

## **Sustainable Construction Policy**

### **1.0 Introduction and background**

This policy aims to ensure that The University of Northampton meets its ethical and legal obligations (e.g Building Regulations 2010 Part L, Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, Building Act 1984) The University of Northampton is committed to making sustainable development part of its operations, research and curriculum.

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 Sustainable Construction 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 contractors and consultants involved in construction projects must adhere to this policy.

### **4.0 Policy Statement**

- **Design and Planning:** All new construction and refurbishment projects must prioritise sustainable design, including energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and accessibility. Where possible, projects should aim to achieve recognised sustainability certifications (e.g., BREEAM).
- **Materials:** Preference will be given to locally sourced, recycled, and low-impact materials. The University will avoid materials with high embodied carbon or those sourced from unsustainable supply chains.
- **Waste Management:** Construction projects must include robust waste minimisation and recycling plans, aiming to divert as much waste as possible from landfill.
- **Energy and Water:** Buildings will be designed and constructed to

minimise energy and water consumption, incorporating renewable energy systems where feasible.

- Biodiversity: Projects should enhance or protect local biodiversity, including the integration of green roofs, native planting, and wildlife corridors.
- Health and Wellbeing: Construction must ensure safe, healthy, and inclusive environments for students, staff, and visitors.
- Monitoring and Reporting: The University will monitor sustainability performance throughout the lifecycle of each project and report progress annually.

This policy forms part of and should be read in conjunction with the University's [Environment Policy](#).

Our goals are:

- Lead environmental best practices in Higher Education
- Reduce carbon emissions and resource consumption in all construction activities
- Promote the use of environmentally friendly materials and technologies
- Enhance biodiversity and green spaces across the University estate
- Ensure compliance with all relevant UK environmental legislation and standards
- Encourage stakeholder engagement and education on sustainable construction projects
- Fulfil our mission to provide a transformative experience and inspire change
- Positively impact the environment and enable the University's success

## **5.0 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](#)
- [Waste Policy](#)
- [Single Use Plastics and Disposable Items Policy](#)
- [Energy Policy](#)
- [Travel Plan](#)
- [Sustainable Catering Policy](#)

## **6.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment must accompany this document.

## **7.0 VERSION CONTROL**

### **Version Control**

Original date written: October 2020.

Author: Environment and Sustainability Team, Estates and Campus Services

Approval: TU Liaison 17/11/2020 and Sustainability Board 23/11/2020

### **Version Control V2**

Author: Environment and Sustainability Team, Estates and Campus Services

Date Written: 02/04/2026

Amendments: Review of content and rewrite

Approval Submitted to: Social Impact Board (SIB)

Status: Approved 10.6.2026

### **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)**

Sustainable Construction Policy – to ensure the University focuses on the impact it has on the local and global areas when considering new buildings or modifications to existing buildings.

**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: Tracey Russell

Job title: Director of Estates & Campus Services

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
- 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	<i>Positive impact</i>	<i>Negative impact</i>	Detail of impact	How will you mitigate or remove any identified negative impacts and/or promote any positive impacts?  <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	<p>Improves indoor air quality and thermal comfort, supporting health and wellbeing for students and staff across all age groups.</p> <p>Designs for accessibility and ease of navigation (e.g., step-free routes, clear wayfinding) benefit older staff, mature students, and visitors as well as younger users.</p>	<p>Short-term disruption (noise, dust, temporary closures) can disproportionately affect people who rely on familiar routes and predictable environments, including some older staff, students and visitors.</p> <p>Over-reliance on app-based access, QR codes, or “smart building” controls can disadvantage people who are less digitally confident.</p> <p>Changes to timetabling, relocations, or travel routes</p>

			Creates healthier, greener campuses, shaded routes,, supporting safe travel and outdoor activity for everyone.	during works can create additional time and cost burdens that fall unevenly across age groups.
Disability	X	X	<p>Inclusive design embedded in new builds/refurbs (step-free access, accessible toilets, sensory-friendly spaces, adjustable lighting/acoustics) reduces barriers to study and work.</p> <p>Better lighting efficiency and glare control can support people with visual impairments, neurodivergence, migraines, and fatigue.</p>	<p>Decanting, temporary ramps/lifts, and changing access routes during construction can create significant barriers for wheelchair users and people with mobility impairments.</p> <p>Energy-saving measures that reduce heating/cooling or ventilation too aggressively can worsen comfort and health outcomes for people with certain conditions (e.g., respiratory illness, chronic pain, fatigue).</p> <p>Construction noise, lighting changes, and “open plan” retrofit choices can negatively affect neurodivergent people and those with sensory sensitivities if not properly managed.</p>
Gender reassignment	X	X	<p>Policy-led design standards can include inclusive changing and toilet facilities, improving dignity, privacy, and safety.</p> <p>Clear, consistently applied building standards reduce reliance on ad-hoc decisions that can unintentionally exclude trans and non-binary users.</p> <p>Improved campus environments (lighting, wayfinding, safe routes) can help everyone feel safer moving through buildings and between sites.</p>	<p>Facility changes (e.g., removal or reduction of single-occupancy toilets/changing spaces to meet space-efficiency goals) can reduce privacy and increase anxiety for some users.</p> <p>Inconsistent signage or poorly handled consultation can lead to confusion and conflict about facilities, increasing the risk of exclusion or complaints.</p> <p>Temporary relocations or security changes during works can make some routes or buildings feel less safe, particularly outside core hours.</p>

