

LIGHT OF TOMORROW by VELUX.

International single stage open ideas competition and award for students of architecture

September 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

1. General Information

LIGHT OF TOMORROW by VELUX is an international, single stage, open ideas competition for students of architecture, which runs every second year since 2004. Over these two decades, close to 7,000 projects have been created and submitted for the award by teams or individuals from around 800 universities and schools of architecture from all over the world. All the projects are related to daylight; either in specific buildings and built environments or in pure investigations and experimentation.

Under its motto “Light of Tomorrow”, the competition wants to encourage and challenge students and their teachers all over the World to explore the theme of daylight in the widest perspectives and understanding of the subject.

To ensure participation by students from all World regions, the competition will reward a prize for the best project, submitted from each of the UIA (International Union of Architects) regions: Africa, Americas, Asia and Oceania, Eastern Europe and Middle East and Western Europe.

Additionally, there will be special prizes for the best submitted project within three specific categories: ‘Natural light in new buildings’, ‘Daylight in Transformations’, and ‘Daylight Investigations’.

All students selected as regional winners and special prize winners of the competition are invited to present their projects to the jury at a workshop, held prior to the award ceremony during the UIA World Congress in Barcelona from 28 June to 2 July 2026. As a result of the

presentations, the jury will honour the project that, overall, has demonstrated and presented the most convincing idea with a global award.

2. UIA (International Union of Architects) Approval and Endorsement

This ideas competition for students of architecture is organised and conducted in accordance with UNESCO Standard Regulations for International Competitions in Architecture and Town planning and the UIA best practice recommendations (see UIA Competition Guide for Design Competitions in Architecture and Related Fields) and has been reviewed by the International Competitions Consultancy Board (ICC).

3. Organiser

The Organiser of the competition is the VELUX Group and D/A - Daylight and Architecture, a global knowledge-sharing initiative that promotes daylight in architecture, represented by Tina Christensen, Architect MAA, Daylight & Architecture, VELUX.

4. Scope

Daylight in architecture is an ever-relevant topic. Daylight has been used for centuries as the primary source of light for the interior and architects have always been interested in and fascinated by daylight; yet daylighting can be a difficult discipline to approach, understand and master.

Daylighting describes the controlled use of natural light in and around buildings. It is the practice of placing windows, or other transparent media and reflective surfaces, so that natural light provides effective internal illumination during the day. Successful daylighting requires design considerations at all stages of the building design process, from site planning to architectural, interior, and lighting design.

Appropriate daylighting strategies are important when designing new and future buildings - but equally important is to look at the existing building stock. A vast majority of the world's buildings are already built, and we need to look into how we can retrofit existing buildings and city structures and how we can use daylighting in the transformation process and by that exploit untapped potentials.

We spend an excessive amount of time inside buildings, and the air that we breathe and the amount of daylight we are exposed to have a great impact. We know that appropriate light signals during the day and darkness at night are critical in maintaining key aspects of our overall health and general well-being and performance.

Given the importance of daylight, it is crucial that architects know the fundamentals; the physical properties of light as well as the basics of optics and materials and technological developments. Also, that they take an interest in the effect of daylight on state of mind, health and well-being. It is crucial that theory and practice maximize the benefit of daylight, and we encourage students of architecture to be open-minded and to dig deeper into daylight investigations - also beyond buildings.

5. The competition

LIGHT OF TOMORROW by VELUX, 2026, wants to encourage and challenge students of architecture and their teachers to explore the theme of daylight - and to facilitate a deeper understanding of this specific and ever-relevant source of energy, light and life.

The competition celebrates and promotes excellence in completed study works. These works can be made as works complying with the prize scope of rethinking the values of conscious daylighting design with focus on people's health in living and working environments.

The competition encourages projects that celebrate the privilege of being a student; with curiosity and with the willingness to think "out of the box" - as well as by considering the social, sociological, and environmental dimension of light. The competition encourages specific focus on the existing built environment by looking at: how to recycle, adapt, upgrade or reuse buildings by considering daylighting as a driver for lower energy demand consumption and better indoor comfort.

