

Sustainable Food Policy

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Department:	Estates and Property Services		
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Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.

1. Scope

- 1.1. The hospitality experience team will apply this food policy to all catering outlets and food served within the hospitality offering, and vending machines.
- 1.2. The policy will be fully reflected in catering tenders and contracts. Catering-specific sustainability questions be included, beyond the standard sustainability questions to ensure adherence to this policy.
- 1.3. The Head of Hospitality Experience is responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring that it is regularly updated to reflect evolving recommendations and best practices. The Head of Hospitality Experience will support the Head Chef to ensure adherence to the food offering elements of the policy, with the facilities manager to ensure adherence to the waste elements, the Head of Procurement for the supply chain elements, and the suppliers and the sustainability team throughout.

2. Introduction & Purpose

- 2.1. SOAS is dedicated to advancing sustainability, social justice, and global responsibility across its operations. As an institution focused on addressing pressing global challenges, SOAS acknowledges the profound impact of food systems on climate change, biodiversity, and community well-being. This policy outlines our commitment to reducing the environmental footprint of campus food, promoting ethical and inclusive sourcing, and supporting the university's goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.
- 2.2. The policy is to establish a campus food system that reflects our values of equity, diversity, and environmental stewardship, contributing to a net-zero future while fostering resilient and ethical food practices.

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3. Objectives of Policy

- 3.1. Reduce Environmental Impact: Minimize the carbon, water, and land-use footprint of food served on campus, aligning with SOAS's net-zero target by 2040.
- 3.2. Promote Ethical Sourcing: Prioritize fair trade, local, and sustainably produced food that supports producers and aligns with global justice principles.
- 3.3. Enhance Inclusivity: Provide diverse, affordable, and culturally sensitive food options for the SOAS community.
- 3.4. Minimise Waste: Reduce food waste to landfill to a minimum and offer to the SOAS community any surplus by setting up a community fridge and adopt circular economy practices when reasonably practicable.
- 3.5. Educate and Engage: Empower students, staff, and visitors to make informed, sustainable food choices.

4. Sustainable Procurement

- 4.1. Source food from local suppliers, as close as possible to our sites, reducing transport emissions and supporting regional resilience as part of the net-zero strategy.
- 4.2. Source suppliers through suitably compliant framework. When conducting catering-related tenders and contracts, ensure the inclusion of catering-specific sustainability questions, alongside standard sustainability questions. These should focus on provenance of the food.
- 4.3. Provide plant-based menu options, reflecting the lower carbon footprint of vegetarian and vegan diets.
- 4.4. Ensure all goods imported (e.g., coffee, tea, cocoa) are certified by Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, or equivalent standards, as much as practicable.
- 4.5. Only use sustainably farmed products from managed forest resources.
- 4.6. Any new kitchen equipment should be more efficient than the last, by energy star or equivalent standards.
- 4.7. Procure and use eco-friendly cleaning products.
- 4.8. Secure confirmation from suppliers that none of the products used are genetically modified or contain genetically modified ingredients.
- 4.9. Ensure, whenever possible, that all the food and drink offering are free from artificial trans fats or the following additives:

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- Colourings - E102 tartrazine E104 quinoline yellow E107 yellow 2G E110 sunset yellow E120 cochineal, carminic acid, carmines E122 carmoisine E123 amaranth E124 ponceau 4R E129 allura red E131 patent blue V E132 indigo carmine E133 brilliant blue FCF E151 black PN
- Flavourings/enhancers - E621 monosodium glutamate E635 sodium 5 – ribonucleotide
- Sweeteners - E950 acesulfame K E951 aspartame E954 sodium saccharin
- Preservatives - E211 sodium benzoate
- Trans fats Partially hydrogenated fats

5. Menu Design and Accessibility

- 5.1. Provide affordable, nutritious meals with clear labelling for cultural dietary needs (e.g., halal, kosher, gluten-free).
- 5.2. Launch “Low-Carbon Days” (e.g., Meat-Free Mondays) across all dining facilities
- 5.3. Where possible subsidize some plant-based options so there is price parity with meat-based options, making sustainable choices accessible to all.

6. Waste Management

- 6.1. Track, monitor and analyse food waste to adjust portion sizes as appropriate. Consistently work towards reducing waste, and segregating waste appropriately. Ensure that catering staff receive waste training annually.
- 6.2. Continually reduce plastic waste and single-use items. When possible, provide crockery and reusable cutlery. Where disposable items are the only appropriate option, use compostable options. Ensure that any single-use packaging purchased is recyclable.
- 6.3. Offer reductions on food with short expiry dates and work to minimise food waste through different initiatives.
- 6.4. Achieve zero food waste to landfill by 2030 through composting, anaerobic digestion, and donations of edible surplus to local charities.
- 6.5. Install food waste bins in all dining areas during 2025 with staff and student training to ensure effective use.
- 6.6. Reduce food waste by 50% by 2035 through portion control, and regular waste audits.

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7. Community Engagement and Education

- 7.1. Host annual events (e.g. Sustainable Food Week) to educate the SOAS community on food's role in achieving net-zero and social equity.
- 7.2. Partner with student groups to co-design initiatives and gather feedback on dining experiences.

8. Monitoring and Accountability

- 8.1. Publish a yearly sustainability report tracking food-related emissions, sourcing progress, and waste metrics, aligning with the net-zero roadmap.
- 8.2. Report and assess sustainability through attaining the Food for Life award, working towards the goal of achieving the Bronze award by 2026, Silver award by 2028, and Gold by 2030.

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