



Beyond the noise. Into the DNA.

FREE SHEET

Twelve Checks Before Review

and the four-step answer that defends any
decision

Score your project across the twelve areas a reviewer actually looks at, find out which type of student you are this week, then learn the formula that turns any design decision into an answer you can defend. Two working pages from The Review Defence Kit.

WHO WE ARE

CRUX makes practical toolkits for architecture and design students. We take the parts of studio work nobody teaches directly – choosing, deciding, defending, finishing – and turn them into methods you can actually follow.

No theory for its own sake. No filler. Tools you fill in, not essays you read.

VISIT THE WEBSITE

cruxlabstools.com

WHAT WE MAKE

- Decision kits – for the choices that stall a project
- Method guides – for the skills studio assumes you have
- Completion standards – what finished actually looks like
- Review and defence toolkits
- Fill-in worksheets, scorecards and worked examples

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Review Readiness Diagnosis

Score each area honestly. 0 = missing or unusable · 1 = partly done · 2 = done and presentable. Takes ten minutes. Do it now, not later.

Area	What '2' looks like	0	1	2
Concept clarity	You can state it in one sentence with no hedging	☐	☐	☐
Site response	Sun, access, noise or context visibly shaped the design	☐	☐	☐
Floor plans	All levels drawn, labelled, dimensioned, readable	☐	☐	☐
Sections	At least two, cut through the most interesting space	☐	☐	☐
Elevations	Main elevations complete and consistent with plans	☐	☐	☐
Diagrams	Zoning and circulation shown clearly	☐	☐	☐
Area schedule	Calculated and tabulated, matches the drawings	☐	☐	☐
Sheets	Planned in sequence, not composed at random	☐	☐	☐
Views / renders	At least one clean, honest view	☐	☐	☐
Physical model	Massing or site base at some stage	☐	☐	☐
Print readiness	Files named, scale set, print slot known	☐	☐	☐
Spoken explanation	You have said it out loud at least once	☐	☐	☐

YOUR TOTAL

____ / 24

Add all three columns

DO THIS FIRST

Write today's date and score in the margin, then re-score on the morning of your review – the gap is the only progress measure that matters this week. If any single row scored 0, fix that one first even if another row would be faster. Reviewers probe the gap, not the strength.

Read your score

0–9

TYPE C · PANIC MODE

Not lost, but it must be shrunk today. Stop designing, build the Must-Have set only, and rehearse an honest explanation. Aim for defensible, not complete.

10–17

TYPE B · HALF-READY

The most common result, and the most winnable. You have material but no sequence. Finish your weakest three rows first, then protect your last two days for sheets and speech.

18–24

TYPE A · ALMOST READY

Do not add scope. Your risk is now presentation and defence, not drawings. Spend the remaining time on your story, likely questions, and rehearsal.

How to Defend Your Design

A reviewer asks 'why is this here?' and most students say 'it looked good' or go blank. Both lose marks. Use a formula that turns any decision into a defensible answer.



Step	What you say
Decision	State what you did, plainly
Reason	Give the logic behind it
Evidence	Point to the sheet or drawing
Result	Say what it achieves

STRONG ANSWER

Q: Why is the public block near the road?

I placed the public block near the main road (**decision**) to reduce disturbance to the quieter functions (**reason**). The site's noise and access both come from that edge (**evidence**), so this creates a clear public-to-private transition across the plot (**result**).

WEAK ANSWERS TO NEVER USE

"It just looked balanced." · "My tutor told me to." · "I didn't have time to think about it."
These signal that the decision was random – and random decisions invite more questions.

SAY THIS WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW

"I haven't resolved that fully. My thinking was _____, and the next step would be _____." That is a complete, professional answer – not a failure.

Practice: convert two of your own decisions

[TRY IT NOW](#)

DECISION 1

DECISION · REASON · EVIDENCE · RESULT

DECISION 2

DECISION · REASON · EVIDENCE · RESULT

That was two pages. The full kit has 77.

Four roadmaps by days left, the minimum viable submission set, sheet layout templates, 50 reviewer questions with answer approaches, your first 90 seconds, what to do when reviewers disagree, 14 printable worksheets and the whole method worked through on one project.

Get the full Review Defence Kit →

cruxlabstools.com/toolkit/review-defence-kit