ESF
Office of Sustainability

Green Office Certification Guide

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Linked to External Documents and Webpages

Relevant information is linked in the document and will take you to external documents and webpages, many of these resources can only be accessed digitally.

Checkboxes

You can mark checklist items by clicking in the checkbox, and a ✔ will appear.

Overview

The Green Office Certification Program is designed to guide members of collective office spaces to assess their current operations and set goals to adopt sustainable practices. Through certification, the program allows offices to earn recognition for their accomplishments. This voluntary program supports the development and continuation of sustainable office spaces and will benefit the entire campus community and beyond. This Guide will help you to "**Practice What We Teach**". Sustainable office practices go far beyond adopting energy conservation and waste reduction measures, they also include fostering healthy relationships with oneself and other members of the campus community.

The Green Office Program includes sustainable practices across:

- Community & Wellness
- Energy Use
- Light & Thermal Comfort
- Printing & Paper
- Materials & Zero Waste
- Green Purchasing
- Food & Dining
- Water
- Transportation

Any student, faculty, or staff member with an on-campus office space can participate in the program. "Offices" may be defined as:

1. A contiguous group of offices that share a common area, or
2. A group of staff, faculty, and/or students working together as an office, departmental, or divisional unit, but located in separate spaces.

The program is not just limited to staff Offices, but includes campus Departments and Divisions!

Overview

The **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The SDGs comprise of 17 goals as a shared blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. These goals are integrated, meaning change in one area will affect the outcomes of the others, so it is key to balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

From countries to institutions, many have committed to prioritize progress towards these goals. As a signatory of the **SDG Accord**, SUNY ESF is committed to aligning our actions to the SDGs. One way we are doing so, is through the Green Office Program. While many of these actions may seem small from a global perspective, any progress towards social, economic, and environmental sustainability can have far-reaching beneficial impacts.

Throughout the guide, you will see the symbols to the right. These reflect the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the actions in each category align with.

Certification Process

Instructions

1. **Download Form**: Download a copy of the [Green Office Certification Form](#). This form will be used to document the sustainable action taken by the office group. Please download the form **EACH** time you plan to resubmit.

2. **Locate Categories**: In the form, each sustainable action category is organized by separate worksheets. First review the credits in each section, then decide with all participating office members which credits you would like to pursue.

3. **Input Actions**: In the column labeled "Achieved", use the drop-down menu in each cell to select "Yes," "No or unknown," or "NA (Not Applicable)"
   a. Select **"Yes"** to indicate that your office has performed the action or has taken steps to prepare the office to fulfill the action within the next month
   b. Select **"No or unknown"** to indicate that the office has not taken the action or is unsure at the time of submission
   c. Select **"NA (Not Applicable)"** if an action does not apply to the office. See notes in the form for when to select "NA"

4. **Describe Actions Taken**: In column G, describe the steps taken to achieve or prepare to complete the action item.
    To earn points for **EACH action item**, a description must be provided.

5. **Review**: Double check that Steps #3 and #4 are complete for all categories

6. **View Final Tally**: Your points will self-tally in the form as you complete it. View points for each category at the bottom of the page. To view your total, see the **"Final Score"** worksheet.
   a. Please note that this score may not be your final score. After receiving your submission, the Office of Sustainability will review and request additional information.

7. **Save and Submit**: Once the form is complete, save the form, and email it to the [Office of Sustainability](#). Please allow two weeks for the Office of Sustainability to review.

8. **Certification**: Upon certification, you will receive a certificate from the Office of Sustainability to display in or outside the office.

Certification Process

Scoring

To earn Green Office Certification, offices must complete a certain number of sustainable actions. See the table below.

There are four levels of certification:

Certification Levels	
Bronze	45% of applicable points
Silver	60% of applicable points
Gold	75% of applicable points
Platinum	90% of applicable points

Questions?

Contact your Office, Department, or Division's Sustainability Ambassador or the Office of Sustainability for assistance, or complete this form to request a consultation meeting with the Office of Sustainability.

IMPORTANT

The Office of Sustainability may periodically update the **Certification Form** after the guide is published. Changes will only be made if campus operations or procedures change, or if an action is no longer applicable.
Certified offices will be notified if changes occur.

