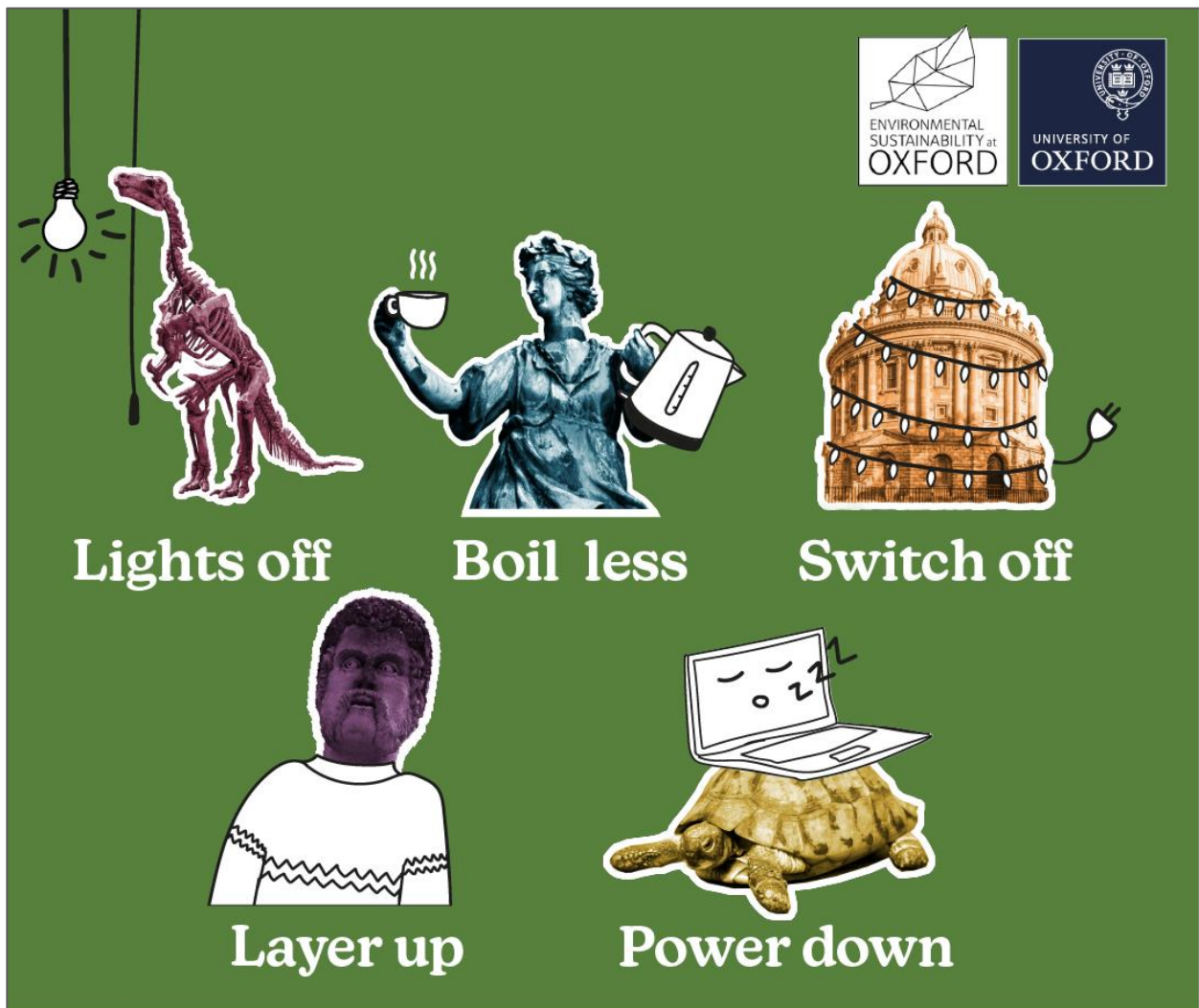


# Estates Services

## ENERGY USE IN BUILDINGS



Energy policy,  
FAQ for building management  
November 2023



**Be energy friendly**

Save energy. Save the environment.

[ox.ac.uk/energy-friendly](https://ox.ac.uk/energy-friendly)

## PRAC energy policy

The Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) approved the following energy policy on 11/10/2022.

