



- ▶ Home
- ▶ About Us
- ▶ Organization Chart
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ Access to Information
- ▶ Tender Notices
- ▶ Links

University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat Environmental Report 2012

Introduction

Welcome to the 2012 Environmental Report of the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat. In this report, you will find our environmental policy, performance in 2012 and targets for 2013.

Controlling Officer's Profile of Key Responsibilities

The UGC is appointed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Its main function is to offer impartial and expert advice to the Government on the funding and development of higher education in Hong Kong, and to provide assurance to the Government and the community on the standards and cost-effectiveness of the operations and activities of the UGC-funded institutions. The UGC has no statutory powers.

The UGC Secretariat is formed to provide secretariat support to the Committee. We had an establishment of 58 permanent posts and 21 contract staff as at 31 December 2012. We are located at 7/F Shui On Centre, 6-8 Harbour Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Environmental Policy

We are committed to contributing to a healthier and more sustainable environment by ensuring that our operations are conducted in an environmentally-responsible manner, in that -

- a. we work by the 3 "R" principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in the consumption of materials, supplies and energy and seek continual improvement to make effective use and reduce consumption of natural resources;
- b. we support and promote the practice of environmentally-responsible purchasing among staff;
- c. we promote greater awareness among staff in assuming their environmental responsibilities; and
- d. we review our activities and operations regularly to strive for continual improvement in our environmental performance.

The Clean Air Charter

To show Government's commitment to improve air quality, the Chief Executive signed the Clean Air Charter (the Charter) on behalf of the Government of the HKSAR in November 2006. As in the previous year, we have actively supported the Charter by -

- a. following the "Environmental Friendly" Guidelines issued by the Government Logistics Department (GLD);
- b. conducting frequent checks for overheating or any other defects of vehicle;
- c. always reminding our driver to switch off engines while waiting so as to reduce idling emissions and achieve fuel saving; and
- d. using unleaded gasoline to help reduce emission of polluting particles.

Green Performance in 2012

In 2012, the following green housekeeping practices were taken in our workplace -

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(A) Waste minimisation

- using double-sided network printers and photocopiers;
- using the back of used paper for drafting before collection for recycling;
- re-using file jackets;
- reducing the use of fax covering and printing of fax journals;
- minimising the use of paper cups;
- using e-mails for distributing meeting papers, thereby reducing the number of hardcopies printed;
- promoting the extensive use of e-mail and the Local Area Network (LAN) in internal and external communications;
- minimising the number of hardcopies of circulars issued to staff by disseminating departmental information electronically or by circulation;
- use of electronic-Christmas and New Year banners for seasonal greetings;
- use of departmental electronic-Christmas cards instead of paper ones;
- encouraging shared use of reference materials through the intranet;
- using environmentally-responsible products supplied by the GLD e.g. refillable ball pens, clutch pencils and recycled paper;
- following the green procurement practice issued by the Environment Bureau to procure environmental friendly products of computer equipments, electrical appliances, etc;
- printing publications with papers made from wood pulp derived from renewable forests and uploading publications onto the Internet; and
- using plain paper fax machines.

(B) Waste recovering for recycling

- collecting waste paper for recycling;
- collecting used toner cartridges for printers and fax machines for recycling;
- collecting used plastic bottles and aluminum cans for recycling; and
- adding the term on the use of degradable plastic bags or plastic bags with recycled content for garbage collection in cleansing service contract.

(C) Energy conservation

- using computers, lamps and fluorescent tubes with Energy Efficiency labels;
- installing energy saving fluorescent lights with electronic ballasts and occupancy sensor control on the lighting system;
- affixing "Save Energy" stickers to air-conditioning and lighting switches;
- disseminating green messages to remind staff to switch off their computers, lights and air-conditioning outside office hours or when not in use;
- switching off unnecessary lighting and air-conditioning when area is not in use;
- arranging for the last-man-out to check and turn off all lighting and electric devices before leaving office; and
- complying with the policy set by Electrical and Mechanical Services Department by maintaining the office room temperature at 25.5 degree.

(D) Improvement in indoor air quality

- implementing government "Smoke-free Workplace" policy; and

- cleaning the office ventilation system on a regular basis.

(E) Environmentally-responsible purchasing

- procuring photocopiers with duplex function;
- including common environmental friendly terms such as trade-in clause, recycling arrangement, etc., as far as practicable when arranging tenders;
- using green products procured by the GLD; and
- using recycled paper in lieu of plain wood-free paper for printing and photocopying.

(F) Raising staff awareness

- disseminating tips on enhancing green management practices on regular basis; and

With the increase in our business volume and further implementation of new initiatives in 2012, we recorded a corresponding increase in electricity consumption, paper consumption and waste paper collection last year. However, we also note a progressive reduction in envelope consumption as a result of more frequent use of electronic means of communication. We shall continue to carry out various effective measures to reduce our paper and electricity consumptions.

Targets for 2013

In 2013, we are actively exploring more concrete measures to seek improvement in green management. By reviewing our green performance in 2012 and taking into consideration our actual operational requirements, our targets will focus on -

(a) reduce paper consumption by using electronic means -

- continue to use the electronic information system of the General Research Fund (GRF) to cover monitoring and review of approved projects of all the four panels;
- continue to screen proposals/applications in computer instead of making hardcopies for the panels meeting;
- continue to upload new publications onto internet for public viewing and to produce DVD/USB version of publications as appropriate, the printed copies of UGC Annual Report will be reduced substantially;
- continue to use electronic mails as the most popular means of communication within and outside the Secretariat; and
- proceed with the development of an electronic information system for the 2014 Research Assessment Exercise to reduce paper consumption.

(b) further increase the use of recycled paper and other green products available from GLD so as to help reduce subsequent waste disposal problems -

- publication of UGC documents will continue to be on environmental friendly paper; and
- photocopiers, printers and scanners with duplex function will continue to be used to facilitate double-sided printing and electronic record-keeping.

(c) collect waste paper/newspaper/toner cartridges/plastic bottles/aluminum cans and other solid plastic wastes for recycling.

In addition, we will step up our efforts in promoting greater awareness among colleagues by -

(a) adopting green housekeeping practices as appropriate;

(b) issuing guidelines addressing various aspects of resources consumption and waste reduction during daily operations from time to time;

(c) arranging environmental protection activities to enhance colleagues' awareness, e.g. donating usable and/or recyclable items to needed members of the society and encouraging staff to participate in community-wide green activities; and

(d) soliciting support and suggestions for green initiatives from staff.

The Way Forward

Looking ahead, we will continue to explore the feasibility of more extensive application of information and communications technology commensurate with our operational requirements with a view to achieving, among others, the reduction of paper-based processes and records to the minimum and consequently, paper consumption.

We welcome comments on this report. Please contact us at ugc@ugc.edu.hk.

UGC Secretariat
July 2013

