

New projects to reduce university carbon emissions

Written by jamie

Wednesday, 11 January 2012 14:56 - Last Updated Wednesday, 11 January 2012 15:04

Funding for projects at 27 universities under HEFCE's Revolving Green Fund (RGF) was announced today.

The awards have been made to four major projects and 24 smaller-scale programmes at higher education institutions, and collectively they will receive nearly £11 million.¹ All are designed to reduce harmful carbon emissions. In this, the second round of the RGF, the four major projects enable existing buildings on a campus to be retrofitted to reduce energy consumption. This work is collectively predicted to reduce CO₂ emissions by around 229,000 tonnes per year.

The four retrofit projects:

The University of Exeter project focuses on Cornwall House, an energy-wasteful 1960s building on the university campus. Retrofitting will radically improve the energy rating of the building. The project will focus on 12 kinds of retrofit, including fabric improvements, metering and ventilation improvements.

The University of Derby project is to install Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting throughout the campus. Fluorescent lamps will be replaced with LED lights and controls will ensure that lights are only illuminated when needed, significantly reducing electricity consumption.

The project at the University of Bradford is to transform the library from an energy-intensive 'E' rated building to an 'A' rating that will deliver a service for future generations with minimal environmental impact. The space will also be altered to provide greater flexibility of use.

The Plymouth University project is to create the world's first integrated Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Building Energy Management System (BEMS), a system that can control all energy-consuming devices and systems in public or private buildings. The aim is for this to lead to step-changes in energy performance and behavioural change at the university.

Steve Egan, Deputy Chief Executive of HEFCE, said: 'Improving energy efficiency in the higher education sector is not all about new-build programmes. These four retrofit projects will demonstrate the significant gains to be made by improving the efficiency of existing buildings and equipment.'

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The 24 small-scale programmes:

Twenty-four small-scale programmes at higher education institutions have been funded to promote energy efficiency.² This funding totals £6.83 million and awards to individual institutions range from £70,000 to £500,000. The projects that will receive funding are wide-ranging, from single projects, such as voltage optimisation, lighting replacements and green IT, to a suite of nine projects at the University of Surrey encompassing a range of technologies to deliver greater energy efficiency.

Background information about the Revolving Green Fund:

The RGF is an innovative source of funding from HEFCE which began in 2008. It is 'revolving' in the sense that the money saved due to greater energy efficiency is subsequently re-paid back into the fund, to then be made available for other carbon reduction projects. HEFCE awarded £20 million in the first round of the RGF3; in this round £10.8 million is available. This includes £4 million recycled from the first round plus additional funding over 2011-12 and 2012-13. An independent evaluation of the first round of the RGF demonstrated that the funded projects made a major contribution to reducing carbon emissions.