



a handy guide to
Sustainable Travel



Welcome



At Cardiff Met we understand the importance of global opportunities to assist with your academic and personal development. Completing a global opportunity outside of the UK, either studying, working or volunteering abroad helps you to learn new languages, appreciate other cultures, overcome challenges of living in another country and gain a greater understanding of the world. Not only this but it allows you to expand your global footprint becoming a global citizen.

In a world where sustainability is becoming more and more important in the face of the climate crisis, it is essential that we all consider the environmental impact of our actions.

This is why the Global Opportunities team are excited to share with you some top tips and some resources to help you offset your carbon footprint and travel as sustainably as possible. It is all about balance; some of this advice may be realistic for you to implement, and some may not be possible for you at the moment based on budget, beliefs, personal circumstances, and so many other factors. If you have any other ideas on having a sustainable global opportunity, we would love to hear from you.

You could also consider carbon offsetting. This is where a person compensates for CO₂ emissions made in one action, by making reductions of CO₂ in another action. There are several websites and organisations designed to do just this. You could get creative with this though if you have your own ideas.

For example, by giving up meat consumption, or setting yourself a challenge of going “waste free” for a set period of time, until the carbon footprint left by your flight has been offset.



Cut down on waste and save the environment



Remember the four R's



Refuse

Say no to single use plastics
and items that will immediately
go to landfill.



Reuse

Choose sustainable alternatives to
replace disposable products.
Say yes to reusables!



Reduce

Reduce the amount of general
waste you produce.



Recycle

After you refuse, reduce,
and reuse - recycle properly.



Things to think about before you travel



Choose travelling by train, bus or ship over flying

We know that air travel is a big contributor to CO2 emissions every year. In 2019, it is estimated that airline flights were responsible for 2.4% of carbon emissions. While this doesn't sound like a lot, this would mean that if airline flights were a country, they would have been the sixth in the world in global emissions standings.

If possible, consider taking an alternative form of transport. If you are heading to mainland Europe, you could consider getting there via train or even coach. Especially if you have not travelled in this way before, it is yet another chance to try something new and see the world from a different point of view.

However, we can't all be Greta Thunberg and traverse the Atlantic on a yacht. Sometimes flights are quite simply the quickest and most cost-effective way of getting to your destination country.

Invest in eco-friendly products

Consider looking at taking with you items such as reusable cutlery, refillable bottles, and products made out of biodegradable materials. These simple changes will help you to live a more sustainable life both at home and abroad!



Pack light

Maybe a tip for short-term opportunities. Pack light when flying! The more a plane weighs, the more carbon emissions it produces. Pack only what you need, and the environment will thank you!

Capsule wardrobe

Fast fashion (clothes that are mass-produced for large retailers, which have a very quick turnover and could be made poorly and therefore do not last a long time) accounts for about 10% of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, and around 20% of global waste is caused by the fashion industry.

Buying clothing that markets itself as a “greener” alternative often comes with a larger price tag that may be out of your budget. Besides, a lot of this clothing is not even as green as it makes itself out to be anyway. This is why one popular way of rejecting the over-consumption of fast fashion can be implementing a capsule wardrobe. Traveling with limited luggage can be the perfect time to try this out. While you are off seeing the world with just a suitcase in your hand and a rucksack on your back, why not try life with a smaller wardrobe while you are abroad, and see how you get on? Instead of having an outfit for every occasion, try curating a handful of items that you can mix and match for any occasion while you are abroad. Enjoy getting creative with what this will look like for you - capsule wardrobes don't have to be an Instagram-perfect collection of expensive neutral pieces.



Going paperless

An increasing amount of airlines and other transport companies are making it possible for you to download your tickets and store all of the information needed for your plane, train or bus boarding passes on their apps, or using a ticket app on your phone. Be sure to do some research into whether this is an option for you. This way, you are reducing the unnecessary use of paper, be sure to select the mobile ticket option at checkout!

Just make sure that if your tickets and documents are stored digitally, you have a way of accessing them offline and that you have a device charging cable (with an adaptor for your destination country if needed), just in case!

A possible sustainable packing list!

- Reusable thermos flask/ coffee cup
- Your own mini travel dining kit a knife, fork, spoon, collapsible lunchbox, straw (great options for materials are bamboo, stainless steel)
- Bamboo toothbrush
- Compact capsule wardrobe that you can easily pack into a suitcase
- Re-purposed containers for your liquids and toiletries
- Soap/shampoo bars
- 2 or 3 reusable tote bags (easy to scrunch into a case, great for doing your food shopping)
- The correct plug adaptor needed for your country



Things to think about once you arrive at your destination



Walk or cycle to get around whenever possible

Every step counts, and it is worth considering the legs of your journey other than your flight. Can you use public transport to get from the airport to where you are staying? Many cities where Cardiff Met students choose to do their study or work abroad placements have excellent public transportation systems, whether it is bus, subway, train, or tram.

Did you know? In 2020, Luxembourg became the first country to make public transport free for all! Also, there is the option to walk or cycle instead of jumping in a taxi to cut down on petrol usage it also saves you money – the best of both worlds! It will also give you a more local experience of the country you are in and it is a lot healthier for you too!!

