

# Sustainable Food Policy 2025

## Aims

At Bath Spa University, we understand that the provision of food and catering services has environmental and social impacts. In support of the [Bath Spa Strategy 2030](#), we are committed to minimising these impacts and making them positive whenever we can.

To achieve these aims, we will create a sustainable food culture at the University by:

1. Meeting and exceeding all relevant industry regulation
2. Promoting healthy food to our customers to enhance their well-being
3. Reflecting seasonality in menu plans
4. Working to support our local producers
5. Incorporating best practice in our sourcing of sustainable food
6. Ensuring our catering staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to embed sustainable issues into their practices
7. Engaging customers and our supply chain in the issues around sustainable food
8. Promoting sustainable food choices and food management amongst our student body
9. Ensuring there are affordable food options available for staff and students
10. Reducing waste of all kinds
11. Requiring relevant sustainability standards are embedded in tenders and contracts with external contractors
12. Ensuring meat free and plant-based options are always available at every outlet, with at least 1 fully meat free counter available whenever possible (i.e. during term time)

We will work with our suppliers and stakeholders to achieve these aims. This policy covers all food outlets and food served by the University.

This Policy will be reviewed biannually or when material changes to the University occur, to ensure that it continues to be relevant and fit for purpose. Sustainable food and nutrition is a key theme of our Sustainability Strategy, and progress and barriers are therefore reported to our Sustainability Steering Committee 3 times a year.

## Actions

1. Meeting and exceeding all relevant industry regulation

We ensure all catering outlets follow Health & Safety and Food Standard regulations which are audited by BANES every 2-years, supported by in-house audits conducted monthly by our catering team. Detailed records are kept on audit results.

Our environmental management system operates under the ISO 14001 and 50001 frameworks and covers all operational aspects of our university including energy efficiency, waste management and the handling of chemicals and oils, which applies to our catering operations.

We currently hold 5-star food and hygiene certificates at all of our sites.

## 2. Promote healthy food to our customers to enhance their well-being

The World Health Organisation, UK Government and the NHS define 'health diet' as one with low salt levels, low sugar and low saturates/ trans-fat percentages with a focus on fresh rather than processed produce: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>. We will use this definition to identify the food to be promoted as healthy, for example salads and fresh meals. Communications will be developed to promote 'healthy food' and how it is part of an overall 'healthy diet'.

We will work with students in our [Food with Nutrition BSc](#) course to offer research opportunities related to healthy and sustainable food, and effective communication methods.

We will ensure healthy options remain an affordable option for our customers and prioritise freshly cooked food over pre-prepared meals.

## 3. Reflecting seasonality in menu plans

Growing food out of season can result in vast amounts of water and energy being used to grow, transport and store produce, resulting in a significantly higher carbon footprint than locally grown, seasonal food. Our outlets have spring, summer and winter menus centred around seasonal foods to prevent a high quantity of food being imported to our outlets.

We also promote seasonal foods through our cooking classes and free cookbook, which highlights seasonal recipes to be recreated at home.

## 4. Working to support local producers

We will prioritise the procurement of local food and produce in an effort to reduce the emissions caused by food transportation and to support the local economy. Our local suppliers may include foods that are

grown locally, or by companies that are based locally but sustainably source produce from elsewhere e.g. coffee companies.

We also utilise “home grown” products from our grounds, such as berries and fruits for our crumble bar, and salad items from the allotments. We will develop a “Home Grown” label to highlight these products to our customers.

By 2030, 70% of our food (by value) will be sourced locally within the UK, We will facilitate the provision of ultra-local produce from growers within a 30-mile radius where possible and financially viable.

We will look for innovative ways to establish direct supply contracts that support regional small and medium sized growers and producers

## 5. Incorporating best practice in our sourcing of sustainable foods

Food production and distribution can contribute to the environmental impact of the food we provide. We strive for continuous improvement in our catering outlets. This includes ensuring we are up to date on best practice and reducing our impact on people and the planet. We will do this through engagement with awarding bodies such as the Soil Association’s Food for Life award, the Green Kitchen award and the Fairtrade University Award.

We will also prioritise food with sustainable or ethical certifications such as Red Tractor, Fairtrade, MSC and Organic, and communicate the significance of these certifications with our customers.

Furthermore, we are committed to removing environmentally and ethically damaging food and procurement streams. For example:

- Procedures are in place to ensure we do not source fish listed on the Marine Conservation Society ‘fish to avoid list’
- No caged eggs will be used across any product ranges. Free range eggs will be used to produce our in-house meals
- Cakes and bakery goods (excluding bread) will come from local suppliers, or contain Fairtrade ingredients
- Fruit will always be a lower cost to customers than desserts
- No genetically modified ingredients
- Free-range meat (no factory farmed meat)

Our new Procurement Framework will allow us to prioritise produce that fits our requirements and set specifications in tenders to adhere to our ambitions.

## 6. Ensuring our catering staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to embed sustainability issues into their practices

All catering staff receive training to comply with health and safety standards when they begin employment at Bath Spa University. We will also ensure all catering staff have the option to partake in our bespoke Carbon Literacy training course to better understand the influence we as individuals, and as a business, have on the climate.