The competition wants to acknowledge not only the students but their teachers as well. Therefore, teachers or tutors that support the projects are also rewarded.

6. Registration, questions and submission of entries

Competitors must use the Light of Tomorrow by VELUX platform to register, ask questions and submit their entries, according to the related deadlines.

7. Key dates

Launch: 01 September 2025

Deadline for registration: 30 March 2026

Deadline for submission of entries: 06 April 2026

Jury meeting: 27-28 April 2026

Result announcement: May 2026

Winner's workshop and Awards Ceremony: 26 June – 2 July 2026

Online exhibition of all submitted projects: August 2026

8. Submission requirements (project guidelines)

The proposal must be comprehensively presented in one image file, which depicts the project and includes a written description that explains the idea and details.

For specific sizing and formats, please refer to the submission requirements in number 14 in part 2 'regulations'.

II. REGULATIONS

1. Eligibility criteria

The competition is open to students of architecture, individuals or in teams, from all over the world who comply with the following:

- The author(s)/ team leader(s) and all team members of the submission must be enrolled as students at a named university or school of architecture during the years 2025 and 2026
- Every submission must be supported by a named teacher, tutor or professor from a named university or school of architecture
- Students, teachers, tutors and professors, family members or anyone closely related to jury members and persons involved in the preparation of this competition are not allowed to participate in the competition.
- If participating in a team, multidisciplinary teams are encouraged. However, the team leader must be enrolled in an architectural education.
- Team members from other disciplines can register as collaborators.
- The participants are responsible for identifying conflicts of interest that would prohibit them from participating in the competition.
- Students are only allowed to participate in one team and submit one entry. Teachers/tutors/professors are allowed to support multiple projects

2. Official language

The official language of the competition is English. Entries and all documents submitted during the procedure must be submitted in the official language.

The planned workshop will be carried out exclusively in English.

3. Registration of competitors

Participants are required to register on the D/A Light of Tomorrow by VELUX platform (velux.awardsplatform.com) and fill the required information:

- To align with the European General Data Protection Regulation rules, information of author, co-authors, other team members and teacher/tutor/professor needs to be confirmed by the individuals.
- Contact person and email address: Check box to confirm that the participant meets the eligibility criteria (mandatory).

The competition brief is available on the website for download without registration.

No fees are required for registering on the platform.

Upon registration, participants will create an account with a username to access the award platform.

4. Modification of team information

Applicants may list as many team members as they wish. Team members may also be added or removed after registration has closed; however, the author(s) or team leader(s) cannot be changed. Modifications can only be made until the date of submission of entries.

5. Jury members

The entries will be evaluated by an international jury:

Níall McLaughlin (Ireland)

Liene Jākobsone (Latvia)

James Carpenter (USA)

Oya Atalay Franck (Switzerland) - UIA representative

Elena Arregui Jaeger (Spain) - VELUX Representative

Alternate juror:

Doris Wälchli (Switzerland) - UIA representative

6. Questions and answers

Competitors may submit questions regarding the competition through the competition website until the specified deadline.

Questions related to eligibility will be answered on an ongoing basis until the deadline.

Questions about the competition brief and the task will be compiled and published collectively in March 2026.

Questions must be submitted anonymously and must not include any information that could identify the applicant. Any questions failing to meet these requirements will not be accepted, published or answered.

7. Competition Prizes and Prize money

The total prize money available for the competition is € 28.000 - split between a total of 8 prizes. Prizes are not subject to VAT.

There will be a total of 8 prizes: 5 regional prizes and 3 special prizes

Five prizes for best * regional projects: € 3.000 and a certificate for the student team and € 500 for the teacher/professor

* UIA regions: Americas, Asia and Oceania, Africa, Western Europe and Eastern Europe and Middle East

1 prize for the best project demonstrating `Natural light in new buildings´: € 3.000 and a certificate for the student team and € 500 for the teacher/professor

Projects that articulate a qualified and conscious work with daylighting in new buildings including focus on the effects of building construction and context of the site, shape and dimensions, window openings, screens, shadings, interior divisions, materials and external conditions. It can be a specific focus on architecture for health and well-being.

