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Space Temperature Policy for the University of Bristol

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| **Version Author:** | Rob Collins – Head of Campus Smart Technology |
| **Review Period:** | 2 years or following any significant change in operational circumstances |

**Version History**

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# Overview

## Purpose

This policy provides guidance on the management of indoor space temperatures across academic, residential, and professional service buildings. It supports comfort and wellbeing while aligning with sustainability, legal, operational, and cost management priorities.

## Clause Reference

None

## Scope

Applies to all University-managed buildings used for teaching, research, administration, and student accommodation. Includes guidance for managed temperature ranges, operational hours, and occupant responsibilities.

## Revocations

This document supersedes any previously published, informal, or uncontrolled versions of the Space Temperature Policy, including the Estates Office Space Temperature Policy for the University of Bristol (2018), which predates the formation of the Campus Division.

# Definitions

None

# Approval Authority

Policy owner: Chief Property Officer

Policy lead contact: Direction of Campus Innovation

Approving body: Campus Division Leadership Board (CDLB)

# Policy Statement

This document sets out guidelines for managing indoor temperatures in University of Bristol buildings used for academic, residential and professional services. It aims to create a comfortable and welcoming environment for staff, students, and visitors while balancing operational, sustainability, cost, and legal considerations.

The University understands that temperature plays a key role in people’s comfort and well-being. However, comfort levels can vary from person to person, influenced by factors like air temperature, humidity, clothing, health, and personal preferences. Because of this, we aim to manage temperatures in a way that supports as many people as possible while using energy efficiently.

As part of Campus Division continuous improvement, we will work towards more effective temperature control methodologies and design principles that align with our strategy and vision.

The University spends a significant amount on heating, cooling, and air conditioning. Reducing energy use is not only good for the environment but also helps manage costs and improve our sustainability efforts. This policy supports the University’s goal of cutting carbon emissions (scope 1 & 2) by making our heating and cooling systems more efficient.

The following have been consulted in production of this policy:

* Head of Campus Building Services
* Head of Campus Facilities Management
* Head of Sustainability and Net Zero Carbon
* Head of Residential Facilities Management
* Director of Health and Safety (including Occupational Health)

# Heating & Cooling

## Seasonal Operation

In buildings without automated temperature controls, we will gradually switch heating and cooling on or off based on seasonal changes. Decisions will be made by reviewing both indoor and outdoor conditions:

* Heating will be turned off in late April or early May.
* Heating will be turned on in early October.

Facility Managers will keep building occupants informed of these changes.

As our buildings become more modern and connected, we will use smart technology to manage heating and cooling more efficiently. Systems will automatically adjust based on when and where people are in the building. By using weather forecasts, the building can anticipate temperature changes and make adjustments in advance. This will help save energy while keeping spaces comfortable, all without needing manual changes.

## Operational Dates & Times

Heating and cooling will follow this schedule:

Academic and Professional Services buildings

* Monday to Friday 7 AM - 6 PM – Normal operation
* Outside of these hours – Temperature will be adjusted to save energy

Residential buildings

* Monday to Sunday 6 AM - 10 AM and 4PM - 11PM

**Requests for heating or cooling outside of the university’s core operating dates and times should be made via your local Facility Manager, demonstrating a clear business need.**

## Temperature Settings

### **Heating Season (Winter):**

Indoor temperatures will be kept between 19°C and 21°C in occupied areas. Hallways, toilets, and stairwells will be set between 16°C and 18°C.

### **Cooling Season (Summer):**

The University will aim to maintain a comfortable indoor environment that supports wellbeing and productivity, while balancing energy efficiency and sustainability goals.

For mechanically cooled (serviced) spaces, the University will aim to maintain an indoor air temperature of no more than 26°C during the summer period, in line with industry guidance such as CIBSE Guide A. This temperature reflects a reasonable upper threshold for comfort under typical UK conditions.

Where possible, cooling setpoints will be optimised to achieve this target without excessive energy use. Local adjustments or exceptions may be considered for specialist environments (e.g. IT rooms, labs) where specific conditions are required.

Uncooled spaces will be monitored and reviewed, and mitigating measures (such as ventilation, shading, or flexible occupancy) may be considered to manage thermal comfort during peak summer conditions.

