

# Student Switch Off – Colleges

## Context and overview

Student Switch Off is an international campaign, run by NUS, that encourages students living in halls of residence to save energy. We have recently adapted the campaign to include a version suitable for colleges who want to run a Student Switch Off week.

The aim of Student Switch Off week is to raise awareness and encourage practical actions by staff and students to save energy in order to reduce their impact on climate change. Alongside the awareness-raising activities we encourage participating colleges to collect and analyse energy data in order to measure the impact of their activities. This document outlines how colleges can run their own Student Switch Off week.

## Preparation

Once you have decided the dates of your Switch Off week you will need to arrange for electricity data to be collected in the two weeks before your Switch Off week in order to provide a baseline for the equivalent usage during the week. This data should be available via the Energy/Sustainability/Estates Manager of your college. If you have a large campus with many metered buildings, we suggest you conduct the energy data analysis on the buildings that you will be running the main awareness raising events in.

The document 'Student Switch Off Colleges energy calculations document' provides a template for you to enter your energy meter data before and during Switch Off week. The document calculates the saving achieved and provides estimates of carbon dioxide savings and useful comparisons to include in your post-event communications.

We suggest you notify students and staff of the Switch Off week a fortnight prior to the event to build excitement and recruit volunteers (if necessary). Template e-mails and social media messages are available upon request along with an editable Student Switch Off poster.

## Suggested timetable for the week

The exact nature of your Switch Off week events will vary at each college and will depend on staffing and resources available. Here we provide details of activities that have worked well in the Student Switch Off campaign in the past – feel free to pick and choose what works best for you and let us know of other successful events you have tried.

**Monday – pledge event.** Run an environmental themed pledge event on a stall in an area with good footfall. Ask students/staff to complete a pledge card or write an environmental pledge on a small white board. Have their photo taken with the pledge card and provide a prize for the best pledge/someone picked at random from among those pledging.

**Tuesday - online climate change quiz.** Launch the Student Switch Off online climate change quiz - a six question multiple choice quiz with a prize draw for one of the entrants (you provide a prize). We ask each college to provide us with a college-specific multiple choice question to be included in the quiz and this is combined with five general energy-saving/climate change questions. The quiz is embedded on your college Facebook page though you don't have to have a Facebook profile to access it. In order to get the quiz embedded on your Facebook page you will need to liaise with NUS to sort the technical logistics. Set a closing date for the quiz of the end of the week and do a draw from the entrants once the quiz closes.

**Wednesday – film screening.** Organise a free screening of an environmentally-themed film such as An Inconvenient Truth, Age of Stupid, Avatar or Chasing Ice.

**Thursday – photo competition.** Launch an energy/water-saving/recycling themed photo competition where students are encouraged to post environmental photos on to the Facebook/Instagram/Twitter feed of the college to go in the draw to win a prize (you provide a prize).

**Friday** – run an energy-saving obstacle course in an area with good footfall. This consists of 2-3 tables with five different actions that need to be completed in order in the quickest time. Actions often include putting on layers of clothing, putting lids on pans, filling the kettle with the right amount of water, unplugging appliances, switching off lights and putting recycling in the correct bin. The student who gets the fastest time win a prize (provided by you).

## After the week

Analyse the energy data and feedback to students/staff on the achievements of the week including CO<sub>2</sub> and money saved and the number of people engaged in the various activities.

## Materials

The following materials are available in electronic form upon request to use for your switch off week:

- Editable version of Student Switch Off poster
- Excel document for energy data entry and analysis
- Online climate change quiz (set up by NUS as an app on your Facebook page)
- Template e-mails for publicising the week and events

The following materials are available at cost price to complement your activities, (please contact us for prices):

- Student Switch Off climate neutral t-shirts
- Switch Off stickers
- Student Switch Off drinks coasters

## Next steps

If you plan to run a Switch Off week, please contact Dr Neil Jennings ([neil.jennings@nus.org.uk](mailto:neil.jennings@nus.org.uk)) to let him know the dates of your week and which materials you require.