Duhok Polytechnic University

Life on Land and Biodiversity Policy

Policy information	
Policy number	DPU-POL-EN-13
Policy category	Environment and Campus Operations
Version	1.1
Policy owner	Sustainable Development Goals Policy Development Committee
Responsible office	Directorate of Engineering and Maintenance, with the Directorate of Procurement and Stores and the Directorate of Services
Approving authority	University Council
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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); Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems and Marine Pollution Prevention Policy (DPU-POL-EN-12)
SDG alignment	SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)

1. Policy statement

Duhok Polytechnic University (DPU) is strongly committed to the protection, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity. Duhok Governorate's oak and pine forests, mountains, rangelands and farmland face deforestation, wildfires, drought, erosion and land degradation. Recognising the role of healthy land systems in supporting biodiversity, climate stability and human well-being, DPU commits to achieving the aims of Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land through its campus operations, education, research and community engagement.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- support sustainable forest management, stop deforestation and increase afforestation and reforestation in the region
- combat desertification and land degradation, and restore land affected by drought, floods and fire
- protect and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and natural habitats
- stop biodiversity loss and protect endangered and threatened plant and animal species
- oppose illegal hunting and trafficking of protected species
- ensure that food on campus is sustainably farmed and that products causing deforestation are avoided
- integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into university planning, study programmes, research and outreach

3. Scope

This policy applies to all DPU campuses, land, buildings, gardens and green spaces in the Duhok, Zirka, Zakho, Shekhan, Amedi and Shingal areas; to campus planning, construction and maintenance; to the purchasing of food, paper, wood and other products; and to all students, staff, contractors and suppliers.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Biodiversity	The variety of life in all its forms, including plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms; crucial for ecosystem health and resilience
Ecosystem	A community of living organisms interacting with their physical environment, such as a forest, wetland or grassland
Desertification	The process by which fertile land becomes desert, typically due to drought, deforestation or inappropriate agriculture
Land degradation	The decline in land quality caused by human activities, reducing productivity and ecosystem services
Afforestation / reforestation	Planting trees in areas that have never been forested / replanting trees in deforested areas to restore ecosystems
Sustainable forest management	Managing forests to meet current needs without compromising future generations, balancing ecological, economic and social goals
Protected areas	Land dedicated to the long-term conservation of nature, such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries
IUCN Red List species	Species assessed as threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature
Alien invasive species	Non-native species whose introduction or spread threatens local biodiversity

5. Policy provisions

5.1 Campus biodiversity action plan

- DPU preserves green spaces, natural areas and botanical gardens on its land, and extends green cover through tree planting.
- Landscaping uses native tree and plant species of the Kurdistan Region and is biodiversity-friendly; monoculture planting is avoided.
- The campus is used as a living laboratory to record and protect native flora and fauna, including a species inventory of plants, birds, animals and insects.

5.2 Threatened species and local biodiversity in planning

- Before construction or expansion works, DPU identifies any IUCN Red List and nationally protected species with habitats in the affected area, and takes measures to avoid or reduce harm.
- Local biodiversity is considered in all campus planning and development, and habitats are protected during construction.
- Land use, tree removal and works affecting protected species must comply with national and Kurdistan Region laws, zoning, green building codes and land development regulations.

5.3 Alien invasive species

- DPU does not knowingly plant or introduce alien invasive species on its land.
- Invasive species found on campus are monitored and controlled using environmentally safe methods.

5.4 Sustainable land management on campus

- University-owned farmland and gardens are managed using organic, permaculture or other sustainable methods, including composting and biofertilisers.
- Harmful pesticides and chemicals are avoided or kept to a minimum.
- Rainwater harvesting, terracing and planting are used to prevent soil erosion.

5.5 Sustainably farmed food and responsible purchasing

- Food on campus, including from outsourced cafeterias and caterers, is purchased from sustainably farmed sources, with priority to local farms using sustainable agricultural practices, as set out in the Responsible Consumption and Production Policy.
- Paper, wood and other products are purchased from sustainable and legal sources, and products that contribute to deforestation or habitat loss are avoided.

5.6 Pollution and waste affecting land ecosystems

- Water discharged from campuses must meet national and Kurdistan Region quality standards, as set out in the Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems and Marine Pollution Prevention Policy.
- Plastic and non-biodegradable waste is reduced and recycled, and hazardous waste is disposed of safely through licensed contractors, as set out in the Responsible Consumption and Production Policy.

5.7 Forests, afforestation and wildfire prevention

- DPU organises and supports tree-planting campaigns on its campuses and in degraded areas, using native species.
- DPU supports wildfire prevention through awareness campaigns, in cooperation with the Duhok Forest Police and the Directorate of Environment.
- DPU opposes illegal hunting, logging and trafficking of protected species and raises awareness of these issues.

5.8 Education, events and community engagement

- SDG 15 topics, including biodiversity, land management, forest conservation, climate change and ecosystem services, are integrated into relevant study programmes.
- DPU organises public lectures, workshops and awareness campaigns, and celebrates the International Day of Forests (21 March), Earth Day (22 April), the International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May) and World Environment Day (5 June).
- DPU offers outreach and training to farmers, local schools and NGOs on sustainable land use, agriculture, soil conservation and eco-tourism.
- Student-led environmental clubs, clean-up drives and green initiatives are encouraged.

5.9 Research and collaboration

- DPU encourages and supports research on biodiversity conservation, native plants, sustainable land use, forest regeneration, soil quality and invasive species control.
- DPU works with local communities, government departments, NGOs and industry on the conservation and restoration of shared land ecosystems, and provides scientific input to land use, conservation and reforestation policy.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
University Council	Approves the policy and reviews the annual report
SDG Policy Development Committee	Owns the policy; supervises implementation; coordinates events and partnerships; handles non-compliance; prepares the annual report
Directorate of Engineering and Maintenance	Applies the policy in campus planning, construction, landscaping and land management
Directorate of Procurement and Stores	Applies sustainable food, paper and wood purchasing criteria
Directorate of Services	Manages green spaces, tree planting, composting and waste
Deans and faculty members	Integrate SDG 15 into teaching and research; support outreach on their campuses
Students and student clubs	Lead awareness campaigns, tree planting and green initiatives
Contractors and suppliers	Comply with the environmental requirements of this policy

7. Compliance and enforcement

- Projects or departments that violate land use or biodiversity requirements must carry out remediation and may face penalties under university regulations.
- Contractors and suppliers that do not comply with this policy may have their agreements terminated.
- Faculty, staff and students are trained and informed on the principles of SDG 15 and campus conservation.

8. Monitoring and reporting

1. The SDG Policy Development Committee monitors, each year: the campus species inventory and changes over time; the area of green space and natural habitat compared with built area; the number of trees planted; conservation projects, events and partnerships; biodiversity-related courses; and participation in outreach activities.
2. Periodic environmental audits review campus biodiversity, land use practices and compliance with regulations.
3. An annual report is presented to the University Council and included in the sustainability report published on the DPU website.

9. Related documents

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land
- IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- Iraqi and Kurdistan Region environmental protection, forestry and wildlife regulations
- DPU Clean Water and Sanitation, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems and Marine Pollution Prevention policies
- DPU Institutional Strategic Plan for University Reform 2024–2027

10. Policy review

The policy is reviewed every two years, or earlier if environmental, forestry or wildlife 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.

