



Operational Control Procedure	
Procedure	Grounds Management
Reference	OCP001

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To define the processes by which the environmental aspects of our grounds activities are managed by the University of Exeter.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This procedure relates to activities carried out by the University of Exeter Grounds team on the Exeter campuses and satellite sites.

3. PROCEDURE

- 3.1. Guiding principals

- 3.1.1. [Biodiversity Strategy](#)

- 3.1.2. [University of Exeter Master Plan](#)

- 3.2. Hazardous materials

- 3.2.1. An annual COSHH assessment is carried out of all pesticide storage areas and records retained on the Grounds SharePoint site. Results of COSHH assessment reports are shared with all Grounds Managers.

- 3.2.2. Agronomy information is also available from a number of suppliers, allowing the latest area speciality advice to be accessed, including Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is used whenever possible as the preferred approach.

- 3.2.3. All staff applying pesticides are trained to a minimum of PA1, PA6a and PA2 for boom spraying standard and are externally assessed for their competence to apply pesticides. They will not over-apply chemicals or spray when weather conditions are not appropriate, or insect/mammal/fish activity makes treatment inappropriate. Only Government approved chemicals will be used, as part of an integrated approach to pest management to minimise environmental impacts.

- 3.2.4. Environmental Assessment Record Sheets are used for areas where chemical pesticides are to be used. Records are held in the Estate Service Centre.

- 3.2.5. Chemical herbicide application decision process form is completed and signed by an authorising person before any Pesticide is applied.

- 3.2.6. In some areas but particularly the Forum controls in excess of the SDS will be used such as applying in low footfall times and signs while products are drying.
- 3.2.7. There is a strong reliance in the campus plant nursery on integrated pest management. Sticky and pheromone traps are used to monitor pest numbers but not when they interfere with biological controls which are used preferentially to control both insect and fungal infestations, e.g. *Encarsia* predatory wasp to control whitefly. The supplier of bio controls visits the site to create a biological control program.
- 3.2.8. All chemicals are transported in designated secure boxes to prevent spills. All decanting is conducted in drip trays to prevent accidental spillage and release. All applications are conducted to the label specification to reduce run-off with particular care taken on hardstanding areas.
- 3.2.9. Weed growth is firstly controlled using a combination of sweeping, brushing, hoeing, strimming and high-pressure jetting to keep surfaces clear from weeds during the growing season. Glyphosate is still used widely across campus as and when other methods are not appropriate or won't produce the required output. Application areas for PPP's are most commonly areas of hard landscaping that are not practical to use cultural control, invasive species or sport pitches.
- 3.2.10. Fertiliser use is monitored and planning with controlled release is the preferred option to further reduce leaching and run-off.
- 3.2.11. Bark and on-site composted mulch is extensively used on planted beds, to reduce dependency on herbicide treatment for weed control.

3.3. Pollution prevention

- 3.3.1. Spill kits have been deployed in areas where oil and chemicals are stored. Staff complete the Pollution Prevention and Emergency Spill Response recorded training.
- 3.3.2. All bulk fuel storage tanks are bunded tanks and are subject to an annual inspection by the estates team.
- 3.3.3. There are no designated vehicle washing sites on campus; white fleet vehicles are washed and valeted off site. Other equipment is brushed off, air-broomed or vacuumed at the Grounds Estate Services Centre. Low pressure water is used to clean grass from mower decks but this is not used on areas of the machine that may contain greases or oils.
- 3.3.4. Hydraulic systems

- Staff have been advised (workplace induction) that all equipment with hydraulic connections should be checked prior to and after use, and any issues immediately reported, so that the equipment is fixed/not used.
- All operators are appropriately trained (workplace induction) in the use and maintenance of ride-on equipment.
- All hydraulic connections are snap-on where possible, to ensure they have good seals to prevent leaks.
- All systems are self-contained, meaning hydraulic fluid would not normally be decanted.
- Ride-on equipment has a recorded PUWER check at the start of each use, including a check of the hydraulic system for leaks. Paper records are held at the Estate Service Centre.

3.4. Waste management

- 3.4.1. Free blowing litter in all areas of the grounds are managed by a dedicated team of two people Monday to Friday. In addition, weekend resource is available for this activity at busy times of year. The Estate Services Help Desk can be used to highlight any areas of the campus with a litter problem; action is then taken by Grounds to clear the area of litter as soon as practically possible.
- 3.4.2. Grounds staff mechanically sweep roads and pathways on a regular routine by an in-house person and item of equipment to reduce weed growth and drain blockages in gutters and gullies. Arisings from the sweeping are either composted or disposed of in a specific waste stream and a dedicated skip.

3.5. Recycling

3.5.1. Green waste

- Uncontaminated material from leaf fall is recycled as green waste and/or used as mulch.
- Woody waste is cut into logs or round discs, chipped and used as mulch or left on selected sites as habitat piles to provide shelter, hibernation and ecosystems.
- Smaller pruning and plant waste is stored for bulk processing by in house equipment into compost for reuse on sites.
- There are recycling facilities in the yard area.

