



L-Università  
ta' Malta

# Climate Change

What do members of the  
University of Malta think?

A publication from the  
Office of the Pro-Rector  
for Strategic Planning  
and Sustainability

World Environment Day  
5 June 2026



# Foreword

*This publication presents results in response to a short survey invitation which was sent to members of staff and students at the University of Malta.*

*This initiative was taken to commemorate World Environment Day, which is celebrated annually on 5 June.*

*The focus of events for this year was climate change.*



## Respondents were invited to

1. List three words they associate with climate change;
2. Specify their reactions to climate change from a given list of emotions;
3. Identify the campus operation they feel is in most urgent need of improvement to reduce University's carbon footprint; and
4. Write one sentence with their wish for UM to take action and improve the environment.



## Why publish these responses?

1. Showcase the variety of reactions;
2. Give staff and students a voice and an opportunity to share their personal concerns and reactions associated with climate change;
3. Raise awareness about respondents' concerns related to an environment which, for many, is a second home; and
4. Showcase suggestions which illustrate how our University, as a higher education institution, can take action to reduce its carbon footprint and simultaneously lead in bringing about change.



*If you would like to find out what UM staff and students think and feel about climate change, as well as what they suggest UM could do to address these concerns, read on.*

*Prof. Valerie Sollars  
Pro-Rector for Strategic  
Planning & Sustainability  
June 2026*



## Meet the respondents ...

*276 participants  
including:*

<b>RSO/Post-doc</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Students</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Administrative staff</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Technical staff</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Academic staff</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>1</b>



# Meet the respondents

*276 participants  
representing:*

*RSOs with different levels of contracts  
(RSO I to IV and a post-doc)*

*Students at Junior College (JC) & UM;  
undergrads, postgrads & Ph.D. candidates*

*Administrative staff at different grades  
including administrators; administrative  
specialists; managers; directors and  
executive directors.*

*Technical staff including Officers &  
Systems Engineers*

*Academic staff from JC & UM including  
all grades: from Lecturer to Professor;  
full-time and part-time staff*

*Other: a childcare educator*



# Meet the respondents

*276 participants representing:*

- *All 14 Faculties*
- *3 Schools: Doctoral School; School of Performing Arts & International School of Foundation Studies*
- *11 Institutes: Aerospace Technologies; Earth Systems; Sustainable Energy; Digital Games; Climate Change & Sustainable Development; Islands & Small States; Physical Education & Sport; Linguistics & Language Technology; Creative Thinking & Innovation; European Studies; Maltese Studies*
- *3 Centres: Biomedical Cybernetics; Environmental Education & Research; Molecular Medicine & Biobanking*



# The respondents work within

- *Rectorate & Pro-Rectorate Offices*
- *Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit; Admissions & Records Office*
- *Argotti Botanic Gardens & Resource Centre*
- *Childcare services*
- *Corporate Research & Knowledge Transfer Office; Estates, Facilities & Capital Development*
- *Health & Safety Services; Finance Office; International Office; IT Services; Library*
- *Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office; MATSEC; Office for Human Resource Management & Development; Office of the Registrar*
- *Quality Assurance Unit; Research Support Services Directorate; Research Grants Finance Management; SEA-EU Office*
- *SIMS Office; Student Services Office (Junior College); Univ. of the Third Age*



# Insights into words associated with Climate Change



Weather  
Adverse Conditions  
Crazy weather patterns  
Extreme weather  
Hazardous events

Heat/excessive heat  
Hot weather  
Global warming  
Drought  
Desertification  
Temperatures  
Sustainability

Planet  
Flooding  
Rising sea-level  
Storms  
Planet Damage  
Habitat Loss  
Ecosystem rupture  
Biodiversity loss  
Famine

# Insights into words associated with Climate Change



Catastrophe  
Cataclysm  
Scary  
End of the world  
Uncertainty  
Change

Pollution, smog  
Greenhouse gases  
Ozone layer  
Carbon Emissions  
Fossil fuels  
Particulate matter  
Landfills  
Plastic