1 prize for the best project demonstrating `Daylight in building transformation´: € 3.000 and a certificate for the student team and € 500 for the teacher/professor

Projects that focus specifically on the opportunities and challenges offered by daylight in the retrofit of existing buildings and city structures. Including focus on adaptive re-use, while conserving resources and historic value and by considering people's health and well-being, politics and economy.

1 prize for the best project demonstrating 'Daylight investigations': € 3.000 and a certificate for the student team and € 500 for the teacher/professor

Projects where daylight is present as a significant and thoroughly studied element. Either with focus on the physical properties of light, the basics of optics and materials, or technological developments, or daylight for functional, recreational, cultural or spiritual use, or the effect of daylight on state of mind, health and well-being.

8. The Global Award and Award money

The 8 prize winners will be invited to the award event and workshop with the jury at the UIA Congress in Barcelona, June-July 2026, where they will also present their projects to the jury, to compete for the 1 global award.

As a result of the presentations, the jury will honour the project that, overall, has demonstrated and presented the most convincing idea - with € 4.000 Award and Certificate for the students and € 1.000 for the teacher/professor. The award money is not subject to VAT.

Travel and accommodation will be arranged and paid for by the organizer with a maximum of 2 students representing each project. Teachers' travel and accommodation will not be covered.

The prize/award money will be paid in full to the team leader within 30 days of announcement of the prize/award, with the total prize/award money paid in full to the team leader.

10. Client's Intent

The competition wants to encourage and challenge students and their teachers all over the World to explore the theme of daylight in the widest perspectives and understanding of the subject.

All winners will have the opportunity to present their projects to the press and the wider public. All proposals will also gain significant exposure through publication on the D/A and UIA websites.

11. Submission and anonymity

Submission of entries must be made exclusively through the D/A competition platform (velux.awardsplatform.com)

The user account provided during registration will allow participants to submit their entries via this secure online platform.

Participants are required to maintain anonymity while submitting their entries. The names of competitors must not appear on any part of the submitted materials.

After completing the submission, applicants will receive a confirmation email. Please note that modification to the application will not be possible once it has been submitted.

The competition platform ensures anonymity of applicants to the jury, however, access is available to the platform manager.

12. Technical support

In case of technical issues, applicants can contact the D/A secretariat at lightoftomorrow@velux.com

13. Submission requirements and deliverables

Submission of entries must be made exclusively through the D/A platform

The user account provided during registration will allow participants to submit their entries via this secure online form.

Applicants are required to submit

- One image file, JPEG format, which depicts your project in graphics and text
- A description of your project, no longer than 800 words, in English

The incorporation of videos, QR codes, external links, or similar types will not be accepted. Proposals containing such elements will have this information excluded from evaluation.

Image specifications file format JPEG

File format: JPEG

File extension: .jpg

Layout: Landscape

Aspect ratio: 16:9

Dimensions: 9600 pixels wide x 5400 pixels high (32 x 18 inch in 300 ppi)

Colour space: RGB (Preferred destination/mode Adobe RGB 1998)

Effective resolution: 300 ppi (pixels per inch)

Maximum file size: 150 MB

14. Reasons for disqualification

Entries submitted after the deadline or failing to adhere to anonymity requirements will be excluded.

Any entries not meeting the conditions outlined in this brief or containing irregularities will not be reported to the jury.

15. Evaluation

Preliminary Examination

The entries submitted will undergo an initial review to verify their compliance with the submission requirements. This process will be completed before the entries are formally presented to the jury at the beginning of the evaluation procedure.

Evaluation process

Once constituted, the jury shall make all decisions relevant to the procedure, particularly the assessment of the proposals.

During the evaluation session, the jury will assess and discuss all entries and evaluate them according to the set criteria.

