



Green Office  
Certification Credit  
Companion Guide  
For Individuals

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## Introduction

Thank you so much for your interest in the Georgia State University Green Office Certification Program, created and managed by the Georgia State University Sustainability Initiatives Office! This is a program that is open for all university faculty and staff and is an excellent way for your existing sustainability efforts to be recognized as well as a way to learn how to become an even “greener” part of the university.

Participating individuals earn points by completing specific sustainability actions, which are assigned point values based on their impact and level of difficulty to implement. You can choose to aim for the highest level from the start, or work your way up slowly from a lower level. Level 1 certification can be reached with easily achievable actions, while subsequent levels require increasingly more effort and cost, but also have larger impact. The checklist provided in a separate attachment can be used to track points and mark progress towards an office/department’s target level.

Participants will receive a certificate celebrating their achievement, and will be acknowledged on Georgia State Sustainability website and monthly Green Scene newsletter for their positive contribution to sustainability at Georgia State University.

**Certification is valid for 2 years from the date of the award.** To recertify, you must submit a new application for certification. You will receive a framed certificate for the level achieved. The certificate should be placed in an area where it will be easily viewed by staff and visitors.

Sustainability staff are available to talk with you about the green office program and to assist you in reviewing its operations and selecting the appropriate level of certification to strive for. **To inquire about the green office program, send an email to [sustainability@gsu.edu](mailto:sustainability@gsu.edu), using the subject line “Green Office”.**

## Scoring

**The Green Office Program is organized into seven sustainability categories:**

1. Waste
2. Purchasing
3. Energy
4. Water
5. Indoor Air Quality and Human Health
6. Transportation
7. Involvement

## Application and Certification Process

If you would like to complete the application yourself, simply download the interactive scorecard from the website, complete, and submit to [sustainability@gsu.edu](mailto:sustainability@gsu.edu) . If you require assistance in completing the application, please contact us at [sustainability@gsu.edu](mailto:sustainability@gsu.edu) and someone from the Sustainability Initiatives Office will be happy to help.

Once your checklist is submitted, the Sustainability Initiatives Office will review and contact you within two weeks.

## Waste Credits

**W.1:** I have set double-sided printing as a default on my office computer, and always make double-sided copies.

Intent: Double-sided printing reduces the amount of paper used per printout, thus reducing the use of resources and reducing waste produced.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Double-Sided Printing on Individual Computers

1. Go to the Start Menu, click on 'Control Panel'
2. Choose 'Printer', under 'Hardware and Sound'
3. Select your default printer and click 'Select Printing Preferences'
4. Under the Finishing tab, click on the box next to 'Print on Both Sides'
5. Click Ok to Apply changes
6. Repeat steps 3-5 to change the settings on other printers if you regularly use more than one.

**W.2:** I have reduced paper margins in order to decrease the length of documents I print.

Intent: Reducing the paper margins on documents decreases the document length, thus decreasing the number of pages used to print. This saves paper, saving money and valuable natural resources.

Point Value: 1

Instructions:

1. Go to the 'Page Layout' tab.
2. Click on 'Margins'
3. Select 'Narrow' to use the default setting for small paper margins or 'Custom Margins...' to select your own settings.
4. If you chose 'Custom Margins...' type in the size margins you wish to use in the pop-up box to change the sizes. Often, side margins of .75", top margin of .75", and bottom margin of .5" is a change barely noticed by the reader.

**W.3:** I do not print out emails.

Intent: Refusing to print email messages unnecessarily, cuts down on the amount of trees being used for paper, as well as ink and electricity used for the printer.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Choose to save important messages in designated outlook folders. You can even go a step beyond and add a message to your email signature asking others to only print when necessary.

**W.4:** I keep a stack of previously used paper near printers to be used for scratch paper or internal memos, made into notepads, or loaded into a designated bypass tray on the printer for printing internal or draft single-sided documents.

Intent: Reusing paper reduces the amount of trees cut down for new paper products.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Most if not all Georgia State University offices should already be implementing this by utilizing Financial Edge and/or Spectrum.

**W.5:** I always choose to re-use office supplies (file folders, binders, pens, paper clips, etc.) whenever possible.

Intent: First, reusing supplies reduces the amount of virgin materials and energy used to create new supplies. Second, reuse is an important and easy way to save money. New supplies are expensive and waste disposal is expensive. Supply reuse reduces both of these budget drains.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Make sure reusable supplies are conveniently located for ease of access. It is often best to store reusable supplies with new supplies so you can easily choose to reuse.

