

Academy Environmental Sustainability

We look after our staff, our customers, our community and our environment in the following ways:

- **Academy is committed to reducing waste.**

We are working toward zero-waste both within the kitchen, and front of house. We aim to reduce waste that normally goes to landfill, by reducing food waste during the meal production and consumption processes. Students are taught about waste minimization during practical classes, which can be re-enforced by our commercial team

- **Academy is committed to become a paperless restaurant.**

We are trialling alternative methods of services, such as the use of electronic ordering and production of receipts, the introduction of QR codes for menus and feedback cards and the digitization of marketing materials. We are reducing use of disposable paper items, such as cleaning towels and disposable cups.

- **Academy is committed to reducing the carbon miles of its product purchases.**

To enable us to reduce our carbon miles we are purchasing from local food and beverage producers, with the introduction to Artisan Local Suppliers being added to our procurement strategy. Academy Menus are seasonal and utilize local produce. Our Guests are informed about the carbon footprint / food miles of their meals. We also host low-carbon food themed events as well as vegan and vegetarian menus.

- **Academy is committed to ethical food sourcing and animal welfare.**

The ethical food sourcing and animal welfare is a set target for purchasing eco-labelled products, e.g. Soil Association, Red Tractor and/or RSPCA Assured. We ask our suppliers to provide a 'Code of Ethics' or 'Code of Conduct'. We are working with local suppliers who can provide appropriate sustainable seafood supply strategies. Vegan and vegetarian meal options are actively promoted to customers.

- **Academy is committed to dignity at work.**

We include a supplier human rights screening, handbooks for employees' wellbeing services and we actively promote wellbeing activities, anti-harassment and bullying policies and access to continuous staff development. We train our people to care for our guests ,we train our people to look out for one another, we train our people to look after the environment.

- **Academy commits to supporting Ulster University's Civic Contribution vision.**

We encourage our staff to participate in volunteer days, whilst continuing to work on combatting food poverty, we collaborate with food banks for food waste donations and encourage a monthly charity appeal among guests and staff.

- **Academy is committed to supporting the local economy through its purchasing and procurement.**

We are building up relationships with local artisan suppliers and local brewery's and distilleries. We are piloting a new procurement scheme with Food NI to ensure we can expose the Academy to the best of local suppliers whilst ensuring that we follow the university guidelines on procurement. Our overall goal is to develop a new public sector procurement policy that will enable us to support and enhance the local supplier network.

- **Academy is committed to incorporating technology to support a Green Growth economy.**

We use apps and digital technologies to reduce waste, e.g. 'Too Good To Go' app, was set up during the pandemic and we continue to use and support this. Academy will continue working towards a zero-waste kitchen and promote a sufficiency-based meal consumption, e.g. exercising portion control.

- **Academy commits to saving energy and water consumption, thereby reducing its environmental impact and supporting financial viability.**

We have purchased energy-efficient and water-saving appliances, using superior technology to save energy and water.

- **Academy is committed to promoting an inclusive and welcoming environment for all genders and sexual orientation.**

We embrace gender equality and provide gender-appropriate wash and changing facilities, we encourage a gender balance on committees, such as the Green Key working group as well as the support of LGBTQ+ community in collaboration with the Student Union.

- **Academy supports all cultures and races and provides opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity.**

Cultural diversity is showcased in the Academy through our Culinary Salons that are hosted throughout our calendar of events. We work in collaboration with the Ulster University School of Art.

All our staff are trained in intercultural communication and guests are involved through immersive cultural events.

- **Academy is committed to reducing food poverty within the local community.**

We are registered on the Too good to go app, and offer daily surprise bags, which can be purchased and collected from the Academy daily between 2.30pm and 3.30pm.

- **Academy is committed to a diverse and representative Green Key working group.**

We aim to get our Green Key certification within the first year of trading in the new Academy premises. We are working with students, academics and commercial staff to achieve this goal.

- **Academy is committed to promoting sustainability literacy in the restaurant industry to all its stakeholders.**

We focus on practical sustainability education in Academy, training programmes for suppliers and other industry stakeholders. Academy is committed to creating a sustainability literacy workshop programme; and becoming an industry leader in this area.

- **As an integral part of Ulster University, Academy is committed to widening access to culinary arts education within the university and the wider community.**

We work closely with schools, university and governing bodies to host and engage workshops in culinary arts education.