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National Innovation Challenge winners head to US for life-changing trip



Students from the UK will soon embark on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the US after winning the National Innovation Challenge (NIC).

Led by HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges) in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Industrial Liaison Program, the NIC aims to empower young people to tackle some of the world's most pressing issues.

Shlok, Faithon and Xainaldo from Uxbridge College, London, and Timothy, Ollie and Wojtek from St Bede's Catholic High School in Ormskirk, Lancashire, were named the winners of the NIC 2026 at a glittering awards ceremony earlier this year.

This weekend, they are jetting off to America for a two-week trip as part of their prize. The group are set for an action-packed schedule full of thrilling experiences and exciting opportunities.

Their first stop will be Boston, where they will visit the world-renowned MIT, enjoy a tour of the university campus, and discuss their NIC projects with leading scientists and researchers. They will also have the chance to glimpse what it's like to study at an American school during a visit to Watertown High School, before heading to the historic city of Cambridge.

The students will learn more about American history during their trip to the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, and take in local nature during a whale watching cruise in Boston Harbour.

Next, the group will head to New York, where they will explore famous sights such as Times Square, the Rockefeller Centre and the Statue of Liberty.

Finally, the group will travel to Washington DC to take part in a tour of Amazon's head office, as well as enjoying sightseeing at the White House, Lincoln Memorial and the International Spy Museum.

Yaseen Akhtar, Managing Director of the West London Institute of Technology, HRUC, said: "The NIC 2026 winners massively impressed the judges with their projects, and this trip will allow them to see just how far their ideas can take them. It offers an invaluable opportunity for them to network and talk about their projects, as well as enjoy sightseeing and exploring a different country. It's a joy seeing how much a trip like this can change students' perspectives on what's possible."

Dr Niamh Shaw, NIC ambassador and chair of the independent judging panel, said: "I'm delighted to be involved in a Challenge that offers such incredible opportunities for the winners. Being able to go to MIT will open so many doors and inspire the students to keep working hard and aiming towards a bright future."

For NIC 2027, students from secondary schools, colleges and sixth forms are invited to submit their projects on the theme of Tomorrow's World. Spanning a wide variety of disciplines, students are challenged to imagine the future and develop bold, innovative ideas that could shape the way we live, work and interact.

The winners will once again embark on a trip to the US next year, and all finalists will be invited to attend the awards ceremony in summer 2027.

To register your interest or find out more, visit [NIC 2027: Tomorrow's World | 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, higher education courses and apprenticeships. The College group also proudly supports over 1,000 learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing tailored programmes and internships to help them thrive.