D&AD New Blood Awards

NAILING YOUR ENTRY

When submitting your entry...

Don't include your name, university/college/institution or place of work anywhere in the work
You'll be able to credit everyone on the entry site, **but please don't put your name anywhere on your work** (including the title), or anything that denotes where you study or work, as the awards are judged completely anonymously. If you do, we'll be in touch to ask you to remove it.

If we don't hear back, we may have to remove it ourselves. The *only exception* to this is if your identity is integral to your response.

Don't repeat the brief back
Don't waste precious minutes or slides re-explaining the brief to the judges. They all have the brief in front of them and will know it inside out. They'd much rather hear about your project!

Insight, Idea, Execution
Make it really easy for the judges to understand what your idea is and how you came to it. A great presentation explains what the insight was that helped you create the idea, what the idea is itself, and then shows how you've executed it.

Stick to the submission formats
One of the main judging criteria for the awards is 'is it on brief?'. Part of the brief is the deliverables (the way you present your work). So it's really important you stick to them. And remember the judges look through hundreds of pieces of work each year, so make sure yours gets the opportunity to shine.

Don't panic!
We have a team of people who look through all your entries before they are seen by the judges. If there's any issues, we'll be in touch! Be sure to keep an eye on your email inbox (and double check your junk folder) for emails from newblood@dandad.org as this is how we'll contact you.

No matter which brief you're working on, there's a few words of wisdom that will help you to nail your response. If you'd like even more advice, we offer a completely free online learning course (a new version will be released later in 2026) to help you work through the brief.

Stay. On. Brief.
Ideas and execution are hugely important, but every year the judges' number one piece of feedback on where work fell short is that it wasn't on brief. New Blood briefs are centred around commercial creativity, which means your response needs to solve a client problem. Make sure you read the brief, read it again, then read it again. D&AD have a few exercises for cutting down a brief to its core elements which is part of the online course mentioned above.

Entries which aren't in response to one of this year's briefs may be removed from the competition.

Research, research, research
Once you've read and understood the brief, it can be really tempting to jump straight into ideas. But research is an integral part of the creative process. Make sure you spend time researching not just the brand (and what they've done before), but also their competitors, audience and anything else that might be relevant to help you solve the problem. The more research you do, the better equipped you are to create a response.

Speak to your audience
Focus on your audience and consider what will make them sit up and take notice. Think about how your idea can infiltrate spaces they exist in, and engage with them directly. No matter how great your idea is, if you can't ignite your audience's interest, it won't make any headway, so get to know who you're talking to.

Understand the brand/product
If you don't have a strong understanding of the brand/product your brief is centred around, you're unlikely to develop a response that really fits with what they want/need. Don't just spend time ideating, but really try to get under the skin of the company you're creating for.

Many brief packs will also include brand guidelines and other helpful documents to help you stay on track. Read them. Get to know them. Even if you want to subvert the brand, you can't do this without first understanding what it currently is and grasping what their current challenges are.

Be realistic
One of the best parts about the New Blood Awards is that many brands are genuinely looking for work they might be able to turn into a reality (and to pay you for it, or hire you to work it up, in the process).* Some briefs are looking for big scale thinking, others want something more nuanced. Whatever your brief, make sure you consider reality in your ideas. You can do something new and innovative without breaking the bank or asking a brand to invent new technology. Be adventurous with your ideas, but always keep at least a toe on the ground...

**Unlike some creative competitions, you retain your IP when you enter the New Blood Awards. If you're entering similar contests, be sure to check this before you submit your work.*

New Blood: The Portfolios

Prepping your portfolio?

If you're currently working on honing your personal website, we've got some exciting news... D&AD will be running our Portfolio Competition again in 2027.

New Blood: The Portfolios recognises creatively excellent portfolio websites across a number of disciplines, including Advertising, Animation, Illustration, Commercial Photography, Graphic and Digital Design. Entry for the competition will open after the New Blood Awards close in 2026.

D&AD will select and promote a curated selection of must-see portfolios to prospective employers at New Blood Festival 2026.

Winners will also be eligible to apply for the New Blood Academy.

Register your interest here and we'll email you the details as soon as they're available