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# CITYZEN

## BUILD YOUR WORLD

2026 Award  
Mentor Guide



For pupils aged 16-18



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# Introduction

## A little bit about us to begin with...

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is a professional organisation that promotes and supports civil engineering. At ICE engineers come together to create solutions that enable our planet and our people to thrive.

## The ICE CityZen Award

Get ready to take part in the ICE CityZen Award. It's a fun, rewarding and unforgettable journey. Plus, it could pave the way for a fulfilling career in civil engineering.

There are two levels for students to get involved in, making it accessible for all.

## The CityZen Challenge

The first step on students' journey is the CityZen Challenge. Four engrossing weeks of gaming, where they will tackle civil engineering projects. It's challenging but simple to follow and supports collaboration, practical skills development and STEM subject learning.

## The Project Pitch

To complete the full ICE CityZen Award, students can go a step further. They'll use their CityZen Challenge learnings to pitch an idea to help improve people's lives and where they live. Your knowledge and insights can make a real difference to their success.

**Winning students and schools receive generous cash prizes and exclusive access to ICE headquarters.**

**Two thirds of CityZen participants have told us they are interested or very interested in civil engineering after taking part in the award.**

### ON-CALL SUPPORT

We know your time is precious. That's why we're here to help you deliver great mentoring with minimal preparation. Everything you need is at [ice.org.uk/CityZen](https://ice.org.uk/CityZen) (or in this guide!).

If you have a question, problem or technical issue, we are here to help.

Please contact:  
[careers@ice.org.uk](mailto:careers@ice.org.uk)

So, read on to find out how you can support students with their CityZen journey!



# Award timeline

You can run the activities flexibly throughout the autumn/spring terms to fit into your school timetable. As long as the game and video project are completed by the submission date below it's entirely up to you when you do them!

**2026 Award submission date: 18 December 2026**

## Suggested timeline:





# Prizes

No competition is complete without great prizes. The ICE CityZen Award rewards winning teams and acknowledges the efforts of their schools and mentors. So, students can share their success with their community. Exactly the kind of mentality they need as a civil engineer!

There are two ways to take part, so there are also two sets of prizes.

## CityZen Challenge prizes

For the three highest scoring teams who complete the CityZen Challenge:

- 1st Place:** £50 Waterstones voucher each
- 2nd Place:** £35 Waterstones voucher each
- 3rd Place:** £20 Waterstones voucher each



Every team who completes the CityZen challenge receives a certificate



2025 CityZen Award winners on their VIP visit to ICE Headquarters

## ICE CityZen Award prizes

Our top three teams will enjoy a tour of ICE's headquarters, including lunch with the ICE president or vice-president.

Winners will also be featured in CityZen publicity. What's more, there are cash prizes for students and their schools too.

The architecture and history of the building were really impressive and it was great to meet the other winning teams and hear their ideas.  
Lara McDonald, Highly Commended

Thanks for the amazing hospitality at the winner's dinner. We felt well rewarded for our hard work!  
Team Canon Slayer, Silver Award Winners 2023

**GOLD** £2,000\*  
PRIZE MONEY

**SILVER** £1,000\*  
PRIZE MONEY

**BRONZE** £500\*  
PRIZE MONEY

There are also more special prizes on the next page!

\*Shared equally between students and school.



# Additional prizes

The following special prizes may be awarded by the final CityZen judging panel - alongside those for the Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards (whose winners are ineligible for these additional prizes).

## JBA Trust Special Award for Nature and People Positive Innovation

JBA Trust sponsors this special prize for the project pitch which suggests highly creative and practical ways to support nature and the environment, as well as considering how the project can have inclusive positive impacts on society. This could include, for example, nature-based and/or community based initiatives to strengthen resilience or deliver environmental benefits.

**The winning team will receive £500 – split equally between students and school.**

**The winners of this prize will also be invited to the VIP CityZen winners lunch at ICE Headquarters (see main prize page for more info!).**



It will be awarded for a project pitch that strongly demonstrates at least one of the following:

- A positive impact on nature and/or biodiversity.
- An innovative/original solution that will positively impact the environment for both people and nature.
- A solution that uses natural processes or materials in an impactful and/or original way.

For more information on JBA Trust, visit: [www.jbatrust.org](http://www.jbatrust.org)



## Loud Speaker Prize for Communication Skills

One team will be awarded this special prize which celebrates excellence in communication skills (demonstrated in their project pitch).

It will be awarded for a project pitch that demonstrates at least one of the following:

- Has an outstanding presenter(s).
- Uses a highly original and effective communication style.

That also demonstrates a genuine passion for the project – showing how much you care about making a difference.






