



News Release: 06 May 2026

## HRUC announces National Innovation Challenge sponsor



Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges (HRUC) today announced that Amazon is the first-ever Platinum Sponsor of the HRUC National Innovation Challenge (NIC).

Led by HRUC in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Industrial Liaison Program, the competition aims to empower young people to tackle some of the world's most pressing issues.

Submissions for the Challenge, now in its second year, have been received from schools, colleges and sixth forms across the UK.

This year's theme — Sustainability and AI — calls on participants to design innovations that could contribute to a more sustainable future, reflecting increasing global focus on environmental challenges and emerging technologies.

Winning teams will earn a trip to the United States, where they will collaborate with leading experts in science, technology, engineering and innovation, with the aim of taking students' ideas "from the classroom to the global stage".

The sponsorship announcement builds on the existing connection between HRUC and Amazon. This includes events such as Amazon's UK Girls' Tech Day event, held at HRUC's Richmond Upon Thames College, to inspire and empower the next generation.

Ben Watson, Regional Data Centre Operations Leader for Amazon Web Services in the UK, said: "We're proud to support the NIC as part of our commitment to empowering the next generation of innovators. Innovation thrives when we provide young minds with the tools and opportunities to tackle real-world challenges. By supporting programmes like the NIC, we're investing in future leaders who will drive positive change in their communities and beyond."

Keith Smith, HRUC CEO, said: "We're proud to welcome Amazon as our first-ever NIC Platinum Sponsors. This is a reflection of the growth of the Challenge and builds on HRUC's longstanding connection with Amazon to support and inspire students through and beyond the curriculum."

The NIC is also supported by BBC presenter and STEM ambassador Konnie Huq, who has highlighted the importance of nurturing young talent.

Speaking on national radio earlier this year, Konnie said: "Helping young people achieve things they never dreamed possible is all about unlocking their full potential and nurturing their creativity. It's really exciting to see them challenge themselves, think big, and tackle issues like sustainability and the use of AI head-on."

Other exciting sponsorship opportunities are on offer. For more details of how your organisation can sponsor the National Innovation Challenge, please visit the HRUC website: [Sponsor the National Innovation Challenge | HRUC](#)

**Note to editors:** Following a merger in 2023, HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges) has rapidly evolved into a thriving educational hub with three colleges and a strong apprenticeship provision.

The diverse and aspiring college group now serves nearly 15,000 learners across west and south London, offering a range of courses, including A-Levels vocational programmes, T-Levels, and apprenticeships. The College group also proudly supports over 850 learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing tailored programmes and internships to help them thrive.

