



Green Gown
Awards 2016



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Anglia Ruskin University Student Engagement

ARU Green Student Societies Fund

About the project

Summary

Our ARU Green Student Societies Fund gives students the opportunity to apply for grants which they can spend on their club or society. Clubs and societies need to fulfil a set number of 'green' criteria depending on the level of grant they are applying for; £50, £200 or £500. The Green Fund has 13 criteria to choose from ranging from engaging with the Environment Team on social media to promoting our annual travel survey to members and their peers.

Project partners

The ARU Environment Team developed the project with the support and involvement of our Students' Union, particularly the Societies Officers who advised on the structure and marketing of the project. During its first year the project directly engaged 12 student societies with over 500 student members.

The results

The problem

We think we've identified an innovative student engagement method which is delivering better results than previous approaches we've tried. Our ARU Green Student Societies Fund offers relatively small amounts of funding to student clubs and societies in return for them undertaking environmental activities.

Our reasons for trying this method are multiple: ARU's teaching and research strengths are largely in subjects other than environmental sciences, meaning there are relatively few students engaged in sustainability through their courses; our students haven't established a society focusing on campus environmental sustainability, despite offers of support and funding from the Environment Team; and traditional engagement activities and competitions haven't seemed to reach beyond the enthusiastic minority. Therefore, instead of trying to support the establishment of a new green society we decided to try and 'green' the societies which already existed.

The approach

During summer 2015 we worked with the ARU Students' Union to establish how the fund would work, the green criteria for societies receiving money, how to publicise and operate the fund and how much money to make available. The criteria were developed by looking at the activities of clubs and societies and asking them to take a greener approach, for example: if they hold a cake sale could they use Fairtrade ingredients or promote we



Anglia Ruskin
University

Profile

- Higher Education
- 39,400 students (includes full and part time students)
- 1,900 staff
- Urban

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are a Fairtrade university; if they produce posters or flyers could they be electronic or if printed have the recycle logo; if they travel to events could they car share or get public transport, etc. The ARU Green Student Societies Fund was launched to students at the start of academic year 2015/16.

Student clubs and societies can apply for 3 different tiers of funding depending on how many green criteria they fulfil: £50, £200, £500. All applications must fulfil up to 3 essential criteria: making announcements of environmental events and activities in lectures; publicising our annual travel survey and having members complete it; and liking or following the ARU Green social media accounts. Additional criteria relate to: Flyers/Leaflets; Posters; Bake Sales; Ethical Clothing; Travel; Refreshments; Helium Balloons; Driving; Quizzes; Other.

Our goals

To engage our student community in our sustainability agenda and encourage adoption of positive sustainability behaviours through incentivising student societies.

