

Students' Union's Environmental Impact Assessment, April 2019

The day-to-day activities and operations of Lancaster University Students' Union lead to inevitable environmental impact. As part of our Environmental Sustainability policy and annual strategies, the students' union is committed to ongoing monitoring of impact and the identification of positive and robust actions to be taken to eliminate or reduce impact.

Businesses and organisations are under increasing pressure, either through regulatory frameworks or wider public pressure to deal with the negative environmental externalities of human activity. The context are the twin-challenges posed to the global community by Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss. Most recent scientific knowledge (IPCC, 2018) identifies a twelve-year window in order to cut carbon emissions in order to limit human-induced global temperature rises to just 1.5 degrees Centigrade compared to pre-industrial levels. In parallel to this the WWF living planet report (2018) reported that in just 50 years, there has been a 60% decline in overall population size of vertebrate species.

The students' union recognises that the first step to reducing environmental impact is to identify the existing impacts of day-to-day business. This will assist with the prioritisation of our work to first eliminate or reduce activities of highest environmental impact. Over time, this assessment will assist with revising our policies and embedding more efficient and effective practices into our business.

In 2018-19, the students' union embarked on an Organisational Change: Environmental Sustainability project. This has initially involved evidence gathering on our significant environmental impacts and aspects via an environmental audit of the various areas of activity/operation. This ongoing project is allowing the students' union to highlight our most significant impacts, as well as produce action plans to reduce them. Below is a summary of the students' union's most significant environmental impacts by area of activity/operation. The assessment is structured such as to prominently highlight the activities with relative high impact by comparison to those with medium or low(er) impact.

Area of Activity/Operation		Environmental Impact	Impact Level
Travel	Staff journeys to work (walking, cycling, cars, buses, trains)	Energy consumption, particulate, exhaust gas & CO ₂ emissions	High
	Student local journeys to/from campus	Energy consumption, particulate, exhaust gas & CO ₂ emissions	High
	National/international business travel by staff and students	Energy consumption, particulate, exhaust gas & CO ₂ emissions	Very High

SU Organisational Change: Environmental Sustainability

Procurement and Retail	Procurement/consumption of supplies & commodities	Resource use, manufacturing & logistics impact, waste reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High
	Food and other retail products	Resource use, manufacturing & logistics impact, waste reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High
Students' Union housing company (LUSU Living)	Energy consumption	Supply, distribution, CO ₂ emissions	Medium
	Student travel	Energy consumption, particulate, exhaust gas & CO ₂ emissions	High
	Procurement/consumption of supplies & commodities	Resource use, manufacturing & logistics impact, waste reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High
	Waste & recycling	Reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High
SU Night club (Sugarhouse)	Procurement/consumption of supplies & commodities	Resource use, manufacturing & logistics impact, waste reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High
	Energy consumption	Supply, distribution, CO ₂ emissions	Medium
	Noise	Natural environment & local community	Medium
	Waste & recycling	Reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High
Students' Union Office space (Bowland Main)	Use of electrical equipment; IT, air conditioning, lights etc.	Resource use, manufacturing & logistics impact, waste reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions. Hazardous waste generation & legal compliance	Medium-High
	Waste & recycling	Reprocessing, recycling or disposal impacts, CO ₂ emissions	High