

# Queen Mary Students' Union Environmental Policy

Approved by Sustainability Board March 2021

## The Students' Union Notes:

- The climate and ecological emergency is a real and present threat that is affecting people right now.
- Not everyone is equally affected by the climate and ecological emergency. The communities on the front lines of the climate crisis, who are already feeling its catastrophic effects in the Global South, have contributed least to causing the planetary crises.
- The science on climate change is clear and was set out by the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming (October 2018).
- Earth Overshoot Day (when humanity has used more of the Earth's resources than can be renewed in one year) continues to move earlier each year (with the exception of 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic). In 1970 it was 29th December and in 2019 it was 29th July.
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provide a blueprint for environmental and social sustainability to be achieved by 2030.
- Queen Mary University has established an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan in response to current and emerging environmental trends.
- The Students' Union declared a Climate Emergency through its Student Council in November 2019.

## The Students' Union Believes:

- Sustainability should be a central part of the Students' Union values.
- The Students' Union has a responsibility to current and future students to protect their health, wellbeing, and future life prospects by tackling the climate emergency.
- Continuous development and improvements can and should be made to the Students' Union's Strategic Plan to ensure it is doing everything it can to reduce carbon emissions and improve its sustainable practices.
- Queen Mary University's Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2020-23 sets 2050 as a target for achieving net-zero carbon emissions. We believe this should and can be achieved sooner.
- This Environmental Policy document should be reviewed and adapted regularly, with changes being passed through the Students' Union Sustainability Board.
- Meeting global sustainability goals should not disadvantage our university community and the wider area of Tower Hamlets.

## The Students' Union Resolves:

- To create an ambitious climate emergency action plan in response to our declaration of a climate emergency. We will remain accountable to students at all stages of this process and the plan will be renewed annually.
- To commit to continual improvements of its environmental practices, remaining transparent in its actions, and being held accountable to students.
- To lobby the university to continually improve their practices, including being more ambitious in their Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2020-23.

- To provide a platform for students to engage in sustainability and offer educational experiences for students to learn about the climate emergency.
- To tackle the following issues:

### **Transport**

The Student's Union will encourage low or non-carbon transport to and from the University for staff and students, and student group trips.

### **Emissions**

We will significantly reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we emit, committing to net-zero carbon as soon as possible.

### **Waste**

We will significantly reduce waste throughout the Students' Union, including but not limited to food, water, energy, rubbish, and plastic. The Students' Union will promote a zero-waste culture and employ the waste hierarchy of refuse, reduce, reuse, repair, recycle. We will reduce the provision and sale of single-use plastic products in Students' Union outlets and provide the facilities for composting.

### **Ethical Procurement & Investment**

The Students' Union will make sustainable and ethical purchasing and investment choices within its outlets and activities including banking, energy, telecoms, pensions, food, clothing, service provision and partnerships as well lobbying the University to do the same.

### **Biodiversity**

We will consistently engage in projects that allow us to respect and promote biodiversity and ecosystems, including rewilding all campuses as much as possible. In addition, we will offer opportunities for students to get involved with biodiversity and food growing projects.

### **Global Justice**

The Students' Union will promote issues of global justice as a result of the planetary crises and educate students on the disproportional impact these have on people globally. We will engage with students in order to help protect the rights of both humans and animals.

### **Outreach and Collaboration**

We will promote and uphold the Students' Union's environmental values along with other organisations, communities and the University to engage and develop wider understanding and awareness. This can be achieved through activities such as training, lobbying, campaigning, and volunteering.