

**SEED
AWARD**

Award Submission Guide

About DBCS

Design Business Chamber Singapore (DBCS) is Singapore's only multidisciplinary chamber that facilitates **collaboration between the design and business communities**. Established in 1985 as the Designers Association of Singapore, the chamber serves as a national platform connecting practitioners, industry and education.

Guided by the tagline **"Better Business by Design,"** DBCS advances a community of practice that embraces design-led practices and innovation for sustainable growth, and it exists to facilitate business transformation through design innovation for social good.

DBCS convenes programmes that promote excellence and thought leadership across the ecosystem, including Singapore Good Design (SG Mark) and the Singapore Design Awards, alongside dialogues, forums and capability-building initiatives.



Background

For the design industry to continue to flourish, nurturing the next generation of designers is essential. We must prepare students to navigate and succeed in the world that is emerging rather than the world of the past and present. In light of trends such as an ageing population, economic uncertainty, rapid adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, and climate challenges, the Design Business Chamber Singapore (DBCS) believes that **future designers will require specific designer qualities.**

This calls for a **renewed approach** to preparing and educating students with designer qualities, and we acknowledge the Institutes of Higher Learning for leading this transformation and inspiring students to become leaders of the industry. Educating the next generation is a shared responsibility of institutions and industry, and, as a national chamber, DBCS would like to do our part by partnering with institutions in Singapore to shape future leaders and equip them with relevant skills, industry perspectives, and professional networks through mentorship and workshops.

About the Award

Organised by DBCS, the **Seed Award** serves as a forward-looking statement of how DBCS envisions design leaders who will flourish in the future. It seeks to broaden traditional measures of success in design education by recognising leadership qualities that are critically important and that will support graduates throughout their careers.

The award provides a platform for a wider group of students to **distinguish themselves as they enter the design industry**, and it also acknowledges and encourages Institutes of Higher Learning for supporting holistic student growth in both design craft and leadership development.

In this spirit, unlike traditional design awards judged primarily on finished work, the Seed Award recognises students for their demonstration of **5 Designer Qualities across study and practice**, with Top Seed Award from DBCS conferred on the **top 10** among all of the Seed Award winners.



5 Designer Qualities



Creative Impact



Critical Thinking



Perseverance



Connective
Intelligence



Ethical
Decision-making

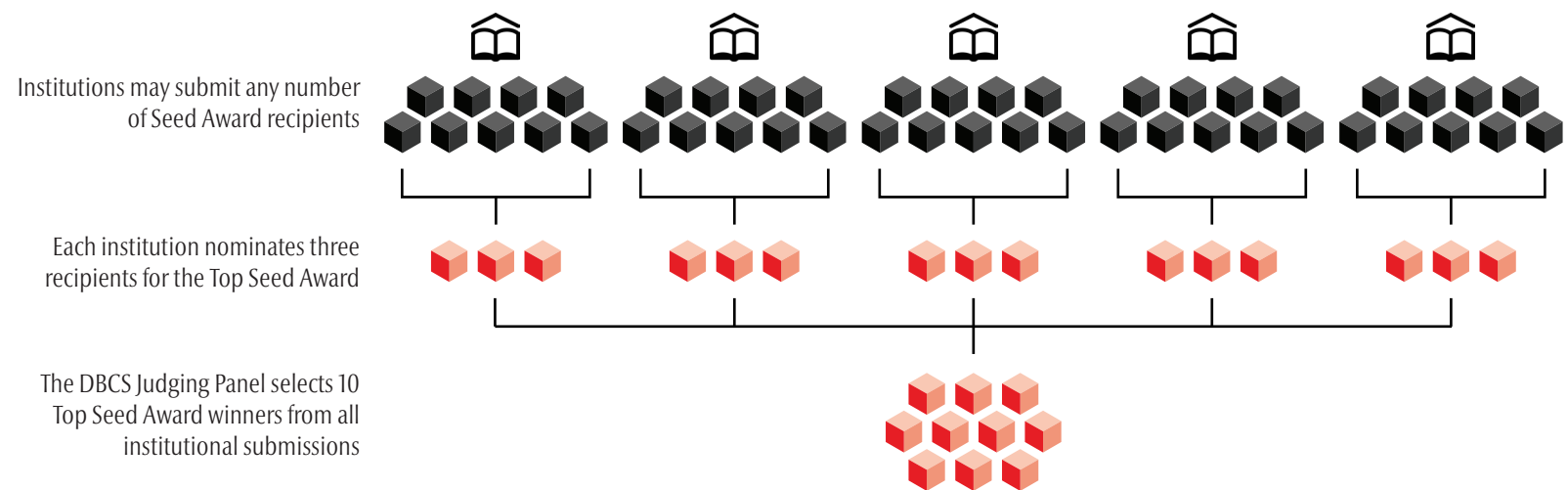
"As we advance, let us hold firmly to the values that make us human. Because it is these values that will guide how we use technology and ensure it serves people, and not the other way around"

- Jasmin Lau, Minister of State for Education and Digital Development and Information

Process

All participating Institutes of Higher Learning will **serve as the assessors** for the Seed Award within their own institutions. Each institution should apply the DBCS guidelines and rubric consistently, and evaluate candidates on evidence that demonstrates the 5 Designer Qualities. Institutions are expected to ensure fairness and transparency by declaring and managing any conflicts of interest, calibrating scoring before and after reviews.

