

HKUST Sustainable Catering Policy

HKUST strives to become a global leader in sustainability education by transforming the Clear Water Bay campus into a living laboratory for experiential learning, demonstrating cutting-edge research and sustainable operations within a vibrant and engaged community.

HKUST's goal is to create food and dining facilities and services that provide clean, healthy, environmentally responsible food and surroundings, reflecting our campus sustainability vision and mission. To this end, HKUST has adopted the following **Sustainable Catering Policy**, which applies equally to HKUST managed caterers and caterers who supply services for one-time events on campus.

Requirements reflecting HKUST's emphasis on healthy and sustainable lifestyles

- Caterers must produce a sustainable food practices plan, explaining their general approach – as well as specific steps and/or commitments – to reducing environmental impacts and operating in a sustainable manner. This plan will be posted and accessible by the HKUST community.
- Caterers must utilize the WWF-Hong Kong Sustainable Seafood Guide (<https://seafood-guide.wwf.org.hk/en/seafood-guide>) and not offer any species that are listed in the “Avoid” category.
- Catering outlets must utilize Environmentally Preferable Cleaning Chemicals (EPCC) that are consistent with campus standards and must comply with the criteria established by the Hong Kong Green Label Scheme, or be certified by one of the following green labeling organizations: Ecologo; Green Seal; US EPA Design for the Environment; or China Environmental Label.

Strongly encouraged :

- All campus community farms and gardens are required to abide by sustainability principles, including the use of organic practices. Caterers are encouraged to participate in this farms, or explore other opportunities to grow organic food resources on campus to demonstrate sustainable food systems to our students and staff.
- Caterers should participate in efforts to highlight sustainable catering through promotional materials and education campaigns.

Requirements reflecting HKUST's emphasis on waste and energy reduction

- Caterers must comply with all measures, introduced by the university to ensure that the least amount of food waste enters the landfill, including separating and recycling food waste (both post-consumed food waste and pre-treatment/kitchen food waste) into compost/animal feed, providing incentives and promotion on less rice/portion menus as well as donating leftover usable food to NGOs for redistribution to underserved populations.
- Caterers must undertake measures to reduce the use of plastic, particularly one-time use disposable plastic. Efforts should include eliminating the free provision of plastic items (e.g., straws, utensils) and adopting measures to reduce the overall amount of plastic packaging. Where plastic is consumed, additional measure should be in place to ensure that it is separated, collected, and recycled to reduce the overall landfill load.

- It is HKUST policy that water may not be sold on campus in plastic containers less than one liter. Caterers should provide clean, filtered water in ways that do not necessitate disposable plastic water bottles.
- During one-time events, caterers must arrange required facilities to separate and recycle materials and provide food and drinks in reusable (washable) containers.
- Caterers must undertake all measures necessary to minimize energy and water consumption through selecting best-in-class efficient equipment, as well as strategies for efficient food preparation, storage and cooking methods. Caterers must ensure that equipment (including fans, fan coil units, refrigeration coils, and exhausts, etc.) remain at optimal levels.

Strongly encouraged:

- Caterers should undertake measures to reduce waste from eat-in and take-away orders by adopting reusable dining wares for dine-in, providing biodegradable ware or reusable containers for takeaway orders, encouraging customers to bring their own reusable wares through incentives and charges for disposables, and ensuring that any disposables used can be collected and recycled or composted.
- Caterers should empower canteen staff to deliver sustainable catering practices through regular training, building responsibility, effective communications and feedback on improvement.

Requirements reflecting HKUST's emphasis on student learning experiences

- Caterers must recognize that this campus is a “learning laboratory,” whereby students gain experience and understanding from observation, research, and on-site experimentation. Therefore, based on mutual agreement, caterers are expected to meet with students or faculty members, share data and experience, and arrange on-site visits where reasonable, to support course and learning objectives.
- Caterers shall provide and will cooperate with the University’s food waste recycling program (e.g., “Less Rice”), be encouraged to use fair trade or organic ingredients in their products where the use of these foods does not add to the environmental cost of transportation. Caterers should advertise this as indication of the support of grander sustainability goals, as well as complete energy and water data.

This policy will be enforced by the HKUST Campus Service Office, which has daily responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this Policy by all Caterers. Performance shall be reviewed and reported to the Sustainable Operations Executive Committee.

This policy may be updated or amended by HKUST from time to time and all caterers shall comply with the updated or amended policy as from time to time notified by HKUST.

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