

**Press Release: 24/03/21 5pm**

## **Green Gown Awards Celebrate Initiatives Playing Leading Roles in Addressing Climate Action**

In the first ever virtual ceremony, held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the Green Gown Awards celebrated the inspirational work and projects of **74 Finalists** in **12 different categories** - showing the importance of sustainability commitments even in the most unprecedented of times.

As the Climate Crisis is increasingly recognised as the most pressing issue our world faces, the Green Gown Awards put a spotlight on the innovative and inspiring sustainability work taking place in universities and colleges to create a brighter future for their students.

This year's UK and Ireland Green Gown Awards Finalists represented over **850,000 students** and **130,000 staff**. They are leading the way with their commitment to the global sustainability agenda and proving the value that universities and colleges bring to the wellbeing of society.

Winning initiatives ranged from social projects, like [The University of Nottingham's Vets Need Pets](#) initiative that provides free care for pets belonging to homeless and vulnerably housed people with the help of students, to projects that focus on a low carbon future, like [North East Scotland College's Girls in Energy](#) project that gives female engineers of the future a platform to drive positive change with their skills.

Host, **Iain Patton, EAUC CEO**, said, "The Green Gown Awards occupy a very special place. They force us to ask what our institutions are doing well, and, of course, what they could be doing better. They raise the bar. Our Winners, Highly Commended and indeed all of our Finalists have shown the sector's resilience and adaptability on how to collaborate to build back better and play a pivotal and leading role in tackling climate action, in even these most challenging of times. We hope that others will be inspired to take similar actions in their institutions to benefit staff, students and their local communities."

Co-host, **Alison Robinson, NERC Deputy Executive Chair & Director, Corporate Affairs**, said, "Sustainability should not be seen as an add-on to good practice, but an inherent part of research and innovation's excellence. We must champion and celebrate all who are taking strides to reflect this across the sector; learn from each other to build on successes; and collaborate across the research and innovation system to rise to the challenge of our ambitious environmental sustainability goals."

## **Huge Congratulations to all of our Winners, Highly Commended Entries and Finalists!**

Case studies and videos from all projects are available on the [Sustainability Exchange](#) and we'll be running webinars with our Winners over the next 12 months to encourage further engagement.

**ends**

## ***Notes to Editors***

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**About the Green Gown Awards:** Established in 2004, the Green Gown Awards UK and Ireland recognise the exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities, colleges and the learning and skills sectors across the UK and Ireland as the education sector leads a path to efficiency, employability and better quality of life for us all. The Green Gown Awards are administered by the EAUC and are governed by [a cross agency steering group](#).

The Green Gown Awards UK and Ireland is further enhanced by its international presence. The Awards are also delivered on a regional basis in Australasia, French speaking as well as the International Green Gown Awards supported by the [United Nations Environment](#), the [Higher Education Sustainability Initiative](#), [The Association of Commonwealth Universities \(ACU\)](#), [L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie \(AUF\)](#) and [International Association of Universities \(IAU\)](#).

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