HKUST Sustainable Office Standards & Guidelines

STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND FACULTY TO IMPROVE OFFICE SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE

Effective Date: May 2016
Reviewed Date: August 2023

Developed by the Sustainable Operations Executive Committee
GREEN.UST.HK | GREEN@UST.HK
HKUST Sustainable Office Standards & Guidelines

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) is a leader in the Hong Kong community and strives to be a leader in sustainability as well. HKUST’s commitment to this idea is articulated in the following sustainability mission statement:

HKUST will become a global leader in sustainability education by transforming the Clear Water Bay campus into a carbon-neutral, zero waste, and net-positive environmental impact living laboratory for experiential learning, demonstrating cutting-edge research and sustainable operations within a vibrant and engaged community.

Based on the premise that many small actions lead to big changes, this document provide a clear set of Standards and Guidelines for improving the sustainable operations offices on campus.

How to Use these Standards & Guidelines

These Sustainable Office Standards and Guidelines are intended to provide simple, yet meaningful rules and direction for individuals and teams at HKUST to improve the sustainable performance of their spheres of influence on campus.

These standards and guidelines were developed and approved by the Sustainable Operations Executive Committee (ExCo) with the understanding that they are flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions and constructive feedback. Please provide comments and suggestions to green@ust.hk so the guidelines can improve and grow with our HKUST community.
HKUST Sustainable Office Standards & Guidelines

Contents

1. The Sustainability Network Representative (SNR)
2. Sustainability-Driven Human Capital
3. Sustainable Use of Materials
4. Sustainable Communications and Outreach
5. Sustainable Work Spaces
6. Sustainable Meetings and Events
7. Sustainable Student Support

1. The Sustainability Network Representative (SNR)

The Sustainability Network Representative (SNR) is the central point of contact on sustainability issues for the office.

All offices are required to appoint one person to assume the role of Sustainability Network Representative.

The responsibilities of the SNR are:

- To become familiar with the details of the HKUST Sustainable Office Guidelines and to present this information to office colleagues.
- To inform new members of the office/department, including faculty, staff and students, of the guidelines and how they are implemented within the office.
- To advance any interesting or relevant information to their colleagues and office-mates, and can serve as a resource to their colleagues if there are questions about HKUST sustainability goals, objectives, or actions.
- To attend quarterly meetings and contribute advice and feedback to other members.

The responsibility for coordinating the SNRs, facilitating meetings, and answering questions is the Sustainability Unit. green@ust.hk
2. **Sustainability-Driven Human Capital**

People are HKUST’s most important resource. Making sure that all members of the HKUST community are healthy, safe, and nurturing work environment is a key to supporting sustainability-minded faculty, staff, and students who can perform at a high level.

The following actions are encouraged to develop our human resources in ways that reinforce sustainability goals.

- Include in the University’s statement of values the importance the University attaches to sustainable actions within the workplace.
- Include sustainability modules within the new employee orientation events.
- Consider including sustainability practices for performance evaluations so that employees recognize that reducing environmental impacts and conserving natural resources is an element of the job function.
- Encourage staff to join the HKUST Green Team. Volunteers for the Green Team meet monthly over lunchtime (lunch is included!) to discuss areas of interest on campus and how this network of Team members can share ideas and improve campus conditions.

Any questions relating to developing sustainability-driven human capital can be directed to the Human Resources Office c/o Ms Vivian Lam, Human Resources Manager (e-mail: hrvivian@ust.hk)

3. **Sustainable Sourcing and Use of Materials**

The sourcing and use of materials on campus – and how we treat them afterwards – is a key area where sustainable offices can make a difference. The following standards and guidelines are intended to prioritize the minimization of wastes through specification in contracts, through reuse of materials before purchasing new ones, or other means.

All offices are required to procure 100% recycled or FSC certified paper for office printing. Offices are prohibited from the use of plastic, single-use bottled beverages at meetings and events. Since 2017, HKUST has maintained a ban on the sale and distribution of plastic disposable one-time use bottled water on campus.

Offices are also encouraged to adopt the following actions:

- Reduce printing as much as possible by utilizing electronic resources for filing, forms, communications, and other documentation (see “Print Tips” at green.ust.hk for more ideas).
- Ensure that all business cards are printed with recycled content, FSC certified and using soy-based ink
printing.

- Purchase appliances with Energy Efficiency Label Grade One, and water appliances that achieve “Water Sense” conservation levels.
- Choose and environmentally friendly office supplies such as refillable pens, biodegradable garbage bags, ethically sourced eco-friendly souvenirs. Whenever appropriate, buy in bulk to reduce packaging and minimize the use of plastic.
- Before buying large items (like new furniture) contact the Purchasing Office to check our green purchasing policies.

