

# Judging Criteria for Each Category 2026

## **CUBO Rising Star Award - NEW**

This award recognises an emerging talent within a CUBO member institution, someone who has demonstrated exceptional promise, innovation, and impact early in their career. Open to individuals in any role or department across campus and commercial services, the Rising Star Award celebrates those who are making a difference, whether through fresh ideas, outstanding service delivery, or leadership potential. It's about recognising the next generation of changemakers shaping the future of campus life, wherever they work and whatever their title.

### **Who Can Enter:**

This award is open to individuals working in any role or department within campus and commercial services at a CUBO member institution. Whether in accommodation, catering, events, sport, sustainability, retail, or residence life, if you're making a meaningful impact early in your career, we want to hear from you. There are no restrictions based on job title or level; the Rising Star could be anyone who is driving positive change, inspiring others, and showing real potential to shape the future of campus life.

## **CUBO Green Impact Award - NEW**

This award recognises a project, initiative, or operational change that has made a significant contribution to environmental sustainability within campus services.

What the judges are looking for:

Entries should demonstrate measurable impact, creativity, and leadership in embedding sustainability into campus life. This could include:

- Reducing carbon emissions or energy consumption
- Waste reduction and circular economy initiatives
- Sustainable food and catering practices
- Eco-friendly accommodation or facilities management
- Biodiversity and green space enhancement
- Engagement campaigns that inspire behavioural change among students and staff

Submissions should highlight how the initiative aligns with institutional sustainability goals, involves collaboration across departments or with students, and shows potential for long-term impact or scalability.

### **Who can enter:**

Open to any team or individual working within a CUBO member institution, regardless of department or role.

## **CUBO Campus Experience Impact Award**

Replacing the former Campus Experience of the Year award, the Campus Experience Impact Award honours a team, initiative, or service that has made a transformative contribution to the campus experience. This could include anything from sustainability and wellbeing programmes to digital innovation, hospitality, accommodation, or commercial services.

In particular, this award shines a spotlight on the moments when different teams and services join forces to deliver measurable impact on their campus for students, staff and/or visitors. It reflects the breadth of CUBO's mission enhancing campus life through excellence in campus operations, engagement, and service.

### **Who Can Enter:**

This award is open to any team, department, or cross-functional initiative within a CUBO member institution that has made a meaningful and transformative contribution to the campus experience. Whether you're working in accommodation, catering, events, wellbeing, sustainability, digital services, or any other area of campus or commercial services, we welcome entries that demonstrate collaboration, innovation, and impact. Joint submissions across departments or services are encouraged where the initiative reflects a shared commitment to enhancing campus life.

## **Creativity in Conferencing, Events, and Hospitality**

Judges will be seeking a standout initiative in conferencing, events, or hospitality, something that truly raises the bar.

Successful entries will showcase originality and forward-thinking approaches that respond to the evolving needs of the conference and events sector. Whether it's a bold new concept, a reimagined service, or innovative facilities that offer a fresh experience for customers, submissions should demonstrate creativity, adaptability, and impact.

### **Who Can Enter:**

This award is open to any team working within conferencing, events, or hospitality services at a CUBO member institution. Whether you're part of a commercial services team, an events unit, catering, or venue management, we welcome entries that showcase creative thinking and innovative delivery. Cross-departmental collaborations and joint initiatives are also encouraged, especially where they demonstrate a fresh approach to meeting the changing demands of the sector.

## **Creativity in Catering and Retail**

This award celebrates a successful initiative that brings fresh thinking and originality to campus food and dining experiences. Judges will be looking for standout creativity in service delivery, food concepts, purchasing methods, and facilities, anything that offers customers something truly new, exciting, and impactful.

Whether it's a bold new dining concept, a reimagined catering service, or an innovative use of space and technology, entries should demonstrate how creativity has been used to meet evolving customer expectations and enhance the overall campus experience.

### **Who Can Enter:**

Open to any team working in food, dining, or hospitality services within a CUBO member institution. This includes catering teams, retail food outlets, hospitality services, and collaborative initiatives across departments. If your project has brought innovation and delight to campus dining, we want to hear about it.

