



2012 SCUP Excellence Awards – Frequently Asked Questions

We keep trying, but we continue to receive frequently asked questions, so once again, here are our frequently repeated answers. Yes, some are repeats from last year, but we received even *more* good questions, and are responding with *more* good answers. The list continues to expand, just like the universe. In addition, we have added **Free Tips** this year! These are observations or ideas expressed by last year's jurors. Watch for them throughout the Qs & As. If we still haven't answered *your* question, please send it in and we will address it promptly.

Q. Do we need to be members to submit an entry?

A. No, we welcome entries from everyone.

Q. Can unbuilt work be submitted?

A. No, not yet. We may develop an award for unbuilt work, but not this year. The architecture entries must have been completed and occupied within the past five years. The planning entries do not need to be completed; however, it must be evident that a significant event such as a strategic, physical or facilities change, a change that triggered expansion, executive board actions or establishment of a new strategic partnership has taken place. The landscape architecture entries must be completed but there is no age limitation since these projects need time to develop. See "eligibility requirements" in each call for entries for further details.

Q. Are our firms prohibited from making submissions if I am on the jury?

A. Institutions or firms that have someone on the jury should not submit entries.

Free Tip: You do not need to be the prime or lead firm on the project to submit an entry.

Q. My project is not a college or university but a private prep school. Is it eligible?

A. The eligibility requirements state "two year and four year colleges, universities, academic medical and research centers, public or private institutions." This has come up before and the conclusion was that no, it's not eligible in this program. In fact, no high school projects would be eligible. Sorry.

Q. Do I have to integrate my images within the text?

A. Yes please.

Q. In order to provide an image showing the project in context with the rest of the campus, given the size of the building, this would be best shown with an aerial photo, but one is not yet available. Would it be acceptable to provide a good quality Google Earth image showing the project's campus context?

A. Yes, this is acceptable and very creative!

Q. Do I have to use 12-point font?

A. Yes please, although you may use any readable font as long as it is 12-point.

Q. Can I use a different font for the captions for my images?

A. Yes, but please limit captions to about 10 words.

Q. Can I prepare my entry in a horizontal format?

A. You may use horizontal or vertical orientation to best illustrate the images in your PDF submittal. Just be sure that every page is oriented for reading on a screen without rotation or reformatting by the jurors. Please do not spread an image over more than one page. Or ask us to turn our computer sideways to view your pages. We don't want any neck injuries from viewing award entries.

Q. With regards to the images integrated within the text, can we have a horizontal image on a vertically formatted page?

A. Yes. How and where you place the images is up to you. Just not upside down please.

Q. We would like to include floor plans, but to be readable on a screen, they would take up 4-5 pages. What should we do?

A. Your best bet would be to try and reduce them to a readable size and stay within the 10-page limit. I hope you can still find a creative way to say and show what you want to within the limit.

Free tip: There is a site plan requirement now - please make it legible and larger than a postage stamp. Explain how it relates to the master plan, strategic plan and surrounding community using examples if available

Q. The instructions say we must limit our response to approximately 200 words for each question. Do you mean 200 words for the entire question or 200 words for each bulleted item?

A. The word limit is 200 for the question, not for each bullet. Some bullets may not even apply to your project so don't feel like you have to answer every one. Remember, do not repeat the question - doing so only takes up space on your 10 pages. Just say 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.

Q. When we read the eligibility requirements, we thought our project met the requirements: although the buildings have not been constructed, we have had significant executive board action to move the plan forward. The plan has been presented to the city for review. But the instructions state that the work must be built. What does that mean?

A. If you are entering one of the planning categories and have indicators that the project will go forward (such as regent or board approval), yes, go ahead and enter. Projects in the architecture categories must be built and occupied or used within the past five years. I guess you wouldn't really live in a lab or library for example - hopefully. Landscape projects have no time limit.

Q. Our institutional statement is not addressed to the "2012 Awards Jury." Can we still submit it or do we need them to redo it?

A. That is fine as long as they do not mention the name of your firm or subconsultants. If they do, and you are at the 11th hour, you can go ahead and blacken them out before you scan and send the letters to us.

Q. Is there a maximum pdf file size?

A. Yes, it is 25 MB. We also accept zip files. You won't get extra credit if your entry clogs up our computers while we try to open your file. After all, we have other work to do. And other entries to read. Really.

Q. We see that the size limit is 25MB for the file size. Is there a limit to what your system will accept via e-mail? Is there an ftp site that we can post our file (under 25MB) to, or can you download a file from our ftp site?

