



CDN COLLEGE AWARDS 2025

AWARDS PROSPECTUS

#CollegeAwards

WELCOME >

The College Awards 2025, proudly delivered by CDN, are now officially open for entries!

The Awards recognise the talent, skills, and achievements of colleges, their staff, and their learners. They offer a valuable opportunity to celebrate the innovation happening in colleges across the country.

This year marks the 26th anniversary of the College Awards, celebrating the exceptional accomplishments within the sector. Over the past 26 years, these awards have highlighted the profound impact colleges have had on learners, communities, and the wider economy, showcasing their vital role in shaping a brighter future.

New for 2025!

We're excited to introduce the Change Makers Award, celebrating educators – individually or as a team – who embody innovation, risk-taking, and non-conformity in their teaching. In response to feedback, we've combined Innovation and Research into one powerful category, and removed the Judges' Award to ensure all successes are celebrated.

The awards categories this year are:

- Changemakers Award
- College Community Learning Award
- Digital Learning Award
- Employer Connections Award
- Health and Wellbeing Award
- Inclusive College Award
- Innovation and Research Award
- Lecturer of the Year Award
- Marketing and Communications Award
- Professional Services Colleague of the Year Award
- Skills Development Award
- Student of the Year Award
- Sustainability Action Award

Entries for the College Awards 2025 must be submitted by 5 PM on **Thursday 26 June 2025**.

The awards ceremony will take place at the Radisson Blu in Glasgow on **4 December 2025** – mark your calendars for this prestigious event!

We look forward to receiving your entries, and we wish you every success.

ENTRY GUIDELINES >

Guidelines for Completing Entries

- Entries must be completed using the online Awards Entry Form and submitted via email. An email receipt will be issued for each entry received.
- All entries must have the approval of the college Principal.
- Entries must relate to an activity which took place in the academic year 2024-25.
- A maximum of two entries per category per college will be accepted.
- A project/nominee can only be submitted once.
- Entries must be tailored to an individual category.
- Please state if entry has won any previous Awards; stating date and name of Awards.
- The deadline for entries is **Thursday 26 June 2025 at 1700**. Late entries will not be accepted.

Judging

- All entries will be considered by an independent panel of judges; the judges' decision is final.
- CDN staff will not be involved in any decisions regarding the judging or the shortlist.
- Shortlist announced:
September 2025

Award Presentations

The awards ceremony will take place on **Thursday 4 December 2025** at the Radisson Blu in Glasgow.



#CollegeAwards

www.cdn.ac.uk/college-awards-2025

AWARD CATEGORIES

CHANGEMAKERS AWARD

New for 2025! The Changemakers Award celebrates a team of educators who embody the spirit of innovation, risk-taking, and non-conformity in their teaching practices.

Entries should evidence:

- A bold willingness to experiment with unconventional teaching methods, using creative strategies that challenge traditional educational norms and foster impactful learning experiences.
- Measurable improvements in student engagement, performance, confidence, and overall learning outcomes, contributing to the development of students' capacities and abilities.

- A student-centred approach that adapts teaching methods to prioritise student needs, encourages active participation, and fosters a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.
- The integration of multiple disciplines into the curriculum, promoting a holistic understanding of the subject matter and designing projects that encourage the application of cross-disciplinary knowledge.
- Ongoing professional development to refine teaching practices, while sharing innovative methods with colleagues to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.
- Clear examples and data that demonstrate the success and impact of innovative teaching, including testimonials from students and colleagues that highlight the effectiveness of the approaches.



[Download Entry Form for Changemakers Award](#)



COLLEGE COMMUNITY LEARNING AWARD

The values of inclusion, empowerment, lifelong learning, self-determination and community / learner collaboration are key to Community Learning.

This award recognises and celebrates the innovative and outstanding work of colleges and their community partners in the delivery of Community-Based Learning opportunities.

Entries should evidence:

- How the college shows a sustained commitment to supporting community-based learning which is lifelong, life wide and learner centred, particularly to learners who face barriers to accessing existing learning provision
 - How the college contributes to community learning through curriculum content, design, and teaching practice
 - How the college creates and supports effective community partnerships with external community-based learning providers, to bring added value to the learning offer in local communities
- How the college has developed innovative and creative approaches in the recruitment and delivery of community-based provision in order to engage, support and empower community learners to fulfil their potential
 - How the college is supporting community learners to further their qualifications in a community supported learning environment
 - How the college shows effective transition routes from community to college for those seeking to continue their learner journey
 - What is unique about this piece of work and why.



