



THE ROYAL ANNIVERSARY TRUST

PRESS RELEASE

22 February 2022

The Platinum Jubilee Challenge launched to help UK tertiary education sector hit carbon net zero

An innovative new scheme has been launched by the Royal Anniversary Trust to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, asking leading UK universities and further education colleges to work together to help their sector reduce carbon emissions to net zero.

The Platinum Jubilee Challenge will be open to the 21 winning institutions (15 universities, 6 further education colleges) from the most recent round (Round 14) of the Queen's Anniversary Prizes, which is also run by the Trust. It will provide stimulus and challenge to leaders in UK tertiary education, with universities and further education colleges joining forces to help resolve one of the most important issues facing society.

The 12-month programme is being provided at no cost to the institutions, with funding from the Trust and the Department for Education. It will include a review of existing measures, building on the work of the EAUC – the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education. Expert consultancy for each institution will be provided, as will grants for practical student projects to reduce carbon, and a three-day residential workshop will be held for all participants.

The start date is 1st March 2022 and the Challenge will conclude in February 2023, when a report setting out a pathway for the sector to reach net zero will be published. The aim is for Challenges with different themes to continue to run in future alongside the Prizes scheme in their normal two-year cycle.

Royal Anniversary Trust Chair, Sir Damon Buffini, comments:

"We are most proud to be able to launch this scheme, with the support of the DfE, to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There is arguably no greater challenge facing us than climate change, and by bringing together the best in our UK universities and colleges, we should see an outcome of real practical benefit to the sector as it aims to deliver on net zero aims."

New Trust Chief Executive, Kristina Murrin, adds:

"As the incoming CEO of the Royal Anniversary Trust, I am delighted to be able to announce this innovative programme. We already have a number of Queen's Anniversary Prize-winners involved in environmental and low carbon work and this new scheme will allow all our Round 14 winners to come together to learn from each other, share ideas and demonstrate the capability of our outstanding tertiary education sector."

Minister for the school system, Baroness Barran, comments:

“The fight against climate change requires action from all of us. People in further and higher education are showing tremendous initiative and drive and the Platinum Jubilee Challenge will harness that and help the sector get to net zero faster.

“This challenge, with its focus on creating a standardised framework for reporting emissions, dovetails with the ‘innovate, test and invest’ strategy set out in the DfE’s Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

“Case studies and best practice released through the challenge will be brought together via the DfE’s National Education Nature Park that is being designed to share best practice across the education system as a whole.”

-Ends-

Editor’s note:

The Royal Anniversary Trust was established in 1990 to create a national programme of educational activities and other events marking the 40th anniversary of The Queen’s accession in 1992. It runs the Queen’s Anniversary Prizes – the highest national Honour awarded in UK further and higher education, with Prizes granted by The Queen every two years. A total of 296 Prizes have been awarded to 83 universities and 54 colleges of further education over 14 Rounds, for work that shows outstanding quality and innovation and delivers real benefit to the wider world.

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DfE is setting out a system-wide strategy for Sustainability and Climate Change for the United Kingdom to be a world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030. The draft strategy was launched at COP26, following sector engagement, it will be formally published in April 2022.

Website:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1031454/SCC_DRAFT_Strategy.pdf

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EAUC is the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education. Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart and to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'. EAUC represents over 250 universities and colleges in the UK and Ireland with a combined total of over 4.5 million students supported by over half a million staff with a spending budget of over £43 billion. EAUC also work on an international level with United Nations Environment Programme and other UN bodies on several global education initiatives.

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