<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Construction programmes that prioritise predictable phasing and clear access routes can reduce disruption to staff with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Healthier buildings (air quality, daylight) support wellbeing for staff and students balancing work, study, and family life.</p>	<p>Cost uplifts from higher sustainability standards may result in cuts to other campus services, which can indirectly affect staff and students with household or caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Extended construction timelines can increase commuting complexity (parking changes, public transport reliance), disproportionately affecting those juggling work, study, and family commitments.</p> <p>Restrictions on on-site accommodation or guest arrangements during refurbishment can reduce flexibility for households visiting or supporting students.</p>
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Pregnancy and maternity			<p>Improved indoor air quality, temperature stability, and reduced exposure to hazardous substances support maternal health.</p> <p>Inclusive layouts can ensure convenient access to lifts, rest areas, and baby-feeding/changing facilities.</p> <p>Safer, well-lit routes and improved security measures in building design benefit those travelling on campus at different times.</p>	<p>Exposure to construction dust, fumes, and vibration (even when within limits) can raise health and comfort concerns for pregnant people if controls are not robust.</p> <p>Longer walking routes due to closures, lift outages, or decants can be particularly challenging during pregnancy or when returning to campus post-birth.</p> <p>Space-optimisation decisions may deprioritise parent facilities (lactation rooms, baby-changing, rest spaces) unless explicitly protected in requirements.</p>
Race			<p>Local, ethical procurement and community-benefit clauses can widen access to jobs, apprenticeships, and supplier opportunities for underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Inclusive consultation during design can help ensure spaces work for diverse cultural needs (e.g., prayer/quiet spaces, inclusive catering and social areas).</p>	<p>Rising accommodation or service costs linked to capital investment recovery can increase financial pressure on students who are already disproportionately affected by cost-of-living issues.</p> <p>If engagement is limited, design outcomes may overlook cultural needs (e.g., cooking provision, hair care facilities, community space), reducing inclusion despite sustainability goals.</p>
Religion or belief			<p>Design standards can protect and provide appropriate multi-faith/prayer/quiet spaces with good ventilation, lighting, and privacy.</p> <p>Construction scheduling and stakeholder engagement can consider key religious dates and observances, reducing avoidable disruption.</p> <p>Sustainable landscaping and biodiversity</p>	<p>Construction schedules, relocations, or reduced space may disrupt access to prayer/quiet rooms or ablution facilities if not planned and communicated well.</p> <p>Design choices that “standardise” spaces can inadvertently remove features needed for particular practices (privacy, foot-washing access, storage for items).</p>

			<p>initiatives can create reflective outdoor spaces valued by many belief systems and traditions.</p>	
Sex			<p>Improved lighting, safe access routes, and secure building design can enhance personal safety for everyone on campus.</p> <p>Better indoor environmental quality can reduce health impacts that disproportionately affect some groups (e.g., headaches/fatigue linked to poor ventilation).</p>	<p>Changes to lighting, entrances, or campus routes during works can increase safety concerns if temporary arrangements are poorly designed or maintained.</p> <p>Construction site boundaries and reduced passive surveillance can create poorly overlooked areas, raising risk perceptions for people travelling alone.</p> <p>If policy focus is primarily environmental, workforce and site culture controls may be under-emphasised, increasing the risk of harassment or poor conduct on projects.</p>
Sexual orientation			<p>Consistent inclusive design (privacy, safety, welcoming social/study spaces) helps all users feel comfortable using facilities.</p> <p>Visibility of inclusive, values-led campus investment can strengthen belonging and wellbeing for LGBTQ+ students and staff.</p> <p>Safer, better-lit public realms and routes between buildings can reduce perceived risk and support full participation in campus life.</p>	<p>Inadequate consultation or communications can lead to design outcomes that feel less welcoming (e.g., removal of inclusive facilities or community spaces to save cost/space).</p> <p>Disruption to trusted safe spaces, student hubs, or support-service locations during works can reduce access and visibility.</p> <p>If changes increase surveillance or restrict informal gathering areas, some LGBTQ+ students and staff may feel less comfortable using campus spaces.</p>

<b>9. Does the policy/practice eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to any of the protected characteristics? Yes</b>	
<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? A positive impact</b>	
<b>11. Does the policy/practice foster good relations and address prejudice in relation to any of the protected characteristics?</b> Yes	
<b>12. Adjustments made to the policy/practice to counteract potential or actual negative impact.</b> None	
<b>13. Outcome</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No change required to the proposal– the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.  <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.  <input type="checkbox"/> Continue the policy/ practice proposal despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified  <input type="checkbox"/> Stop the policy/ practice proposal as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.	
<b>14. Approval</b>	
Signed by policy/ practice owner	Hollie Darby
Date: 10.06.2026	

Signed by the faculty Dean/ Department  
Director

Date: 10.06.2026

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Russell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends under the word "Russell".