3.5 Procurement

- 3.5.2. In the case of grounds, no pure peat products are used as a soil amendment. In nursery production, soil-based composts, such as John Innes and own mix composts, are used to reduce peat dependency in seed and cutting production.
- 3.5.3. Wood products are only sourced from sustainably managed forests and those following the Forest Stewardship Council schemes.

3.6 Minimising impact on biodiversity

- 3.6.1. The University Master Plan identifies areas that are to be conserved and developed for botanical and historic interest. Ecological habitats have also been identified in the Plan and will be managed to develop biodiversity and support lifelong learning opportunities.
- 3.6.2. When selecting plants, the environment will be considered. Plants needing additional regular watering other than for establishment will not be used.
- 3.6.3. Tree works are avoided during the bird nesting season and checks undertaken for roosting bats and badger activity in advance of planned tree works.
- 3.6.4. Trees and planting are protected during development works, to the maximum of the required British Standard. Where this is not possible, planting is recorded and re-sited or replaced as part of the development process.
- 3.6.5. Our own arborists and Grounds staff inspect the trees to identify priority works annually. They then implement a programme of felling and pruning, followed by replacement planting between October and March each year. This is undertaken by NPTC (National Proficiency Tests Council) trained staff in accordance with best industry practice.
- 3.6.6. A job sheet and site-specific risk assessment is completed for all new tree works; this includes environmental and biodiversity considerations (ecological assessment). Additional professional advice is sought where/if protected species are present.
- 3.6.7. Where alien and damaging species are identified, steps will be taken to control them as appropriate.
- 3.6.8. Any water extraction will be done in accordance with licencing, and be metered whilst using the minimal required amount.

3.7 Biodiversity enhancement

- 3.7.1. All on-site water features are for passive activities only, favouring wildlife by offering roosting and nesting sites. A 1m buffer zone is maintained in appropriate

locations around watercourses to provide a wildlife corridor and prevent contamination.

- 3.7.2. A number of wildflower meadows and meadow roofs have been established around the campus to create a bee superhighway and sources of pollen for insects.
- 3.7.3. Ponds and watercourses on campus are cleaned annually to remove surface debris. When necessary, they are drained or lowered to prevent build-up of rotting material. Pumps and fountains are used to agitate ponds, introducing oxygen to sustain pond life and reduce the build-up of weed and algae problems. Work is carried out in conjunction with a local specialist aquatic company to improve biodiversity and water quality.
- 3.7.4. A trial is being conducted to introduce areas of species rich grassland across campuses with information boards being established.

3.8. Monitoring

- 3.8.1. The University undertakes a biannual bird survey on campus. The survey is undertaken in the winter to determine the resident bird population on campus and in spring/summer to indicate the breeding bird population. The population statistics gives an indication of the year-on-year comparisons, equating bird numbers to the health of the ecology on campus.

3.9. Machinery and vehicles

- 3.9.1. Electric powered alternatives are considered when purchasing new/replacement fossil fuel operated machinery and vehicles.

3.10. Communication

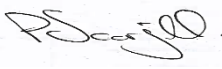
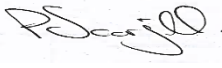
- 3.10.1. All staff attend the University Environment and Climate Emergency Induction Learn Upon Course
- 3.10.2. Biodiversity interpretation boards have been implemented at key habitat locations across the campuses.
- 3.10.3. Biodiversity trail guides have been created and published for both the Streatham and St Luke's campuses, to promote key habitats and features that benefit wildlife and sustainability.
- 3.10.4. Regular discussions take place at the weekly team meetings regarding ecology and environment (e.g., bird surveys, algae, new initiatives, etc). Minutes are available on SharePoint.

3.10.5. The results of bi-annual bird surveys are communicated (see 3.8.1) on the Grounds website.

4. CONTACTS

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Document Control

Date	Purpose	Author	Approved	Issue
16/4/2012	First Issue	K Gallagher	I Park	v.1.r.1
11/4/2013	Revised document; inclusion of additional pollution prevention controls re hydraulic systems	K Gallagher	I Park	v.1.r.2
21/12/14	Revised document	D Evans	I Park	v.1.r.3
12/15/17	Revised document	D Evans	I Park	v.1.r.4
04/12/18	Revised document	D Evans	I Park	v.1.r.5
12/12/19	Revised document	D Evans	I Park	v.1.r.6
10/11/19	Revised document	D Evans	I Park	v.1.r.7
27/11/20	Revised document	D Evans	A Davidson	v.1.r.8
07/09/21	Revised document	D Evans	A Davidson	v.1.r.9
10/11/21	Revised document	D Evans	A Davidson	v.1.r.10
21/3/22	Reviewed document – no change	D Evans	A Davidson	v.1.r.11
03/05/23	Revised document	D Evans	P Scargill	v.1.r.12
29/01/24	Revised Document	D Evans	P Scargill	v.1.r.13
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18/01/25	Revised Document	D Evans		v.1.r.15
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