



Green Gown Awards 2021

Winners' Brochure

Awarding Sustainability Excellence | Since 2004

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Contents

We are delighted to present the 2021 Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists and share their inspiring examples of sustainability best practice, together with some words of advice and encouragement on lessons learnt along the way when implementing their projects.

We hope many readers will be inspired and motivated by these projects. There are 18 Winners, 18 Highly Commended, and 53 Finalists, representing 50 institutions, split over the 14 categories.



GET TWEETING ABOUT THE INSPIRATIONAL FINALISTS AT @GREENGOWNS

Want to know more about our inspiring 2021 Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists?

Then visit the Sustainability Exchange where you can view additional information including short videos, infographics and documents (where provided).

www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/green_gown_awards1

Want to SUPPORT THE GREEN GOWN AWARDS?

Please help us continue our vital work in supporting and celebrating the incredible sustainability initiatives being undertaken by our sector.

You can do this at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/greengownawards>

We are grateful for all donations (big or small) which will go towards to the running of the Green Gown Awards.

Where provided, we have included each project's savings over a given period.

KEY

t = tonnes

kg = kilogrammes

% = percent amount = actual /

estimate / target over period of time.



Judges have the discretion to award up to two category winners based on the size of the institution. Large/small sized institution is based on annual turnover of £50 million or below. This is to recognise that the size of an institution can affect the size and impact of an initiative. This will be done when applications are of a high quality, at the judges' discretion and it is not mandatory.

***The Winning entry will be put forward for the International Green Gown Award.**

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Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland

18
Winners

18
Highly
Commended

53
Finalists

Leading Climate and Sustainability Excellence in Extraordinary Times

The Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland provide the sector with inspiration and benchmarks for climate and wider sustainability excellence. Respected by Governments, funding councils, senior management, academics, and students and in the face of profound disruption and distraction, this year's Finalists are no exception. Representing over 862,000 students and 156,000 staff, the Green Gowns lead the way to identify, profile and scale the value that universities and colleges bring to the economy and society even in the most challenging times.

We need to ensure that we inspire and empower our young people to visualise a better future and to do all that we can to ensure that every career becomes a sustainable career. We need to turn feelings of anger and anxiety into hope and action. Education has a pivotal role to play. This is a decisive decade for our very own future and this year's Green Gown Award winners reflect the urgency and innovation identified at COP26. Inspired by our winners, highly commended and all of our finalists means that we have no time to delay to replicate and scale their work in our own institution.

Each Finalist is tasked with identifying their project's top 4 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): topping the list this year and rightly so is "Climate Action" at 60% (up from 51% last year), 50% are working towards "Sustainable Cities and Communities" (new to the top 4), 44% are delivering 'Quality Education' (up from 34% last year) and 36% are working towards 'Responsible Consumption and Production' (down on 51% last year).

The Global reach of the Green Gown Awards continues to grow

The Green Gown Awards are further enhanced by their ever-expanding international presence. Each winner from the regional categories – 2030 Climate Action, Benefitting Society, Next Generation Learning and Skills, Student Engagement, and Sustainability Institution of the Year Award - go head-to-head for the coveted International Green Gown Awards.

We work hard with the many partners of the Awards to ensure the good practices shown from our Finalists are disseminated far and wide. With a showcase of over 1,000+ case studies, short videos, and infographics from past Winners, Highly Commended and Finalist entries available from the Sustainability Exchange (www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk), we are sure there is plenty there to inspire you.

Partners

Without the financial support and sponsorship from our 2021 partners we would not be able to run the Awards and for this we are most grateful. We also thank the 100+ expert colleagues who help judge the applications for their time, commitment, and valuable contributions. It is their substantial experience in working with and representing universities, colleges, and other providers of tertiary education, as well as industry experts, that truly make the Green Gown Awards sector-owned.

The Awards have no entry fee, and the virtual Awards Ceremony is free to attend, however, we do ask for your support - if you are able - with a donation which will allow us to continue our vital work in supporting and celebrating the sector. You can do this at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/greengownawards>.

We really do appreciate your support and all donations will go towards the Green Gown Awards.

Finally, we congratulate each of our Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists and encourage them to continue on their sustainability paths which in these challenging years, is now more critical than ever.

Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education

Peter James, Chair, Green Gown Awards Steering Group, Director of S-Lab, and co-founder of the Awards



www.greengownawards.org | 01242 714 321 | @greengowns | greengown@eauc.org.uk



























About the Awards

The Green Gown Awards underline the value and recognition that winning offers, and highlight the continued importance of sustainability within the international tertiary educational sector.

The Green Gown Awards UK and Ireland are administered by EAUC – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education and are governed by a cross agency steering group made up of:

- Advance HE
- Association of Colleges (AoC)
- Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA)
- Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE)
- British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG)
- College Development Network
- Colleges Wales
- EAUC – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education
- Education and Skills Funding Agency
- The Education and Training Foundation
- Guild HE
- Higher Education Environmental Performance Improvement (HEEPI)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Jisc
- Learning and Work Institute
- National Union of Students (NUS)
- Office for Students
- Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- University and College Union (UCU)
- Universities UK (UUK)

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  Universities UK |  Cymru Cytido Adolyg Urech Cymru Higher Education Funding Council for Wales |  Education & Skills Funding Agency |  L&W LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE |
|  ASSOCIATION OF HEADS OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION |  HE EPI HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT |  Scottish Funding Council Promoting further and higher education |  Jisc |
|  Office for Students |  AUDE Association of University Directors of Estates |  EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION |  BUFDG British Universities Finance Directors Group |
|  AdvanceHE |  eauc Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education |  Green Gown Awards |  bufdg british universities finance directors group |
|  nus national union of students |  cdn College Development Network |  Colegau Cymru Colleges Wales |  UCU University and College Union |
|  AoC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES |  PRME Principles for Responsible Management Education |  sustainability exchange |  SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS |

The Awards have been sponsored and supported by a number of organisations during their lifetime and huge thanks go to past and present sponsors and supporters. Thank you.



2021 Judges

The judging panel are representatives of sector organisations and/or specialists in a particular area. It is their substantial experience that truly makes the Green Gown Awards sector owned. We thank the judges for their time, commitment and valuable contributions.

3 side cube

Advance HE

AOC - Association of Colleges

APUC (Scotland) - Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges

AGCAS - Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services

ASRA - The Association for Student Residential Accommodation

AUCSO - The Association of University Chief Security Officers

AUE - Association of University Engineers

Black Sun

BREEAM UK New Construction/ BRE Global

BUFDG - British Universities Finance Directors Group

Caplor Horizons

Centre for Sustainable Solutions

Change Agents

Circular Economy Club

Climate Change Awareness Project/British Council

Climate Commission

College Development Network

CUBO - College and University Business Officers

Enactus UK

EAUC - The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education

EAUC Groups - EAUC Board and Fellow Members and representatives from regional Communities of Practice (COPs) and Topic Support Networks (TSNs)

Enactus

Education & Training Foundation

Global Sustainability Institute of Anglia Ruskin University

GUILD HE

Hillside Environmental Services

HOLEX - Adult Community Education and Learning

LUPC - London Universities Purchasing Consortium

MY CARBON

oikos International

ProBe Advisory Group

PwC

QAA - Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Russell Group

SALIX Finance

S-LAB

Soil Association

SOS - UK & International

Student Hubs

TEC - The Energy Consortium

UCU - University and College Union

Union of Students in Ireland

UKRI - UK Research and Innovation

UUK - Universities UK

WRAP - Circular Economy & Resource Efficiency Experts



2021 SPONSORS

2030 CLIMATE ACTION*



RESEARCH WITH IMPACT - INSTITUTION

BENEFITTING SOCIETY*

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT*

BUILDING BACK BETTER

TOMORROW'S EMPLOYEES

CAMPUS HEALTH, FOOD AND DRINK

SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTION OF THE YEAR AWARD*



CAMPUS OF THE FUTURE

RESEARCH WITH IMPACT - STUDENT

ENTERPRISE



SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION AWARD - STAFF AND STUDENT



NEXT GENERATION LEARNING AND SKILLS*

MEDIA PARTNER



REPORTING WITH INFLUENCE



The Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland are run in accordance with EAUC's high expectations of sustainable standards and its sustainable events' ethos.

For more information, please visit www.eauc.org.uk/sustainability

Founded by HEEPI, the Green Gown Awards are administered by EAUC. For more information please visit www.greengownawards.org.uk.
 Disclaimer: The information provided within this publication has been provided solely by the applicant as defined by the Awards through the two stage process. No member of the Green Gown Awards team or steering group will be liable for any misrepresentation.
 * The Winning entry will be put forward for the International Green Gown Award.



Sustainable Development Goals

On September 25th, 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and people like you.

We asked each of our Finalists to select up to a maximum of four goals that their application particularly delivered against. These are shown alongside their individual listings, showing the impact education has on a global scale.



Sign the SDG Accord www.sdgaccord.org 



2030 Climate Action

Institutions are having to plan how they get to net-zero emissions. This category focuses on the steps that institutions are taking and planning to take to reach their targets.

Category sponsor



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

Bridgend College

Small institution



The 'spider's web' - an extraordinary vision for zero emissions

Our mission is 'to seek out and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions wherever they hide' but we are not an island. This current and future-faced project takes a multi-disciplinary and science-based approach working with people in our Carbon Task Force, seeking fewer but more ethically-minded partnerships such as the Art of the Possible partnership working with an award-winning consultancy for a genuine movement for positive change.

We are working with partners for the 60,000 trees and biodiversity project, 2022 Sustainability Summit, 200-point EV charging, architects and designers for our new STEAM Academy and land based buildings which will be carbon positive for electricity this year and on the horizon - planning for a new Town Centre Campus. The new Action for Sustainability Digital Badges and staff training planned for this year will support our ambitions. The purpose is to nurture people and our environment so that they can flourish simultaneously as part of a growth mind-set; leading front and centre.

What the judges thought...

The judges were highly impressed with the holistic and whole institution approach to climate action. With evident progress since 2016, strong leadership and commitment to a refreshed climate strategy the range of actions across all domains in a large and complex institution is impressive. There was much evidence for other universities and colleges to learn from.

What it means to win

"We are absolutely delighted to win this prestigious Green Gown Award! This has been a fantastic team effort from everyone at Bridgend College and although there is still much more to do, this wonderful achievement recognises that we are on the right path."

Simon Pirotte, Principal/Chief Executive

Top 3 learnings

1. We recognise and value the great strength in collaboration and partnership working.
2. Our clear sense of purpose helps us focus on what is possible and achievable.
3. We are not afraid to make mistakes.



Winner

The University of Edinburgh

Large institution



Positive Futures: Addressing the climate crisis through a whole institution approach

The climate crisis is one of the most pressing issues facing humanity, and the University has demonstrated its commitment to playing a leading role in creating a more sustainable world through implementing a whole institution approach. The University's Climate Change Strategy from 2016, sets out the significant steps it will take to achieve its carbon neutral commitment by 2040. To date, the University has reduced its carbon emissions by 15 per cent since 2007-08, during a period when turnover increased by one hundred per cent. A total of £7.4 million has been invested since 2016-17 in projects, delivering savings of £1 million and estimated annual saving of over 3,000 tonnes CO₂e.

A new Sustainable Travel Policy has been developed to actively promote climate conscious travel. Significant work has been undertaken to ensure the University's investments are positively responding to the climate crisis. And the University has been proactively developing a range of accessible education resources, as well as harnessing its academic expertise to help local and global efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

What the judges thought...

The judges were impressed by the science-based target approach across this very large and multi-college university. There is clearly rigour in application and carbon savings being made. At the same time there is action around scope 3 and evident external engagement and sharing of learning.

What it means to win

"Our mission is to deliver positive impact for society, by discovering, developing and sharing knowledge. The University is committed to supporting a lower-carbon, healthier, more sustainable and equitable future. The Green Gown Awards provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of our staff and students to help us achieve this."

Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Adaptation and carbon sequestration project impacts are maximised through careful long term forward planning.
2. The Climate Crisis is one of the most important issues for staff and students at Edinburgh.
3. Climate strategies do not stand still, they evolve over time to reflect changing priorities and contexts.



Highly Commended Newcastle University



Climate Action at Newcastle University: Our roadmap to change

Newcastle University's Climate Action Plan (CAP) sets an ambitious target for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 for scopes 1 and 2 and a range of challenging targets for scope 3. The CAP represents a further raising of ambition in our leading carbon reduction work, underway since the development of our first Carbon Management Plan in 2007 which has seen us achieve a 43% reduction in carbon emissions since a 2005/6 baseline as well as meet the BEIS Carbon Pledge.

These achievements provide milestones on our journey, but we know there is more we need to do to accelerate our climate action, and we have been working at pace to not only develop our roadmap but also ensure key projects are underway towards meeting our goal. Developed with our colleagues, students and partners, our CAP targets deep and lasting change through our research, teaching and daily practices.

What the judges thought...

The judges were impressed with the 10-point action plan for meeting net zero targets and the holistic approach to climate action.

There are ambitious plans of work and strong partnership working within the city and with the sector.

What it means to win

"This Award makes me so proud. Our Climate Action Plan 2030 has been created through a whole University effort between students and colleagues. To receive this recognition gives immense pleasure but also future energy and impetus to everyone working together to bring about real positive change at Newcastle University."

Professor Julie Sanders, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

Top 3 learnings

1. Be brave and set a high ambition.
2. Be honest about the challenges, including those around scope 3 and offsetting.
3. Ensure key stakeholders, especially students, are engaged in CAP development.



Highly Commended University of Cambridge



Following the science to go beyond net zero

By adopting a science based approach to target setting, the University of Cambridge has positioned itself to take ambitious and collaborative climate action to reduce its scope 1 and 2 emissions to absolute zero before 2048 (requiring a 75% reduction by 2030). With a focus on 'following the science', the University has built engagement and momentum behind its carbon reduction programme and provided a platform for increased collaboration across the Collegiate University. Parties across the wider University and the 31 Cambridge Colleges have engaged with the Science Based Target approach, which is in turn fostering new conversations around common experiences, ideas, and challenges.

Capitalising on this, the University has developed and is implementing a programme of work to reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions from its operational estate to absolute zero and is sharing its learning with parties across the Collegiate University to support joint working across all aspects of carbon reduction.

What the judges thought...

The judges were impressed by the science-based target approach across this very large and multi-college university. There is clearly rigour in application and carbon savings being made. At the same time there is action around scope 3 and evident external engagement and sharing of learning.

What it means to win

"I am thrilled to accept this important Award which celebrates our collective progress and bold strategic direction, while also looking to a net-zero future for the University that puts resilience, innovation and partnership at its heart."

Professor Stephen Toope, Vice-Chancellor

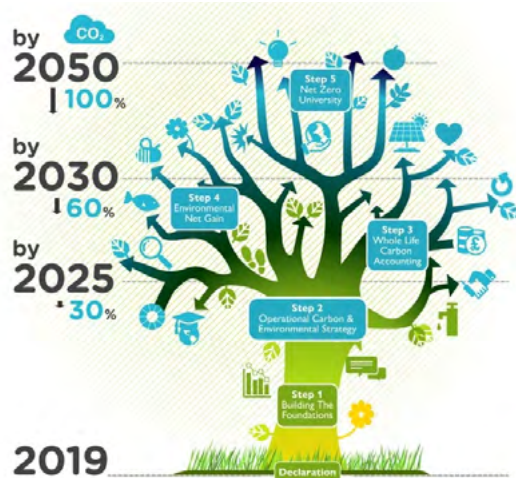
Top 3 learnings

1. Focus on finding common ground - whatever that might look like in your institution.
2. A science-based approach can unite parties with differing views on what your carbon reduction strategy should look like.
3. Whatever approach you take, focus on being transparent about what works and what does not.



FINALISTS

University of Exeter



Top 3 learnings

1. Other than carbon, we must consider other factors such as biodiversity, health and wellbeing, and embedding the SDGs.
2. Providing opportunities for student and staff engagement in our climate agenda has been key.
3. By sharing we hope that institutions will do the same and collaborate to achieve our net zero goals as a sector.

Environment and climate emergency journey to net zero and beyond

In May 2019 the University declared an Environment and Climate Emergency (E&CE) to support staff and student calls for greater action. Since our declaration, the climate agenda has progressed at speed, with a new carbon roadmap setting out our plans for achieving net zero (across all carbon scopes) by 2050 at the very latest. This ambitious plan takes into account the need for sector collaboration in achieving our climate goals, but also goes beyond carbon, focusing on environmental net gain across our grounds, region and the globe. We have already built the foundations with a growing bespoke E&CE Team, Board, and policy in place to guide our agenda.

We encourage our entire student and staff community get involved, via attending thematic forums to deliver carbon reduction projects, engaging with our online Green Rewards Platform to win prizes for their sustainable actions, or by taking part in the new Societies Sustainability Alliance, to have a tangible impact on our Net Zero journey.



University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

Tending the conditions for climate action to flourish

This project is about embedding truly sustainable, transformational change by creating the conditions for emergence of Climate Action within the UWE community, following the principles of systems thinking. It is about recognising that the institution is complex, that traditional cultural change programmes are not long-lasting or quick. It is about appreciating that staff and students know “their” area of the university best and are in the optimum position to make change. Their role as active agents to keep UWE focused and developing in our sustainability ambitions is crucial.