Download Entry Form for
**College Community
 Learning Award**



DIGITAL LEARNING AWARD

This award recognises a college that has implemented creative ideas to improve the quality and effectiveness of technology-enhanced learning, teaching and/or assessment practice.

Entries should evidence:

- Creative digital approaches in curriculum design, content or delivery
- Scope for ideas to be adapted or transferred to other curricular areas
- A sustainable plan to ensure the longevity of the project
- Collaboration with other departments, students and/or partners
- What is unique about this piece of work and why.



Download Entry Form for
Digital Learning Award

EMPLOYER CONNECTIONS AWARD

This award recognises creative and sustained approaches that a college has taken to enhance active, effective and sustained engagement activity with employers that support the ambitions of the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce and Skills Strategy. These approaches should demonstrate clear, positive benefits to the employer, stakeholders, staff and learners in colleges and in the workplace as a result of the activity.

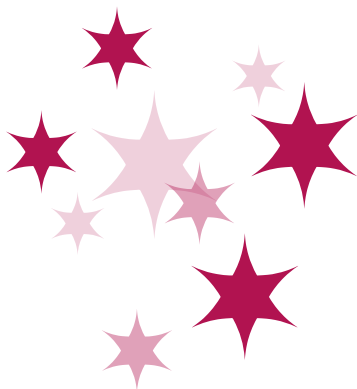
Entries should evidence:

- Creative approaches to providing opportunities for learners and staff to engage with employers, and/or develop more productive partnerships with employers
- Evidence on how the approach has and will be embedded to ensure long term benefits for learners, employers and staff
- Approaches that drive and develop enhanced relationships between employers, training and education which develop and sustain effective engagement including work experience, placement and/or employment opportunities



- Details on how employer(s) have become central to the planning/design and delivery of learning. This can include systemic approaches to ensuring employer connections are embedded in the culture across department and college as a whole.
- Personal and professional development opportunities for college staff through effective engagement with employers
- Impact of employer and college business benefits which may include bespoke training solutions that directly meet employer business needs
- What is unique about this piece of work, why, and what are the aims for the future with it?

 [Download Entry Form for Employer Connections Award](#)



HEALTH AND WELLBEING AWARD

This award recognises a college that has made a significant contribution in addressing the health and wellbeing needs of its staff and students, particularly within the context of supporting staff and students remotely.

Entries should evidence:

- A strategic approach for supporting health and wellbeing improvement activity within the college setting
- Health and wellbeing improvement initiatives which are proactive in their response and are sustainable
- Health and wellbeing improvement initiatives which recognise different dimensions of health including physical, emotional and mental health
- How these initiatives have impacted individually and collectively on staff and student resilience, motivation, and performance
- What is unique about this piece of work and why.

 [Download Entry Form for Health and Wellbeing Award](#)

INCLUSIVE COLLEGE AWARD

This award recognises a college with an organisational commitment and strategy to create, promote, and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion in all functions and processes of college life.

Entries should evidence:

- How the college is showing commitment and dedication to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, through curriculum content and design, teaching practice, and supporting students and staff
- How the college establishes a mainstream environment that recognises, encourages, and celebrates each individual's talents.
- How the college is empowering others to fulfil their potential and to provide support in ways that foster increasing independence
- How the college is intervening in ways likely to foster good relations and maintain students' and/or staff enthusiasm, motivation and sense of belonging
- What is unique about this piece of work and why.



[Download Entry Form for Inclusive College Award](#)

INNOVATION AND RESEARCH AWARD

This award recognises projects that demonstrate innovation and/or research within colleges. We invite applications from colleges that have implemented groundbreaking practices in skills development, process redesign, or successful collaborations with businesses to bring ideas from concept to delivery. We also welcome entries from colleges whose research projects or enhancement initiatives have led to significant improvements in college offerings, student experience, or partnership working

Entries should evidence:

- The justification and need for the project, highlighting its significance and potential impact.
- The innovative elements of the idea, including the inspiration behind it and how it challenges existing practices.
- The role of research (academic, action research, or a combination) within the project, detailing the methods and approaches used.
- The positive impact of the innovation on the college and its wider community or surrounding area.
- Effective collaboration with external partners
- What makes the project unique and the specific outcomes that distinguish it from others.



