

Ban the Bin

What is it?

Ban the bin is part of Queen's campaign to increase recycling, reduce landfill and make us all more conscious of where we dispose of our waste.

How does it work?

Individual desk bins are removed...

...and replaced by several designated recycling points in the office with shared recycling and waste bins.

How does this improve recycling?

Removing under-the desk bins has provided an effective way of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

- Much of what we throw away can be reused or recycled but having a bin right by your desk provides a temptation not to bother
- The campaign aims to raise awareness of recycling: getting us really thinking about which bin items of rubbish should go in

Figures from other schools and directorates that have adopted Ban the Bin indicate that recycling has increased by 30%. Those areas involved include the MBC, DKB, International and Post Graduate Student Centre, Academic Affairs, Education, History & Anthropology, English, Registrar's office, Information Services and Estates.

So what are the benefits?

- More waste sent to be recycled and less to landfill
- Less plastic bin bags used everyday
- Nicer workspaces – Less clutter and hazards which improve Health & Safety
- Better use of cleaning staff resources i.e. less time spent emptying bins
- Increase environmental awareness throughout the University
- Encourages improved occupational health and wellbeing as staff should take a break from their desk every thirty minutes in order to stretch muscles and rest eyes
- Offices that adopt this system demonstrate leadership by supporting cultural change that fosters a more sustainable environment

Contacts

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Ban the Bin – How to Guide

Step 1: Tell your Colleagues

You will probably have a reasonable idea of the level of support expect from your colleagues; however don't be surprised if some become surprisingly attached to their bins when you suggest removing them! If you mention the project informally and sense some interest from a few (but not necessarily all) staff members, then you should give it a go.

Engage management and staff

Make the time to meet with management to discuss the project. Be very clear on what is to change, focus on the benefits and mention other offices where this has been implemented. Try to anticipate what questions will be asked and how you will respond. You may prefer to invite an enthusiastic colleague to this meeting if you feel your manager may have reservations. It is best to introduce the project to everyone at a staff meeting where you have the opportunity to clarify the project and answer questions. Follow up this discussion by sending out an explanatory email reiterating the benefits of the project.

Step 2: Establish the new system

Once you have general approval from your colleagues, you will need to establish the new system in your office. Each desk will need a small desktop bin (Queen's are using flower pots as desktop bins which can be requested via Planon) and a paper cardboard tower if required. The central recycling station will need a plastic bottle and metal can recycling bins and a general waste bin.

Plan central recycling station location

The central recycling station will need to be accessible to all staff. Remember, we're not trying to inconvenience people, just rearrange bin locations to support the behaviour we are trying to promote. It is therefore essential that the plastic bottle, metal cans and general waste bins are placed next to each other, and are no further than a thirty second walk from every desk. Where you establish this station is up to you, however kitchens are usually a good choice since they are high traffic areas where waste is often generated. If your department is large, you may need more than one recycling station.

Tell the University's Environmental Team

Even if you already have all the bins you need, please liaise with the University's Environmental Team, by sending an email to carbonmanagement@qub.ac.uk with:

- Your name, department and contact details.
- The exact location of the offices from which waste bins will be removed, and the number of staff in those offices.
- The number of desktop bins you require along with any additional cardboard towers and recycling bins you require (please log this on Planon as well).
- The approximate date that you intend to remove waste bins.

The Environmental Team will send you signage and the desktop bins to you directly and notify cleaners. There is no charge for these bins.

Distribute the new infrastructure

If possible, distribute the recycling boxes and bins as soon as you receive them to allow staff to adapt before Bin Removal day. You (and maybe your manager) can set a good example and test the new system by removing your waste bin early.

Step 3: Bin Removal Day

It is a good idea to send a brief reminder email to staff several days before Bin Removal to avoid surprising anyone. You may also want to ask staff for feedback for any ideas/comments/complaints/suggestions.

Step 4: Feedback

Both positive and negative feedback on any aspect of the project is welcomed, and will inform future projects. Please send us any feedback you may have.

Dealing with resistance

Adapting to this system requires a behavioural change, which is difficult for everybody, but will challenge some more than others. Again, try to anticipate the questions and reactions you will receive, and be ready with a clear, concise and strong case. If you encounter resistance, put yourself in their shoes and try to match benefits of the project with their concerns, such as health, costs, innovation or efficiency. Remind them that bins have already been removed from several departments (including the Vice Chancellor's office!).

Please ask them to trial the new system for a month, and encourage them to suggest improvements.

The Estate's Department can provide more assistance and information on the Ban the Bin initiative, so get in touch if you would like more information or if you would like to proceed with its implementation in your school or department. This initiative works best when it has the full support and commitment from the top.