Speak with the person in your office in charge of supply purchases and ask them to encourage supply reuse as a way to reduce unnecessary purchases and waste.

**W.6:** I have unsubscribed from all junk mail.

Intent: Decreasing junk mail decreases the amount of paper used unnecessarily, thus reducing waste and conserving trees. It also decreases the amount of energy used to create, process, and deliver this unwanted mail.

Point Value: 1

To opt out of credit card offers simply call: 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688)  
Call the customer service number on catalogs and product offers to remove your address from the mailing list.

Direct Marketing Association's (DMA) Mail Preference Service - sign up online to opt out of various mailings: <https://www.dmachoice.org/dma/member/home.action>

Other services for reducing junk mail:

[www.stopjunkmail.org](http://www.stopjunkmail.org)

[www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org)

Eliminating junk faxes:

[www.junkfax.org](http://www.junkfax.org)

Use the iPhone app "Mailstop Mobile" to take pictures of your junk mail and eliminate it. If you do not have an iPhone, instead register here:

<https://www.catalogchoice.org/login>

**W.7:** I do not have a personal printer in my office, but use only a shared, networked printer.

Intent: To save money and reduce toner, energy, and paper use.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Call your IS&T department to have them set up a network printer for you.

**W.8:** I use only reusable mugs and glasses and make sure I have additional mugs and glasses available for visitors to my office.

Intent: To cut down on waste and save money by not continually purchasing single use disposables

Point Value: 1

**W.9:** I bring a water bottle or travel mug to meetings and events outside of my office.

Intent: To reduce waste and costs

Point Value: 2

**W.10:** When bringing my lunch from home, I always choose reusable containers.

Intent: To decrease amount of waste

Point Value: 2

Instructions: Invest in reusable containers and refillable dispensers or bulk containers.



**W.11:** When buying my lunch, I choose reusable dinnerware and utensils.

Intent: To decrease amount of waste

Point Value: 1

Instructions:

1. Determine what your most common dishware and individual use items are.
2. Invest in reusable alternatives and refillable dispensers or bulk containers.

**W.12:** I always use refillable or bulk containers for sugar, salt & pepper, ketchup, etc. to avoid individual condiment packets.

Intent: To decrease amount of waste

Point Value: 2

Instructions: Do not collect disposable and individual condiment packets when you pick up food, but instead keep bulk containers at the office.

**W.13:** I am aware of the office/department rules regarding proper recycling practices.

Intent: Education increases program awareness and reduces recycling contamination and loss of recyclables to the trash.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Speak to your supervisor about setting up a meeting with the Georgia State University Recycling Coordinator, or review our recycling program and practices on the Georgia State University Sustainability website.

**W.14:** I take my trash and recycling to the central location OR

I have eliminated my desk-side trash container and use a desk-side recycling container and central trash locations.

Intent: Desk side recycling can help improve participation rates by making recycling easier. Switching to central trash means that occupants must make an extra effort to place things in the landfill stream, often reducing trash volumes significantly.

Point Value: 2

Instructions: Check to see where your centralized recycling and trash is in your area. This is typically located in a breakroom. Once that has been established, take your deskside bins to the

central locations to empty when necessary. If you need a deskside bin, please contact [recycle@gsu.edu](mailto:recycle@gsu.edu). Please notify your custodian of this change and ask them to not empty trash or recycling in your private office.

## Purchasing Credits

**P.1:** I consolidate supply orders with my co-workers so that we do not make single item purchases less than:

- a. \$50
- b. \$100
- c. \$200

Intent: Order consolidation reduces transportation emissions, packaging, and fuel usage. Oftentimes, there are also discounts offered when placing larger orders.

Point Value:

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3

Instructions: Do not make individual orders but rather order at or above the desired minimum. Depending on your office's purchasing needs, this may simply mean placing orders once a week or every two weeks. Selecting a standard day for ordering can also help you anticipate and plan around ordering times.

**P.2:** I choose vegetarian or vegan options at least:

- a. 1 time per week
- b. 2 times per week
- c. 3 or more times per week.

