

# Environment and Sustainability Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

The University of Northampton is committed to creating positive environmental and social impact through the way we work, teach and engage with our communities. Reflecting the University's values of sustainability, aspiration, inclusivity and trust, we are embedding sustainable development across our operations, research and curriculum. Estates & Campus Services is responsible for owning and managing the Energy 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 Environment and Sustainability 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

The Estates and Campus Services department will monitor sustainability issues and initiatives, promote its environmental ethos to new staff and students, as well as ensuring all legal, regulatory and service requirements are adhered to. It will ensure auditing and reporting is carried out annually and presented to the Social Impact Board (SIB) and ULT. The **Social Impact Board (SIB)** was established to replace and broaden the remit of the former Sustainability Board. The SIB will have an expanded focus, including

the oversight and monitoring of social impact initiatives, and will report to the Board of Governors' Infrastructure and Resources Committee.

## **5.0 Key Principles**

To achieve its aim, the University is committed to:

1. Ensuring no student leaves the University without an understanding of climate change and sustainability, and the role that they can play in reducing their impact on the environment in their personal and professional lives.
2. Requiring catering outlets to offer sustainably sourced food that incorporates environmental, ethical, and animal-welfare considerations, including local and seasonal produce.
3. Raising awareness on both the environmental and health benefits of plant-based diets (vegetarian/vegan) through transparent product information, education and campaigns.
4. Reducing our staff and student carbon emissions associated with travel, to include but not limited to, commuting to and from UON, field trips, international student travel and university business travel in line with our Net Zero Carbon by 2050 target.
5. Developing and embedding environmental awareness and principles with staff and students; encouraging a university-wide participation in environmental activities, training, and programmes.
6. Developing and delivering the University Travel Plan's legacy.
7. Protecting the environment and preventing pollution, taking direct responsibility for the environmental impacts associated with all activities and operations in pursuance of high standards of environmental management across the estate.
8. Maintaining and annually improving of an externally audited Environmental Management System (EMS) to maintain continual improvement of performance and environmental best practice. This also ensures that UON fulfils its compliance obligations.
9. Setting environmental objectives and targets and reporting performance annually on the UON website.
10. Communicating the Environment & Sustainability Policy to employees and all interested parties.
11. Developing programmes and initiatives for energy conservation, improving energy efficiency, and instilling personal responsibility for conserving natural resources. Specific work includes maintaining and updating carbon management plans in line with UON Net Zero Carbon targets, which include specific carbon reduction targets and Government strategies.
12. Minimising waste generated through effective management, focusing on

avoidance, reuse, and recycling and calculating associated carbon emissions in line with our Net Zero Carbon by 2050 target.

13. Minimising water wastage and optimising the use of water saving to calculate associated carbon emissions in line with our Net Zero Carbon by 2050 target.
14. Protecting the environment by enhancing biodiversity within the management of the existing estate as well as with any new developments, including the appropriate management of protected and invasive species. Specific work includes maintaining and updating Management Plans for Biodiversity, which include specific targets and linked to relevant Government strategies.
15. Ensuring sustainable procurement policies take a long-term view of purchasing decisions, focusing on reducing environmental impacts and increasing the benefits that the University has on society.
16. Taking appropriate actions to enhance the environmental performance of the University estate, including consideration during construction and refurbishment.
17. Enhancing UON's place in the community, proactively working with external organisations to promote a better environment and encouraging best practice principles.
18. Acknowledging responsibility for protection of the environment and the prevention of pollution. across UON estate, at local and national levels.
19. Encouraging staff, students and contractors to be actively involved in environmental improvement on the University estate and in engaging with the wider community.

## **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](#)
- [Ecology 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: October 2007

Author: Environment and Sustainability Team, Estates and Campus

Services Approval: TU Liaison 20/05/2021 and Sustainability Board  
14/06/2021

### **Version Control V16**

Author: Environment and Sustainability Team, Estates and Campus

Services Date Written: 19/05/2026

Amendments: Edits made regarding iiE and Environmental Legal Register  
and Social Impact Board

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)**

Environment & Sustainability Policy – to ensure the University focuses on the impact it has on the local and global areas. To ensure it reduces its emissions year on year, to make sustainable choices and encourage all staff and students to do so.

**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:

- o Internal and External audits
- o Annual reporting such as HESA and iIE

**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 Environment and Sustainability Policy can have a positive impact across all age groups by promoting healthier, safer and more sustainable spaces in which to study and work. Measures such as improved building performance, greener travel options, reduced waste and better environmental quality can enhance the overall campus experience for younger students, mature learners and staff at different life stages. When communicated and implemented well, the policy can also encourage shared responsibility and participation across generations.	There is potential for negative impact if environmental and sustainability measures are introduced in ways that do not reflect the different needs, routines or levels of familiarity that may exist across age groups. Changes to travel expectations, building use, digital processes or campus practices may be easier for some people to adapt to than others. If implementation is not supported by clear communication, flexibility and appropriate adjustment, some younger or older students, staff and visitors may experience disadvantage.
Disability	x	x	: A well-designed Environment and Sustainability Policy can positively support disabled students, staff and visitors by creating healthier and better	Disabled people may experience negative impact if sustainability initiatives change the physical environment, modes of access or ways of working without fully considering accessibility and