Furthermore, all staff, receive training through the Food for Life award. This ensures they are up to date on sustainability issues and understand the measures we are taking to lessen our impact.

## 7. Engaging customers and our supply chain in the issues around sustainable food

We aim to clearly communicate sustainability issues in our outlets and on our menus and utilise digital screens to provide relevant information. We will continue to promote sustainability issues, including food, on the [Sustainability Instagram page](#), and highlight food developments on the [Catering Instagram page](#).

We also work with various courses to provide data and information to research projects for sustainability and food related issues throughout the academic year. Not only does engagement with research projects provide students with the opportunity to gain deep understanding of food issues, it also provides us with fresh data to make effective changes to our operations.

We strive to engage with and enable students to influence change. We listen to feedback and encourage suggestions on the improvement of Sustainable Food across our outlets.

## 8. Promoting sustainable food choices and food management amongst our student body

We promote our offerings on the catering social media platforms and student newsletters to maximise our reach. We will also continue to develop relevant point of sale communications to highlight sustainable choices, including home-grown and locally produced foods, as well as low carbon options.

## 9. Ensuring there are sustainable food options for all students and staff

We are committed to supporting students and staff acquire healthy, fresh food that directly tackles SDG2, Zero Hunger. We operate the Student Eats bar in our refectory, offering a hot meal and drink for £3.50. The Student Eats bar has been in operation since September 2022 and has been well received by our student body.

There are additional promotional offers aimed at reducing the cost of food, including the Rise and Shine deal (breakfast and a hot drink for £1), Voucher Books (£25 worth of vouchers for £20) and free hot drink stations available at all sites. Furthermore, we directly support the Student Larders by providing short-life produce and meal kits throughout the year.

Our  cookbook is available to all student and staff, containing simple, popular recipes to recreate food from our outlets or seasonal meals. We offer monthly cooking classes to teach cooking skills and showcase these recipes and supporting meal kits will be available from our on-site shop. All upcoming events and offers can be found on our Catering Team's [Instagram page](#).

If you are concerned about the Cost of Living, or would like more information on what Bath Spa do to support students, our [Cost of Living Page](#) contains a wealth of information.

## 10. Reducing all waste

We are committed to removing all waste where possible, from packaging to food waste. We are in the process of removing all disposable cups from all outlets, a journey that started with the removal of disposable cups from our water fountains in 2018 and the removal of most disposable hot drink cups in 2024 through a partnership with [Refill](#). We aim to take the final steps in removing disposable XL and iced drink cups from our outlets in 2025. Furthermore, we are working with Refill to include disposable food boxes in this offer, thereby removing a considerable waste stream. Current incentives to encourage this behaviour change include the 30p cup charge, stamp cards for both reusable cups and food boxes (the stamp cards can be used to redeem free hot drinks/ meals).

We closely monitor our food provisions to prevent excess purchasing and waste. Any short life products such as sandwiches, baked good and salad boxes are offered through the [Too Good to Go app](#), or placed in the Student Larders.

We continue to identify single-use plastic that can be removed from our operations, such as sauce sachets in our outlets, reducing our dependency on plastic-based food storage and switching from plastic to wood based disposable cutlery.

We also engage students in research projects focusing on food waste reduction to improve plate waste levels in our Refectory. We will engage with the wider university to include these studies within the Living Lab framework that is under development.

Food waste bins to be placed in the “back of house” kitchen areas to increase the proper disposal of food waste into a compostable waste stream.

Our new on-campus shop will feature a zero-waste station containing dry good such as pasta, rice, flour and sugar as well as soaps, juice and milks. This will provide a plastic-free shopping option for students and staff and encourage consideration of portion sizes as well as waste produce.

## 11. Requiring relevant sustainability standards are embedded in tenders and contracts with external contractors

When tendering for new contractors or suppliers, sustainability related criteria will be used. This may include requiring that suppliers adhere to certain standards that the university sets, e.g. no use of virgin plastics in packaging, or to committing to reduce their environmental impact year on year. These requirements will form part of our procurement process to ensure all external suppliers are contributing to the Universities sustainability goals.

## 12. Ensuring meat free and plant based options are always available at every outlet, with at least 1 fully meat free counter available whenever possible (i.e. during term time)

Studies show that the lowest carbon intensive foods are usually those that do not include animal products. To promote a low carbon diet and provide sustainable options for those who do not eat meat or animal derived products, we will always offer meat-free and plant-based food (i.e. vegetarian and vegan options) at all of our outlets. During term time we will also endeavour to provide a meat-free counter that does not serve animal products at all, for example The Pitta Bar which provides only vegetarian and vegan food.

## Closing

Food is an ever-changing landscape and the full impacts of climate change on food production are still unknown. We are already seeing a changes in the spreading of diseases around the world and changing weather patterns make cultivation variable. We will continue to monitor and update our Sustainable Food Policy to ensure we follow changes to best practice within the sector. We also strive to ensure that our business does not negatively impact people through modern slavery or contributing to international food scarcity.

We will continue to engage students in the development of menus, provide research projects and identify opportunities for improvement that ensure their needs are met. Furthermore, we understand that the balance between ensuring food is fresh, healthy, affordable and sustainable requires compromise and adaptation.