

## 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.

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 2018-19, please [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					
2 - Infrequent					
3 - Medium					
4 - Frequent					
5 - Very frequent					

### 1) Travel and transport:

Travel and transport was identified as one of our top 5 environmental impacts in 2018-19 and will continue to be one of our top 5 environmental impacts this year. As we have a central London campus, many of our staff use a mixture of public transport and walking to get to work. Public transport is known to be better for the environment than using private cars due to the shared carbon footprint shared amongst passengers.

Public transport journeys to the office range from 15 minutes to almost 2 hours. A full survey of frequency, transport modes and journey length is something we would like to complete for academic year 2020/21.

Cars and other personal vehicles are not used regularly by office staff.

A small number of office staff use only walking or cycling to get to work, and this is an option that live within a smaller radius to City, University of London. To encourage cycling the University continues to provide a Cycle to Work Scheme, which union members are able to take advantage of if practical.

This environmental impact has been ranked highly as the majority of office staff commute to the office 5 days a week throughout term time, and whilst the environmental impact of public transport is shared, the frequency is rated as very frequent.

## 2) Procurement:

Procurement is the purchasing of materials for sale or use in our outlets.

The Union purchases a variety of different items namely food, clothing and stationary. We aim to ensure the following when purchasing:

- To comply with City University Sustainable Purchasing Policy;
- Internal purchasers review what goods and materials they are consuming in order to reduce; or choose more environmentally friendly products;
- Recycled products and environmentally friendly materials are chosen where appropriate;
- Explore opportunities to recycle materials.

Stationary purchased for office use is typically using paper that is bleached and/or has not been recycled. As identified in 2018/19, bleaching paper to change it from its naturally occurring light brown to white has negative impacts on health, flora, fauna and water, whilst not using recycled paper causes more deforestation which in turn impacts biodiversity, health, ecosystems and air quality. This is recognised as an area of improvement however we are currently limited by the supplier we use not offering any suitable alternatives that contain higher recycled content paper.

To mitigate our stationary use, staff are encouraged to use scrap paper for simple notes, and to reduce the use of ink and post-it notes, the Union has utilised several online platforms for sharing information and project plans. As of this Academic year, all Union project plans are created and shared via our project management client, this has significantly reduced the stationary use in working collaboratively.

Procurement includes our purchasing of promotional material. This is a list of the main promotional items used this academic year:

- Badges
- Wooden spoons
- Lanyards
- Pens
- Sweets
- Tote bags
- Paper bags
- Recycled Coffee cups
- Stickers
- Handbooks

Some of these products have been made out of plastic, whether single use plastic or recycled, plastic is still a wasteful product and damaging for the environment. As stated as a requirement in the 2018/19 Environmental Impact Document, for this years 'Freshers promotional material' used less plastic than in previous years. For the promotional material in 2019/20, the union provided branded wooden spoons, lanyards and a multi-functional pen.

To mitigate our use of plastics in our promotional material, we have increased the amount of recycled and eco-friendly items in our Programme Rep 'Rewards and Recognition'. This year Programme Reps received:

- A recycled reusable coffee cup;
- A note book and pen made out of recycled paper;
- A Programme Rep Lanyard;
- A tote bag.

And

- All Programme Rep hoodies ordered were provided by our [ethical supplier](#).

Procurement is listed as number 2 on this list due to the medium severity of the procurement and the frequent nature, yet it is less frequent than the travel and transport used daily.

### 3) Student engagement:

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

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

- Badges
- Wooden spoons
- Lanyards
- Pens
- Sweets
- Tote bags
- Paper bags
- Recycled Coffee cups
- Stickers
- Handbooks

And

- Posters
- Leaflets
- Flyers

You can see the environmental statement from our external printing provider [here](#).

Our impact comes from the amount of posters and fliers printed for Welcome, 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.

We have been unable to do an analysis of our waste and purchasing of promotional material this year, this is something we will identify in our work next academic year.

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

Another method for reducing our material use in student engagement has been through taking steps to make our Student Members Meeting paperless. The Student Members Meeting is our AGM and happens in February. Students attending the meeting need to be able to access papers and motions that will be discussed and debated. This would mean that for all of the 30+ students in attendance they would need more than 50 pages of printed documents. To reduce this, we introduced QR codes, printed on 5 sheets of paper and placed around the room. This allowed us to cut down on the material used for this student engagement activity; whilst some papers were still provided, a significantly fewer number of sheets were used.

#### **4) Energy use:**

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.

Every member of Union staff uses a PC or a Laptop when in the office. This is where our energy usage comes from predominantly. Staff are typically working on their computers when they are not delivering an activity or training. This results in 15+ computers being used daily for multiple hours. To mitigate this, staff are encouraged to put their computers off at the end of the working day and to use the sleep function when not using the monitors.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation and closure, all staff in the Union are now working remotely, they are using work laptops and personal devices if necessary.

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.

#### **5) Waste:**

Waste is our 5<sup>th</sup> 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

Our office contains 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. To mitigate our food waste, remaining flapjack bars and bottles of water from our Study Well campaign were distributed to CitySport to ensure we did not have to unnecessarily dispose of food.

**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](#).