

Nature Positive Pledge Roadmap



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1. Make your pledge and announce to stakeholders

Universities have a huge opportunity to influence current and future generations: tell your staff, students and wider communities about your Nature Positive pledge and invite their involvement.

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2. Establish biodiversity working group

This will ideally include a wide range of stakeholders, such as management, academics, estates teams and students to discuss and implement initiatives for biodiversity at your institution.

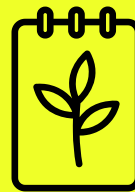
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3. Baseline data mapping and gap analysis

The first step of working towards a biodiversity baseline is mapping the existing data you have, who is responsible for it and where there are gaps. Data sources might include environmental audits, research reports and financial accounts.

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4. Baseline surveys and data collection

Complete ecological surveys of habitats and species on campus (via citizen science or experts). Collect activity data such as purchasing data to measure indirect biodiversity impacts. Staff and students can help with this.

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5. Target setting and action planning

Wide consultation with stakeholders is key to understanding capacity and ambition and setting realistic, measurable and time-bound (SMART) targets for your institution. Plan actions using the 4Rs: Refrain, Reduce, Restore and Renew.

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6. Actions for nature

Actions towards a global Nature Positive goal need to be based on your SMART targets and take place at all levels: from grassroots to management, including research, teaching and operations.

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7. Annual reporting and evaluation

Reporting your progress annually to stakeholders and on your university website is an important way to be held to account, inspire others and to demonstrate leadership.

Nature Positive Pledge FAQs

What is the Nature Positive Pledge?

The Nature Positive Pledge is an institutional commitment, made by the senior management of an institution, to prioritise nature by working towards four steps.

These are:

1. Conducting a biodiversity baseline;
2. Setting smart targets for nature;
3. Carrying out actions and using your influence;
4. Transparent annual reporting.

Who else has made the Pledge?

To date, 138 higher education institutions from 44 countries have made the Nature Positive Pledge (Feb 2024).

What is Nature Positive?

Nature Positive is a global goal for nature, equivalent to 1.5 degree of warming target for carbon, meaning that nature loss has been halted and reversed, and species and ecosystems are in recovery. For a university a Nature Positive goal means that the negative impacts of a university on nature are mitigated, and the positive impacts enhanced.

Who are your stakeholders?

Universities have a huge opportunity to lead action on nature, influence current and future generations by communicating with their stakeholders. These include staff and students at all levels, alumni, suppliers, collaborators and wider communities.

What is a biodiversity working group?

It is important to build a team to discuss and implement initiatives for biodiversity at your institution towards your Nature Positive commitment. This may be a sub-group of an existing sustainability or environmental committee and will ideally include a wide range of stakeholders, such as management, academics, estates teams and students, who all have important contributions to make.

What is a biodiversity baseline?

A biodiversity baseline is a snapshot in time to facilitate measurable improvements for biodiversity at your institution. This can be undertaken at two levels:

- Campus biodiversity survey
- Biodiversity footprint

What is a campus biodiversity survey?

A campus biodiversity survey / audit comprises ecological surveys of habitats and species on campus. This may be collected via citizen science, through academic research or by employing ecological experts to generate a snapshot of the current state of your campus environment.

What is an institutional biodiversity footprint?

A biodiversity footprint is a comprehensive estimate of the impacts to biodiversity caused by your institution. This is calculated by collecting activity data, such as purchasing records, flights taken, food consumed etc which are converted into environmental pressures then a measure of indirect biodiversity impacts.

What level of resources do we need?

A biodiversity baseline can be conducted in varying degrees, depending on your resources and capacity. The first step is mapping the existing data you have, who is responsible for it and where there are gaps. Citizen science can be a great tool to engage staff and students in the process.

What is a SMART target?

A smart target is one that is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. These can be overall targets such as “No Net loss” or “Biodiversity Net Gain” for your institution by a given date, or specific targets such as measurably reducing the impact of food consumption.

What is the Conservation Hierarchy (4Rs)?

The Conservation Hierarchy is a useful framework for planning actions. It comprises the 4Rs: Refrain, Reduce, Restore and Renew. These should be tackled in order, emphasising the importance of first avoiding then reducing any harmful activities before mitigating ‘mission critical’ activities and engaging in positive conservation actions.

What kind of activities count?

Actions for nature can take place at every part of an institution. This could be student-led actions to record wildlife, habitat creation and restoration on campus, nature-friendly gardening, purchasing initiatives to prioritise low-impact products and sustainable food, and divestment from environmentally destructive companies.

What is our reporting commitment?

Reporting commitments for the Nature Positive pledge are relatively light. We ask you to complete a simple “Pledge Health Check”, and more importantly ask you to report your progress annually to your stakeholders (and on your university website) as an important way to be held to account, inspire others and to demonstrate leadership.

