ice
Institution of Civil Engineers

Bett, Learning Technologies and Memcom Award Winners

& CREST accredited

CITYZEN

BUILD YOUR WORLD

2026 Award Teacher 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. It's where engineers come together to create solutions that enable our planet and our people to thrive.

Teacher-approved!
Teacher Rating: ★★★★½

The ICE CityZen Award

The ICE CityZen Award is an award-winning and teacher-approved scheme which is fun and easy to deliver. It gives students practical learning and problem-solving opportunities, which they'll find useful regardless of their courses of study. They will also see how these new skills could transfer into real careers, helping them reach their full potential.

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

The CityZen Challenge

The first stop on your student's journey is the CityZen Challenge. Four engrossing weeks of gaming tackling civil engineering challenges. It's challenging but simple to follow and supports collaboration, practical skills development and STEM subject learning.

More info on page 12

The Project Pitch

To complete the full ICE CityZen Award, students can go a step further. They'll use their learnings from the CityZen Challenge to pitch an idea to help improve people's lives in their local area. The three teams with the most impressive ideas will also win great prizes.

More info on page 15

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

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** (or in this guide!).

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

Please contact: careers@ice.org.uk

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



Why take part?

Building skills for life, study and work

The ICE CityZen Award isn't just for future engineers – it's for every student, regardless of their interests or aspirations. Taking part gives/builds:

Communication skills Building skills and confidence through teamwork and presentation challenges.

Employability Collaboration, critical-thinking and ability to research are 'soft skills' highly valued in the workplace.

Creativity CityZen encourages innovative thinking and problem-solving.

Leadership Students can take charge, delegate tasks and inspire their peers.

Digital expertise Past participants have loved developing their digital skills to make videos for the Project Pitch.

Myth-busting inspiration CityZen can open the door to civil engineering for more young people, especially girls, realising it could be a career for them.

Opportunities to shine Exercising new knowledge and skills gives confidence.

Inclusive access CityZen is inclusive for neurodiverse and a wide-range of students.

What did you think of the CityZen award?

For a first-time entrant into this competition, I found it brilliant.
Teacher, Barnwell School

Thank you for organising this competition again. This is one of the most comprehensive comps we enter as a school, and it is very well-resourced.
Teacher, Upton Hall School FJC

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

Playing the games and finishing the video project as a group was enjoyable. It was fun to work towards a goal together and to put in as much effort as we could. It allowed me to use my analytical skills and creativity. I also learned to communicate my ideas and listen to others better.
Year 13 student
Hillcrest High School



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:

Preparation (teachers)
Register your teams on the CityZen Account Manager. Check to see if you have a mentoring offer and arrange your sessions.

Week 1

1



Introduction
CityZen Round One: Bridge Building

Project Pitch:
Ideation - coming up with ideas to explore.

Week 2

2



CityZen Round Two: Park Revitalisation

Project Pitch:
Choosing an idea.

Week 3

3

CityZen Round Three: Sustainable Housing



Project Pitch:
Impact assessment - checking your facts and figures.

Week 4

4

CityZen Round Four: Crisis Management



Project Pitch:
Planning and task assignment.

5

Weeks 5-6

Project Pitch:
Designing, filming, editing, animating etc.

6

Competition support and resources

Competition mentors

Having a competition mentor can help your students get more out of the CityZen experience. Mentors are usually professional or student Civil Engineers who are volunteering their time.

Mentors choose a school they can support through their CityZen online account. They offer informal support to give context to the activities and career opportunities.

A mentor in your area might be able to visit your school in person for some or all of your sessions, or join you online for Teams/Zoom calls – or a mix of both. They might also offer feedback by email for Project Pitches.

Important

All official CityZen competition mentors are registered STEM Ambassadors (with STEM Learning) who have undergone engagement training and safeguarding checks. Mentor-student interactions should nevertheless be supervised at all times by a teacher* and any email communication should be through the responsible teacher*.

*or responsible school representative

Unfortunately, due to availability not all schools will be offered an official competition mentor so if you are contacted by one with an offer, please respond to them quickly so that in the unlikely event they can't support your planned sessions, they can work with another school.



Leicester High School for Girls team with their mentor Jonathon Simons, Principal Engineer at AECOM.

Maximise your chances of getting a competition mentor by registering your teams early and including some info about when (month/day of the week) you are planning to hold your sessions in the 'school info' box in the CityZen account manager. You can also let us know there if you don't need a competition mentor.

For help with mentors please contact us at **careers@ice.org.uk**



Competition resources

You can find the following resources at **ice.org.uk/CityZen**

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



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.

The architecture and history of the building were really impressive and it was great the meet the other winning teams and hear their ideas.
Lara McDonald, Highly Commended 2023

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

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

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**



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**



Taking part in the ICE CityZen Award and your data

To participate in the ICE CityZen Award we need details about you and your school, to register your interest and to receive your competition entry submission. We also need your school to share the following student data, (subject to appropriate permissions sought from parents/guardians), with ICE:

- Names.
- Dates of birth.
- Name and address of your school.
- The year in which each student entered the Competition and their school-year at the time of participation.

