

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



WINNER
ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

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Highly commended
Gloucestershire University, the first university to gain ISO 14001 from the British Standards Institution

The judges for our first award for Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Development, made in association with Forum for the Future, praised the high quality of the nominations and admitted that it was a close-run contest.

They looked for entries covering the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, with proven achievement over the past year, and chose St Andrews University as the winner. Sara Parkin, co-founder of Forum for the Future, said: “St Andrews’ partnership with students, along with innovative multidisciplinary teaching methods, a commitment to executive leadership and bottom-up engagement of staff and students, tipped the balance.”

St Andrews is charting the progress of the first student cohort taking a four-year interdisciplinary honours degree in sustainable development. Staff from three faculties teach the course. St Andrews believes that no single discipline can span the field effectively.

Dominic Houlihan, professor of zoology and vice-principal of Aberdeen University, said it was notoriously

difficult to get units to contribute to a new degree across disciplines, and the programme was an achievement.

“It will be very interesting to see how these students develop — and also whether the momentum in teaching as well as in other areas of the university’s life really can make a difference to the profile of St Andrews, which is already very attractive to students.”

Elaine Thomas, rector of University College for the Creative Arts, said St Andrews displayed a comprehensive strategic approach, showing what could be done when “student enthusiasm is matched by executive leadership”. The degree sits alongside initiatives including Fairtrade status for the university and a students’ association, a comprehensive sustainability strategy including an ethical screening policy for investments, and completing a carbon budget for the science campus in partnership with the Carbon Trust.



Green leader: Jan Bebbington, who serves on the degree’s management committee