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## Young Physics students celebrated at Northumbria

**The North East physicists of the future have been recognised at an inaugural award ceremony celebrating young people's achievements.**

The Schools Physicist of the Year Awards (SPotY) took place at Northumbria University and saw 38 students from 19 schools across the region receive awards for their efforts in the subject.

Nominated by their teachers, the winning students included those who had

shown real enthusiasm for physics, overcome obstacles to succeed, achieved high marks or shown real improvement.

This is the first time the awards, which are funded by the Ogden Trust, have been held in Newcastle.

Dr Antonio Portas, Northumbria's Ogden Science Officer, is a member of the NUSTEM project which aims to encourage and inspire the next generation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics students through a wide variety of educational events.

He said: "We were very pleased to host Northumbria University's first Schools Physicist of the Year awards – it was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate some of the region's most promising physics students and their dedicated teachers, along with their proud parents. We are especially proud to see so many female physicists amongst the nominees.

"It was also a great chance for the team here at Northumbria to give the students a real flavour of what it means to study physics at degree level.

"Our NUSTEM team already work closely with local schools and hope events such as this will inspire more young people in the North East to consider science as a career and encourage the next generation of employees to acquire STEM-skills, highly in demand by businesses."

More than 130 people attended the event, with Professor Glen McHale, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Engineering & Environment at Northumbria, welcoming guests. This was followed by a lecture on soft matter by Dr Rodrigo Ledesma-Aguilar.

Among the students recognised was Alannah Bain of Heaton Manor School in Newcastle. She was nominated by her teacher Gethin Richards who said: "Alannah excels at physics because of her natural ability and hard work. She regularly comes out top in tests but it is her helpful nature in lessons that really shines through and that she is always willing to help her peers."

Also recognised was Rebecca Cather of Excelsior Academy who was nominated by teacher Arran Stephenson. He said: "Rebecca is a very conscientious student who is already enhancing her education outside the

classroom. She has recently planned and in the process of delivering a year 10 STEM scheme of work designed to increase the enthusiasm of students.”

Across the UK 25 Schools Physicist of the Year events are taking place, with more than 600 students recognised for their achievements and efforts in physics, including many Year 6 primary students who will receive Primary Scientist of the Year Awards.

For more information about Northumbria’s NUSTEM project visit <https://nustem.uk/>.

To find out more about Northumbria’s department of Mathematics, Physics and Electrical Engineering and the degree courses available please visit <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/mathematics-physics-and-electrical-engineering/>

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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