Duhok Polytechnic University

Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems and Marine Pollution Prevention Policy

Policy information	
Policy number	DPU-POL-EN-12
Policy category	Environment and Campus Operations
Version	1.1
Policy owner	Sustainable Development Goals Policy Development Committee
Responsible office	Directorate of Services, with the Directorate of Procurement and Stores and the Directorate of Engineering and Maintenance
Approving authority	University Council
Approval date	30/06/2024
Effective date	30/06/2024
Last review date	30/06/2025
Next review date	30/06/2027
Related policies	Clean Water and Sanitation Policy (DPU-POL-EN-07); Responsible Consumption and Production Policy (DPU-POL-EN-11)
SDG alignment	SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)

1. Policy statement

Duhok Polytechnic University (DPU) is committed to protecting aquatic ecosystems and promoting the sustainable use of aquatic resources. The rivers, streams, springs, dams and lakes of Duhok Governorate, including the Khabur and Great Zab rivers and Duhok Dam lake, are vital for drinking water, agriculture, fisheries and tourism, and pollution that enters them ultimately reaches the sea. DPU aligns its operations, education, research and community engagement with Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water, to prevent and reduce water pollution, ensure that aquatic food on campus is sustainably harvested, and work with the community to protect shared water bodies.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- minimise direct and indirect pollution of rivers, dams, lakes and other aquatic environments, including the marine environment
- phase out single-use plastics from all campus facilities
- ensure that food on campus that comes from aquatic ecosystems is sustainably harvested
- set water quality standards for water discharged from DPU campuses
- minimise alterations to aquatic ecosystems and support sustainable watershed management
- educate students, staff and the local community through training, workshops and outreach
- support research and innovation in aquatic conservation and sustainable aquaculture

3. Scope

This policy applies to all academic and administrative units, students, staff, alumni, contractors, suppliers and external partners of DPU, particularly those engaged in research, food services,

procurement, campus operations, construction and outreach, across all DPU campuses, colleges, institutes, dormitories, laboratories, workshops and cafeterias.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Aquatic ecosystem	A freshwater or marine environment, such as a river, stream, spring, dam, lake, wetland or sea, and the plants and animals that live in it
Water and marine pollution	The introduction of harmful substances or waste into rivers, dams, lakes, other freshwater bodies or the sea as a result of human activity
Aquatic foods	Edible plants and animals sourced from freshwater or marine ecosystems, such as fish and shellfish
Sustainable harvesting	Catching, collecting or farming aquatic foods legally and in ways that keep ecosystems healthy and resources available in the long term
Single-use plastics	Disposable plastics intended for one-time use before disposal or recycling
Watershed	The area of land that drains into a river or lake, including its streams, springs and groundwater

5. Policy provisions

5.1 Sustainably harvested aquatic food on campus

- Fish and other aquatic foods served on DPU campuses, including by outsourced cafeterias and caterers, must come from sustainable, legal and well-managed sources.
- Procurement gives priority to vendors that supply certified sustainable aquatic products (such as MSC or ASC certified) and to local licensed fish farms in the Kurdistan Region.
- Endangered or protected species, and fish caught by illegal or destructive methods (such as explosives, poison or electric fishing) or outside the legal fishing season, are not purchased or served.
- Catering contracts include these requirements, and suppliers must be able to state the source of the aquatic foods they supply.

5.2 Water discharge quality standards

- Water discharged from DPU campuses must meet the Iraqi and Kurdistan Region environmental standards for waste water discharge.
- Laboratory chemicals, oils, fuels, paints and other hazardous liquids must never be poured into sinks, drains or the ground; they are collected and disposed of as hazardous waste under the Responsible Consumption and Production Policy.
- Septic tanks, grease traps and drainage systems are inspected and maintained regularly to prevent leaks and overflow into streams and groundwater.

5.3 Preventing water and marine pollution

- DPU minimises direct and indirect pollution of rivers, dams and other aquatic environments from its campuses, laboratories, workshops and vehicles.
- Litter bins are provided across campuses, and waste is collected and recycled so that it does not reach drains, streams or rivers.

- The use of fertilisers and pesticides on campus grounds is kept to a minimum to prevent run-off into water bodies.