It is about facilitating action to target the areas of greatest impact and influence. It is about letting go - seeing ourselves as the gardeners, seeing what will grow if we create fabulous conditions and plant many seeds. It is about enabling, creating confidence, encouraging action, and having a model to frame actions on to grow cautious optimism.



Top 3 learnings

1. Creating an adaptable approach to suit the conditions of each specific group is fundamental.
2. Creating an empowering environment that enables individuals to release their potential is key.
3. Be open to what emerges and let go!



University of Warwick

Carbon emissions removal: The Warwick way to sustainable. Aligning engineering decarbonisation with science based targets

In 2019, the University declared climate emergency and committed to net-zero carbon emissions (scope 1, 2) in 2030. The plan deploys a series of low/no-regret investments in incremental emission reduction implementations. The project aims to deliver continual annual emissions reduction, ensuring the University's contribution towards a 1.5°C global temperature scenario.

Significant investment in on-site generation, energy storage and heat pumps will annul CHPs, increase resilience to ever-increasing electricity import cost transience, while slashing emissions. Energy storage and internal switchboards will increase flexibility, further improving energy system resilience. The University will continue reducing its consumption. The plan aims to deliver scope 1 and 2 carbon reduction of 19% by 2024, 36% by 2027 and a total 70% reduction by 2030 compared to a business as usual projection.



Top 3 learnings

1. Learn and inspire from international best practices.
2. Combine Estates and academic expertise.
3. Create a core team with 'can do' attitude to maintain focus and delivery.

University of Winchester



The University for Sustainability and Social Justice - our journey to net zero

In 2006, the University of Winchester (UoW) set out on its journey to decarbonise its estate. In addition to purchasing 100% renewable electricity since 2008, the UoW is one of the first to purchase 100% Green Gas from August 2020 making the campus net zero from energy emissions.

We are now stepping up our carbon reduction programme further with a major £3.1m capital investment programme in low-carbon technologies taking place over Summer 2021. This investment is possible through a £3.1m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant. The project priority is the decarbonisation of heat, with 32 air source heat pumps replacing gas boilers, Solar PV, LED lighting and BMS optimisation will guarantee annual savings of 505 tCO2e/£102k (location based). Added to our participation in the EAUC Carbon Coalition trial, UoW is now one of the lowest carbon Institutions in the UK and will achieve Carbon Neutral Status for our Scope 1 & 2 emissions for 2020/21.

Top 3 learnings

1. Having 'shovel ready' projects is good when funding opportunities present themselves
2. Procuring renewable energy and fleet replacement will have a significant impact on Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions.
3. Scope 1 & 2 emissions are just the tip of the iceberg



ENERGY & EDUCATION CONNECTED

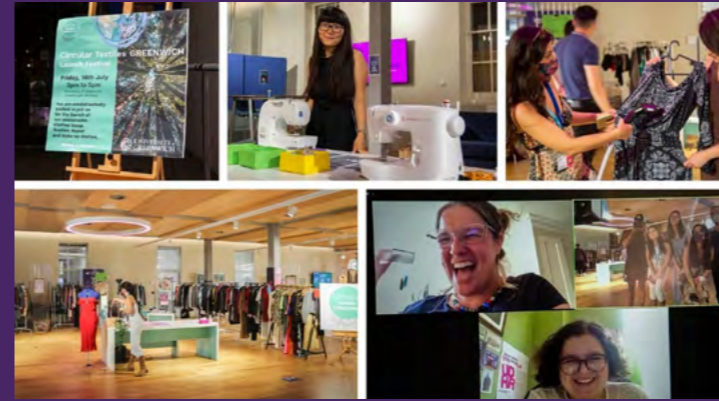
PROUD SPONSORS OF THE 2030 CLIMATE ACTION AWARD

Championing the interests of the education sector by delivering sustainable energy solutions which deliver carbon reduction for our Members, you can trust TEC to support your Institution on your Net Zero journey.

Our highly experienced team of energy experts deliver services in energy procurement, data reporting, price risk and carbon management.

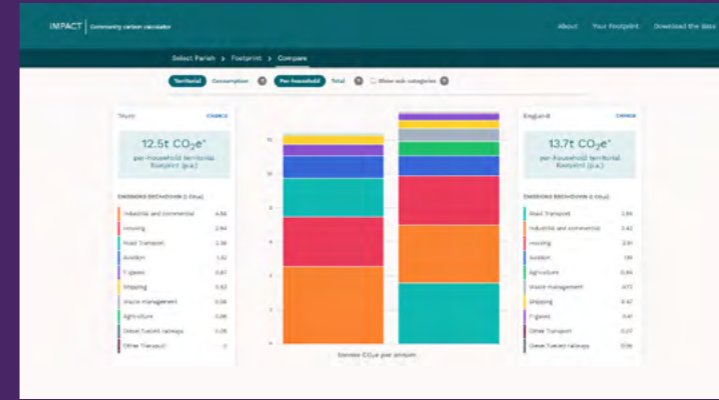
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Benefitting Society

This category captures the powerful and innovative ways education institutions are realising their purpose in today's society to benefit the lives of individuals, communities and wider society.



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Photo credit: Lindsay Duncanson



Winner

Dumfries and Galloway College

Small institution



Making the most of the coast - marine plastics

In association with The Dumfries Devorgilla Rotary Club, Solway Firth Partnership and Eco Warriors, Dumfries and Galloway College Photography and Visual Communication students have been working together to create photography and animation work which highlights the impact of plastic on marine life. As a starting point, these creative works will be used to aid the discussion and identify ways forward to address the issue of marine plastics and the effects they have on our environment and potential filtration into our food chain.

A webinar will be held after the Holyrood Elections and attended by parties including The Rotary Club, SEPA, Solway Firth Partnership, Holyrood, Councils, and Marine Conservation groups where the videos will be viewed and shared and exhibited at Dumfries and Galloway College and with a larger local audience on social media. This project will help to highlight the serious issue of a regional 'plastic problem' and students have been able to respond to it in creative and thoughtful ways. The animation works were created to fully engage the students and highlight the issues in context.

What the judges thought...

This project may have been small, but it had real impact with limited resources, making great local partnerships and innovative approaches, and beautiful art. We thought this was a beautiful project, well implemented and showed real innovation. We need to connect people to the issue of marine plastic and its consequences, and the art you produced goes a long way towards doing that.

What it means to win

"Winning the award is a tremendous honour for us. This prize represents the environmental ethos of our student community, which strives to embed the benefits we can bring to our region into all our partnerships, green policies, and eco-friendly initiatives."

Joanna Campbell, Principal and CEO

Top 3 learnings

1. Community partnerships are integral to college and student growth.
2. Encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box thinking in challenging times.
3. Helping students to find their voice on key issues.



Winner

Newcastle University and Cap-a-Pie

Large institution



Photo credit: Lindsay Duncanson

Climate Change Catastrophe! - a new show about climate change, made by kids, for grown-ups

What do kids think about climate change? Can school children develop the engineering solutions to one of society's biggest challenges? Climate Change Catastrophe! is a theatre project developed jointly between Cap-a-Pie and Newcastle University's School of Engineering that will give you inspiring perspectives on one of the biggest challenges of our time - climate change. It's all about what children think about climate change – their hopes, fears, and ideas for the future. The show was released as a six-part online series in May 2021.

To make this show, scientists and engineers at Newcastle University worked with hundreds of Key Stage 2 students from across the North of England as well as theatre company Cap-a-Pie. Ideas were shaped together, based on research in the School of Engineering and interactive activities. Everything you see in the show has been informed by, inspired by, or is directly from ideas from children.

What the judges thought...

This innovative project brought STEM scientists directly into contact with schools, inspiring children to follow STEM careers, connecting them to issues like climate change. The project reacted well to COVID and could be repeated by others across the UK. We loved this project, and that you were adapting and making it ready to use at other schools. A great winner.

What it means to win

"We are so proud of our climate action research at Newcastle University but to win an award for a project that benefits society is really special. This brilliant collaboration demonstrated how, through the creative input of theatre makers and the wonderful young people of our region, knowledge can be transformative."

Professor Julie Sanders, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

Top 3 learnings

1. We learnt the importance of partnership working across academic, creative, and community sectors.
2. We discovered that creative arts organisations are vital to communicating complex engineering ideas.
3. Our engineers learnt that children have freedom of imagination to think up crazy climate solutions!



Highly Commended Aston University



Low carbon SMEs

SMEs in the West Midlands (UK) face many challenges in achieving the ambitious target of being net zero carbon by 2041. In response to this challenge, Low Carbon SMEs (LCSMEs) was set up in 2017 to help 165 businesses until 2023 reduce their carbon footprint substantially (7 ton per company) and make the transition to a net zero industrial future. The programme attracted a £1.7m grant from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), bringing together an expert team of over 20 members from Aston Business School comprising leading academics and industry practitioners.

A blend of world-class applied research and industry-led consulting led to the “greening” of 85 businesses to date, largely from the energy intensive manufacturing sector, yielding average energy cost and CO₂e savings per company of £8,879 and 40 tonnes CO₂e, respectively. Radically improving overall SME sustainability performance through the adoption of low carbon initiatives led to business growth and improved employee productivity.

What the judges thought...

This project successfully de-siloed academics and connected them to small businesses, prompting additional research; and recognised that SMEs are all different, needing differing approaches to lessen their environmental impacts.

What it means to win

“This is well deserved recognition for the Low Carbon SMEs team and participating academics, and a real boost to the education and business sectors for the sustainable development work at Aston University. A special thanks to all those involved and the ERDF for making the project a success. We look forward to the next stage of growing our low carbon programme.”

Professor Pawan Budhwar, Head of Aston Business School

Top 3 learnings

1. Improving environmental performance can directly enhance overall business productivity and wellbeing.
2. Industry-academic collaboration can solve business sustainability challenges.
3. Lifecycle approach and collaboration among the stakeholders facilitate sustainability in SME businesses.



Highly Commended Cardiff Metropolitan University



Hero's Haven student society project

Hero's Haven is a student led project about hope. Throughout lockdown we have worked as volunteers with children in our local Pupil Referral Centre to meet their needs of wellbeing, life skills, learning and community engagement, through environmental and sustainability-based workshops. These children are vulnerable so still attended the unit all through 2020.

We offer a combination of COVID safe online resources that can be accessed by our YouTube channel. In person workshops covering activities such as gardening, environmental protection, nature-based arts and crafts using recycled materials. Community forest planting days, where we have successfully planted an 80 tree food forest in Llandaff campus. This will be looked after and harvested by the college and the school communities. The project will eventually spread to other youth centres in Cardiff and become self-sustaining through selling produce at our community market and running forest school activities adding environmental entrepreneurship to the impact of the project.

What the judges thought...

A great project using resources to support children whose needs haven't been met by the education system, encompassing climate change, health, and wellbeing, and opening up future life chances.

What it means to win

"Innovation' is one of Cardiff Met's key values. Staff and students have engaged with a broad range of innovative developments from curriculum to estates as we aim to attain our ambition to become Net Zero by 2030. Winning this award is a great accolade for our Cardiff Met community."

Professor Cara Aitchison MA (Hons), PgDRLP, CertEd, MA, PhD, FAcSS FRGS FHEA FLSW, President and Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Know what you're doing and why. It's about researching the need and achieving the impact.
2. Keep it real. Focus on the thing you can achieve over impractical big ideas.
3. Communicate. Make sure everyone knows what's happening when, and delegate work.



FINALISTS

The University of Edinburgh



Top 3 learnings

1. We have learned that awarding the grant is just the start of the relationship.
2. We trust community organisations to spend money well and avoid bureaucracy.
3. We remind ourselves of the bigger funding and societal picture within which our grants exist.

Supporting local action for a better Edinburgh

Since 2017, the University of Edinburgh has provided grants to local community organisations for projects which have a positive social impact for people living locally. The emphasis is on supporting groups who have the least in a city which is one of the most unequal in the UK (Edinburgh Poverty Commission, 2020). While partnership between community organisations and the University is encouraged, the ethos is that communities know what they need and how to achieve it. Four years in, the longer-term positive impacts of some funded projects are now being seen.

The Y2K '180' project, seed-funded by the University in 2018, is going strong and has been in even more need by young people due to the pandemic. The University is one of very few globally to make community-led funding awards and offers the most funding out of all. Still, conscious that £50,000 per year is still modest, the University has both doubled this figure in practice and provided other support alongside it.



The University of Greenwich

Circular Textiles Greenwich

The Circular Textiles Greenwich project aims to address and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and contribute to eliminating forced labour and modern slavery as part of UN SDGs (8, 7 & 12).

The project involves establishing a hub at the University of Greenwich for swapping clothes, providing a textiles repair, and upcycling and mending training station and community exchange, including inviting local entrepreneurs to share and promote their experiences.

The hub raises awareness on human rights and environmental abuses in the global supply chains, with a focus on the fashion industry, through these activities as well as public talks and promoting engagement with the research of the Business, Human Rights, and the Environment Research Group (BHRE).



Top 3 learnings

1. We engage the local community in practicing sustainable consumption through the clothes swap.
2. Our community is the spark that will light the way towards local climate action.
3. By extending the lifecycle of clothes, we are moving closer towards a positive sustainable future.

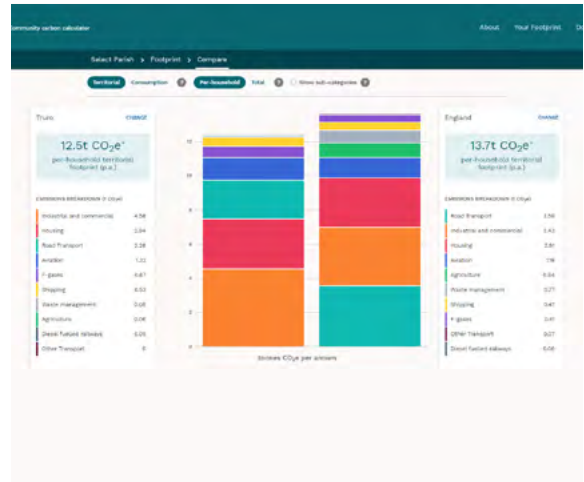


University of Exeter

Impact tool: Community Carbon Calculator

Impact, the parish-level carbon emission estimator, gives parishes and small communities usable data on their carbon emissions that is easy to interpret and easy to share. It tells users how people in the parish travel and heat their homes, and other activities in the area that contribute to the local carbon emissions total. Impact identifies the main 'carbon impact areas' in the parish or town - those places where focused community-based action can make the biggest contribution to cutting local emissions.

The tool includes territorial and consumption approaches to estimating carbon footprints; both provide useful information to help target local action to reduce emissions. A territorial carbon footprint includes all emissions generated within a defined geographical area, including those from industry, agriculture, and transport activities. A consumption-based footprint includes upstream and downstream emissions from residents' consumption of manufactured goods, food, and their own transport activity, regardless of where the emissions occur.



Top 3 learnings

1. We identified the key similarities and differences between communities in terms of their impacts.
2. Providing communities with tools to understand their own impacts is a catalyst for large-scale action.
3. Combining resources with an external organisation resulted in improved outcomes for all.



University of Hertfordshire



Wild Connections - Windowsill Series

The premise of the project was to build a collective community awareness of biodiversity and how we can support and protect the wildlife around us. The environment we live and work in forms part of the wider context of our lives.

This environment changed suddenly as the country went into lockdown due to COVID-19. In January 2021, we launched an initiative project Windowsill Series 'WILD CONNECTIONS' designed to enrich their community's mental health and wellbeing and enhancing the biodiversity however big or small. The projects encouraged individuals to get involved in 4 episodes connected to environmental awareness and management. Through the collaborative work between the University and local groups (Ground Works) and the local community through access to our content via YouTube, the project provided great awareness and education for the community. The University of Hertfordshire's Environment & Sustainability Team worked in close partnership with the Dean of Students, Community Biodiversity Special Advisers, Estates Teams, and the University Green Team to bring together the package of awareness campaigns and events.

Top 3 learnings

1. The ability to Innovate and adapt.
2. The strong connection of the environment and sustainability with Workplace Wellbeing.
3. Be mindful of how the choices around you impact your individual wellbeing.



FINALISTS

University of Warwick



Top 3 learnings

1. Teamwork is essential and frontline staff are key to make changes happen.
2. Think global act local.
3. Turning waste into resources.

End of term enters the circular economy. Closing the loop of circular economy during pandemic to support local community

How frontline key workers within the University of Warwick collaborated with local charities and Emmaus during lockdown, turning waste into resources to create a circular economy project offering regenerative support to the local community while reducing waste.

At Warwick, we want to demonstrate it is possible to be convenient, efficient and fight climate change. Transition to circular economy is essential to preserve natural resources and reduce carbon emissions if we are to meet 2050 climate goals.

The project is a key example of breaking the routine of "buy and throw away" inducing a mind-set change in our students, staff, and local community. Taking place during COVID lockdown, extensive team efforts doubled. End of term items collected for reuse, enabled large quantities of donations to local charities and food banks for the benefit of the community. Incoming students bought donated items and generously raised near to £2,000 of charitable donations.



University of Worcester

Sustainable Young Minds - University joins forces with school and housing association to increase community recycling

University students created and market tested recycling information posters and a video aimed at their fellow students on campus. This proved so successful that this concept moved off campus and saw students working with primary school children to create their own 'at home' posters. They held a workshop with the school's Eco Club, who drew typical items that belonged in rubbish or recycling. Creative Media students turned their artwork into posters that the pupils took home to give their family greater guidance, becoming 'pupils as teachers'. This approach attracted sponsorship from a national housing association, Platform Housing, the largest housing association in the Midlands.

