EDUCATION AND LEARNING AWARD 2024

Rules & Guidelines

1. This Award is to encourage and reward schools, colleges, universities and other recognised education and training providers who increase awareness, understanding and skills related to the environmental, social and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests, and who may also demonstrate the link between trees and wood products.

2. The Awards rotate annually around five regions across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. On the sixth year, a Best of the Best Award may be held with regional winners invited to take part. In 2024, the Awards will be for entrants from the Midlands and Eastern England, defined as the counties covered by the RFS Nottingham/Lincolnshire, Midlands, East Anglia and North West Midlands Divisions.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3. Entries are invited from educational providers including schools, colleges, universities and other educational organisations, training providers and charities engaged in forestry learning and skills development.

4. Eligible projects might include:
   • practical improvements to trees and woodlands on school grounds or in the local community
   • a programme of learning in a woodland or forest environment or similar programme that links to the curriculum and extends learning beyond the classroom.
   • a classroom-based study of trees, woods, forests or the forest industry that links to the curriculum and contributes towards outcomes in core areas of numeracy, literacy and science education.
   • an educational project or programme that enhances skills and competencies e.g. an excellent apprentice programme, work-based learning, or a programme dedicated to enhancing access, skills, employability and safety for the forestry sector.
   • a college, university or training provider with areas of innovation and/or curriculum development that enrich and enhance the learning experience.

5. The list above is not exhaustive. We will consider a wide range of innovative and dedicated forest and forest industry related education and learning projects or programmes.

JUDGING CRITERIA

6. Your project or programme needs to meet at least one of the criteria above. Projects will score highly if they meet more than one.

7. The judges will consider
   - **To what extent has the project or programme increased the use of woodland and related industries for first-hand learning?**
     - o Projects will score highly if they provide opportunities for active learning in woodland settings; visits to related industry sites such as sawmills or wood product manufacturers; and/or where a hands-on experience has been provided in the school/college/university/training provider's grounds.
   - **To what extent has the project or programme increased the opportunity for students to learn about the importance of trees and forests for conservation of the environment?**
     - o Projects will score highly if they provide opportunities to learn about the critical role of the woodland environment such as its richness in biodiversity, landscape value and response to climate change.
   - **To what extent has the project or programme increased the opportunities for students to learn about the link between trees and everyday wood products?**
     - o Projects will score highly if students are provided with an opportunity to learn about the social and economic benefits of wood as a sustainable resource, both locally and globally.
   - **To what extent has the project or programme contributed to the development of skills and competency for learners?**
     - o Projects will score highly if they can demonstrate positive outcomes in terms of student development, attainment and/or employability.

In school settings
   - **To what extent does the project relate to the curriculum?**
     - o Projects or programmes will score highly if they link across a number of curriculum areas and whole school initiatives. A project or programme will also score highly if there is evidence that it is embedded into the school's teaching and learning rather than as an 'add on'.
   - **To what extent has the student community been involved in the project or programme?**
     - o Projects with student involvement in designing and planning, as well as implementation and reviewing of the project or programme outcomes will score highly.
   - **To what extent has the wider community been involved?**
     - o Projects and programmes will score highly if they show that there has been communication and/or direct participation with parents, governors and the wider community.
   - **To what extent does the project or programme have a lasting impact on the environmental/social and/or economic aspects of the school/community?**
     - o i.e. its overall sustainability.

For colleges, universities and training providers

- **To what extent does the project or programme engage new learners in forestry education, or provide new career development opportunities?**
  - ○ Projects and programmes that develop skills, reach new audiences, support career transition and employability are especially important to the forestry sector and will be viewed favourably by the judges. Projects that encourage new approaches to skills and professional development and safer working environments will be scored highly.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

8. To enter you need to complete an entry form and include any examples of students'/ learners' work, photographs, videos etc. Case studies are welcome where they support the aims and objectives of the project or programme.

- Entry forms can be downloaded from the Royal Forestry Society website. Please refer to the judging criteria when completing your application.
- Entrants must submit a written 500-word statement with the accompanying form showing how their project achieves the overall benefits above.
- The completed entry form should be sent preferably by email to eif@rfs.org.uk or exceptionally by post to RFS Excellence in Forestry Awards, The Hay Barns, Home Farm Drive, Upton Estate, Banbury, OX15 6HU.
- The Education and Learning Award is free to enter.

9. Please contact Andrea Donnelly by email eif@rfs.org.uk or phone 01295 678588 if you require clarification.

10. **The closing date for entries is noon on 30 April 2024.** An email will be sent to acknowledge that your application has been received and will be considered.

SHORTLISTING AND JUDGING

11. The RFS will appoint a panel of two judges. All entries will be assessed, and final judging will take place on site, however the judges will short-list according to the quality and composition of the application and written submission. It is therefore crucial that you show through your written application how your project meets each element of the eligibility criteria, and that you provide all the information requested, to enable the judges to fully assess your entry. Entries that do not meet all the criteria will not be shortlisted. The judges' decision is final.

12. Judging is expected to take place in July/August 2024. During the site visits it is particularly important that the judges should meet and be accompanied by those staff responsible for creating and delivering the project or programme.

13. When judging is complete the judges will prepare a comprehensive report, which is published in the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry*. Individual reports on each project or programme are not available although the RFS is keen to disseminate learning and may contact winning entrants to develop case studies.

PUBLICITY, PRIZES AND PRESENTATION

14. Winners are asked not to publicize their awards until authorised by the RFS.

15. The Award will consist of:
    - **First Prize** – a trophy (to be held for one year), cash prize of £500 and a certificate
    - **Second Prize** – a certificate and cash prize of £250.

NOTES

16. Both the cash prize and the entry fee may be modified as the RFS sees fit.

17. No member of any judging panel and no national RFS officer may enter their own project or programme for the Award during their term of office.

18. The Society reserves the right to:
    a) suspend the competition at its own discretion.
    b) decide against awarding any or all of the prizes if it feels they are not warranted.

Education and Learning Award 2024

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