**The winners of this prize will be invited to the VIP CityZen winners lunch at ICE Headquarters (see main prize page for more info!).** There will be a prize for the winning students which is to be confirmed for 2026. For more information on Loud Speaker visit: [www.loudspeaker.org.uk](http://www.loudspeaker.org.uk)



# The CityZen Mentor Role

Are you ready to inspire and guide young minds? Then the CityZen Award is the perfect opportunity to flex your mentoring muscles.

As a mentor, you will:	How it helps:
 Share your insights, career choices and experiences	You become a role model and inspire students
 Support and encourage your team, without revealing too much	You nurture independence and critical thinking
 Challenge your team to extend their learning	You enhance students' experience of the CityZen award, and their wider understanding of civil engineering

**Teachers of teams supported by mentors were most likely to give the competition: ★★★★★**

## Get started

**1. Check your STEM Ambassador status** before the competition starts. You must have:

- A current registration with ICE
- An active registration as an ICE STEM Ambassador – visit STEM Learning ([stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors](http://stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors)) to check if you need to renew your registration

**2. Login or create a mentor account** on the CityZen Account Manager

<https://bit.ly/CityZen-login>

**3. Choose the 2026 Award game Campaign** when prompted

**4. Choose a school to support**

You're not a mentor until you match with a school, so don't forget this step! You will need to check back in the Autumn, perhaps a couple of times, when schools will be registering their teams. Keep an eye on your emails for reminders from us.



**Choosing the right school**

**1. Look for a school in your region.**

**Find your school**  
Select a school amongst the schools looking for a mentor:

East of England (0)  
School region  
East Midlands (0)  
East of England (0)  
**London (0)**  
North East (0)  
North West (0)  
Northern Ireland (0)  
Scotland (0)  
South East England (0)  
South West (0)



**2. For the school(s) you're interested in, read their requirements in the 'more info' box. This will help you decide whether they're a good fit for the support you can offer.**

**Find your school**  
Select a school amongst the schools looking for a mentor:

London (1)

[Test School]  
1 teacher from this school is participating  
**Teachers' note**  
Keen to have a mentor visit the school for our sessions on Wednesday lunchtimes between 12.30-1.30pm, thanks. **Select**



**3. When you find a school to support, select them from the list and email the teacher to start making arrangements. You will find their details in the 'home' tab.**

**4. If you can't find a school, keep checking back regularly. You could also consider supporting a school from another region remotely - especially from October onwards.**



**5. Remote mentoring can be just as effective as in-person. In fact, the 2023 Gold Award winning team were supported by a remote mentor!**



**6. If the logistics don't work out with your chosen school, please switch schools as soon as possible. Let the teacher at your original school know, but a successful match is the best outcome for everyone.**

**Play the game**

Have a go at playing the CityZen game before you start mentoring. Play as many times as you like - immersing yourself in the challenges students will face so you can help keep them on track. Just keep the game details under wraps, to make the competition fair for everyone.

Read the CityZen Award Game Guide to learn more. Find it here [ice.org.uk/CityZen](https://ice.org.uk/CityZen)



## Support the Project Pitch

As a mentor, you help drive both creativity and practicality in your team. Facilitate regular discussions to refine project pitch ideas, presentation concepts and timelines. Give constructive feedback along the way and help your team check their details. They should think about cost, impact and potential challenges. If their ideas won't work in the real world, they won't be successful in the competition. So, your input can really help them here.

Read the CityZen Award Project Pitch Guide to learn more. Find it here [ice.org.uk/CityZen](https://ice.org.uk/CityZen)

## Safeguarding

Nothing is more important than keeping everyone involved in the competition safe. That's why there are key guidelines you must follow in order to take part.

Remember to make sure a teacher is present when you mentor your team – both online and in-person – so that you're never left alone with students. Also, never give your contact details to students or have private conversations online. All communication should go via the teacher.

Please watch our short video for tips on operating within our safeguarding policy:

<https://bit.ly/CityZen-safeguarding>



## Suggested session outlines

You can structure your mentor sessions however you like, in partnership with the school you work with. But to keep things as easy as possible, here's an example of how your sessions could look:



### Set the scene

1. Explain your background and give examples of how the competition challenges link to projects you've worked on - there's a handy careers presentation template in our resources hub that might be useful.
2. Ask the students to introduce themselves. Try to get a feel for their current understanding of civil engineering and where there are knowledge gaps.
3. The team should play the first round of the game, then discuss their decisions and the outcomes.
4. Discuss your team's initial ideas for the project pitch.
5. Give them the chance to ask general questions and make sure they know what will happen over the next few weeks.



