



Sustainable Food Policy

Estates / May 2023

Sustainable food policy

Introduction

The Open University strives to provide students, staff and visitors with a healthy, high quality, value for money sustainable food service. With a significant proportion of greenhouse gases being attributed to the food system/chain, along with the University's target to reach net zero greenhouse emissions no later than 2050, sustainability is at the heart of catering's ethos.

Targets and objectives

A multi-faceted approach has been adopted to ensure the sustainable use of the planet's resources, key focus areas are:

- Promote ethical sourcing and supply chain
- Sustainable catering operations
- Source local and seasonal products where possible
- Increase sustainable / plant-based dishes
- Healthy and nutritious food options
- Limit food waste to 3% by 2024
- Eliminate avoidable single use plastic items by 2030
- Comply with all relevant food handling and waste legislation

Scope

The policy covers all retail outlets and hospitality services across Walton Hall campus.

Sustainable food plan

The OU has built a long-term relationship with catering contractor whose environmental commitments are aligned with the University's Sustainability targets.

Purchasing

The catering contract will:

- Buy local and in season food where possible to reduce food miles and support local communities
- Higher animal welfare: Red Tractor Accredited
- Eggs: all eggs are free range
- Milk: all fresh milk comes from British dairy farms.
- Fish: sustainably sourced fish, we exclude fish species identified as most at risk by MCS Marine Conservation Society. Tuna: we only use pole caught tuna which ensures no other species are harmed
- We only sell Fair Trade triple certified coffee
- Ensure our contract caterer signs up to our Modern Slavery policy
- Pay the catering team as a minimum at the Real Living Wage rates

Sustainable catering operations

- Energy efficiency - The main catering facility (Hub) operates using energy efficient induction cooking, ventilation, LED lighting systems and has roof top solar panels to reduce energy demand
- Water: water refill stations are available at all catering outlets to promote reusable water bottles
- Reduce Food Waste: limit food waste to 3%. Effective production planning including portion control to ensure minimal waste is produced during food production process.
- Discount is given to fast-track sales of short life perishable items, with unsold food at the end of the day being offered free to staff and students to prevent items being treated as waste.
- Menu planning: Our menus provide customers with choice, and we continue to promote sustainable plant-based dishes by featuring them first on the menus and a dedicated vegan hot food counter.
- Environmentally friendly cleaning products: increase eco-friendly cleaning products to 60% by 2024, currently at 45%.

- Staff training: Catering team receives 'Green Flash' training, contractor's bespoke sustainability training.
- Key members of the catering team will have completed Carbon Literacy training by the end of 2023.
- Carbon Labelling of meals to be introduced in 2024.

Waste and recycling

- Energy from Waste: Unavoidable waste & other pantry kitchen waste is sent to an anaerobic digestion facility for processing into bioenergy.
- Oil recycling: Waste oil is recycled into biodiesel.
- Specialist bins for recycling coffee cups, coffee pods, crisp packets, batteries.

Hospitality

- 50% of our hospitality menus are plant / vegetarian-based options.
- Promotion of bottled tap water and provision of glasses

Eliminate single use plastic items

- Drinking straws have been withdrawn from counters and available by request. We only use paper straws.
- Introduction of wooden cutlery
- Use of ceramic cups at the Hub and cafes
- Promote reusable takeaway cups
- Engage stakeholders to identify the most sustainable reusable system which will allow customers to take food away, and the caterer to operate effectively.
- Research most sustainable bottled / canned drink materials

Health & nutrition

- The calorific value of foods is available throughout the outlets at all point-of-sale areas.
- Potatoes and vegetables are cooked without the addition of salt

Communications

Update website to ensure that consumers are well informed of food provenance and best sustainable food practices.

Linked policies

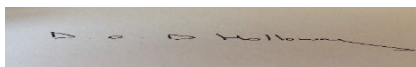
Policies, strategies and plans linked to the Waste and Recycling policy include:

- Waste and Resource Management Policy and Plan
- Net Zero Carbon 2030 Policy and Plan
- Environmental Sustainability policy
- Biodiversity policy
- Sustainable construction policy

Monitoring and review

The Sustainable Food Policy is owned by OU Estates. The policy will be reviewed annually, and targets reported to the OU Sustainability Steering committee.

Signed By

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Next review date: May 2024