

# STEM NEXT

TECHFEST

## TECHFEST'S STEM NEXT ESSAY COMPETITION

OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,  
ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) ACTIVITIES TO  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TECHFEST](#)



TECHFEST IS AN INNOVATIVE CHARITY WHICH CONSISTENTLY  
PROVIDES QUALITY STEM EDUCATION.



[WWW.TECHFEST.ORG.UK](http://WWW.TECHFEST.ORG.UK)

# PROFILE

TechFest is governed by a small, voluntary Board of Directors (Trustees) all committed to the aim of the organisation.

TechFest has an enviable record of engagement with schools in the North-East and throughout Scotland. This is reflected in our level of activity, reputation and knowledge of the education community in each of the 32 Local Authority areas.

With over 35 years' experience in promoting STEM subjects, TechFest are in the unique position of being able to identify and develop effective programmes and measure their impact. The extent of the TechFest operation is vast and full details can be found on our website. The content and information included on the website demonstrate the range and depth of our involvement in designing, developing and delivering STEM events across Scotland.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jeremy Cresswell - Chairman  
Sarah Chew  
Brenda Wyllie  
Claire Keenan  
Dr Brian Wilkins  
Professor Phil Hannaford  
Professor Don Cairns  
Alec Carstairs  
Paul Garnham

## ADAPTING TO A NEW WORLD

# TECHFEST

*digital*

During the past 12 months, TechFest has been updating and translating our educational resources to utilise the digital opportunities that arose in response to the global pandemic. By going digital, we have been able to remove many of the potential barriers to participation and as a result have the opportunity to widen the scope of many of our existing projects, as well as creating brand new resources designed to support student learning in the current environment.

Through direct conversations and focus groups with teachers, local authorities and educational leaders, TechFest are in a position to ensure our programmes are best matched to meet the needs of schools and students. In addition, through our student-led, project-based learning opportunities we aim to facilitate the all-important links between education and industry. TechFest aims to ensure all students have the opportunity to engage with industry in a meaningful way that illustrates the diversity of options available in their future.

Last year, as a result of teacher and student feedback, TechFest's piloted our first ever essay competition, a solo research project for S5 and S6 students in the North East.

Participating students were tasked with independently researching and writing an essay related to the theme of Energy Transition (full essay guidelines can be found [here](#)) In addition, as part of the essay criteria, students were required to interview at least one external industry professional to gain some inside knowledge about their essay topic. At a time when work experience and other placements have not been possible this connection with industry and opportunity to develop networking skills was of vital importance to the students. In both student and teacher feedback, this interaction with industry professionals was pin pointed as one of the highlights of the project.

Due to the success of the pilot run of this essay competition, and the hugely positive response from schools, TechFest are delighted to announce the launch of **TechFest's STEM Next Essay Competition**. Building on last years success we aim to make this years competition bigger, better and more inclusive. With your help, our goal is to make this competition a staple across all secondary schools in Scotland.

# NEXT STEPS

This year, we are hoping to increase the scope of the project by introducing new essay categories that the students can choose from. The proposed categories are:

