



Recycling

In 2022 UNSW research facilities generated 120 tonnes of chemical waste and 56 tonnes of biological waste. 64% of our chemical waste goes to landfill, 20% is incinerated, and less than 16% is recycled. You can help by applying the **5Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover**.



- Before recycling, ensure materials are clean, dry and empty. Labels should be defaced or removed to avoid confusion.
- **Don't wishcycle** - Wishcycling refers to well-intentioned attempts to recycle non-recyclable materials. Once a recycling bin becomes contaminated, the entire bin gets disposed as general waste, including correctly recycled items. If you are unsure whether an item is recyclable, either find out more information or dispose of it as general waste.



- Materials which may have been contaminated with hazardous materials, or used in PC2 and PC3 facilities, cannot be recycled and must be treated as laboratory hazardous waste. See the [Laboratory Hazardous Waste Disposal Guideline - HS321](#)

How to recycle common laboratory items

Glass bottles

Remove the lid and any labels, rinse the bottle thoroughly and allow it to dry. Place it in the glass bottle collection bin at lower campus stores.

Plastic containers

Non-contaminated plastic containers (e.g. pipette tip-boxes) and tubes can be cleaned for reuse or put in mixed recycling bins.

Plastic solvent bottles

Rinse the bottle thoroughly to remove all traces of solvent. Reuse for chemical waste or place in mixed recycling bins.

Soft plastic

Non-contaminated, clear and colourless soft plastics that can be scrunched into a ball in your hands can be placed in dedicated soft plastic collection points. More information [here](#).

Polystyrene

Consider reusing cooler boxes for storage and shipping. Check to see if your vendor has a take-back program for their polystyrene.

Remove labels and tape, before placing boxes in polystyrene [recycling locations](#).

Cardboard

Cardboard boxes can be flattened and taken to the nearest cardboard recycling bin (blue). Consider reusing clean boxes before disposal to give them a second life.

Wooden pallets and boxes

Make an [Archibus Service Request](#) or ask UNSW Stores to arrange disposal. For large equipment, the supplier may be required to take back materials through their agreement with UNSW.

Office waste

Always deposit office waste in correct UNSW recycling bins (e.g. mixed, paper, compost). For hard to recycle products like coffee capsules, TerraCycle offers free shipment and recycling for selected brands. Find out more [here](#).

Further information

Use the [UNSW Kensington campus sustainability map](#) to find where recycling facilities are located on campus. More information on waste and recycling streams at UNSW can be [found here](#).