**Exceptions based on business needs should be requested through your local Facility Manager, providing a justification and explaining the impact of additional heating and cooling costs.**

## Compliance and Health and Safety Considerations

The heating and cooling policy will align with all relevant legislative requirements. To address insurance concerns, electric convector heaters are prohibited on all university premises.

In cases where there are concerns that the policy may not meet operational or personal requirements, a suitable risk assessment should be carried out. This assessment will help identify potential challenges and allow for adjustments to be made to ensure that the thermal environment meets the needs of occupants while aligning with the University's goals and obligations.

## Taking Charge: Occupant-Led initiatives for Building Energy Efficiency’s

Occupants of buildings play a crucial role in conserving energy and contributing to a more sustainable future. By implementing simple yet effective recommendations, we can significantly reduce energy consumption and minimise our environmental footprint.

* Managing windows and utilising blinds to mitigate solar heat gain.
* Flexibly scheduling work hours to avoid temperature extremes.
* Positioning workstations away from heat sources
* Powering down unnecessary electrical equipment and lighting during all seasons.
* Occupants are encouraged to dress appropriately for the season to optimise comfort levels without relying solely on heating or cooling systems

# Governance

The Space Temperature Policy contributes to and is governed by the University of Bristol’s Integrated Management System (IMS). The following ISO standards are applicable to its development, implementation, and ongoing review:

### ISO 9001 – Quality Management Systems

* **Clause 4.2 – Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties**

Acknowledges that staff, students, contractors, and visitors expect a safe and comfortable indoor climate conducive to wellbeing and productivity.

* **Clause 7.1.3 – Infrastructure**

Identifies heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC), and smart controls as critical infrastructure supporting service delivery and operational efficiency.

* **Clause 7.1.4 – Environment for the operation of processes**

Recognises thermal comfort as a key environmental factor enabling effective academic, research, and professional activities.

### ISO 45001 – Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

* **Clause 4.2 – Needs and expectations of workers and other interested parties**

Includes consideration of thermal comfort as part of workplace health, safety, and wellbeing obligations.

## Overall governance and alterations to this policy will be taken via Campus Division Leadership Team (CDLT), to ensure continuous alignment with the University's objectives & strategic direction as well as its legal obligations.

### ISO 50001 – Energy Management Systems

Supports the University’s commitment to energy efficiency and carbon reduction (scope 1 & 2), particularly in relation to the optimisation of heating and cooling systems.

### ISO 7730 – Ergonomics of the Thermal Environment

Provides internationally recognised criteria (e.g. PMV/PPD indices) for assessing and managing indoor thermal comfort in line with occupant needs.

### ISO 52000-1 – Energy Performance of Buildings

Establishes a performance-based methodology for evaluating and improving the energy performance of building stock, including HVAC systems.

### ISO 41001 – Facility Management Systems

Emphasises the strategic role of facilities management in maintaining indoor environmental quality, including temperature regulation and energy performance.

# Equality Impact Assessment

An [Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)](#_Other_Internal_References) was completed to evaluate the potential impact of this policy on different groups across the University community.

The EIA identified key considerations for groups including those with disabilities, pregnant individuals, and those experiencing menopause. Reasonable adjustments and flexibility in thermal environments will be considered upon request through local Facilities Managers or line managers.

Ongoing monitoring of requests and feedback will inform any future updates to the policy.

# References

## Internal References

[EIA-Checklist-Form-Space Temperature Policy (11-03-2025).docx](https://uob.sharepoint.com/:w:/t/grp-cd-campusinnovation/EU0dIx-k_mNDl-hF_kDMUbQBQ4T4ud_U79KY73an0qTdvA?e=BbtdxG)

[Campus Division Service Directory](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/campus-division/Shared%20Documents/Campus%20Division%20Service%20Directory.pdf?web=1)

[IMS](https://uob.sharepoint.com/teams/grp-cd-ims/SitePages/Alt-Documented-Information.aspx?web=1)

## External References

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – Temperature: The Law for Employers  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/the-law.htm>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 – Approved Code of Practice (L24) <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm>

[CIBSE Guide A](https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/guide-a-environmental-design-2015-updated-2021-pdf/) – Environmental Design (Used for temperature setpoint guidance and thermal comfort standards)