CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ON CAMPUS

1. PREAMBLE

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) recognises that the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive alien species (IAS) pose significant threats to native biological diversity, campus ecosystem resilience, agricultural research, and infrastructural integrity across all University campuses.

The University is committed to establishing robust biosecurity protocols, eradication programs, and sustainable land management practices to prevent the introduction of invasive non-native flora and fauna, control existing infestations, and restore native ecological communities on University land.

This Policy establishes the University's institutional framework for identifying, managing, mitigating, and eradicating invasive alien species within campus grounds, research stations, agricultural facilities, and surrounding University properties.

The Policy operates consistently with the environmental laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, national biodiversity strategies, Anambra State forestry and agricultural regulations, the University's enabling legislation, and international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- prevent the intentional or accidental introduction of high-risk invasive alien species to University campuses;
- provide a structured framework for early detection, rapid response, and systematic control of invasive alien flora, fauna, and microorganisms;
- prioritise the protection, conservation, and reintroduction of indigenous Nigerian plants, trees, and native wildlife species;
- safeguard University agricultural, horticultural, and forestry research plots from biological invasions;
- regulate campus landscaping, agricultural activities, and botanical acquisitions to prevent the introduction of invasive nursery stock;
- promote scientific research, student training, and campus-wide awareness regarding invasive species impacts; and
- establish institutional responsibility, monitoring mechanisms, and clear oversight for invasive species management.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies across all campuses, research centers, experimental farms, botanical gardens, administrative grounds, and land holdings of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, and covers:

- all academic, administrative, technical, and maintenance staff;
- enrolled students across all departments and faculties;
- landscaping contractors, groundskeeping personnel, and facilities developers;
- agricultural researchers, farm managers, and botanical curators; and

- third-party vendors, tenants, and visitors utilizing University land or facilities.

Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as authorising the unauthorized importation, propagation, sale, distribution, or release of recognized invasive alien species within or adjacent to University properties.

4. PRINCIPLES OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES CONTROL

4.1 Prevention and Risk Assessment

The primary defense against invasive alien species is prevention. The University shall maintain a priority watch-list of invasive plants, animals, and pathogens relevant to the region. All proposed introductions of non-native plant or animal species for landscaping, research, or soil stabilization must undergo prior ecological risk assessment and clearance by the University biosecurity authority.

4.2 Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)

The University shall institute regular campus biodiversity monitoring to identify newly established invasive species. When an invasive species is detected on University grounds, prompt eradication or containment protocols shall be activated before the species establishes self-sustaining populations.

4.3 Integrated Invasive Species Management

Control programs shall utilize Integrated Pest and Vegetation Management strategies, prioritizing mechanical, biological, and ecological control methods. The use of chemical control agents (pesticides, herbicides) shall be strictly controlled, evaluated for non-target impacts, and applied only by trained personnel following approved safety and environmental guidelines.

5. LANDSCAPING AND BOTANICAL REGULATION

5.1 Native Plant Priority in Campus Landscaping

All campus greening, landscape design, erosion management, and shade-tree planting initiatives shall prioritize native Nigerian plant and tree species. A minimum threshold of 80% native flora shall be mandatory for all new campus landscaping projects.

5.2 Ban on Recognized Invasive Flora

The cultivation, planting, or dissemination of invasive alien plants known to disrupt local ecosystems (such as *Chromolaena odorata*, *Lantana camara*, *Tithonia diversifolia*, or *Eichhornia crassipes* in campus water bodies) is strictly prohibited on University land. Existing stands of invasive flora shall be targeted for systematic removal and replacement with non-invasive or native vegetation.

6. FAUNAL BIOCONTROL AND ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

The deliberate release or unapproved introduction of non-native animal species, including invasive fish, birds, insects, or feral domestic animals, into campus lakes, forests, or open grounds is strictly prohibited. Campus animal facilities and research laboratories using non-native organisms must implement strict containment measures to prevent accidental escape into the surrounding environment.

7. PROTECTION OF RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURAL RESERVES

University agricultural stations, experimental fields, and biological reserves shall be designated priority protection zones. Special quarantine and sanitation practices shall apply to agricultural equipment, soil shipments, seeds, and organic mulch entering these zones to eliminate hitchhiking invasive weed seeds or soil pathogens.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Members of the academic community and campus residents shall:

a. refrain from planting, breeding, or releasing unapproved alien flora or fauna on University property;

b. report sightings or infestations of recognized invasive species to the Campus Landscape and Environment Office;

c. participate in campus invasive species eradication and native tree planting activities; and

d. comply with disposal guidelines for garden waste, soil, and organic matter to prevent accidental invasion spread.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The University Management shall:

a. allocate necessary logistical and financial support for campus invasive species eradication programs;

b. integrate invasive species management criteria into all campus master plans, facilities procurement, and landscaping contracts;

c. facilitate interdepartmental collaboration among Botany, Zoology, Forestry, Agriculture, and Physical Planning units;

d. enforce contractual penalties or administrative sanctions against vendors or individuals introducing prohibited invasive species; and

e. conduct regular campus biosecurity and ecosystem health reviews.

10. GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The University shall establish a **Campus Biosecurity and Invasive Species Control Taskforce** (under the oversight of the Senate Committee on Environment and Sustainability) to:

a. compile and maintain the official COOU Invasive Alien Species Blacklist and Native Approved List;

b. review and approve proposals for exotic plant or organism introductions for legitimate academic research;

c. oversee mechanical and biological eradication schedules across all campus sectors;

d. conduct training for campus groundskeepers, researchers, and contractors on biosecurity hygiene; and

e. submit annual Invasive Species Impact and Restoration Reports to the Vice-Chancellor.

11. PUBLICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

This Policy, alongside the official lists of prohibited invasive species and recommended native species, shall be published on the official University website and displayed across administrative and academic departments. The Policy shall be incorporated into orientation programs for facilities personnel and contractors.

12. REVIEW AND REVISION

This Policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years or earlier if required by emerging biological threats, statutory updates, or academic research insights. Every review shall be officially recorded and approved through proper administrative channels.



Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, Fnipr

Vice Chancellor **Date:** 24/10/2026