

# Ecology Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

The University of Northampton recognises the importance of conservation, restoration and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. It is essential for the continued sustainable development and for the health and well-being of our staff, students and visitors in line with the Strategy 2023-2027 and focus Inclusivity, Sustainability, Aspiration and Trust. The University of Northampton is committed to making sustainable development part of its operations, research and curriculum. Estates & Campus Services own and manages the Ecology policy on behalf of The University of Northampton.

This policy will be reviewed by Estates and Campus Services on a 3-year basis or amended in response to changes in future legislation and/or case law.

## 2.0 Ownership

Estates and Campus Services owns and manages this policy on behalf of The University of Northampton.

## 3.0 Organisational Scope

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.

## 4.0 Policy Statement

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.

## **5.0 Key Principles**

The University is committed to making biodiversity across our whole estate 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 audited by SOS and British Hedgehog Society and awarded the Gold Hedgehog Award in 22/23. This accreditation stands for 3 years and will be re-audited in May 2026.

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 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 Biodiversity Net Gains assessment was carried out at Waterside, Scholars Green and Gallagher Fields in 2024.

The University of Northampton is 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, non-native 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 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.

## **6.0 Associated Documents**

The University of Northampton's associated documents:

- [Water Action Plan \(as part of our liE Manual\)](#)
- [Carbon Management Plan](#)
- [Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Construction Policy](#)
- [Waste Policy](#)
- [Single Use Plastics and Disposable Items Policy](#)
- [Energy Policy](#)
- [Travel Plan](#)
- [Sustainable Catering Policy](#)

## **7.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment must accompany this document.

## **8.0 VERSION CONTROL**

### **Version Control**

Original date written: November 2020

Author: Environment and Sustainability Team, Estates and Campus

Services Approval: TU Liaison and Sustainability Board 17/11/2020

### **Version Control V3**

Author: Environment and Sustainability Team, Estates and Campus

Services Date Written: 12/01/2026

Amendments: None

Approval Submitted to: Social Impact Board (SIB)

Status: Approved 10.06.2026

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Template

Before carrying out EIA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EIA Guidance and Notes. Additional training is available through staff development.

EIA forms part of the University's Impact Assessment procedure and covers policies, provisions, criteria, practices and activities, including the delivery of services and decisions, but will be referred to as policy/ practice hereafter. An EIA should be completed prior to decisions to implement new or change any existing policy/ practice and reviewed throughout the decision making or review process.

### 1. Policy/ Practice (name and brief description)

Ecology Policy - ensure the University focuses on the impact it has on local wildlife as well as committing to improving its BNG scoring within 5 years.

### 2. Reason for the EIA

- Proposed new policy/practice
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

### 3. Person responsible for the policy/ practice

Name: Hollie Darby

Job title: Environment Advisor

Department/ Faculty: Estates and Campus Services

### 4. Groups the policy, practice applies to:

- Staff
- Student
- Parents
- Visitors/Public

**5. Data and evidence used to facilitate the screening of this policy/ practice including internal and external metrics and qualitative and anecdotal evidence**

Benchmarking via:

