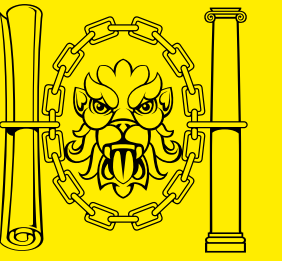


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Entering the AT Awards | Student

Top Tips



Designed to recognise excellence in Architectural Technology globally, the Student AT Awards are open to all students, whether they are based nationally or internationally, no matter their level or year of study.

Paul Laycock MCIAT, the Chair of the Judging Panel, gives you his top tips for any student considering applying.



There are two Student AT Awards up for grabs:

- 1 **Student Award | Project**
- 2 **Student Award | Report**

Here are Paul's top tips for creating an application for each Award that really stands out and sets you apart from the rest of the crop.

Entry for Student Award | Project has a few more moving parts, so a breakdown of the assessment criteria has been provided for your benefit.



Student Award

Project



Remember this is a competition

Treat it as such! The Judging Panel is a mixture of academic and practitioner, so structure your entry for the audience for your best chance of being a winner. Remember your entry must be part of an in-course or in-module project. It can be either a new build or a refurbishment, both are acceptable. Most important of all: stick to the brief!



Size matters, but not in the way you might think

Bigger doesn't always mean better. If anything, it can be a disadvantage if you have too much to cover with limited space. A well-designed project should be large enough to cover all the essentials well. Something too large runs the risk of appearing incomplete or partially covered. Equally, too small a project will not provide enough scope to be a good

entry. We have had strong entries from residential projects, but they need to be something with enough scope and interest. For example, they could have an unusual brief or unusual requirements/technology, innovative design/technology, or a real focus on sustainability. The standard traditional construction semi is unlikely to be a winner.

Your project must be technically competent

This is very important. We are not expecting every detail to be resolved, but the building must be possible. For example, we occasionally get entries with a glaringly obvious problem, where it is clear the building as pictured (elevations and renders) is not possible or unlikely and where this has not been addressed in the project.

We must remember these projects will be featured publicly; we can't be seen to award a project with an obvious issue (even if this was not part of the brief for the original project). In the past, it has been common for us to see structural issues, as well as the project feeling like an exercise to include as much technology or sustainability as possible.

Showcase an exceptional level of skill and knowledge

Linked to the above, you must demonstrate excellence in technical knowledge and detailing. We are Technologists. This means that during judging we often have long conversations looking at, for example, the position of washers for the steel frame bolting. Make sure your details show as much technology as possible, and you really highlight

that exceptional competence and knowledge. Try not to use abbreviated details common in industry. For example, going back to that example, do not rely on the steel work designer to determine the number and position of washers. Avoid generic statements where possible.

Don't plagiarise!

Judges are from all over the country – no, all over the world – and very experienced. Precedence should inspire and not be copied.



Use the A1 layout to your advantage

The boards should tell a story. They should take the viewer through the design logically and sequentially. Sometimes, we get entries that are just a collection of images. Needless to say, these do not win. Make sure you avoid dead space and use a variety of media, including sketches. Showcase as many of your skills as you can, but make sure all of them are well-executed.



Make your report as succinct as possible

Stick to the 1000-word word count, and ensure those words address all of the Award criteria. While the background to your project might be interesting, keep it brief and focussed. You should use additional images to illustrate and add to the narrative, yes, but remember that the narrative must always lead the report. Last but not least, no QR codes or hyperlinks please – use your words!



Assessment criteria

Functionality and inclusivity

A building must function for its use intended and function for all. Inclusivity isn't just providing ramps; consider the wider meaning and implications for all users.

Buildability and assembly

See the discussion earlier in this text around detailing and producing a good and technically competent project.

Health and safety

This criterion is one that is often not addressed well. With the current focus of industry, fire safety should be a focus, but it should not overpower the rest of the project. We are not expecting designer risk assessments throughout the entry, but some reference to safety features or features added to mitigate a hazard will be noted.

Environment and sustainability

It is not an exercise in cramming in as much as possible; a good, sensible, well thought through strategy will be noted.

Performance and durability

We are looking for a good, well thought through strategy for the building that will see it performing well in its surroundings for its design life.

Design and presentation

Much of the guidance in this area is mentioned in the text above. It is key that all parts of the submission link together and appear to be one unified project. The individual items must flow through the story of the design and describe the key features addressed in the assessment criteria.

Student Award

Report



Stick to the brief

It sounds obvious, but you might be surprised to learn many entries do not stick to the 3,000 word (+/- 10%) limit. Remember you are aiming for a balanced piece of work. Don't expend the entire word count on the methodology, for example; make sure you leave space to adequately address conclusions and recommendations at the end of the report too. It is an academic report so should be structured and written

as such. Generally, this means it should be in third person, not first person. Remember that us judges are academics ourselves! Remember to include your aims, objectives and a rationale. Make sure the methodology for your chosen subject area is clearly stated. You must incorporate a clear analysis of data and demonstrate linkage of the results to the various sources of information used.

Think Architectural Technology

We have had a good mix of very practical and very theoretical reports in the past. We welcome and encourage all these equally, but no matter the style, we are always primarily looking for work that is of the concern and benefit to an Architectural Technologist. The report must demonstrate technical expertise and critical awareness of technological problems that affect Architectural Technology.



Your title is important

Sometimes a project ends up going in a different direction than first anticipated. If you realise you had unrealistic expectations to complete the project in the word count and with the time/resources available, the title will need to be reworded to reflect what was actually achieved. In other words, make sure your title aligns with the body of the finished report. It won't do your entry any favours to make the judging panel

expect one thing only to give them another. This mistake can be avoided by choosing a project carefully in the first place. Bearing in mind your time, resources and the word count before embarking on the report is key here.

Don't repeat yourself

In the past, we have had a number of entries that were simply an expansion of the 1000-word report from the Project category. While your report can be linked to the project design, it should be a separate piece of work.



Be aware of good practice in the use of AI

At my university, we are adopting the stance that the use of AI is encouraged and are actively working with students to develop good AI skills. I will be the first to admit I use it to generate ideas and start my thought processes. However, I have seen work that does not use AI well and is a simple copy and paste exercise, which produces very bad work. If you are going to use AI, use it well.



Questions?

If you have any questions or would like further information email atawards@ciat.global

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