A. We would rather not receive large emails. We do not have an FTP site but yes, we are happy to download an entry from your site. Happy. Happy. Happy.

Free Tip: It is important to provide enough context or program intent so the jury can readily see how the building or landscape relates to and supports the rest of the campus.

Q. The architect I'm working with is concerned that her 10-word captions begin to sound like a foreign language. Is 10 words a hard-and-fast limit, or can it go to 15?

A. You can use longer phrases for your captions if you like, but don't worry if they aren't complete sentences. We have interpreters standing by.

Q. The person that we need the institutional letter from is out of the office this week. Would it be possible for us to send all the rest of the documentation by Friday's deadline, and the institutional letter next week?

A. There are two options that I see here. The first is that I would need the letter no later than the following Monday, February 20th. A second option is to find another individual from the institution who could provide a letter for you so you could meet the deadline and have a nice weekend.

Q. I mailed out two award submittals today, one of which is missing the institutional letter due to a hold up at the university. I expect this letter tomorrow but wanted to mail the rest of the package today. Would it be acceptable to send the letter electronically once I receive it tomorrow for consideration? I had to mail the other material because my company requires we pay for award submittals by check.

A. Certainly – please have the letter here by Monday, February 20th and be sure to give us enough information so we connect it up with the correct entry.

Q. We are resubmitting our entry from another awards program, which was done in a horizontal layout. Do we have to change the orientation in order to submit it?

A. No, but please make sure you provide the required graphics and answer our specific questions. Wait. Is that like re-gifting?

Free tip: Almost all of the entries involved sustainability and explained it in many different ways. If any third party sustainability documentation was applied to the project, please include that in your entry.

Q. We have a question about the three images per page. Does that refer to photographs? Or photos + plans? Can we use a tiny series of "thumbnails" that are grouped together to illustrate one point? Does that count as one image or several? Will you count the images on each page and throw an entry out if a page contains four instead of three?

A. By images we mean photos, plans, sketches, and renderings. I used the term images as a generic term for all of those. A grouping of thumbnails to make a point is acceptable and would count as one image. We won't throw you out for an extra image. Please adhere to the 10 page + institutional letter page limit however. I wouldn't put in too many thumbnail image groupings however. These eyes are getting oooooold. We received some in last year's entries that were extremely difficult to see.

Q. We plan on emailing in our 2012 SCUP Award entry and would like to pay by check. Do we mail the check with a copy of the "Project Data, Payment and Team Members" information when we email the submission?

A. That would be helpful and help us ensure your payment gets connected to the right project.

Q. Is there any protocol for file naming for the two-part entry in the submittal – i.e. do we add our firm name to Project Data, Payment and Team Members and Response or leave the file names as they are?

A. No, do not add your firm name to the file. Please name your files "Project Data, Payment and Team Members" and "Response." Pretty simple. We assign a number to each entry and the jurors see the number and the Response part. Identity of the submitting firm and subconsultants and the Project Data information is concealed from the jurors until after deliberations.

Q. I'm assembling the information for this award. It seems to me that there is a lot of overlap between questions. In order to avoid redundancy, would it be possible for me to combine them?

A. You do not need to repeat answers, but please make it clear to the jury that you have addressed the bulleted items in each question that *do* apply to your project. Don't worry if some of them are NA. See the next questions/answers too.

Q. Do we need to number our responses and answer in the order given, or can we just take the text from our answers to create an integrated presentation with text/images.

A. Yes, you can respond to the text without numbering your answers and do so in the order that tells your story best. Here is a suggestion though - you might start some sentences with words such as, "The purpose of the building was . . ." or "The client was happy with the results that included . . ." just so the jury can be assured that you did answer all the questions.

Q. Is there a dpi requirement?

A. Yes, please save your images at 100 dpi maximum to expedite computer viewing. If your entry receives an award, we'll ask you for higher resolution images for both web and print.

Q. Does the project have to be in the USA?

A. No, any project on this planet is eligible. Even though you think yours might be "out of this world." There may be a category for interplanetary (no Pluto though – sorry) in the future.

Free Tip: As you prepare your entry, keep asking yourself "how did this make the campus better?" or how is this relevant to the students?"

Q. What is the page limit?

A. There is no page limit to the first part of your entry, "Project Data, Payment and Team Members." There is a ten-page limit to the second part of your entry, "Response," including images. The Institutional Statement does not count as one of your ten pages. It counts toward whether you receive an award though. In fact, you will be *discounted* if it is *not* included. So, technically you get 11 pages, but who's counting? Wait! We are. Also, please number your pages – you can't believe how much that helps.

