

Sustainability Awards (Labs) Participants' Guide

2019



THE UNIVERSITY
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Introduction

Welcome to the Lab Awards! The [Lab Awards](#) are a part of the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS Department) Sustainability Awards programme, which also includes the Office Awards, Student Awards, Student Residence Awards, Community Partnership Awards and the Changemaker Awards.

The Lab Awards are open to teams of staff from any lab-based University department, school, unit, centre, etc. Throughout the year teams will work together to improve sustainability in their workplace, basing their efforts on the ESA Labs Criteria 2019 (available in spreadsheet format).

Around November each year teams are assessed to ensure their departments meet the sustainability criteria set out in the criteria. Successful teams will receive their Lab Award at our annual Sustainability Awards Ceremony around March or April, which celebrates the achievements of staff and students from across the University.

Why participate?

There are many reasons to participate in the Lab Awards:

- The three Lab Award levels provide a **framework for incremental development** and **longer-term sustainability**. Teams will continuously improve by progressing through the scheme.
- The Lab Awards recognise departments that have established **good value**, resource efficient business processes.
- Teams will have access to **support and advice** from the SRS Department throughout the year.
- The Lab Awards are a fantastic opportunity for staff to develop **leadership and teamwork** skills by **working as a team** with colleagues.
- **Training and Professional Development opportunities** (contact Rachael.Barton@ed.ac.uk to discuss)
- Participants have opportunities to **learn from and network with other teams** from around the University, including mentoring teams
- Departments will gain a **national sustainability accreditation**¹. Teams will receive recognition from senior members of the University at our **Sustainability Awards Ceremony**.
- Incentives and additional **support to access funding** to implement your ideas
- **Special recognition** for teams who participate long term (5 years +)

¹ The Labs section of the Sustainability Awards follows the NUS Green Impact criteria.

Changes since 2016

Criteria have been updated since 2016, based on the Green Impact programme, which updated the original S-Lab criteria to make a more comprehensive assessment. To receive a Lab Award teams must meet criteria set out across 9 categories

Categories	Key Principles	No. of Criteria (Bronze, Silver, Gold)
1. Fume Cupboards and Biosafety Cabinets (BSCs)	1: Fume cupboards and other containment devices are working safely and efficiently when in use. 2: Fume cupboards and other containment devices are in low or zero energy states when not in use.	10 (3,2,5)
2. Cold Storage	1: Cold storage requirements are minimised through effective sample management and other means. 2: Cold storage devices are energy efficient and used appropriately.	16 (2,5,9)
3. Chemicals and gases	1: Chemicals and materials are stored safely and used efficiently. 2: Chemicals and materials hazardous to health or the environment are substituted wherever possible.	9 (1,3,5)
4. Scientific Equipment	1: Equipment is used efficiently, with high utilisation and turning off or down when not in use. 2: Energy, water and waste costs are calculated for, and significantly influence, equipment procurement.	11 (2,5,4)
5. Water	1: Water is used efficiently and recirculated wherever possible. 2: Purified water is used appropriately and sparingly.	9 (2,2,5)
6. Waste and Recycling	1: There are effective mechanisms to maximise reuse & recycling of materials and equipment. 2: Hazardous and special waste is minimised	9 (3,3,3)
7. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)	1: Laboratory conditions are comfortable for users. 2: The HVAC system is working to specification and well maintained and air flows are appropriate.	3 (1,1,1)
8. Lighting	1: There is maximum use of natural lighting 2: Lighting is appropriate to user requirements and is always turned off or down when not required.	6 (1,2,3)
9. Awareness and Training	1. The importance of energy and environmental issues is conveyed to laboratory users. 2. The lab has a responsibility structure for, and is connected to networks on, environmental improvement.	5 (1,2,2)

Teams can work towards a Lab Award at Bronze, Silver or Gold level.

Additionally, to recognise the valuable experience of existing teams, those who have previously participated have the option of mentoring another team:

- **Bronze:** Bronze level recognises teams that follow good practice and have made efforts to raise awareness of sustainability amongst staff. There are a total of 16 Bronze criteria of which 15 should be met in order to receive a Bronze Lab Award unless teams can demonstrate that certain criteria are not applicable to them.
- **Silver:** Silver level recognises teams that have gone further to promote a culture of sustainability by establishing resource efficient procedures and environmentally-friendly ways of working, and have made efforts to engage with staff. There are a total of 25 Silver criteria, 23 of which should be met in order to receive a Silver Lab Award unless teams can demonstrate that certain criteria are not applicable to them. Teams applying for Silver should also demonstrate that they are compliant with Bronze level.
- **Gold:** Gold level recognises exemplary teams that demonstrate and actively develop best practice in lab sustainability. There are a total of 37 Gold criteria, 34 of which should be met in order to receive a Gold Lab Award. Teams applying for Gold should also demonstrate that they are compliant with Silver level.

