

TECHFEST'S STEM NEXT ESSAY COMPETITION

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TECHFEST: STEM NEXT

At TechFest, our mission is, and always has been, to encourage STEM learning in children and young people of all ages, abilities and interests.

And with a whole host of activities spanning primary and secondary education, it got us thinking. What's next?

As S5 and S6 students think about continuing their education at college or university or entering the world of work, we want to help give them the best possible start - introducing them to skills they'll need on their journey beyond school.

STEM Next bridges the gap between school education and higher education/working environments with industry-linked, project-based learning that positively facilitates their transition.



"This was without a doubt one of the most intriguing projects I've ever worked on. I had a great time conducting research for my essay, learning new things, and interviewing industry experts. This project has given me an idea of the types of projects I'll be working on at university." - student participant.

A LOOKBACK: THE EVOLUTION OF STEM NEXT

STEM Next began life as an essay competition in 2020.

In response to student and teacher feedback, our popular 'STEM in the Pipeline' competition was reconfigured to a completely digital format where S5 & S6 students would undertake independent research to complete essays focused on the energy transition.

In 2021, we broadened the competition to incorporate more categories which then broke down to individual essay topics. Still including energy transition, students could also research and write an essay on the application of mathematics, medicine & life sciences, technology & computer sciences or food, drink & agriculture.

With these topics available, STEM Next mirrors the identified industries of growth in the UK, providing a platform for students to consider more educational and career opportunities within these flourishing sectors.

STEM NEXT 2021

TechFest's STEM Next 2021 Finale - available on YouTube



STEM Next 2021 was launched in May 2021 so as not to interfere with Higher and Advanced Higher exams.

Ninety students from 25 schools in Scotland, England and Wales entered the competition and submitted entries across three potential essay categories.

Throughout summer 2021, the students completed independent research, supported by live Q&A style webinars and online resources created in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University. These sessions and resources taught pupils the valuable skills they'd need to write a successful essay, including planning, citing references and writing style.

After judges' scoring, pupils and teachers were invited to the virtual STEM Next 2021 final, hosted in Aberdeen and presented by Northsound 1 radio presenter Lauren Mitchell. The final formed part of the TechFest Digital Science Festival 2021 and coincided with Scottish Careers Week, something we would wish to replicate in future years subject to best timings for schools. This digital format allowed each winner to be announced by a sponsor representative and interviewed regardless of geographical location.

Amazon vouchers were awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each essay category, totalling nine prizes. 1st place received a £200 voucher, 2nd place received £100, and 3rd place received £50.

As well as prize money, all winning essays were published on the STEM Next webpage, and all were eligible to be submitted at the Crest Awards, hosted by the British Science Association (BSA).

2021 RESULTS

"This was a fantastic initiative and the essays were very well written considering the age of the students. It was really interesting reading the different styles and takes on the questions posed." - industry volunteer.

90 UK Students

25 Schools

3 Essay Categories

119 Industry Volunteers

6,000 STEM Next Webpage Hits

Combined media circulation of 504,329

"Thank you very much for this opportunity and the help in writing this essay! It has been great fun to research over the summer." - student participant

"I enjoyed these very interesting essays where it was clear the students had put in a lot of time and effort." - industry volunteer.

OUR MISSION

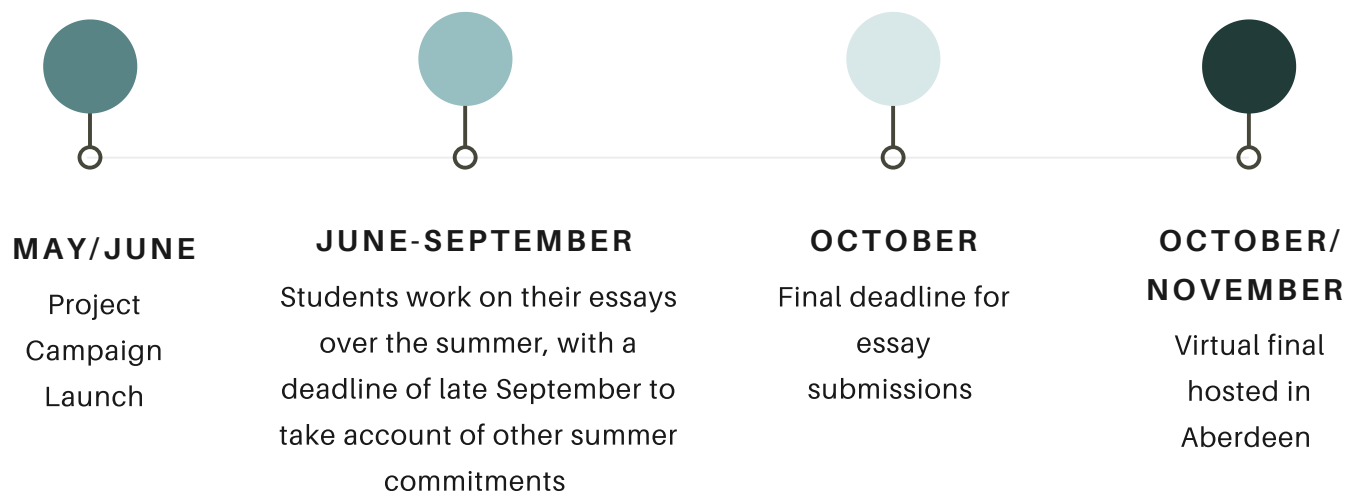
FORMAT

In developing STEM Next for 2022, we aim to increase the scale of this project to build on its momentum as a diverse and national STEM competition.