The jury is required to select the entries deemed worthy of a prize.

A summarised jury report, including details of the evaluation procedure, will be published following the conclusion of the competition.

Evaluation criteria

Submissions will be assessed on the criteria below

- The work with daylighting as a premise for architecture or research
- How the project is researched and documented
- How the project addresses contemporary and future challenges
- The level of experimentation and innovation
- The overall graphic presentation of the project, how the project presents itself.

16. Results announcement and publication after the jury decision

The organizer will individually notify all award winners immediately after selection by the jury.

The team leader of winning projects should ensure that they are contactable the day after the jury meeting in order to allow sufficient time to arrange visas, if necessary.

Results will also be published on the D/A website and other online platforms.

17. Jury decisions

Decisions are made by majority vote, with a separate vote for each entry. The chair, elected at the jury meeting, holds a casting vote in the event of a tie. Jury decisions are sovereign, irrevocable and unappealable. They are final and binding for the competition organiser and the participants. The submission of an entry implies tacit acceptance of all conditions and rules outlined in these regulations and the results of the competition.

18. Author's rights

Competitors maintain the authors' rights on the submitted proposals. Competitors must affirm being the sole authors of the submitted proposal having full and exclusive rights to grant the organizer the authority to use the proposal.

By submitting an entry, competitors guarantee that they are the authors of the proposal and that they do not infringe author rights of third persons.

Competitors must expressly declare that they have checked the documents provided (photos, plans, etc.) for any existing copyrights, trademark rights or other third-party rights.

19. Publication rights

Competitors give the right to the organizer and the UIA to publish the entries for the purpose of promoting the competition and its aims, and for research. They also grant the organizer the right of first publication.

The Organizer and the UIA may publish the entries on their websites, in exhibitions, press releases, social media, publications and other communication platforms. The names of the authors will be mentioned.

Competitors are not allowed to publish their entry before the announcement of the competition results. Publication prior to the official announcement of the competition results will be grounds for disqualification.

When publishing the submitted proposal, the competitors must mention the Light of Tomorrow by VELUX and UIA as organizers.

20. Announcement of winners and Exhibition

All winners will be notified by e-mail. The results of the competition will be officially announced during the awards ceremony. All submitted proposals will be showcased online on the D/A website.

21. Dispute resolution

By submitting an entry, participants accept all conditions of the competition, rules outlined in these regulations and decisions of the jury in matters of evaluation. It is not possible to appeal to the court system against the organizer and the decisions of the jury.

Eventual complaints may be addressed to the D/A Secretariat.

III. PROGRAMME

1. Task description

Context

Task

The LIGHT OF TOMORROW by VELUX, 2026 competition wants to encourage and challenge students of architecture and their teachers to explore the theme of daylight in the widest perspectives and understanding of the subject - and to facilitate a deeper understanding of this specific and ever-relevant source for energy, light and life. The competition celebrates and promotes excellence in completed study works and it encourages projects that celebrate the privilege of being a student; with curiosity and with the willingness to think “out of the box”

Each project is free to explore the theme of daylight in the widest perspectives and understanding of the subject.

Projects submitted may demonstrate applicable principles for providing daylight and sunlight into either new or existing buildings. This could include, for example, the effects of building construction and context of the site, shape and dimensions, window openings, screens, shadings, interior divisions, materials, and external conditions.

Projects may also additionally consider how to work with indoor climate and natural ventilation in their proposals in connection with daylight and sunlight.

Projects may also be broader investigations that look at the physical properties of light, basics of optics and materials, as well as technological developments, new materials, storage or transportation of daylight. This can also include the use of daylight for functional, recreational, cultural, or spiritual use and the effect on state of mind, health and well-being and behaviour over time and seasons.

2. Documents provided to competitors

Apart from this brief, a number of helpful links are provided in the Appendices for further information and inspiration.

IV. APPENDICES

Links to [Daylight and Architecture](#)

Links to [Daylight Talks](#)

Links to [previous winners](#)