



Third-level

Re-turn Awards Entrant's Toolkit



Awards
2026



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Entrant's toolkit



Re-turn awards overview

In short:

- » Run a Re-turn collection (big or small)
- » Raise funds or build participation
- » Submit a short entry with photos
- » Win funding and recognition

Who can enter?

Entries are open to:

- » Student Unions
- » Clubs and societies
- » Student groups and committees
- » Faculties/departments and campus initiatives

Prizes

- » First Prize: €5,000
- » Second Prize: €2,000
- » Third Prize: €1,000
- » 11 category awards: €700 each

Deadline

Submit by **Monday 27 April**

How to enter

Submit via: re-turn.ie/thirdlevelawards

What counts as a campaign?

A campaign can be large or small. It's not just about how many plastic bottles and cans are Re-turned - it's about the difference they make. There's lots of ways to Re-turn it Right!

Examples include:

- » A collection drive to fundraise for your cause
- » A challenge between clubs/societies/courses
- » Event-based collections (matches, club nights, campus events)
- » A week-long or month-long campus activation

If you have run any kind of Re-turn collection activity this academic year (August 2025 - April 2026), you can enter.





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How to start your campaign (simple 5-step plan)

1 Choose your goal

Pick one clear purpose:

- » Raise funds for a charity or club
- » Fundraise for a society trip, event, or equipment
- » Increase sustainability participation on campus

2 Pick your dates

Best formats:

- » 1 day (event-based)
- » 1 week (collection drive)
- » 2 to 4 weeks (biggest campus impact)

3 Assign roles

Even small campaigns run better when roles are clear:

- » Campaign lead
- » Comms lead
- » Collection lead
- » Volunteer lead

4 Choose your collection method

Common options:

- » A central drop-off point in a high-footfall area
- » "Drop-off Hours" staffed by volunteers
- » Collections after events
- » A friendly challenge format to drive participation

5 Promote early

Make it easy for people to take part:

- » Where to drop container
- » Campaign dates
- » What containers are accepted
- » Aims & goals of campaign





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Campaign ideas that work well

If you want a simple format that delivers impact quickly:

- » 'Drop and Go' collection point for one week
- » Society vs Society and Club vs Clubs challenge
- » Matchday/event collections
- » Themed day with a visible target (for example, "Return for [Cause] Week")

Collection tips (Optional / Practical)

What to collect

Collect eligible Re-turn containers (with the Re-turn logo), typically:

- » plastic bottles
- » aluminium cans



Best practice for smoother collection

- » Empty containers before collecting
- » Avoid crushed containers where possible
- » Keep collection areas clean and tidy
- » Check collection points regularly

Set up a good collection point

A strong setup includes:

- » A clearly labelled bin/bag
- » Simple "what goes in here" signage
- » A regular check-in so it doesn't overflow
- » A plan for storage and returns

Orange Re-turn bins

Orange Re-turn bins can help make campus collection more visible and organised. Availability may vary by campus or partner supports.

- » **Step 1:** Go to re-turn.ie/thirdlevelawards
- » **Step 2:** Register your campaign using the JotForm provided
- » **Step 3:** Tick the box: "Are you interested in receiving an Orange Collection Bin?"



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How to submit a strong entry

A strong entry is:

- » Easy to understand
- » Specific about what you did
- » Supported with photos or videos
- » Evidence of multiple promotional social posts

Entry structure (recommended)

1. Campaign summary (3 to 5 lines)

What you did, where, and why.

2. What you organised

Your collection method, any events, and your promotion approach.

3. Who was involved

Your team, volunteers, and any campus partners.

4. Results and impact

Anything you can share, for example:

- » Funds raised (if applicable)
- » Number of containers collected
- » Number of days active
- » Number of collection points
- » Volunteer involvement
- » Campus awareness or engagement

5. What made it successful

- » What worked best and what you learned.

What to upload

Strong supporting materials include:

- » Photos of collection points and volunteers
- » Short videos (even 10 seconds helps)
- » Screenshots of your posts or promo

Quick submission checklist

Before you press submit:

Campaign name and dates confirmed

Best photos selected

Short summary written

Entry link ready: re-turn.le/thirdlevelawards

Submitted before **Monday 27 April**





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Example campaign

TU Dublin's Re-turn Heroes

The Re-turn Project is a student-led sustainability initiative at TU Dublin, spanning the Bolton Street and Linenhall campuses. Led by volunteering students with staff support, the project grew from repurposed bins to a campus-wide scheme funded through the *Green-Campus Open Call*.

In just over two months, it recycled more than **7,000** plastic bottles and cans, raising **€1,100** for local charities including *Friends of the Elderly* and the *Red Cross Foundation*. *The Red Cross* donation (the largest single contribution received this year) earned the team recognition at the TU Dublin Students' Union Awards.



Technological University of Dublin (2025). Re-Turn Heroes. [online] TU Dublin. Available at: <https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/about-the-university/sustainability/about/news-and-events/news-archive/re-turn-heroes.php> [Accessed Feb. 2025].





Ready to take part?

1 Scan the QR code



2 Tell us how your third level group took part

3 Upload photos or videos

Share your story by Monday 27 April




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