

Your Students' Union

University of Birmingham
guild of students

ETHICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & PROCUREMENT POLICY

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Policy Statement

The Guild of Students recognises that it has global responsibilities with regards to ethical and environmental issues, on a local, national and global scale. In campaigning and fighting for the rights of Birmingham students the Guild should not directly or indirectly worsen the rights or living standards of other groups in the global community.

We regard all UK and EU environmental laws and regulations as setting the minimum standards for environmental good practice. We aim to be achieving higher than the minimum standard however, and accept that we must always be continuously striving to improve our environmental performance.

We regard the standards of the Fair Trade Foundation, the International Labour Organisation, the Ethical Trade Initiative, NUS and NUSSL as setting minimum standards of working conditions for the production and manufacture of goods. The Guild will always strive, to the best of its ability, to do business with companies that comply with the above standards, and to avoid companies who do not adhere to Ethical working practices. We will ensure standards are met through using effective suitable monitoring bodies, decided upon by the Guild, e.g. the Workers' Rights Consortium.

This policy will not succeed without the co-operation and support of all officers, staff and members.

The Guild of Students will strive to ensure that any officers, staff or members who are unclear as to ethical and environmental best practice will have the support of the organisation in ensuring that information, assistance and training will be available where necessary.

The Guild shall encourage, and, where possible, to support students to live in a way that is environmentally sustainable and so benefits themselves, their community and the environment.

Any further ethical or environmental targets, directives, requests, or policies issued by the organisation separately from this policy should also be considered as covered by this policy, and therefore as key duties of any Guild officer or member of staff.

The Guild should promote a best practise approach of 'Reduce, Re-use and Recycle' towards sustainable procurement and consumption, in that order.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Ethical and Environmental Committee, the Guild Policy Development Group, and an annual update will be given to the Trustee Board.

This policy should be updated in line with any relevant changes to the Guild's Beliefs and Commitments, and vice versa.

Responsibilities for the implementation

The members of the Ethical and Environmental Committee have overall responsibility for implementation.

Departmental managers shall be responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to within their department. If they wish, they may choose to appoint a member of their staff to take responsibility for the implementation of the policy. The manager or member of staff must have adequate time and training to fulfil this role. Should they be unclear as to how to fulfil their obligations, they should consult the Ethical and Environmental Committee.

Individual staff and officers must ensure that their personal actions are not detrimental to the aims of this policy.

1.0 - Ethical and Environmental Concerns

- 1.1 - The ethical and environmental impact of any decision must be a primary documented concern of the officer or member of staff making that decision.
- 1.2 - The Guild of Students must be committed to educating and training their employees, officers, volunteers, student groups, and members on ethical and environmental issues and the effect of their activities; to raise awareness and encourage participation from the whole organisation.
- 1.3 - The Guild of Students shall abide by all NUS boycotts, subject to student approval through 'Your Ideas'.
- 1.4 - Any ethical or environmental decision made shall be publicised on the Guild website and/or other social media channels as appropriate, in order for members to be educated as to the reasons for such a decision.
- 1.5 - No action should be undertaken that will be severely detrimental to the environment.
- 1.6 - There must be a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement, and the environment must be strongly considered in all future building developments.
- 1.7 - If any construction or maintenance work needs to be done in the Guild building, efforts should be made to ensure that the company used adheres to good environmental practices.
- 1.8 - The Guild shall request that University Estates ensures any building materials used in Guild building projects purchased shall be from sustainable sources. This especially includes only buying wood from managed or sustainable sources.
- 1.9 - The environmental impact of any activities, events, or trips organised and or undertaken by any officers, staff, or student groups and their committees must be taken into consideration, and the impact of the event made as small as possible. This includes travel, resources and equipment needed, as well as the activity itself.