Issuing White Bags, via the school community, is now being rolled out to over 45,000 homes to people mostly living in areas of highest need. The plan is to distribute 15,000 recycling bags via schools to Platform Housing homes and engage closely with the local community across the Midlands region.



Top 3 learnings

1. Pupils as teachers - we motivated the schoolchildren to educate all their family members.
2. Our scheme showed bespoke materials, really does make a difference.
3. Our fun competition between schools and classes helped energise a 'whole school' approach.



Building Back Better

This new category is recognising the impact that the pandemic has had on institutions and challenges and opportunities that have been created to drive an environmental and just sustainable recovery in a fair and inclusive way. The pandemic has impacted the education sector hugely, however it has also provided opportunities for creativity and innovation. It has challenged colleagues in the sector to review everything from how we deliver education through to how we use our estates, and this has liberated us to think differently and find new more sustainable solutions.

Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Join GREEN IMPACT

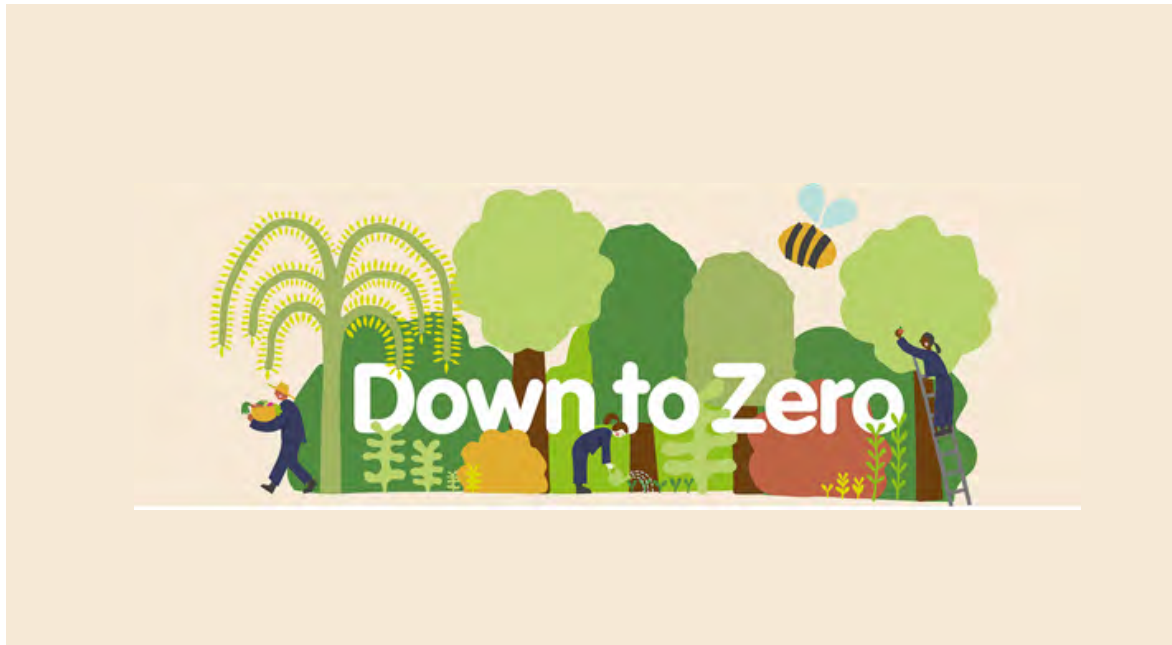
1. Purchase sustainable alternatives to day-to-day products such as coffee and tea, cleaning material, recycled paper and more.
 2. Reduce the use of paper.
 3. Consider reuse and recycle items before disposing

RETHINK YOUR RESOURCES

REMIND, ADVISE, AND SUPPORT
 Your team members about the individual steps they can

Winner

Cardiff Metropolitan University



Down to zero: Cynon Taff Community Housing Decarbonisation Project

Three interdisciplinary academics from Cardiff Metropolitan University have teamed up with Cynon Taff Community Housing Group (a medium sized housing association) to embark on a long-term project with the ultimate goal of developing a land-based draw down and capture of CO₂ alongside community supported agroforestry and growing projects to produce local food and reduce food miles.

The initial stages have included the creation of a working group, identification of milestones and stages for the project and a research led analysis of the costs, risks, and benefits of each element. This marks the first stage of a long term, ground-breaking project which seeks to reduce the carbon footprint of Cynon Taff Housing Association down to or below zero within the next five to ten years and then in perpetuity. It is aligned with the both the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and marks the initial step towards a more sustainable future.

What the judges thought...

This highly effective initiative identified issues that became more acute during the pandemic. The pandemic was used successfully not just to address this, but to accelerate implementation. A worthy winner.

What it means to win

"Innovation' is one of Cardiff Met's key values. Staff and students have engaged with a broad range of innovative developments from curriculum to estates as we aim to attain our ambition to become Net Zero by 2030. Winning this award is a great accolade for our Cardiff Met community."
Professor Cara Aitchison MA (Hons), PgDRLP, CertEd, MA, PhD, FAcSS FRGS FHEA FLSW, President and Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Meaningful, long terms solutions can take time.
2. We believe that an integrated systems approach is more sustainable than standalone projects.
3. Time spent in the preparation and planning stage reduces potential pitfalls and mistakes later.



FINALISTS

De Montfort University



Top 3 learnings

1. Identifying the correct community partners will ensure that the project is best placed for success.
2. Ensure your project is scalable so that if external funding is secured, it can grow.
3. Take your time. Long term impact has more benefits than short term success.

Community Solutions Programme

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, De Montfort University (DMU), Leicester, has used its position as community leader and anchor institution for Leicester to lead a programme to enable its communities to follow the United Nations' call to 'build back better'.

The programme consists of three projects: 1. Reducing the Digital Divide - DMU is calling on local businesses and organisations to donate unused computers, laptops and other digital items which are offered to the community to help tackle the digital divide exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. 2. Germ's Journey - The newly published book: 'Bye Bye Germs: Be a Handwashing Super Hero', was developed to teach children in a fun and engaging way about respiratory disease and the importance of handwashing and has received great feedback from parents and teachers regarding its effectiveness. 3. Homelessness City Project - The project supports people in Leicester to enable them to set up a home and support reintegration into the local community following a period of homelessness.



University of Cambridge and RE-USE

A "return and reuse" logistics system for takeaway food and drink containers

The market for takeaway food delivery has grown dramatically in recent decades, leading to increased waste generation, pollution, and elevated carbon footprints, partly related to using disposable food containers. One study has estimated that a staggering 2 billion single-use takeaway containers are used every year in the European Union alone. Meanwhile, the recent 'Single Out' campaign estimated that around 10 tonnes of takeaway containers were disposed of from the University of Cambridge annually.

Our response to COVID-19 has further exacerbated the scale of waste generation. The pandemic has created huge problems in waste management - collection and processing for disposable/compostable containers. Girton & Darwin catering teams have collaborated with RE-USE, an innovative system for reusable takeaway containers, with an aim to not only tackle waste generation and pollution, but also provide tangible benefits to staff and students in Cambridge Colleges.



Top 3 learnings

1. Sustainability can be effortless. RE-USE is easy and convenient, not to mention cost-efficient and sustainable.
2. RE-USE can be implemented in other institutions, in different formats (soup, salad containers, coffee cups).
3. We need more forward-thinking institutions, supporting innovative initiatives like RE-USE.



University of Oxford

University of Oxford new ways of working

Following lessons learned during COVID-19 pandemic and working remotely, the University of Oxford has committed to making adjustments to accommodate a "new normal" for sustainability and wellbeing. The primary change encompasses introducing a framework to support opportunities for greater flexibility in future working arrangements, including hybrid forms of working, across the University's professional services.

The pandemic has upended the traditional way of work for many colleagues at the University. The changes, although forced by the circumstances, shed light on the potential benefits for environmental sustainability, wellbeing, and equality.

The University's newly approved Environmental Sustainability Strategy targets, among other action areas, lessons learned from the pandemic. As one of ten priority areas to apply and monitor the environmental effects of these changes is one of the criteria for the success of the project. These include carbon reduction, resource use and local travel. Additional criteria for the project relate to efficiency, staff, and students' wellbeing of and supporting equality in the workplace.



onsite.

Join **GREEN IMPACT**

1. Purchase sustainable alternatives to day-to-day products such as coffee and tea, cleaning material, recycled paper and more.
 2. Reduce the use of paper.
 3. Consider reuse and recycle items before disposing

RETHINK YOUR RESOURCES

REMIND, ADVISE, AND SUPPORT

Your team members about the individual steps they can take for environmental sustainability.

CONSIDER
The environmental implications of business

CHOOSE
Plant-based or vegetarian food for

Top 3 learnings

1. There is a genuine desire for people to do the right thing environmentally.
2. Behaviour change on large scale is achievable; addressing it empowers the community that is involved in the process.
3. The experience from the pandemic shed light on the need for large scale engagement and having everyone on board.

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For more information, please contact Claire de la Motte - cmotte@eauc.org.uk

Campus Health, Food and Drink

This category includes all food, drink, kitchen, and hospitality aspects of healthy, sustainable institutions. Including but not limited to; holistic approaches across the whole institution that show creativity, innovation and consideration for how healthy food and drink is procured, cooked and served, considering environmental and social issues and making informed selections.



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



100%



67%

Winner

Nottingham Trent University



A DINEamic sustainable journey

We strive to be an influential leader in corporate responsibility, global citizenship and sustainable business within the education sector, the catering industry and beyond, seeking out opportunities for investment and development and continually sharing and delivering best practice globally. Our achievements have resulted in a catering offer which exceeds our customer expectations in terms of variety, nutrition and above all sustainability. From procurement to plate we set ourselves challenging targets which we continue to achieve with passion and determination.

Our significant achievements have included a compelling reduction in food miles, waste, and energy consumption, and a considerable expansion of Fairtrade, organic, MSC, Red Tractor and plant-based produce. We have improved sustainable catering education within the university and wider community and have worked with suppliers to improve their sustainable credentials. We are passionate about engaging and educating our staff, our students, and the wider community in what can be achieved both with small steps and giant leaps.

What the judges thought...

A very well rounded application that showed a holistic lifestyle approach with lots of examples of good practice. The application also showed that great care is taken in what they do, and the culture of the organisation really is evident. Some great practice of innovation during the lock down period. Good levels of engagement between departments on a large scale.

What it means to win

"This Award reflects the University's strategic commitment to embracing sustainability, empowering people, and valuing ideas. Our students arrive already engaged with the key sustainability questions; by collaborating with our teaching and professional teams, we aim to develop their understanding and provide them with the opportunities to deliver meaningful change."

Professor Edward Peck, Vice-Chancellor and President

Top 3 learnings

1. We discovered that small changes can contribute substantially to the bigger picture.
2. We avoided being overprotective of our knowledge and through sharing made a greater impact.
3. We made sustainability an essential not an optional in all of our practices.



Highly Commended University of Plymouth



From local sourcing to agricultural robotics

Plymouth's approach to delivering sustainable, healthy food looks at the whole life cycle of production, including research and development into innovative technology to solve the emerging pressures in the agricultural supply chain. It ensures local sourcing, local disposal, high quality ethical and sustainable products, while also developing innovative robotics, vertical plant factories, soil manufacture and speciality Cornish crops to support agriculture for the future as it looks to respond to climate change and growing populations.

The University of Plymouth believes that understanding and managing the impact that its actions have on people and the environment, both locally and globally, is an essential part of being a socially and responsible transparent institution. What its staff and students eat, and drink has a significant impact on the producers throughout the supply chain, on the health of its consumers, and on the wider environment. So it is seeking to effect change, not just through conscious purchasing but also through developing revolutionary farming practices to help address industry pressures.

What the judges thought...

A comprehensive story of sustainable practices and research in action. A strong application, well supported by data and the impact of this. Well explained collaboration throughout.

What it means to win

"Universities demonstrate their sustainability credentials in many ways. The Campus Health, Food and Drink category challenges us to demonstrate excellence in how we operate on a fundamental level, championing sustainable and ethical principles for our staff, students, suppliers and stakeholders."

Professor Judith Petts CBE, Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Review impacts of decisions throughout the supply chain.
2. Engage and partner with innovative local producers.
3. Partner with health faculties to review nutritional factors in the food and drink offer.



FINALISTS

University of Nottingham



Enactus Nottingham - Foodprint

Foodprint, Nottingham's first social supermarket, was established in 2017 by a group of Enactus Nottingham members, all students at the University of Nottingham. We sell surplus supermarket food, which is still perfectly good to eat, at a 60% discount from the supermarket price. We are supported by our supply partners Fareshare and Neighbourly who together with a network of supermarkets such as Co-Op, Tesco, Lidl, Aldi, Sainsburys, Spar, and more, we are able to stock our shop with food which would otherwise go to landfill.

In the past year alone, we have prevented over 30 tonnes of food from going to landfill and have prevented 96 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere. Alongside this, we run projects such as Foodprint on Wheels, bringing affordable food to Nottingham's elderly and isolated communities, and supplying school breakfast clubs in partnership with Hovis.

Top 3 learnings

1. Food poverty and food wastage must never coexist, it is our mission to rectify this.
2. We work best as a collaborative community, bringing together students and local people.
3. We recognise the value of providing for the local community and preventing unnecessary waste.



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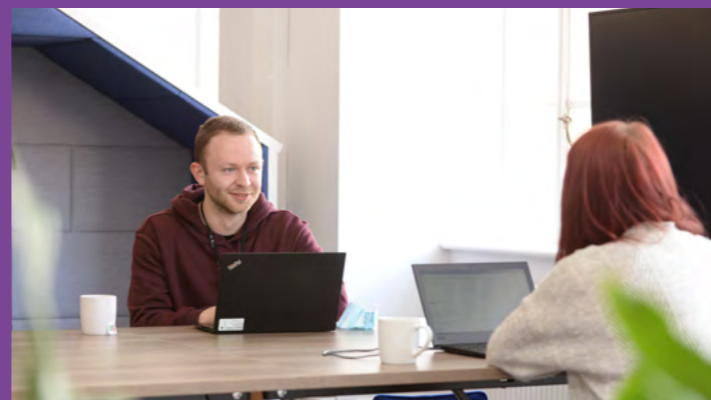


https://www.eauc.org.uk/carbon_literacy_training

Campus of the Future

This category recognises pathfinding campus and learning innovation to improve the student experience. Traditional campus and learning processes are challenged and advances in internet connectivity, artificial intelligence and augmented reality have scope to transform campuses and learning into more immersive and more sustainable experiences.

Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

Dumfries and Galloway College



Reimagining the learning environment

Creating a campus building that provides innovative facilities, digital accessibility, flexible access... and all without increasing our carbon footprint. That truly shows the way the campus of the future will operate.

Here at Dumfries and Galloway College we have created a new research and innovation centre which showcases a modern learning environment. Our Centre consist of a dedicated care hub which consist of a realistic flat mirroring a modern home care environment. Users can learn life-like skills using the most modern technology. Our Digital Hub allows for link up across the South of Scotland using enhanced virtual classroom technology, allowing our students to participate in live courses with partner institutions.

The Green Energy Centre is designed to help lead the way in providing the green skills essential for the post-COVID green recovery. This centre uses renewable technologies for practical power and heating as well as for use as live teaching aids for budding engineers.

What the judges thought...

Judges really liked the integration of environmental, health and digital and the use of technology, all of which created a multidisciplinary environment that supported the skills and employability of students at the College as well as benefits to the wider community.

A great example of leadership from the FE sector. Well done!

What it means to win

"Located in both Stranraer and Dumfries, our campuses contain some of the most innovative, forward-thinking, green skills, technology-based learning and teaching anywhere in the world. That's why we are delighted to have been recognised at these prestigious awards in the Campus of the Future category."

Joanna Campbell, Principal and CEO

Top 3 learnings

1. Flexible, adaptable and accessibility are key to the future of campus buildings.
2. Innovation in the teaching space encourages inspiration.
3. Engaging all users helps find the right building and space design.



Aston University



Top 3 learnings

1. We invested in our people to enable them to complete activities in an effective way.
2. We have removed physical and perceived boundaries to encourage cross collaboration and problem solving.
3. We have created efficiency and improved sustainability through dynamic working and agile workspace.

Agile workspaces, leading the way

An area previously segregated for HR, Estates, Health & Safety and Finance with walls and further access restrictions, was redesigned from a user, rather than a space experience. The vision of the project was to design an agile workspace to support dynamic working and facilitate cross-service working. This saw a move away from the previous one desk per person approach to shared, agile workspace and resources with no allocated desks. This has enabled 4 other teams to move up to use the space, freeing up space elsewhere in the University.

The project was designed with three streams of people, space, and technology to ensure that each was appropriately considered and consulted. There were also two executive sponsors and a business owner from the Finance service to help support and deliver the project. The space is a prototype for future campus development and so capturing engagements and learnings was critical.



University of Warwick

Construction of the future

The University of Warwick has invested in its collaboration, teaching, and research activities through the Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building by bringing together the School of Life Science and Warwick Medical School into a shared facility promoting collaboration through the project process and enabling collaboration for students and researchers within the completed building.

