



## Stage 1 Background



*The Green Gown Awards recognise positive actions to achieve sustainable higher and further education, with particular emphasis on environmental improvement. They are organised by the Higher Education Environmental Performance Improvement (HEEPI) project, which is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).*

*The Awards are being run in collaboration with key sector bodies such as The Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE), The British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG), College and University Business Officers (CUBO), The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), Guild HE, The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), The Energy Consortium (TEC), and Universities UK.*

The achievements of the universities and colleges winning the Awards will be publicised through:

- Presentations of the Awards at prestigious events
- A brochure summarising winning entries
- Coverage of the Awards in sector publications
- Publicity on the HEEPI web site and partner websites.

Experience of the first three years of the Awards scheme shows that the resulting benefits to institutional and personal reputations vastly outweighs the time involved in preparing applications.

### **Award Categories for 2007-8**

These have been revised since last year's awards with the aims of 'refreshing' categories, exploring new areas of activity, and placing greater emphasis on day to day improvement and learning activities. The eight categories for 2007-8 are:

- 1) Colleges
- 2) Continuous Improvement
- 3) Courses
- 4) Energy and Water Efficiency
- 5) Residences
- 6) Social Responsibility
- 7) Student Initiatives
- 8) Sustainable Construction.

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*Colleges* – This category recognises the difficulties which FE and smaller HE institutions have, relative to larger universities, in taking action in many areas. It encompasses any environment-related initiatives which contribute to sustainable development. It is open to all institutions funded by the Learning and Skills Council and/or affiliated with Guild HE. (Note – other categories are also open to FE and HE Colleges and may be a better choice for specific initiatives, such as a green building).

*Continuous Improvement* – This category recognises sustained and successful activities to improve the performance of whole FE and HE institutions, campuses, faculties and buildings over a number of years. One intention is to provide recognition for ‘coalface’ initiatives which may not be high profile, nor deliver great benefits in a single year, but which keep on creating benefits. Examples of possible applications include environmental and other management systems; use of metering data to drive improvements in the energy and water consumption of buildings; setting of medium/long-term goals for areas such as biodiversity, procurement, transport or waste and sustained activities to achieve them. Applications which are essentially about recognising the achievements of an ‘unsung hero or heroine’ (especially people who do not normally figure in Awards of this kind, such as cleaners or maintenance staff) are also welcomed, but should be submitted by a senior member of the institution. Applications in the Continuous Improvement category are only likely to be successful if they provide considerable quantitative evidence on the nature of the improvements made, and also demonstrate a causal relationship between activities undertaken and improvements achieved. If the applications are of sufficient quality, the judges may choose two winners for this category – one for a whole institutional approach, and another for a specific area of continuous improvement such as transport or waste.

*Courses* – This category recognises innovative actions with regard to sustainability in undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational courses in FE and HE institutions. Examples of possible application topics include the development of new courses focused on some or all sustainable development issues; adaptation of existing courses; use of practical sustainability-related projects or other practical activities within courses; and work-based learning initiatives.

*Energy and Water Efficiency* – This category recognises initiatives which have achieved reductions in the fossil fuel and/or water consumption of buildings, groups of buildings, campuses or FE and HE institutions as a whole. (Note – this category is for relatively self-contained, ‘one off’, activities or campaigns. Energy and water initiatives which have been sustained over a period of years, supported by long-term investment such as metering, and/or which span a number of areas, are best entered in the Continuous Improvement category).

*Residences* – This category recognises initiatives to create environmental and social benefits in any residences (including those owned by private providers) which mainly house FE or HE students. The initiatives must be mainly focused on residences, but can be on a wide range of topics, including green design and refurbishment, energy and water efficiency, recycling, community involvement, improving relations with local neighbourhoods, and innovative fund raising for sustainable development. (Note – applications focusing on a new or refurbished residence may stand a better chance of success in this category than in sustainable construction).

*Social Responsibility* – This category recognises initiatives by FE or HE institutions which create significant benefits for local communities, disadvantaged groups, and society as a whole in either the UK or developing countries. As well as specific initiatives, this category includes institutions taking a leading and visionary role in multi-partner activities such as community development or urban regeneration. Although all applications will be considered on their merits, the judges will be looking for ‘corporate social responsibility’ type initiatives which have an element of proactive community and social concern, rather than ‘business as

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usual' activities which create immediate financial benefit for the institution such as putting on new courses for particular groups. (Note – activities which have a substantial student element should be submitted to the Residences or Student Initiatives category).

*Student Initiatives* – This category recognises initiatives which have been developed and/or substantially influenced by students. Examples include awareness campaigns, procurement actions, and volunteering activities organised by unions, societies and similar organisations within FE and HE institutions, the general sustainability activities of students' unions, and specific initiatives or campaigns by national student bodies. Activities aimed at changing student awareness and behaviour by universities and colleges themselves are also eligible, provided that there is evidence of substantial student involvement.