Intent: Vegetarian and vegan menu options, being meatless, typically require less energy and water than meat-based menu options.

Point Value:

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3

## Energy Credits

**E.1:** I leave clear space in front of all radiators and vents.

Intent: Leaving radiators and vents clear allows for better airflow within the office. This allows the radiators and vents to heat and cool the space more efficiently, using less energy and also saving the university money.

Point Value: 2

Instructions: Regularly check radiators and vents to ensure that they are not blocked and open space is maintained around them.

**E.2:** I have enabled the recommended power management settings on my computer.

Intent: By enabling the recommended power management settings on your computer, you can save anywhere from \$10-100 per computer annually in electricity costs and eliminate the need to boot up your computer each morning.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Contact your IT support to enable power management settings.

**E.3:** I shut off my monitor and/or manually send my computer into energy saving mode (standby or hibernate) when not in use.

Intent: A PC in idle mode eats up the same amount of energy as in full-power mode. However, if you put your PC in power saver mode, you save energy and money. In case of a power failure, you might lose all the unsaved data on an idle PC. However, your documents remain safe in power saver mode, even during power cuts, as they are saved to the computer memory or hard disk and can be opened easily. Computers in energy saving modes use 2% of the energy used when at full power.

Point Value: 1

Instructions for Windows 7:

1. Got to your Start Menu
2. Click on Control Panel
3. Select Power Options
4. Choose the Power Saver plan

Instructions for Windows 8:

1. Got to your Settings
2. Click on Control Panel
3. Select Hardware and Sound
4. Choose Power Options
5. Edit your plan settings

**E.4:** I shut down my computer at the end of the work day.

Intent: Computers continue to draw electricity while in sleep mode. For example, a desktop computer may draw on average 74 W when on and idle; it still draws 21 W when in sleep mode. When turned off (and still plugged in) the average draw drops to 2.8W.

Point Value: 2

**E.5:** I use “smart strips” for electronics, chargers, and appliances/devices with digital clocks and program them to shut off each night OR

I use power strips and surge protectors with an on/off switch for electronics, chargers, and appliances/devices with digital clocks and switch them off each night.

Intent: Most electronic devices, chargers and any device with a digital clock continue to use electricity when turned off. These are referred to as “vampire” loads and account for 10-15% of commercial energy use. Turning off power strips is the equivalent to unplugging the devices, and eliminating the “vampires.”

Point Value:

- a. 2
- b. 1

Instructions: Currently, only the traditional power strips and surge protectors are available on PantherMart. Smart Strips will need to be purchased externally at this time.

**E.6:** I complete an energy saving checklist before leaving my office for holidays and vacations.

Intent: Unplugging electronics over extended breaks reduces energy consumption as many of these devices continue to use a small amount of energy while powered off but still plugged in. Closing blinds will reduce energy loss through windows and excess heating from direct sunlight.

Point Value: 1

Instructions: Please see the sample checklist below. If you have additional ideas that you feel should be added to a sample checklist, email [sustainability@gsu.edu](mailto:sustainability@gsu.edu)

Sample Checklist:

- Unplug electronics at the source
- Turn off all lights
- Close all blinds
- Turn down air conditioning (raise temperature) and heating (lower temperature) if you have the controls. Tightly turn off faucets and report any leaks
- Water plants

**E.7:** I turn off lights whenever I leave a room.

Intent: Turning off lights when not in use saves electricity.

Point Value: 1

**E.8:** I turn off lights and use natural lighting when possible.

Intent: Turning off lights and using natural lighting is more energy efficient and reduces energy costs.

Point Value: 2

**E.9:** I close blinds/shades during peak summer to reduce heat coming in the windows.

Intent: Shades & blinds can be used to reduce excessive heating of office space in the summer. This can also reduce the energy needed to maintain the appropriate temperature in the office and increase occupant comfort.

Point Value: 2

**E.10:** I close blinds/shades at the end of every day during winter heating season.

Intent: Shades & blinds can be used to reduce excessive heat loss from office space overnight during the winter. This can also reduce the energy needed to maintain the appropriate temperature in the office and increase occupant comfort.

Point Value: 2

**E.11:** I do not use a space heater in my office.

Intent: Space heaters are considered energy hogs with very good reason. The smallest electric space heaters can use about 10,000 BTUs per hour. Larger electric space heaters may use over 40,000 BTUs per hour. In addition, using space heaters can throw off the central heating control sensors and create an uncomfortable temperature environment for others in the office.