Through the pandemic, the importance of this type of research was emphasised including the worldwide collaboration needs which were enhanced as a result. The project works have taken place in a very confined area and with high sustainability targets leading the team to push for modern methods of construction and 50% of the project's value was manufactured in an off-site environment. Innovative products were also used such as vertical solar panels. The project has obtained EPC A and BREEAM Excellent ratings.



Top 3 learnings

1. Pre-manufacturing works for improved sustainability, improved quality, and reduced community impacts.
2. By taking this approach the full project team is encouraged to collaborate more.
3. Emphasising the reasons for the project being undertaken, can inspire a workforce to achieve more.



Enterprise

This category recognises social, social media and sustainable enterprise as key ingredients of contemporary education to ensure a supply of education leavers who can rise to the 21st century's economic, environmental, and social challenges.

Category sponsor



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

Durham University and Earth Minutes



Project RENU

Project RENU (Research Expedition for Net Zero and Universal Learning) is in collaboration with Earth Minutes, a youth-led environmental communications service grounded in science, and Durham University. Since the Coronavirus outbreak, we recognised that many University courses have been largely digitalised and the majority of Geography field-trips have been cancelled or postponed. This unearthed many challenges related to traditional field-trips, including the accessibility (i.e. physically and financially) and sustainability (i.e. carbon footprint) of field-trips. We used this as an opportunity to drive the future of field-trips through trialling a digital field-trip experience for the second-year module, 'Glaciers and Glaciation', within the geography (BSc) degree. Through using cutting-edge communication techniques (i.e. 360-video) whilst following sustainable digital practices, we aim to assist Higher Educational institutions to make environmental learning accessible to all students and to provide students with the sufficient tools to learn about the environment in a fundamentally sustainable way.

What the judges thought...

The judges were impressed with this innovative approach to improving accessibility to field trips whilst potentially reducing sector wide emissions. This project could be commercialised and replicated by any institution carrying out field trips. It will be good to see how this project progresses over the next few years.

What it means to win

"Educating students through fieldwork is important to many of our degree programmes, but it must be accessible and sustainable. This innovative project involving our staff, students and Earth Minutes, demonstrates the power of digital technologies to enhance the educational experience of our students, whilst also supporting the University's sustainability commitment."

Professor Alan Houston, Vice-Provost (Education)

Top 3 learnings

1. There is a significant student demand to make field-trips more accessible and sustainable.
2. Digitalised field-trip experiences can be most effective when used alongside local-based research.
3. Digitalised field-trip experiences can be utilised to enhance students' scientific communication skills.



FINALISTS

The University of Edinburgh



Top 3 learnings

1. Students want to make their ideas work for a better world.
2. Many projects coming forward from students require some sort of high level software engineering.
3. Applications to our programmes have changed, with student ideas having a strong focus on being impact driven.

Making ideas work for a better world: Student-led social enterprise

The Edinburgh Innovations' Enterprise Service for Students supports innovation and entrepreneurialism in the student community. It provides students with a range of support to turn their impact driven ideas into reality, leading to benefits for local communities, the environment and specific groups or the wider society. This past year has been record breaking, with over two thousand students accessing the advice, funding, and support on offer, and more than one hundred student start-ups being supported. Over the last year, hundreds of one to one meetings between advisors and students have taken place, and over 70 per cent of applications to the Enterprise Foundation Programme have been impact driven. The Startup Community Platform continues to grow, providing a space for students, recent graduates, and academics in the enterprise community to collaborate. Grant support, recognition, training workshops, an enterprise toolkit and the physical Student Enterprise Hub are further resources that are helping embed impact driven innovation and enterprise into the student experience.



University of Leicester

Toast of the Town by Enactus Leicester

Toast of the Town is a social enterprise which turns surplus bread destined for landfill into lager with the profit from sales funding support sessions for individuals recovering from alcohol and substance use. It aims to give back to the community in the form of vital counselling sessions for those on their recovery journeys from alcohol and substance use whilst simultaneously providing an opportunity for Psychology students to gain relevant experience. This year we have recruited 5 Psychology students from the University of Leicester, who were selected from our stringent application process consisting of a written application, test and an interview and provided DBS checks for all finalised candidates. Working with Dear Albert - a local alcohol and substance use recovery Social Enterprise - to provide support sessions for their users.

From this year alone, we impacted the lives of 12 individuals with over 50 hours of support sessions. Due to the pandemic, all of our sessions were hosted via an online video conferencing platform with individual clients. We worked with Psychology tutors as well as the Careers Development Service to provide this opportunity.



Top 3 learnings

1. We identified more support sessions are needed within our community,
2. Psychology students don't have enough opportunities to gain relevant work experience during their undergraduate studies.
3. Large amounts of food can be upcycled, however, more consumer awareness is needed.



University of Southampton

Enactus Southampton - Future Brew

Future Brew revolutionises an emission heavy industry by making truly sustainable and carbon negative beer. We achieve this through our manifesto, 26 pledges that encompass our commitment to ethical production, ensuring our practices remain sustainable as we grow. This includes local sourcing, zero waste and single use plastic, renewable energy, tracking of all our emissions and carbon offset. All of our beers are brewed with surplus bread that otherwise would go to waste as one of the main ingredients.

As a result we tackle the 900,000 tonnes of bread that goes to waste every year in the UK which in turn reduces emissions from the atmosphere.

Through our products we drive social mobility by employing vulnerable individuals in our supply chains and educate our customers and partners on the importance of climate change and sustainable practises. We are making a difference one beer at a time. Are you?



Top 3 learnings

1. Be open to change and don't be afraid to talk with others about your idea.
2. Take risks but do your due diligence. Take action not just words.
3. Don't be afraid of change, change is good.



Green Gown Awards

2022 Applications open April 1st

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Promoting excellent student and campus experiences

Next Generation Learning and Skills

This category recognises achievement in the development of academic courses, skills and capabilities relevant to sustainability. These can be vocational, undergraduate or postgraduate courses or related to wider purposes such as community involvement, global or environmental awareness or to support lifestyle changes

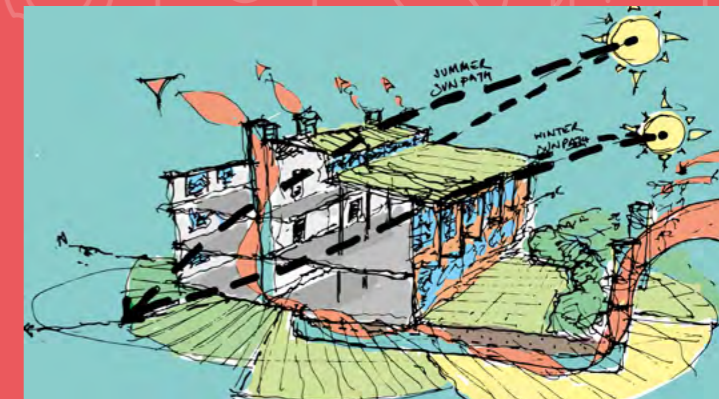
Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



100%



45%



Winner

De Montfort University



Future-fit fashion and textiles: A whole school approach towards transforming the industry

What does a University Fashion School look like if it aims to respond comprehensively to the social and environmental challenges posed by clothing production and consumption? Over the last three years De Montfort University's School of Fashion and Textiles has been developing an answer to this question, through an integrated approach comprising curricular change, co-curricular opportunities, innovative research into new materials and community engagement to address the challenges of the textile industry, locally in Leicester, nationally and internationally.

With over 1200 students, the School offers a rich experience with a broad spectrum of sustainability initiatives for design practice and fashion business. Through external engagement with industry, the School ensures the next generation of designers, communicators, buyers, and managers have the knowledge and skills to be relevant and responsible and can make a positive impact as they move to the next stage of their career or education.

What the judges thought...

This application demonstrates an impressive whole school holistic approach to sustainability. There are great links to the local fashion industry and a real commitment to tackling these local challenges, while also making connections with international experts, and considering the sustainability of assessments. There are good numbers of students (and staff) impacted and engaged through the activities and good dissemination.

What it means to win

"Winning this means the world to DMU as a UN SDG hub. The reputation and global reach of our fashion school drives us to produce graduates leading on responsible design and practise in fashion, ensuring the next generation of designers make a positive impact on our world."

Professor Katie Normington, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Think large scale but also remember the small details can have a huge impact.
2. Future scan, think ahead to when you will have had chance to make an impact.
3. Provide the opportunity for creativity to flourish.



Highly Commended The University of Edinburgh



STUDENTS AS .. **CHANGE** AGENTS

Students as Change Agents

Created by the University of Edinburgh Careers Service and hosted within the Data Driven Innovation programme of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Region City Deal, Students as Change Agents (SACHA) is a co-curricular experiential idea lab that brings students from different academic disciplines and levels together to tackle real-world complex challenges linked to the UN Sustainability Goals.

Using purposefully wicked challenges set by external organisations, SACHA helps develop data and design thinking skills for students at the same time as making industry experts take a fresh look at their own sector and contributing to lasting change. This year, using online training tools and platforms, SACHA has moved at scale with over 250 student completions across three programmes with 11 different challenge partners, with groups ideating on subjects such as fashion overconsumption, fuel poverty, sustainable tourism, youth homelessness, and building a more welcoming Scotland for refugees and asylum seekers.

What the judges thought...

It is great to see a project led by the careers service which is engaging with a wide range of external partners both locally and further afield and providing real-world based interdisciplinary opportunities for students to make a real difference. There is an impressive approach and commitment to accessibility and inclusion, and good training provision to support students in the projects.

What it means to win

"Our mission is to deliver positive impact for society, by discovering, developing and sharing knowledge. The University is committed to supporting a lower-carbon, healthier, more sustainable and equitable future. The Green Gown Awards provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of our staff and students to help us achieve this."

Professor Peter Mathieson. Principal and Vice-Chancellor

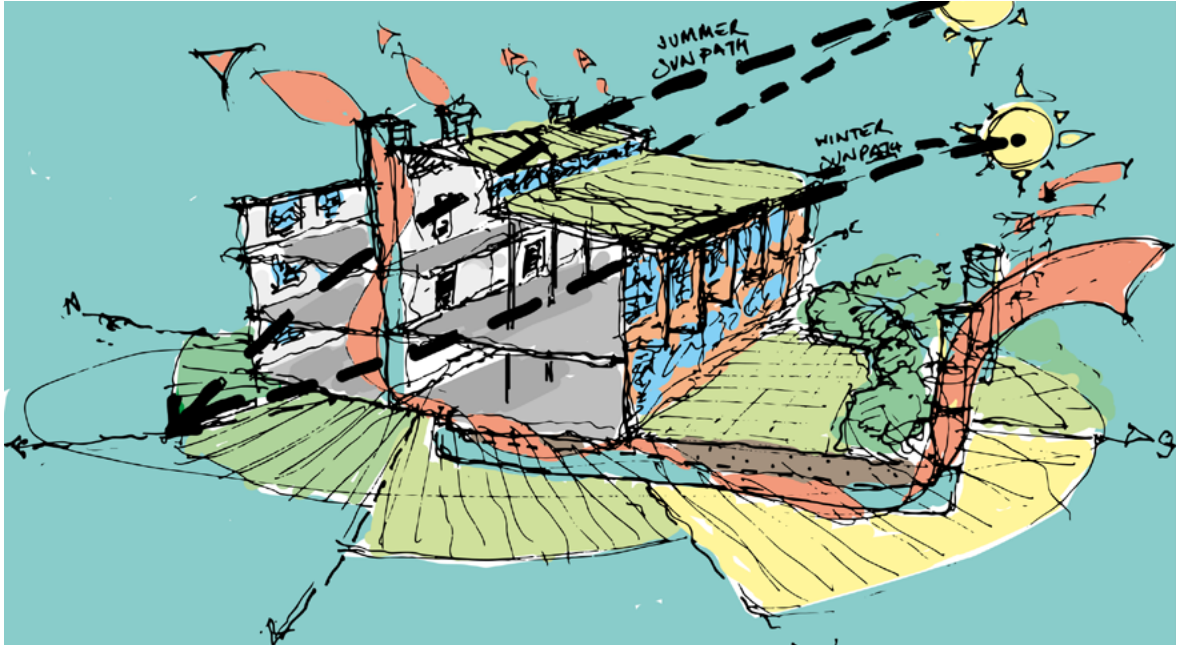
Top 3 learnings

1. We can link UN SDGs to co-curricular activity with great results for students and external partners.
2. Student love being in multidisciplinary group environments working on real world challenges.
3. We can create space for industry to be blown away by the standard of student thought on wicked challenges.



Highly Commended

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol



The UWE Zero Carbon Framework: Enhancement short courses for built environment students and professionals

A tiered framework of extra-curricular short courses to develop zero-carbon champions across all the disciplines of the built environment, offering exit points at the level of “Aware”, “Skilled” or “Expert”. Level-Aware (8-hours) explores the environmental, social, and economic aspects of zero carbon buildings and how they relate to wider sustainability. A taster course, that generates enthusiasm and empowers participants to plan their personal development.

In Spring 2020, with many professionals on furlough, Level-Aware was delivered as a free online MOOC, giving back to hard-hit communities. An outstanding success with 1,616 participants from around the world, a completion rate of 72% and a 94% approval rating despite being targeted at all disciplines and all levels of experience. In Autumn 2020, Level-Aware was completed by 1,301 students as an induction to online learning, critical preparation for the year ahead and resulting in wide ranging impact on student activities.

What the judges thought...

The achievements in the development of the first stage of this project are themselves impressive, with significant numbers of both students and professionals benefitting from the course that has been developed in an important area of industry. The overall structure of the project is well thought through with different levels of engagement possible, and therefore the potential to influence a wide audience within the sector.

What it means to win

“Sustainability, particularly climate change, presents a significant challenge to each and every one of us. One we must not and cannot ignore. We are committed to building on the progress we have made as a University community over the last 25 years and this Award is a welcome recognition of our progress and a spur to further endeavours.”

Professor Steve West, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. An enthusiastic tone often leads to action, a fatalistic tone usually leads to disempowerment.
2. We should harness the next generation’s hunger to learn these issues and use it to change the culture of teaching.
3. Achieving Zero Carbon means moving from of siloed-disciplines to a collaborative culture with a shared lexicon of terms.



FINALISTS

Anglia Ruskin University



Top 3 learnings

1. Dedication, consultation - and plenty of planning time - are key to successful institutional transformations
2. Supporting staff to follow their passion and expertise leads to great creativity, trust, and community
3. True interdisciplinarity in teaching requires commitment. But once people get it, they really get it!

Ruskin Modules: Working together on 'wicked' problems

From next year, students at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) will take a 'Ruskin Module' - an interdisciplinary learning module that will give them the opportunity to tackle 'wicked' challenges and explore solutions to global societal problems as part of their three-year undergraduate degree.

Developed over two years through a process involving students, academics, and professional services staff from across ARU's community, the credit-bearing Ruskin Modules will enable students across our four campuses to work together to develop the innovative thinking and the problem-solving skills that the jobs of the future demand. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the reference framework for each Ruskin Module. From examining the concept of social justice to identifying the ethical principles needed for our growing use of Artificial Intelligence, ARU's Ruskin Modules provide a unique and inclusive learning opportunity for tomorrow's global thinkers and leaders.



Birmingham City University

Inspiring sustainable curriculum initiatives

Birmingham City University's Education Development Service and Environmental Team worked in partnership to co-create a brand new accredited 'Embedding Sustainability into the Curriculum' course for staff. The course is the first of its kind and is accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA).

The course aims to support colleagues to embed sustainability in the curriculum of their individual courses and faculties, giving participants the knowledge and skills to support implementation of sustainability priorities aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. This enables staff to both contribute towards their continuing professional development and allow them to transfer knowledge to students, providing them with the capability to implement sustainable practices in their future careers. By completing the course, participants are playing a key role in the delivery of the University's environmental vision and supporting a more sustainable future locally, regionally, and globally. We expect real change with real impact will be made.



Top 3 learnings

1. Ability to drive the ESD agenda through a unique accredited offer accessible across the University.
2. Power of cross-faculty working, networking and idea sharing on the sustainability agenda.
3. Use of firmer assessment parameters to recognise participant passion but improve clarity of outputs



Cardiff Metropolitan University

If you go down to the woods today, you'll see what the buzz is about

We have re-imagined and regenerated an un-used ancient strip of Welsh Woodland, an old concrete patch, into our Outdoor Learning Centre (OLC). Working with students, local children, schools as partners, reconnecting us all to nature, reviving spaces into stimulating arenas for learning / teaching, linking different theories and approaches to practice e.g. Forest School, Earth Education and Nature Pedagogy. Our OLC now comprises a log cabin, log circles, beehives, and gardens.

Working through regenerative and place responsive pedagogy, actively nurturing a sense of 'communitas', 'cynefin' and care for our environment through civic mission and city-wide campus ethos. The OLC is used for free green workshops focused on greener living, connecting sustainable minded campus to learn together, share sustainable skills, ideas and meet others in the community. Workshops of Bee Keeping, Urban chickens, Sustainable Fashion, Wasteless Home, Bathroom, Kitchen, Soap Making, Natural dye making, Foraging Campus, Willow making and Eco Green washing.



