



Awards 2025

Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Leadership

Institution Name	Royal Northern College of Music
Submission title or project name	The Future is Green
Nominee / key personnel	Royal Northern College of Music
URL	https://www.rncm.ac.uk/rncm-innovate/the-future-is-green/
Submission	Throughout 2023-24, the Royal Northern College of Music presented The Future is Green, a programme embedding climate issues and our environmental impact at the heart of our decision-making, seeking ways to reduce our carbon footprint while asking “What role could and should musicians and creative artists have in response to the climate crisis?” As well as providing opportunities for students, staff, audiences and the wider community to learn with us, we also highlighted the important work within our curriculum and the sustainability measures in place across our estate. The programme delivered 30 public performances, an Earth Day symposium, eight student Spotlight concerts, five Green Fund-supported student projects and significant reductions in energy and carbon consumption, food waste recycling and CO₂ emissions. The Future is Green was shortlisted in the 2025 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards’ Series and Events category and for the Educate North Awards’ Sustainable Green Initiative of the Year.



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Institution Name	University of York
Submission title or project name	YESI Fellows Initiative
Nominee / key personnel	Rachel Drinkhill; Jane Güleş; Lindsay Stringer
URL	https://www.york.ac.uk/yesi/yesi-fellows/ https://www.york.ac.uk/yesi/
Submission	Environmental sustainability is a core principle at the University of York, driving research, education and partnerships. The York Environmental Sustainability Institute (YESI) exemplifies this through its pioneering YESI Fellows Programme – an institutional model for interdisciplinary, impact-led research that is scalable across the sector. Since 2022-23, 43 fellows have secured more than £1.5 million in grant income. The programme supports researchers at all career stages through three schemes: Discipline Hopping Fellowships (cross-disciplinary research); Knowledge Exchange Fellowships (co-created work with stakeholders); and the International Fellows Scheme (global collaboration with Official Development Assistance recipients). These schemes foster innovation, stakeholder engagement and real-world impact. York shares its model through national forums and training, helping to embed sustainability into wider research culture. By championing interdisciplinary, actionable research, York is leading systemic change in how environmental sustainability challenges are addressed.



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Institution Name	King's College London
Submission title or project name	Menus of Change – leading sustainable and nutritious campus food at King's
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	Menus of Change is a flagship initiative central to the Climate & Sustainability Action Plan at King's College London. This programme has transformed campus dining by prioritising sustainable, plant-forward meals through an "Inverted Menu Design" approach – featuring seasonal, local ingredients and avoiding overfished species. More than 350,000 sustainable meals have been served, reducing CO₂ emissions by 6.42 tonnes and generating £1.5 million in revenue. Food waste has declined thanks to smarter portioning and whole-ingredient use, while nutritional quality has improved through research-led enhancements. Menus of Change exemplifies collaboration, engaging students in carbon labelling research and partnering on sector-wide projects such as the Circular Food Sprint. King's initiatives – Too Good to Go, Love Our Leftovers, and Root-to-Tip – further reinforce the institution's commitment to net zero carbon by 2030. This model not only redefines sustainable campus dining but also offers a replicable framework linking climate action, education and health.



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Institution Name	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Submission title or project name	Halve the half: evidencing and actioning energy waste to save millions in cost and carbon
Nominee / key personnel	Graham Lewis (chief officer university environments and property); Lee Davies (environment and energy manager)
URL	
Submission	Cardiff Metropolitan University's initiative to tackle energy waste on campus began with space utilisation analysis in the 2023-24 academic year. We uncovered that our buildings consume more than half their energy out of hours, and that there is a total disconnect between building occupancy and energy use. In response, targeting out-of-hours waste achieved the following: • A saving of £5.1 million in capital cost and 402 tonnes of embodied CO₂, as well as an annual saving of £78,000 in operational costs and 55 tonnes of operational carbon in not building new facilities we had envisaged in the first year, as a result of utilisation findings • Future cost avoidance of £53 million through not building new teaching space but rather utilising underused facilities • A 20.77 per cent reduction in gas consumption in the first nine months of the academic year • A combined reduction of 1.93 GWh in gas and electricity consumption • £945,000 in annual tariff and consumption savings.



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Institution Name	Nottingham Trent University
Submission title or project name	Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	https://www.ntu.ac.uk/media/documents/business-and-employers/action-research-project-final-report.pdf https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/strategy/sustainability https://www.ntu.ac.uk/business-and-employers/procurement/sustainable-procurement-and-net-zero-carbon
Submission	Nottingham Trent University has set a challenging target to be net zero carbon by 2040 across all three scopes, including in our supply chain, which is the largest and most challenging source of emissions. Working with NETpositive Futures, NTU has developed the Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool to engage with a range of businesses on net zero, obtaining robust carbon data to help measure, monitor and reduce supply chain emissions. A one-year action research project led by NTU brought together more than 100 procurement and sustainability professionals from 32 UK universities to learn how to deploy the tool in their own supply chains and to contribute to ensure that the tool was designed “for the sector by the sector”. The project shines a spotlight on higher education collaborating to tackle a challenge that had been placed in the “hard to do” box, and working together to maximise resource, which has a profound measurable impact.



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Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Leadership

Institution Name	Aston University
Submission title or project name	
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	Aston University's Green Advantage Programme, delivered by the Aston Centre for Growth, is a globally recognised approach for incorporating sustainability into company leadership. The programme, funded by the UK government's Community Renewal Fund, has helped more than 250 business leaders in the West Midlands to establish personalised green impact strategies and lower their environmental footprint. Participants learn how to incorporate sustainable practices into essential company processes through expert-led workshops, peer mentoring and personalised coaching. Green Advantage reflects Aston's social commitment and sector leadership in practical sustainability education. The initiative has built long-term collaborations between universities, local governments and SMEs, resulting in significant economic and environmental benefits.