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HKUST Cares for the Environment

In addition to establishing the Institute for Environmental Studies on 4 November to tackle regional environmental problems at large, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology is making every effort to ensure that the University itself maintains the highest possible standards of environmental friendliness.

Each laboratory in the University is required to segregate any hazardous waste it generates, and to place it in carefully labelled containers. It is then collected by the University's Safety and Environmental Protection Office (SEPO) for treatment.

Before a project begins, SEPO staff will meet individual researchers to assess the kinds of emissions their work is likely to generate. Exhaust air from certain laboratory processes may require scrubbing or filtering to prevent the release of harmful pollutants.

The University also has a policy of planned procurement of chemicals. "We encourage researchers to use the least toxic, most biodegradable chemical possible to do the job if there is an option," says Dr Joseph Kwan, the SEPO Manager.

Energy conservation at the University is also an issue of great importance. A computer system is used to monitor energy consumption throughout the campus, and utilities are programmed to switch on and off at appropriate times.

Recycling at the campus is carried out where possible. Many offices have participated in the recycling of items such as paper, toner, and cartridges, and in future it is possible that the service will be extended to include glass and plastic.

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