We want to introduce even more potential essay categories in 2022, drawing on relevant topics from the energy, medical & life sciences, technology & innovation, food, drink and agriculture and space industries. By aligning with industries of growth in the North East of Scotland and across the rest of the UK, we hope to provide a programme that effectively showcases career opportunities in these areas.

The Prize money will remain the same as 2021, with a £200 voucher awarded to the 1st place winner in each category, followed by £100 for 2nd place and £50 for 3rd place. Winning essays will continue to be published on the STEM Next webpage and will be eligible to enter the Crest Awards.

TIMELINE FOR STEM NEXT 2022



All dates specified in the timeline are subject to change, considering schools and requirements/restrictions on them during the pandemic.

CONSIDERATIONS

SCHOOLS

Since its introduction in 2020, STEM Next has always been shaped by student and teacher feedback. This relates to the logistics of the programme and its content.

Over the past two years, we have aimed to broaden the essay topics beyond the energy industry to cater to all sorts of interests and introduce more career path options.

We also understand how important it is that the pupils learn transferable skills that they can utilise in their future studies and careers, e.g. research, critical analysis, communication. These elements are woven into the project itself, but we also continue to produce easily-accessible resources that teach and reinforce these skills. For example, our online tutorials and Q&A sessions focus on these skills rather than the subject matter of each pupil's essay.

To acquire the information they need for their essay, pupils must interview at least one industry representative. We hope this can go some way to replacing valuable work experience placement opportunities that pupils have missed out on due to the pandemic and its restrictions.

THE INDUSTRY

As with any TechFest programme, we work closely with our industry sponsors to ensure that students and teachers learn about topics that are most relevant to each industry, what it is going through and its plans for the future.

With this in mind, we allow our industry sponsors to influence and direct the potential essay titles that students can choose from. We also work with sponsors to ensure all learning resources remain inclusive of the considerations within their industry and give sponsor representatives the opportunity to be interviewed to support the next generation in their learning.



INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING US?

Each year we seek to raise enough money to finance all our events, plus staffing and development costs. We, therefore, welcome sponsorship for all of our projects.

Sponsorship provides an excellent opportunity to invest in the future of our local community, directly benefiting hundreds of young people throughout the area and across Scotland.

By supporting TechFest activities, you are encouraging the interest of young people in STEM and supporting long-term future recruitment for your sector.

SPONSORING STEM NEXT

As a sponsor of STEM Next, you will be acknowledged in several ways to help raise your profile and contribute to your corporate social responsibility strategy.

Where appropriate, sponsoring a TechFest event, activity or workshop also has the potential to provide your staff with personal development opportunities through volunteering as well as networking opportunities with your industry peers.

In supporting us, we want to ensure that your sponsorship is tailor-made to suit your company's needs, values and goals. So if you have any suggestions not covered within the benefits listed below, we'd be delighted to consider them.

SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Acknowledgements	Company Visibility	Volunteering Opportunities
Mention in all press releases relating to STEM Next	Company logo included on all marketing materials relating to STEM Next	Invitation to contribute to essay topics
Recognition in TechFest's Annual Review	Company logo included on STEM Next landing page on TechFest website	Invitation to be interviewed by competition participants
Mention in all information and resources sent out to schools	Company brand prominently displayed at all STEM Next events	Invitation to judge essays as part of the assessment panel
		Invitation to nominate sponsor representative to attend and present awards at the STEM Next virtual final

SPONSORSHIP FEE

- **Principal Sponsor - £6,000**
- **Category Sponsor - £2,000**

We will send a sponsorship agreement and invoice to you upon the written agreement of the sponsorship fee.

BESPOKE OPTIONS

At TechFest, we strive to break down any barriers to participation. With this in mind, we are happy to look at alternative ways your company can support STEM Next that fits with your budget and CSR objectives. Contact us through the details at the end of this proposal to discuss your options.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Our goal is to have a long-lasting effect on young people's enthusiasm for STEM subjects/topics.

To achieve this, we strive always to be accessible, inclusive, practical and innovative.

