

Policy name: **Plastic Free**

Date Presented: **12/02/19**

Lapse Date: **Nov 2025**

### **STUDENT COUNCIL NOTES:**

In 1950, the world's population of 2.5 billion produced 1.5 million tons of plastic; in 2016, a global population of more than 7 billion people produced over 320 million tons of plastic. This is set to double by 2034.

Every day approximately 8 million pieces of plastic pollution find their way into our oceans.

There may now be around 5.25 trillion macro and microplastic pieces floating in the open ocean. Weighing up to 269,000 tonnes.  
Plastics consistently make up 60 to 90% of all marine debris studied.

Approx 5,000 items of marine plastic pollution have been found per mile of beach in the UK.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL BELIEVES:**

Its essential that Union leads by example — following in the footsteps of the European Parliament — by eliminating single-use plastics within the Union premises, educating students on the environmental impact of single-use plastic pollution, and promote plastic-free initiatives.

We recognise the damage that waste plastics cause to the worldwide environment, acknowledge that there are measures we can take now to reduce, or cease, our contribution to that contamination and damage and that we must commit to becoming a plastic-free Union.



**STUDENT COUNCIL RESOLVES:**

- UUSU eliminate all plastic usage within our facilities, and at UUSU events where practicable, by committing to sustainable, ethical and plastic-free alternatives.
- Work with key stakeholders in the University to encourage the reduction and elimination of single-use plastics in University premises by encouraging more single-use plastic collection points across all campuses.
- Incorporate education about the environmental impact of single-use plastic pollution into our UUSU Green Impact sustainability efforts, through training, lobbying, campaigning and volunteering.
- Lobby government, local councils and external organisations to reduce and eliminate plastic-usage, adopt plastic free initiatives and promote the removal of single-use plastics elsewhere.
- UUSU evidence plastic-free initiatives in the NUS Green Impact scheme, to ensure the Union is developing its operations in line with best practice, and ensuring the Union is nationally recognized for its ethical and environmental work.
- Link up with external organizations and national campaigns, to achieve the above.
- The students' union recognises that plastic use straws are a necessary item for many disabled people. Until an alternative that is acceptable to disabled people is found then plastic straws remain available as an option.

Name of Proposer: *Student Executive*

*Policy renewed and amended on the 27th November 2024.*