

Thermal Comfort Policy

1. Purpose

This policy deals with thermal comfort in non-residential buildings across the University of Lincoln's estate. It supports the University's Environment and Energy Policy, and the University's Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

The University has committed to reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2030, against a 2009/10 baseline, and achieving Net Zero emissions by 2040. In order to meet these targets, energy consumption must be carefully managed in order to reduce energy wastage.

The Estates Department is committed to providing fit for purpose buildings to enable University activity, whilst balancing energy consumption and our environmental impact.

2. Scope

The University aims to provide a comfortable working environment for staff, students and tenants, comply with Health and Safety requirements while minimising the effects on the environment and costs of operating heating and cooling systems.

3. Principles

Thermal comfort is highly subjective, and affected by factors such as air temperature, air movement and humidity as well as individual metabolism and preferences. Staff, students and visitors are expected to take personal responsibility for their comfort by wearing suitable and adequate clothing for the season.

4. Thermal Comfort - Heating

During a building's opening hours, in line with health and safety guidance, all general use spaces will meet a minimum of 16°C. Within the heating season, the university will aim to heat utilised spaces to approximately 20°C.

The use of individual plug-in heaters presents a health & safety risk, as well as interfering with a building's heating systems, and are therefore not permitted.

5. Thermal Comfort - Cooling

Air conditioning is not fitted as standard throughout the university. To support our commitment to reducing carbon emissions and working towards our target to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2040, alternative and natural measures for cooling spaces or reducing heat gain will be prioritised wherever possible and air conditioning will only be considered as a viable solution when all the following criteria apply:

- Alternative measures for cooling a space, including natural ventilation, have been fully utilised and shown to be insufficient, and;

- Temperatures are shown to be consistently and regularly over 27°C, or 25°C in spaces where personal protective equipment is required;
- Colleagues could not reasonably work elsewhere, and;
- Spaces are in regular and consistent use throughout the summer period, and;
- The installation of air conditioning is feasible, practicable, affordable and adequate funding for the works can be identified.

Requests for installation of cooling and ventilation measures, including air conditioning, in academic spaces can be submitted to Estates via the Estates Support Desk and will be assessed using the above criteria on a case-by-case basis.

Where present, mechanical cooling will be set to cool no lower than 23°C. In smaller offices and teaching spaces, cooling will not be activated automatically, but will be available for use when required. Desk and room fans may be used provided they comply with the University of Lincoln Control of Electricity at Work Policy.

The University aims to achieve the temperatures described, however on days when extreme external temperatures are experienced this may not be possible.

6. Exceptions to the Thermal Comfort Policy

- Laboratories and specialist spaces
- Rooms with heat generating equipment
- Extenuating circumstances relating to specific health requirements whereby temperatures are detrimental to health, as recommended by an occupational health professional.

7. Maintenance of systems

The heating and cooling systems are maintained by the Estates Department. Every effort is made to minimise inconvenience to building users, but there may be occasions when a shutdown of service is unavoidable.

8. System faults

The Estates team relies upon colleagues from across the university to report any problems with the heating and cooling systems, which should be the first course of action if a thermal comfort issue is identified.

9. Compliance

This policy complies with Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers, Health and Safety Executive, Carbon Trust guidelines and sector best practice.

10. Supporting Policies

Available at <http://estates.lincoln.ac.uk/policies>:

- Carbon Management Plan
- Environment and Energy Policy
- Space Management Policy

Review

Policy to be reviewed in August 2024.

Version History

Version	Changed Made	Approved by	Date approved
1	Approved by Senior Management Team.	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Simon Parkes.	30 th June 2016
2	Reviewed and approved by Environmental Sustainability Committee.	Environment and Sustainability Committee.	21 st June 2017
3	No changes.	Estates SLT.	17 th October 2018
4	Expanded to include exceptions to the policy and compliance with guidelines.	Estates SLT.	2 nd August 2019
5	Approved by ESLT. Clarification of heating and cooling thresholds and when this is provided to building occupants.	Estates SLT.	1 st February 2022
6	Updated policy format to be consistent with other UoL policies. Additional text stating circumstances whereby mechanical cooling may be considered.	Estates SLT	3 rd August 2023