Each participating institution may grant the Seed Award to **any number of eligible students** within the institution. Within the submitted students, each institution can nominate **up to 3 proficient and exemplary students for the Top Seed Award**.



Awardee Criteria

Awardees should be **current students or recent graduates (within 1 year of graduation)** within your institution at the time of submission.

Institutions are asked to assess awardees against the 5 Designer Qualities when preparing submissions.

- 1 **Creative Impact** concerns the use of design to address real needs and to deliver positive, measurable outcomes for users, stakeholders, or society.
- 2 **Critical Thinking** concerns clear problem framing, evaluation of alternatives, and reasoned judgement in conditions of ambiguity.
- 3 **Connective Intelligence** concerns empathy and collaboration across disciplines and communities, together with the ability to integrate human, nature, and digital considerations.
- 4 **Perseverance** concerns resilience, reflective learning, and sustained effort in the face of constraints or setbacks.
- 5 **Ethical Decision-Making** concerns integrity, anticipation of consequences, and a demonstrable regard for the public good in design decisions.

Rubrics

Criteria	Emerging (Baseline)	Effective (Level 2)	Exemplary (Level 3)
1 Creative Impact Concerns the use of design to address real needs and to deliver positive, measurable outcomes for users, stakeholders, or society.	Bold, original solutions within the target audience or local community . Able to show initial measurable impact to target audience (with either quantitative or qualitative evidence).	Bold, original solutions within the sector or industry vertical of concern . Able to show measurable, lasting impact to target audience (with EITHER quantitative OR qualitative evidence).	Bold, original solutions, potentially a world-first innovation . Able to show measurable, lasting societal impact, beyond the intended target audience (BOTH quantitative AND qualitative evidence).
2 Critical Thinking Concerns clear problem framing, appropriate use of tools and technology, evaluation of alternatives, and reasoned judgement in conditions of ambiguity.	Identifies several key factors and creates solutions to address the problem/ challenge using appropriate tools or technology . Challenges existing assumptions and norms.	Identifies and addresses deeper causes beyond the initial problem/challenge , fully applying tools and technology to their optimal use . Challenges existing assumptions and norms with clear and sharp critiques .	Identifies root causes/systemic factors beyond the initial problem/ challenge, addressing them through use of tools and technology critically . Redefines and creates new assumptions and norms that regenerate and improve the community .

*Students assessed at the **Emerging (Baseline)** level qualify for recognition through the Seed Award, while those assessed at the **Effective (Level 2)** and **Exemplary (Level 3)** level will be contenders for the Top Seed Award.

Rubrics

Criteria	Emerging (Baseline)	Effective (Level 2)	Exemplary (Level 3)
3 Connective Intelligence Concerns empathy and collaboration across disciplines and communities, together with the ability to integrate human, nature, and digital considerations.	Deep empathy and compassion for people, achieving goals by working with a team . Serves and supports a community .	Deep empathy and compassion, working with a team to integrate perspectives from 2-4 key external stakeholder groups . Serves and supports multiple communities .	Deep empathy and compassion for more than 5 diverse stakeholder perspectives . Involves stakeholders in co-creation. Works well with/in multiple teams . Creates richer and stronger relationships across human, natural & digital systems that benefit the vulnerable and under-represented .
4 Perseverance Concerns resilience, reflective learning, and sustained effort in the face of constraints or setbacks.	Shows examples of resilience throughout school life. Found inspiration to stay hopeful and committed .	Shows persistence, even through setbacks . Developed strength through reflection and learning from difficulties . Inspired others leading by example with their own resilience .	Embraced multiple major life setbacks as growth , staying hopeful and committed. Inspired others to achieve even more with their resilience .

*Students assessed at the **Emerging (Baseline)** level qualify for recognition through the Seed Award, while those assessed at the **Effective (Level 2)** and **Exemplary (Level 3)** level will be contenders for the Top Seed Award.

Rubrics

Criteria	Emerging (Baseline)	Effective (Level 2)	Exemplary (Level 3)
5 Ethical Decision-Making Concerns integrity, anticipation of consequences, and a demonstrable regard for the public good in design decisions.	Made a strong stand on moral or ethical grounds in a critical incident or event. Took ownership of unintended consequences for a decision they made.	Championed for an area of interest or a community , especially the vulnerable and under-represented. Made decisions that benefited key stakeholders in the near future.	Championed for an area of interest or a community consistently for a long time, especially the vulnerable and under-represented. Showed personal values through committed actions. Made decisions and fought for solutions that benefited present and future generations.

*Students assessed at the **Emerging (Baseline)** level qualify for recognition through the Seed Award, while those assessed at the **Effective (Level 2)** and **Exemplary (Level 3)** level will be contenders for the Top Seed Award.

