**Sustainability Policy**

**Statement and vision**

Worcester Students’ Union (WSU) recognises the importance of sustainability in fostering a healthier and more equitable future for our planet and its inhabitants. As an organisation representing the student body, we are committed to minimising our environmental footprint, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship among our members.

Our vision is to become a leader in sustainability within the HEI and SU communities, inspiring our members to embrace environmentally responsible behaviours and initiatives both within our organisation and beyond.

**Scope and implementation**

WSU’s Sustainability Policy encompasses all activities, operations, and initiatives undertaken by the organisation. It applies to all aspects of our organisation's functioning, including but not limited to operational practices, events and activities, communication and education, collaborations and partnerships and compliance and accountability.

The student voice plays a crucial role in planning for sustainability activities at the grassroots level as it embodies the perspectives, passions, and priorities of those directly impacted by these initiatives. Students are not only stakeholders in their campus community but also inheritors of the environmental and social challenges facing our planet. Engaging students in the planning process ensures that sustainability activities are relevant, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the student body. To achieve our sustainability objectives, WSU will:

* Establish a Sustainability Committee (led by the SU President and attended by members of core staff) responsible for developing and implementing sustainability initiatives.
* Integrate sustainability considerations into decision-making processes and organisational practices.
* Regularly monitor and evaluate our progress towards sustainability goals.
* Communicate our sustainability efforts and achievements to our members through various channels, including social media, newsletters, and events.
* Actively engage with our members to solicit feedback, ideas, and support for sustainability initiatives.

**Guidance documents**

WSU’s Sustainability Policy is the overarching document which sets out the organisation’s approach to sustainable development, however, WSU realises the need for more specific guidance for its members and staff to satisfy the principles of this document.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Version 1 (v.1)** | **V.2** | **Review date**  |
| **Responsible freebie giveaways** | Policy 2021-22\_001 passed by Student Council 25/10/2021 | Passed as a guidance document by Student Council on 25/10/2021[HYPERLINK](https://www.worcsu.com/pageassets/yourvoice/studentcouncil/policies/2021-22_001-Responsible-Freebies.pdf) | September 2027 |
| **Single-use plastic**  | Policy 2018-19\_006 passed by Student Council 31/01/19 | Passed as a guidance document by Student Council on 10/02/02022[HYPERLINK](https://www.worcsu.com/pageassets/yourvoice/studentcouncil/policies/2018-19_006-Single-Use-Plastic.pdf) | September 2027 |
| **Domestic air travel**  | Policy 2018-19\_009Passed by Student council 26/03/2019 | Passed as a guidance document by Student Council on 07/04/2022[HYPERLINK](https://www.worcsu.com/pageassets/yourvoice/studentcouncil/policies/2018-19_009-Domestic-Air-Travel-Policy-Motion.pdf) | September 2027 |

**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Accord**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are 17 global objectives addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges for a sustainable and equitable future. They encompass areas like poverty alleviation, health, education, gender equality, climate action, and biodiversity conservation, each with specific targets. The SDGs provide a framework for collective action towards a prosperous world. The SDGs Accord is a voluntary commitment by higher education institutions to promote SDGs through education, research, and operations. WSU signed the accord during the academic year 2018/19 to demonstrate commitment to concrete actions, collaboration, and progress reporting, showcasing sustainability leadership.

**Roles and responsibilities**

The Sustainability Lead, typically an elected Sabbatical Officer or SU President, is tasked with leading sustainability efforts among students. They serve as a bridge between students, the university, and external sustainability groups, championing eco-friendly policies and practices on campus. Responsibilities include raising awareness, coordinating events, integrating green practices into union operations, and voicing student sustainability issues in decision-making. Their goal is to inspire student involvement in sustainability, cultivate environmental consciousness, and advance towards a greener campus.

**Sustainability committee**

WSU has a sustainability committee; a dedicated group that is responsible for overseeing and advancing sustainability initiatives and practices. The committee typically consists of the WSU sustainability lead and a representative from the following groups: the senior leadership team, marketing and communication, human resources, help and advice, and a member of staff involved in societies, student groups or events. The primary role of the sustainability committee is to develop, implement, and monitor sustainability strategies and programs that align with the organisation's goals, values, and priorities.

**Reporting**

WSU communicates transparently with its members and stakeholders by reporting on progress towards sustainability targets through committees, website updates, social media posts and all student emails. This helps to build accountability, trust, and engagement among the student body and broader community. WSU will work with the University of Worcester to provide evidence of WSU’s progress towards the SDGs through the SDG Accord’s annual reporting tool, and this will also be shared with the Trustee board.

**Compliance and Review**

This policy will be formally reviewed every 2 years but will be regularly reviewed and updated by the sustainability committee as needed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all members of Worcester Students’ Union.

Approved by Executive Committee: 27/09/2024

Approved by Student Council: 22/10/2024

Date of Adoption: 22/10/2024

Signed: Ruttuja Mane (SU elected president)

Person responsible for review: Director of Representation and Membership Services