- University buildings will not be heated above 19° C or cooled below 26° C.
- The heating system timeclocks should be set between 8:00am–3:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Last winter, the policy, along with the Be Energy Friendly campaign and the collaboration of all partners across the University, resulted in a 17% reduction in gas consumption over the winter months, which is equivalent to an emissions reduction of **3,400 tCO<sub>2</sub>e** and savings of **£1.1M**.

The policy supports the University's [Environmental Sustainability strategy](#) and its headline target of reaching net zero carbon by 2035.

Below are some resources for building management staff involved in implementing this policy. Please contact the Environmental Sustainability team with any further queries.

## Energy use FAQs:

### 1. Are there exceptions to the default environmental control settings?

- Yes, if there is a meeting, event, or course that is set to occur outside of regular operating hours, please provide the relevant information to your building manager or through the FM Helpdesk at least 4 days prior to the required change. They will ensure the necessary adjustments are made to deliver an appropriate temperature.
- Space that is temperature controlled for research and science purposes is exempt from the default environmental control settings. However, this exception should be limited to the minimum required space.
- Where there are building users with specific needs relating to temperature (such as health conditions), please seek guidance from your building manager or departmental safety officer. Thermal comfort is not simply about the temperature of the room. It might be possible to make helpful adjustments to the work or environment e.g., addressing draughts, changing working practices, and relocating. Some individuals have medical conditions that cause a persistent feeling of cold. A reduction in room temperature to 19° C is unlikely to make a significant difference to how they feel, given their medical condition. However, individuals may seek guidance from Occupational Health in these circumstances.

### 2. Personal guidance for conserving heat during winter months?

- Ensure doors and windows are closed where appropriate.
  - Remember it is no longer a COVID-19 requirement to keep windows open in spaces with mechanical ventilation and safety approval. Please check local guidance and keep in the heat where you can.
- Encourage building users to dress for the weather.
- Close curtains/blinds where applicable, especially overnight.
- **Avoid the use of plug-in electric space heaters** due to excessive energy use and health and safety risk.

### 3. What can be done to reduce energy consumption?

- Follow the [‘Be Energy Friendly’](#) guidance. This energy campaign has been launched by the University in response to the energy crisis. The following ideas are not new but aren’t always implemented. Where possible incorporate these into your daily routine:
  - **Layer up:** Bring a jumper for comfort during the winter months
  - **Switch off:** Turn off appliances at the socket when not in use; and keep electric heaters off for good (they consume up to £1 each per hour and can increase the risk of fire)
  - **Boil less:** only boil as much water as you need (this could save £3 per day per kettle)
  - **Lights off:** turn off the lights if you’re the last one to leave the room
  - **Power down:** turn off the computer and screen at the end of a working day. Make sure your computer is set to ‘hibernate’ if you’re away.
- There is also [‘Be Energy Friendly’ guidance specific to laboratories](#) (e.g., ensure the fume cupboard hood is closed when not in use).
- If the building has water heaters in the kitchens, consider setting the timer to working hours with instructions on how to heat the water after hours.
- Re-evaluate lighting needs after working hours.
- Set reminders or timers for turning off appliances such as photocopiers, computers and monitors.
- Get communication materials from the Environmental Sustainability team, including:
  - Small paper thermometers. These can help provide building users reassurance as they adjust to the changing conditions.
  - “Turn off” reminder stickers.
  - Additional graphic resources for posters, digital screens and local reminders are available in the [Be Energy Friendly folder](#).

### 4. What to do in case of a draught?

- The Environmental Sustainability team have a rolling programme of draught proofing across the estate. This can be applied to most window fittings, but is especially suited to wooden frames, including sash windows.
- Where possible, relocate working spaces to be further from draughts and report these to DLO/FM Helpdesks. Building managers will identify the source of the draught (window/door/vent) and seek appropriate solutions, which may include a draught excluder or longer term draught-proofing.
- If the source of the draught cannot be located, but evidence suggests significant heat loss in an area, please consult the FM Helpdesk to request thermal imaging of the building. Please note that there are longer wait times for these requests due to the equipment required.

