

Sustainable Food Standard

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Sustainable Food Standard

1. Introduction

The University of Leeds recognises and accepts its responsibility to seek to achieve high standards of sustainability across all of its activities, including its catering provisions.

The primary purpose of this Standard is to define the requirements and principles for managing and improving sustainable catering at the University.

We define this as:

- Recognising the importance of our conferencing and catering provisions to our students, staff and local community, and its potential to be used as a resource for teaching, research and engagement.
- Ensuring that food provision always has a positive impact on the environment and the health and wellbeing of University staff and students and society.

This Standard supports the Sustainability Strategy and associated action plans created for all catering sites that are wholly owned and managed by the University of Leeds.

2. Scope

The scope of this Standard includes all catering sites and conferencing facilities that are wholly owned and managed by the University of Leeds.

3. Requirements

The following section is divided into general requirements, which should be followed by anyone whose activity is likely to impact on University catering provisions, and specific requirements which are linked to areas of responsibility.

General requirements:

- University staff and suppliers appointed to provide catering or food provisions across University owned and managed catering sites must follow the principles and requirements of this Standard.
- The impact of any change(s) in existing catering infrastructure or food provision will be assessed by the Catering team, with reporting on significant changes affecting sustainability aspects to the Head of Retail Catering and the Sustainability Service, to decide on required mitigation measures.

The **Head of Retail Catering** will ensure that:

- If significant changes to catering provision are proposed, the Sustainability Service will be contacted to support the assessment of impact of the change(s) and identification of any mitigation that is required.
- The sustainability and health and well-being impacts of new menus are considered, and negative impacts mitigated where possible.
- Catering staff and suppliers are made aware of their responsibilities within this Standard.
- The principles and requirements of this Standard are followed within areas of their responsibility.
- The training needs of catering staff are assessed.
- They endeavour to share any best practices across the city, across the Higher Education sector and with all other relevant bodies.

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University suppliers will ensure that:

- They work with the University to ensure that sustainability is a key consideration throughout their supply chain.
- They supply the University with sustainability data, as and when requested, in a timely manner.

Commercial and Campus Support Services Sustainability Steering Group will:

- Ensure that the Steering Group's objectives are developed in accordance with this Standard.
- Support the implementation and monitoring of the Standard and of other related policies.

The **Sustainability Service** will:

- Provide advice and support to Catering Managers, Suppliers and Commercial and Campus Support Services to ensure the requirements of the Standard are met.
- Assist with assessing training needs and provide training where appropriate, helping to identify suitable external training providers and conferences.
- Investigate new and innovative methods of food provision through direct links with undergraduate, postgraduate and academic research, and encourage incorporation into operational activity.
- Review the Sustainable Food Standard on an annual basis, considering up to date research.

Conferencing staff will:

- Consider and mitigate negative impacts on sustainability of conferencing activity.
- Offer sustainable options as standard.
- Assess individual requests for conferencing facilities, additional to those provided as standard, and offer appropriate sustainable options.

4. Principles

The following principles should be used in the management and improvement of University food provision:

Provenance

- Products will be sourced locally and seasonally where possible.
- All of our menus will be reviewed, when any changes are proposed, against seasonal, geographical and environmental criteria. We will also look to exclude fish species identified as most at risk by the Marine Conservation Society, where possible.
- We will work with our suppliers to ensure that the fish we serve comes from sustainably managed sources, where possible.
- We will serve a diverse species of fish to reduce pressure on sensitive stocks.

Climate Change Mitigation

- We will raise awareness of the environmental impact of eating meat through the availability of a meat free counter at the Refectory.
- Palm oil, where present, should be responsibly sourced where more sustainable alternatives are not available.

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Animal Welfare

- We will work with our suppliers to improve animal welfare standards throughout the supply chain.
- We will avoid serving fine food items that are associated with highly controversial animal welfare issues such as foie gras, caviar, veal and exotic meats wherever possible.
- Free-range eggs will be used in all freshly made food in our outlets where possible, and fresh eggs should be preferred over liquid egg, where possible, in all other food.

Improving Health and Wellbeing

There is a recognised link between health and food quality.

- We will promote health and well-being through our menu selection, offering a choice of at least two hot vegetables daily as well as the option of undressed salads. We will always have a selection of fresh fruit readily available, and provide free drinking water and a range of alternatives to high sugar, fizzy drinks. Unhealthy fats and oils will be minimised.
- We will endeavour to respond to dietary requirements, in consultation with individuals, and will offer a range of daily vegan and vegetarian choices in all of our catering outlets, including options that are gluten free and nut free.
- We will work with suppliers to ensure our baked goods do not feature unnecessary ingredients and additives, contain more than 5% wholemeal content, and contain only minimal levels of salt. Natural sugar alternatives such as local honey and agave nectar should be used in place of refined sugars.

Minimising Waste

- The principles and requirements of the University's Reuse, Recycling and Waste Standard will be followed.

Fairtrade and Organic Certification

- We will purchase and sell ethically sourced products, including coffee, in all of our catering outlets that meet at least one of the following requirements: fairtrade, locally sourced, biodynamically or organically produced. Compliance with labour codes for specific products, where in place, should also occur (i.e. WIETA labour code for South African wines).

Accreditation

- To regularly review and maintain certification to relevant accreditation schemes such as Fairtrade, Food for the Brain and Sustainable Restaurant Association accreditation.

Knowledge and Collaboration

- The University is in a unique position to incorporate new research and teaching with the improvement of its catering provision and the implementation of this Standard. All stakeholders should actively look at developing and strengthening this collaboration, particularly through the Living Lab programme, and to share best practices within both the University and externally.
- Updates to the Standard will be communicated through appropriate channels.

Continual Improvement

- In order to become a University with an exceptional reputation for sustainable food and catering, all

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stakeholders should work towards a year on year improvement to the requirements of this Standard.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for implementing and complying with this Standard are defined in the requirements of the Standard. Overall ownership will be co-owned by Commercial and Campus Support Services and the Sustainability Service. Audits will take place on a bi-annual basis.

The following Heads of Service within the Facilities Directorate will continue to collaborate in developing this Standard, and have the following responsibilities within the Standard:

- The **Director of Sustainability Services** and the **Director of Commercial and Campus Support Services** will act on behalf of the University to ensure that the principles of this Standard are embedded into University activity and operations, and that the requirements are met.
- The **Head of Retail Catering** will have responsibility for the day to day implementation of this Standard.

6. Review and Reporting

This Standard shall be periodically audited and reviewed to determine its accuracy and relevance, with reporting to the Sustainability Steering Group and the Commercial and Campus Support Services Steering Group. A review of practices will be carried out as appropriate.

In all other circumstances, the Standard shall be reviewed no later than one year since the previous review.

7. Further Guidance and Procedures

Further guidance on sustainable food management at the University can be found in related site-specific action plans, found on the EQMS system.

For further information please contact sustainability@leeds.ac.uk

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