Any questions relating to the sustainable use of materials can be directed to Mr. Alan Ng in the Purchasing Office at pualanng@ust.hk

4. Sustainable Communications and Outreach

Communicating with colleagues, peers, and students can often place undue burdens on our consumption and waste streams. The goal of these standards and guidelines is to facilitate less impact from communications strategies in terms of printing, publishing, displays, handouts, and inter-office communications.

Offices are encouraged to adopt the following actions:

- If printing large banners, utilize the water-resistant heavy paper option from PTC as cheaper and recyclable alternative to vinyl banners.
- Consult the Sustainable Printing guide from PTC for tips and suggestions on how to utilize digital printing, reduce wasteful over-runs, and manage supplies in the most sustainable ways.
- Publish newsletter and promotional materials in e-format to minimize hard copies.
- Send and use e-copies of minutes and agendas for meetings, and utilize document sharing software to reduce the need for printed copies for editing and notes.
- Eliminate the practice of printing emails.
- Remove all inkjet printers, as they are more expensive, consume more energy, and require more ink cartridges over time than laser alternatives.

Any questions relating to the sustainable strategies for communications and outreach can be directed to Mr. Kenny Fong in the Publishing Technology Center at ptkenny@ust.hk
5. **Sustainable Work Spaces**

The office workspace is where most of us spent the majority of our time, so it is essential that we set up these spaces in ways that contribute to our ability to use the spaces in the most efficient ways possible. Offices are encouraged to adopt the following actions:

- Establish convenient recycling collection locations with proper signage in the office and separate recyclable (paper, plastic, metal and glass) from general trash. Check periodically to ensure that diverted items are going into the appropriate containers.
- Coordinate with CMO to target areas that do not require cooling during off-hours so that they can be scheduled as such, and share feedback on the temperature control.
- Set up strategies for reducing light levels when natural lighting is available, such as using task lighting, window shading, and placement of desks in ways that maximize the utilization of natural light.
- Switch off air conditioning after office hour or when staff leaves the room.
- Ensure that all non-essential devices are shut off or in standby mode at night and during weekends and holidays (copiers, printers, computers and other appliances).
- Use power strips with individual switches to switch off appliances when not in use.
- Install a pipe filtration water refilling system to eliminate the use of bottled water.
- Enable sleep mode on all copiers and printers after 5 minutes or more of inactivity; set all computers and screens to go into sleep mode after 10 minutes of being inactive or less. Avoid using screen savers, as they use much more energy than standby mode.

**Any questions relating to creating sustainable workspaces can be directed to Mr Jerome Hon at the Facilities Management Office at eojerome@ust.hk or 2358 6431**

6. **Sustainable Meetings & Events**

Conducting university business often requires face-to-face meetings, working meals, content-specific events, and even celebratory receptions. The way we facilitate these meetings and events can create good outcomes in terms of our impacts on waste management.

**Offices are prohibited from the use of plastic, single-use bottled beverages at meetings and events. Since 2017, HKUST has maintained a ban on the sale and distribution of plastic disposable one-time use bottled water on campus.**

For any events that involve food, please consult the Green Catering Guide to ensure that food waste is minimized and the appropriate facilities units are engaged to separate and remove recyclable items.

- When you order food, ask for reusable cutlery, mugs and tableware to reduce disposable items. If
disposables are necessary, please request biodegradable materials and ensure that CMO is able to collect the food waste and materials for appropriate recycling.

- Develop a plan for what to do with any left-over food, including the process for donating the food to charities like Food Angel or Feeding Hong Kong.
- When promoting the event, utilize low-impact strategies (such as those in the Sustainable Communications and Outreach section), and consider bags and souvenirs that are reusable and practical to minimize waste.
- Avoid bottled water. Provide tap water or use bulk water dispensers with reusable cups and mugs.

Any questions relating to sustainable meetings and events can be directed to Mr Stanley Sit at the Campus Services Office at kstanley@ust.hk

7. Sustainable Student Support

At HKUST, students are our partners, our part-time workers, our Interns, our “eyes and ears” on the campus, and even our entertainment. It is critical that we make sure students are surrounded by positive examples of sustainable actions, and that they have the ability to participate. All offices that come into regular contact with students are encouraged to adopt the following actions:

- Include sustainability education in the orientation of new students.
- Encourage students to only print out course materials if needed.
- Educate students and societies about organizing sustainable events.
- Ask students to switch off the lights when they leave the classroom or dormitory.
- Engage students on energy saving, water conservation, reduce waste and support recycling on campus.
- Encourage students to bring and refill their own water bottle, and coffee mugs.

Any questions relating to sustainable student support can be directed to the Student Affairs Office at saray@ust.hk, tel: 23586658, Mr Raymond Tang, Manager, SAO.