

Ecology Policy

1 Scope

The University of Northampton is one of the youngest Universities in the UK and recognises our activities can have a positive and negative impact on the environment, both locally and globally and we are committed to making sustainable development part of its operations, research and curriculum. The Environment & Sustainability Team owns and manages this policy on behalf of The University of Northampton. This policy will be reviewed by the Environment & Sustainability Team on a 3- year basis or amended in response to changes in future legislation and/or case law.

This Ecology policy is a corporate policy and applies to all employees (and workers, as applicable) of The University of Northampton including any wholly owned subsidiaries, unless an alternative policy exists, subject to any qualifying conditions. All staff, students and contractors of the University must adhere to this policy. University activities including teaching, accommodation, research, administrative and operations are under scope of this Ecology policy, considering impacts from buildings owned, operated or leased by the University. All staff, students and contractors of the University must adhere to this policy.

2 Purpose

2.1 The University recognises the importance of the conservation, restoration and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. It is essential for continued sustainable development and for the health and well-being of our staff, students and visitors in line with the Strategic Plan and its focus on Social Impact.

3 Definitions

3.1 PEA: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2 BNG: Biodiversity Net Gains.

4 Scope

4.1 This Ecology policy is a corporate policy and applies to all employees (and workers, as applicable) of The University of Northampton including any wholly owned subsidiaries, unless an alternative policy exists, subject to any qualifying conditions. All staff, students and contractors of the University must adhere to this policy. University activities including teaching, accommodation, research, administrative and operations are under scope of this Ecology policy, considering impacts from buildings owned, operated or leased by the University. All staff, students and contractors of the University must adhere to this policy.

4.2 We are committed to:

- The continual enhancement and conservation management of habitats and biodiversity at all the University sites through adherence to the Biodiversity Management Plan;
- To identify, monitor and maintain plants and animals, especially those under threat or are rare and declining
- To monitor and protect International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red Listed species at the University and ensure the correct management and operating procedures for protected species are in place;
- To reduce or remove where possible, alien species at the University through approved procedures and following guidance produced by Natural England;
- To ensure new plans for land use change, habitat creation, restoration, conservation management of terrestrial and/or aquatic ecosystems associated with the University are consulted widely by relevant expertise;
- To raise awareness of the ecology and biodiversity at the University and to engage with staff and students through educational outreach, initiatives and campaigns, action groups and our own ecology zone.

5 Background

5.1 The University is located within the Nene Valley Way Nature Improvement Area and is committed to making biodiversity at our Waterside campus a fundamental part of our sustainable action plans. Waterside campus was planned and constructed with Biodiversity in mind. In 2019/2020, University of Northampton was awarded, with 22 other UK Universities, a Bronze Hedgehog Award from the British Hedgehog Society and the Gold Hedgehog Award in 22/23.

Waterside has already proven to be home to over 70 species of birds, otters, foxes, and other small mammals and in 2019 over 200 plant species were

identified, including one nationally-rare plant, which has not been recorded in Northamptonshire for 170 years – The Small-flowered Catchfly (*Silene gallica*).

The Environmental Act 2021 now includes the legislation for all sites to have baseline surveys of Biodiversity Net Gain assessments as a condition of planning permission. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and BNG was carried out at Waterside, Scholars Green and Gallagher Fields in 2024.

5.2 Using This policy forms part of, and should be read in conjunction with the [University's Environment Policy](#) and [Strategic Plan](#). A breach of this policy may be addressed via the University's disciplinary and code of conduct policies.

Our goals;

- Become an exemplar of environmental best practice in Higher Education
- Fulfil our mission - Transform lives + inspire change
- Be impactful on the University community
- Have a positive impact on our environment, helping the University to thrive

6 Where to get help, how to report an issue

6.1 Email environment@northampton.ac.uk

7 Associated documents

7.1

- [Environment Policy](#)
- [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (as part of our liE Manual)
- Construction Policy
- [University Strategic Plan](#)

8 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is in place for this policy and procedure

1. Policy/ Practice (name and brief description)

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<p>2. Reason for the EIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposed new policy/practice ○ Proposed change to an existing policy/practice ○ Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice ○ Other (please state):
<p>3. Person responsible for the policy/ practice</p> <p>Name: Hollie Darby</p> <p>Job title: Environment & Sustainability Department/ Faculty: Estates & Campus Services</p>
<p>4. Groups the policy, practice applies to:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visitors/Public</p>
<p>5. Data and evidence used to facilitate the screening of this policy/ practice including internal and external metrics and qualitative and anecdotal evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainability Leadership Scorecard ○ People & Planet league ○ BNG improvements ○ Investors in the Environment Accreditation ○ Northampton Biological Records Office
<p>6. Gaps in information/ evidence to allow proper assessment of the policy/ practice and how this will be addressed</p> <p>Reporting results can differ depending on the season carried out in. Try to minimise this by carrying out any audits the same time of year each year.</p>
<p>7. Groups who have been consulted with in the development / review of this the policy/ practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unions ○ Staff networks ○ HR ○ ULT ○ Internal experts ○ External experts ○ Focus groups ○ Other (please state):

8. Potential/actual impacts of the policy/ practice on the following characteristics

Reviewed characteristic	Positive impact <i>A positive impact is one in which a person or people will experience an advantage or benefit.</i>	Negative impact <i>A negative impact is one in which a person or people will experience a disadvantage.</i>	Detail of impact <i>If there is no impact – you do not need to fill in this section</i> <i>Explain how the proposal will disproportionately impact people who share the characteristic and/or what the effect of that impact will be on those people.</i> <i>This section should be completed whether the impact is positive or negative. With positive impact, detail the actions you will take to promote the positive impact to the university in the next column.</i>	How will you mitigate or remove any identified negative impacts and/or promote any positive impacts? Can any identified impact be justified for business reasons? If yes, please explain why. <i>If an identified negative impact cannot be removed or mitigated, explain why this can be justified for business reasons. Where you identify negative impact which cannot be justified for business reasons, you should identify any changes you can make to your proposal which will mitigate or eliminate this.</i>
Age			No impact	
Disability			No impact	
Gender reassignment			No impact	
Marriage and civil partnership			No impact	

Pregnancy and maternity			<i>No impact</i>	
Race			<i>No impact</i>	
Religion or belief			<i>No impact</i>	
Sex			<i>No impact</i>	
Sexual orientation			<i>No impact</i>	

9 Ownership and approval

Policy Owner: Environment & Sustainability Team, Estates & Campus Services

Author Date: November 2020

Approved By: TU Liaison + Sustainability Board

Date of Approval: 17/11/2020

Date of next review: 2028

10 Version control

Version Control: V2

Amendments: 25/06/2025 – update on Hedgehog Award, rare plant species and our BNG assessment.