Refer to the Green Office Certification Form for the current checklist.
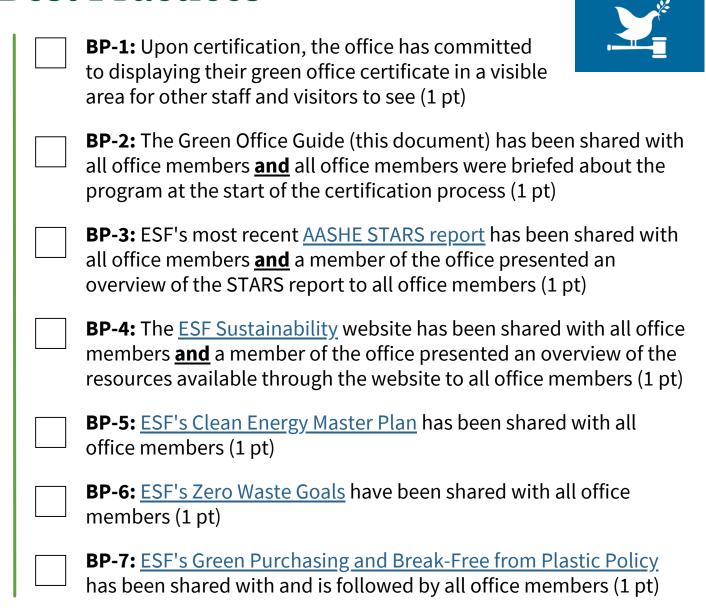If major changes are made, a new edition of the Guide will be released.

See the Certification Form for additional tips and resources to support each credit.

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Green Office Checklist

Best Practices

- **BP-1:** Upon certification, the office has committed to displaying their green office certificate in a visible area for other staff and visitors to see (1 pt)

- **BP-2:** The Green Office Guide (this document) has been shared with all office members **and** all office members were briefed about the program at the start of the certification process (1 pt)

- **BP-3:** ESF's most recent AASHE STARS report has been shared with all office members **and** a member of the office presented an overview of the STARS report to all office members (1 pt)

- **BP-4:** The ESF Sustainability website has been shared with all office members **and** a member of the office presented an overview of the resources available through the website to all office members (1 pt)

- **BP-5:** ESF's Clean Energy Master Plan has been shared with all office members (1 pt)

- **BP-6:** ESF's Zero Waste Goals have been shared with all office members (1 pt)

- **BP-7:** ESF's Green Purchasing and Break-Free from Plastic Policy has been shared with and is followed by all office members (1 pt)
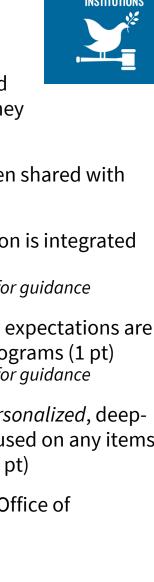
Green Office Checklist

Best Practices

- [ ] **BP-8:** The latest edition of ESF's Green Purchasing Guide has been shared with all office members and they know where to find the latest version when they are released (1 pt)

- [ ] **BP-9:** GreenNY Purchasing Specifications have been shared with and are followed by all office **purchasers** (1 pt)

- [ ] **BP-10:** Office and campus sustainability information is integrated into new faculty and/or staff orientation (1 pt)
  Contact the Office of Sustainability and Human Resources for guidance

- [ ] **BP-11:** Office and campus sustainability goals and expectations are included in all faculty and/or staff performance programs (1 pt)
  Contact the Office of Sustainability and Human Resources for guidance

- [ ] **BP-12:** The office has requested (or received) a *personalized*, deep-dive training from Office of Sustainability staff focused on any items included in the Green Office Program or beyond (1 pt)

- [ ] **BP-13:** All office members have subscribed to the Office of Sustainability Listserv (1 pt)
  Contact the Office of Sustainability to join the Listserv

- [ ] **BP-14:** All office members (with social media accounts) follow the Office of Sustainability and SUNY ESF on at least one social media platform (1 pt)
  Office of Sustainability: Instagram, Facebook
  SUNY ESF: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter

Green Office Checklist

Community & Wellness

- **CW-1:** Office members have a good relationship with campus facilities and operations staff, and actively take steps to maintain those relationships (1 pt)

- **CW-2:** Office members are encouraged to take wellness breaks, such as spending time outdoors and away from devices, during lunches and regular breaks (1 pt)
  Nearby green spaces: Oakwood Cemetery and Thornden Park

- **CW-3:** The office has organized a month-long step or movement challenge (or similar) for all office members (1 pt)
  Use Stridekick (Apple) or another similar free step/movement challenge app.

