

Sustainable Carolina

GREEN OFFICE CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK



OFFICE OF
SUSTAINABILITY

Welcome to the Green Office Certification Program!

The Green Office Certification Program is a voluntary, self-guided initiative that promotes sustainable practices at the University of South Carolina, engaging staff, faculty, and students in making our campus and our world a little greener. The program is designed, implemented and maintained by a team of student interns in the Sustainable Carolina Leadership Program.

The goals of the program are to:

- Support and promote offices that are taking steps toward reducing their environmental footprint
- Educate participants on how and why to live and work more sustainably
- Further integrate sustainability into campus culture
- Conserve water, save energy, minimize waste, and save money

This handbook will serve as your guide throughout the certification process.

Why participate?

Being green is part of Gamecock culture. The Green Office Certification program will help the university advance toward a more sustainable future. It is a perfect example of small changes saving money and preserving critical natural resources. True sustainability happens when it is embedded into every part of our daily lives, including the workplace.

What is an office?

An office is a work area (administrative, academic or service) that shares common areas and resources. It may include just one or all of the offices within a unit or division. You may have an office of 5 people or 50 people-- all sizes are welcome to participate! Your office could include kitchens, meeting rooms, storage rooms, and other shared areas. We are happy to work with you and answer any questions you may have while defining your office!

What will your Green Office receive?

Besides pride in both a greener, healthier planet and in a job well done, your office will receive:

- An award to hang in your front office (or other common area)
- Acknowledgement and promotion that your office is setting an example for the University in the Office of Sustainability's website, sc.edu/sustainability
- A digital logo to place on your website that indicates your Green Office status
- A digital footer for your email signatures
- A spot on our website, recognizing you for sustainable contribution to the USC community

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU WILL FIND THE GREEN OFFICE RESOURCE MANUAL, DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GREEN OFFICE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. IT INCLUDES DETAILS ON HOW TO APPLY, WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO “GREEN” YOUR OFFICE, AND WHY YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE SO INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO OUR CAMPUS. IF AT ANY POINT YOUR OFFICE HAS A QUESTION ABOUT THE PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT US AT [SUSTAINABILITY@SC.EDU](mailto:sustainability@sc.edu).

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AN EXAMPLE OF A TRULY SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS. THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW AND IT STARTS WITH YOU. THANK YOU AND GO GAMECOCKS!

-THE STUDENTS OF THE GREEN CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

1. Register for Green Office Training on University Human Resources Training Website

Employees interested in serving as their offices Green Office Representative should visit the University of South Carolina's Human Resources web page to register for the Green Office Training. This webpage can be found at sc.edu/hr. If your office already has a Green Office Representative, you are more than welcome to attend the training to learn about the Certification process as our goal is to educate as many people on campus about Sustainable workplace practices as possible.

2. Attend Green Office Certification Training

Office Coordinators are required to attend a training session in the Green Quad Learning Center where you will learn more about the process and how to implement it in your office. At this training you will receive the Green Office Handbook, which will contain detailed instructions for creating sustainable change within your office, and help you prepare for your on-site evaluation with a member of the GO team.

3. Receive approval from your Director

Before bringing GOC into your workplace we ask that you and your director each complete a survey acknowledging the coordinators responsibilities, as well as the sustainable changes that will be made in your office.

Coordinator Pledge



Director Pledge



PROCESS CONTINUED

4. Complete Green Office Evaluation

After attending our training, you will go back to your office and complete the checklist on your own, identifying areas in which your office can make changes to become more sustainable. Office Coordinators are also responsible for preparing a short presentation on the sustainable changes that will be coming to their office and presenting to their office. Once these changes have been established and you have given your office the presentation, we will set up a time to complete the on-site evaluation.

5. Complete on-site evaluation with a member of the Green Certification team

A member of our team will come to your office and walk through the checklist with you to ensure the proper changes have been made. If your office reaches the threshold of 70%, you will receive the Green Office Certification.

6. Obtain Certification

Congratulations! Your office is now a recipient of the Green Office Certification. We appreciate all of the changes you have made to contribute towards a more sustainable future for our university. In order to maintain this certification, we will conduct a yearly audit in which our team visits your office to check on your sustainability efforts and answer any questions you may have.

EDUCATION

Why it is Important

Educating the Carolina Community on the overwhelming benefits of environmentally-friendly sustainable practices is the key to inspiring action here on our campus. As students, faculty, and even the general public continue to learn of the incentives which stem from exercising sustainability, a growth towards conscious, “green-centric” decision-making will occur. The University of South Carolina recognizes the large-scale benefits that continue to come to fruition as our community trends towards sustainability. It is due to this that USC strives to encourage education on the topic, and includes sustainability topics in over 700 classes while also supporting many student organizations involved with the movement. Specifically, the Green Office Certification team seeks to support offices on campus to train their staff on sustainable practices and the importance of caring for our environment.

Efforts at The University of South Carolina

The Arbor Day Foundation has awarded USC with the Tree Campus USA Award for its upkeep of the Horseshoe. Some other initiatives that help to educate all individuals across campus include the water bottle filling stations, the Farmer’s Market, Green Dorm Room Certification, and community gardens. In addition, USC has pledged to ensure all future building construction will have at least Silver LEED Certification while also converting our recycling facility to be single-stream so all recyclable material can be transported together and sorted at the site. These efforts are all in order to meet several goals we have set ourselves including: reduce GHG emission by 30% by 2025, increase the recycling rate from 17% to 50% by 2050, and water consumption by 60% from 2004 in the coming years.