Point Value: 3

## Water Credits

**WR.1:** I report any sink leaks (kitchen, bathroom, or lab) to the building manager immediately.

Intent: Sink leaks can waste a lot of water. Reporting them quickly reduces water waste and ensures they are fixed in a timely manner.

Point Value: 1



## Human Health & Indoor Environmental Quality Credits

**H.1:** I have at least:

- a. 1 plant
- b. 2 plants
- c. 3 or more plants in my office.

Intent: Office plants reduce stress and increase productivity. Plants also improve indoor air quality and reduce employee sickness.

Point Value:

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3

Instructions: Remember to consider the amount of available sunlight in each location. Also consider how often the plants will need to be watered or cared for.

**H.2:** I do not use the elevator unless traveling to the fifth floor or higher.

Intent: Taking the stairs instead of the elevator for short trips, conserves energy and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Point Value: 3

**H.3:** I do not smoke.

Intent: The negative health effects of smoking are well known. University employees who smoke also pay a higher healthcare premium.

Point Value: 2

**H.4:** I regularly participate in walking meetings.

Intent: Walking meetings have been shown to be more productive, improve moral, and promote healthier lifestyle choices.

Point Value: 2

**H.5:** I participate in the Fresh Harvest Co-op on campus.

Intent: This is a way to support local farmers while incorporating nutritious food options into your diet.

Point Value: 2

Instructions: Fresh Harvest is now a Panther PERQ, which means that all GSU staff, faculty, and students receive 10% off the cost of any “basket”. Simply visit [freshharvestga.com](http://freshharvestga.com), and select the Georgia State Co-op as your delivery location and enter “Panther PERQS” as the promo code. Your order will be delivered to the Sustainability Initiatives Office on Wednesdays.

## Transportation Credits

**T.1:** a. I use public transit, bike, walk, or carpool to work OR

b. I only use public transit, bike, or walk to work.

Intent: To reduce GHG Emissions from employees using single occupant vehicles

Point Value:

a. 1

b. 2

**T.2:** I have enrolled in Georgia State University public transportation incentive programs and/or I am participating in the Georgia Commute Options Program for walking, bicycling, or ride sharing.

Intent: To reduce GHG Emissions from employees using single occupant vehicles.

Point Value: 1

**T.3:** I walk, bike, or use public transit to and from lunch.

Intent: Walking, biking, or utilizing public transit cuts down on the amount of GHG emissions produced by single occupancy vehicles, and potentially helps you save money on parking.

Point Value: 2

**T.4:** When planning work-related travel, I consult websites to explore greener transport options and carbon offsets.

Intent: Traveling by plane or automobile produces a great deal of GHG emissions. Websites such as Terrapass.com and Carbonfund.org offer ways to offset those emissions.

Point Value: 1

## Involvement Credits

**I.1:** I have attended an information session regarding Green Office Certification.

Point Value: 1

**I.2:** I am a member of the Green Team or the designated person that works with the Georgia State University Sustainability Initiatives Office staff.

Point Value: 2

**I.3:** I attend Georgia State University Sustainability Initiatives Office events such as Earth Week, Georgia State Recycles Day, and others.

Point Value: 1

**I.4:** I attend sustainability events held by my office at least annually (e.g. Green Day, Green Happy Hour, Bike/walk to work Day, etc.)

Point Value: 1

**I.5:** I have given feedback to my office about green building features we have or could have in our office, such as lighting retrofits, occupancy sensors, dual flush toilet retrofits, aerators on sinks, etc.

Point Value: 2

**I.6:** I have inspired another employee \_\_\_\_\_ to pursue Green Office Certification.

Point Value: 2

**I.7:** I have submitted a story for Georgia State University's sustainability e-newsletter, the Green Scene, about this experience or similar sustainability efforts in my life during the past two years.

Intent: To share success stories in order to inspire others to engage in more sustainable behaviors.

Point Value: 4

Instructions: Submit your story to [sustainability@gsu.edu](mailto:sustainability@gsu.edu).

**I.8:** I have successfully implemented additional green projects in my office not listed here.

Point Value: To be determined by the Sustainability Initiatives Office