## **Excellence in Student Sport Experience**

This award recognises a successful initiative that has made a meaningful difference to the sport experience at a CUBO member institution. Judges will be looking for entries that demonstrate increased participation, promote health and wellbeing, and support improved performance levels among students and/or staff.

Whether through innovative programming, inclusive engagement strategies, facility improvements, or collaborative partnerships, entries should show how sport is being used to enrich campus life and foster a vibrant, active community.

### **Who Can Enter:**

Open to any team or department involved in delivering sport, physical activity, or wellbeing initiatives within a CUBO member institution. This includes sports services, wellbeing teams, accommodation or events staff, and cross-departmental collaborations. If your work has positively impacted the sport experience on campus, we encourage you to enter.

## **Student Living Innovation Award**

This award recognises a student accommodation initiative that demonstrates innovation, high standards, and a commitment to creating a “home from home” environment where students can thrive.

Judges will be looking for entries that showcase creative approaches to enhancing the student living experience—whether through design, service delivery, sustainability, or community-building. The initiative should enable students to achieve their best, both academically and personally, by fostering a supportive and inspiring living environment.

### **Who Can Enter:**

Entries are invited from student housing complexes and operations, including university-managed accommodation and Private Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) providers. Submissions must be led by a CUBO member institution, but may be developed in collaboration with PBSA partners, developers, or other stakeholders.

## **Innovation in Student Experience**

This award celebrates an innovative product, service, or campaign that has significantly enhanced the student experience or contributed to the development of commercial business within the university environment.

Judges will be looking for entries that demonstrate originality, measurable impact, and a forward-thinking approach to meeting student needs. Whether it's a new digital solution, a creative wellbeing initiative, or a commercial service that adds value to student life, submissions should show how innovation is driving positive change across campus.

### **Who Can Enter:**

This category is open exclusively to teams or individuals from CUBO member institutions. Entries may come from any campus or commercial service, including accommodation, catering, events, retail, wellbeing, or digital services. Cross-departmental collaborations are welcome, provided the lead entrant is a CUBO member.

## **Business Partnership of the Year**

This award recognises an outstanding collaboration between a university and a commercial partner that is fully integrated into the institution and delivers high-quality services that enhance the student experience.

Judges will be looking for partnerships that demonstrate clear achievement of shared goals, measurable outcomes, and a commitment to excellence. Whether through innovation, service delivery, or strategic alignment, entries should showcase how the partnership has added value to both the institution and its students.

### **Who Can Enter:**

Entries must be submitted by a CUBO member institution and should highlight a partnership with a commercial business. The partner does not need to be a CUBO business partner. Submissions can come from any campus or commercial service area, provided the partnership is well-established, actively contributes to institutional objectives, and positively impacts the student experience.

## **Best Marketing Campaign**

This award recognises a recent, successful marketing campaign within campus or commercial services that tackled a specific strategic challenge and delivered measurable results.

Judges will be looking for entries that tell the full story—from insight to impact. Campaigns should demonstrate clear objectives, creative execution, and tangible outcomes through metrics such as engagement, reach, revenue, or behavioural change. Entries should cover all key stages: situation analysis, research, objectives, target audience, segmentation, channels, proposition, budget, tactics, results, and ongoing measurement.

### **Who Can Enter:**

This category is open to teams from CUBO member institutions working within campus or commercial services. Campaigns may relate to accommodation, catering, events, retail, sport, or any other service that supports students or generates commercial value. Cross-departmental collaborations are welcome, provided the lead entrant is a CUBO member.

## **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Spotlight**

This award recognises a CUBO member institution that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within campus and commercial services.

Judges will be looking for submissions that show how the institution values diversity in the workplace and creates an inclusive environment where all students and staff feel respected, supported, and empowered to thrive. Entries should highlight initiatives or strategies that have led to demonstrable improvements in EDI practices, culture, or outcomes.

### **Who Can Enter:**

This category is open to any team or department within a CUBO member institution. Entries may come from any area of campus or commercial services, including accommodation, catering, events, sport, or leadership teams. Cross-departmental collaborations are welcome, provided the lead entrant is a CUBO member and the initiative has had a meaningful impact on EDI within the institution.