|  |
| --- |
| **Beds SU Policy Ideal: Reduce Unnecessary Printing** |
| ***Beds SU believes***the University of Bedfordshire should reduce unnecessary printing to lower the institution’s environmental impact. |
| **What are the facts?**  This policy stems from Beds SU observing that multiple hard copies of meeting papers (100+ pages) were being printed out in advance of the UoB’s Faculty Academic Board meetings.  The UoB Environmental Policy states the following commitment:  *“The University recognises that all of its academic and associated activities have impacts on the environment at local, national and global levels. As such the University is fully committed to minimising these impacts as far as is practicable and seeks the support of all its students, staff and other stakeholders to contribute to achieving environmental excellence”.[[1]](#footnote-1)*  **Printing and Environmental Damage**  Paper:   * Wasting paper leads to increased deforestation[[2]](#footnote-2), which has negative consequences both for the environment (as deforestation contributes to global warming), and human survival (as humans rely on trees to produce oxygen) * Although 68% of paper was recycled in 2021 according to US census statistics, paper still accounts for significant landfill waste[[3]](#footnote-3) * When paper is not reused, recycled, or disposed of properly, then it rots over time and produces methane gas, which is over 20 times[[4]](#footnote-4) more toxic to the atmosphere than CO2.   Ink Cartridges:   * There are chemicals in printer inks that can be harmful to the environment, for example, volatile organic compounds and heavy metals in inks can lead to soil and water pollution when left in landfill[[5]](#footnote-5) * Many ink cartridges are made with metals and plastics that are not recyclable[[6]](#footnote-6)   Printers:   * Printers contribute to environmental damage, particularly as they consume a great deal of energy[[7]](#footnote-7) * Printers are thought to consume the most energy while on standby, often thanks to poor energy settings, inefficient models, and lack of energy-saving calibration   + For example, a study by top print company RISO[[8]](#footnote-8) found that only about 15% of the energy consumption of printers is used for printing |
| **How does this impact students?**   * Research conducted by the NUS suggests that students overwhelmingly want to see their institutions take matters of sustainability more seriously.   + The NUS Sustainability Skills survey[[9]](#footnote-9) found that 80% of further education students want their institution to take sustainability more seriously   + Almost three quarters of respondents agreed that all courses should seek to actively incorporate and promote sustainable development * Whilst embedding sustainability and sustainable development in the curriculum across all UoB courses will be a much more significant (and lengthy) undertaking for the university, taking further action to reduce unnecessary printing is a more achievable sustainability related goal for the UoB to achieve in the short term * As per NUS national data, it can be inferred that students would take more pride in belonging to an institution that is regularly taking further steps to lower its detrimental impact on the environment |
| **What is the Beds SU ideal?**  *Beds SU believes that the UoB should implement a new print policy and commit to the following:*   * All UoB departments should be required to conduct termly internal audits recording printing activity (i.e., meetings/activities for which printing is carried out; the volume and frequency of printing carried out) * The UoB Sustainability Steering Group should commit to reviewing print audit reports, and discuss where reductions in printing output could be made * All UoB staff utilising printers should be required to complete mandatory training on how to lower the environmental impact of printing, including – but not limited to: * Use double sided printing and copying * Use smaller font, reduce line spacing and margins for larger documents * Properly recycle all paper * Configure printers to the most energy efficient settings (contingent on the model) when not in use, i.e., eco-mode or quiet mode * When replacing printers, the UoB should commit to switching to models which consume less energy |

1. <https://www.beds.ac.uk/sustainability/about/environment-policy/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/pulp-and-paper> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.afandpa.org/news/2022/unpacking-continuously-high-paper-recycling-rates> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://cbmjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13021-018-0115-3> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://lanesprinters.co.uk/environmental/case-studies/organic-printing-ink-lanes-printers-broadstairs> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://greenoffice.co.za> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.risolatin.com/site/PDFs/Info_Resources/White_Paper_The_Hidden_Costs.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *ibid* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.sos-uk.org/research> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)