### 5. What if the conditions in the building require long-term investment?

- For some buildings, the existing building fabric does not offer sufficient insulation. Although the aim is to address as many projects as quickly as possible, complex projects can take years to plan and deliver. To find out more about opportunities to improve building fabric, please consult the Environmental Sustainability team while considering some short-term solutions with the FM Helpdesk.
- Short-term installation solutions to consider where possible/applicable:
  - Curtains
  - Radiator reflectors
  - Seasonal double-glazing film

- Insulating wallpaper
- Window draught proofing

## 6. What to do when building users are uncomfortable with the temperature?

- Everyone’s perception of the environment is different, and some may find themselves uncomfortable from time to time. In the first instance, building users should confirm that some of the small adjustments listed above, including closing windows and wearing layered clothing have been adopted. Where the discomfort persists, building users can contact the building manager to confirm that the temperature is within the accepted range.
  - Where the temperature has fluctuated outside of the accepted range, this will be investigated.
  - Where the temperature is within the accepted range and the building user remains uncomfortable, please consider the following:
    - Relocating the individual to a different location within the building or floor. For example, moving them away from walls or windows, relocating their workstation in proximity to a radiator or heat source, etc.
    - Implementing the personal guidance stated above to conserve heating/air conditioning.
    - Direct building users to the ‘Be Energy Friendly’ campaign materials.
    - Share with them some of the larger context behind the policy and the consideration that led to these energy standards being set. You can find a template letter from the Environmental Sustainability team below.
- Where there are building users with specific needs relating to temperature (such as health conditions), please seek guidance from your building manager, local HR staff or departmental safety officer to see what adjustments can be made. Some individuals have medical conditions that cause a persistent feeling of cold. A reduction in room temperature to 19°C is unlikely to make a significant difference to how they feel, given their medical condition. However, individuals may seek guidance from Occupational Health in these circumstances.

### Suggested template to communicate the energy policy with building users:

**Title: Working together to reduce energy use**

As winter approaches, we are asking once again to champion our Be Energy Friendly campaign and build on last year's energy reduction achievements.

Last winter the Be Energy Friendly campaign, with the collaboration of all partners across the University, resulted in **a 17% reduction in gas consumption** over the winter months, which is equivalent to an emissions reduction of **3,400 tCO<sub>2</sub>e** and savings of **£1.1M**.

These actions support the University’s Environmental Sustainability strategy and its headline target of reaching net zero carbon by 2035.

Following the guidance set by the University’s energy policy, the building’s heating system will run from 8:00am to 3:00pm (assuming regular operating hours), with temperature controls set to 19°C in the winter months. This is in line with World Health Organisation and EU guidance.

We realise that you might need to dress differently considering the new heating arrangements. Line managers are asked to be supportive of changing from traditional work clothing to multiple layers and jumpers.

Having said that, we understand that everyone's internal temperature varies, and some may find themselves uncomfortable with these environmental controls or have particular needs relating to temperature (such as health conditions). If this is the case, please contact me [name, contact details], and we will do our best to assist. Please bear in mind that **plug-in electric space heaters are not allowed** as they pose a health and safety risk as well as being energy intensive.

What else can be done to reduce energy consumption?

- As a building
  - [where applicable, please add any other measures the building is taking, such as energy efficiency projects, adjusting water heaters, improving insulation, etc.]
- As an individual
  - Follow the '[Be Energy Friendly](#)' guidance. This energy campaign has been launched by the University in response to the energy crisis. The following ideas are not new but aren't always front of mind. Where possible incorporate these into your daily routine:
    - **Layer up:** Bring a jumper for comfort during the winter months
    - **Switch off:** Turn off appliances at the socket when not in use, and keep electric heaters off for good (they consume up to £1 each per hour and can increase the risk of fires)
    - **Boil less:** only boil as much water as you need (this could save £3 per day per kettle)
    - **Lights off:** turn off the lights if you're the last one to leave the room
    - **Power down:** turn off the computer and screen at the end of a working day. Make sure your computer is set to 'hibernate' if you're away.
  - There is also '[Be Energy Friendly](#)' [guidance specific to laboratories](#) (e.g. ensure the fume cupboard hood is closed when not in use).
  - See additional guidance on the sustainability web site (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/energy-friendly>)

Thank you for your help in this matter and please do contact me if you have any questions.

Kind Regards

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## Appendix – Key contacts

The colleagues listed below are the first points of contact for concerns regarding heating and cooling in estate buildings.

### FM Helpdesk

T: +44 (0) 1865 2 70087

E: [facilities@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:facilities@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### DLO Helpdesk

T: +44 (0) 1865 2 70877

E: [estates.helpdesk@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:estates.helpdesk@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### Environmental Sustainability team

T: +44 (0) 1865 6 14605

E: [sustainability@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@admin.ox.ac.uk)