- 1.10 - The environmental impact of any company or organisation with whom the Guild of Students or any of its student groups has dealings with, must be taken into consideration before the Guild or a student group (for student groups sponsorship and invitation of companies) enters into any agreement. (This includes the environmental impact of the Guild's dealings with it, its day-to-day activities, its environmental policy, the nature of its business, and how it uses its business to better the environment.)
- 1.11 - The environmental impact of the university and its campus shall be one of the issues which the Guild works collaboratively with the university on.
- 1.12 - The Guild shall work to reduce the environmental impact of organisations it is affiliated to,

2.0 - Energy Usage and Efficiency

- 2.1 - As an organisation, the Guild shall always seek to effectively manage its carbon footprint
- 2.2 - To consider the environmental impact of supplies during their usage. This should include 'life-time' costs such as energy consumption.
- 2.3 The Guild must ensure that all feasible measures are taken to reduce energy use within the building. (These measures might include temperature controls, lighting sensors and water saving devices in toilets).
- 2.4 As individuals, all Guild officers, staff, members and student groups shall seek to minimise the use of energy. (This includes, for example, turning off lights and appliances when they are not in use, and ensuring that heating is used only as much as is necessary).
- 2.5 All electrical equipment procured shall be the most energy efficient models available, (either A or A++).
- 2.6 The Guild will try to minimise the use of supplementary heating. To achieve this, steps must be taken when possible to eliminate heat loss and thus maximise the effectiveness of the gas-powered central heating system. If supplementary heating is absolutely required, heaters must be oil filled, and operate on 2kW or less.
- 2.7 An energy audit shall be done at least every five years by an accredited external organisation.

3.0 - Waste Reduction and Recycling

- 3.1 The Guild must strive to minimise the amount of waste it produces. All products should be reused if possible. If that is not possible, they should be recycled. Guild Departments and Student groups should always seek to re-use resources and equipment they no longer need. (This could include selling or donating it to another group.) Ultimately, the aim of everyone concerned must be to minimise the amount of waste being produced which has to be sent to landfill or incinerated.

- 3.2 To promote the purchase of supplies that can be recycled after Guild use, or disposed of with minimal damage to the environment.
- 3.3 The organisation shall facilitate the recycling of products by creating/maintaining contracts with external recycling companies and by ensuring that recycling facilities are always readily available in work places and in communal areas. These must be clearly labelled and promoted.
- 3.4 If possible, before disposal, all old furniture or electrical equipment should be reused or recycled as appropriate, with the aim of reducing energy consumption and wastage.
- 3.5 The organisation shall also strive to minimise the amount of paper used in publicity, communications and office use, and will commit to using 100% recycled paper.
- 3.6 The organisation must strive to provide adequate storage facilities for any resources used by the organisation (including student groups), to maximise the ability to reuse these resources.
- 3.7 The Guild will ensure adequate student group storage to encourage the reuse of general activity stock, props, sets, and costumes.
- 3.8 The Guild should not be used as the launching ground for deliberate release of balloons, nor should it finance or support such activities for fear of damaging the atmosphere or wildlife, and so as to reduce the amount of unnecessary pollution we cause.
- 3.9 The Guild should discourage the buying of balloons.

4.0 – Transport

- 4.1 The Guild of Students believes that climate change is an urgent threat, and we as a student union have a responsibility to act in a manner that reflects this, and that members, officers and staff should make efforts towards minimizing emissions arising from transportation.
- 4.2 Due to these considerations, the Guild resolves that no staff, officers or student groups may travel by air to destinations in **Western Europe (defined as: The UK (including Northern Ireland), Belgium, the Republic of Ireland (Eire), France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany):**



- 4.3 While the Guild aims for as few trips by air as possible to be made by staff, officers and student groups, journeys by coach train or other means may not be feasible. The Guild notes that student groups in particular often use trips abroad to expand the horizons of their members and offer opportunities gain life-enhancing skills that would otherwise be out of reach.

Restricting the ability of a student group, or officers/staff members to fly to a Western European country where no other options are feasible would significantly hamper the ability of the Guild to organise such a trips and/or participate in useful networking abroad.

In exceptional circumstances, such as a lack of other transport options (train or coach etc.) or excessively high cost implications, student groups may submit details of their plans **To FTOG (Full-Time Officer Group)** to be

considered for permission to travel by air to Western Europe for a one-off trip/event. Such reasons could include, but not be limited to – excessive additional costs accrued by travelling by means other than flight, excessive time required to travel by other means, accessibility needs, lack of availability of required transport.

- 4.4 Members of the Officer team wishing to fly to Western Europe for Guild business must gain written permission (via an email resolution or ordinary meeting) from **GOG (Guild Officer Group)**
- 4.5 Staff Members must gain written permission from their **relevant director or the Chief Executive** before arranging trips to Western Europe by air. Before arranging air travel to Western Europe, the Chief Executive should gain permission from the President.
- 4.6 The Guild shall actively promote cycling, the use of public transport and lift-sharing to all staff, officers and members for local sustainable transportation & work with the university to improve facilities for cycle parking on campus.