Top 3 learnings

1. The value of working beyond the lecture theatres and re-imagining and re-wilding learning landscapes.
2. Nurturing skills, maximising community learning in our ancient Welsh woodland and city-wide.
3. Regenerating our un-used ancient strip of Welsh Woodland into lively reciprocal community engagement areas.

King's College London



Top 3 learnings

1. Educating doctors of the future to be champions of healthcare sustainability is integral to KCL.
2. Education is a powerful tool if it provides learning with practical projects.
3. Combining improvement, science and sustainability concepts can be applied at every level of the health system.

Using Quality Improvement to build sustainable value in healthcare

Today's health professionals are expected not just to provide exemplary individual care, but also to contribute to systematically improving the services within which that care is delivered, using Quality Improvement (QI). In King's College London (KCL) Year 4 students undertake the QI and Evidence Based Practice module, working in peer group teams with a supervisor to complete a project in a clinical setting. The module has been running for 5 years training approximately 400 students and 100 supervisors delivering 100 projects per year across the healthcare system of South East of England. The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare worked with KCL to integrate sustainability into the module using the sustainable QI framework. In this way, we address social and environmental challenges in healthcare as a core part of professional practice. A model which is being spread to other medical school settings. The impact of a single QI project can be high but by multiplying that across the whole year group and hopefully into all healthcare education settings we can see start to see real change happening.



FINALISTS

The University of Liverpool



Top 3 learnings

1. Utilising foundation weeks can provide opportunities for students to be introduced to the UN's SDGs.
2. Student interns can produce creative and practical course designs that are engaging for their peers.
3. A co-creation approach can provide student interns with valuable employability skills and experience.

Sustainability in Action: A short interactive online course designed by students for students introducing the UN's SDGs

Sustainability in Action is a short course designed by students for students at the University of Liverpool introducing the UN's SDGs. It formed a component part of a revised 2020/21 Foundation Week of online activities accessible and open to new and returning students. The course was designed to enable students to make connections, create friendships and embrace new opportunities.

As a collaborative project between the University's Careers and Employability and Centre for Innovation in Education, the project started with the recruitment of a small team of student interns to develop the course over six weeks in the summer of 2020 ensuring we had an active student voice in the course development. The course was designed to be asynchronous, sit within the University's VLE, and be flexible, interactive, and fun. The interns developed multimedia content with input from academic and professional services staff, city region partners and online resources.



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Reporting with influence

This Award aims to assess how sustainability is reported and how reports are used to impact and influence within the institution. Reports must be publicly available information provided by institutions.

Category sponsor



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



100%



100%

Winner

University of Cambridge



Being open and honest about progress is a central part of our approach to sustainability.

We have developed our approach to reporting since publishing our first annual report in 2016.

Our 2020 report included independent assurance of our environmental sustainability data by PWC to improve the quality and credibility of our data.

We want to ensure that our report is accessible to a wide range of audiences so in addition to publishing the full report, we produce a summary report and video as well as the University's Annual Report including a sustainability section.

One benefit of reporting has been to engage a wider range of staff and students, fostering new conversations around common experiences, ideas, and challenges.

What the judges thought...

Judges were impressed by the activity and the involvement particularly of students and staff beyond the core sustainability team in driving initiatives, getting involved in 'live smart' and other activities, and events. An engaging read with honesty about performance and balance in the reporting. A good application that deserved to win with great evidence of commitment, ambition, and engagement across the university and its key stakeholders.

What it means to win

"Winning this Award is not only an achievement for the University, but also for those who rightly expect institutions with influence to accurately and openly communicate their sustainability journey. We have worked hard to improve our sustainability reporting and communications, and are absolutely delighted to receive this Award."

Professor Stephen Toope, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Independent assurance has helped improve the quality and transparency of our data.
2. Presenting the report in different formats helps engage a wider range of audiences.
3. Be honest about your progress - reporting is about transparency.



Highly Commended University of Gloucestershire



Our Annual Sustainability Report was designed to communicate and engage people inside and outside our University, from students to staff, to partners locally, in our sector and other industries. The report takes seriously its duty to report clearly for lay readers on technical issues that are easy to 'greenwash' such as carbon – and to communicate the importance of sustainability learning – and the impact our graduates create in the world.

Linked to our Environmental Management System, it shows our decisions, top impacts and opportunities to drive positive change. We do not shy away from reporting change (e.g. pandemic effects good and bad), even loss of accreditation or under-performance, as honesty is key to powerful reporting. Improvement areas are defined according to impact assessment and student interests. We have feedback on how it has influenced understanding of sustainability and inspired people to drive change, from teams internally to regional schools' networks, to our accounting students who study it each year.

What the judges thought...

A colourful and engaging read for stakeholders. It is clear as well that sustainability pervades the whole organisation, and it is focused on trying to influence and impact a lot in this space.

What it means to win

"This recognition is an affirmation of our wide-ranging sustainability change programme. The report showcases the powerful learning experiences we are creating for our students, our performance environmentally and the collaborations we are involved in locally and globally. This commendation from expert peers who know the importance of dynamic reporting is rewarding and inspiring for the whole University."

Stephen Marston, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. We involve those who deliver on sustainability, to gain ownership, input, and fresh ideas.
2. Clear infographics and simple stories make all the difference in communicating sustainability.
3. Our report is a centrepiece of our communication strategy, to engage and educate people.





HILLSIDE
environmental services

Going green should be a breath of fresh air

Specialists in further education carbon reduction



Environmental impact reporting



Risk evaluation

Project funding

Economic & financial modelling

Bid writing to secure green finance & grant support



Renewable energy system design

Operational change management

Procurement, delivery & measurement



Hillside's professionalism ensured that we were able to significantly reduce our carbon footprint and realise revenue savings, with minimal capital outlay."

— Pete Smith, Vice Principal,
Border's College, Galashiels

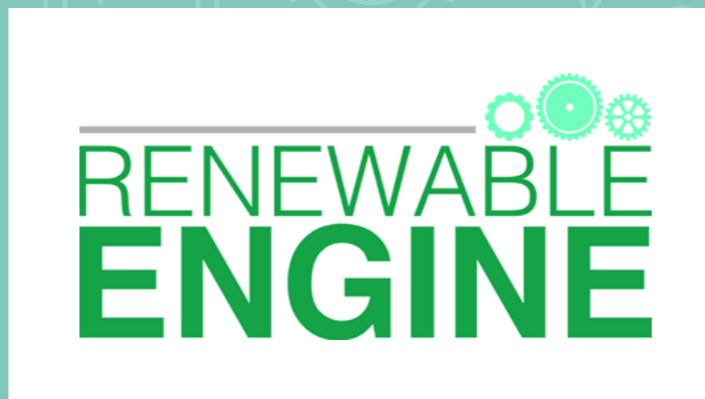
Combating climate change, without costing the earth



hillsideenvironmental.co.uk

Research with Impact - Institution

This category recognises the importance and societal impact of research and development by post-16 education as a driver of sustainable development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

South West College

Small institution



RENEWABLE ENGINE

Renewable Engine

Renewable Engine is an exciting cross-border research and innovation project aimed at facilitating direct knowledge transfer and technology development within the Advanced Manufacturing and Renewable Energy sectors. Research themes focus on energy generation, energy storage and innovative enabling technologies. The focus of the project is to apply advanced manufacturing expertise to the development of technologies in order to utilise renewable energy sources more effectively. Renewable Engine exists as a direct response to the threats of climate change and environmental degradation. Renewable Engine is directly partnered with 10 industrial enterprises, ranging from micro-SMEs to large multinationals, with the purpose of engagement to ultimately create jobs in green industries and boost the economic potential of the programme area through sustainable initiatives. Partnered enterprises access support by way of two means; through access to academic expertise via the research super-cluster and through access to technology development grant funding administered via the project.

What the judges thought...

This is a really impressive project that is an exemplar for how a college group can work with businesses on sustainability projects that benefit companies, students, and society through their 'Renewable Engine'.

A fabulous project and submission - really demonstrates what smaller institutions can achieve.

What it means to win

"We are delighted to be recognised regarding our work through Renewable Engine. Over the last decade, SWC has undertaken a remarkable journey towards becoming one of the UK's most environmentally sustainable academic organisations. This represents a major success as we continue to support the transition to a greener future."

Michael McAlister, Chief Executive

Top 3 learnings

1. Despite how well you plan out a project, things can change very quickly.
2. Young people are extremely responsive in reacting positively to changing circumstances.
3. Collaboration is key to realising sustainable goals and rebuilding the economy.



Winner

University of Derby

Large institution



A new relationship with nature - for human and nature's wellbeing

The Nature Connectedness Research Group at the University of Derby have transformed the way people interact with nature to improve wellbeing and promote pro-nature behaviour. Their 'Pathways to Nature Connectedness', a behaviour change framework for improving the human-nature relationship, has been adopted by The National Trust, Wildlife Trust, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, New Zealand Government Department of Conservation and many others. The pathways inform the Connecting People with Nature stream of the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund and the Green Influencers scheme.

The group has developed a new population measure of nature connection for the Government's People & Nature Survey, enabling the impact of nature connection on wellbeing to be identified. The group has developed the first interventions to improve nature connectedness, pro-nature behaviours and mental wellbeing with the approach featuring as the theme for the 2021 Mental Health Awareness Week.

What the judges thought...

The submission linking the natural world and wellbeing, is a fascinating, holistic, and timely project, combining social and environmental benefits.

The impact has benefitted hundreds of thousands of people and is underpinned by strong research.

What it means to win

"The research into Nature Connectedness being undertaken at the University of Derby is having a wide-reaching impact on pro-nature behaviours both nationally and internationally. We are therefore delighted that this important work has been recognised with this Green Gown Award."

Professor Kathryn Mitchell DL, Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. We found that nature connectedness can be improved for human and nature's wellbeing.
2. We found that a close relationship with nature is key for a sustainable lifestyle.
3. We established that noticing nature is key to a new relationship with nature.



Highly Commended Lancaster University



Thinking globally, working locally: Co-developing net zero solutions at scale

The Centre for Global Eco-innovation (CGE) is a nationally leading interdisciplinary initiative focused on practical place-based solution-driven sustainable innovation. It brings together cross-disciplinary expertise across environmental, biological, and physical sciences, engineering, social sciences, business, and design at Lancaster University into cross-sector partnerships to co-develop solutions that enable people and planet to prosper. CGE has engaged with more than 700 SMEs across the North West, and has supported more than 100 PhD and 50 MRes studentships. CGE has expanded this model of 'thinking globally and acting locally' beyond the region, successfully co-delivering the place-based eco-innovation model through the pan-African Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) supported RECIRCULATE project.

Founded in 2016, this project has extended our learning to seven research partners across Africa in Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, Botswana, Zambia, and Kenya.

What the judges thought...

An impressive large-scale initiative that demonstrates the volume of research (100 PhD students, 50 MRes students) and extensive engagement with SMEs (700+) to drive practical place-based solutions driven by sustainable innovation.

What it means to win

"I am delighted that Lancaster University has won this award - it is a team effort since net-zero will only be achieved by working together. Lancaster is proud to bring its international leadership, science and research together with our partners locally and globally to deliver sustainability from Morecambe to Malawi."

Professor Andy Schofield, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. For economies, communities, and ecosystems to thrive together we all must commit to co-designing solutions.
2. Place-based innovation is a powerful approach to create solutions that work in local contexts.
3. We believe every innovation needs to be an eco-innovation to meet global net-zero targets.



Highly Commended

London College of Fashion, UAL



Sustainable Fashion Glossary

Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) has partnered with Condé Nast to create the first Sustainable Fashion Glossary, combining Condé Nast's unique perspective on the sector with CSF's academic leadership in fashion design for sustainability. It was developed with a diverse and global network of academic researchers led by CSF to ensure global reach as well as localised relevance and perspectives.

The Sustainable Fashion Glossary is: An authoritative global resource for understanding sustainable fashion and the fashion industry's role in the climate emergency; an easy-to-use guide, divided into categories which relate to sustainability in fashion: its cultures, materials, production, buying habits and care practices; written with over 250 terms, fully referenced for further reading and broken down into four key themes: climate emergency; environmental impacts of fashion; social, cultural and economic impacts of fashion, and key elements of fashion and sustainability, plus 10 sub-themes that cover must-know aspects of fashion and sustainability.

What the judges thought...

Textiles and fashion are some of the most polluting industries, and bringing together researchers, journalists, and designers to use the same language in a glossary was a huge challenge - this is a game-changer for sustainability and SDGs in this area.

What it means to win

"We have developed a vital glossary of terms for journalists and editors and a reference point for educators, students, and industry; who share a responsibility to accurately communicate the complexities of the climate emergency. By working with leading fashion Editors at Condé Nast, we can create a new era of beauty and style borne out of an understanding and intimate connection with our most precious asset; the earth."

Professor Dilys Williams, Director, CSF

Top 3 learnings

1. Cross-sectoral collaboration is key! The world's wicked problems cannot be addressed in isolation.
2. Accessibility and inclusion are not nice to have but essential.
3. Sustainability is a journey, not a target.



FINALISTS

Aston University



Top 3 learnings

1. We learnt that delivering energy access can unleash myriad social and economic benefits in different country contexts.
2. We confirmed that empowering local communities with knowledge maximizes local benefits.
3. We proved that demonstration and dissemination foster replication; translating local benefits into global solutions.

An agricultural bio-economy: From green dream to sustainable reality

Climate change will change our lives, but low and middle income countries will experience the greatest temperature rises, droughts and crop failures. Balancing population expansion and energy access while controlling greenhouse gases is a huge task. Yet millions of tonnes of crop-residues and wastes are annually wasted in countries where agriculture is a key component of economic activity. Our Energy and Bioproducts Research Institute (EBRI) is carrying out world-leading research into innovative ways of converting agricultural residues and wastes into sustainable energy and products in low and middle income countries. We don't just deliver greenhouse gas reductions: we develop technologies, supply chains and business models that support livelihoods, food security, energy access and resilience in sub Saharan Africa, south east Asia and south America. We use our academic knowledge and skills to go beyond technologies; delivering sustainable systems that dispel food: fuel friction by focusing on the energy/water/land nexus to implement sustainable systems that deliver environmental, economic, and social benefits.



Loughborough University

Out of the fire and into the electric pressure cooker - sparking a clean cooking revolution on a global scale

Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) is a five-year programme funded by UK Aid (FCDO) which aims to spark a revolution through rapidly accelerating the transition from biomass to clean cooking on a global scale. By integrating modern energy cooking services into the energy planning, MECS looks to leverage investment in renewable energies (particularly regarding electricity access, both grid and off-grid) to address the clean cooking challenge. Modern energy cooking is Tier 5 clean cooking, and therefore MECS also supports new innovations in other relevant cooking fuels such as biogas, LPG (bio) and ethanol.

The intended outcome is a market-ready range of innovations (technology and business models) which lead to improved choice of affordable, reliable, and sustainable modern energy cooking services for consumers. We seek to have the MECS principles adopted in the SDG 7.1 global tracking framework and hope that participating countries will incorporate modern energy cooking services in energy policies and planning.



Top 3 learnings

1. We show that cooking with electricity is feasible and can be developed in low-income communities.
2. We argue post-Covid-19 clean cooking plans should provide an integrated response which enhances women's lives.
3. We show that business models for clean cooking transitions need to engage with household cooks.

University of Portsmouth and Clean Growth UK

Clean Growth UK (three regional hubs, the University of Brighton, Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Portsmouth)

Established in 2018, Clean Growth UK is a national, university-led business network comprised of three hubs. It was designed to catalyse clean innovation and deliver research with impact. We have created a thriving clean growth business-innovation network of 2000+ members, which adds significant value to member businesses, organisations, and universities. We support organisations aiming to create and mainstream the products, services and business models required for rapid transition to a net zero, sustainable economy.

We have demonstrated the strong potential for research with impact to drive clean growth and the role of SMEs as innovation drivers. Clean Growth UK pools the Knowledge Exchange (KE) expertise and capabilities of its three regional cleantech networks. Through our three university hubs, we provide, and broker support focused on developing innovations and R&D projects, commercialising ideas, and securing funding for businesses and researchers on a mission to protect the planet for future generations.



Top 3 learnings

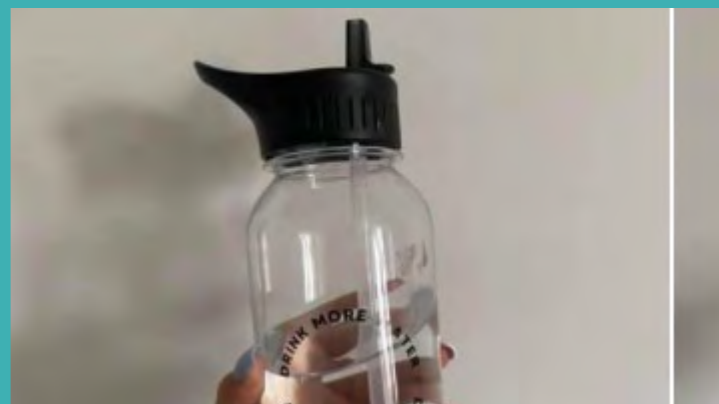
1. We have developed a national service and membership offer with regional delivery.
2. We successfully collaborated across three HEIs to maximise impact and deliver 170+ R&D projects.
3. We have successfully deployed new approaches to clean growth innovation.