*Sustainable Construction* – This category recognises new or refurbished buildings or campuses in further or higher education which have good energy and environmental performance. As such buildings sometimes fail to perform to their design specifications, evidence of actual performance in practice, and ideally of a post occupancy evaluation to identify problems and means of improving them, will be given special weight in judging. Applications featuring refurbished buildings are especially welcomed, and the difficulties of achieving similar levels of performance to new build will be taken into account in the judging process.

Initiatives which won or were commended in previous years will not generally be considered for this year's awards. They can, however, form part of an application to the Continuous Improvement category, provided that there is evidence of further improvement since the last Award. Other initiatives from the institutions concerned – or ones which were previously submitted but unsuccessful - can also be submitted.

**The closing date for stage 1 applications is 1200 on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2007.**

#### **The Stage 1 Application Form – Background Information**

The Green Gown Awards has moved to a two stage application process in order to make it easier for applicants, to enable a feedback process to achieve a more uniform quality in the applications seen by the full judging panel, and to allow recognition of a greater number of initiatives (through publication of a considerable number of short listed entries).

Stage 1 involves a short application form. A small panel of sector experts will assess these to produce a short list for each category. These short listed entries will then be invited – by January 14<sup>th</sup> at the latest - to submit a fuller application for stage 2 by February 11<sup>th</sup>. These will then be assessed by a larger judging panel with experts from both inside and outside further and higher education at a special 'judgement day' in late February. This panel will select winning, and highly commended, entries for each category from the short list. The Awards will be presented in a high profile way in spring 2008.

Stage 1 will involve consideration of a large number of entries, many of which are likely to be on similar topics. *Applications which stand out through their succinct descriptions, and well substantiated claims, will have a greater chance of progressing to stage 2.* Applications which are more than 3 pages long will not be accepted, and the judges will look favourably on those which keep to 2!

Please cover the following topics in your application:

Summary – Insert a short title, and a one or two (short) sentence summary of your application. Please make it as 'catchy' and descriptive as possible.

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General Information - If the application is being made by an architectural practice, or other non-academic body, please obtain prior approval from the institution, and provide a contact there.

The Initiative – Describe, in under 300 words, the initiative, covering topics such as the activities undertaken; reasons for doing it; time-scale; costs (in cash and staff time); current status (on-going, completed etc); departments/organisations involved.

Benefits - Summarise, in bullet point format, and with as much quantification as possible, the main benefits achieved by the initiative. Indicate, where relevant, the reference case against which benefits are being compared, e.g. status quo.

Headline Points – Please summarise, in bullet point form, why you feel that your application is of wider interest to the sector. Relevant points might include significant internal impacts on finance; student and/or staff recruitment and behaviour; external recognition; replicability of both outcomes and learning through the HE and/or FE sectors; an original attempt to tackle a problem.

No background material, appendices etc. will be examined for the stage 1 applications. Short listed entries will be invited to submit such material in stage 2.

### **Judging Criteria**

The judging will be based on a composite view of the application, taking account of the following criteria, and the specific nature of the Award category:

The nature and size of both environmental and non-environmental benefits (relative to its context)

The relationship between benefits and costs

Broader significance to the sector (e.g. originality, pathfinder status; replicability)

The quality and reliability of evidence supporting the claims being made (e.g. quantitative evidence of benefits and outcomes)

Unusual features which make the application 'stand out from the crowd' (e.g. extraordinary commitment and impact of a member of staff, quirky responses to topics that are sometimes seen as boring).

### **Entry Details**

To enter, please fill in the two page stage 1 form and email it to [greengowns@heepi.org.uk](mailto:greengowns@heepi.org.uk) by 1200 on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Submission of the form means that entrants have read, and accept, the conditions of entry (see below). Please use a separate form for every specific initiative you wish to enter. Try also to make your entries succinct, using bullet points wherever possible, and with a typeface of at least 11pt.

Please contact HEEPI if you have not been advised of receipt of your application within a week of sending it, or by 1700 on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**CONDITIONS OF ENTRY**

- The projects entered must have been operational within a higher or further education establishment, or a work-based learning provider.
- Third party organisations, e.g. architects, may enter on behalf of an Institution, but an Institution employee must approve the application.
- Entries must be submitted using an official Awards entry form.
- The closing date for stage 1 entries is 1200 on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Selected entries will be placed on the HEEPI web site in order to disseminate best practice throughout the sector. Unless otherwise stated, it is assumed that applicants accept that their applications will be in the public domain.
- The Awards organisers reserve the right to a) refuse an entry if the rules have not been met, and b) audit winning applications to ensure that claims made are fully justified.
- The Awards organisers reserve the right to move an entry from one category to another if they feel the new category is more appropriate.
- The Awards organiser's decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.