Inevitability  
Helplessness  
Vulnerability  
Human arrogance  
Inequality  
Resilience  
Overwhelmed

Poverty  
Health  
Population  
migration  
Anthropogenic  
Overpopulation



## Item 2: Respondents' feelings about and reactions to Climate Change

Emotion/Feeling	Frequency of response
Worried	158
Frustrated	119
Anxious	103
Sad	91
Angry	89
Overwhelmed	50
Hopeful	42
Curious	36
Motivated	32
Empowered	7
Indifferent	7
Powerless	4
Challenged	2
Furious	2
Disheartened	2

Besides identifying their emotions, some respondents explained what led to the feelings they have.

*I am concerned about climate change, as it is one of the most pressing challenges facing our world today. At the same time, I am eager to stay informed about recent developments and motivated to do my part by supporting and contributing to meaningful solutions.*

*Administrator at HR*

*Worried, anxious, frustrated, angry, sad, furious because of climate deniers.*

*Part-time lecturer at the Institute of Linguistics & Language Technology*

*Worried but hopeful. I feel that there is a lot we can do but we need to act fast.*

*Associate Professor, Institute for Creativity & Innovation*

*Worried, angry, frustrated by what I see as inconsistencies in how governments and organisations address it.*

*Administrator, Faculty for Social Well-Being*

*Feeling betrayed by our societies.*

*Associate Professor, Faculty of Engineering*



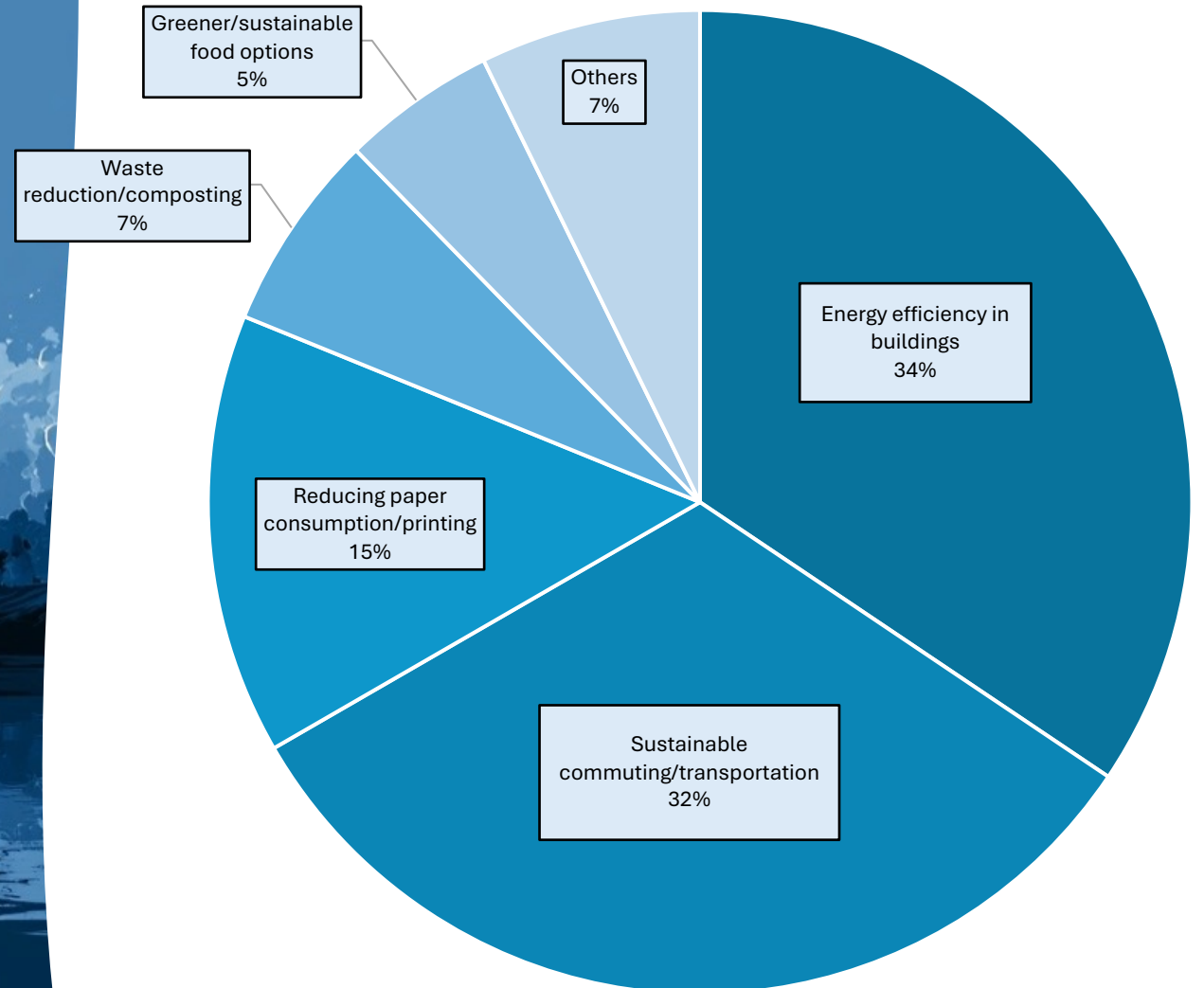
### Item 3: Campus Operations in most urgent need of improvement to reduce institution's carbon footprint