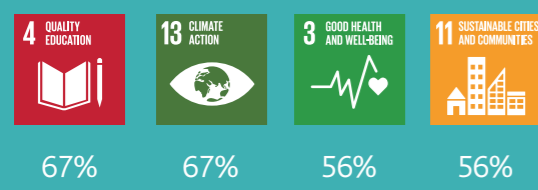


Student Engagement

This category reflects that students and staff must work together to achieve goals using "top-down" and "bottom-up grass roots" methods to achieve maximum understanding and engagement across an institution. This in turn aids student progress and allows for opportunities to gain transferable employability skills. It looks at both the student input and the staff commitment and the relationship between the two.



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

University of St Andrews



THE THIRD GENERATION PROJECT

The Third Generation Project

With engagement from student and faculty members, strong international partnerships, and innovative ways of communicating research, the Third Generation Project lead climate justice through social change.

Professor Ali Watson and student Bennett Collins founded the Third Generation Project in 2016. They saw a gap in climate justice education and an opportunity for students and academics to work closely together. Since then, the project has initiated a range of programmes, from Emerging Researchers - which upskills students in critical thinking, research, and in communicating climate justice - to the Aamusnaan Maya Initiative, which analyses the humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic within marginalised communities in Somaliland. The project continues to live as it was founded: with students and academic staff working together.

The Third Generation Project is about making way for opportunities through top-down commitment, leading change through bottom-up input and reimagining how we talk, learn and act on climate justice.

What the judges thought...

This project is an outstanding example of staff-student co-construction and partnership to lead innovative and action-oriented research. There are wider societal, and even international, impacts across a multitude of key areas, championing intersectionality between environmental and social impacts. This think tank has reached a level of maturity, suggesting lasting, tangible impact.

What it means to win

“Winning this Award shows how all of us can inspire our students to develop their skills for sustainability. The work of the Third Generation Project team, based at the University of St Andrews, is shaping how the sector defines and delivers student engagement, building skills and a mindset for the future.”

Professor Sally Mapstone, Principal and Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. The next generation's skills affect the current generation's attitudes.
2. Complex issues need intergenerational, interdisciplinary, and international partnerships to solve.
3. Social change makes way for climate justice.



Highly Commended Nottingham Trent University



Gamifying climate action for mass engagement

Students and staff at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) are making a big impact reducing carbon emissions and addressing sustainability concerns by undertaking environmental and socially sustainable actions through NTU's Green Rewards programme, in a fun and meaningful way. NTU Green Rewards is a joint venture between NTU and our Students' Union (NTSU). Through our engaging app, users are signposted to climate positive actions across six key themes, ranging from reducing food waste, to sustainable travel and connecting with nature. Participants can track their progress, take part in monthly challenges, compete with peers, and earn points to win prizes; all of which strengthen the sense of community at NTU.

The combination of gamification and personalisation encourages and empowers users to go that extra mile in their sustainability commitments.

Since its launch in 2019, over 3,000 staff and students have taken part in NTU Green Rewards, racking up an impressive 155,000 sustainability actions which have enabled the avoidance of 331,000kg CO₂.

What the judges thought...

This project has resulted in a gamification of the carbon reduction process, with widespread use by both staff and students. This well-rounded, innovative, and cost-effective app positively reinforces good habits and encourages engagement with sustainability in the everyday lives of those at the University. It is inclusive, with a broad range of opportunities and prizes available to users, and a replicable example for others to implement.

What it means to win

"This Award reflects the University's strategic commitment to embracing sustainability, empowering people and valuing ideas. Our students arrive already engaged with the key sustainability questions; by collaborating with our teaching and professional teams, we aim to develop their understanding and provide them with the opportunities to deliver meaningful change."

Professor Edward Peck, Vice Chancellor and President

Top 3 learnings

1. Leverage internal networks and collaboration to increase impact.
2. Sustainability and wellbeing behaviour change initiatives can be fun and rewarding.
3. 'Catch-all' mass engagement is a cost effective and meaningful way to reduce carbon emissions.



Highly Commended University of Oxford



OXFORD CLIMATE SOCIETY

Oxford Climate Society

The Oxford Climate Society is an ambitious and impactful student-run society at the University of Oxford dedicated to developing and connecting informed climate leaders. Our membership extends from students to professionals and the general public, welcoming all levels of interest and experience. We connect like-minded individuals, inspire, and educate the next generation of climate leaders, take action and lead campaigns for ambitious emission reductions in Oxford, and provide platforms for academic, artistic, and social engagement with climate change.

We host weekly events with speakers such as Bill McKibben, Fatih Birol, and George Monbiot. These explore diverse interdisciplinary perspectives on climate change, ranging from feminism to international development, politics to psychology, science to social issues and much more. We also organise and run the Oxford School of Climate Change, providing participants with a comprehensive education in the core issues underlying climate change, as well as the most promising solutions.

What the judges thought...

Oxford Climate Society is a well-run, student-led society. Their public-facing events have attracted a great list of speakers, and their high attendance underpins strong engagement with both staff and students. The Society is proactive in their efforts to collaborate with staff, academics, and students, whilst also seeking to influence wider top-down changes across their University.

What it means to win

“Winning this Award recognises our students for their commitment, energy and activism. It also helps to publicise their educational work and draws more recruits to the critically important task of acting now, before it is too late, to effect meaningful change such as the School of Climate Change and the University’s Sustainability Strategy.”

Louise Richardson AAAS AcSS FRSE RIIA, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Aim high. Our shift to online events led to a massive growth in our reach worldwide.
2. Grassroots initiatives are a successful model which we plan to adopt for future campaigns.
3. Discussion and collaboration are important. Our initiatives are successful because of the community we have built.



Dundee and Angus College

Period Positive

Dundee and Angus College's (D&A) 'Period Positive' campaign is driven by the need to end period poverty in a sustainable and inclusive fashion. In our college alone, hundreds of youngsters face the tyranny of coping with the physical and economic demands of menstruation. Not content to simply offer period products in the toilets, we have used our portion of government funding to develop and deliver a truly dynamic and ambitious campaign to turn period poverty into Period Positive!

Our dedicated Project Officer made it a focus to not only educate about periods, but also the financial and environmental impacts of products on the market. By bringing in specialist speakers from healthcare and our sustainable partner agencies, to better inform our students and staff, we witnessed a huge shift in behaviour change with people requesting re-usable products.



Top 3 learnings

1. We learnt that with an open, sustainable, and inclusive approach, period poverty can be tackled effectively.
2. Period poverty is widespread and has a far greater impact than we realised.
3. Tackling period poverty with sustainable solutions not only helps the planet, it makes it more cost effective too.

Glasgow Kelvin College



East End Community Garden Project

Glasgow Kelvin College has designed and built a college community garden at its East End Campus. The aim of the Garden is to provide an inspiring space that can help to deliver exciting, interactive outdoor learning experiences for learners; provide benefits for the health and wellbeing of the College and local community; and help to improve the College's awareness of and relationship with the surrounding natural environment.

The Garden design centres on issues concerning both social and environmental sustainability. These include reducing the environmental impact of any intervention and protecting the existing ecosystem; requiring low maintenance and is resilient to current and future climate change effects; ensuring the College community have the potential to gain and develop new skills. It is intended that the Garden will benefit students and the local community by providing learning and development opportunities. It will also provide a welcome area to relax and enjoy the wonders of nature.

Top 3 learnings

1. Derelict wasteland can be re-purposed into a vibrant, useable social/learning space for students/ stakeholders.
2. We have learned to use nature to further support mental health and well-being.
3. We recognised that transformation was built through a symbiotic relationship of College, Community and Business.



FINALISTS

The Students' Union at UWE



Top 3 learnings

1. Established communities are well placed to tackle behaviour change as a team.
2. Incentivising engagement brings student through the door, inspiration and passion will keep them meaningfully involved.
3. Running a mid-year competition helped to keep involvement in the yearlong initiative.

Greener Futures!

Greener Futures is a sustainability competition for societies and sport clubs at The Students' Union at UWE. It is a creative, fun, and rewarding way for our students to gain inspiration and recognition for building sustainability into their communities. The programme features a workbook of challenges that are completed throughout the academic year and connected to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Participating clubs and societies are given the option to apply for financial aid of up to £500, this enables groups to carry out in-depth sustainability projects.

At the end of the academic year, the club or society with the most points will receive the title of 'Greener Futures Club/Society of the Year', presented at their respective awards ceremony. There is also an award for 'Leader of the Year', celebrating a student who has made particularly strong efforts to be sustainable and encourage their group to get involved.



The University of Northampton

Up For The Cup

The University of Northampton joined forces with eight of the largest employers and most recognisable organisations across the town centre to secure funding for The Cup Fund – the UK's largest grant fund to bolster coffee cup recycling – an initiative from environmental charity Hubbub, financed by Starbucks through their 5p charge on their single use coffee cups.

The project, called Up for the Cup officially launched in January 2020, the original task was to collect and recycle as many disposable paper cups as possible to reach a target of 160,000 over a 12-month period. Despite significant periods of closure for our partners as a result of COVID-19 the project has still collected and recycled approximately 50,000 cups.

Student engagement has been a significant element of the project with our 2nd year Digital Marketing Students working with our partners and a local marketing agency to design the branding for the project and social media awareness campaigns.



Top 3 learnings

1. The importance of placing the recycling bins in the right locations and next to a general waste bin.
2. How important regular awareness campaigns are in changing habits of our students, staff, and the wider community.
3. We realised the benefits of student engagement in the project.



University of Gloucestershire

Live Smart

Live Smart is our new student experience programme connecting students' immediate concerns (e.g. money, wellbeing, isolation) with bigger picture issues the world faces for the future. It moves past the 'green silo' approaches to student engagement - and embeds a visibly connected triple bottom line from the grassroots into mainstream student experience and informal learning. Live Smart is unique in that it was co-created from scratch with students - and student partnership remains at its heart. Students design and deliver core communications, events and community challenges that get credibility with peers - and work closely with the sustainability team to align their impact with university strategy and influence staff to adopt their ideas.

This innocent looking co-curriculum programme smuggles change in at many levels - student-facing staff teams, formal course experiences and action with local partners. In 2020 Live Smart won an 'outstanding flagship project' award by the UN University Regional Centres of Expertise for its community/student learning partnerships.



Top 3 learnings

1. Co-creation is key - students are powerful voices - empower them with systems and strategy insight.
2. Mainstreaming gets past green echo chambers - ask different questions, start with different people.
3. Community matters - build it, use it, benefit from it, internally and externally.



University of Leeds



Urban Biodiversity Monitoring Programme

The Leeds Urban Biodiversity Monitoring programme has been co-created between staff, students, and academics to inform campus biodiversity management and development and provide students with valuable engagement, monitoring and employability skills. Student Ambassadors work alongside student and staff volunteers, guided by an interdisciplinary group of academic colleagues and sustainability staff, to map and monitor biodiversity on campus. During the pandemic they have also provided lectures, webinars, and drop-in sessions for a variety of people, from local school children to academic researchers on urban biodiversity.

The programme has received international acclaim through the International Sustainable Campus Network Awards and students have showcased their work to a wide variety of audiences, presenting to University partners in Japan, the USA, as part of the Club of Rome UN Youth Summit as well as more locally with other Leeds city institutions and was presented at the ISCN conference in 2021.

Top 3 learnings

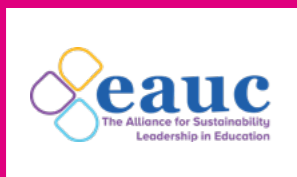
1. We can enhance the student experience at the University by providing real-world opportunities.
2. We can use the living lab as a powerful tool for delivering sustainability.
3. We can use the creativity and passion of our students to drive sustainability!



Sustainability Institution of the year

This category recognises sustained, whole-institution commitment and impact to becoming a sustainable organisation. To improve economic and social responsibility and environmental performance through a whole institution approach, strategic sustainability activities through four main areas must be achieved: Leadership and Governance; Estates and Operations; Learning, Teaching and Research; and Partnership and Engagement.

Category sponsor



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

University of St Andrews



Net Zero 2035: Towards a climate positive future in partnership with our students

In partnership with our students, the University of St Andrews is committed to becoming 'Net Zero by 2035' through ambitious governance, innovative technology, and community engagement. To realise this vision, the Principal formed the Environmental Sustainability Board - which engages staff and students from the whole University - and launched the St Andrews Environmental Sustainability Strategy. We are taking a lead by not only working to reduce carbon emissions but also to enhance biodiversity and inspire a circular economy and are doing this with our students and the community. This approach produces results. Sustainability is now woven into everything from individual behaviour and choices to campus structure and actions to sequester carbon. We are seeding intergenerational initiatives such as Transition, StACEES, and Eden Campus, these engaging our community in low-carbon living, stimulating research on environmental sustainability, and sourcing renewable energy in innovative ways. Together we champion St Andrews as a sustainable institution.

What the judges thought...

St Andrews have gone beyond adapting business as usual to creating a new norm of sustainability being woven through everything. They are walking the walk and talking the talk. They have demonstrated well established cross-institution action with clear values-led leadership and ambition. Student engagement is strong and they are embedding what they're doing in their courses and community.

What it means to win

"We believe that sustainability should be at the heart of all that we do. We hope that our commitment to becoming net-zero for all forms of environmental degradation by 2035, will inspire other institutions to respond to the challenge of our time. As drivers of innovation and social progress, universities must be at the forefront of our response to the climate crisis."

Professor Sally Mapstone, Principal and Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Think broadly and with imagination - sustainability is a part of everything.
2. Work top-down and bottom-up - and make sure there is a central role for students.
3. Set bold targets - our actions set the ambitions of others.



Anglia Ruskin University

**"The earth [is lent to us] for our life; it is a great entail"
Ruskin**

Here at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), we believe in making informed decisions and taking responsibility for the impact of our actions on current and future generations. And so we have pledged to incorporate sustainability into every aspect of university life. Our Academic Regulations include a requirement that all our courses include sustainability, which is supported by our Education for Sustainability team and monitored by our Academic Registry.

We have reduced our carbon emissions by 45% since 2005 by investing in our buildings, new heating, cooling, lighting, and computing technologies, and engaging our staff and students to adopt greener behaviours. In 2011 we launched our Global Sustainability Institute, which is now a world leading research centre and leads the University in growing our portfolio of research designed to lead to impact against the Sustainable Development Goals.



Top 3 learnings

1. Our early engagement of staff and students in the consultation process was critical.
2. Where there are potential barriers, the student voice is very important.
3. We learned early not to be afraid of challenging targets that seemed unachievable.



Forth Valley College



Sustainability Institution of the Year

Forth Valley College is literally built around sustainability. Over the past nine years the college has constructed three new campuses in Alloa, Stirling and Falkirk. All three have been constructed to very high sustainability and energy efficiency standards with BREEAM ratings ranging from Very Good to Excellent - putting them in the top 25% of efficient new builds.

The Alloa and Stirling Campuses use solar panels to heat water, utilise a rainwater harvester for flushing toilets, and boast food waste stations that grind food waste to fine particles removing excess liquid and reducing waste by up to 80%. The newest campus in Falkirk takes new technologies to another level with solar photovoltaics used to generate electricity, a ground source heat pump to provide heating and power the chilled beams, which regulate the heating system in summer and in winter.

All in all the three campuses are a model for sustainable learning, cutting total CO2 emissions from 2501 (tCO2e) in 2014/15 to 1454 (tCO2e) in 2019/20.

Top 3 learnings

1. With the right will radical carbon reduction is possible.
2. Think carbon reduction across all College activities.
3. Every small step adds up to big emission cuts.



FINALISTS

The University of Edinburgh



Top 3 learnings

1. The last year has brought into sharp focus the role and responsibilities of universities to support society.
2. Working in partnership with external partners can maximise the positive impacts universities can have in society.
3. Sustainability, social and civic responsibility are issues that can help bring staff and students together.

Social and civic responsibility: Addressing the climate crisis and supporting society

The last year has brought into sharp focus the role and responsibilities of universities to support society. As a large organisation, how we do things can have both positive and negative impacts on people and the natural environment near and far. The University's new Social and Civic Responsibility Plan sets out our plan to increase the positive impact we can have across everything we do, and actively seek to reduce any negative impacts. It sets out our commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals and how critical local and global challenges are interconnected.

Staff, students, and alumni have come together as one University community this year to address the climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the systemic racism in our society. The University has completed its divestment from fossil fuels, created largest social investment fund of any UK University, launched a new Community Plan, contributed to policy responses and interventions from governments to COVID-19, and established the RACE.ED Hub to bring the University community together to address the issue of racism.



University of Cambridge

Instituting change - embedding sustainability at an 800 year old organisation!

The University of Cambridge presents a compelling story of embedding sustainability into a historic, complex, and research-intensive institution. For over a decade we have worked to reduce our negative and enhance our positive environmental sustainability impacts, but recently we have seen increased commitment and drive to embed sustainability into everything we do. The first University to set a Science Based Target to achieve absolute zero energy-related carbon emissions; transparent reporting of our progress backed by independent assurance of our data; and a flagship initiative, Cambridge Zero, bringing together the collective expertise of the University to offer integrated, holistic, and practical solutions to climate change. Our approach involves harnessing academic expertise to support policy development and implementation; providing opportunities for all staff and students and internal and external stakeholders. We know there is more than we can and must do and are committed to building on our successes and learning from our and others' experiences to further embed sustainability across the University.



