

Ecosystems Services Policy

This document forms part of the University of Greenwich Sustainability Policy. This policy outlines the importance of natural space and the benefits that can be obtained from a sensitively managed ecosystem to both staff and students alongside that of biodiversity. The successful delivery of this Policy supports the university's Sustainability Strategic Action Plan and the Biodiversity Action Plan

Ecosystem services are the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to human survival and enhance our well-being. They can be direct, or indirect and can be split into four broad categories;

- **Provisioning services** are products obtained from ecosystems including food, fresh water, wood, fibre, genetic resources and medicines.
- **Regulating services** are the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes such as climate, water, pest control and disease.
- **Supporting services** are necessary for all other services including biomass and atmospheric oxygen production, soil formation and nutrient recycling.
- **Cultural services** include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, recreation and aesthetic values.

These services influence our health, social and economic success and underpins the importance of sensitive environmental management. For the university specifically this approach could help reduce summer solar and heat gain through tree planting, reduce run off and flooding, provide spaces to improve stakeholders mental and physical wellbeing and reduce particulate pollution.

The university has almost 30,000 students and over 2,500 staff based across three campuses. The Greenwich Campus has a central London location in a predominantly urban environment but is also close to an area of known conservation value. Avery Hill Campus is in South East London and encompasses a significant area of green space adjacent to areas with known conservation value, and the Medway Campus is based in Kent in a predominantly urban environment near to the mouth of the River Medway.

Our operations have the potential to impact on our ecosystem services both directly and indirectly and we have a responsibility to manage these impacts.

The university commits to undertake the following:

1. Comply with all relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice, linking with our environmental management system. This includes the protection of any endangered or listed species located on site.
2. Renew and develop the management plan for each campus reflecting the need to deliver ecosystem services; these will be reviewed against survey records and those from further assessments and wildlife monitoring.
3. Manage our estate to conserve and, where possible, enhance site biodiversity whilst maintaining the cultural heritage and amenity value. Invasive species, where identified will be monitored and reflected in management plans. Artificial chemical inputs will be strictly avoided with systems in place to ensure they can only be used if there is no effective alternative.

4. Consider the environmental impact and identify opportunities for ecological enhancement of any development and undertake appropriate mitigation.
5. Provide training for staff and ensure contractors are appropriately trained and meet the requirements of all relevant university policies.
6. Educate and engage staff and students to increase awareness of the wildlife on campuses and the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural environment, whilst engaging in health and wellbeing promoting activities.
7. Explore and develop the range of educational opportunities offered by the estate and promote these to the relevant departments.
8. To work in partnership with local conservation and environmental groups and local authorities, to share knowledge and resources and maintain shared land ecosystems.
9. To work with internal stakeholders to reduce their impact on ecosystem services where possible
10. Initiate and progress carbon sequestration research for quantitative benefits into having natural space as a carbon offset.

Collaboration between the Estates & Facilities Directorate, Faculty Academics and invested groups and individuals with appropriate knowledge is crucial for success.

This policy will be reviewed and implemented by through quarterly stakeholder meetings. Updates to the policy will be submitted for approval to the Sustainability Management Committee (SMC) for review before final sign off by Vice Chancellor.

Each campus is unique in its natural landscape; though this policy & action plan over the university as a whole, collaborative work will shift improvements on a local level.

All staff and students have a duty to maintain a clean and safe environment. Report any identified hazards within the grounds and use waste disposal bins correctly. This applies to all external parties and contractors on site.

Progress against this policy and any related issues will be reported annually to the Sustainability Management Committee. The Annual Sustainability Report will provide progress for public viewing.

Professor Jane Harrington
Vice-Chancellor and CEO, University of Greenwich
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1.0	December 2023	Head of Strategic Sustainability	Minor changes from version approved on 21/02/22
1.1	November 2024	Head of Strategic Sustainability	Minor amends relating to contextual changes (organisational and reporting and management meetings)

Approved by the Sustainability Management Committee 27/11/2024