

## Sustainability Survey Report

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<b>Paper for</b>	SLT
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<b>Relevant Aims</b>	Values; We will take actions to improve our environmental impact, we will take the required actions to become financially sustainable and we will ensure our stakeholder relationships are developed and maintained.
<b>Relevant Risks</b>	NA
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	There are no equality/diversity implications concerning this paper.
<b>Considered by</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>Summary</b>	This paper summaries the outcomes and actions of the Sustainability survey.
<b>Action for meeting</b>	To Note.
<b>Appendices</b>	None

## 1. Summary

The sustainability skills survey was a general survey sent out via the newsletter to all students on November 12, 2019 by the University of Westminster Students' Union.

In total there were 55 responses to the survey. 50 left personal details in order to be entered into the prize draw, which included 2 chilly bottles, 10 sets of reusable straws and cleaners, as well as a £50 Lush gift card. All prizes have been distributed by the end of January, 2020.

Please note: the survey was sent out at the same time as another survey by the Student Voice team, as well as the externally managed Student Life Pulse, which may have impacted the number of respondents. It is also very likely that those who responded to this survey have very strong feelings one way or the other about environmental issues.

## 2. Overall Importance of Sustainability

In the first section students were asked to rate the below statements based on their importance to them. All statements were focused around different areas of Sustainability, from personal choices, collective action, political voting, and community change. These questions are intended to select what actions to take as an institution to best engage students in a Sustainability Campaign.

The overall rating of the following issues was by far 'Very Important' to respondents, with nearly 66% of all responses being 'Very Important'. Only one response received 'Not Important' ratings from 8 students, that being 'Fighting Climate Change Through Activism'. This can be interpreted as a politically significant stance, given the climate protests which have taken place in London in recent years.

Overall, the top positive category for respondents is 'Being a Conscious Consumer'.

<b>Being a conscious consumer</b>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Very important	37	67%
Somewhat important	18	33%
<b>Fighting Climate Change through activism</b>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Very important	28	51%
Somewhat important	18	33%
N/A	1	2%
Not important	8	15%
<b>Seeing political action on Climate Change</b>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Very important	41	75%
Somewhat important	13	24%
N/A	1	2%

Seeing the University and Union take climate action	Count	%
Very important	40	73%
Somewhat important	12	22%
N/A	1	2%
(blank)	2	4%

In the second section, respondents are asked to select the 'Top 3' UN Sustainable Development Goals that they would like the University to focus on.

## THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development



Sustainable Development Goals	Count	%
Climate Action	24	44%
Clean Water and Sanitation	18	33%
Responsible Consumption and Production	16	29%
Gender Equality	15	27%
Zero Hunger	14	25%
Good Health and Wellbeing	14	25%
Affordable and Clean Energy	13	24%
Reduced Inequalities	12	22%
Sustainable Cities and Communities	12	22%
Quality Education	11	20%
No Poverty	10	18%
Life on Land	6	11%
Life Below Water	5	9%
Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	5	9%
Decent Work and Economic Growth	2	4%
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	2	4%
Partnerships for the Goals	0	0%

When collating all choices made, there is a clear preference for Goals 13, 6, and 12.

### 3. Issues to focus on

The next section asks two questions, firstly ‘What is the most pressing issue the Union should be focusing on?’ and ‘What Changes would you like to see the Union make to become more Sustainable?’, in order to identify current and future changes that students would like us to make.

Overall, comments fall in line with the ratings in the first sections. Most respondents referenced a clearly identifiable SDG within their comments, with the vast majority discussing the use of plastic on campus, the general threat of global climate change, as well as wanting to learn more about making Sustainable choices.

	<b>CODES</b>	<b>COUNT</b>	<b>%</b>
	▼ <b>total</b>	▼ <b>55</b>	▼ <b>100%</b> ▼
<i>code 1</i>	plastic/waste	18	33%
<i>code 2</i>	climate change/global warming	12	22%
<i>code 4</i>	(promoting a) sustainable lifestyle	10	18%
<i>code 3</i>	recycling	7	13%
<i>code 7</i>	other	7	13%
<i>code 5</i>	pollution	5	9%
<i>code 8</i>	energy	3	5%
<i>code 6</i>	water	2	4%

There are however some notable comments from students;

*“Sustainable where possible in Hideaway/Canteen [...] selling sustainable straws/ cups/ bottles to encourage students and profit goes to organisations in which help the environment. e.g.-save the turtles”.*

*“I think a major part of environmental sustainability in coming years will be getting people, individuals to shift their own cultures and lifestyles toward more sustainable practices. [...] the student union has a lot of power in the kind of culture they create on campus, and it will come down to making a lot of small decisions to ensure that sustainability is promoted (and normalised) throughout.”*

*“[The Union should focus on] Environmental racism and the destruction of human rights that corporations/the military push through a stronghold on resources in developing countries. how much environmental change is actually doable.”*

There are also a few examples of feedback to the University estates and catering, including;

*“More vegan options (which are more ecological and healthier) in the canteen (at least one vegan meal a day which is not a thing in Harrow yet). 50% on food in canteen during the last 20 minutes. Or something like that, in order to fight food waste.”*

*“decreasing the use of plastic on campus.”*

#### 4. Recommendations

Based on the following research, the recommendation to the Union is to take the following actions:

##### **a. Work with the University to reduce plastic waste and increase recycling**

- i. Evaluate the current recycling initiatives available and their efficiency across campuses, and determine if students are adequately supplied with opportunities to recycle as well as the knowledge of how to recycle effectively.
- ii. Waste Management data from Bywaters suggests that the estates team has fully resourced the University and that most campuses are recycling effectively, if this is the case there should be a focus on running a campaign to raise awareness about what can be recycled and which bins to look for. This should especially be focused on coffee cups and plastic mugs as this came up several times unprompted.

##### **b. Run a campaign about how to make sustainable choices**

- i. Individual choice is a common theme in the feedback and students are clear that they want to be given the opportunity to make sustainable choices. Any products in the SU shop that are sustainable should be highlighted and comms could be run detailing how to make products last longer.
- ii. Whether the products are currently available or not, they should be clearly introduced and highlighted through marketing. Research should be done into how to make sustainable choices and presented to students with full context.

##### **c. Inform students about ethical consumption**

- i. Consistently allowing students to make responsible choices is a core theme for many respondents. Utilise the outlets available on campus as examples and highlight any changes made as a Union to be more ethical.
- ii. Student groups could also be utilised, especially in the topic of wastage and food as many students alluded to wanting more vegan choices, food or otherwise. Students with expertise can be used as a way to engage other students in a campaign.

##### **d. Work with the catering team to reduce food waste**

- i. It is important to have unity across campus when it comes to tackling larger issues such as food waste. Consistency is key when meeting with catering team, though any changes that can be made to Union outlets should be done.
- ii. Highlighting current food wastage measures on social media is a good way to raise awareness of the issue and put pressure on University colleagues. Again, student groups who specialise in nutrition can be utilised to engage with the community.