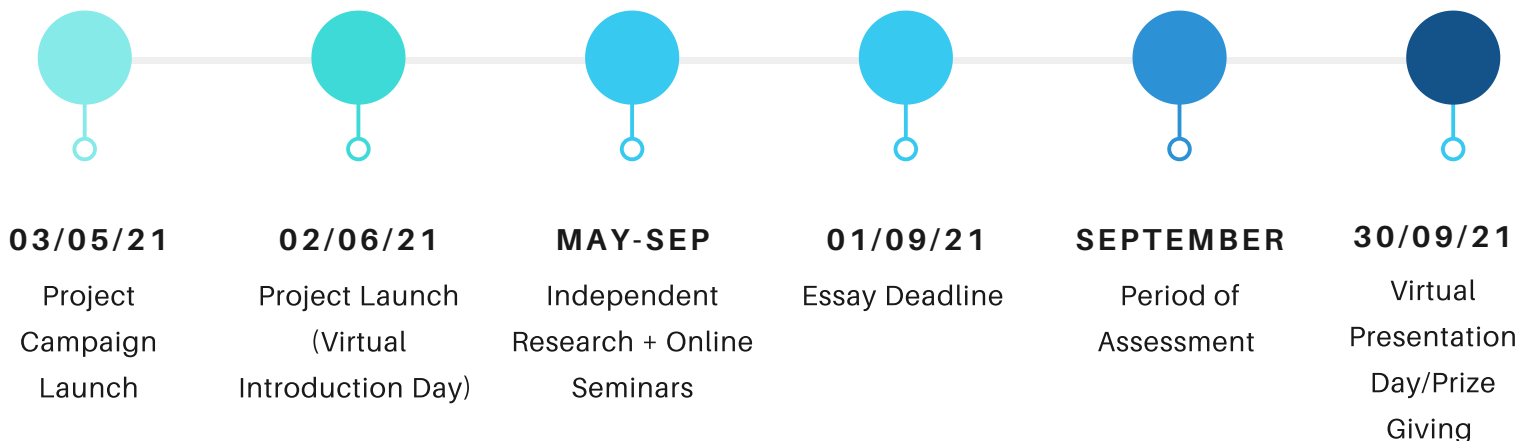
1. Energy Transition
2. Applications of Mathematics
3. Medicine & Life Sciences
4. Technology & Computer Sciences
5. Food, Drink & Agriculture

These topics were chosen as they represent priority areas that have been identified as key industries for future career opportunities. For each category students will have approximately four essay titles or topics to choose from. Students will have to adhere to the specified essay criteria, including interviewing an associated industry professional. By working with a diverse range of sponsors from different industries we hope to demonstrate the range of future opportunities available to our young people.

For each category, the winning students will receive a monetary prize (£200 for first place, £100 for second place, £50 for third) as well as the opportunity to have their work published. In addition, every student that takes part will be eligible to apply for the British Science Associations Silver CREST Award, which is a fantastic addition to any UCAS application, personal statement or CV.

Furthermore, over the course of the project TechFest will develop and run several online tutorial sessions (these will cover topics such as “A guide to Essay Writing”, “Harvard Style Referencing 101”, “The Importance of Critically Evaluating Sources” and “Career Networking – the Do’s and Don’ts”). These tutorials are a new development and have been highly requested.

## TIMELINE FOR 2021



# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

TechFest's aspiration this year is to gain a sponsor for each of the five essay categories. We would be delighted if you choose to come on board as one of our valued sponsors.

The standard sponsorship package we would like to propose is:

- A £1000 financial contribution - this would be used to cover the prize money for your category and contribute towards staff time and overheads.
- Volunteers within your organisation who would be willing to potentially be interviewed by the competing students.
- Volunteers to help form the assessment panel and assess any essays that fall under your area of expertise (TechFest will provide an extensive marking guide and optional training session to help facilitate this).

In addition, as we want to highlight your industry or organisation we would be honoured if you would like to set (or help set) the essay topics for your category. Provided are some example topics in the appendix at the end of the document. These can easily be changed to reflect the future of your industry.

All sponsors logos will be used in all promotional material for the competition, including in the press release, on our website and social media. Furthermore, we would be delighted if you, and any volunteers from your organisation, would be able to attend the Presentation Event and help us celebrate the student's success!

However, if you are unable to sponsor as stated above but would still like to be involved with the project please do get in touch as we would be happy to discuss bespoke sponsorship agreements. If you are able to volunteer your time but not financially (or vice versa) then we would still be very grateful for your involvement with the project.

One of the central pillars of TechFest is the importance of project-based learning and we cannot emphasize enough how crucial opportunities like this are for the students - especially during a time when they have missed out on so much. Industry linked project-based learning offers a transparency into the workplace and has been demonstrated to empower students and positively facilitate their transition from school into higher education, apprenticeship schemes or the workplace. By participating in STEM Next your actions could have a huge impact in helping inspire and inform the next generation.

For more information or details about how you could get involved please contact:  
[marthagavan@techfest.org.uk](mailto:marthagavan@techfest.org.uk)



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