*Respondents were invited to choose ONE from among five options:*

- 1. Energy efficiency in buildings;*
- 2. Waste reduction/composting;*
- 3. Reducing paper consumption and printing;*
- 4. Sustainable commuting/transportation; or*
- 5. Greener/sustainable food options.*



# Campus operations requiring urgent improvement





## Campus operations requiring urgent improvement

- **34.4% (N=95) chose energy efficiency in buildings.**
- **32.3% (N=89) believe sustainable commuting/transportation is crucial.**
- **14.5% (N=40) opted for reducing paper consumption and printing.**
- **6.5% (N=18) believe waste reduction/composting needs urgent improvement.**
- **5.1% (N=14) opted for greener/sustainable food options.**
- **7.2% (N=20) respondents chose the 'other' category. In some instances, recommendations were provided (ref. to next slide).**



## Campus operations requiring urgent improvement

- 4 of the 20 'other responses' referred to transportation measures.
- 6 of the 20 'other responses' referred to buildings, energy efficiency measures and use of resources.
- Suggestions included:
- *the full-time employment of a sustainability manager*

*Associate Professor,  
Faculty of Engineering*

- *an increase in trees and green spaces;*

*Administrator, Rectorate*

## 'Other' responses concerning perceived campus operations in need of improvements

Switching off ACs and electricity when not in use because it's not me who is paying.

Admin Specialist, Estates, Facilities & Capital Development Directorate

More transparent dialogue over the planning of available built and unbuilt spaces. With more direct involvement comes more personal responsibility. We cannot solve climate issues with a heavy hand, but through dialogue ... and mutual respect of absolutely everybody concerned. ...change is slower...but might be more lasting.

Senior Lecturer, Institute of Linguistics & Language Technology

Remote Working for staff in a way to reduce AC usage, lighting, and forced ventilation (if the latter is present) in offices. This will also reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the streets knowing that every worker practically owns a car.

Systems Engineer, Faculty of ICT

Not running the ACs all day everyday. It is way too cold in the rooms and just unnecessary usage of electricity

Undergraduate student, Faculty for Social Well-Being

Carbon sinks for cleaner air on campus.