- Internal and External audits

**6. Gaps in information/ evidence to allow proper assessment of the policy/ practice and how this will be addressed**

N/A

8. Potential/actual impacts of the policy/ practice on the following characteristics				
Reviewed characteristic	<b>Positive impact</b> <i>A positive impact is one in which a person or people will experience an advantage or benefit.</i>	<b>Negative impact</b> <i>A negative impact is one in which a person or people will experience a disadvantage.</i>	<b>Detail of impact</b> <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. This section should be completed whether the impact is positive or negative. With a positive impact, detail the actions you will take to promote the positive impact to the university in the next column.</i>	<b>How will you mitigate or remove any identified negative impacts and/or promote any positive impacts?</b>  <b>Can any identified impact be justified for business reasons? If yes, please explain why.</b> <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	x	x	An Ecology Policy can have a positive impact across all age groups by supporting greener, healthier and more engaging outdoor environments. Measures such as biodiversity enhancement, improved landscaping, habitat protection and greater access to natural spaces can enrich the campus experience for younger students, mature learners, staff and visitors. These improvements can also encourage learning, wellbeing and shared involvement in environmental stewardship across generations.	There is potential for negative impact if ecological measures are introduced in ways that change how outdoor spaces are used or maintained without considering the differing needs of age groups. For example, altered landscaping, reduced mowing, habitat protection zones or changes to pathways and seating may be experienced differently by younger students, mature learners, staff and visitors. If such changes are not clearly communicated and managed sensitively, some users may find outdoor spaces less accessible, less usable or less welcoming.
Disability	x	x	A well-implemented Ecology Policy can positively support disabled students, staff and visitors by promoting healthier outdoor environments and more thoughtfully designed green spaces.	Disabled people may experience negative impact if ecological enhancements alter access routes, external spaces or maintenance practices without fully considering accessibility and reasonable adjustments. For example, taller planting, uneven

			<p>Biodiversity improvements, access to natural areas and better management of the external estate can contribute to wellbeing, sensory engagement and opportunities for rest and recreation, provided that ecological enhancements are planned alongside accessibility requirements. This can help ensure that the benefits of nature-rich spaces are experienced as inclusively as possible.</p>	<p>natural surfaces, reduced lighting, changes to wayfinding or restrictions on access to certain areas could create barriers for people with physical impairments, sensory impairments, long-term health conditions or neurodivergent needs. Without careful planning, ecological improvements could unintentionally reduce independence, confidence or equal access to the outdoor environment.</p>
Gender reassignment	x	x	<p>: An Ecology Policy can contribute positively by creating attractive, well-maintained and inclusive outdoor spaces that support comfort, dignity and a sense of belonging for all users. Improvements to the quality and management of the campus environment, including green areas and routes through the estate, can help promote confidence in using shared spaces. Where ecological enhancements are designed inclusively, the policy can reinforce a welcoming and respectful campus culture.</p>	<p>: Although an Ecology Policy would generally apply to all users, there is potential for negative impact if changes to outdoor spaces, routes or facilities do not fully consider privacy, dignity and inclusive use of the campus environment. Poorly planned alterations to planting, lighting or access arrangements could affect some individuals' comfort or confidence in using shared external spaces. Inclusive design and consultation are therefore important to avoid unintended disadvantage for trans students, staff and visitors.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	x	x	<p>An Ecology Policy can have a positive impact by applying fairly and consistently to all members of the University community, regardless of marital or civil partnership status. By improving the quality, sustainability and usability of outdoor spaces, the policy supports equitable access to healthier and more welcoming environments for study, work and recreation. This contributes to a fair and inclusive campus experience for everyone.</p>	<p>An Ecology Policy is unlikely to have a direct negative impact on the basis of marriage or civil partnership. However, indirect impacts could arise if changes to outdoor spaces, campus routes or the use of shared environments are implemented inflexibly and affect how some individuals manage personal responsibilities or access campus facilities. Any such impact is likely to be limited, but fair and consistent implementation remains important.</p>

