



NATSPEC Student Prize

NATSPEC Annual National Student Competition



How will architects control and communicate quality and performance of materials in the future?

The challenge is to explore the ways in which architects control and communicate the quality and performance of innovative design in construction. This submission can include innovative building materials; the use of existing materials in new ways or alternative ways of documenting and specifying materials or systems.

The expanding design and construction industry is driving the need to develop and maintain specification systems which effectively describe the essential quality of construction materials. Increasingly the performance of the materials and systems is a priority when considering financial, environmental, and social impact. The materials and systems that meet these needs are envisaged to be practical, sustainable, affordable, well-researched, with low embodied energy, using local Australian recycled or raw materials.

The competition is intended to illustrate and emphasise NATSPEC's objective to improve quality of construction (materials, products, systems, assemblies, and execution) and assist mitigate the negative impact of the construction industry on climate change.

You will need to show how your proposal will be incorporated into building systems by providing:

- detailed drawings/digital technology demonstrating the integration into building systems.
- specification ensuring that required properties can deliver the performance expected; and
- an explanation of how your proposal can be delivered on site.

The NATSPEC Student Prize seeks to reward innovative ways to document and communicate material, systems and construction quality and performance requirements.

Project brief

Demonstrate how a material, product, system, or assembly can be used in an innovative/sustainable way within a built asset.

Develop the documentation to clearly articulate to an on-site builder or installer the quality outcome you desire.

Demonstrate that the specification system effectively integrates building science principles, construction sector best practice, and adherence to the principles of national building codes, standards and regulations.

Outcomes should include the criteria from the 2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects which are particularly relevant to this project:

- PC 45: Understand processes for selecting materials, finishes, fittings, components and systems, based on consideration of quality and performance standards, the impact on Country and the environment, and the whole life carbon impact of the project.
- PC 46: Understand the processes for producing project documentation that meets the requirements of the contract and procurement procedure and complies with regulatory controls, building standards, codes, and conditions of construction and planning approvals.
- PC 47: Be able to complete and communicate on-time, accurate documents for relevant stakeholders, including drawings, models, specifications, schedules and construction documentation.

Submission deliverables

Each submission is to include:

- Entry Q&A on the competition portal.
- All submitted documentation must have no distinguishing marks or attributes that will identify the teams in the blind judging process, including names, authors/team members or university.
- An A3 presentation board (landscape) describing your documentation system and the interrelationship to communicating your quality of construction (materials, products, systems, assemblies, and execution) to the on-site builder/installer, and your understanding of materiality. The presentation board is to be submitted in PDF format and minimum font size of 10pt.
- A documentation package to act as a sample of your communication of the use of your chosen material/product/system/assembly in a project. All documentation will need to be viewed in a free software format.
- All competition submission material must be clearly legible.
- Submissions must comply in general accordance with Academic policy guidelines.
- Submissions are to be loaded to the competition portal prior to the closing date.

Eligibility for entry

The NATSPEC Student Prize is open to students enrolled in Australian Universities that provide an Accredited Architecture Masters course, who meet all the eligibility requirements below:

- Individual and/or team entries are acceptable. Teams are to have a maximum of 4 members.
- The individual or team lead is to be a student, enrolled during the competition year in an AACA Accredited Architecture Masters course.
- The individual and all team members must have been enrolled in the university during the competition year.
- There is no limit to the number of entries from each university.
- Only one entry per person may be submitted.
- An individual and/or team is allowed to re-enter the competition if they have participated in previous years, provided they meet the following conditions:
 - The individual and/or team members are still current students at the University at the time of entry.
 - The submission is different from what has been submitted previously.

Registration

Register at www.natspec.com.au

Judging

An independent jury will judge all students' work against set criteria, selecting one overall winner and awarding two commendations. The judges' decision will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

- Clarity of the A3 presentation board in communicating the system of documentation.
- Merit of the system of documentation to communicate the quality of construction.
- Clarity of the sample documentation package to communicate the quality of construction.
- Practicality of approach to technology and feasibility of construction demonstrating an appreciation of buildability, and sustainability.
- Demonstrated understanding of materiality.

The first two criteria will be used to short-list submissions.

Submission date.

The closing submission date is midnight, Perth time, of Tuesday 1 December 2026 unless specifically advised and approved.

Prizes

NATSPEC Prize: \$8,000 + certificate

2 Commendations @ \$1,500 + certificate

Exhibition, Award Presentation, Public Forum and Publication

The NATSPEC Prize may be awarded at the NATSPEC Shareholder Lunch in the capital city of the university. Alternatively, it may occur at a university event.

NATSPEC aims to promote the Award, and winners through various mediums including the NATSPEC newsletter, website and ArchitectureAU.

After judging, the winner's submission will be accessible on the competition website along with acknowledgement of the winners and their university.

Copyright

Copyright of the submissions and all material submitted by the Competition entrants will remain the property of, and be vested in, the individual entrants. The students and universities will be entitled to acknowledgment whenever their entries are publicly exhibited or published.