Undergraduate student, Faculty of Arts

## 'Other' responses concerning perceived campus operations in need of improvements

More flexible work arrangements for UM staff to reduce commute times and traffic on the roads. Alternative modes of transport including bicycles do not work because Malta does not have the proper infrastructure.

Manager, Research Support  
Services Directorate

Time-tabling that promotes limited commuting at the right times.

Senior Lecturer, Junior College

Make driving private cars unsustainable to promote use of public transport, bicycles, walking.

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Arts

Impose regulations on generative AI use, as it is a significant pollutant and consumer of both water and electricity.

Postgraduate student,  
Faculty of Science

Car-centric infrastructure.

Technical Officer,  
Institute of Earth Systems



## Staff wish-list for UM to improve the environment

*Open-ended responses were collated under major headings. Categories which emerged include desires or wishes related to:*

- *Education for staff and students*
- *Greening*
- *Transport issues & pollution*
- *Buildings & construction*
- *Energy efficiency*
- *Food-related improvements*
- *The social aspect of sustainability impacting UM and the wider community*

## Responses focusing on Education

To implement and educate more about the negative effects of climate change and what the realities are for our world. These things are taking place now and we need to take proper and effective action.

Student, Faculty of Media  
& Knowledge Sciences (MAKS)

I think we must conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine which investment will yield the quickest sustainability return (environmental, financial, and social). I am not an expert, but I think being energy self-sufficient would be a good investment, with PV panels being a good idea since university is mostly active during daytime when the sun produces free energy without (or with minimal) battery storage needed.

Lecturer, Faculty of Health Sciences

## Responses focusing on Education

As a University we need to keep being scientific when talking to the general Maltese community and this needs to be in two main ways; help the Maltese community adapt to changes brought about by climate change and on the other hand be clear that not everything that happens is caused by climate change.

Administrator, Resource Centre

Market awareness of preservation of healthy environment.

Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences

Drum into students and personnel the importance of adopting eco-friendly habits and really making them understand what these are and their benefits.

Professor, School of Performing Arts

Instill in each and everyone at UM be it a lecturer, staff or student that less waste helps in preventing climate change.

Technical Officer, MAKS

## Responses focusing on Education

Immediately initiate an environmental awareness campaign, tackling a range of issues from basic non-littering awareness to ways in which staff and students can discover how to adopt more environmentally friendly lifestyles through initiatives such as reducing consumption and cutting out unnecessary waste, making sustainable food choices, switching to green energy in the home, using energy efficient modes of transport, etc. This could be done in collaboration with a local environmental NGO.

Senior Assistant Librarian, Library

Raise awareness of climate deterioration and organise/petition to push non/low emission power generation and transportation.

RSO, Faculty of Science

Smart technological collective stations for different types of materials that will explain the process of recycling for each material.

Administrator, Faculty of Engineering

Educate students and the public about the real causes of climate change and the most brutal reality of consequences, including biodiversity loss and human migration.

Postgraduate student, Faculty of Science

## Responses focusing on Energy Efficiency & buildings

Universities typically consume large amounts of energy for cooling, ventilation, lighting, laboratories and IT infrastructure so improving building efficiency can produce substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Ph.D. Student, Faculty for the Built Environment

I wish the University of Malta would aggressively expand campus green infrastructure and install widespread solar canopy structures over parking areas to combat the urban heat island effect while accelerating its transition to full energy self-sufficiency.

Administrator, Office of the Registrar

Educate members of staff and students on this matter, more green infrastructure such as green roofs and more effective green infrastructure management, and reduction in energy waste.

RSO, Faculty for the Built Environment

## Suggestions for UM-wide policies and resource-saving measures

More carbon-friendly buildings, shading of facades and green wall.

Undergraduate student,  
Faculty of Health Sciences

Invest more in sustainable campus initiatives, such as expanding renewable energy use, improving recycling infrastructure/reducing waste, and being greener.

