



Sustainable Building Policy

Category: Space and Property;

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance;

Approval Authority: Executive Team;

Established on: April 1, 2009;

Amendments: November 30, 2020; September 23, 2025;

Most Recent Review: September 23, 2025.

1.0 Purpose:

This policy states Lakehead University's commitment to environmental, economic and social stewardship through sustainable building practices for University buildings and facilities. This policy is being implemented:

- 1.1 to yield cost saving through reduced operating costs for energy and utilities;
- 1.2 to provide a healthy environment for University students, faculty, staff and visitors;
- 1.3 to contribute to the University's objective of protecting, conserving, and enhancing the region's environmental resources; and
- 1.4 to help establish and foster a community standard for sustainable building practices in Thunder Bay and Orillia.

2.0 Organizations Affected

All University departments and offices in both Thunder Bay and Orillia are covered by this Policy.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Sustainable Building

Sustainable building integrates building materials and methods that promote environmental quality, economic vitality, and social benefit through the design, construction and operation of the built environment. Sustainable building merges sound, environmentally responsible practices into one discipline that looks at the environmental, economic and social effects of a building or built project as a whole. Sustainable building design encompasses the following broad topics: efficient management of energy and water resources, management of material resources and waste, protection of environmental quality, protection of health and indoor environmental quality, reinforcement of natural systems, and the integration of the design approach.

3.2 Life Cycle Cost Analysis

Life cycle cost analysis is an inclusive approach to costing a program, facility, or group of facilities that encompasses planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance over the useful life of the facility or group of facilities as well as any decommissioning or disassembly costs. Life cycle cost analysis looks at the net present value of design options as investments. The goal is to achieve the highest, most cost-effective environmental performance possible over the life of the project.

3.3 LEED Rating System

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), is a voluntary, consensus-based market-driven green building rating system, based on existing, proven technology and evaluates environmental performance from a "whole building" perspective. LEED is a certifying system designed for rating new and existing commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential buildings. It contains prerequisites and credits in five categories: Sustainable Site Planning, Improving Energy Efficiency, Conserving Material and Resources, Embracing Indoor Environmental Quality, and Safeguarding Water. There are four rating levels: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

3.4 Major Renovation

A major renovation is any renovation to a University owned facility that is to exceed 40% of the existing gross floor area of the facility or any addition to a University-owned facility.

3.5 Minor Renovation

A minor renovation is any renovation to a University owned facility that is below 40% of the gross floor area of the facility.

4.0 Policy

It is the policy of Lakehead University to budget, plan, design, construct, manage, renovate, and maintain its facilities in a sustainable fashion. This applies to new construction and major renovations. The LEED rating system and its associated Reference Guide shall be used as a design and measurement tool to determine what constitutes a sustainable building. All new facilities and major capital renovations shall meet and acquire;

4.1 at the Thunder Bay Campus, a LEED Gold rating at a minimum; and

4.2 at the Orillia Campus, a LEED Platinum rating at a minimum.

Design and project management teams are encouraged to meet higher LEED rating levels as may be possible with any given project.

Criteria for choosing designers, architects, construction managers, and consultants shall include demonstrated knowledge of green building practices in their respective fields, and as applicable, a familiarity with life cycle cost analysis and LEED ratings.

4.3 The University recognizes that fresh water is a non-renewable resource that must be conserved. The University will attempt to:

- Reduce the quantity of water consumed and wastewater produced across all campus operations;
- Utilize natural stormwater management and green infrastructure solutions such as ponds, porous paving, roof gardens, rain gardens and other mitigation strategies to manage stormwater sustainably
- Prioritize the planting of native and drought-resistant plant species to reduce the need for irrigation incorporating xeriscaping principles where feasible
- Maximize water reuse across the University;
- Incorporate water-efficient fixtures and appliances in all new constructions and renovations;

- Implement water recycling programs to use rainwater for landscape irrigation where needed.

5.0 Procedures and Responsibilities

All University employees whose responsibilities include planning, designing, constructing or renovating, University-owned or leased facilities shall be responsible for ensuring that facilities and buildings comply with the appropriate threshold of sustainability as set out in this policy.

The University's Physical Plant department shall be responsible for annually evaluating and reporting to the Executive Team how well applicable University construction and renovation projects meet the goal of sustainability.

6.0 Budgeting and Financing

All capital construction which falls under this policy will be expected to meet the appropriate level of LEED certification. For the Orillia Campus, the Platinum rating applies. For the Thunder Bay Campus, the Gold rating applies, but budget planning and life cycle cost analysis to achieve a higher rating of Platinum is encouraged.

7.0 Education

University capital project managers currently managing or likely to manage projects which fit the criteria in 4.1 and 4.2 will be required to attend introductory LEED training and periodic supplementary training.

8.0 Exemptions and Exceptions

Small, stand-alone buildings (e.g. storage facilities, garages, etc) are exempt from this policy as the LEED rating system is not designed to evaluate these types of projects. Similarly, also exempt is site work (including grading, infrastructure work, etc.) that is not part of a major project. These exceptions, however, are only for the LEED rating system and do not include tree removal for which there is an existing policy, nor landscaping where plantings and practices are to minimize maintenance requirements. Every project should address to the fullest extent possible sustainable building practices. Sustainable practices include those elements of planning, design and construction that promote the efficient use of energy and

material resources, the conservation of water, and the protection of land and water environments. Projects utilizing the sustainable practices approach will use the LEED process and rating system to the fullest extent possible.

In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Team shall exercise discretion in cases where the cost and time required to achieve the applicable LEED rating level outweigh the resulting benefits, and adjust requirements to levels where the intent of this policy is still met but is achieved in a more cost effective or timely manner.

9.0 Review

The Executive Team will review this policy every 5 years, with such review to be undertaken at the direction of the Vice President (Administration & Finance).

Review Period: 5 years;

Next Review Period: 2030-2031;

Related Policies and Procedures: None;

Policy Superseded by this Policy: None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-343-8010 Ext: 7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.