



L-R: Professor Neil Beattie, Director of ReNU; Dr Li Chin Khor, ReNU Centre Manager; Dr Paul Steadman, Sustainability Manager at Northumbria University; and Jo Allatt, Head of Sustainability at UKRI who presented the awards.

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National award for renewable energy future leaders training programme

An innovative programme to develop the next generation of leaders in the renewable energy sector has been highly commended in the national Green Gown Awards.

The [Green Gown Awards](#), which are delivered in association with UK Research and Innovation, recognise the exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the world.

The [Renewable Energy Northeast Universities \(ReNU\)](#) doctoral training programme was [highly commended in the Tomorrow's Employees category](#). This category focuses on institutions taking pioneering and innovative steps to embrace the green skills agenda by creating people equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to ensure a transition to a sustainable economy.

Led by Northumbria University and delivered in collaboration with Newcastle and Durham Universities and more than 40 partners across industry, government and academia, [ReNU is creating a team of future leaders](#) in the renewable and sustainable energy fields with excellent scientific, engineering and problem-solving skills.

To date, more than 70 doctoral candidates have enrolled on the four-year training programme which also provides training in business, innovation and internationalisation and gives students the chance to work with industry specialists to develop their areas of research focus.

Students have worked on [industry focussed projects](#) with organisations including the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult, where they investigated new technologies that would improve the efficiency of floating offshore wind turbines and with deep-tech innovation specialists CPI where they evaluated the viability of Li-ion battery recycling in the UK.

Green Gown Awards judges described the ReNU programme as being ambitious and with significant potential for global impact from innovations developed through the programme.

They were impressed not only with the volume of partnership working but also the work to address equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the programme.

[Neil Beattie](#), Professor of Energy Innovation at Northumbria University and Director of ReNU, said: “ReNU is creating highly skilled people with excellent scientific and engineering skills, coupled with specialist training in business, innovation and internationalisation to accelerate net zero.

“The shared platform of research excellence in energy materials and systems between the institutions and the unique training opportunities we provide,

has created a transformative and professionally accredited programme to drive forward UK innovation in renewable and sustainable distributed energy.”

[Professor Andy Long](#), Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: “ReNU is making a significant contribution to the global transition towards achieving net zero and a greener, more equitable future for all.

“This award recognises Northumbria as an inclusive provider of green skills and highlights our work to empower future leaders through ReNU’s innovative research, education and collaboration programme.”

Charlotte Bonner, Chief Executive of EAUC which administers the Green Gown Awards said: “This year’s outstanding winners and highly commended entries for the Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland once again provide an inspiring and diverse array of initiatives, from impactful projects to passionate individuals, all dedicated to advancing sustainability.

“These awards demonstrate that sustainability is a collaborative journey, not a competition, with each effort contributing to the broader goal of transformative change for the post-16 education sector and beyond. Congratulations to all our winners, highly commended entrants, and finalists.”

ReNU was launched in 2019 after being awarded £5.8 million by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. It has proven so successful that [further funding of almost £11.5 million](#) was awarded in 2024 to expand its work.

The new funding, which also comes from partner universities and companies, has created ReNU+ which will help the UK government progress towards its net zero aims for a low carbon economy.

Northumbria University has a growing reputation for excellence in sustainability. Earlier this year, Northumbria achieved its [highest ever world ranking for sustainability](#) after being named one of the top 50 institutions in the world in [Times Higher Education’s Impact Rankings 2024](#).

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk

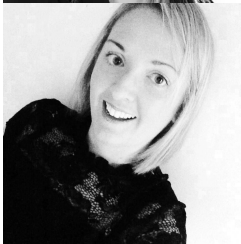


Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk