

The
AUDE Awards 2026



Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds

Wednesday 22 April

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AUDE Awards

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Welcome to the AUDE Awards 2026

I am delighted to be able to welcome you to the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds, for the AUDE Awards 2026. Always an annual highlight for the association, tonight we gather to share in the success of the many nominated projects, and the winners in our nine categories. As always, part of the value of the awards is for nominees to gain peer recognition for what is always outstanding work. For the rest of us there is an opportunity to learn. Every university is on a similar path, with estates and facilities teams facing the same considerable challenges. Many of our nominees tonight have blazed a trail that we can, perhaps with a little adaptation to individual circumstances, follow ourselves. And in this way our nominees offer leadership for us all.

The nominees this year tell us of projects across the entire estates and facilities remit. Many are working to harness every drop of ingenuity they can as a way to maximise straitened budgets. Estates and facilities teams continue to operate in demanding and fast-changing environments. Our awards show the way in which the profession within Higher Education is persevering and innovating to find new solutions. Every nominee represents ambition and collaboration and sheer hard work. It is a pleasure to be able to highlight that work to the whole of the AUDE community.

Perhaps next year you will consider entering the AUDE Awards? The process is easy, and involves gathering evidence of impact that you'll have readily to hand. Every one of our nominees tonight carries a story that might inspire you to make bigger and brighter your own achievements. Gaining kudos from peers is great in its own right, and appreciated. And it could be you, next year, that enjoys that kind of success. But the AUDE Awards also highlight the strength of your work beyond the association's membership. We think estates teams deserve to bask in the occasional moment of real success. Congratulations to all our winners and nominees for the outstanding work they have done.

We are very grateful to Gardiner & Theobald for supporting the AUDE Awards 2026.

Ian Grimes
AUDE Chair
and Director of Estates
at the University of Hertfordshire

Awards Categories

The AUDE Summer School Award

AUDE's seventh Summer School development programme took place in June 2025 where 50 of the sector's aspiring future leaders had the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, stretch their thinking and embark on a six-month team project. The winning project will receive the Summer School Award for their work, effort and contribution to the sector.

The AUDE Sustainability Impact Initiative Award

Recognition for a specific initiative having a significant positive impact on the institution, the sector and/or the profession, including those focused on carbon reduction.

The AUDE Emerging Talent Award

To reward a member of staff, working in estates or facilities, who is making an exceptional contribution and demonstrates great potential for the future. This could be someone brand new to the sector or perhaps an individual who already has career experience but is fresh to estates/facilities management. The winner of this award will also receive a special contribution towards their personal and professional development.

The AUDE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award

The EDI Award seeks to recognise an individual or institution that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the promotion of EDI in estates and facilities management.

The AUDE Reaching Higher Award

For those that have gone above and beyond the usual realm of their institution, benefiting their local community and having a positive impact on those outside of the usual student and staff community.

The AUDE & University Design Forum Small Scale High Impact Design Award

This award, given in partnership with the University Design Forum, recognises small scale, low-budget design interventions within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that deliver high-impact improvements to the educational environment.

The AUDE Estates/Facilities Team Award

For exceptional team working leading to significant achievement.

The AUDE Chair's Long Term Contribution Award

For achievements benefitting the higher education estates/FM community, by an individual, over an extended period of time in a senior position.

The AUDE Supplier of the Year Award

This award is open to all those who supply products and services to the Higher Education Sector. A chance for our institutions to recognise and celebrate your contributions to helping us achieve our strategic goals and ambitions. This award is open to any supplier of any size.



The AUDE Summer School Award

OUR WINNERS

Jon Belfield
Edge Hill University

David Gray
University of Glasgow

Laura Parry
University of Plymouth

Laura Pickles
Institute of Cancer Research

Jason Stanley
Birmingham City University

Jonathan Thompson
Queen's University Belfast

The winners of the Summer School Award were all delegates at the 2025 Summer School residential programme, which was held at the University of Plymouth.

It is an important element of each year's programme that delegates join a team made up of fellows from the programme to propose a project for a new AUDE workstream with a specific defined outcome that is likely to be of benefit to the wider membership. AUDE then considers the projects to assess viability, and if possible adopts the proposal into its workflow. This has proven to be a reliable source of new ideas that can positively impact on our sector.

This year's group project, '**Best practice approaches for energy saving across Higher Education institutions within the UK and internationally**', looked at energy conservation. The team examined ways to cut out-of-hours energy use through operational building consolidation, better use of existing technologies such as LED sensors for space allocation, occupancy sensors and a wide range of other options. A survey helped the team to establish the relative level of popularity and uptake of these options, and uncover those that have already invested in the available technologies - many of them now enjoying savings in ongoing energy spend. The report used case study examples from across UK Higher Education to substantiate the points made.

This theme aimed straight at perhaps the most significant challenge to have faced our university estates teams in the last 5 years - a period in which energy costs have more than doubled. As global affairs and energy prices once more make it into the national conversation this spring, this group's work feels like a timely intervention.



The AUDE Sustainability Impact Initiative Award

research. Laboratories are among the most resource-intensive spaces, consuming up to 10 times more energy than offices and generating significant plastic waste. LEAF provides a practical, scalable solution through a certification framework, impact calculators and tailored resources. At UCL, 251 labs achieved LEAF certification last year, reducing carbon emissions and operational costs while embedding sustainability into research culture. Now adopted by over 150 institutions across 17 countries globally, LEAF is driving sector-wide change and meeting growing funder requirements for environmental responsibility in how research is conducted. By combining technical guidance, measurable impact, and global accessibility, LEAF sets a new standard for sustainable science.

THE SHORTLIST

C-CAT: Carbon Calculation and Analysis Toolkit - Edge Hill University

This initiative delivers a sector-leading suite of carbon calculation toolkits designed to standardise how emissions from business-related activities are calculated and reported across the University. The toolkit includes calculators for common activities such as travel and utilities, specialised tools for field trips and sports team travel, updated guidance on carbon costings, and links to the HES CET Scope 3 reporting tool. This project not only ensures consistency and accuracy in carbon reporting but also enhances staff engagement with sustainability, reduces administrative burden, and creates real-world learning opportunities for students - our intern led the development of the field trip calculator. The toolkit is being shared widely through Community of Practice meetings and on LinkedIn, generating sector interest and collaboration. A presentation to a local college showcased the project's adaptability, reinforcing its potential for replication across the higher education sector.

Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) - University College London

The Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF), developed by UCL, is revolutionising sustainability in laboratory-based

Purdown View – University of the West of England

Purdown View is a landmark 900 bed student accommodation development at UWE Bristol and the largest certified Passivhaus project in the UK, as well as the largest certified Passivhaus student accommodation scheme in the world. It represents a step change in how sustainability can be delivered at scale in higher education estates. Working in close partnership with designers, contractors and the Passivhaus Institute, UWE Bristol pushed the boundaries of Passivhaus standards, developing tailored methodologies to address the specific operational and wellbeing needs of student living. This has established a robust, replicable approach for future developments. Beyond delivery, Purdown View acts as a catalyst for sector wide learning. UWE actively engages students, academic partners and industry to share knowledge, foster collaboration and accelerate the adoption of high performance, low carbon student accommodation across the sector.

OUR OTHER NOMINEES

Transforming Coventry: Converting a Grey Morass to a Green Oasis for People and Wildlife – Coventry University

Coventry University has transformed its campus by replacing two outdated buildings with vibrant,

biodiverse green spaces. This initiative enhances the environment while supporting sustainability and climate action. The gardens feature diverse planting, pollinator hubs, and edible areas accessible to all, alongside tranquil social spaces for relaxation and community engagement. The environmental benefits are significant: reduced carbon emissions, improved air quality, mitigation of the urban heat island effect, enhanced biodiversity, and sustainable drainage to manage rainwater. These efforts have earned multiple accolades, including DEFRA Bees' Needs Champions Awards and Hedgehog Friendly Campus Awards, and Green Gowns Nature Positive Award and Green Flag International Award, winner of Best of The Best Climate Adaption Award. Beyond ecological impact, the space serves as a community hub, hosting cultural and educational activities that foster connection. Coventry University's commitment to sustainability sets a benchmark for institutions worldwide, creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

The 'Siemens Living Lab' – University of East London

UEL's Siemens Living Lab is an example of decarbonisation across a university estate, delivered by the integration of sustainable technologies, with interactive digital dashboards for optimal energy management, that is scalable and replicable. It is an example of digital disruption within campus operations, that loaned itself to sustainable action research, and influenced stakeholder behaviour change. It demonstrated how a strategically aligned, data-driven sustainable programme can deliver measurable carbon reduction and cost savings and reignite interest in green skills development. Through the use of PVs, EVs and LEDs, the University made significant progress towards its Net Carbon Zero Carbon target, while also delivering social value. This evidence-based approach is an exemplar for other higher education institutions seeking to leverage a commercial partnership to inspire innovation in research, and influence behaviour changes. It's also an exemplar of cross-cutting, interdisciplinary research, and interdepartmental collaboration, that raises the profile of an institution, thus generating revenue.

The Data-Driven Carbon Pivot – University of Essex

Driven by its target to achieve net zero by 2035, the University of Essex has been undertaking a range of large-scale carbon reduction and energy efficiency projects, that have contributed to reducing scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by over 30% since 2019-20. With resources significantly tightened in 2025, the university has pivoted its approach to identifying and delivering carbon reduction projects through the detailed analysis of data. It is able to identify the enhancements it can make to the existing estate, that maximise ROI, while also reducing energy use and therefore carbon emissions. A particular success has been in digital twin work, that has allowed an improvement to the heating and cooling systems in one of the worst performing buildings, reducing the building's heating load by 49% and gas consumption by 51%, with an ROI in less than two years and within the significantly reduced budget envelope.

Maximum Nutrition, Minimum Waste: 'Root-to-Tip' Dining – King's College London

Root to Tip is an innovative collaboration between King's College London academics, students and King's Food that reimagines how university food can deliver both sustainability and health benefits. Launched in summer 2025, the initiative applies a root to tip approach to commercial catering, using edible plant parts typically discarded to reduce waste and increase dietary fibre. Over a nine week pilot, more than 6,000 Root to Tip dishes were sold, diverting an estimated 245kg of food waste while achieving cost savings and strong customer approval. Research led consumer insight, fibre analysis and behaviour change marketing underpinned the project's success, demonstrating that sustainable eating can also be appealing, affordable and scalable. Now embedded in King's core food offer, Root to Tip provides a practical, low cost model that other institutions can readily adopt to improve nutrition, reduce carbon impact and drive meaningful change across the sector.

The Blueprint Programme – University of Leeds

Blueprint is the University of Leeds' flagship staff engagement programme for embedding sustainability. Developed by the Sustainability Service in 2018, it supports Schools and Services to co-design bespoke five-year plans to embed

sustainability within their operations, ways of working, culture, and impact, whilst contributing to institutional sustainability ambitions. Blueprint empowers teams to identify what is important to them as a department, incorporating objectives which are within their sphere of influence whilst allowing them to contribute to the University-wide goals. The programme has transformed how sustainability is delivered at Leeds by democratising action planning, fostering cross-departmental collaboration, and enabling hundreds of colleagues to participate in creating positive change. This structured yet flexible model has led to measurable improvements across travel, procurement, curriculum, labs, waste, emissions and community engagement. Blueprint has become a catalyst for culture change across the University and a scalable model of sector-leading practice.

University of Liverpool Waste Management Plan 2021 – 2025 – University of Liverpool

The University of Liverpool's Waste Management Plan 2025 delivered sector-leading results: a 47.5% reduction in general waste sent for incineration, over £200k savings through reuse, and new services for food, lab plastics, and specialist waste streams. Infrastructure upgrades, cultural change, and circular economy initiatives positioned waste management as a strategic enabler of sustainability. Spearheaded by two dedicated staff members, this initiative demonstrates how operational excellence can deliver measurable environmental and financial benefits, redefining waste as a strategic asset aligned to ISO14001, financial savings, emissions reduction, and institutional culture change. This nomination celebrates a plan that not only met its objectives but redefined what waste management can achieve in higher education. WMP 2025 provides a model that is scalable, financially proven, and adaptable to other institutions across the sector. It delivered measurable impact, innovation, and cultural change – proof that sustainability is most powerful when embedded in everyday operations.

The University of Warwick 60th Anniversary Tree Trail – University of Warwick

The Tree Trail aligns with a growing portfolio of sustainability-focused experiences at Warwick, such as the existing Sculpture Trail, Spring Trail, and the Sustainability team's Biodiversity Walk



series. Together, these initiatives form a cohesive network of trails and events that encourage exploration, ecological awareness and wellbeing across campus. The Tree Trail strengthens this network by adding a permanent, digitally enabled feature that celebrates heritage while advancing sustainability. Its integration with QR codes and interactive mapping ensures consistency with Warwick's approach to accessible, data-informed engagement, supporting impact measurement and continuous improvement. By aligning with these established initiatives, the Tree Trail reinforces Warwick's commitment to placemaking, biodiversity and community wellbeing, while offering a scalable model for other institutions seeking to embed sustainability into campus identity through connected, experiential landscapes.

3G Pitch Refurbishment, Haxby Road Sports Park – York St John University

York St John University's 3G Pitch Refurbishment illustrates both the opportunity and the reality of pursuing circular, low-carbon infrastructure. By specifying recycled materials, a cork infill and full material take-back, the project diverted 299 tonnes of material from landfill and achieved an estimated 89 tCO₂e carbon saving. As one of the first UK installations of its type, the project has also generated valuable learning. Ongoing work to address drainage issues associated with the recycled sand crumb has reinforced the importance of performance monitoring, supplier engagement and adaptability when trialling new materials. The initiative reflects the University's wider commitment to sustainability and demonstrates a realistic, evidence-led approach to reducing embodied carbon. It provides a practical reference point for other institutions seeking to balance ambition with delivery, and to pursue circular solutions while remaining open about their challenges.

The AUDE Emerging Talent Award

THE SHORTLIST

Hannah Coates – University of Leeds

Hannah Coates, Portfolio Manager in the Programme Office team, has combined her client management skills with her expert knowledge of information management tools to transform the effectiveness and visibility of the Estates team. The rigour with which she manages Estates projects ensures that stakeholders across the University, at all levels, are kept up-to-date with clear information. The systems she has introduced mean they can understand changes more easily improving the management of costs and project benefits. The Faculties and other stakeholders that use the project delivery services are better informed which allows them to communicate with their teams. Hannah played a significant role in delivering the Capital Programme in line with budgeted expenditure last year, working closely with project teams at the start of the year to ensure forecasts across over 100 projects were realistic. This is particularly important at a time when the whole sector is experiencing financial constraints.

Callum Hornsby – Durham University

Callum is an exceptional emerging talent whose progression from Grade 1 Casual Cleaner to interim Grade 6 Senior Estates Systems Analyst reflects growth, capability and commitment. When Business and Campus Services assumed

responsibility for the struggling IWMS (Planon) project in January 2025, Callum stepped-up immediately, learning the system from scratch, creating high quality training materials, delivering sessions and supporting colleagues across the University. Following the departure of two colleagues, Callum absorbed additional responsibilities to maintain continuity and momentum at a critical time. His contributions directly improved data quality, strengthened system reliability and enabled the early delivery of the reactive maintenance module across all twelve colleges. Callum supported the creation and development of the Management Information Hub, Power BI reporting and E&FD Data Academy, enhancing data literacy and insight across the Directorate. Dedicated, capable, and values driven, Callum embodies the spirit of emerging talent and is already making a meaningful and lasting impact.

Madalina Voicu – Cardiff Metropolitan University

Madalina's work embodies how people-centred sustainability leadership can transform climate ambition into meaningful, everyday action. At Cardiff Metropolitan University, Madalina has led a step-change in sustainability engagement, building strong connections between strategy, governance, and the lived experience of staff and students. Through the creation and growth of the University's sustainability communication channels, inclusive campus-wide initiatives, and practical engagement programmes, she has helped embed a culture of environmental stewardship across the institution. Her work has increased participation, supported behaviour change, and strengthened confidence in sustainability governance, contributing to continued top-tier performance in external benchmarks and successful ISO 14001 accreditation with no non-conformities. The key learning from this work is that climate action is most effective when it is visible, inclusive, and rooted in trust. By focusing on communication, participation, and shared ownership, Madalina has demonstrated how engagement can accelerate delivery of carbon targets while strengthening organisational culture and resilience.

OUR OTHER NOMINEES

James Batten – University of Birmingham

“An apprentice delivering digital estates impact beyond expectations.” James, an Apprentice Building Information Surveyor at the University of Birmingham, has delivered a step-change in how the University understands and manages its estate. Operating well beyond the expectations of a Level 3 apprenticeship, he led a comprehensive digital survey of over 350 teaching spaces, creating a validated dataset covering condition, functional suitability, accessibility, capacity, and AV capability. Through his own initiative, James extended this work to accessible toilets, gender-neutral facilities, and multi-faith spaces, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion requirements within the University’s digital estate framework. His work has informed the 2025/26 Teaching Spaces project, supported the University’s response to recent regulatory change, and underpins the development of integrated 3D estate models. Now completing his end-point assessment, James plans to progress to a degree apprenticeship in property management, demonstrating exceptional future potential within the estates profession.

Anna Lodge – University of Warwick

Anna Lodge is an exceptional emerging talent within the University of Warwick’s Estates department. Starting her career as a Decorator in 2017, Anna has progressed to become a Building Fabric Maintenance Officer, where she manages complex maintenance activity across a live university estate. Her work ensures statutory compliance, health and safety excellence and service continuity, while her proactive approach and strong leadership skills have seen her successfully cover a vacant supervisory role for 18 months, effectively managing double the workload. Anna’s commitment to professional growth is evident through her completion of a

Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Construction Contracting Management, enrolment on a Level 5 Leadership qualification, and hands-on involvement in project delivery and tender evaluation. Combining technical expertise with outstanding interpersonal skills, Anna exemplifies the future of estates leadership and is a worthy nominee for the AUDE Emerging Talent Award.

Brad Musgrove – Nottingham Trent University

Brad Musgrove is a Chartered Surveyor and Property Manager at Nottingham Trent University, where he manages the University’s diverse property portfolio at a strategic and operational level. Since joining NTU in 2024, Brad has quickly become a trusted specialist known for sharp commercial insight, and he is quickly developing a sound understanding of the higher education environment. Brad has played an important role in NTU’s Future Campus Initiative, providing the valuation, market intelligence and asset data that underpin long term estates planning. Brad has already delivered significant financial gains through high value lease negotiations, asset disposals and improved revenue performance, while strengthening relationships with local authorities, partners and University spin outs. Pragmatic, collaborative and technically strong, Brad brings clarity to complex property issues and helps ensure NTU’s estate remains financially resilient, future focused and aligned with the University’s strategic ambitions.



The AUDE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award

THE SHORTLIST

Enhancing Inclusive Evacuation Planning through PEEPs – University of Sussex

The University of Sussex has been on a journey of continuous improvement over the last few years, and the last academic year saw a significant shift in take up and engagement by students in PEEPs. A key element has been the introduction of an 'interim PEEP', providing a plan for students that reflects their needs before their first day at Sussex. The initiative was led by Graham Gray, Fire Safety Manager, whose fire safety expertise shaped the approach. This demonstrates an early commitment to their safety and wellbeing on campus, and reflects our values of Inclusion, integrity, and kindness. The process is more efficient and includes an offer to meet members of the Health and Safety Team to ensure the PEEP meets individual needs, thus giving the student a voice, autonomy, and confidence in the arrangements in place to support them. The University continues to seek improvements in this area, recognising the significant impact this has on students' lived experience during their time at Sussex.

Pavan Nagra – King's College London

Over 18 months, Pavan Nagra, E&F EDI Manager, has accelerated the EDI journey within Estates & Facilities at King's by embedding inclusion into governance, projects and everyday practice. She refreshed the EDI Steering Group to move from awareness to action, delivering workshops that measurably increased confidence across operational teams and senior leaders. Pavan moved E&F to be more proactive with the creation of the Accessibility Design Principles, now embedded into processes and informing major developments. She also introduced the Accessible Room Levels (Gold/Silver/Bronze), shaped through staff and student consultation and supported by AccessAble audit data, giving E&F robust evidence to prioritise improvements. Sector engagement through the HEI Inclusive Environments Network and continued investment in Stellar HE reinforce a diversified leadership pipeline and shared learning. Together, Pavan's work demonstrates how estates teams can lead inclusive design and culture change, moving beyond compliance to proactively create accessible, equitable environments.





The AUDE Reaching Higher Award

THE SHORTLIST

Natalie Chivers-Cross – Bangor University

Natalie Chivers-Cross, Head of Botanic Garden and Biodiversity at Bangor University, makes an outstanding contribution to the wider community through her voluntary leadership, charity work and public engagement. Alongside her professional role, she plays a central part in delivering Draig Beats, a family-friendly festival held at Treborth Botanic Garden that brings together around 1,000 people each year to celebrate Welsh culture and raise funds for the Dr Sophie Williams Trust. Natalie leads on site planning, safety and environmental protection, ensuring the event is delivered sensitively within a living botanic garden. She also serves voluntarily as a Director of Red Squirrel Trust Wales and a Trustee of PlantNetwork, supporting conservation, education and community engagement across Wales and the UK. Through inclusive volunteering, wellbeing-through-nature programmes and accessible public events, Natalie strengthens community connection, wellbeing and civic pride, demonstrating how university green spaces can deliver lasting social and cultural value beyond campus.

Enhancing Biodiversity for All – Durham University

DU's Vice-Chancellor notes "our campus is situated in a beautiful landscape setting, with examples of high-quality wildlife habitats located within our estate. These include deciduous woodland, grassland and wetland habitats".

Durham takes its stewardship of high-value natural assets seriously. The University's care for habitat and species, based on its Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, is coordinated by the Biodiversity Delivery Group, uniting staff and students from research, gardens, grounds, sustainability, and biodiversity teams. Durham is proud to work with local and regional partners and to participate in (inter)national networks to share good practice. This longstanding commitment to nature has seen results, including work towards the 2032 BNG target and success reintroducing priority species. The team is proud to actively share this with staff and students who live and work on campus, our local communities, and our many visitors through maintained access, education, citizen science, guided walks, wellbeing sessions, and visitor attractions.

Furniture and Equipment Donation Initiative – University of Warwick

Warwick's Furniture and Equipment Donation Initiative turns surplus into social value through a governance-led process that ensures safe, compliant donations to local charities, schools, and community groups. Realised in June 2025 after two years in the planning, the scheme has so far donated 476 items, saving partners more than £64,000 and preventing 332 kgCO₂/kg of embodied carbon emissions. Delivered entirely in-house with no extra resources, the initiative exemplifies collaboration, sustainability and innovation. Key learnings include the importance of robust liability transfer, cross-departmental collaboration to establish a governance process, and impact reporting. Future plans include an external platform to scale accessibility. This replicable model demonstrates how universities can embed circular economy principles into operations while creating measurable benefits for the wider community.



The AUDE & University Design Forum Small Scale High Impact Design Award

THE SHORTLIST

Students' Association Refurbishment – Abertay University

This project in the Library provides modern, informal space beyond the traditional classroom. The co-created design and implementation was led by Estates but shaped by the design team and stakeholders. A team grew organically and coalesced around a developing design that took the conversations that were had and converted them to reality. The results have created a space that inspires community building and friendship and learning. A space that elevates a small corner of our campus into a destination spot for our students to thrive. The project brings to life AUDE's "Social Learning @ University" thesis and validates the decision made by Abertay University in development of the new student space. The project responds to the modern demands of Higher Education and Abertay's Estates team are to be commended for their prescience and collaboration. The project was shortlisted for the Scottish Design Awards and Times Higher Education Awards in 2025.

Digital Enabled Active Learning Space (DEAL Space) – Glasgow School of Art

The Digitally Enabled Active Learning (DEAL) space represents a milestone for The Glasgow School of Art: a first of its kind environment designed to develop active, digitally enabled learning. Delivered through a collaborative process, the project reflects our commitment to innovation and student experience. A unique aspect of this initiative was entrusting design leadership to a Part One Year Out Architect Student, a role we have championed for three years now. Working in the Estates team, and mentored by colleagues, the student gained invaluable experience across all the RIBA stages while contributing fresh ideas to the team. Their attention to detail of every aspect really shines through to create a 'wow space'. This space embodies creativity, flexibility, and sustainability, setting a new benchmark for learning environments within the institution. It demonstrates how collaboration and vision can transform educational spaces, ensuring students thrive in a setting that supports both artistic and technological growth.

Harrington Student Social Hub – University of Lancashire

The Pod coffee outlet and social space mark a complete transformation of a neglected reception and breakout area into a vibrant hub for students, staff, and visitors. Previously dark, draughty, and used for storage, the space is now bright, welcoming, and multifunctional - supporting informal learning, social interaction, and wellbeing. Designed with student feedback and the University's catering strategy in mind, The Pod offers flexible seating, healthy menu choices, and inclusive options for all dietary needs. It creates a "home from home" for commuter students, fosters collaboration, and enhances campus identity. Sustainability was central to the project with recycled equipment, local suppliers, and waste reduction practices embedded throughout. This project sets a new benchmark for The University of Lancashire's campus hospitality, combining design innovation, operational efficiency, and environmental responsibility. The result also highlights the importance of partnering with sector experts who can help realise your vision.

OUR OTHER NOMINEES



Arnold Wolfendale, Ken Wade, and Rosemary Crump Lecture Theatre Refurbishment – Durham University

The Calman Learning Centre seating refurbishment project transformed three lecture theatres and breakout spaces by recycling and re-upholstering existing chairs, delivering a modern, welcoming environment with minimal disruption to University activities. By reusing seating, the project diverted significant waste from landfill, reduced demand for new materials, and cut the energy and carbon emissions associated with manufacturing new furniture. Any materials that could not be repurposed were responsibly disposed of, ensuring the project's environmental impact was carefully managed. The result has revitalized the space, enhancing the learning experience and being warmly embraced by staff and students alike. This demonstrates how sustainability and innovation can go hand-in-hand to create a positive learning environment and being sustainable at the same time.

Neighbourhood Health Hub – University of East London

The Neighbourhood Health Hub at Stratford Campus is a small-scale, high-impact design intervention that transforms underused space into a welcoming environment for community-based healthcare, learning and engagement. Delivered for £580,000 and completed in summer 2025, the project demonstrates how thoughtful reuse and human-centred design can deliver significant educational and social value within constrained budgets. Designed to meet NHS clinical standards whilst avoiding the feel of an institutional healthcare setting, the Hub provides flexible spaces that support preventative health services,

student learning and partnership working. A circular design approach reused existing partitions, doors and furniture wherever possible, reducing waste and embodied carbon while maintaining quality and longevity. The project forms an early component of UEL's wider Health Campus vision and 'learn by serving' teaching model to exemplify how universities can pilot innovative, place-based models of care and education through modest, agile interventions driven by clarity of purpose rather than scale.

Kathleen Booth Building, Streatham Campus – University of Exeter

This project is a high-impact transformation of an existing University of Exeter facility, reimagined to support contemporary teaching, research and collaboration within the Computer Science department. Through early engagement and an evidence-based design approach, the project challenged a previously siloed, under-utilised layout and unlocked the building's hidden potential. By stripping the interior back to its core, the concealed central atrium was celebrated and used as a collaborative hub. Flooding the space with natural light and restoring its original architectural intent. Carefully planned open-plan workspaces, supported by quiet pods, meeting rooms and adaptable settings, now encourage interaction while accommodating focused work. The project demonstrates how thoughtful reuse, flexibility and user-centred design can deliver significant cultural and educational benefit without extensive structural change. The result is a vibrant, inclusive and highly functional environment that reflects the University's identity and sets a benchmark for small-scale, high-impact design across the higher education estate.

Architect Design Studio, Edwin Chadwick Building – Heriot-Watt University

The Architect Design Studio has taken an ordinary student resource centre space and with a low budget transformed it into a unique and adaptable location where students can be creative and expressive. The transformation of the existing space into the design studio has been a contributing factor in attracting students from around the globe to join the newly formed Master of Architecture degree. The commitment to delivering a sustainable space was at the forefront of the project teams minds, and the inclusion of recycled furniture not only saved money but showed the incoming students the importance of embracing sustainable material options during the design process. The bold design and layout of the studio, encourages creativity and inspires the students to push their own imagination to deliver portfolios of work that can help shape the future of architecture.

Platt Lane Strength and Conditioning (S&C) Gym – Manchester Metropolitan University

The S&C gym development at Platt Lane has been transformational for students, staff, and external users. The project refurbished and expanded an end-of-life gym by knocking through and repurposing adjacent underutilised laboratory space, increasing the size of the facility to 378m². Delivered within the project budget, the scheme maximised value through intelligent reuse and targeted upgrades. The previous facility was not fit for purpose for large groups, requiring clubs and classes to split sessions to accommodate demand. The new facility can now support larger cohorts in a single session, improving user experience, reducing booking pressures, and increasing overall availability. A wider range of professional-standard equipment supports diverse training needs while enabling academic teaching within the same space. The improved efficiency, flexibility, and quality of the environment have made the facility highly attractive to elite level external organisations, creating a new revenue stream and reinforcing the site's role as a high-performance hub for education and sport.

Neurodiversity Informed Study & Exam Suites: Improving Education & Student Experience Through Design - University of Nottingham

In response to student feedback and rising demand for accessible, neurodiversity sensitive spaces, the University of Nottingham repurposed under utilised facilities to create three purpose built study suites. Delivered in 2025 for £485,000 (incl. VAT), the suites provide twenty-nine year round bookable quiet study and convert to dedicated 1:1 exam spaces with adjustable environment conditions. Co designed with students and aligned to AUDE's Neurodiversity Design Guide, the adaptable booths include height adjustable desks, flexible ambient/task lighting, generous work surfaces, and consistent IT/power provision. Key learnings: Adaptive re use yields high impact at low cost and minimal disruption. Standardised layouts and sightlines enable shared invigilation, reducing staffing and room waste. A unified, inclusive specification improves focus, equity, and confidence. Achievements: Reliable capacity for adjustments, student friendly timetabling, a scalable campus standard, and early positive feedback confirming improved comfort and fairness - alongside operational efficiency and sustainability.



Neurodiverse Spaces on Campus: NTU's 'Glow' Sensory Rooms and Rest Nest – Nottingham Trent University

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is proud to be recognised as a university that opens its arms to all. We have created three new 'Glow' Sensory Rooms – one at each of our City, Clifton and Brackenhurst libraries – to meet the needs of our Neurodiverse students and colleagues. We have also created a 'Rest Nest' wellbeing zone. These rooms offer a calm and inclusive environment to support focus, relaxation and sensory regulation. They have been designed with Neurodivergent students in mind, but are open to anyone who would benefit from a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of campus life. Soothing lighting, comfortable seating and a range of sensory tools all help the user regulate and decompress. This project follows the creation of a Family Room, Prayer Room, Safe Space and a Knowledge Café – all delivered in response to student feedback to enhance our teaching, learning and study spaces.

The Eating Place, Library Building – University of Warwick

The project successfully maximised a modest budget through strategic material and product choices. An industrial aesthetic was softened using a natural colour palette, furnishings, and greenery to promote wellbeing, complemented by external planting added after refurbishment. Sustainability and resource efficiency were prioritised, existing teaching furniture was repurposed for alternative uses, reducing waste. The heating system was upgraded from a gas-fired source to a heat pump, enabling electrification and improving efficiency, which delivers significant energy and carbon savings. Lighting was modernised by replacing outdated T8 fluorescent fixtures with LED technology and intelligent controls, resulting in substantial energy reductions and an enhance user experience. These interventions collectively improved environmental performance, reduced operational costs and created a more comfortable, visually appealing, and sustainable built environment.

The AUDE Estates/Facilities Team of the Year Award

THE SHORTLIST

Estates Division – London School of Economics and Political Science

The Director of Estates' Meet the Customer initiative, which has been running for 16 years, where customer experience is gauged first hand and the performance of different sections within Estates are graded, has produced both validation and compliments but also indicated areas for improvement. The dual focus on the physical estate and the service ethos of estates staff has produced impressive and measurable results which can be replicated across the sector. The focus on obtaining direct student feedback on the quality of the estate and estates services helps justify investment decisions and keeps facilities and services up to date, relevant and delivering for all. Learning from each other and sharing both successes and areas where we could have done better is one of the best things about the AUDE network. The LSE experience is one that can be replicated across the sector and improve the effectiveness of what we do.

My Campus Team – University College London

My Campus has transformed how UCL manages its spaces, assets, and maintenance operations. Developed through collaboration between Estates and ISD, it unites property, people, and operational data in one system. It replaced fragmented tools with a single source of trust that supports smarter planning, quicker reporting, and clearer accountability. Teams now access live data on space use, asset performance, and maintenance anywhere, improving efficiency and accuracy. The system also enables strategic forecasting and operations tracking, guiding future investment decisions. My Campus delivered measurable results, including faster insights, improved data quality, and stronger operational control. Its success was only possible due to a cross-functional team that combined technical skill and service understanding to deliver a modern, flexible platform now recognised as a sector leader in Integrated Workplace Management.

Information & Systems (Estates) – University of Warwick

The Information & Systems team has delivered a transformative programme of digital innovation, revolutionising how the University of Warwick manages its space, assets and operations. Highlights include sector-leading initiatives such as the implementation of ArcGIS with drone imagery for building condition surveys, occupancy analytics powered by sensors and Wi-Fi data, and deploying Maze Maps for seamless campus navigation. Maintenance workflows have been streamlined through Invida Resolve, enabling mobile work assignments, direct contractor dispatch and enhanced service desk processes. More than 250 staff have been trained and more than 9,000 jobs migrated to the new system, supported by real-time performance dashboards. These achievements have driven measurable improvements in efficiency, compliance and user experience. Scalable and replicable across the sector, this work sets a benchmark for estates digital transformation, positioning Warwick as a leader in smart campus management and a trusted collaborator in shaping the future of higher education.

OUR OTHER NOMINEES

Campus Environment Division, Waipapa Taumata Rau - University of Auckland

The Campus Environment Division at the University of Auckland has delivered one of the largest and most ambitious capital and operational programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand. With more than \$700m NZD of projects completed in a two-year period, the team has transformed the University's estate through innovative, sustainable and award winning developments, including the Hiwa Recreation Centre. Their integrated approach across planning, development, capital projects, facilities management, sustainability and commercial services, as well as student services, ensures a high performing, resilient and future focused campus environment for approximately 57,500 staff and students. The CED's work has strengthened institutional reputation, contributed to top global sustainability rankings, reduced emissions, enhanced student experience, and delivered sector leading initiatives such as climate change scenario planning and a first in NZ funding partnership for new student accommodation. Their collaborative, repeatable and scalable operating model provides a benchmark for excellence across the higher education estates sector.

Grounds Services Team – Coventry University

Coventry University has achieved multiple prestigious awards in recent years, including the Green Gown Higher Education Excellence Award in the "Nature Positive" category in 2024, the Green Flag Award for "Best Climate Adaptation," and

Defra Biodiversity Awards in 2023 and 2025. These accolades notably recognise the University's campus transformation - from grey, urban spaces to attractive, engaging green environments where people and wildlife can coexist. The University Grounds Team plays a pivotal role in delivering these improvements and ensuring continuous enhancement year after year. Their commitment to nurturing these spaces enables the full realisation of environmental, economic, and wellbeing benefits. Demonstrating a strong team ethos, they remain dedicated to making a meaningful difference by maximising opportunities to enrich the student experience, strengthen the University's reputation, and advance its sustainable performance.

Estates Department – University of Derby

The University of Derby's Estates team transformed the Cavendish Building into a smart, sustainable hub for learning and innovation. As the purpose-built home of the Derby International Business School, this flagship facility integrates air-source heat pumps, advanced BMS controls, occupancy sensors, and room-booking integration to deliver demand-led heating and cooling and optimise energy performance. From handover to opening, the team ensured seamless mobilisation - commissioning systems, installing specialist furniture; building services infrastructure, and embedding social value through a cleaning contract supporting refugee integration. Cavendish operates as a living lab, enabling continuous performance monitoring and providing real-time data for academic research and teaching. Working with Schneider Electric, the team is developing a white paper to share insights and plans to scale this model across the estate. This project sets a benchmark for FM-led innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence in higher education.

Systems and Business Support – Edge Hill University

The Systems and Business Support Team in Facilities Management delivers exceptional support and innovation across all 14 service areas. They lead structured, proactive sessions with each service area to review systems, address challenges, and identify opportunities for improvement. By leveraging technology, data analytics, and automation, the team has streamlined processes, improved reporting, and enhanced collaboration across the department. These initiatives have driven measurable efficiency, strengthened governance, and improved decision-making, ensuring FM operates effectively and delivers value for money. By embedding a culture of continuous improvement, sharing best practice, and supporting colleagues in adopting innovative solutions, the team has transformed how FM functions. Their expertise, strategic focus, and collaborative working not only enhance the department's performance but also provide a transferable model for other teams across the university and higher education sector, making them a deserving candidate for the AUDE Estates/Facilities Team of the Year Award.

Transport & Logistics Team – University of Glasgow

The University of Glasgow's Estates Transport and Logistics Team is a key part of the operational backbone of campus life, delivering essential services with precision and professionalism. Their remit spans fleet management, mail and parcel distribution, logistics support, academic deliveries, and VIP transport for high-profile events. Each year, they complete over 500 vehicle services, manage 1,400 deliveries, process 30,000 letters and 8,500 parcels, and securely handle 100,000 exam papers and scripts. Their adaptability during adverse conditions and commitment to sustainability - through electric vehicles, route optimization, and Warp It resource redistribution - has earned global recognition, including 3rd place worldwide for savings and 2nd for waste avoided. Operating largely behind the scenes, the team enhances accessibility, supports academic integrity, and strengthens the University's reputation. Their achievements set a benchmark for excellence and demonstrate best practice that can be replicated across the sector.

Facilities Directorate – University of Leeds

The University of Leeds Facilities Directorate have developed a highly collaborative and transferable approach to delivering complex, sustainability led projects, demonstrated through its sector leading Biodiversity Programme. Bringing together grounds specialists, sustainability professionals, estate planners and academic partners, the FD has created an integrated model of working that turns campus challenges into shared opportunities for innovation. Through collective use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the development of multifunctional living lab sites such as Gair Wood and the Brownlee Natural Flood Management project, the team has shown how estates services can support research, enhance student experience, and deliver measurable environmental gains simultaneously. The FD's approach, which is an evidence led, partnership driven and deeply collaborative, offers a scalable blueprint for institutions across the sector, demonstrating how joined up teams can create resilient, research active, nature rich campuses that benefit communities and advance national environmental goals.



Facilities & Engineering Directorate – King’s College London

The Facilities & Engineering Directorate is a core component of the Estates & Facilities Division, responsible for delivering safe, efficient, and sustainable environments across campus. With a workforce of skilled engineers, project managers, and technical experts, the directorate operates within a complex, high-demand environment, balancing operational continuity with strategic development. Its remit spans planned and reactive maintenance, lifecycle investment, and innovation in building performance. The team collaborates closely with faculties, professional services, and external partners to ensure alignment with institutional priorities, including sustainability, resilience, and cost efficiency. This collective expertise enables the directorate to deliver transformative change while maintaining service excellence, positioning it as a trusted partner in shaping the university’s physical estate for the future.

Accommodation Facilities Team – Queen’s University Belfast

The Queen’s University Belfast Accommodation Facilities Team delivered a major operational transformation by bringing summer cleaning services in-house, addressing long-standing challenges associated with outsourced provision during peak transition periods. Supporting over 3,400 student rooms across multiple sites, the team successfully planned and delivered an intensive summer turnaround programme, recruiting, training, and deploying a flexible workforce to meet demanding timescales. In 2025, 33 buildings – including more than 1,000 en-suite rooms and shared facilities – were turned around within seven days to accommodate conference guests, while maintaining high quality standards for returning students. The initiative resulted in a 66% reduction from previous summers in both staffing hours and costs, alongside improved service consistency, communication, and workforce engagement. This achievement demonstrates exceptional teamwork, innovation, and resilience, delivering measurable institutional benefit and providing a scalable, transferable model for the wider higher education sector.



The AUDE Chair's Award for Long Term Contribution

The AUDE Chair's Award for Long Term contribution is often at the emotional heart of our Awards evening, and can be an opportunity to thank (and surprise) a recipient for their long service to the association, perhaps after retirement. When possible we do maintain secrecy around the winner of this award. But we do sometimes have to give the game away a little, and not least when the winner is no longer in the sector and might have no reason to attend the awards evening unless we gave them a strong hint about why they should do so.

Strong hints have been in order this year.

We have not one but two winners to celebrate tonight and we are delighted to have with us two gentlemen that are no longer in Higher Education, though for different reasons.

Richard Jordan, most recently of Bath Spa University but now retired from the sector.

And **Andy Nolan**, most recently of the University of Nottingham but now working for Sheffield City Council as Assistant Director for City Sustainability.

These colleagues are well known amongst the AUDE community and we know you will celebrate this joint winning of this award with them.



Richard said: "I feel very privileged to receive this award having been at Bath Spa University for 15 years and being a Director of Estates for 12 years during the time. AUDE has been a big information companion during that time. I will miss meeting all of my colleagues at the main AUDE conferences and the Big Conversation, but I am also looking forward to enjoying my retirement over the forthcoming years."



Andy said: "I am genuinely honoured to receive the AUDE Chair's Award for Long Term Contribution - thank you. I am particularly grateful to those that supported our vision and backed our plans - including the members of the Sustainability Advisory Group and the AUDE Executive Group."

The AUDE Supplier of the Year Award

The relationships with key suppliers that every university estates team develops are among our most crucial. The best suppliers to the sector see us through long and complex projects, help us with our learning as we undertake new tasks, and give us fresh ways to do things as new and improved products and services come to market. Thankyou to all of the companies and organisations that nominated themselves for the AUDE Supplier of the Year Award. Which will follow in the footsteps of Hassell (2023), Buro Happold (2024) and Provelio (2025)?

THE SHORTLIST

Curtins

JLL

Provelio

Southerns Broadstock Interiors

Turner and Townsend

Vital Energi



Judges

Thank you to all of our judges for the 2026 AUDE Awards for their hard work and focus in deciding between such excellent nominations.



**Tom Alexander,
Tom Alexander
Design Team**



**Lucy Black, University
of Plymouth**



**Rachel Brealey,
University of Leeds**



**Syd Cottle,
University of
Liverpool**



**Paul Davis,
Birmingham City
University**



**Miles Delap,
Gardiner & Theobald**



**Umesh Desai,
Birmingham City
University**



**Ian Grimes,
University of
Hertfordshire**



**Jane Harrison-White,
AUDE**



**Eleanor Magennis,
Glasgow School of
Art**



**Adrian McGillion,
Edge Hill University**



Tracy Meller, RSHP



Julian Robinson, LSE



**Stephen Wells,
University of East
Anglia**



**Lars Wiegand,
Bangor University**



**Trevor Wills,
University of
Plymouth**



**Jerry Woods, Oxford
Brookes University**

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The
AUDE Awards 2026