### Weekly mentoring sessions

1. Introduce each new round of the game then play!
2. Host a quick discussion of what happened and how your team scored. What went well, what went wrong, and what did they learn?
3. Encourage your team to enter the final part of the CityZen Award and support their project pitch development. Start by checking out past winning projects for inspiration. Then, chat with your team about their research progress and project pitch plans. Are there any crucial points they've overlooked in their argument? The 'Project Pitch Planning Sheet' found at [ice.org.uk/CityZen](https://ice.org.uk/CityZen) in the Project Pitch Guide can help make sure they've got all the basics covered.



### Final session

1. Share any outstanding feedback on how the team performed in the game. What went well and what didn't? Discuss their professionalism, teamwork and enthusiasm.
2. Support your team to complete the final details of their project pitch. If you need to, ask leading questions and guide their focus towards the ideas which could really work.
3. Use your remaining time to inspire the team to explore civil engineering even further. Share your own journey into the profession, encourage questions and point them to helpful resources like [www.ICE-futures.com](https://www.ICE-futures.com)

**TOP TIP:** You can use our resources hub to order free printed careers guides to give out to your teams: <https://ice.marketing-hub.uk/stemabassador>



## Competition resources

You can find the following resources at [ice.org.uk/CityZen](https://ice.org.uk/CityZen)

ICE CityZen competition resources	Teacher use	Mentor use	Student use
Competition poster	✓		
Student registration form (find this in the teacher guide)	✓		
Teacher guide	✓		
Student guide			✓
Mentor guide		✓	
Game guide	✓	✓	✓
Project Pitch guide		✓	✓
CityZen introduction presentation	✓	✓	
Further learning links		✓	✓



# Promoting Career Learning & Aspirations

## Connecting learning to careers

The ICE CityZen Award gives students valuable insights into careers in civil engineering. They will learn about different roles and how to be successful in them. They will also discover how their school subjects connect to those roles.

### **The ICE CityZen Award aligns with the Gatsby Benchmarks:**

Learning from career and labour market information

Linking curriculum learning to careers

Encounters with employers and employees

As an industry mentor, you will share your insights into civil engineering with your students.

**It was really helpful for the students to be able to email their mentor with questions about their projects.**

Teacher, Comberton Village College

**Our mentor has been fantastic. He brought a different colleague each week to give further advice and guidance to our students. It has been an excellent relationship which we hope will continue to develop.**

Teacher, Chelmsford College

## Supporting every student

This experience is made for all kinds of learners. It shows that civil engineers come from all walks of life, breaking stereotypes and providing encouragement.

It also caters to neurodiverse learners. Students can feel safe and confident in a digital space with clear rules. They will work in teams with different roles, so students of all abilities can join in.

The Project Pitch task is completely student-led, with a wide brief which gives students the freedom to use their strongest skills and create content which reflects their passions.

Students can choose whether to work in teams or individually, so there are no barriers to taking part.



# Links to Curriculum

The ICE CityZen Award empowers students to cultivate teamwork, strategy, and digital skills – while developing critical skills that are useful across their studies. It connects with key curriculum elements, particularly in Design & Technology and Geography.

## Design & Technology

- The ability to be innovative and creative in design and technology within a clear set of constraints
- An awareness of the significance of design and technology to society
- The ability to make informed choices as a discerning consumer
- Positive attitudes of co-operation and citizenship and the ability to work collaboratively
- The ability to apply essential knowledge, understanding and skills of design production processes to the design of civil engineering solutions
- The ability to use information and communications technology (ICT), as appropriate, to enhance their design and technological capability
- Critical evaluation skills in technical, aesthetic, economic, environmental, social and cultural contexts

## Geography

- The ability to recognise and analyse people-environment interactions, and appreciate how these underpin some of the key world issues
- An understanding of the ways in which values, attitudes and circumstances have an impact on the relationships between people, place and environment
- Engage, as citizens, with the questions and issues arising from these relationships
- Apply geographical knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches in a rigorous way to a range of geographical questions and issues
- Develop as critical and reflective learners, articulate opinions, suggest relevant new ideas and provide evidenced arguments
- Apply a range of quantitative and qualitative skills and approaches

## Media Studies

The project pitch task is also particularly relevant to Media Studies as it includes film-making skills (optional), story-crafting and journalistic/documentary evidence gathering and presentation elements.

**Great competition that is  
really well structured.**  
Teacher, Guildford High School



# Mentoring in the ICE CityZen Award and your data

We will need to collect details about you in order to enrol you as part of the team administering the competition at ICE. As a mentor you will need to be a current member of the institution and a STEM Ambassador registered with STEM Learning - it's an essential part of ICE's safeguarding policy.

When you register on our online platform and select a school, your name and email address will be shared with the teacher so they can coordinate your engagement with their team. If you are invited to attend the winners' lunch, we will share your details with our venue and travel providers as required.

For a full privacy notice, please see: [ice.org.uk/privacy-policy](https://ice.org.uk/privacy-policy)



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