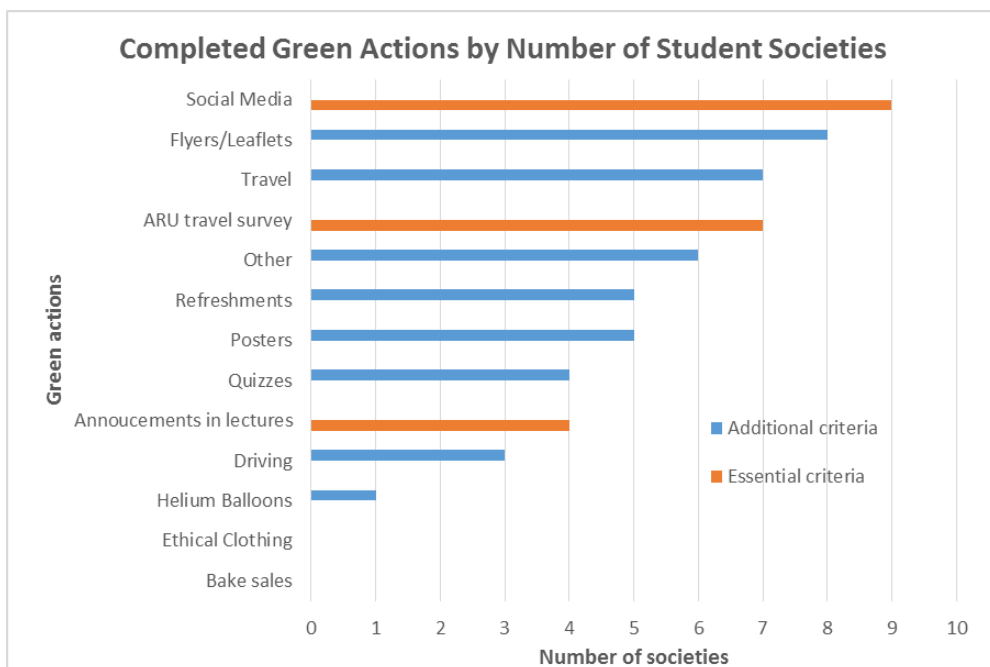
Obstacles and solutions

Fortunately we experienced no significant obstacles with this project. The ARU Green Student Societies Fund is the culmination of numerous attempts over several years to effectively engage our student community in our sustainability agenda and has proved significantly more effective, efficient and problem-free.

Performance and results

During academic year 2015/16 a total of 12 applications were received, 9 of which were successful and a total of £2,700 in grants was distributed. The staff time required to publicise and operate the fund has been approximately 2 days per month, proving relatively less time-intensive than other student engagement activities we've tried and with better results.

During its first year we've seen evidence that the ARU Green Student Societies fund is prompting real increases in environmental awareness and behaviour amongst our students. The chart shows that linking the social media accounts of societies and the ARU Environment Team is the most popular criterion to complete. This is extremely useful as it has significantly broadened the reach of our communications amongst our student body, reaching at least 500 additional students and very likely many more.



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The second most popular criterion ensured that where societies felt the need to produce flyers or leaflets, these included messages to encourage their recycling in our orange recycling bins. Evidence was submitted by 8 societies of completing this criterion, representing 400 student society members. As well as providing a valuable additional channel of communication to our students reminding them of our recycling system, there is added value in the issue of 'recycling' being discussed by the committees of 8 societies. This applies similarly to the other criteria completed by student societies, for example:

Of particular interest are the 6 societies with 527 members who completed 'other environmental activities' to meet the funding requirements. The Law Society proposed holding an energy efficiency workshop for the new environment committee to teach the new students how to make their halls more environmentally friendly. The Mooting Society also proposed having a subcommittee for 2016/17 to work purely on environmental issues. These initiatives go far beyond our initial hopes for the project and we will be showcasing them to other societies as examples of best practise.

The future

Lessons learned

ARU Green Student Societies Fund is an on-going initiative and we're excited by the possibilities of how this will develop next year and beyond. We've been taken aback by how some societies have gone beyond the minimum criteria required for obtaining the funding and we intend to review the fund for 2016/17 to see how we can reward this kind of unprompted, proactive initiative. The 2015/16 project also worked well raising awareness of our annual travel survey, and this year we will be designing the fund to support other aspects of our engagement agenda including Christmas switch-off, Fairtrade Fortnight, World Water Day, Biodiversity Photo Competition and Green Move Out.

Sharing your project

ARU is an active member of the EAUC South East Regional Group and will be hosting a meeting in which this project will be featured. We will also be producing a case study document and video for inclusion in the EAUC Sustainability Exchange. We are also active members of the International Sustainable Campus Network and have featured in previous ISCN/GULF best practice publications submitted to the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2014 and 2015 and will include this project in the next edition.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

"I am absolutely delighted we have won a Green Gown award. It reflects the commitment and dedication from students and staff across the university in providing leadership in delivering sustainable solutions both for the university and the wider community and demonstrates how we deliver on the values we promote across ARU".

Professor Iain Martin, Vice Chancellor, Anglia Ruskin University

Further information

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