Transport

As mentioned before, transport is a key area to think about when you are looking to live a more sustainable lifestyle. It is always worth looking into what the public transport system in the place you're traveling to is like before getting out there, so you have a solid plan of how you're going to get to your classes, your place of work, or other important places like the supermarket, bank, or your favourite local coffee shop. This can be a great opportunity to live life as locals do. Maybe there are a lot of commuters that take the metro if you're in a big city? Or maybe cycling is the way to go. Since you are almost definitely not going to have a car out there with you, this is an automatic way you are reducing your daily carbon footprint by relying more on public transport, cycling, or walking.



Prevent the air-con or heating escaping

If your accommodation has air-conditioning or heating whilst away, make sure that your doors and windows are closed so that you don't lose any of the air. For extra eco-friendly brownie points, ensure that curtains are closed and there aren't any draughts coming through!

When you leave your room, always turn off all lights, heat/AC, and television

When you leave your accommodation, as you aren't using any of these resources why keep them on, turn appliances and lights off.

Eating

What we eat and how we consume food is a significant part of our carbon footprint. Whether it is the packaging, how far the food has travelled from farm to your home, or the amount of energy expended to create the food, there is a lot to consider when trying to eat in a more sustainable way.

Did you know that, farm livestock in Europe is in fact responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than cars and vans.

For some, choosing a diet more aligned towards vegan values (i.e. reducing animal product consumption) is a very achievable way to reduce your carbon footprint. Whether you decide to commit to going fully vegan, or just making a more conscious effort to reduce your meat intake, anything you decide to do is a step in the right direction for the planet. You will find that it is easier to be vegan in some countries than others, so you may want to do some research into the food culture of your host country to see what kind of approach will be best for you while you're there. For example, are there certain meats that aren't eaten in country for religious or cultural reasons? Are vegan diets easily catered for? It is worth knowing what to expect before traveling so you are not met with a big surprise when you arrive.



Shop local

Shopping locally is a great way to reduce the negative environmental impact of what we eat. This is made more interesting when abroad, as the food that is local to that area may be very different to what you are used to. You never know what amazing foods you'll discover, whether it is freshly baked bread in Germany, fresh citrus fruits in Spain, or maybe a cheese native to a local region in France. Why not try this out at a local market?

Not only does this reduce the amount of miles that your food has travelled, you are also more likely to find food that's way less packaged at smaller local markets. You will also be contributing to the local economy and local businesses, which are likely to be less harmful to the environment than bigger businesses.

Shopping locally is also a great way of learning a bit about the local culture, and maybe even trying out a little bit of the language. Bonus points if you remember your reusable tote bag to put all your goodies in!

Honour local customs

Being an ethical traveller isn't just about how you treat the environment. It also includes treating the people and local customs well too. Do your research before you travel to learn about the destination's local cultural traditions so that you can speak and behave appropriately.

Pick up litter when you can

Whether you are at your place of study or work, or undertaking a cultural experience, pick up litter when you can. Sometimes something so small makes the biggest difference. You don't need to go out of your way to do it – just pick it up each time you see it and dispose of it correctly!



Once you come home



Keep a look out

We always talk about how having a global opportunity expands you as a person in so many new ways, and immersing yourself in another culture encourages you to see things differently that you may have taken for granted before. Take some time to consider your surroundings. Have a look to see if there are any innovative approaches to tackling climate crisis that your host country uses.

Maybe the country has an innovative way of encouraging recycling, a new reusable product you have never seen before, or even a phrase or saying that changes your perspective. Challenge yourself to bring back something you have seen during your global opportunity and try and implement it when you get home. Who knows, maybe you will inspire the people around you to start doing the same thing?

Regardless of what kind of global opportunity you have, it is all about learning new things, learning to be independent, discovering another culture and challenging the way you view the world around you. We are sure that you will return having new ideas about many different subjects. Is there anything you have picked up that will help you to become a more responsible and sustainable global citizen? Whatever it is, we hope that your Cardiff Met global opportunity will inspire you to think bigger and contribute to making the world a better place.



Virtual global opportunities

Since March 2020, we have identified innovative ways for every Cardiff Met student to be able to access global opportunities.

Virtual placements are a great way to achieve a global opportunity with considerably less environmental impact, since they are undertaken from your own home. No commute, no air travel, no single-use coffee cups or lunch bought on the go while at work.

Virtual opportunities such as work placements, summer schools, and cultural courses have proven to be incredibly popular amongst Cardiff Met students. We love that these opportunities are also more accessible financially, and for students who have family responsibilities who cannot travel internationally so easily.

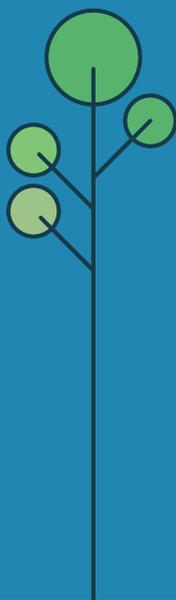
For the latest information on what virtual Global Opportunities are available, check out our website:

www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/international/study-and-work-abroad/Pages/default.aspx



Image from Generation Climate Europe (2021), on reducing digital carbon footprint

We would love to hear your own ideas of how to approach travel more sustainably. **Tag @cmetglobalopps on Instagram or Twitter with your ideas!**



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