			<p>managed environments that take account of accessibility, comfort and wellbeing. Improvements to air quality, lighting, thermal comfort, transport planning and estate design can support a more inclusive campus experience, particularly when sustainability measures are implemented alongside reasonable adjustments. This can help ensure that environmental improvements enhance, rather than limit, equal access and participation.</p>	<p>reasonable adjustments. For example, alterations to heating, lighting, ventilation, transport, waste arrangements or estate use could create barriers for people with physical impairments, sensory impairments, long-term health conditions or neurodivergent needs. Without careful design and consultation, environmental improvements could unintentionally reduce comfort, independence or equal access.</p>
Gender reassignment	x	x	<p>An Environment and Sustainability Policy can contribute positively by supporting safe, well-maintained and inclusive campus environments for all users. Improvements to the quality, consistency and sustainability of University facilities can help promote dignity, comfort and confidence in the use of shared spaces, including for trans students and staff. Where changes to buildings and services are planned inclusively, the policy can reinforce a culture of respect and belonging.</p>	<p>Although an Environment and Sustainability Policy would generally apply to all users, there is potential for negative impact if changes to facilities, estate management or access arrangements do not fully consider privacy, dignity and inclusive use of space. Poorly planned changes to buildings, travel arrangements or service provision could affect the confidence and comfort of trans staff and students. Inclusive consultation and implementation are therefore important to avoid unintended disadvantage.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	x	x	<p>The 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 promoting more sustainable ways of working, using resources efficiently and improving the campus environment, the policy supports equitable access to facilities, services and opportunities. This helps maintain a fair and inclusive learning and working environment for everyone.</p>	<p>The policy is unlikely to have a direct negative impact on the basis of marriage or civil partnership. However, indirect impacts could arise if sustainability-related expectations around travel, working patterns, campus attendance or service use are implemented inflexibly and make it harder for some individuals to balance personal responsibilities. Any such impact is likely to be limited, but fair and consistent implementation remains important.</p>

Pregnancy and maternity	x	x	An Environment and Sustainability Policy can positively support people who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding by encouraging healthy, comfortable and well-managed campus environments. Measures that improve indoor environmental quality, access to suitable facilities, sustainable travel options and responsive estate management can contribute to wellbeing, dignity and ease of access. When implemented thoughtfully, the policy can help ensure that environmental improvements also support the needs of this group.	There is potential for negative impact if environmental or sustainability measures affect comfort, rest, travel, access to facilities or flexibility in ways that do not take account of the needs of people who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding. Changes to temperature control, seating, travel expectations or access to appropriate spaces may have a disproportionate effect on this group. It is therefore important that implementation remains responsive to health, wellbeing and dignity requirements.
Race	x	x	The policy can have a positive impact by helping to create an inclusive and equitable environment for a racially diverse University community. A consistent approach to sustainability, communication and environmental improvement across the estate can support fair access to safe, healthy and welcoming spaces for people of all racial groups, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. It can also reinforce the University's wider commitment to respect, inclusion and social responsibility.	Negative impacts could arise if the design, communication or implementation of the policy does not adequately reflect the experiences and needs of a racially diverse University community. If engagement, consultation materials or behaviour-change expectations are not inclusive and accessible, some groups may be less able to participate fully or shape decisions that affect them. Any perception that burdens or benefits are unevenly distributed could also undermine fairness, trust and belonging.
Religion or belief	x	x	A well-implemented Environment and Sustainability Policy can positively support people of all religions, beliefs and none by helping to maintain safe, suitable and sustainable spaces across the campus. Improvements to buildings, resource use and operational planning can help ensure that teaching, working, reflection and prayer spaces remain accessible and fit for purpose. This can support an inclusive	There is potential for negative impact if sustainability measures affect the availability, suitability or accessibility of spaces and practices associated with religion or belief. For example, changes to room use, opening times, travel arrangements or catering approaches could unintentionally make it harder for some individuals to observe religious practices or access appropriate facilities. To avoid disadvantage, implementation should take account of the diverse needs of people of different religions, beliefs and none.

			environment that respects the diverse needs and practices of the University community.	
Sex	x	x	The policy can have a positive impact on people of all sexes by supporting safer, healthier and better managed campus environments. Improvements to lighting, building quality, travel planning and the overall sustainability of the estate can enhance comfort, wellbeing and confidence in using University spaces. Through fair and consistent implementation, the policy can contribute to equitable access and experience across the University community.	Potential negative impacts may arise if environmental and sustainability changes affect safety, access, facilities or patterns of campus use in ways that are not experienced equally by everyone. For example, changes to lighting, building access, active travel expectations or service provision may influence different users' sense of safety, confidence and convenience. This means implementation should be assessed carefully to ensure that it does not create indirect disadvantage on the basis of sex.
Sexual orientation	x	x	An Environment and Sustainability Policy can contribute positively by supporting inclusive, high-quality and sustainable spaces in which all students, staff and visitors can study, work and engage confidently. By improving the consistency and condition 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 social impact.	The 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 campus environment, facilities or ways of working reduce individuals' confidence that they can participate fully and comfortably in University life. Maintaining inclusive, well-managed and accessible spaces 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>This policy sets out to be inclusive of all people to ensure knowledge and understanding of our environmental and sustainable responsibilities.</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>	