Top 3 learnings

1. Collaboration is key.
2. Be open about successes and failures – share learning.
3. Harness academic expertise and thinking.



University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

Sustainability Plan 2.1 - 4 years of comprehensive whole institution sustainability engagement

Sustainability Plan 2.1, UWE's refreshed sustainability commitment, was launched in 2017 as the successor to the Green Gown Award Winning Sustainability Plan 2.0. The Sustainability Plan 2.1 took its authority from UWE's Strategy 2020 and set new and challenging targets for the University across 13 themes of sustainability engagement: Health and Wellbeing, Engagement, ESD, Energy and Carbon, Water, Smarter Travel, Biodiversity, Food, Adaptation, Green IT, Campus Development and Resource Management (Wastes, Emissions & Discharges).

UWE has pushed itself to 'do more, do better and do quicker' just as the student foreword to the Sustainability Plan 2.1 challenged us to do. In 2020 at the end of the Strategy period we reported on our achievements, challenges and remaining actions and this submission summarises the outcomes achieved under Sustainability Plan 2.1 and briefly presents the next steps in UWE's ongoing commitment to the sustainability agenda.



Top 3 learnings

1. The importance of whole institution engagement especially working with students and the SU.
2. The importance of committing to challenging targets and celebrating successes.
3. Learning from failures as well as successes.



Sharing Best Practice The Sustainability Exchange

sustainability exchange
Delivered by the EAUC

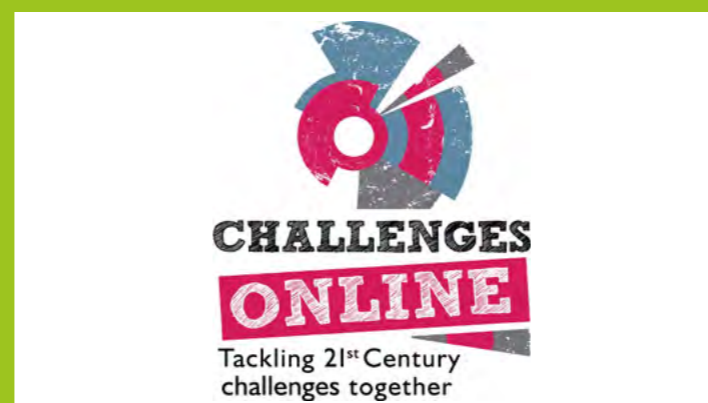
WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR INSPIRING 2021 WINNERS, HIGHLY COMMENDED AND FINALISTS?

As the ethos of the Awards is to ensure the lessons and examples of good practice are shared within the sector and beyond, regionally, nationally and globally, we work with all our winners, finalists and regional partners to produce case studies and short videos around their projects. Our current showcase of 1,000+ case studies, short videos and infographics can be accessed via the Sustainability Exchange.

To find out more, visit:
www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

Tomorrow's Employees

For a sustainable industry and economy, we need students leaving universities and colleges with the necessary understanding and skill sets. Judged by leading industry sustainability executives, this category recognises institutions which are taking pioneering and innovative steps to ensure that their leavers are future-fit.



Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol



Graduates responsible for a sustainable future

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol (UWE), is engaged in ongoing institution-wide mapping of activity against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Stage 1 of this project (2016-2021) is the subject of this award application. We began with a focus on our UG programmes of study since we have an institutional commitment to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to engage with sustainable development as part of their programme of study. We have since extended the project to modules, disciplines, PG programmes and research.

Our 'map' outputs are informative, visually appealing, and useful in their own right, but the processes by which they are produced and subsequently engaged with are where the real impact occurs. This work is aimed at ensuring that our graduates are capable of and driven to engage in sustainable professional practice throughout their careers and to challenge established practice which they recognise as inhibiting progress towards a sustainable future.

What the judges thought...

UWE's SDG work gets to the heart of the Tomorrow's Employees category.

It's innovative, fresh, and pursuing truly systemic change to embed sustainability across all parts of university life, with exciting reverberations for the whole sector. Fantastic!

What it means to win

"Sustainability, particularly climate change, presents a significant challenge to each and every one of us, one we must not and cannot ignore. We are committed to building on the progress we have made as a University community over the last 25 years and this Award is a welcome recognition of our progress and a spur to further endeavours."

Professor Steve West, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Persevere!
2. Be alert to positive unintended outcomes, especially when anticipated outcomes are not achieved.
3. Be as flexible as possible.



Highly Commended University of Gloucestershire



Radical Sustainability

Radical Sustainability is a unique approach to education/industry partnerships, driven by the need to accelerate sustainability learning through collaboration. Kick-started by University of Gloucestershire and Interface, it uses their cutting-edge sustainability insight and sustainability education methodology, to meet professional development needs for all tomorrow's employees: Current students – rapid professional learning for students via industry-led course experiences that build skills for change - over 350 students involved in the initial competition; Current professionals – building expertise of professionals and academics with fresh insights into business transformation and triple bottom line change – 100 people involved in year 1.

Since its 2019 launchpad, Radical Sustainability has triggered a wave of collaboration that is speeding up learning for us all, as we adapt to the pandemic and move to recreate our professional worlds for green recovery. The past year has seen innovative developments in these partnerships, plus creation of an online bitesize resource to open this learning to any student wherever they are.

What the judges thought...

We applaud the focus on practical sustainability application in the workplace and believe support from Gloucestershire business and community leaders as well as the University is key to long term success.

We hope that other universities will follow this excellent example.

What it means to win

"The University of Gloucestershire is committed to dynamic, applied learning that moves the needle on course experiences, preparing our students to lead industry change in the future. We are delighted to be recognised for our sustainability partnership with Interface and our local business community, recognising its wider professional impact for our graduates and our region."

Stephen Marston, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Cross-sector partnerships driven by common purpose are dynamic and successful.
2. Assessed sustainability learning has huge impact compared to optional experiences.
3. We are all tomorrow's employees and mutual sustainability learning is richer for us all.



FINALISTS

University of Exeter



Top 3 learnings

1. Our students appreciate they make a huge impact on the world as their careers develop.
2. Our students are empowered by steering their learning, giving them power, motivation, aspirations, and skills.
3. Our academics are inspired by student-led projects and build confidence for change towards co-creation.

Challenges Online - developing employability by solving wicked problems

Grand Challenges has run since 2012 with undergraduates focussing on some of the most challenging problems humanity faces. Students select which global issue they want to address, covering a wide range of topics mapped to the SDGs, developing their employability in the process.

Challenges Online was developed in response to the COVID-19 global lockdown. It exceeded the energy and outputs of Grand Challenges, broadening its reach and reducing its environmental impact. In 2019-20 we had 362 undergraduates from 41 nations across 16 time zones. The programme enables students to develop their employability whilst working on wicked 21st Century problems in small interdisciplinary groups. This exposes them to different ways of thinking and working. Our student-centred approach enables them to develop their employability in a safe environment with playful experimentation. Students take risks and learn from co-creation. They are motivated to make a difference and apply their knowledge, passion, and creativity.



York St John University

YSJgoesgreen

York St John University (YSJ) hosted its first ever virtual Green Week from 15 to 19 March 2021. Organised virtually in collaboration with YSJ Students' Union (YSJSU) and student volunteers, it was a week designed to empower students on sustainability employability skills, especially during lockdown where there were fewer opportunities for students. The key events were a full day project management workshop (themed around the UN Sustainable Development Goals), panel discussions with local business and alumni involved in sustainable careers, a discussion with Thimali Kodikara on Climate Justice and a showcase of Ecological Justice Students' Research.

The whole YSJ community was involved, including York Business School, Ecological Justice research team, Estates, Careers, Events and Communication team. YSJSU and Executive Board drove communications in the lead up to the event. Having a strong Student voice and working across interdisciplinary teams was central to the success of the project.



Top 3 learnings

1. Employability skills in a sustainable job market are key skills students are looking for.
2. Students' voices are powerful. Working with students will add another strong layer to your project.
3. Collaboration is key. Involve all the key stakeholders to make your project impactful.



Research with Impact - Student

This category recognises excellent student research that progresses the field of sustainability and beneficially impacts on society. The focus of this award is the impact (actual or estimated) of the research. Judges will be looking for evidence of the project's potential to strengthen at least one of the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social or economic as well as links to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Top SDGs the projects in this category deliver against



Winner

Lea Barbett



University of Derby

There is a gap in the science of human behaviour related to sustainability: While there is a great deal of research on climate-related pro-environmental behaviours, conservation practitioners have repeatedly pointed out a lack of research on nature conservation specific behaviours. With biodiversity loss being equally as dangerous for humanity as climate change, my research set out to address pro-nature conservation behaviours in a systematic manner. Using psychological scale development methods, I created what we believe is the world first Pro-nature Conservation Behaviour Scale (ProCoBS), a validated psychometric measurement tool, which has rapidly been adopted by researchers, conservation organisations and even governmental institutions to understand the public's conservation practices so they can be improved. The development of this scale and my subsequent research have contributed to a thorough, reliable, and replicable approach to these previously neglected behaviours. For example, research by me and other researchers using the ProCoBS has identified important predictors of pro-nature conservation behaviours.

What the judges thought...

Terrific research impact through influencing public policy and NGOs in their strategic approaches to the complex issue of public engagement in conservation projects, weaving through natural, societal, and policy-making fields. An absolutely outstanding project by Lea.

What it means to win

"I am delighted that this impactful research from one of our postgraduate students has been recognised by the Green Gown Awards and would like to congratulate Lea on this tremendous achievement. Lea's work developing a new questionnaire scale for pro-nature conservation behaviours will help to address the Value-Action gap and change attitudes towards the environment."

Professor Kathryn Mitchell DL, Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. We can act in many ways to support nature.
2. Impactful research arises from close collaboration between researchers and practitioners.
3. Research is for the public and should be performed with that in mind.



Highly Commended

Francesca Topp



University of Southampton

The 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic provided a unique opportunity to investigate the energy consumption and carbon footprint of the University of Southampton during a period of full campus closure followed by phased reopening for the 2020/21 academic year. I investigated the baseload carbon footprint and assessed whether a blended learning approach notably decreased the carbon footprint against previous 'normal' operational years, aiding the emerging area of research regarding carbon intensity of different teaching models and the challenges faced in decarbonising the HE sector.

I discovered that a notable amount of energy was consumed to maintain baseload operation during closure. I also observed no material decrease in the Scope 1 & Scope 2 carbon footprint during semester 1 of academic year 2020/21, which questions blended learning as a method to reduce carbon intensity. The notable contribution of the combined heat and power plant was an unexpected finding; therefore, I accomplished an initial carbon intensity assessment which highlighted the need for further investigation into its role in carbon reduction.

What the judges thought...

A timely and smart piece of research, taking advantage of COVID 'down time' to understand better how energy is used and GHG generated. Francesca's determination, knowledge, and enthusiasm shines through, and this is an impressive piece of undergraduate research.

What it means to win

"I am absolutely delighted that Francesca has won this Award. Her research is a substantial and important piece of carbon management and sustainability work that speaks highly of her skills, and recognises the support of her excellent Environmental Science academic supervisory team."

Professor Mark E. Smith, President and Vice-Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. This study emphasised the importance of accurate data for carbon management on a temporal basis.
2. Work in partnership with an organisation to create a project which makes a meaningful difference.
3. Do not hold back from exploring unexpected findings within your research.



Highly Commended

Leah Bromley



University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

There are around 18 million women of menstruating age in the UK and 200,000 tonnes of waste generated per year from single-use menstrual products. Yet research into sustainability and menstrual products is relatively limited. My postgraduate dissertation is a timely addition to this body of knowledge. The research, to be published in the International Journal for Student Sustainability Research later in 2021, explored students' experience of and attitudes towards reusable menstrual products. Students were found to be motivated by the environmental benefits and long-term cost savings which use of reusable products could bring, but barriers include a lack of knowledge of reusable products and their benefits, upfront cost of certain products, and stigma against reusables. I shared my findings with Bristol-based organisation, City to Sea and this has informed their national work on and approach to menstrual products. As an Environmentstrual Ambassador and volunteer for the Women's Environmental Network, I created videos and ran workshops for community groups about sustainable menstrual products.

What the judges thought...

Reusable Menstrual Products is a great initiative which could have far-reaching consequences for the whole sector and beyond. Leah assessed the social and cultural barriers and used academic publications as well as social media - an impressive masters project.

What it means to win

"Sustainability presents a significant challenge to all, one we must not and cannot ignore. We're committed to building on the progress we've made as a University over the last 25 years. This Award is a welcome recognition of our progress and a spur to further endeavours."

Professor Steve West, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Take every opportunity to be involved in projects you are passionate about.
2. The power of individual action should not be underestimated.
3. Contributing to a gap in research is extremely rewarding.



Ellie Summer Reynolds

University of Chichester

I developed an innovative sustainable proposal for a wedding venue, Farbridge, located in West Dean, West Sussex, to both increase their sustainability by reducing their waste going to landfill and their Carbon emissions from guest travel to the venue. I developed a plan which will allow the venue to achieve these goals by reducing the amount of single-use physical materials used for communications marketing, and by encouraging their customers to use more sustainable transport options to get to and from the venue.

In addition, my plan also provided the venue with clear marketing actions that would enable them to increase their customers' awareness about the sustainability initiatives that the business is already making, as these are not currently being used as part of their marketing information and promotion, thus missing an opportunity to create commercial value and increase their competitive advantage.



Top 3 learnings

1. When aiming to improve sustainability on a business, focus on a single aspect of their operations.
2. Persevere when trying to convince a business of the benefits from sustainability implementation.
3. Businesses become sustainability advocates when they see initial improvements.

Daniel Algje



Top 3 learnings

1. I have learnt how technology can be successfully applied to enhance recycling rates.
2. I have displayed confidence and drive in making the project a reality.
3. I have learnt that potential waste already includes the key to its recycling through barcodes.

University of Wales Trinity St David

The concept behind my project was to create an application to improve the sorting of recyclable packaging into various waste streams. Through my observations, students on campus at UWTSU appeared unsure which bin to place recyclable waste into and I recognised that their "best guess" scenario unfortunately resulted in accidental contamination of individual waste streams. My project aimed to provide a scanner on a waste bin, allowing students to scan a product's barcode which returned relevant information to an interface screen above the bin, thus informing the user which section of the bin to use. I achieved the aims of my project by attaching a barcode scanner to a Raspberry Pi. Then I linked a web-based platform which interfaced with both the hardware and a public Application Programming Interface (API) to retrieve product details. When I used this in conjunction with a local (Swansea) recycling database application, I was able to accurately obtain and show on screen information about the correct recycling bin for products. I have successfully created and tested a working prototype within the limitations of lockdown and social distancing regulations.



Sustainability Champion Award - Staff and Student

The Sustainability Champion Award is an individual award open to both staff and students at a tertiary education institution. It recognises people at any level who have worked hard at implementing a sustainability project/initiative (or several) and whose involvement has made a positive impact be that on their peers, their institution, their students, their local community or their local workforce. A key criterion is actions that have been taken over and above the normal requirements of people's jobs.

Category sponsor



Top SDGs the Staff projects in this category deliver against



Top SDGs the Student projects in this category deliver against



Photo Credit: SENTINEL



Winner (Staff)

Daniela Farina



University of Exeter

Universities are leading sustainability research, but the research itself, particularly in laboratories, is a significant burden on the environment. The equipment used is energy intensive and the use of single-use plastic consumables is rampant. As Lab Manager in the Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI), I made the decision to champion lab sustainability and change the impact of labs for the better. Despite sustainability not being part of my role I volunteered my time to implement the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) accreditation and achieved our first ever award of silver status at the ESI (which has since progressed to gold standard).

I have also coordinated the development of the Exeter Sustainable Labs Team, providing a support network so all lab users can feel empowered to play their part and make environmentally friendly decisions. I am proud to say my work has made lab sustainability a priority for the University of Exeter.

What the judges thought...

A great application tackling sustainability in labs that can be replicable across HE and FE sectors. Great leadership leading to a positive result across the University of Exeter labs, showing what can be done from the bottom up. The application also highlight that it is equally important to research in the field of sustainability and beyond to be sustainable.

What it means to win

“At the University of Exeter we aspire to create a working environment where ideas are supported and people can thrive. I am delighted that Daniela has won the Sustainability Champion Staff Green Gown Award. The efforts of passionate individuals put us on the path towards a greener, sustainable future.”

Professor Lisa Roberts, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

Top 3 learnings

1. I was able to introduce organisational change demonstrating the impact grassroots action can have.
2. I lead the initiative, but the support and engagement of others was hugely important and ultimately enabled its success.
3. Small, local changes in our labs can have a massive impact on the University.



Highly Commended (Staff)

Holly Hansen-Maughan



Harrogate College

I have driven the College to transform its outlook on all things green in order to help the planet, its people and to better serve its community. The College changed hands in Sept 2019, and I started in Dec 2019. There was no prior work to build upon, but I was inspired to create change.

The college has now committed to being Net Zero Carbon, has partnered with various local organisations, has run discount schemes, climate cafes, and awareness events.

A cultural shift means it has a sustainability committee, a green week, student campaigns – it has allocated an area in College for gardening and planting. The impact of the change is affecting more than staff and students. It will host the launch event of the first ever Harrogate Action Climate Festival this October. It will host awareness events around sustainable construction and retrofit.

My goal is long term organisational change.

What the judges thought...

