**Environmental Policy and Code of Practice**

**Introduction**

The environmental values of Sheffield Students' Union are made clear by our strategic goal “To be at the forefront of environmental best practice”.

To that end, we have developed our Environmental Policy and Code of Practice to spell out how we will take environmental action within the students’ union. The policy focuses on our broad aims. The code of practice develops our commitment into a number of clear policy statements, each of which are followed by the practical actions we will take to implement them. This code should inform our members of our environmental plans and the ways in which they can and will be involved in making the Union as sustainable as possible.

The areas covered by the Code of Practice are: 1. **Awareness & Engagement**, 2. **Energy Use**, 3. **Recycling and Waste**, 4. **Sustainable Transport**, 5. **Procurement** and 6. **Construction**. An “abridged version” with Key Aims for each topic (more suitable for posters etc) is included at the end.

**Environmental Policy**

This Students’ Union believes climate change is one of the greatest threats facing human civilization and disproportionately impacts upon the poorest and most marginalised groups

That this Students' Union will undertake to:-

- Ensure that it educates its members on the issue of climate change, and be responsible for motivating and mobilizing them.
- Endeavour to implement the Environmental code of Best Practice and ensure that it is updated and kept relevant.
- Raise awareness on environmental issues, and work towards achieving associated awards
- Call on the University to reduce its environmental footprint and to increase its environmental sustainability
- Proactively work with or lobby Sheffield City Council and regional agencies ensuring a constantly progressive agenda working towards achieving a sustainable city.
- Aspire to be a leader of environmental commitment through acting locally and to help demonstrate and inspire a national movement.
- Ensure relevant committees will be consulted to advise on environmental issues and to monitor the implementation of the environmental policy.
Environmental Code of Practice

Awareness and Engagement- We will encourage staff and student involvement in environmental issues through appropriate information, training and the provision of direct opportunities for them to take action by:

- Encouraging all staff to proactively identify ways in which their work can feed into/ adhere to this code of practice, to Green Impact Students’ Unions, and to Goal 8. Staff will be supported to do so by the Environmental Coordinator.
- Promoting environmental awareness through Intro Week events, Ultimate Fair and drop-in stalls at other appropriate events throughout the year.
- Liaising regularly with relevant student committees and societies. This work will include supporting an annual student-led EEK Week/ Green Week.
- Following up all environmental ideas from our members- students and staff- which are potentially workable. We shall resource, implement and give credit for the best ideas (Responsive and Innovative).
- Co-developing (alongside the University) an “environmental brand identity” to visually tie together all Union green initiatives. This will be used on all our environmental publicity, to include new fixed signage in each area.
- Informing all new staff of the code of practice, together with the implications that it has for their work, through their training and induction.
- Using all appropriate communication channels to promote campaigns and events. This will include bulletins and briefings for staff, flyers, posters, plasmas, email lists and social media for students. Materials will use the Union’s environmental brand identity.

Energy- We will promote energy conservation by efficient use, careful planning and design with due regard to improved energy utilisation and appropriate investment in energy efficient measures by:

- Working to reduce our on-site carbon emissions from energy use (Scopes 1 & 2) by at least 2-3% each year in the short term. We will monitor our progress and, if feasible, will converge with the HEFCE HE sector targets*.
- Publicising to members our energy performance compared to our targets
- Seeking the advice of the University Energy Manager on all future refurbishments and ensuring that energy-saving opportunities are prioritised.
- Investigating any opportunities which arise to generate renewable electricity on our site, by working with the University.
- Auditing to identify avoidable energy waste and projects eligible for SALIX funding. This to be done (informally or by University staff) annually.
- Encouraging students and staff to switch off lighting and other electrical equipment appropriately to minimise energy consumption. Each area will display a visible “Switch Off Responsibility Plan”.
- Limiting the carbon impact of our heating requirements by strictly monitoring the use of electric heaters, and by banning patio heaters.

* HEFCE targets are- 35% carbon reduction by 2017/18, 48% reduction by 2020/21.
Recycling and Waste- *We will minimise waste and ensure effective control is in place, which promotes recycling and provides responsible disposal by:*

- Setting percentage targets for recycling. We aim to pre-sort 50% of our waste for recycling by January 2012.
- Working with the University to ensure that University waste disposal/recycling arrangements take account of the needs of the Union.
- Prioritising waste reduction and reuse over recycling.
- Minimising waste by providing appropriate and convenient re-cycling facilities in working spaces and common areas.
- Trialling donating our food waste to local organisations running drop-ins.
- Offering facilities for members to recycle a wide variety of common items: mobile phones, batteries and - through Bring It Don’t Bin It- end of year waste such as clothes, shoes, books, DVDs, electrical goods.
- Ensuring that our own redundant IT equipment, electrical equipment, and, where possible, furniture is re-used or recycled.
- Requiring contractors to dispose of waste, in line with University policy.
- Monitoring, and seeking to reduce, paper consumption in photocopying, office printing, stationery and general printing expenditure.
- Implementing where possible the UoS [Guide to Best Practice Printing](#)

Sustainable transport- *We will encourage our members and visitors to use more sustainable forms of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport and car share, by:*

- Working together with the University’s Energy and Environment Team at key times, particularly Intro Week, to publicise the help available for members wanting to use sustainable transport
- Rewarding sustainable commutes, by walkers/ cyclists’ breakfasts etc
- Using our expenses policy to prevent staff from taking domestic flights (under 400 miles within Great Britain) on Union business
- Encouraging our visitors to travel to the Students’ Union by green means

Procurement- *We will ensure that our procurement practices are as sustainable as possible, by:*

- Buying only the most energy-efficient appliances (A-rated or above, for example), using the University’s SALIX funding where appropriate
- Annually increasing the proportion of our products- food, packaging and stationery- which are sustainable (recycled, organic etc), in all outlets

Construction- *Ensure that all our construction projects – both new build and refurbishments- are done to above average environmental standards, by:*

- Engaging consultants on the basis that they will consider the whole lifecycle of materials used and work to industry best practice
- Building long-lasting facilities that will not need frequent replacement
- Achieving BREEAM “Very Good” or “Excellent” for all applicable larger projects, or engaging with the University to ensure that they do so
**Abridged version- Key Aims for each topic:**

**Awareness and engagement –**  
Staff take ownership of environmental best practice in their area. Student involvement in achieving our environmental goals is maximised.

**Energy -**  
Students’ Union carbon emissions from energy use reduced annually by 2-3%

**Recycling and Waste -**  
Initial target that 50% of our waste is pre-sorted on site for recycling

**Sustainable Transport -**  
We will encourage and reward sustainable transport through our expenses policy and through regular awareness events

**Procurement -**  
Only A-rated appliances bought, the proportion of sustainable food, drink, packaging and stationery to be increased year on year by each outlet

**Construction –**  
We will be clear with consultants/ the University that we expect high environmental standards in all refurbs, including at least BREEAM “Very Good”, or “Excellent”, for applicable larger projects

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An interactive version of this Code of Practice is available on the Students Union Website at:  
http://www.shef.ac.uk/union/ethical-environmental/what-we-do/eco-code.php