

University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat Environmental Report 2007

Introduction

Welcome to the 2007 Environmental Report of the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat. In this report, you will find our environmental policy, performance in 2007 and our targets for 2008.

Controlling Officer's Profile of Key Responsibilities

The UGC is a non-statutory advisory body appointed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 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 Secretariat is formed to provide secretariat support to the Committee. We had an establishment of 48 permanent posts and 18 contract staff as at 31 December 2007. 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. Like 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 as so to reduce idling emissions and achieve fuel saving; and
- d. using unleaded gasoline to help reduce emission of polluting particles.

Green performance in 2007

In 2007, the following green housekeeping practices were taken in our workplace -

(A) Waste minimization

- using double-sided network printers and photocopiers;
- using the back of used paper for drafting before collection for recycling;
- re-using file jackets and economising the use of envelopes;
- 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 in addition to 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;
- 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 energy saving computers and 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

- successfully organizing the "Donation Campaign for the Needed Members of the Community" in which colleagues gave out usable and/or recyclable items for re-use by other members of the society.

With the concerted efforts of colleagues in achieving paper reduction and the wider application of information technology, we have made the following achievements -

(a) reduction in overall paper consumption by 9.5%, i.e. from 2,980 reams in 2006 to 2,696 reams in 2007;

(b) reduction in envelope consumption by 29.4%, i.e. from 17,459 in 2006 to 12,320 in 2007; and

(c) reduction in waste paper by 30.6%, i.e. from 6,648 kg in 2006 to 4,614 kg in 2007.

The total electricity consumption was also decreased from 272,734 kWh in 2006 to 268,569 kWh in 2007 (i.e. -1.5%). This was mainly due to support and cooperation of our colleagues on energy conservation.

Targets for 2008

In 2008, we are actively exploring more concrete measures to seek improvement in green management. By reviewing our green performance in 2007 and taking into consideration our actual operational requirements, our targets will focus on -

(a) reduce paper consumption by using electronic means -

- implement electronic information system of the General Research Fund (GRF) to cover monitoring and review of approved projects of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Panels;
- encourage sharing of hardcopies of proposals/papers by Members during meetings e.g. launching a pilot scheme of screening proposals/applications in computer instead of making hardcopies for selected panel meeting;
- continue to upload new publications onto internet for public viewing in order to reduce printing on paper; and
- continue to use electronic mails as the most popular means of communication within and outside the Secretariat.

(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.

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

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
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