

Sustainable Events Guidelines (updated September 2025)

The Corporate and Alumni Events Team at the University of Sussex supports the conservation of energy and considers carefully the environmental impact of all of its activities. We recognise the role we play in contributing to a sustainable future for all. Our Sustainable Events guidelines set out to articulate our commitment to environmental and socially sustainable practices in all areas of our event design and management systems.

1. Event publicity and bookings

- We will use double-sided printing for any necessary promotional or event materials ensure the paper has a high recycled content.
- We will make use of websites and email and social media to promote events where possible, using electronic registration where possible.

2. Venues

- Venues will be selected for access to public transport which reduces the need for delegates to travel by car.
- We will ask potential venues for their environmental policy – including waste management and recycling, energy efficiency and sustainable supplier's policies.
- We will choose naturally lit meeting/catering/exhibition areas if possible.
- We will book venues for the least amount of space/number of rooms and the least amount of time needed – minimising unnecessary lighting, heating, air conditioning and avoiding waste.
- We will prioritise venues offering in-house catering and technical equipment /support (e.g., staging, AV) that can reduce the need for equipment transportation.

3. Food and Drink

- We will actively discourage the use of bottled water and plastics at events.
- We will provide tap water and encourage guests to bring their own water bottles.
- Where this is not possible, we will provide the minimum amount of plastic water bottles possible and encourage reuse. Jugs of water will be available as an alternative.
- We will encourage staff working at events to use their own water bottles and reusable coffee cups.
- We will plan catering requirements carefully to avoid unnecessary waste.
- We will ensure that all dietary requirements are catered for but where appropriate will provide a predominately vegetarian menu.
- We will prioritise selecting meals and catering using seasonal, local produce – buying local food to avoid unnecessary food miles and keeping money in the local economy.
- If serving fish, we will choose a fish from sustainable sources.
- We will aim, where possible, to serve that tea, coffee and juice that is Fair Trade and will minimise the use of individually packaged food and drink items.
- We will provide reusable crockery, glassware and cutlery wherever possible, reducing waste before, during and after the event.
- If the venue subcontracts the catering, we will check the caterer's environmental policy, credentials and initiatives.

4. Energy conservation

- We will encourage the turning off of computers, printers, photocopiers, lights, heating, fans and other equipment when rooms are unoccupied.
- We will use portable generic display materials and signage where possible rather than creating displays for just one event.
- We will facilitate the distribution of copies of all documents / presentations by email after the event. Any necessary handouts should be formatted so as to minimise paper.
- We will provide only re-usable name badges and collect them in at the end events.

- We will distribute pens and paper only as needed.
- We will consider video conferencing and or recording the event for wider access via the internet/intranet where possible and appropriate.
- The event name and date will feature on holding slides rather than producing printed graphics at the event. We will make use of plasmas, projected or electronic signage where possible to direct delegates.
- We will use white boards rather than flipchart paper in workshop presentations.
- We will ensure that single-use giveaway items are not selected and will look to produce sustainable, reusable or recyclable giveaways. Our recommendation to clients, however, would be not to produce giveaways at all.

5. Recycling

- The team actively encourages the recycling of paper, cardboard, glass, plastics and other material where possible. Recycling bins will be available at each event requiring disposal.
- The events team will require any exhibitors at events to ensure their materials are produced on recycled paper, printed double-sided and their giveaways are useful and where possible made from sustainable materials.
- Event name badges will be collected in after each event and recycled and reused.

6. Travel

- The events team will use public transport to travel to events whenever possible. If public transport is not an option, car sharing will be encouraged.
- Delegates will be strongly encouraged to travel to the venue by public transport and will be provided with information to make this easy.
- The team will not take UK internal flights and will only travel abroad if deemed essential to the successful running of an event.

5. Evaluation and updates

- The sustainable events policy will be discussed annually at the Events team away day and continual improvement is built into each event performance review and future targets.