

Embedding Sustainability in Research at UCEM

Guidance

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1. Overview

This guidance document is to help staff who are conducting research at UCEM. This guide is not about researching sustainability, it is about ensuring that we embed sustainability into our day-to-day practices to ensure that we practice what we are preaching and are not inadvertently being unsustainable, as this could lead to criticisms of greenwashing and therefore undermine UCEM's ethos.

This guidance will be updated as needed, especially as new information or industry practices come to light.

2. Travel

For travel bookings and preferred transport options, please refer to the main university policy.

It is expected that there will likely be some international or even domestic travel involved for research which will inevitably mean flying or driving a long distance. Researchers are urged to plan their research in such a way that minimises the number of journeys needed. This can be done by:

- Planning to hold meetings online where possible.
- Planning for meetings in a similar location to take place at similar times to minimise travel.
- Pinpointing a location that minimises travel if there are several attendees.

3. Corporate Gifts

It is often customary when visiting other universities, especially overseas, to take a gift. Research gifts are limited to particular activities (such as signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)); please consult with the Research Office for guidance. The Research Office is currently planning to purchase some sustainable branded gifts. If, however, it is required that another gift is needed, it is urged that beyond ensuring the gift is culturally suitable that it is also sustainable. Locally made biscuits/confectionary would be an example.

4. Research Events hosted by UCEM

4.1 Handouts

Do you really need to print handouts? Are you sure?

If you really do, please print as few as possible. Staff are asked not to add in covers, folders, bindings or to print anything that is not of vital importance for the day or to support an accessibility need.

4.2 Delegate Packs

Your delegates probably do not need another tote bag or another reusable cup or bottle. There may be the occasional delegate that may need a pen or note pad, therefore, consider having a very small number of these available rather than routinely putting them on the tables. Consider advising delegates why there are limited items and/or packs – most delegates would understand and appreciate this once they understand our stance on sustainability.

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4.3 Catering

It is important to ensure that all aspects of a visitors experience at Horizons or at another venue hosted by us is as sustainable as possible. One easy way to reduce that carbon footprint of an event is via the catering. By offering vegetarian or plant-based food this can drastically reduce the emissions.

The catering should also not involve single-use plastic, therefore it is important that catering is purchased either through our preferred supplier, or, if off-site, that this is requested at the quote stage. A recent event at Horizons had an entirely vegetarian buffet and the feedback was extremely positive, especially as the sandwich fillings were different.

4.4 Recording meetings

It isn't just handouts that are unsustainable. Creating and storing data also uses resources. It is easy to get into the habit of recording sessions without thinking who will watch them back or checking if past recordings have been watched. Be mindful if something needs recording and for how long it needs to be retained.

4.5 Data Storage

For many research projects, data will need to be stored for several years to comply with funding policies, UCEM policy and UK guidelines. Researchers are asked to be mindful, especially where date isn't sensitive, to ensure that they are not retaining duplicate copies, especially in terms of draft papers and presentations.

4.6 Publicity Material and dissemination

Most projects have dissemination built in. Historically this has often meant creating hard copy reports, many of which would end up un university storage for years before eventually going to be recycled. Please consider how results will be disseminated and aim to produce none or limited number of hard copies.

Signed by:



Professor Angela Lee

Chair of the Research Committee

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