

# Student Challenge invites new generation of engineers to design for people and planet

An exciting, new initiative from the Institution gives students an opportunity to respond to real-world needs and develop innovative solutions in their degree projects.

The IStructE 2026 Student Challenge marks an ambitious new chapter in engaging the next generation of structural engineers – encouraging students to move beyond theory and into the realm of impact-driven design.

Launching this year, the Challenge brings together university students from across disciplines to collaborate on projects that address a central and urgent question: *how can engineering deliver long-term benefits for both people and the planet?*

At a time when the profession is increasingly shaped by complex, interconnected challenges – ranging from climate resilience to social equity – the initiative places holistic thinking, creativity and collaboration at the centre of the student experience.

The Student Challenge provides a platform for students to translate academic work into proposals that respond to real-world needs. Participants are encouraged to work collectively, developing projects that consider not only technical feasibility but also environmental and human outcomes across both local and global contexts.

This emphasis reflects a growing shift within the profession: that engineering solutions must be integrated, systems-based and socially aware, rather than narrowly defined by technical performance alone.

Central to the Challenge is a commitment to innovation in structural engineering design. Students are invited to test new ideas, challenge conventional approaches, and explore how creative thinking can unlock more sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

The Challenge's focus on dual environmental and human impact reflects the evolving role of structural engineers as stewards of both the built environment and the communities it serves. Participants



are asked to consider how their work contributes to long-term well-being, recognising that sustainability extends beyond carbon reduction to include social value, resilience and inclusivity.

The Student Challenge offers an early opportunity to engage with the kinds of challenges that will define modern engineering practice – helping students build the skills needed for future careers. The inaugural year represents an exciting moment for both

students and the wider profession. By creating a space for experimentation, collaboration and impact-focused thinking, it signals a commitment to nurturing future engineers who can respond confidently to the demands of a changing world.

The deadline to submit an entry is **27 July**. Find out more and enter at [www.istructe.org/training-and-development/enter-awards/the-student-challenge/](https://www.istructe.org/training-and-development/enter-awards/the-student-challenge/).

## Student Membership of the IStructE

If you're not yet a Student Member of the IStructE, why not join our global network of 30,000 members, including almost 9,000 students? Student Membership is free and is a first step towards a career of design, problem-solving and professional excellence.

As a Student Member, you'll enjoy free access to great online learning resources to help you prepare for a successful career working in the built environment.

You can also watch or attend talks and conferences, hearing from world-leading professionals and learning how structural engineers make a difference, as well as network with engineers of all ages and backgrounds in your area.

Find out more about joining at [www.istructe.org/membership/student-membership/](https://www.istructe.org/membership/student-membership/).