

Heating Policy

Objective

The University aims to provide a comfortable working environment for staff and students, to comply with Health and Safety requirements, while minimising carbon emissions and costs arising from the operation of heating systems.

Academic Buildings will be heated to maintain a comfortable temperature between 16 and 21°C throughout all areas during the heating season.

Residential Buildings, excepting circulation spaces and stairwells, will be heated between 19 and 21°C during the heating season.

Where areas are not used as either office accommodation, teaching spaces or residential rooms (i.e. workshops, plant rooms, circulation spaces etc.), the minimum maintained temperature will be no less than the statutory minimum.

Introduction

The University aims to provide a comfortable working environment; though we are aware that the temperature in various buildings can be uncomfortable for some colleagues. This policy seeks to clarify the arrangements and expectations for heating the University's buildings to a comfortable working temperature during core operational hours of occupancy in the heating season; and that excess energy is not being wasted through over heating or over cooling.

The University seeks to limit its environmental impact and associated costs rising from energy consumption, whilst ensuring that the University activities continue. This will be achieved, in part, by monitoring the use of its use of energy and maximising the efficiency with which it is used; including eliminating unnecessary energy use and pursuing a programme of energy conservation. The University's Corporate Plan (2020 onwards) commits the University to maintaining, and where possible, enhancing the quality of its environment and to continue to seek value for money in all its activities. The Sustainability Strategy and Carbon Reduction plan commit the University to achieving net zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2040 and net zero Scope 3 by 2050 or sooner. The University spends around £1.4 million on energy annually and costs are rising significantly. Temperature control is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing energy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Sustainability Strategy and Carbon Reduction Plan.

Regulations

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 sets down specific requirements for most aspects of the working environment. Regulation 7 deals specifically with the temperature in indoor workplaces and states that "during working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable". The Health and Safety Executive's Approved Code of Conduct states that "during working hours a reasonable internal temperature must be maintained and this must not be less than 16°C unless the work involves severe physical effort in which case the temperature can be lowered to no less than 13°C". These temperatures are not absolute legal requirements; the University has a duty to determine what a reasonable comfort will be in particular circumstances. There is no maximum temperature stated in the Regulations or associated Code of Practice.

Approved by Senior Management Team – May 2017

Date for review – May 2023

Achieving a comfortable temperature is difficult, as human perception of a comfortable temperature is subjective. Many factors have to be taken into consideration when deciding what will make people feel 'comfortable', such as environmental and personal factors, and the physical condition of the building, for example, the age and location of the building, the age and layout of the heating system and the controls. It is recognised that not everyone will achieve 'thermal comfort'¹ at 19-21°C. The best that can be realistically achieved in any situation is an environment which satisfies the majority of people. The Health and Safety Executive considers 80% of the occupants as a reasonable limit for the minimum number of people who should be thermally comfortable in an environment.

Heating standards

The University, so far as reasonably practicable, will endeavour to maintain building temperatures between 16-21°C during their core operational hours during the heating season.

Where areas are not used as either office accommodation or teaching spaces (i.e. workshops, plant rooms, circulation spaces etc.), the minimum maintained temperature for all work spaces will be no less than the statutory minimum. Normal heating hours are optimised to be at working temperature between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays and University closed days, for the duration of the heating season.

Student Residential accommodation will be heated between the hours of 6.30am to 11pm, where central control is available, subject to the standard thermostatic controls of the rooms.

Outside of core occupation times, all buildings default to a temperature setting of 10 to 12°C to maintain the fabric of the building and to protect water pipes.

The Sports Hall, library and evening teaching areas are heated to cover their opening times. Outside of normal working hours, heating may be provided in specific circumstances providing a request has been approved by the Estates Department in advance.

The heating season is normally from the 1st October to 30th May, inclusive, depending on weather conditions. We are unable to heat specific offices or floors outside normal operating hours although some areas may have a set-back temperature. The University recognises that seasonal weather conditions fluctuate and an assessment of the prevailing weather conditions will be made by Estates. The Building Manager may, using their judgement and view of weather conditions, extend or shorten the heating season.

If there are particular circumstances where, for health reasons, individuals may need special consideration then managers should refer to the Legal Service and Health and Safety Assistant for advice.

Expectation of all Building Users

It is expected that individuals will:

- Accept that their view of an acceptable temperature may not be the same as other users of the building; personal temperature preferences vary greatly among individuals
- Wear suitable clothing, each additional layer can improve comfort by 2-3°C
- Show due tolerance and understanding, especially if they are in buildings that were not constructed to modern standards

¹ Thermal comfort is defined in British Standard BS EN ISO 7730 as: 'that condition of mind which expresses satisfaction with the thermal environment'.

- Report areas of over/under heating to the Estates helpdesk (<http://svestates/EstatesHelpDeskLive/users/login.asp>)
- Keep heat in the building by closing doors and windows, as appropriate
- Ensure radiators and convectors are not blocked with furniture, clothing, towels etc.
- Avoid the use of portable electric heaters as they pose a significant fire risk and interfere with building controls, which will affect the comfort of colleagues in other parts of the building and mask the underlying problem.

Expectation of Estates

- Estates will take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate heating is made available to all areas of the University, matching weather conditions
- Investigate complaints of over/under heating promptly and provide suitable feedback
- In instances where temperatures limits stated above are met and thermal discomfort is still perceived (for example, due to drafts) the Estates Office will examine the feasibility of making improvements to this area. However, especially in older and listed buildings the options may be limited and physical limitations may prevent their adoption. A thorough appraisal will be carried out to ensure all alternative options have been considered before portable heaters are used
- If temperature standards are being exceeded when the heating is operating, the Estates Office will take reasonable measures to reduce the temperature.

Supplementary Heating

Supplementary heating or portable heating appliances may be required under certain circumstances. Portable electric heaters may not be used unless consent has been given by Estates and the heaters have been PAT tested and approved to be plugged into specific sockets to avoid overloading of power circuits.

Individuals are not permitted to bring in/purchase their own local heaters and if found, these may be removed during routine health and safety inspections. Plug in heaters must not be left on out of hours under any circumstances.

Requests for additional supplementary heating for health or other specific reasons must be approved by the Head of Department and Building Manager.

Organisational responsibilities

The Sustainability Group shall monitor the efficiency of this Policy by continually monitoring energy consumption in conjunction with this policy, which shall be reviewed annually.