Submission Guide

All Seed Award submission must be completed through the online form via www.seedaward.sg/submission

Every submission includes:

- 1 **Submission Form**, to be completed online
- 2 **Administrative Fee** invoiced by DBCS to respective institutions after completed submission
Fee per student: S\$70 for DBCS Education Institutions Members and S\$150 for non-members
- 3 **Rationale** (100–200 words) to explain the selected grading across the 5 Designer Qualities

For each Top Seed Award nomination, additional materials are required.
This includes:

- 1 **Additional Rationale** prepared by the nominating staff member that outlines why this nominee stands out nationally across the 5 Designer Qualities
- 2 **Evidence Pack** containing project summaries, process documentation, indicators of impact, and testimonials where available
File format: PDF, up to 10 slides

DBCS may request additional materials for verification. All submissions must be submitted through the online submission form by **31 July 2026, 11:59 PM (SGT)**.

Seed Award Benefits

For students, the award provides industry recognition that extends beyond grades, opportunities to connect with like-minded peers, and access to learning and mentoring from industry leaders.

For institutions, it offers a structured and distinctive way to acknowledge their student cohort, align recognition with industry needs and feedback, and gain prestigious acknowledgement of the impact of their design curriculum.

For organisations, the award offers clearer insight into emerging designers' competencies beyond a portfolio and academic certificate, highlighting evidence of the 5 Designer Qualities and signalling professional readiness.



Timeline

10 June



31 July



10 September



10 September

Submission

During this period, institutions should enter and complete submissions via the online submission form at www.seedaward.sg/submission

At the same time, identify up to 3 candidates for the Top Seed Award and prepare the additional materials required for that nomination.

Incomplete or late entries will not be considered.

Timeline

10 June



31 July



10 September



10 September

Submission Deadline

By this date, all institutions must complete their submissions and upload the required materials (where applicable) for each student via the designated online submission form.

Upon verification of all completed submissions, DBCS will acknowledge receipt and issue a payment invoice to the respective institutions.

Timeline

10 June



31 July



10 September



10 September

Announcement and Recognition

DBCS provides formal confirmation to institutional coordinators of all Seed Award winners and issues official invitations to all participating institutions, together with individual invitations to the Top Seed Award winners to attend the DBCS Gala.

Timeline

10 June



31 July



10 September



10 September

Award Ceremony

All participating institutions are invited to attend, and the Top Seed Award winners receive their token award, presented by the Guest of Honour.

Recognised students and participating Institutes of Higher Learning may be acknowledged in DBCS communications and at the Gala, subject to approval of supplied media assets.

FAQs

Are students from different years of study eligible?

Yes, all students in a design-related programme are eligible.

Are graduates eligible?

Yes, recently graduated students (within the previous academic year) are eligible.

What level of rubric assessment will students need to qualify for the Seed Award?

Students just need to meet the Emerging level of each criteria to qualify for the Seed Award. There is no need to be Effective or Exemplary in any criteria as we acknowledge that youth are still learning and establishing themselves.

For Top Seed Award nominations, institutions are encouraged to put forward students who are at least Level 2 (Effective) and preferably Level 3 (Exemplary) across the 5 Designer Qualities.

The criteria and rubrics sound very broad. I'm not sure if this student would qualify?

As we are awarding based on future leadership qualities and not knowledge and ability tests, there will always be a margin of interpretation and ambiguity in the rubrics to acknowledge the richness and complexity that is life. We trust that the IHL will be able to provide stories and evidence for the students upon submission. However, if further clarifications need to be made, DBCS will follow up with the IHL.

How does the Top Seed Award work?

Each institution may grant the Seed Award to any number of eligible students. From these awardees, up to 3 students per institution can be nominated for the Top Seed Award. DBCS judging panel will review all nominations from participating institutions and select 10 nominees to receive the Top Seed Award.

FAQs

If awardees are assessed and decided by the IHL themselves, then what is the role of DBCS?

DBCS trusts in the discernment and integrity of all IHLs, and will support awardee submissions provided that a clear and adequate rationale is given.

DBCS' role is four-fold:

- 1 Provide a set of unifying criteria and broad rubrics for each IHL to determine which students qualify, backed by broad design industry recognition;
- 2 Organise an industry-led panel of judges to identify the 10 Top Seed Award winners;
- 3 Provide a prestigious platform to acknowledge the students through our annual Gala, which illustrious industry practitioners, international jurors and experts, and Political Office-Holders will attend;
- 4 Provide social media spotlights for each IHL and their respective Seed Award winners.

Is there another way to submit if I have bulk submissions for the Seed Award?

Yes. You can submit all entries via a spreadsheet;

please contact Shirley Yang at shirley@dbcsingapore.org if you want to do a bulk submission.

Next Step

We look forward to your submission for Seed Award via www.seedaward.sg/submission

For more information about the award or any clarification, please contact:

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SHAPING EMERGING EXEMPLARY DESIGNERS ²⁰²⁶



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