

Top 5 Environmental Impacts and our efforts to mitigate them:

The City, University of London Students' Union represents all of our students here at City. We operate in the Tait building and our facilities include our office, reception area, shop and a staff kitchen space. The Union recognises that all of our products, activities and services have an impact on the environment (local and global) and we are committed to managing the environmental and social impacts of our work.

This year we have been working online/remotely for the majority of the year however we still have a number of environmental impacts.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation and the campus closure the Union has been unable to complete a full audit of our environmental impacts. This is based upon our known impacts and work we have done this year to mitigate them. For a full breakdown of our environmental impacts for 2019-20 - [Click Here](#).

In order to assess and state which our 5 most significant environmental impacts are we have used the following matrix.

Impact severity →					
Frequency ↓	1 - Very low	2 - Low	3 - Medium	4 - High	5 - Very high
1 - Very infrequent		Waste		Energy use in office	
2 - Infrequent					
3 - Medium				Student Engagement	
4 - Frequent					
5 - Very frequent		Energy use in home	Incentives		

1) **Incentives:**

As an organisation that runs frequent events both in person and online, we know that the incentives we use to promote our events can have a significant impact on the global environment.

This includes: Purchasing vouchers and products via Amazon Prime due to the increased emissions, greenhouse gasses and packaging waste that this causes, the amount of single use or virgin plastics on food deliveries and the general impact of postage and packaging.

As we have moved online, the majority of our incentives have been gift vouchers and similar monetary incentives for participation in our events. Whilst vouchers have no physical/material impact on the ecosystems and environment, where we choose to put our money does, especially when it is linked to wasteful production, energy uses and emissions.

This is our number 1 impact this academic year due to the fact that throughout 2020/21, we have run events, surveys and projects that have incentives attached with a higher frequency than any of our other impacts.

To mitigate this impact, we have written guidance to our staff to support in purchasing: ethical, sustainable, accessible and international incentives. Check it out at: [Sustainability \(citystudents.co.uk\)](https://citystudents.co.uk/sustainability)

2) **Student engagement:**

Student engagement is the environmental cost of the material we provide to build engagement. Student engagement material includes the promotional material procured, one off events and does not include staff items and stationary.

Whilst the pandemic has reduced the amount of promotion we have done on campus, during term 1, we did have an on campus presence and handed out a portion of freebies and giveaways to students.

Here is the list of items used for promotional material this year

- Badges
- Wooden spoons

- Lanyards
- Pens
- Sweets
- Hand Sanitizer
- Door Pullers
- Gift Boxes

And

- Posters
- Leaflets
- Flyers

Our impact comes from the amount of posters and fliers printed for Welcome, Autumn Elections and other key engagement periods. Use of paper and printing is damaging to the world's natural resources and produces waste on campus once the promotional material is no longer needed.

This is number 2 on this list due to the quantity and frequency of giveaways in term 1.

3) **Energy use in the home:**

The entire staff team has been working remotely for the majority of time since the start of the pandemic. Whilst this has been helpful to reduce our: travel, material and in office environmental impacts, we recognise that while working from home, we are still using a large amount of electricity and energy.

For example, all staff work daily on a Laptop or similar device which uses the energy from the National Grid and also energy to power our Cloud and Shared Drive storage. We use OneDrive and our Students' Union Remote Shared Drive to access and work on documents; with a staff team of around 20 Staff and Sabbatical Officers, we know that our energy use at home has gone up over the pandemic.

We have not been able to evaluate or survey our staff electricity use at home this year.

4) **Energy use in the office:**

The main form of energy use in our Students' Union facilities is electricity. The Students' Union uses electricity in the office for computers, office equipment and lighting.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and campus closures, all staff in the Union are now working remotely, they are using work laptops and personal devices if necessary (see above).

We have used the office space occasionally during the pandemic, and our biggest environmental impact will have come from the Check In Calls (Term 1) in which we had up to 7 Students and Staff in our office making calls to students for 3 weeks.

The second highest use of electricity is our printers, screens and lights. These are used less frequently throughout the day however used to some extent daily. The lights in our office are on a 'dimmer switch' to allow staff to use the necessary amount of electricity to ensure a good light level in the office. We also have sensor activated lights in some areas of the office for when the office is empty.

Our kitchen area also uses energy to power appliances such as the fridge, microwave and kettle. Water is used by staff through the sink and a drinking water tap. This tap helps to reduce our water use by stopping flow once the handle is released, it also provides near boiling water to help us reduce our use of the kettle and microwave.

In order to reduce our environmental impact through student engagement, we have been electronic methods to encourage engagement, such as social media and via our website and articles.

5) **Waste:**

Waste is our 5th highest environmental impact. We have been unable to complete an assessment for the amount of waste this year, however, here is a list of our main waste types in the office.

- Non-recyclable material
- Recyclable materials
- Paper waste
- Food waste
- Water waste
- Textile waste

Whilst at home, staff use their own waste options to dispose of waste and when in the office we have a mixture of non-recyclable and recyclable bins and staff are strongly encouraged to dispose of items appropriately. Our waste disposal is managed by City, University of London. Food waste from our kitchen is put into food waste bins appropriately. This includes staff's personal food waste and any waste from Union events.

Conclusion:

City, University of London Students' Union will continue to monitor and reduce our environmental impacts and complete surveys and assessments of these 5 key impacts into 2020/21. The Students' Union are committed to an ethical and environmental future. We identify sustainability as an enabling factor in our City, University of London Students' Union Strategic Plan 2019-2020.