How is personal data collected and used?

Taking part in the ICE CityZen involves registering teacher and student details on the online platform. Parents/guardians of participants should indicate in writing to you (the school) that they have been made aware of the use of participants' data and consent to its use. We have a template permission form for you to use for this purpose.

We collect and will share your details with the competition mentors and judges so they can support you through your project and score your team's work. During the competition, we will communicate with you by sharing essential information related to your entry. After the competition, we will communicate with you to inform you of our other education activities and to tell you about the work we do. You can opt of these messages at any time.

After the competition, we share student data with UCAS to analyse how successful the competition is in fostering entry to civil engineering higher education courses. The results of this research are anonymised in the report provided, so we cannot identify individual students.

If judging confirms you as the representative of a winning team, you will be asked to consent to and seek appropriate consents for:

- Gold, Silver and Bronze winners - share the bank details of the school and winning students with ICE for the awarding of the monetary prize.
- The JBA Trust special prize - share your email address with the organisation and share the bank details of the school and winning students for the awarding of the monetary prize.
- Loud Speaker special prize - share your email address with the organisation and share the details of the winning students for the arrangement of special opportunities offered as part of the prize.
- All winners - if you and your students choose to attend the winners' lunch, we will share yours and your students' details and food preferences with our venue and travel provider as required.

For more information on data use in the competition please read the full Competition Terms and Conditions which can be found at: **ice.org.uk/CityZen**



Permission to take part

In order to participate in the 2026 ICE CityZen Award you will need to have written permission from a **parent or guardian**. This covers sharing the following personal data with ICE:

- Your full name
- Date of birth
- School/college year at time of taking part.

This data enables ICE to track the effectiveness of the ICE CityZen competitions in encouraging students to study civil engineering at university by tracking individuals through the UCAS service. All report data from this process is anonymised.

For more information on data use in the competition please read the full Competition Terms and Conditions which can be found at: **ice.org.uk/CityZen**

☐ I hereby give permission for the young person (under 18 years) named below to take part in the 2026 ICE CityZen Award. (Required for participation.)

☐ I also give permission for ICE to use the project pitch video (applicable for winners) to promote the competition to prospective new entrants and teachers on public channels including but not limited to the ICE website and social media accounts.

Participants' name.....

Participant's date of birth .....

School year .....

Age.....

Signed by.....

Name .....

Date signed .....

Visit **https://bit.ly/CityZen-permission** to access a printable version of the permission form.



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

Students will also have access to industry mentors where possible who will share their insights into civil engineering.

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.

I loved the real examples of decisions that civil engineers get to make every day. I was particularly surprised by how closely intertwined the gameplay was with my geography lessons in how big a role human experience plays in a 'good' design decision
Joseph Dixon, past CityZen participant and now civil engineering student at University of Southampton



The CityZen Challenge

Our award-winning CityZen Challenge spans four weeks. Your students navigate a virtual city, tackling engineering challenges. There's a different theme every week to keep it fresh. They explore STEM subjects and learn how civil engineering can create change in their community. It's an experience designed to captivated and inspire.

CityZen game features:

3D action

Web-based 3D gameplay transports students into their own virtual city.

Empowerment through decision-making

In CityZen, every decision matters. Students will see how their choices impact the lives of virtual citizens. It also fosters teamwork and critical thinking skills.

Diverse challenges

CityZen offers a range of challenges to keep students engaged and motivated. They will build bridges, renovate parks, and consider sustainable housing and crisis management.

You can find more detailed advice for playing the CityZen game in the separate Game Guide found at: **ice.org.uk/CityZen**

I really enjoyed the game. It was fun and informative, and it was satisfying being able to implement lessons that you had learnt in previous lessons.
Year 12 Student,
Guildford High School

Student Rating: ★★★★½



Award winning

CityZen is the winner of not one, not two, but three international awards. Because, quite frankly, it's worthy!

- Best Learning Game, Learning Technologies Awards
- Best Secondary Free Digital Content App or Open Educational Resource, Bett Award
- Best Education Initiative at the 2024 Memcom Excellence Awards



Registering for the competition

As soon as you know which students will be taking part in the CityZen Challenge please create their teams in the CityZen Account Manager. You'll want to do this before the first session, so that students can play the game straight away.

Find the CityZen Account Manager at **bit.ly/CityZen-login**

You will use this portal to:

- register your school and students
- generate game access codes
- potentially match with an ICE mentor

You'll need some information about all your team members to be able to register them:

Their full names; dates of birth; current school year and permission to share this information with us (see page on data and award terms and conditions included in this pack.)

