry Release Form, Student Nomination Form, and Tutor Information Form
- Two sets of images (as JPG files) illustrative of the project produced by the nominee(s) or used with permission, in the following formats:

Set One: 10 images at high resolution, with each image at a minimum 300dpi density or at least 40cm on the shortest length, approximately 7000x4500 pixels. All images must be sequentially numbered in the order they are intended to be displayed, starting at 01 and finishing at 10. If the entry contains more than 10 images only the first 10 in the sequence will be considered.

Set Two: The same 10 images from Set One saved at a web-compatible resolution, with each image less than 1MB and at least 1,600 pixels wide if in landscape format and 1,000 pixels high if in portrait format, and numbered as in Set One. This set will be made public at www.presidentsmedals.com after the judging. If captions or credit lines are to be published, these must be succinct and provided in a separate document identifying each numbered picture with its corresponding text.

Nominees are advised that the entries will be viewed and assessed by the judges on computer screens and, as such, a landscape orientation layout is recommended.

In addition to these materials, entries for the Dissertation Medal must also include one Portable Document File (PDF) of the dissertation. This file is an essential part of the submission as it will be used by the judges as a reading copy.

Audio-visual files submitted as part of an entry (JPGs, MP4s, PDFs, etc.) **MUST NOT** show the name of the student, the tutor, or the School of Architecture / University either in an immediately visible way or in their metadata. Entries containing such information will be disqualified.

Supporting materials

The President's Medals judging panels welcome and encourage the submission of supporting materials that allow nominees the opportunity to include content that substantiates the design and thinking processes of the entry. Supporting materials allowed include:

- one single audio-visual piece authored by the nominee(s) submitted as MP3 or MP4 format only, and with a maximum duration of 4 minutes.
- one digital portfolio authored by the nominee(s) featuring only content related to the entry, saved as a single PDF with no more than 30 pages, each in A3 size, 150dpi, and 1754x2480 pixels.

Winning entries

The school responsible for nominating the Dissertation Medal winning entry will be asked to produce and submit two printed and bound copies of the dissertation. These will be catalogued in the President's Medals archive within the RIBA Collections.

Equally, the schools responsible for nominating the Bronze and Silver Medals winning entries will be asked to produce and submit two printed and bound copies of the medal-winning entries. Each volume must contain printed versions of the 10 images submitted for judging as well as the content of the digital portfolio (if applicable), and a USB drive containing the supporting audio-visual file (if applicable).

Copyright and Intellectual Property

The RIBA does not claim rights of ownership to the content of the entries submitted for the RIBA President's Medals.

By submitting an entry for the President's Medals, (the) nominee(s) agree(s) to allow the RIBA to use, display and publish their entries in print and digital publications for all purposes in relation to the RIBA President's Medals and associated non-commercial purposes. This includes sharing descriptive text, images, sound recordings and films that are part of the entry with third party press contacts; displaying in exhibitions of the entries submitted for the awards; in lectures featuring the work of the nominee(s) acknowledged as the author(s) of the entry; or in publicising the RIBA President's Medals themselves. This excludes sharing the full text of written dissertations, unless agreed with the nominee(s).

By submitting an entry for the RIBA President's Medals, (the) nominee(s) confirm(s) that the entry and all information submitted and/or distributed in support of it will not infringe the intellectual property or any other rights of any third party. The nominee(s) recognises that it is their sole responsibility to ensure that any images submitted as part of their entry for the RIBA President's Medals are free from the Intellectual Property rights of any third party. Nominees must have the permission of the copyright owner for each image submitted prior to making a submission. Where a nominee is not the copyright owner of any image forming part of their submission, the nominee must also ensure that they give due accreditation in the caption of the image.

The author(s) of the entry agree(s) to the conditions above by completing and submitting an Entry Check List and an Entry Release Form.

The RIBA reserves the right to edit, remove from publication, or disqualify for judging an entry for the RIBA President's Medals that contains any material that infringes, or is claimed to infringe, any third-party rights.

Submissions deadlines

Nominees must email the links to download their entries to presidents.medals@riba.org by the following deadlines:

- Dissertation Medal: 3pm on Friday 23 July 2021
- Bronze Medal: 3pm on Friday 10 September 2021
- Silver Medal: 3pm on Friday 17 September 2021

Owing to the large number of entries received every year, we reserve the right not to confirm receipt of submissions. To ensure that an entry has been delivered, we strongly recommend that emails are issued with a request for delivery receipt from the email provider. The RIBA will not be responsible for undelivered emails and entries.

If you have any questions about the RIBA President's Medals, please contact:

John-Paul Nunes
Head of Education Projects
john-paul.nunes@riba.org

Gillian Harrison
Education Projects Coordinator
gillian.harrison@riba.org