- **CW-4:** Each semester, 75% or more of office members have attended at least one voluntary campus event or presentation that is hosted by an Office or Department **outside** of their own (1 pt)
  See the Events Calendar and ESF Engage. Event Attendance Form Template

- **CW-5:** The office has hosted two or more...
  *Select **all** that apply, maximum of 2 pts*
  - **CW-5a:** Certified Sustainable Event in the past year (1 pt); *and/or*
  - **CW-5a:** Platinum Sustainable Event in the past year (2 pts)
  See the Sustainable Event Guide and Form for more information

- **CW-6:** An office member has discussed the Green Office Certification Program at one or more Office-, Department- or Division-wide meeting once per semester (1 pt)
  This can be promoting the program, providing an update on successes or challenges the office faced, and/or addressing questions others have about the program

Green Office Checklist

Community & Wellness

> Innovation Point
>
> ☐ **CW-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support community and wellness not listed in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)

Energy Use

☐ **E-1:** Building energy use information from the [Mighty Oak Dashboard](#) is shared with all office members once per month (1 pt)

☐ **E-2**: Computer and laptop monitors (screen-only) are set to automatically turn off after 5 minutes of inactivity (1 pt)
How-to guides: [Windows](#), [Apple](#)

☐ **E-3**: Computers (desktops and laptops) are set to automatically enter stand-by or sleep mode after 15 minutes of inactivity (1 pt)
How-to guides: [Windows](#), [Apple](#)

☐ **E-4**: Advanced power strips (APS) are installed and used appropriately where applicable in the office (1 pt)
See the [APS Factsheet](#) & [How-to Guide](#) from NREL. See the [Green Purchasing Guide](#) for options. Dangling and "daisy-chained" power strips are not allowed.

☐ **E-5:** Non-essential power strips, appliances, electronics, and chargers are unplugged or powered-down when not in use, e.g. nights, weekends, semester breaks (1 pt)

Green Office Checklist

Energy Use

- [ ] **E-6:** Duplicate appliances, including coffee makers, fridges, printers, etc., have been removed from the office (1 pt)
Point will be awarded if there were no duplicate appliances in the office prior to certification

- [ ] **E-7:** A space for shared appliances has been created for use by all immediate office members (1 pt)
Not applicable for single, independent offices. Points will be awarded if a space for shared appliances already existed prior to certification

Innovation Point

- [ ] **E-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support energy efficiency and conservation not listed in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)

Light & Thermal Comfort

- [ ] **LT-1:** During work hours, thermostats are kept within the energy conservation zone: Near 68° in the winter and 76° in the summer (1 pt)
Please submit a Work Order to request temperature ranges be set on thermostat(s)

- [ ] **LT-2:** Vents and radiators are clear of any debris or furniture (1 pt)

Green Office Checklist

Light & Thermal Comfort

☐ **LT-3**: GreenNY-compliant motion-sensing light switches are installed in all office spaces, or they have been requested, if not already present (1 pt)
GreenNY Specification: Motion Sensitive Light Switches
Please submit a Work Order to request motion-sensing light switches

☐ **LT-4**: All lights are automatically or manually turned off when the office will be unoccupied for 20 minutes or longer (1 pt)
Please manually turn off lights when you leave, even if motion-sensing switches are installed to save energy.

☐ **LT-5:** All light switches have a reminder sticker to encourage occupants to turn off the lights when they leave (1 pt)
Please contact the Office of Sustainability to obtain sticker(s)

☐ **LT-6:** Where applicable, light fixtures have been "delamped" (bulbs removed) and/or replaced with LED bulbs (1 pt)
"Delamping" is an energy-saving practice that maintains sufficient lighting for safety and comfort. Contact Michael Amadori, ESF's Energy Manager, for delamping guidance.
Please submit a Work Order to request LEDs if they have not already been installed in the office.

☐ **LT-7:** When comfortable and possible, the office prioritizes using natural light instead of turning on overhead lighting (1 pt)

Green Office Checklist

Light & Thermal Comfort

☐ **LT-8:** When natural light is insufficient and when office members are comfortable to, the office prioritizes using task lighting instead of overhead lighting (1 pt)
"Task lighting" refers to desk or floor lamps positioned near an individuals work stations. This practice typically reduces energy consumption compared to overhead lighting.