Teams can be between 1 and 4 students. Go to the 'teams' tab and click on the + button to add students. When you've added all the students in a team click 'Add team' to finish.

Useful tip: Add in any info about when you might hold your CityZen sessions to the 'more school info' box – this will help prospective mentors choose who they can support.

If you are **changing/leaving your school** please transfer your CityZen account to another teacher. You can change the password to something that you can share with your colleague when you update the account with their email address. If you're not transferring your account please let us know to delete it. If you need any support with using the CityZen account manager get in touch at **careers@ice.org.uk.**

Getting started (playing the game)

To start playing the game, teams need their unique access codes.

You create codes when you enter your teams details using the CityZen Account Manager (as above).

To easily pass on the codes to your student teams, click on each to open an email in your default email programme containing a weblink to the game with the code pre-populated in the entry window.

Find the CityZen game website at: **bit.ly/play-CityZen**

If you want to better understand the ICE CityZen Game why not read the Game Guide resource found at **ice.org.uk/CityZen** before starting?



The CityZen Award – Project Pitch

Use your knowledge

For your project pitch, you will present an original idea to effect change in your community. Think about the unique needs and challenges faced by people where you live. Is there an issue related to infrastructure, transportation, environmental sustainability or public amenities? Can you find an innovative and sustainable solution to address it?

Show us:

- the problem your team wants to solve
- your solution
- how it will benefit your community



Pro Tip: Draw on what you learnt in the CityZen Challenge

Get creative

Your teams will craft a compelling project pitch video being as creative as they can. They can use visuals, animations, voiceovers or testimonials if they like. Or maybe they'll do something we haven't seen before!

Please follow our guidelines for filming safely – and you'll also find great advice for making a film from communications skills experts Loud Speaker in the Project Pitch Guide. This also has new guidelines about using AI for the 2026 competition.

Project Pitch videos should be **2-4 minutes** (no longer) and in MP4 format with **max file size of 50MB**.

Be realistic

Remember, this is all about civil engineering in the real world. So think about how much it will cost to deliver your idea, versus the impact it will have. Look at the possible challenges you'll face, and what you could do to overcome them.

Pro Tip: Seeking advice from teachers, mentor and local businesses could be really helpful.

We're looking for:

- original and practical ideas
- a really clear explanation
- creative presentation and design skills
- ideas that will have a BIG impact on the problem you're trying to solve
- a clear demonstration of your learnings from the ICE CityZen Challenge

Each of these criteria is marked out of a score of five, with equal weighting.

Making your submissions

Project Pitches should be submitted by a teacher or school representative.

Submissions can be made between 1 September - 18 December 2026.

Find the submission form at:
https://bit.ly/CityZen-submit

You can find more detailed advice in the separate Project Pitch Guide found at:
ice.org.uk/CityZen

Check out the extra opportunities for 2026 including gaining a CREST Award!

Careers support resources

If you're looking for more information and support to explore careers in civil engineering we've got it here!

Virtual work experience

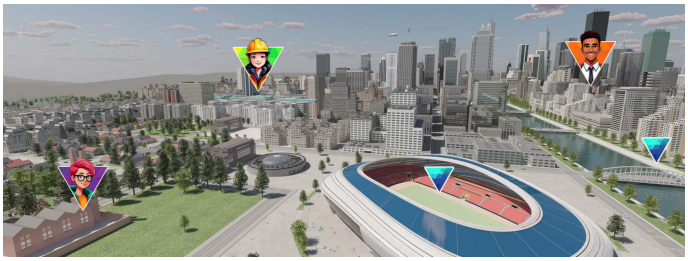
Take part in our on-demand civil engineering virtual work experience to learn why civil engineering is such an exciting and rewarding career. **The Civil Engineers Shaping the World programme** is free and available to all young people via the Springpod platform.



bit.ly/ICE-virtworkexp

ICE Futures

Explore civil engineering with ICE Futures – a gamified platform where students follow Mae, Omar, and Robyn as they tackle real-world challenges and shape an evolving 3D city. By providing clear, bite-sized insights, it helps students understand the tangible impact of civil engineering and the role they can play in shaping the future.



ICE-Futures.com

Loud Speaker: communication skills

Loud Speaker envisions a world where young people have the confidence and tools to speak out and speak well, making their lives less daunting and more fulfilling.

Speaking is easy when we're chatting away to our best friend, but put us on a stage or in an interview and words become hard.

Public speaking ranks on many surveys as people's number 1 fear; ahead of being broke and death... For the young people that we interact with, the future is a beautiful mystery. The only thing that's certain is that they will have to source opportunities and convince people to take a shot on them.

Loud Speaker's goal is to give them the confidence to aim high and the tools to make the most of every opportunity that comes their way. Since 2019, by showing that they have a voice, they have helped over 100,000 young people realise that they are ballers, and can speak their way to success.

LOUDSPEAKER **loudspeaker.org.uk**

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2026 V1