[Download Entry Form for Innovation and Research Award](#)

LECTURER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award seeks to recognise an individual who has successfully inspired students to achieve their goals and ambitions despite challenging circumstances, and who has made a significant difference. This award is open to colleagues in a learning and teaching role.

Entries should evidence:

- How this colleague has instilled positive change through their work
- How this colleague has led on the mainstreaming of research informed practices within the department/college
- The way in which the passion, innovation and hard work of this excellent individual has had an impact on both students, and the wider staff body
- What is unique about the colleague's work and why.



Download Entry Form for
Lecturer of the Year Award



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

This award recognises outstanding college marketing and/or communications activity. It will highlight a specific campaign which has enhanced the reputation and success of the college. Successful submissions will demonstrate how clear strategic planning, including effective market research, delivered compelling results.

Entries should evidence:

- Detailed description of tactics used and why they were chosen
- Budget setting and control, with a summary of planned and actual costs, including any other resources used (including any input from an external agency)
- Outputs and outcomes achieved, with an explanation of how activity and results were monitored, measured and evaluated
- What is unique about this piece of work and why.



Download Entry Form for
**Marketing and
Communications Award**

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COLLEAGUE OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award recognises any support and professional services member of staff within a college who has made a significant investment of talent and time which has had a positive impact on others within the college and/or in their community.

Entries should evidence:

- The positive impact the individual has made to others in the college and/or the wider community
- The way the individual's determination and sheer hard work has inspired, positively challenged and/or provided a positive role model to others
- An insightful and/or creative approach to their work
- What is unique about the colleague's work and why.



Download Entry Form for
**Professional Services
Colleague of the Year Award**

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AWARD

This award recognises a college that has demonstrated impact in their approach to skills development of their students. This could be related to a range of innovative approaches taken to ensure the development and achievement of personal and transferable skills of students, as well as finding effective ways of tracking skills development and enhancing learners' ownership of the development of their skills. The focus on skills development must ensure that students articulate and demonstrate their skills, and the potential to utilise these skills in different contexts.

Entries should evidence:

- Imaginative approaches to developing core, essential, meta and career management skills, for example through the development of learning and teaching approaches, or through projects, inter-disciplinary or collaborative learning, events, volunteering or competitions
- Potential for the approaches to be adapted or transferred to other curricular areas



- The development of core, essential, meta and career management skills that are relevant to the regional or national skills gap, or the predominant regional employment market
- Development of relevant digital skills which meet the needs of today's employers
- Methods in which learners take greater ownership for the development of their skills, including evidence from learners of the impact of skills development
- What is unique about this piece of work and why.

 [Download Entry Form for Skills Development Award](#)



STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award recognises an individual student who has made a significant investment of talent and time which has had a positive impact on others within the college and/or in their community.

Entries should evidence:

- The positive impact the student's contribution has made to others in the college and/or the wider community
- The way the student's determination and sheer hard work has inspired and positively challenged others and/or how the student is seen as a positive role model
- An insightful and/or creative approach to improvement and/or innovation
- The effective development of an idea into a successful venture
- What is unique about the student's work and why.

 [Download Entry Form for Student of the Year Award](#)

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION AWARD

This award celebrates a college that has demonstrated leadership and impact in sustainability.

It recognises the achievements of colleges who have progressed the interlinked issues of social, environmental and economic sustainability within their curriculum, campus, culture or wider community engagement through a successful sustainability initiative over the last year, which aligns to and supports a committed, whole-college approach to sustainability.

Entries should evidence:

- At least one specific sustainability initiative which has progressed significantly in the past year, detailing ambitions and successes so far
- How this initiative supports progressing sustainability within at least two of: curriculum, campus, culture and wider community engagement
- A whole-institutional commitment to embedding environmental and social sustainability across all areas of college activity
- What is unique about this piece of work and why.



Download Entry Form for
Sustainability Action Award



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College Development Network



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www.cdn.ac.uk/college-awards-2025