

Organising Events Sustainably

We encourage you as event organisers to plan, promote and hold your event with minimal environmental impact. This guide is designed to offer advice on how to make your event as sustainable as possible and help SETU contribute to a more sustainable future. We provide suggestions on the following areas:

- [Venue selection and energy conservation](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Catering](#)
- [Promotion and event materials](#)
- [Communicate sustainable practices](#)

Venue selection and Energy Conservation

- Evaluate if the event could be hosted virtually or in hybrid format.
- Check building opening times to ensure that these are suitable for your event
- When booking a room, please be mindful of the size you require for your event – avoid booking a larger room than you need.
- Remember to switch off lights and electrical equipment, and close windows when leaving.
- Venue Decoration: Consider whether your event needs decoration. If it does, ensure that items can be sustainably sourced and can be re-used:
 - Rent/buy potted plants rather than using cut flowers. If you are using cut flowers, choose in-season, local, and fairtrade options with sustainable material.
 - Avoid using single-use items such as balloons.
- Directional signage - if signage is necessary, make sure it is either digital (tv screens/mobile screens are available on all campuses), or reusable and not date/event specific.

Travel

- Encourage the use of public transport and plan journeys through the TFI App - sustainable travel information to SETU campuses are available here: www.setu.ie/about/our-ambition/sustainability/travel-and-transport
- Electric vehicle charging: For attendees traveling with EV's, SETU has electric chargers available at Cork road, Kilkenny road and West campuses.
- Bike share: SETU has options for bike rental on most campuses, for more information visit: www.setu.ie/sustainability



- Carpooling: Where possible, please consider and encourage carpooling with colleagues.

Catering

- Consider whether food is necessary for the event - short events may not need catering.
- Sustainable Food: Use University-approved caterers who meet sustainability and fairtrade standards and, where appropriate, default to plant-based meals with an option for meat if requested in advance. If you're offering animal products, opt for poultry or fish over beef, pork, or lamb. Offer plant-based milk alongside dairy milk and choose local beverages.
- Single Use Plastics should not be used. Encourage attendees to bring their reusable bottles and cups. Water refill stations are available across all SETU campuses. Request jugs of tap water instead of bottled water.
- Reusable serveware: Confirm with caterers in advance that disposable/single-use serveware are not to be used.
- Food waste: Consider the volume of food you order. Highlight the importance of sustainability to attendees and vendors to minimise food waste. In advance of the event, recheck numbers and ask attendees to confirm attendance in order to adjust catering numbers and minimise waste.

Promotion and Event Materials

- Promotional Materials: Consider ways to avoid or reduce printed materials for your event:
 - Instead of using flyers, posters or other physical marketing, use digital means wherever possible.
 - Digital screens are available on all campuses to promote events. Add QR codes to take people to the events page for more information and to register.
 - Online marketing such as social media are great ways to reduce the need for printed materials.
 - Add your event to SETU events page (submit your event details here: <https://www.setu.ie/staff/submit-story-or-event>)
- Signage/Banners: Re-use signage and banners from previous events. If creating new materials, ensure they are generic enough to be reused, i.e. not event/date specific. Share resources with other departments.
- Tickets and PDF material should be used instead of printed handouts. Event material can be sent electronically to attendees in advance, and they can be advised to bring devices to access them or to take notes. Slides can be sent out after the event.
- Encourage attendees to bring their own lanyards to reuse. For name badges, use sustainable options such as recycled or even consider seeded paper. If name



badges/lanyards must be purchased, ensure they are produced by locally using sustainable recyclable material and encourage attendees to return them after the event so they can be repurposed.

- Presenters:
 - Delegates presenting a poster at a conference, should be encouraged to re-use posters printed for other conferences or symposia.
 - Ideally guest speakers should be locally based, and encouraged to travel sustainably to the event, or consider virtual keynotes.
- Avoid promotional merchandise - even sustainable items such as coffee cups and water bottles, can mount up and are wasteful if not used.
 - Use merchandise left over from other events
 - Source sustainable local items such as fully recyclable materials, and keep them generic, without date or logo so they can be reused and shared between departments
 - Consider alternatives to standard merchandise, such as samples from local food suppliers, plants or local crafts.
- Exhibition Stands: Consider using postcards with a weblink/QR code to provide further details rather than a multiple paged leaflet.
- Post-event: Submit a news story after the event which can help promote the department/initiative and help promote future events:
<https://www.setu.ie/staff/submit-story-or-event>
- Feedback forms: These can be issued electronically to reduce the use of paper and can also help with quick analysis post event. Microsoft Forms is free and customisable.

Communicate sustainable practices

- Encourage exhibitors to bring reusable items, minimize waste, and use energy efficiently. Ensure they are aware of recycling facilities.
- If you are implementing sustainable practices into your event, communicate it, and let your guests know why you chose to promote/run the event sustainably.