Pregnancy and maternity	x	x	An Ecology Policy can positively support people who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding by encouraging well-maintained, healthier and more accessible outdoor environments. Enhancements to landscaping, seating areas, shaded spaces and the overall quality of the external estate can contribute to comfort, wellbeing and ease of movement across campus. When ecological improvements are planned carefully, they can help ensure that nature-rich spaces remain supportive and usable for this group.	There is potential for negative impact if ecological measures affect the comfort, accessibility or usability of outdoor spaces for people who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding. Changes to pathways, seating, shade, rest areas or ease of movement across campus may have a disproportionate effect on this group if not planned carefully. Implementation should therefore ensure that ecological improvements do not reduce comfort, safety or access to appropriate external facilities.
Race	x	x	An Ecology Policy can have a positive impact by helping to create inclusive and welcoming outdoor spaces for a diverse University community. A consistent approach to improving biodiversity, landscape quality and access to green environments can support fair access to healthy and attractive campus surroundings for people of all racial groups, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. It can also reinforce the University's broader commitment to inclusion, wellbeing and environmental responsibility.	Negative impacts could arise if the design, communication or implementation of the Ecology Policy does not adequately reflect the experiences and needs of a diverse University community. If engagement with ecological changes is not inclusive or accessible, some groups may be less able to understand, influence or benefit from those changes. Any perception that the quality, safety or usability of outdoor spaces is unevenly experienced could also undermine inclusion, trust and belonging.
Religion or belief	x	x	: A well-designed Ecology Policy can positively support people of all religions, beliefs and none by helping to maintain calm, respectful and well-managed outdoor spaces across the campus. Access to natural environments can support reflection, quiet use and wellbeing, while thoughtful landscape management can help ensure that shared external spaces remain suitable and welcoming for a wide range of users.	: There is potential for negative impact if ecological changes affect the availability, suitability or quiet use of outdoor spaces that may support reflection, prayer or observance. Alterations to landscape design, access, seating or the management of external areas could unintentionally make some spaces less appropriate for these purposes. To avoid disadvantage, implementation should take account of the diverse religious and belief-related needs of the University community.

			This can contribute to an inclusive environment that respects diverse needs and practices.	
Sex	x	x	An Ecology Policy can have a positive impact on people of all sexes by supporting safer, healthier and more attractive external environments. Improvements to pathways, planting, natural spaces and the overall condition of the outdoor estate can enhance comfort, wellbeing and confidence in using campus spaces. Through fair and inclusive implementation, the policy can contribute to equitable access to the benefits of green and biodiverse environments.	Potential negative impacts may arise if ecological changes to planting, pathways, lighting or the management of external spaces affect some users' sense of safety, confidence or ease of movement in different ways. Although the policy is intended to apply equally, the practical effects of changes to the outdoor estate may not be experienced in the same way by everyone. This highlights the need to consider safety, dignity and equitable access throughout implementation.
Sexual orientation	x	x	An Ecology Policy can contribute positively by supporting inclusive, well-maintained and high-quality outdoor spaces in which all students, staff and visitors can study, work and spend time comfortably. By improving the consistency and attractiveness of the campus environment, the policy can help reinforce a culture of fairness, respect and belonging for people of all sexual orientations. This supports the University's wider commitment to inclusion and positive environmental impact.	An Ecology Policy is unlikely to have a direct negative impact on the basis of sexual orientation. However, unintended negative effects could arise if changes to the outdoor environment, access arrangements or the overall inclusiveness of shared spaces reduce individuals' confidence that they can use campus facilities safely and comfortably. Maintaining well-managed, accessible and inclusive external environments is therefore important to ensure that no group experiences indirect disadvantage.

<p><b>9. Does the policy/practice eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to any of the protected characteristics?</b></p> <p>We will ensure everyone will have access to knowledge and understanding of flora and fauna on our campus, as well as access to the Green spaces on campus.</p>	
<p><b>10. Does the policy/practice have a positive or negative impact on advancing equality of opportunity in relation to any of the protected characteristics?</b></p> <p>No</p>	
<p><b>11. Does the policy/practice foster good relations and address prejudice in relation to any of the protected characteristics?</b></p> <p>Yes</p>	
<p><b>12. Adjustments made to the policy/practice to counteract potential or actual negative impact.</b></p> <p>No</p>	
<p><b>13. Outcome</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No change required to the proposal- the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adjust the policy/ practice proposal – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Continue the policy/ practice proposal despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stop the policy/ practice proposal as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.</p>	
<p><b>14. Approval</b></p>	
<p>Signed by policy/ practice owner</p> <p>Date: 10/06/2026</p>	<p>H.Darby</p>
<p>Signed by the faculty Dean/ Department Director</p> <p>Date: 10.06.2026</p>	