1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate,  
Faculty of Science

I wish UM would prioritise renewable energy and energy-efficient infrastructure across all campus facilities.

Administrator, Office of the Registrar

Properly separate waste, instead of placing all the separate bins into one black big bin when collecting them.

Undergraduate student, Faculty of  
Medicine & Surgery

Improve recycling facilities within buildings and faculties as currently the majority of lecture halls etc. only have a black bin for disposal.

RSO, Faculty of Engineering

## Suggestions for UM-wide policies and resource-saving measures

Introduce a penalty system for littering and make a solid effort to reduce the need for printing (too much paper is needlessly wasted in printing invoices, flight tickets and related documents for requisitions, for example).

RSO, Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences

Use the Campus as a model for net-zero and circular economy practices!

RSO, Faculty of Science

Abolish unnecessary printing and make sure that separated waste is being kept separate when emptied by the cleaners.

Senior Assistant Librarian, Library

Photovoltaic panels to be implemented on roofs of buildings that are not used for other functions, even the possibility to add them on top of the bus stop seats as a 2 in 1 function to not only provide much needed shade but to also absorb energy.

Student, Institute for Physical Education & Sport

## Greening, mobility and transport-related desiderata

Apart from planting more trees, the University of Malta should, if feasible, adopt hydroponic techniques to promote water conservation.

Assistant Librarian, Library

Redesign the campus to include more green areas instead of parking.

Senior Lecturer, Faculty for the Built Environment

Make sustainable use of green spaces to plant more trees and vegetation and be more proactive nationwide as catalyst of change in local infrastructure.

Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology

Make driving private cars unsustainable to promote use of public transport, bicycles, walking.

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Arts

Incentive scheme/challenge to every member of staff and student who ditches their car for a whole academic year.

Postgraduate student,  
Faculty of Education

Transforming the University of Malta's car-heavy culture into a hub for public transit and active commuting would drastically reduce its carbon footprint while turning congested parking lots into green, vibrant spaces for students and staff.

Senior Manager, Faculty of  
Medicine & Surgery

UM: Leading by example  
and engaging with society

UM needs to lead by example and  
put in practice all the necessary  
measurements to help the  
environment.

Administrator,  
Student Services

Become a true lighthouse and leader  
for climate action in Malta, through  
both research and practice.

Casual lecturer, Islands &  
Small States Institute

UM should take the lead in raising  
awareness about the various actions  
that could be done to help improve the  
environment, be it from teaching the  
public simple actions that encourage  
sustainable use of resources and  
reduction of waste, to also highlighting  
the immediate and long-term benefits  
of having more green spaces planned  
and made available within urban areas  
across the island.

Senior Lecturer,  
Faculty of Health Sciences

Involve academic entities to speak out  
to government incompetence on  
climate responsibilities.

Senior Lecturer,  
Faculty of Science

## UM: Leading by example and engaging with society

Raise awareness that it is doing a lot through its PV-on-roofs and Water-leakage elimination initiatives by having an online presence showing the outputs produced by all the PVs on all the UM buildings.

Professor, Faculty of ICT

I wish UM would be a model low-carbon campus, leading by example, showing students and the wider Maltese society how climate action can work in practice.

Lecturer, Institute of Earth Systems

Use its academic and research capabilities to push a national agenda for clean transport.

Director at UM

UM could help address climate change by reducing energy consumption, promoting sustainable transport and be a role model to the rest of the country with innovative initiatives such as P&R, minimising waste of paper and printing, and integrating environmental responsibility into campus operations and culture.

Lecturer, Faculty of Education



# Conclusion

The information and data shared are but a brief overview to provide some insights into the perspectives about climate change which staff and students working at the University of Malta hold.

A more thorough thematic review and analysis of the desiderata expressed by the respondents could be conducted to identify the priorities which the University could begin to address. In so doing, it can improve its sustainability credentials and strengthen its mission of advancing knowledge, empowering students and transforming society.