

# Finalist's case study

## University of Glasgow Sustainability Champion GUEST (Roisin Lyle-Collins)

### Section 1 About the project

#### Summary

In summer 2011, Roisin Lyle-Collins, a first-year undergraduate, carried out a summer project which assessed environmental practice at the University of Glasgow. Roisin then successfully applied to the Chancellor's Fund for money to finance student work placements, to implement the various sustainability proposals highlighted in her report. The Glasgow University Environmental Sustainability Team (GUEST) was thus established, and since then has continued to promote sustainable practice to staff and students at the University.

#### Project partners

Undergraduate and Postgraduate (taught) students.  
University Staff including: Estates and Buildings, Grounds and Facilities, Hospitality Services and Corporate Communications.

### Section 2 The results

#### The problem

At a time when the University's main focus regarding sustainability was concerned with operational energy consumption and the associated carbon emissions, Roisin highlighted the importance of ensuring that other strands of sustainability work (sustainable food, biodiversity, recycling, travel and transport, sustainable academia) also receive the attention and publicity they require.

#### The approach

GUEST provides students at the University of Glasgow with very flexible term-time work placements in order to satisfy the operational need for the better promotion of sustainability on campus. These opportunities provide students with the opportunity to work closely with University staff, to develop new skills and experience and also provide a useful income stream.

#### Our goals

- GUEST works to encourage collaborations between management, academics, students, and social and environmental organisations within the wider local community.
- It is GUEST's principal aim to improve the environmental practice of the University of Glasgow. It strives to encourage positive transformations as a means to promote sustainability across all levels of the University establishment.



#### Profile

Example:

- HEI
- 21,890 students (includes full and part time students)
- 4780 staff (FTE)
- Urban

Category supported by



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- GUEST's vision is to achieve an action-oriented University sustainability policy by empowering the community within and without, to be aware of and open to positive ecological change.

## Obstacles and solutions

- Problem: Scope for improved collaboration between GUEST and University Staff responsible for sustainability matters
  - Solution: Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) Board was formed comprising of members of the Carbon Management Committee, the SRC and the annually appointed GUEST Co-ordinators to ensure that the work of GUEST continues to be properly supported.
  - Solution: Dedicated support from Estates and Buildings staff.

## Performance and results

- The development of a revised biodiversity policy for the University
- The development of Willowbank Community Gardens as a space where both students and local people can learn about wildlife and horticulture.
- The promotion of active transport for student commuting; a travel survey carried out in 2008 revealed that 42.9% and 3.7% of students either walked or cycled to University, respectively. A more recent survey carried out at the end of 2013 revealed that these percentages had increased to 50.7% and 4.7%, respectively.
- The availability of the GUEST online blog ([www.guenvironmental.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.guenvironmental.blogspot.co.uk)) and Facebook pages which function as an important means of communicating environmental issues to the wider student and staff population. This has helped to raise environmental awareness.
- The combined efforts of both GUEST and colleagues in the Estates and Buildings department have seen the amount of campus recycled waste increase from 249 ton in 10/11 to 1297 ton in 12/13.
- The organisation of an annual 'environmental careers' fair.
- As a result of the work GUEST has carried out, the University has recently announced that its annual funding will be increased from 20k to 40k per annum.

## Section 3 The future

### Lessons learned

Roisin has now graduated from the University and will no longer be able to provide day-to-day leadership to the GUEST organisation. The University has recognised the need to ensure that the activities of GUEST continue to receive a high level of support and as such, has recently formed an Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) Board, comprising of members of the Carbon Management Committee, the Student Representative Council and the annually appointed GUEST Co-ordinators. The Board will provide written progress reports to the Carbon Management Committee which will in turn report to Estates Committee and to University Court. This partnership will provide a formal mechanism to ensure that the work of GUEST continues to be properly supported in the future.

### Sharing our project

The existence of GUEST has been communicated via a number of different channels, including traditional events such as Fresher's Fair and Go Green Week, social media channels such as Facebook, its own website and via the University's Careers service, where most of GUEST's recent vacancies have been advertised.

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

The University of Glasgow has recently become the first university in the UK to commit to taking its investments out of the fossil fuel industry. The University therefore recognises the devastating impact that climate change may have on our planet, and acknowledges the need to operate in a more sustainable manner. Sustainability Champions play a pivotal role in this process and Roisin's short-listing as a Green Gown Award finalist is therefore a source of great pride to the University.

### Further information

<https://www.facebook.com/GlasgowUniversityEnvironmentalSustainabilityTeam>

OR

<http://guenvironmentalsustainabilityteam.blogspot.co.uk/>

OR

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