NOTE: Some labs may find that a number of criteria are not relevant to them e.g. they have no cold storage equipment, or do not use fume cupboards. In these instances teams would not be expected to complete any non-applicable criteria. The team would still be able to drop the same number of criteria as other teams applying for an award at the same level (i.e. 1 in Bronze, 2 in Silver and 3 in Gold).

If you think a level has a large number of not applicable criteria, a lab walk around will be offered to confirm the Award level's suitability. Please get in touch to discuss further (Rachael.barton@ed.ac.uk).

Mentoring: This new opportunity will allow teams who have completed an award to offer support to another team who are completing their chosen level for the first time. Teams are able to mentor others of the same or lower level to them e.g. Bronze teams may mentor new Bronze teams, Silver teams may mentor Silver or Bronze, and Gold may mentor at any level.

To be eligible to mentor, your team must have achieved an award within the last 2 years. Mentorship will not replace participating in a Bronze/Silver/Gold level but would be undertaken as an additional achievement.

As the nature of mentorship is highly variable and unique to each partnership, there are no specific criteria to complete other than the following. We will expect teams to commit to:

- Communicating at least monthly with each other
- Undertake visits to each other's workplaces
- Provide a written case study on their experience.

Mentoring teams should also arrange to hold an informal Sustainability Open Day for their mentees or the wider University community, to highlight their successes and challenges.

Please contact Rachael Barton (rachael.barton@ed.ac.uk or 0131 650 4064) for further details.

Assessment

Teams are assessed to ensure they have met the sustainability criteria. This involves reviewing evidence submitted online and a face-to-face audit at the lab.

- **Submitting evidence online:** Teams are asked to submit details of some departmental procedures and activities to our online platform in advance of their audit. Assessors will review the evidence and request more information if necessary. Submitting evidence to the online platform is not mandatory for any criteria but is strongly encouraged as it speeds up the audit and serves as a useful record. However, it is recognised that for certain criteria it is easier to demonstrate compliance during an audit. Evidence can be transferred over from year to year on the online platform, which can be a useful way to save time where there has been little or no change. Where we have changed or introduced new criteria since 2016 we will indicate which criterion from the old criteria is similar, to allow you to decide if your previous evidence is suitable for the new criteria.
- **Face-to-face audit:** Some activities are easier to explain in person or are difficult / time consuming to evidence online, particularly at Silver and Gold level. We therefore undertake face-to-face audits of all teams. This is an opportunity to discuss teams' accomplishments, challenges and future aspirations in more detail. A typical audit lasts around 2 hours. The audit will be conducted by a representative of the SRS Department and a peer auditor from another participating team. **All participating teams are encouraged to provide a volunteer auditor to undertake one or two audits per year.** Where teams are being audited for a higher level (silver/gold) the audit will include some elements of the lower level(s) but will focus mainly on the higher level criteria.

Teams will receive the results of their assessment within two weeks. This will include confirmation of the Lab Award level received and an Assessment Report with more detailed feedback.

Entering for the first time

New teams should work towards Bronze level during their first year, although ambitious teams are not forbidden from attempting to achieve Silver level during their first year.

Progressing to the next level

After receiving Bronze, teams are encouraged to work towards Silver level for their next application, and then Gold.

Staying at the same level

Once a team has achieved a level of accreditation, the accreditation remains valid for 2 years. As such teams only need to apply to be audited every 2 years – regardless of if they are remaining at the same level or progressing up the levels. Teams can choose to remain at the same level for a number of years and then apply for the next level in any year (i.e. they do not need to wait until their next 2-yearly audit was scheduled).