5.0 Marketing and Promotions

- 5.1 The Guild shall not promote any advertising from Shell in Line with Guild Council Policy (passed January 2007), or any other company specialising in the extraction of fossil fuels, such as BP.
- 5.2 The Guild shall not promote any companies that are involved with manufacturing armaments or munitions, such as BAE systems, Jaguar Land Rover, etc..
- 5.3 The Guild shall not promote any advertising from tobacco companies or companies providing products related to tobacco.
- 5.4 The Guild shall not promote any advertising from pharmaceutical companies associated with unethical practices.
- 5.5 The Guild shall always prioritise promotions which are considered to be the most ethical or environmental.
- 5.6 The Guild shall always look into the ethical and environmental standing of any company before a promotion is accepted. Its working practices, the nature of its business, the supply chain of its products, and its majority shareholder, should be taken into account where the information is available.

6.0 Sustainable and Ethical Procurement

- 6.1 Sustainable procurement is defined as 'the use of procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives that deliver benefits to the organisation, society and the economy whilst minimising damage caused to the environment'.
- 6.2 The Guild of Students will exclude the use of environmentally damaging supplies where a viable alternative is available.
- 6.3 The Guild of Students will consider the balance between economic, social and environmental factors when making purchasing decisions.
- 6.4 The Guild of Students will promote the purchase of supplies created from sustainable, renewable or recycled resources.
- 6.5 The Guild and its societies shall always endeavour to source any produce, resources or equipment as locally as possible, and should consider the impact of production and transportation when making purchasing decisions.
- 6.6 The Guild of Students will encourage the purchase of supplies delivered with minimal packaging, or at least packaging made from recycled and/or recyclable materials.
- 6.7 The Guild of Students will consider the sustainability credentials of suppliers when entering into purchasing and tender agreements and ensure suppliers are made aware of the Guild's Ethical, Environmental and Procurement Policy, where appropriate.
- 6.8 The Guild of Students will only purchase furniture from sustainable or managed sources.
- 6.9 The Guild of Students will, when replacing any old equipment or furniture, consider whether that piece of equipment or furniture is still needed before repurchasing.
- 6.10 The Guild of Students shall not use cleaning products which have been tested on animals, or which are not BUAV (British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection) approved.
- 6.11 The Guild of Students will not purchase or use bleach for any cleaning tasks.
- 6.12 The Guild have responsibility for ensuring the sustainability of cleaning products used.
- 6.13 The Guild shall always stock Fair Trade tea, coffee and hot chocolate for internal use and in its Venues.
- 6.14 The Guild shall always seek to, where feasible, increase its Fair Trade range in its Venues.
- 6.15 The Guild shall not use any company that has been condemned by the Workers' Rights Consortium for any of its apparel.
- 6.16 All Officer and staff hoodies and t-shirts shall be Fair Trade.

- 6.17 The Guild shall always look into the ethical and environmental standing of any company before selling its products. The working practices, the nature of its business, the supply chain, and its majority shareholder, should be taken into account where the information is available.
- 6.18 The Guild will not use products it knows are made from sweat-shop labour.
- 6.19 The Guild will ensure that IT equipment is ordered only as necessary and use energy efficient equipment wherever possible to minimise environmental impact.
- 6.20 The Guild will monitor the circulation and distribution of Redbrick to ensure that the amount of copies printed do not exceed demand, and to further encourage the development of online services.

7.0 Equality & Diversity

- 7.1 The Guild of Students will not work with any companies which are known, through their practices, to perpetuate racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia or ableism.

8.0 Ethical Investments

- 8.1 The Guild, when tendering for new business will include, along with financial considerations, an ethical and environmental consideration list. The list will take account of human rights issues, animal rights issues, environmental impacts, embedded greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and toxic waste, habitat and resource destruction, workers rights, abusive supply chain policy, and irresponsible marketing.
- 8.2 The Guild, tendering for new business, will positively screen companies, by endeavouring to invest in organisations supporting the Fair-trade Foundation, Rainforest Alliance, Marine Stewardship Council, Fair-trade Labelling Organisation and the Forest Stewardship Council.