☐ **LT-9:** Personal space heaters have been removed and/or replaced with under-desk floor heating mats (1 pt)
See the Green Purchasing Guide for options

Innovation Point

☐ **LT-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support energy efficiency and work space lighting and thermal comfort not listed in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)

Printing & Paper

☐ **PP-1:** Printing is avoided unless absolutely necessary (1 pt)

☐ **PP-2:** The default setting on office printers is double-sided or "duplex" printing (1 pt)
How to guides: Windows, Apple

Green Office Checklist

Printing & Paper

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

☐ **PP-3:** The office has or has access to a multi-function printer that is available for use by all immediate office members (1 pt)

☐ **PP-4:** All office printers are set to an energy-saving mode or stand-by after no more than 10 minutes of inactivity (1 pt)
Check the manual or search online for instructions for your printer model. Please contact the CNS Help Desk if you need further assistance.

☐ **PP-5:** All office printers are manually turned off or unplugged during long periods of inactivity, e.g. weekends, breaks (1 pt)

☐ **PP-6:** Addresses are printed directly onto envelopes instead of using labels or window envelopes (1 pt)
Not applicable if office does not send outgoing mail
How-to guides: Windows, Apple

☐ **PP-7:** All toner and ink cartridges used in office printers are...
See the Green Purchasing Guide for options. Points may be awarded for both.
    PP-9a: High yield (1 pt)
    PP-9b: Remanufactured (1 pt)

☐ **PP-8:** All spent toner and ink cartridges are recycled in campus collection bins, located on each floor of every building (1 pt)
Campus bins are not for disposal of spent ink and toner cartridges from home. They are intended only for disposal of ink and toner cartridges purchased with state funding or used at ESF.

☐ **PP-9:** Document drafts are edited electronically using track changes, to the maximum extent practicable (1 pt)
How-to track changes: Microsoft Word, Google Docs

Green Office Checklist

Printing & Paper

☐ **PP-10:** Office members are encouraged to remove their names from "junk mail" lists and switch to electronic subscriptions for mailing lists they still want to receive (1 pt)
Remove your name from junk mail list with Catalog Choice

Innovation Point

☐ **PP-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support the sustainable use of paper and printing not included in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)

Materials & Zero Waste

☐ **MW-1:** Trash, recycling, and composting guidelines are displayed in the office and are followed by all office members (1 pt)

☐ **MW-2:** Office members properly utilize their mini-bins (1 pt)
See the Mini-Bin Best Practices for guidance

☐ **MW-3:** The Office has performed an audit of all trash and recycling produced by the entire office over an entire week, at least once in the past year
*Select **one**, maximum of 2 points*

    MW-3a: Simplified Waste Audit - Sort materials streams and **count** the number of contaminants (missorted items) (1 pt); *or*

    MW-3b: Standard Waste Audit - Sort and **weigh** material streams and contaminants (missorted items) (2 pts)

Contact the Office of Sustainability for guidance

Green Office Checklist

Materials & Zero Waste

☐ **MW-4:** At least one person in the office is responsible for managing specialty waste materials and is familiar with the proper procedures for each type of material (1 pt)
Specialty waste managed by building occupants includes e-waste, toner and ink cartridges, batteries, shredded paper, and hardcover books.
See ESF's Materials Management Guidelines for procedures, Work Order form

☐ **MW-5:** Office members notify Property Control when electronics are ready for recycling (1 pt)
See ESF's Materials Management Guidelines for accepted materials

☐ **MW-6:** Shipping boxes are kept and reused for outgoing shipments (1 pt) *Not applicable in most offices*

☐ **MW-7:** No outside cleaning chemicals are brought into office (1 pt)
Please submit a Work Order to request assistance from custodial staff when something is in need of cleaning

☐ **MW-8:** All office members are familiar with the Campus Surplus Property program and regularly report unneeded office furniture and equipment to Property Control (1 pt)

☐ **MW-9:** The office has exhausted or donated (*see MW-10*) the current stock of office supplies prior to purchasing products compliant with GreenNY and ESF's Green Purchasing and Break Free from Plastic Policy (1 pt)

Green Office Checklist

Materials & Zero Waste

- [ ] **MW-10:** Gently used office supplies that no longer have use in the office are shared through Oakie's Supplies Swap in Moon Library or donated to Beth's Bounty for reuse by students and other campus members (1 pt)
Empty binder and folder contents prior to donating. Shred private documents prior to recycling. If donating large volumes of materials, contact the Office of Sustainability prior to donation.

