



“DESIGN THE FUTURE OF UNUSED SPACES”

IN BETWEEN 2

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN ARCHITECTURE & CIVIL ENGINEERING COMPETITION

Competition Brief

The second edition of the student competition “In Between”, a collaborative initiative between the American University of Cyprus, and American University of Ras Al Khaimah it aims to bring together aspiring architects and civil engineers to enhance the urban fabric and creatively repurpose underutilized urban spaces.

The competition invites undergraduate students of architecture, interior architecture, and civil engineering to design a conceptual structure that inhabits a tangible “in-between” space—such as areas often overlooked or underutilized beneath or between road intersections, bridges, buildings, or other urban voids. Participants are encouraged to propose innovative architectural solutions that activate and transform these spaces, making them functional and meaningful while addressing broader social, environmental, and urban issues.

The proposed structure should creatively occupy the space between two distinct elements—whether built, natural, or urban—and explore ideas of connection, transition, and interaction. Designs should add value to the site by being not only functional and visually compelling, but also sensitive and responsive to the surrounding context.

The top three projects will be awarded monetary prizes.

Eligibility

- Open to currently enrolled students at MENA (Middle East and North Africa), Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, and Turkiye universities.
- Teams submissions only (minimum 2, maximum 4)
- Maximum four entries from each university
- Original work only

Site

Teams can choose their own site in either MENA, North Cyprus, or Turkiye and demonstrate and understating of site’s cultural and environmental context.



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Design Requirements

- The conceptual structure must fit within a space that is "in between" two distinct tangible sites.
- Designs should emphasize innovative solutions and consider the impact on the surrounding environment – suitability, compatibility, aesthetics and flexibility.
- The project should enhance public engagement and encourage new experiences within the space.
- Entries can range from small-scale interventions to medium structures but must remain conceptual and adaptable to the site’s context.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description	Weight, %
Concept and Innovation	How innovative and creative is the concept? Does it propose a fresh approach to designing "in between" spaces?	30
Contextual Response	How well does the design respond to the chosen site? Does it respect the context, cultural heritage, or urban landscape, and the environment?	25
Functionality and User Experience “suggested”	Is the design functional? Does it enhance the user experience in terms of interaction, comfort, and accessibility?	10
Sustainability	Does the design integrate sustainable materials, energy-efficient solutions, or environmentally-friendly concepts?	20
Aesthetic and Visual Presentation	How visually striking and compelling is the design? Does it enrich the aesthetic quality of the site?	15

Submission Requirements

Participants will submit one A0 poster that includes:

- A written description (max 250 words) explaining the concept, site response, and design process.
- Conceptual drawings: including, site plan, plans, sections, and elevations.
- A 3D visualization to communicate the design intent.
- Project sustainable features narrative (maximum 150 words)



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Specific Guidelines for Preparing Posters

- The format of the A0 (Portrait Position) poster is at the discretion of the presenter. It should be sufficient to explain and illustrate the conceptual design idea to the public and the judges.
- Add Logos and the Title of the competition to your Poster.
- For the shortlisting, the poster must not disclose the team and the affiliated university.
- The shortlisted teams, will be asked to resubmit the posters and include their names as well as their university name.

Awards

- 1st Place: Platinum Prize AED 5000 + Certificate
- 2nd Place: Gold Prize AED 3000 + Certificate
- 3rd Place: Silver Prize AED 2000 + Certificate
- All participating teams (shortlisted or not) will receive certificates of participation.

Important Dates

	Date	Description
Team's registration	How innovative and creative is the concept? Does it propose a fresh approach to designing "in between" spaces?	The team sends an e-mail of intension, indicates each team member Name and Surnames, e-mail address affiliated university, major A written description of the project's site and initial concept
Submission	February, 27th 2026	A0 poster
Notification of acceptance	March, 6th 2026	Via e-mail
Announcement of shortlisted projects	March, 6th 2026	Via e-mail
Shortlisted projects presentations and awards	April, 1st 2026	Presentation at AURAK (Poster printed at AURAK)

Submission Information

To register for the competition, send an e-mail to: liudmila.cazacova@aurak.ac.ae

For enquiries, contact: balkizyapicioglu@auc.edu.tr