An inspiring individual dedication to their institution outside of their role. Holly has implemented a multitude of sustainability activities fostering engagement and collaboration amongst college staff, local authorities, and business. A well written application.

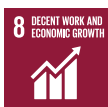
What it means to win

“Congratulations Holly! Winning this Award gives Harrogate College further motivation that our ambition to become a net zero carbon College and to work with local businesses to green the economy and create sustainable practices, as part of a circular Yorkshire, is the right thing to do and that we can make a difference.”

Danny Wild, Principal

Top 3 learnings

1. There is always more to do, and it can grow and develop unexpectedly.
2. Everybody cares about being sustainable - you just have to find out in which way!
3. Sustainability impacts everything and cannot be worked on in a silo.



Winner (Student)

Serena Bashal



Keele University

I champion climate action in the local, national, and global spheres. I have been on the UK Youth Delegation to United Nations Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 2016, having represented UK/global youth at 10 UN meetings across the globe. I have recruited four students from my University into my UN Youth teams and was the youngest ever person elected as a UNFCCC civil society Global Focal Point, where I enabled hundreds of global youths to attend various UN meetings.

Through the UK Youth Climate Coalition, I am working on a fundraising drive to enable developing country youth to attend COP26 in Glasgow, which has raised £1,970. I am collaborating with senior business leaders in the UK to raise ambition for a green industrial revolution. Additionally, I created a digital plastics usage tool for a client through a Research and Innovation project; the client's pride in the outcomes resulted in inviting me to present the tool to local and national governments.

What the judges thought...

Huge global impact benefitting so many. The judges are impressed by Serena's work across her UN duties and her focus in upskilling youth to be leaders to global environmental challenges. A clear and impressive application.

What it means to win

"Serena's work at Keele and beyond, to champion the youth voice for climate action, is applaudable and empowers other students to become change agents in their communities and countries. Serena is an inspiration to students at Keele and beyond and we are proud to see her achievements recognised through this Award."

Professor Mark Ormerod, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Strategic Lead for Sustainability

Top 3 learnings

1. Being younger and less experienced should not hinder your climate action; you can prevail with dedication!
2. Climate action can be physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. Keep the end goal as motivation.
3. Climate change is a cross-cutting issue affecting all demographics and sectors. It must not be siloed.



Highly Commended (Student)

Margaret Jennings



Goldsmiths, University of London

The organic Eco Haven I established in 2014 has developed into an increasingly biodiverse wildlife and plant centred, (rather than human centred), community space, offering research, education, well-being and expanded Ecoarts. In the face of pandemic-lockdowns and increasing mental-health issues, recognising the limitations to connect with nature in inner cities, plus the knowledge that positive wellbeing arises from nature-contact, the need to reach-out to communities on and off campus became self-evident.

Drawing from the Eco Haven experience, 3 socially engaged, participative zoom+instagram Ecoart Workshops based on 4 SDG's, (sustainable cities, quality education, wellbeing, climate change), have been successfully conducted 6 times, offering; Tree stories and sustainable wood-related home discoveries; Walk reasearch+biodiversity curiosity-focus + awe-findings; and local seed exchanges connecting nurturing, community, and legacy. As a proactive eco project they link-up with my local community art fest workshop 21 and Capital Culture 22, a yearly eco-sustainability SU Award, one acre of rainforest purchase and two library eco archives.

What the judges thought...

The judges particularly appreciated the strong focus on mental health and local impacts. It's an interesting, creative way of implementing sustainability, and nature into artwork. Margaret finds a way to act and empower her social and natural environment.

What it means to win

"Margaret has continued to promote sustainability issues in her work with the Students' Union and in our local community. On behalf of everyone at Goldsmiths, many congratulations to Margaret."

Professor Frances Corner OBE, Warden

Top 3 learnings

1. We can offer positive environmental legacy sharing and nurturing seeds. Even on a windowsill.
2. I encourage time to be with nature, Respect, love, and awe - pathways for wellbeing-ecochange.
3. I embrace layered ecoart research, towards stimulating hands on proactive eco- sustainable responsibility.



Highly Commended (Student)

Catarina Costa



University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

I have worked collaboratively, pro-actively and innovatively in my role as President for the UWE Built Environment Society to embed sustainability into the curriculum across two main projects. 1) Zero Carbon Framework (ZCF): a series of three short courses (by levels: Aware, Skilled and Expert) focusing on zero carbon design in the built environment to be provided by the society (for students, and by students in the future). The first two levels have already been successfully delivered by the society mentor (a lecturer) and I was a key part of designing the first level which has been delivered during September 2020 to 1000+ students! 2) Passive Pod: a fully student-led design and construction project of a studio-sized pod using low carbon Passivhaus principles to be built on campus. The design has been approved by lecturers and materials have been ordered to start building during Summer 2021 onwards! The two projects embody an advanced education for sustainable development agenda with the Architecture and Built Environment (ABE) department by positively empowering students with knowledge and skills related to their course and sustainability.

What the judges thought...

Caterina has exemplified and fostered innovative and far-reaching educational practices towards a positive built environment in this application. The judges liked the curriculum impact of your project and the impact for future generation of learner in ABE. A very clear and precise application.

What it means to win

"Sustainability, particularly climate change, presents a significant challenge to each and every one of us, one we must not and cannot ignore. We are committed to building on the progress we have made as a University community over the last 25 years and this Award is a welcome recognition of our progress and a spur to further endeavours."

Professor Steve West, Vice Chancellor

Top 3 learnings

1. Collaboration is the key to generate positive change.
2. Questioning of existing status-quo is essential in order to do better and move forward.
3. Adverse situations can lead to incredible projects and experiences!



Dr Jemma Browne, Dr Sandra Costa, Dr Matthew Jones & Dawn Parke (Staff)

Birmingham City University

The Experimental Sustainability Studio (ESS) at Birmingham School of Architecture & Design brings together staff and students to explore innovative and experimental approaches to sustainability within our School, Faculty, City and Region. The ESS is both a series of interdisciplinary 'pop up' teaching and activism events, and a design think tank embedded in our design studio culture. Through design challenges, theoretical debate, and technological exploration, it aims to enable students to build the critical awareness and depth of knowledge necessary to challenge 'business as usual' and create radical change.

The project has involved over 450 students and staff in online cross-School and wider faculty events exploring individual and collective responses to climate action and has been instrumental in placing sustainability at the heart of the School's ethos. In addition, using our findings from this radical pedagogy, we are developing research strands which we have presented at conferences nationally and internationally and are currently seeking to publish.



Top 3 learnings

1. Our positive attitude and innovative platform for experimentation has planted the seed for transformational change.
2. Reinforcing the value of scaling up actions was critical in creating our community of change.
3. Virtual spaces create possibilities for unique interdisciplinary collaborations and increase access to learning opportunities.

Ankit Duggal (Staff)



Top 3 learnings

1. An opportunity to participate in hands-on learning.
2. Practice the learning of turning food waste into useful compost and reduce the carbon footprint in transportation.
3. Awareness for biodiversity and climate change; in addition, how everyone can contribute within their limited resources.

Edinburgh Napier University

I reinforced the garden club with a sustainability initiative to equip students and local community volunteers to make the campus a more widely used resource. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to connect with nature and promote environmental sustainability, alongside the practical virus security of utilising outdoor space, campaigning the creation of green space and community food resources through developing new space within the campuses. We cultivated the area by adding new beds, one tonne of sustainable soil, manure, and sand, alongside weather protection in order to form an outdoor community classroom space, that is integrated with a practical food resource enabling people from across the community to learn more about climate change, contribute to greenhouse gas reduction and bring technology in support of nature. I extended this project to our other two campuses that are three to six miles apart. I advocated and supported the active transport of our sustainable environment team in the University. It is evident that everyone can play a part to help climate change.



FINALISTS

Dr Eleanor Atkins (Staff)



Photo Credit: SENTINEL

Top 3 learnings

1. Persistence is important, if you see the value of something, strive to make it happen.
2. The value that real-world projects bring to students' confidence and enthusiasm.
3. Be approachable and enthusiastic and people will be enthusiastic and accepting of your ideas.

Staffordshire University

Since joining the University as a lecturer in September 2019, I have worked collaboratively with the leadership of the University, sharing experiences and passion for improving the environment both locally and globally. As well as advising the University on its own biodiversity and sustainability activities, I am also now advising our local authority. My students and I apply academic theory through real-world learning to create beautiful, biodiverse landscapes within our own university campus, via our involvement in the on-campus construction projects as well as the Wild Staffs project, driving positive changes for the environment, biodiversity, aesthetics, and sustainability.

I have developed several initiatives and projects which aim to motivate my students, colleagues and engage members of the community to become more sustainable, providing them with the tools and knowledge to make positive change to protect and value the biodiversity of their own environments.



Dr Ellen Quigley (Staff)

University of Cambridge

My report, "Divestment: Advantages and Disadvantages for the University of Cambridge" was released in October 2020, with the aid of supporting authors Anthony Odgers and Emily Bugden. Following the release of the report, the University of Cambridge committed to: Divest its endowment; increase its investments in renewable energy and achieve net-zero across its entire investment portfolio by 2038.

The commitment to decarbonise its portfolio by 2038 is a particular achievement since it is unique for a university endowment of its size and structure.

My approach, focusing on activating the University as a 'universal owner', has decarbonisation impacts beyond the commitment itself. Universal owners recognise that a majority of their value comes from the health and stability of the economy as a whole and thus rapid decarbonisation is a priority. The University and college endowments have an ability to drive decarbonisation through leveraging their ownership power in impact-oriented strategies to drive corporate change.



Top 3 learnings

1. Open, collaborative communication and respectful dialogue are the foundations of sustainable change.
2. Inviting and respecting students' views and insights is essential.
3. We do not need to be afraid of making big and bold asks.



Helen Baker (Staff)

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

I lead the University's procurement team and am a long-standing member of UWE Bristol's Sustainability Board. I have found a number of ways to extend the reach and influence of procurement within UWE and the wider sector's approach to sustainability.

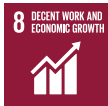
As an active member of the National Responsible Procurement Group (NRPG) I have been instrumental in raising a number of key areas: Promotion of a UWE student's Palm Oil campaign, facilitating presentations at national HE level; Gaining support for the NRPG to adopt the "UK plastics pact."; Facilitating the updating of the National Coding Structure to add a "packaging" sustainability risk; Facilitating the National Supplier Code of Conduct to include reference to the UN SDGs, supplier behaviour on-site and facilitated a rewording of the carbon commitment clause to bring harmony between institutions and purchasing consortia.

Locally, I have promoted student opportunities to local business such as the UWE Students Carbon Guide for SMEs.



Top 3 learnings

1. If, at first you don't succeed, try, try, and try again.
2. Keep communication channels open - up, down and across the sector.
3. Look for opportunities to promote student activity.



Pilar Garcia (Staff)



Top 3 learnings

1. Break big tasks down - I saw the value in capturing and pursuing many small conversations.
2. Use an existing system - I made good use of the departmental team brief process.
3. Adapt and keep going! COVID derailed us but we got going with new working methods.

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

"Ask not what your university can do for the environment, but what YOU can do!"

An old wartime quote befitting the Climate Emergency we are facing. In my role as (Internal) Comms Officer for the Estates & Facilities department, I saw an opportunity to help dispel the notion that it is the Sustainability team's job to tackle Climate Change at UWE whilst at the same time establishing some "ground up" climate action among 450+ staff in 60 teams across 16 departments.

My role includes helping to embed our department values and through my advocacy, in Feb 2020, "Sustainability" was given full backing of the Executive and 16 Heads of Departments as the theme for our "Commit" value. The campaign asked, "what are YOU going to do about Climate Change?". Through discussions, local meetings/surveys (on Teams during lockdown), staff pledged over 100 specific sustainability / carbon reduction actions and targets, half of which are now in progress.



FINALISTS

Richard Green (Staff)



Top 3 learnings

1. I learned that people can change with gentle encouragement and examples.
2. It is vital to create a community. Together we are stronger and more impactful.
3. Communication is key. Promote and celebrate actions.

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

Through my enthusiasm and determination I have shown that you can encourage people to embrace sustainable practices in all aspects of their lives. By arming people with information they have then gone away and done their own work. From turning off equipment in the office and recycling more materials, to changing travel habits, growing food, and encouraging wildlife, it shows what can be achieved with a little effort.

I took it upon myself to start and share actions that were over and above my job requirements and that of our own climate action group. It has stimulated many discussions that simply were not happening before and has given people fresh hope that they can make a positive and measurable impact on the environment.

Points of communication have led to people having more reasons to communicate and create relationships and also feel more value in their work and in working for the University.



The Grounds and Maintenance Team (Staff)

York St John University

We have really taken the initiative to support the community's mental wellbeing through our allotments and biodiversity projects. The work has been on-going for the last couple of years but has accelerated during the pandemic as the link between nature and mental well-being became more apparent. We have also changed the way we maintain our grounds which has made York St John University (YSJ) a haven for wildlife.

The highlight of our initiatives this year is our work on biodiversity enhancement across all sites and the work on allotments at the Haxby Road Campus. During the pandemic, we waived allotment fees to enable allotment holders to access the plots without worrying about financial obligations. Having a space to retreat and to grow plants and vegetables has had a positive effect on their mental well-being. We also worked with students and the academic community on the refugee allotment project, which funded free access to our allotments for refugees, in partnership with Refugee Action York.



Top 3 learnings

1. Play by each other's strengths.
2. Tap into each other's expertise.
3. Giving the champions the lead, brings the project to life and brings amazing results.



Luisa Deragon (Student)

University of Cambridge

I am a final year PhD student in Biological Sciences, from Girton College, at the University of Cambridge. My PhD research is focused on exploring innovative alternatives in bone fracture repair. A veterinarian by training, I have always been passionate about species conservation and the environment. During the course of my studies, I collaborated in a few social causes and innovation projects such as, Medical i-Teams (in a 'project to start-up' initiative called MyLCUvoice), Shaping Horizons and Engage for Change, not to mention volunteering in a Student Community Action project called Big Sibs.

I am Co-founder & CEO in a Start-up called RE.USE, which promotes replacing the use of disposable food containers in takeaway and food delivery for reusables. I am also the coordinator in this year's Cambridge Climate and Sustainability Forum, with the main theme 'Sustainability in Action'.



Top 3 learnings

1. We can make sustainability effortless and cost-efficient by applying circular economy principles.
2. We need to act NOW if we want a more sustainable and equitable world.
3. We need more forward-thinking institutions, like Darwin and Girton Colleges, supporting innovative initiatives like RE.USE.



Ecologeco Team (Student)



Top 3 learnings

1. We volunteer our time and effort so we can make a real, environmental difference.
2. We want to make the agricultural industry more sustainable.
3. We want to educate consumers so they can make informed lifestyle choices.

University of Nottingham - Enactus Nottingham

Ecologeco was formed in September 2020 with the aim to increase the sustainability of the agricultural industry. In order to achieve this, we will be creating a financially viable supplement to add to ruminants existing feed which will reduce their methane emissions. We began by researching various supplements and calculating the viability of using them as our chosen supplement. Alongside this, we create our unique 'methane cowculator' which asks consumers lifestyle related questions and subsequently gives them an estimated methane emission. Following this, consumers can sponsor a cow based on their individual emissions and hence offset their emissions. Not only does this support our project but it also makes consumers aware of the negative climate impacts of their lifestyle. Due to the nature of our project and wanting to focus on achieving the SDG goals, we decided to use native seaweeds as our supplement, reducing the emissions from exporting the supplement overseas whilst also supporting British companies.

We are very excited to see where Ecologeco will go and hope to see a positive, environmental difference.



FINALISTS

Callum Jones (Student)



Top 3 learnings

1. How strong we can be when likeminded and motivated individuals come together for the better.
2. If you have an idea, just do it. Push your boundaries and use your institution's vast resources.
3. If you are benefiting, people will help you strive for better.

University of the West of England, UWE Bristol

Over the last 8 to 9 months I have been productive in different areas as the Sustainability Officer and Participation and Equality Officer of UWE's Geography Society. I have had my fingers in many pies, pushing to make the most out of a not so tasty year.

When it comes to sustainability, engagement is not as high as you dream it to be. Yet, I have found that doing the extra work and building on my 'why' has kept me going through this academic year. When you have found a strong enough 'why', your 'what' and 'how' will find you.

This has happened to me without me even realising I have been building on my 'what's' and 'how's' until I started writing this exact paragraph for you to read. My 'why' to create a greener and more sustainable future, along with the ignorance and lack of engagement from much of the population, has brought me to the very pies that I have been recognised for. And I would be delighted to share with you those scrumptious details.



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John Starmer, Director of Estates



University of Reading receives £3.3m to install carbon-saving technologies on campus

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Dan Fernbank, Energy & Sustainability Director

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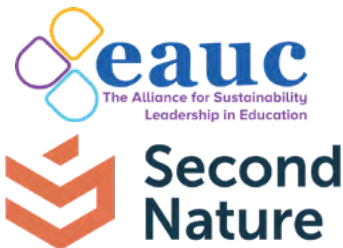
(Figures as of April 2021).

We would like to extend a thank you to those who have continued to commit to the carbon agenda whilst managing the impact of COVID-19. Your work is helping to support the UK's economic recovery and net-zero target.

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*Calculated using Green Book emissions factors for electricity published by the government.



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