- [ ] **MW-11:** Single-use plastics listed in ESF's Green Purchasing and Break Free from Plastics Policy are not used in the office or at office-planned events **_and_** all other single-use plastics are avoided to the maximum extent practicable (1 pt)

Innovation Point

- [ ] **MW-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support sustainable materials management and ESF's zero-waste goals not included in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)

Green Purchasing

- [ ] **GP-1:** When possible, office supplies are ordered in bulk (min. $100 orders) to avoid excess packaging and limit the number of deliveries to campus (1 pt)
Tip: Consolidate orders with a neighboring office when you need to place a smaller order

Green Office Checklist

Green Purchasing

☐ **GP-2:** The office has a centralized location to store shared office supplies, both used and new, for use by all immediate office members to avoid over-purchasing (1 pt)

☐ **GP-3:** The office maintains an inventory of office supplies to prevent over-purchasing (1 pt)
Inventory Procedure | Inventory Tracking Template | Inventory Sheet Template

☐ **GP-4**: Prior to purchasing new furniture or equipment, purchasers check with Property Control to see if available Surplus Property would meet the office's needs (1 pt)

☐ **GP-5:** Energy efficiency is considered when purchasing new office equipment, ENERGY STAR and EPEAT (Silver or higher) certified equipment is preferred (1 pt)
Refer to the GreenNY Specifications for requirements and see the Green Purchasing Guide prior to ordering. Contact the Business Office for guidance.

☐ **GP-6:** The office uses rechargeable batteries in battery-powered devices whenever possible and has (or has access to) a battery charger for office use (1 pt)
Contact ESF's Energy Manager, Michael Amadori, for guidance.
See the Green Purchasing Guide for options.

☐ **GP-7:** The office uses copy paper that meets the GreenNY purchasing requirements: Paper contains 100% post-consumer recycled (PCR) content and is whitened without chlorine (1 pt)
See the Green Purchasing Guide for options
Please order copy paper through the Copy Paper Request Form

Green Office Checklist

Green Purchasing

- [ ] **GP-8:** The office purchases writing paper, including notebooks, loose leaf, notepads, sticky notes, etc., that are unbleached or whitened without chlorine and made with the **maximum amount** of post-consumer recycled content (PCR) practicable (1 pt)
  See the Green Purchasing Guide for options

- [ ] **GP-9**: The office purchases paper storage, including folders, filing folders, envelopes, binders, etc., that are unbleached or whitened without chlorine and made with the **maximum amount** of PCR content practicable (1 pt)
  See the Green Purchasing Guide for options

- [ ] **GP-10:** In-office paper towels and tissues are compliant with NYS EO4: Paper towels contain 40% or more PCR content, tissues contain 10% or more PCR content (1 pt)
  Contact the Facilities Department to confirm paper towels and tissues meet the GreenNY Paper Products Specification. Submit a Work Order to request paper towels and tissues for the office.

Innovation Point

- [ ] **GP-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support green purchasing not included in this checklist
  (Bonus: 1 pt)

Green Office Checklist

Food & Dining

- [ ] **FD-1:** All office members use reusable dishes, drinkware, and utensils when dining in the office, breakroom, or on campus (1 pt)

- [ ] **FD-2:** Reusable dinnerware is used when food or drinks are served at office meetings and events (1 pt)
  Dinnerware can be reserved through ESF's [Reusable Plate Program](#) or rented from a local catering company. See the [Green Purchasing Guide](#) for options.

- [ ] **FD-3:** When ordering drinks from Trailhead Café and the Moon Café, all participating office members use a reusable mug or cup (1 pt)

- [ ] **FD-4:** Office members consider local, sustainable restaurants prior to ordering food (1 pt)
  *See the list of [Sustainable Syracuse Restaurants/Caterers](#) for options. Please note that restaurants and caterers in the list may only meet **one** of the listed criteria. If there is a specific sustainability feature you would like to see, please ask the restaurant or caterer before ordering.*

- [ ] **FD-5:** When ordering from an outside establishment, orders are placed with the goal of minimizing packaging and waste (1 pt)
  Tip: Request no utensils or condiment packets and use what is available on campus (Trailhead Café). When ordering for groups, order in bulk or "family-style" trays. See the [form](#) for more information about compostables on campus.

