

University of Leicester Biodiversity Policy

Biodiversity is short for 'biological diversity' and means the variety of life on earth. This includes all species on our planet, their habitats and the interactions that occur between them.

1. The Leicester Context

The University owns and manages over 300 acres of land; this includes over 88 acres of green spaces including the Botanic Gardens and a Local Wildlife Site – Blackthorn Manor. There are 10,000 trees and a number of protected or rare species to be found on University grounds.

“**The University is committed to protecting, creating and enhancing space for a diversity of human and nonhuman life**” – *Leicester for Life, Estates Vision Statement*

2. Underlying Principles

The University of Leicester aims to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of its land and buildings by “protecting natural habitats and encouraging local wildlife and biological diversity” ([Environmental Sustainability Policy, 2018](#)) in line with local and regional action plans. Wherever practical to do so Leicester will avoid or limit the use of environmentally-damaging substances, materials and processes. Leicester will work with adjacent partner organisations to maintain the existing proportion of ‘green space’ to developed land across the environs of the University.

3. Objectives

The University of Leicester commits to a number of objectives through the [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) including:

SPECIES To implement specialist protective measures for vulnerable and important species with reference to the [City of Leicester’s Biodiversity Action Plan](#);

PARTNERSHIP & COMMUNITY To establish wider links with organisations and groups to sustain and enhance biodiversity in the University and within the community. The University should continue to should grow and strengthen current relationships;

ESTATES To integrate the principles of biodiversity conservation into estate planning and management (Leicester for Life) with the intent to enhance existing habitats and create new spaces where possible. The University should be a role model and act as a responsible landlord to all wildlife residents;

COMPLIANCE To adhere to all laws, policies protecting wildlife and natural spaces; to strive to meet guidance set down by UK government and local governing bodies and be Biodiversity Net Positive;

INSIGHT To raise awareness of biodiversity on University of Leicester-owned land and act on the need to maintain and enhance it for future generations;

EDUCATION To use the 'living lab' philosophy and utilise Biodiversity as a valuable teaching resource resulting in real world impacts. Offering projects and funding for research projects will enable students to gain practical experience and help meet University goals;

STAFF AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE To enhance the natural environment within our urban campuses using responsible planning and the creation of volunteering opportunities. Extra activities and access to nature will aim to maintain the physical and mental health of all staff and students.

4. In practice

4.1 Biodiversity Design Guide

Guidance is provided for new developments and refurbishments through the [Biodiversity Design Guide](#) (2019).

4.2 Key Performance Indicators

A number of KPIs have been agreed under the [Plants and Pollinators Policy](#) (2019)

4.3 Tree sequestration

A [tool](#) has been produced that enables the University to calculate the overall carbon sequestration of our trees, including individual trees. This will provide accurate data when mitigating for tree removal as part of development projects.

4.4 Derogations

Project managers are expected to recording exceptions on developing projects & agree derogations, which will then be recorded within project documentation.

Derogations should be raised with the Social Impact Team and, where necessary the Biodiversity Working Group.

4.5 SOFT

A [Sustainability Offset Treasury](#) is to be established to provide appropriate alternative investment for projects and activities where sustainability and biodiversity initiatives are unable to be implemented. This fund will be spent investing in sustainability and biodiversity initiatives on University of Leicester sites.

5. Review

This policy will be overseen by the Biodiversity Working Group and reviewed annually.