- We offer activities and content in a range of formats, both physical and digital
- We support all schools by ensuring activities can be flexible to their needs
- We consult teachers, students, and senior management in the design, development, and delivery phases of our event programme
- We consult with the industry to ensure we are giving young people an accurate representation of that sector
- We address diversity issues by ensuring we represent minority groups
- We ensure that children from the most deprived areas get a fair chance to attend and benefit from our programmes

NEXT STEPS

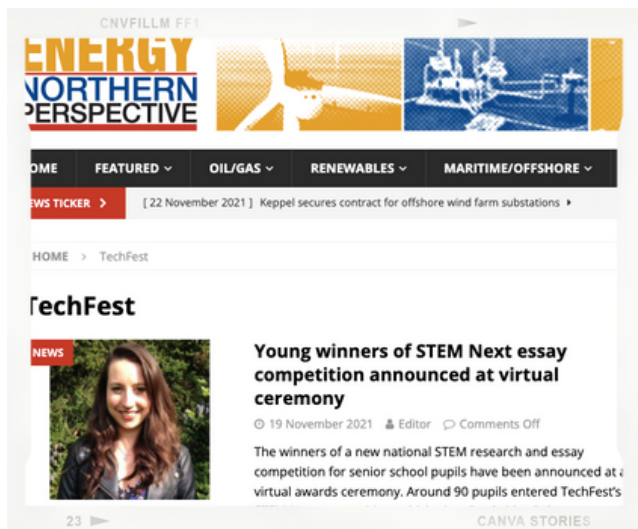
When you choose to support STEM Next, we will:

- Have an initial open discussion where you can ask us any questions and submit any ideas
- Send you a sponsorship agreement that includes the confirmed fee and our duties and responsibilities in meeting your expectations
- Ensure we give an accurate representation of your brand by utilising your brand guidelines and assets

As well as the steps above, we will maintain a clear line of communication at all times. It's essential to us that your company remains a part of the programme and we will contact you at various points during the year to share progress.

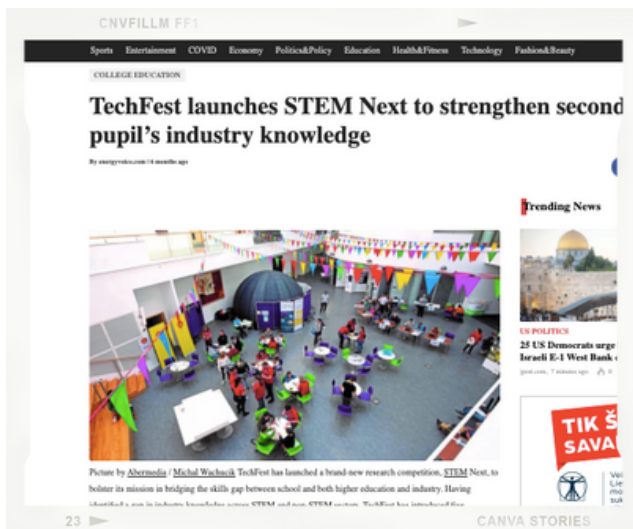
MEDIA COVERAGE & ONLINE PRESENCE

TechFest is proud to work with The BIG Partnership to ensure that our events are published locally, nationally and on social media. This also ensures that our key messages are communicated clearly to our target audiences, as well as helping us to build further links with the energy industry.

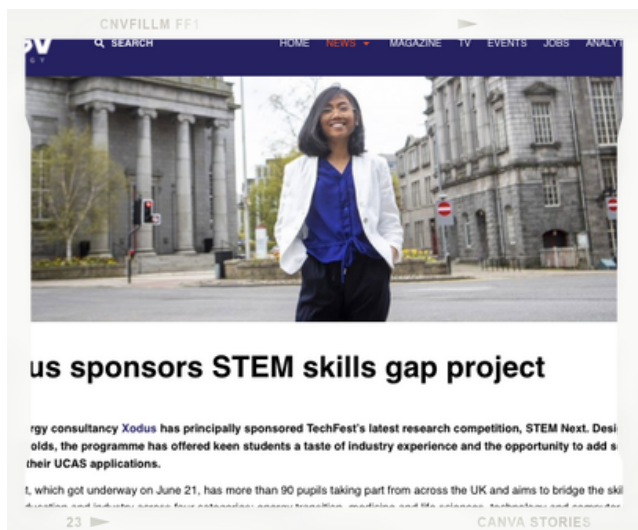


Publications:
OGV Energy, Energy Northern Perspective.

Total circulation:
400,000 + 17,500 = 417,500



Publications:
Energy Voice, AGCC.
Total circulation:
26,870 + 15,000 + = 41,870



Publications:
OGV Energy, Aberdeen Business News, Daily Advent.

Total circulation:
400,000 + 104,329 + n/a = 504,329

READY TO HELP US PROMOTE STEM?

If your company would like to be a part of encouraging the interest of young people in STEM, we would love to team up with you to make this happen.

Contact Martha Gavan (Education Manager, TechFest) to find out more:

marthagavan@techfest.org.uk

01224 274192

THE ORGANISERS

TechFest aims to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to pupils and the wider community throughout Scotland.

They fulfil this aim by developing, organising, and delivering a range of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) activities and events; inspiring, informing and enthusing young people to have an interest in STEM; raising awareness of the application and relevance of STEM subjects; publicising STEM opportunities; and working in partnership with schools, FE colleges, HE establishments, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Enrichment & Engagement (STEM E&E) providers, industry, business, government both local and national.

Don't forget to follow us on our social media channels for the latest TechFest news and updates.



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This sponsorship proposal has been developed in collaboration with local copywriting business, Freshly Ground Copy (www.freshlygroundcopy.com)