Q. I have several photographers for our images. How should I list them all?

A. Please indicate which photographer goes with each picture or image. We will confirm this with you before printing or publishing anything. It might be nice to give credit to in-house photographers too, unless you're afraid they might ask for a raise. That's your decision.

Q. For the Project Data, Payment and Team Members part, do we need to include the names and contact information of renderers as well as photographers? Many of the images in our submission are renderings, but the credit page seems to ask specifically about only photography.

A. Yes, please include everyone. We want to give you an opportunity to give credit where it is due. Credits will be used if your project is selected or if parts of it are shown which exemplify a trend or something unique.

Q. Can I resubmit an entry from previous years that did not win?

A. Yes. The jury changes every year, and so do the entries against which your project is judged. It's up to you whether you submit new photography or get an updated institutional statement. It seems like you would have even more evidence of the project's success after a year or two. We try to clarify (dare I say improve?) the call for entries every year, so be sure to reread all the requirements and make the appropriate updates to your previous entry. Good luck – again.

Q. What if I enter in the wrong category?

A. Can't happen. The jury will pick you up and move you. We know that some projects could be entered in more than one category, but please choose the one where you think it belongs. The jury tries to be fair and likes winners,

so they may move your entry to another category if they feel it is a better fit. They have done this a few times in the past and the project has received an award. That's power. See the next two questions and answers too.

Q. Can I enter the same project in more than one category?

A. Entries are judged against other entries within each discreet category, but it is unlikely that the same project would (could?) (should?) receive three awards. Remember, you should be submitting as a team, listing all team members in your entry – no limit – so you might actually have a stronger entry by demonstrating how all these diverse entities worked together successfully. BUT – see the next question/answer.

Q. We are submitting our project for excellence in architecture and excellence in landscape. Do we have to pay two fees or one?

A. If you have two different entries with regards to text, images, project team, etc., then yes, you would need to submit the separately and pay two entry fees. However, if you have one entry, but are not sure which category to use, you should enter it once and pay one fee. You would need to select a category; however, the jury will move an entry from one category to another if they feel it really belongs there.

Q. Can I see winning entries from previous years?

A. Text and images of award recipients from the last two years are on SCUP's web site so you can see what our juries find "excellent." However, we don't post all the information from their entry. There have to be some secrets.

Free tip: The jury knows that not every institution has the budget for five-star architecture and that there can be excellent and creative results within any budget.

Q. Can I submit more than one institutional statement?

A. Lucky you. We have not had that happen before. Could you instead have co-signers on one statement? Or two half-page statements? If not, I suggest you prepare a nine-page response and then have two pages of institutional statements.

Q. Is the due date/time firm?

A. Yes, we would like all the entries emailed no later than 11:59 pm EST on Friday, February 17, 2012. And no, I won't be up at midnight in the office with a stopwatch, but you get the point. If you choose to send a CD, please have it arrive at our office by 5 pm EST on that same day. It's really good to submit your entries at least one day early because we will look them over and let you know if something is missing or if there are problems with the files. Then you would have time to fix your entry and send it in again before the deadline.

Q. Are you strict on the word count?

A. While we won't cut you off in the middle of a sentence, the word count recommendations are made so the jury can get through all the entries, and make better comparisons among them. Just remember you have 10 pages.

Q. Can I submit a copy of the master plan document?

A. Only if it makes you feel better, but please don't send it via email. We would likely keep it on the SCUP bookshelf, but the jury is unable to spend time reviewing anything but the actual entries. Plus, your firm name is probably all over it.

Q. How many awards are given out?

A. There are essentially eight categories for entries (three in planning, three in architecture and two in landscape). The jury tends to give out honor and merit awards in every category; however, they may give out merits and no honors in a category, or honors and no merits. Or a special citation. Or an honorable mention. All in all, about 10 percent of entries receive awards.

Q. Will I receive feedback from the jury if my project didn't win?

A. We will try. Jurors do their first review of the entries on their own and bring a shortlist to the in-person deliberations. Those entries are viewed and discussed in depth and feedback is almost always available on them. However, feedback is not always heard on entries that were not shortlisted by any of the jurors. We try to get jury comments on those projects, but sometimes it's just not available.

Please keep your questions coming. We want to make it as painless as possible to submit an entry and will continue to add your questions with our answers here. The good ones anyway. Good Luck!