- [ ] **FD-6**: Office members "Lug your Mug and Pack your Plate" to campus events whenever possible (1 pt)

Green Office Checklist

Food & Dining

- [ ] **FD-7**: 100% of office members practice "Meatless Mondays" or go at least one day without meat each workweek (1 pt)
  This can be done individually or as a group!
  Tip: Make these days a fun office activity, try ordering from a local vegan-friendly restaurant, or rotate who brings in a homemade meatless meal each week. Everyone can also make or purchase their own meatless meals.
  See the list of Sustainable Syracuse Caterers and Restaurants for options

Innovation Point

- [ ] **FD-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support sustainable food systems not included in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)

Water

- [ ] **W-1:** Leaks and dripping faucets are immediately reported to the Office of Sustainable Facilities and Operations via Work Order (1 pt)

- [ ] **W-2:** Office and breakroom faucets are fitted with low-flow aerators (<2.0 gpm) (1 pt)
  Please submit a Work Order to request faucet aerator installation if not already present

Green Office Checklist

Water

W-3: Water restoration credits (WRCs) have been purchased to offset water use and degradation as a result of office materials use and activities (2 pts)
See verified WRC options in the Sustainable Events Guide. See form for more info.

W-4: All office members have and use refillable water bottles or cups in the office (1 pt)

W-5: The office utilizes water refill stations throughout campus instead of having an in-office water cooler (1 pt)

W-6: Single-use, single-serving plastic water bottles (and other beverages in plastic bottles) are not in use in the office, nor available at office-planned events (1 pt)

Innovation Point

W-i: The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support water conservation not included in this checklist (Bonus: 1 pt)
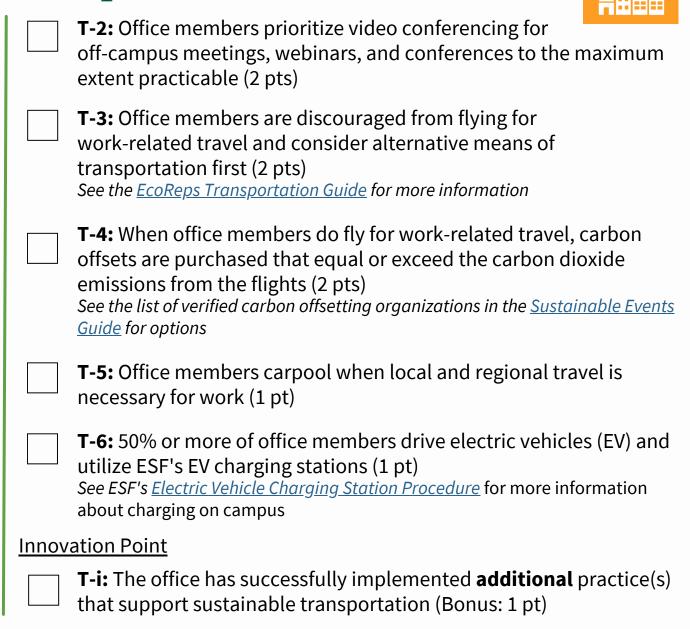
Transportation

T-1: 50% or more of office members walk, bike, carpool, use public transportation, or drive an electric, hybrid, or fuel-efficient (≥40 MPG avg.) vehicle to commute to campus (1 pt)
See ESF's Transportation page and the EcoReps Transportation Guide for more information. Electric Vehicle Charging Station Procedure

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Green Office Checklist

Transportation

- [ ] **T-2:** Office members prioritize video conferencing for off-campus meetings, webinars, and conferences to the maximum extent practicable (2 pts)

- [ ] **T-3:** Office members are discouraged from flying for work-related travel and consider alternative means of transportation first (2 pts)
See the EcoReps Transportation Guide for more information

- [ ] **T-4:** When office members do fly for work-related travel, carbon offsets are purchased that equal or exceed the carbon dioxide emissions from the flights (2 pts)
See the list of verified carbon offsetting organizations in the Sustainable Events Guide for options

- [ ] **T-5:** Office members carpool when local and regional travel is necessary for work (1 pt)

- [ ] **T-6:** 50% or more of office members drive electric vehicles (EV) and utilize ESF's EV charging stations (1 pt)
See ESF's Electric Vehicle Charging Station Procedure for more information about charging on campus

Innovation Point

- [ ] **T-i:** The office has successfully implemented **additional** practice(s) that support sustainable transportation (Bonus: 1 pt)

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