BRONZE

Prior requirements	NONE
Criteria to complete	BRONZE
Reassessment	EVERY 2 YEARS ★



Optional:
Once Bronze is completed,
teams can mentor new
Bronze teams



SILVER

Prior requirements	NONE
Criteria to complete	SILVER
Reassessment	EVERY 2 YEARS ★



Optional:
Once Silver is completed,
teams can mentor new Bronze
and Silver teams



GOLD

Prior requirements	SILVER
Criteria to complete	GOLD
Reassessment	EVERY 2 YEARS ★



Optional:
Once Gold is completed,
teams can mentor any
team up to Gold level

Commitment

Each Lab Awards level differs in the amount of commitment typically required from teams:

- **Bronze:** Bronze level recognises departments that follow good practice and have made efforts to raise awareness of sustainability amongst staff and are following basic good practices for lab management and health & safety. New Bronze teams often find that their department already meets many of the Bronze criteria, so working towards a Bronze Lab Award is a matter of gathering evidence for existing activities and filling in the gaps. Participation can be coordinated by 1 staff member from the department but we would encourage colleagues to work together as a team!
- **Silver:** Silver level recognises departments that have established sustainable procedures and ways of working, and have made efforts to engage with staff. New Silver teams will likely find that their department meets some, but not all, of the Silver criteria. We encourage teams to keep improving each year by completing different or more challenging criteria. It's easiest to complete Silver if colleagues work together as a team.
- **Gold:** Successful Gold teams have significant engagement from the wider department. Gold participants are required to meet a number of challenging criteria which will require the support of the whole team.
- **Mentoring:** Teams who would like to mentor another team will be involved in offering support and advice to their mentees. To successfully share experiences and knowledge, it is recommended that mentorship is offered as a team effort rather than from one individual. The time commitment will vary depending on the level of award being sought, but we would expect at least monthly contact between teams including office visits.

Although the Lab Awards are aimed at staff, teams are strongly encouraged to involve students where possible, to ensure their feedback and ideas are taken into consideration.

Support for teams

Teams will have access to support and advice from the SRS Department throughout the year, including:

- An initial meeting to discuss the scheme in detail.
- Invitations to any joint networking events with other Sustainability Awards teams. A chance to meet other Labs and Office Awards teams, share best practice and hear inspiring case studies.
- Optional baseline audits in summer to provide an indication of progress against targets.
- Professional development opportunities including opportunities to take part in the peer auditing as part of the Core Audit Group.
- Training and Professional Development opportunities (contact Rachael.barton@ed.ac.uk to discuss)
- Our online platform enabling teams to track their accomplishments and store evidence.

- A [Yammer group](#) to help teams communicate with each other to share ideas and experience
- [Resources and templates](#) to help teams complete criteria
- Support to submit applications to the [Sustainable Campus Fund](#) to access funding for equipment and infrastructure changes
- Teams can access up to £500 of funding through our [SRS Project Grants](#)
- An Assessment Report highlighting achievements and areas for improvement

Key Dates

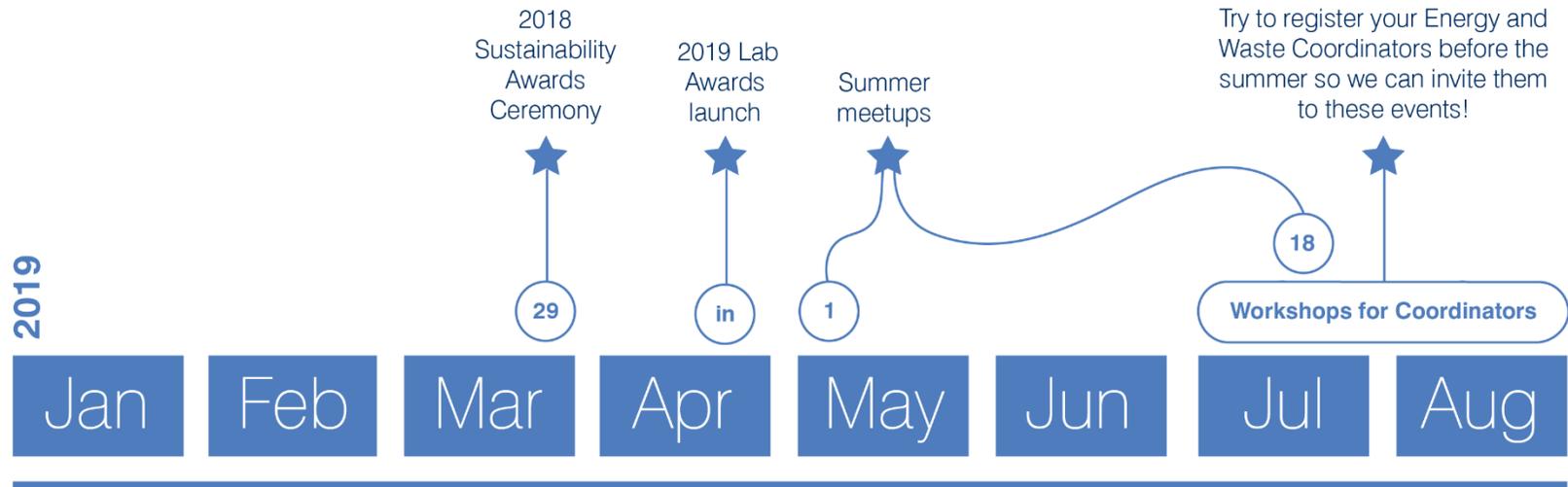
The Lab Awards run annually. Key dates for 2019 are below.

