



## Sustainable Food & Catering Policy

### 1. Vision

The University of East London recognises the impact our food and catering services have on the wider climate, both through the direct impact of the services' provision and through the indirect impact on the behaviours of our staff, students, and visitors to our campuses. This policy seeks to set out a framework and vision for sustainable food and catering services across the University.

The Sustainable Food & Catering Policy forms part of the University's approach to tackling sustainability, as defined by our Sustainability Policy. The University is committed to reducing its carbon emissions in line with a Net Zero target of 2030, and aims to become the most sustainable university in London.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all catering outlets across the University estate, including those provided by external contractors, and to our hospitality services for the provision of catering for both internal outlets and for events and conferences. This policy will be reflected in any catering tenders and contracts, where appropriate.

This policy is supplemental to the University's Sustainable Procurement Policy. The procurement of food and catering services is expected to adhere to both of these policies.

### 3. Objectives

The following objectives are set out for this policy:

- To ensure food and drink is sourced and provided in a sustainable manner, meeting the highest environmental, social, and economic standards, and to work with our supply chain and other partners to deliver this
- To raise awareness on both the environmental and health benefits of plant-based diets through transparent product information, education, and campaigns
- To reduce, as far as possible, the carbon footprint of our food and catering services through a variety of interventions
- To deliver a culturally inclusive, healthy, affordable, and sustainable food offering, with locally-sourced and seasonal produce prioritised

## 4. Policy Commitments

The following commitments are to be adopted by the University.

### 4.1 Meat and dairy products

- Ensure that no ruminant meat is sold (e.g. beef and lamb), and reduce the consumption of other meat by providing and promoting more plant-based meals, so that they consistently form a larger proportion of the offering
- Reduce the consumption of dairy products
- Ensure that animal products are from certified higher welfare standards, including the RSPCA Assured welfare standards
- Ensure that all raw meat is fully traceable to the farm it came from, and where possible traceable to the individual animal from the farm
- Where possible and appropriate, use local produce and/or suppliers, and actively include and promote use of these products in menus
- Ensure that milk alternatives to cow's milk is offered at the same price, or at a discount, in all relevant outlets
- Use free range eggs as standard; and, when using other egg products (e.g. frozen whole eggs, egg whites, mayonnaise etc.), use free range where available
- Commit to working within the Five Freedoms framework set out by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, supplemented by Red Tractor assured standards where appropriate, ensuring that all meat and dairy products are Red Tractor Assured as a minimum

### 4.2 Fish

- Limit the consumption of fish
- Eliminate the use of fish from the Marine Conservation Society's "Fish to Avoid" list, and, where possible, aim to only serve fish with a 'Best Choices' rating from the MCS Good Fish Guide, based on information at the time of purchase
- Ensure that all whole fish and fish products are sourced from Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fisheries and suppliers
- Reduce the consumption of tinned tuna by increasing prices and reducing stock levels, and ensure it is pole or line caught as well as MSC certified.
- Investigate various species of tinned fish and the capture method, aiming to purchase more sustainable alternatives, where possible
- Use diverse species of white fish to reduce pressure on sensitive stocks
- Consider other options for increasing the sustainability of fish, including opting for pole and line caught fish, promoting consumption outside of the 'big five' (cod, salmon, tuna, haddock, prawns), and reducing or eliminating the consumption of carnivorous aquaculture species such as shrimp, prawns and salmon in favour of lower-impact aquaculture species such as tilapia

### 4.3 Fairly traded products

- Ensure that all of our products are fairly traded throughout their supply chains

- Ensure that all tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate (confectionary, cocoa powder, drinking chocolate etc.) and bananas served are certified Fairtrade (subject to supply), and aim to increase these commitments as more products become available

#### 4.4 Fruit and vegetables

- Aim to develop menus which make use of seasonal fruit and vegetables, where practically possible
- Source fruit and vegetables from local suppliers, where possible
- Ensure that fruit and vegetables are Red Tractor Assured, or an equivalent scheme, or otherwise fully traceable
- Where possible, procure fruit and vegetables from low impact production systems
- Consider the feasibility of growing fruit and vegetables on the University estate

#### 4.5 Sustainably sourced products containing palm oil and soya

- Where products containing palm oil are sourced, ensure that they are certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
- Commit to investigating and sourcing the most sustainable oil options available, and to reducing the overall consumption of oil
- Ensure that soya products sourced are certified by the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) or ProTerra

#### 4.6 Food Waste

- Aim to achieve a significant reduction in waste in all catering operations
- Monitor food waste records in order to assess portion size and therefore implement portion control sizes to avoid unnecessary waste
- Recycle used cooking oil for turning into biofuel

#### 4.7 Resource use

- Eliminate the use of non-recyclable plastics and reduce the use of all single use disposable items
- Encourage our suppliers to go plastic-free
- Implement a charge for single-use disposable items in catering outlets, and a corresponding discount for bring-your-own reusable items, with the raised funds to be earmarked for sustainability-focused projects
- Ensure hot and cold reusable items are available for sale in all catering outlets to further encourage the reduction of single-use disposable items
- Explore options to eliminate the use of single-use plastic bottles, including through refillable alternatives
- Where possible, use china plates and bowls and reusable cutlery in place of disposable options
- Ensure eco-friendly cleaners and detergents are used to reduce environmental impact

#### 4.8 Energy

- Ensure any new or replacement cooking/catering equipment provides energy efficiencies
- Conduct energy audits to identify ways to reduce consumption within catering outlets
- Ensure catering staff are provided with energy saving training

#### 4.9 Water

- Expand the provision of chilled water fountains across the University to reduce the demand for bottled water
- Work to reduce the amount of water used in kitchens
- Eliminate the use of single-use bottled water within the hospitality service, using instead either tap water in jugs or purified still and sparkling water bottled using reusable branded glass bottles

#### 4.10 Communication, engagement, and practice

- Increase awareness of this Policy throughout the University community
- Participate in University-wide campaigns and other events by promoting healthy and sustainable food, e.g. plant-based options through Meat Free Monday, Veganuary, and other events
- Ensure that low-carbon, plant-based, or otherwise sustainable food products are highlighted in catering outlets, e.g. placed first within menus above less sustainable choices, highlighted within menus as a sustainable choice, and through appropriate labelling in retail provisions
- Ensure, as a minimum, 50% of a catering outlet's or hospitality offering is vegan or vegetarian
- Include a requirement for adherence to this Policy in all new and retendered projects
- Provide catering staff with training about sustainable food and the objectives and reasons for the Policy
- Implement and maintain the sustainable food framework 'Food Made Good'
- Work with the Sustainability Research Institute, Royal Docks Centre for Sustainability, and other relevant bodies to carry out research linked to food sustainability, for improving monitoring, performance and impacts over time

### 5. Monitoring

Two core targets are to be set for this policy:

- To reduce carbon emissions from food year on year, scaled to the size of the University
- To increase the proportion of plant-based meals within food and catering provisions year on year

The following key performance indicators are also defined:

- Carbon emissions per kilo of food procured (kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/kg food)
- Carbon emissions from food per £ revenue
- Carbon emissions from food per transaction
- Kilograms of meat and dairy purchased as a proportion of total food purchased
- Proportion of plant-based meals served
- Kilograms of food waste generated
- Number of single use disposables used

This is in addition to any relevant targets for individual commitments within this policy.

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