

Waste separation

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I dispose of?

Organic waste

Organic waste can be disposed of in general waste.

For now, organic waste will not be sorted because the quantity is not sufficient to warrant separate collection.

Glass

The current policy on glass is that it is collected separately only when the amount of glass waste is sufficiently large. If no glass container is available at your work location, please wrap glass in paper and dispose of it in general waste.

Metal

Metal waste, such as aluminium cans, can be disposed of in plastic waste.

Drink cartons

Empty drink cartons can be disposed of in plastic waste.

Sugarcane plates and the paper coffee cups used in the mensa's and other UM catering locations

The disposables currently used by the UM caterers, such as the coffee cups and the sugar cane plates, can be disposed of in general waste.

The current paper coffee cups have a plastic lining which prevents them being processed with paper waste. We're currently in the process of implementing paper recyclable coffee cups.

Plastic disposable packaging from laboratories

Whenever it is packaging that is clean and not contaminated (chemical or biological), it can be disposed of in plastic waste.

Polystyrene boxes and material

These can be disposed of in general waste. The UM does not produce enough of this type of waste currently to justify separate collection.

Paper or plastic waste with food scraps on it

A tiny amount of food waste is okay, as much as you would want sitting in your own recycling bin. Otherwise you should dispose of it in general waste. Only dry and clean paper and plastic waste can be recycled.



What happens with the waste?

Where does the waste go after it leaves UM?

1. UM's cleaning company collects the separated waste from the bins and prepares it for pickup by our waste collector SUEZ.
2. SUEZ takes the waste to their sorting facility and processes it in preparation for selling the separate fractions on the market. Paper is shredded, compacted into bales, and made into a pulp before going through a process to remove any ink from the paper. Plastic is compacted into bales, shredded, washed, melted down, and turned into tiny granules.
3. The processed paper and plastic is sold to the highest bidder, under strict rules for recycling so they know for sure it will be 100% recycled.

If people do not recycle properly, i.e., if the paper waste has plastic in it, what happens? Is there a kind of sorting control?

SUEZ checks this during processing, and if there is a certain percentage of contamination, this will be rejected in the recycling process and UM will be fined.

Does any recyclable waste still go to incinerator or landfill?

This depends on the quality of the waste separation and the material. If paper or plastic waste is too contaminated with other types of waste (including food waste) it will be handled as general waste and incinerated.

How does UM earn an income from recyclable material?

Paper recycling provides a small income to the university. Plastic does not currently generate an income since the processing is labour intensive.

