

# First Minister backs green student awards

First Minister Alex Salmond will present this year's awards in a ground-breaking national scheme in which university students help companies improve their environmental practices, the organisers announced.

The Environmental Placement Programme (EPP) is run by the Business Environment Partnership (BEP), the leading provider of free and subsidised assistance to small and medium-sized firms throughout Scotland.

This Summer BEP ([www.thebep.org.uk](http://www.thebep.org.uk)), which has its headquarters in Midlothian, has matched some 50 students with companies keen to cut their fuel and water bills and make other cost savings associated with improved environmental management.

At the end of their eight weeks secondment, the students submit reports on their projects. Students judged to have completed the most innovative and practical work will receive their prizes from the First Minister on 10 September.

"The First Minister's agreement to present the awards is further evidence of the success of the Environmental Placement Programme and the respect it has earned from Government and business," BEP Executive Director Gregor Murray commented. "It is also another sign of the high priority which the Scottish Government attaches to environmental issues and strengthening links between business and universities."

The EPP is sponsored by the Scottish Government, Shell UK Limited and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Last year students on the EPP earmarked savings of over £820,000, some 2,500 tonnes of CO2 emissions and nearly 2,000 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill.

For more information on the Environmental Placement Programme call Barbara Schweitzer-Thompson on 0131-561 6262 or email [Barbara@thebep.org.uk](mailto:Barbara@thebep.org.uk).

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