5.4 Plastic waste reduction action plan

1. Single-use plastics are banned in campus food and drink services, including cafeterias and university events.
2. Reusable, refillable or biodegradable alternatives are provided, and free drinking water points reduce the use of bottled water.
3. Plastic waste is separated and sent for recycling, and the amount of plastic waste is measured each year.
4. Awareness campaigns are held during university events and Sustainability Week to reduce plastic use.

5.5 Minimising alterations to aquatic ecosystems

- New buildings, roads and other works on DPU land are planned to avoid or minimise damage to streams, springs, wetlands and natural drainage channels.
- Construction contractors must control soil erosion and sediment run-off and must not dump construction waste in or near water bodies.
- Natural vegetation along streams and drainage channels on DPU land is protected.

5.6 Watershed management and monitoring

- DPU supports sustainable management of the watersheds its campuses lie in, including rainwater management, reducing run-off and protecting springs and groundwater, as set out in the Clean Water and Sanitation Policy.
- DPU monitors the quality of water bodies near its campuses through student and faculty projects and in cooperation with the relevant directorates, including measuring pollutants in nearby water sources.

5.7 Community collaboration and clean-up campaigns

- DPU conducts clean-up campaigns for nearby rivers, dams or lakes twice a year, with the involvement of the local community.
- DPU works with the Duhok Directorates of Environment, Water and Agriculture, NGOs and local communities to protect shared rivers, lakes and reservoirs.
- DPU supports and organises events that promote the conservation and sustainable use of rivers, lakes, seas and aquatic resources, such as World Water Day and World Environment Day.

5.8 Education and outreach

- Aquatic ecosystem and water sustainability themes are incorporated into relevant curricula.
- Staff are trained in sustainable procurement and waste management.
- DPU offers educational outreach to local communities on water conservation and irrigation practices, sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and tourism, and the harm caused by overfishing and illegal or destructive fishing.
- Student unions and clubs lead awareness campaigns and sustainability initiatives.

5.9 Research and innovation

- DPU encourages and supports research and student projects on aquatic conservation, water quality, sustainable aquaculture and technologies that reduce damage to aquatic ecosystems.
- DPU develops partnerships with local, national and international bodies on research and practice related to SDG 14.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
University Council	Approves the policy and reviews progress
SDG Policy Development Committee	Owns the policy; coordinates implementation; monitors compliance; develops partnerships; prepares the annual report
Directorate of Services	Reduces waste discharge; implements recycling and plastic reduction; organises clean-up campaigns
Directorate of Procurement and Stores	Gives priority to vendors of certified sustainable aquatic products; includes the policy in catering and supply contracts
Directorate of Engineering and Maintenance	Maintains drainage, septic and waste water systems; applies the policy to construction and maintenance works
Faculty members	Integrate SDG 14 themes into teaching and research
Student unions and clubs	Lead awareness campaigns and sustainability initiatives
Contractors and suppliers	Comply with the environmental sustainability requirements of this policy

7. Compliance and enforcement

- Violations, such as procurement of unsustainable aquatic food or dumping of plastic waste, are addressed through formal warnings and may result in restricted access to university services or funding.
- Contractors and suppliers that do not comply with the environmental sustainability requirements of this policy may have their agreements terminated.

8. Monitoring and reporting

1. Annual reports are submitted to the SDG Policy Development Committee and the University Council.
2. Key performance indicators include: reduction in plastic waste (tonnes per year); share of sustainably sourced aquatic products; number of SDG 14-related projects and activities; number of clean-up campaigns and participants; and pollutants measured in nearby water sources.
3. Progress is included in the annual sustainability report published on the DPU website.
4. An independent audit of the policy is carried out every two years.

9. Related documents

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

- ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems
- Iraqi and Kurdistan Region environmental protection, water and fisheries regulations
- DPU Clean Water and Sanitation Policy (DPU-POL-EN-07) and Responsible Consumption and Production Policy (DPU-POL-EN-11)

10. Policy review

The policy is reviewed every two years, or earlier if environmental, water or fisheries regulations change.

11. Version history

Version	Date	Description	Approved by
1.0	30/06/2024	First approval	University Council
1.1	30/06/2025	Revised	University Council

12. Approval

Approved by the University Council of Duhok Polytechnic University, created on 30/06/2024, and revised on 30/06/2025.

