

HKUST Sustainable Landscaping Policy

Last Reviewed: July 2025

Introduction

At HKUST, the University is committed to sustainable landscaping practices that promote environmental stewardship and conservation of natural resources. This policy outlines guidelines for the use of eco-friendly soil amendments, water conservation techniques, and weed and invasive species management strategies to build and maintain a healthy and biodiverse campus landscape.

1. Compliance and Responsibilities

Landscaping contractors working with HKUST are required to adhere to these sustainable landscaping practices outlined in the guidelines below. Intention non-compliance may result in contractual penalties or termination.

2. Soil Amendment Guidelines

- 2.1. Utilize properly composted natural material as a manufactured soil conditioner for landscaping purposes.
- 2.2. Use mature, natural fertilizers derived from plant and/or animal sources as beancake and bonemeal, in place of chemical fertilizers, as deemed appropriate by the University.
- 2.3. Utilize on-site production of soil amendments and compost from existing yard wastes such as leaves, small branches, and grass clippings.
- 2.4. Ensure purchased mulch is natural material like decomposed leaf litter, tree bark, wood shavings, wood chips, or other approved natural materials.

3. Water Conservation Guidelines

- 3.1. Closely monitoring to prevent excessive spillage. Implement water-saving tools or strategies to prevent over-watering, and unnecessary watering.
- 3.2. Prioritize the use of mulch, wood chips, or compost to cover exposed soil, ensuring soil protection and moisture retention.
- 3.3. Collaborate with the University to identify areas for automated watering techniques like automatic drip systems to conserve water.

4. Weed and Invasive Alien Species Management Guidelines

- 4.1. Prohibit the presence of weeds and parasitic plants, including *Mikania micrantha*, *Cuscuta chinensis*, *Cassytha filiformis*, and *Leucaena leucocephala* brought onto the site.
- 4.2. Immediate removal of any parasitic plants found during landscaping activities is mandatory.

- 4.3. Actively monitor and control the spread of invasive alien species, such as those under the Global Invasive Species Database¹, particularly *Mikania micrantha* and *Leucaena leucocephala* on the campus landscape.

5. Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy should be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect new best practices, emerging technologies, and changes in local regulations related to tree felling and planting.

6. Conclusion

The Sustainable Landscaping Policy highlights the commitment of HKUST to responsible landscape management. By integrating sustainable practices and preserving natural resources, HKUST aims to create a greener and more environmentally friendly campus.

¹ Global Invasive Species Database: https://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/100_worst.php