Sustainable Carolina

On our campus we are proud to have programs such as the Sustainable Carolina Leadership Program and EcoReps who are working within the community to create impactful environmental change. In addition to the Green Office Certification, Sustainable Carolina recently started a new program, the Green Event Certification, where the event hosts collaborate with an intern to make sustainable changes and reduce the environmental impact of the event. Sustainable Carolina is also proud to work outside of the Carolina community, educating local elementary schoolers on environmental awareness through the K-12 outreach team. The Campus wide events team plans events on campus to increase opportunities for environmental education with the Carolina community. Our professional development team hosts two major networking events each year to encourage collaboration and communication between students and key players in the Columbia community. The food systems team works both on an off campus, tackling major food-related issues such as food insecurity and food waste in collaboration with programs such as Feedmore and the Gamecock pantry. The Sustainable Carolina garden is an excellent resource on campus for anyone interested in learning more about gardening, and volunteers are always welcome!

Integrating Sustainability

The best way for students and individuals across campus to become familiar with the importance of sustainability is to expose them to sustainability. This can include scheduling conferences or small meetings focused on sustainability, training all new faculty in green habits, encouraging beyond the classroom activities that involve sustainability such as research and internships, and even talking with other offices across campus to see what they do to facilitate green thinking. By simply having the air of sustainability and informing all students of opportunities to learn more, we can naturally encourage students to become more aware.

Resources

Integrating Sustainability – <http://www.aashe.org/blog/ten-ways-integrate-sustainability-curriculum>

WASTE REDUCTION

Why it is Important

The decomposition of trash in a landfill releases methane gas emissions, which hold 21 times more heat than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. This fact makes it vital for students on campus to minimize their waste, either through better sorting of trash, including composting, or by producing less waste in general. Refer to the guides below on how to reduce waste.

Efforts at The University of South Carolina

Last year, this campus wide effort recycled approximately 800 tons of paper, metal, wood, electronics and other recyclable materials. Recycling is available campus wide, with certain locations even collecting e-waste. Each year the campus hold the Give it up For Good sale as an opportunity for student and staff to donate their used goods, with all profits from the sale going to local charities.

Resources

USC Recycling – sc.edu/facilities-recycling

Recycling Tips – epa.gov/recycle

Green Meetings – epa.gov/p2/green-meetings



PURCHASING

Why it is Important

Making environmentally conscience purchases help improve other aspects of sustainability. Purchasing lightly packaged commodities helps reduce waste, and purchasing high-efficiency light bulbs saves on energy costs. Also, choosing products made from recycled material helps preserve natural resources. The University of South Carolina's Purchasing Department works in cooperation with other departments in order to help suggest potential ways to become more sustainable. This ranges from reducing their solid waste to making available alternate sources of recycled products known. Initiatives have also been put in motion to minimize the university's environmental impact. Some of these initiatives include purchasing of recycled furniture, donating outdated dormitory furniture, using recycled and recyclable office supplies, and properly disposing of electronic equipment for potential resale

Efforts at The University of South Carolina

The University works with Staples to purchase sustainable office supplies. Staples currently offers over 10,000 green certified products, and the university hopes to make all of its office supplies green. Consolidated Services serves as a resource for all offices, and prioritizes recycling over purchasing new equipment.

Resources

USC Purchasing –
sc.edu/purchasing Environmentally
Preferable Purchasing –
[http://www.epa.gov/epp/EPA Green
Guides](http://www.epa.gov/epp/EPA%20Green%20Guides) –
[http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/gree
nguides.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/greenguides.htm)



ENERGY

Why it is Important

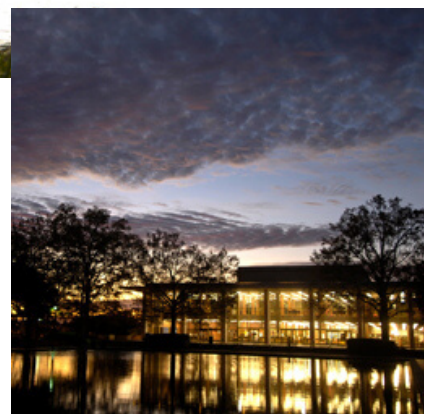
Our society is powered by fossil fuels, and one of the biggest concerns facing our nation and the world is finding alternative sources of energy. In an office, saving energy has financial and environmental benefits. Installing solar panels and other forms of renewable energy are great solutions, but these large-scale transitions are outside the scope of this program. Instead, we expect simple changes, like setting shorter sleep timers on computers and preventing leaks in faucets. With the potential financial benefits, why not invest in these small-scale changes?

Efforts at The University of South Carolina

Our community consumes 1.1 million gallons of water everyday. We are working to reduce through the use of low-flow shower and faucet heads and with reminding everyone to turn faucets completely off after you use them.

Resources

Integrating Sustainability –
<http://www.aashe.org/blog/ten-ways-integrate-sustainability-curriculum>



INNOVATION

Why it is Important

The innovation section of the handbook serves as an opportunity for your office to discover unique ways to incorporate sustainability that we may not have considered. We understand that each corner of campus has its own opportunities to create change, and we encourage you to embrace those that incorporate sustainability.

Efforts at The University of South Carolina

A few great examples of Innovation changes:

- The University Registrars office going paperless
- Break room composting
- Switching the entire office from desk side trash to desk side recycling
- Providing all employees with reusable water bottles
- Service Saturday switching all paper waivers to an online option
- Pledging to get all future events Green Event Certified
- Changing over all cleaning products to eco-friendly options

The possibilities are endless! We are happy to work with you to determine the most beneficial innovation changes for your workspace.

Thank you for taking the initial steps to achieving Green Office Certification! We are so excited work with you to incorporate sustainability in your office and across the USC Campus.

Have additional questions? Email us at sustainability@sc.edu