- **April 2019:** Awards launch
- **Summer 2019:** Networking and support events
- **18th October 2019:** Deadline for submitting evidence to the online platform
- **November 2019:** Audits
- **December 2019:** Evaluation and review
- **March/April 2020:** Sustainability Awards Ceremony

Note: baseline audits can be requested at any time to check how you are getting on.



LABS KEY DATES



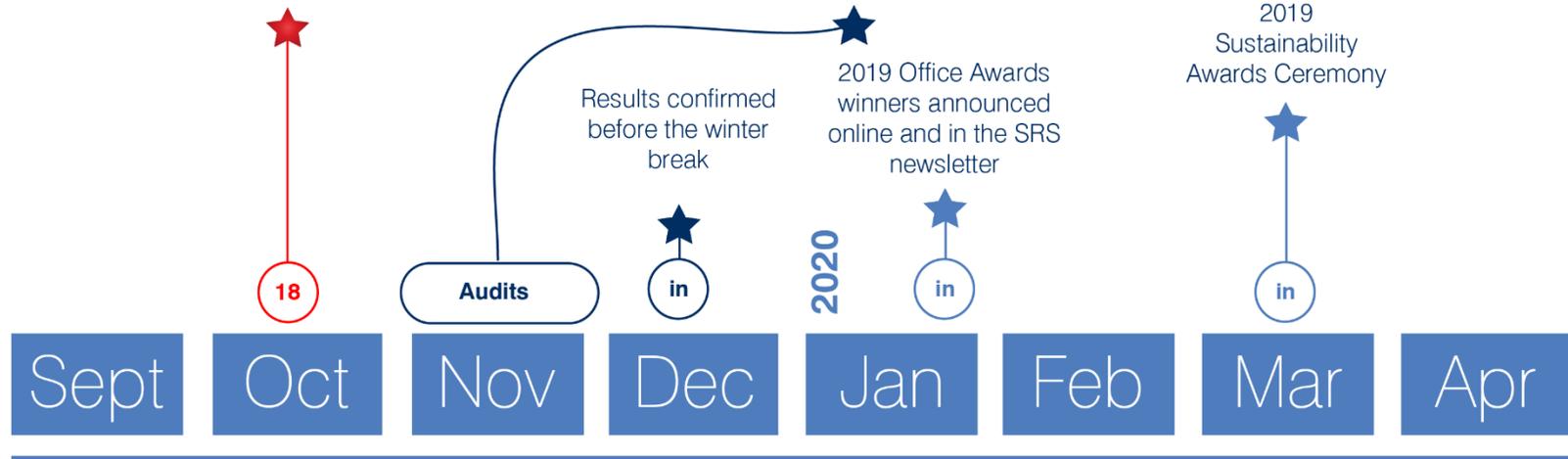
Deadline for uploading evidence to the online platform

Volunteer peer auditors, along with SRS colleagues will review evidence submitted to the online platform and conduct an audit of each team in person

Results confirmed before the winter break

2019 Office Awards winners announced online and in the SRS newsletter

2019 Sustainability Awards Ceremony




Deadline for all levels


Event for all levels


Audit for all levels



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www.sustainability.ed.ac.uk/awards



Next Steps

- **Returning teams:** Rachael Barton continues to coordinate the Lab Awards and will be in touch with previous participants in Spring 2019 to discuss plans for the coming year.
- **New teams:** New or interested teams should contact Rachael at rachael.barton@ed.ac.uk to arrange an initial meeting. In the meantime it would be helpful to:
 1. Secure support for participating in the Lab Awards from senior managers in your department.
 2. Look through the ESA Labs Criteria 2019. This will be available on the SRS website².
 3. Speak to your colleagues about forming a team.

² <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/sustainability/staff/be-part-of-the-sustainability-awards/enter-the-lab-awards>