

Thermal Comfort and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Student Accommodation

Campus Services

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Contents

- 1.0 Purpose
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Comfort Standards and Heating Strategy
- 4.0 Cooling and Overheating Mitigation
- 5.0 Resident Engagement and Responsibilities
- 6.0 Energy-Efficient Appliances
- 7.0 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement
- 8.0 Review

Thermal Comfort and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Student Accommodation

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This strategy sets out the approach to delivering and maintaining thermally comfortable living environments in university-managed student accommodation. It supports student wellbeing, enhances residential experience, and aligns with institutional commitments to sustainability and energy efficiency.
- 1.2 The strategy applies to all student residences managed by the university and is designed to be adaptable to changing weather patterns, student needs, and technological advancements.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 **Wellbeing:** Ensure students live in environments that support physical comfort, mental health, and academic success.
- 2.2 **Compliance:** Meet or exceed legal requirements under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and relevant housing standards.
- 2.3 **Sustainability:** Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions associated with heating and cooling.
- 2.4 **Responsiveness:** Provide a clear process for addressing thermal comfort concerns raised by residents.
- 2.5 **Engagement:** Encourage students to participate in energy-saving behaviours and provide feedback on their living environment.

3.0 Comfort Standards and Heating Strategy

- 3.1 Target Temperature Ranges:
 - Living and sleeping areas: 21°C to 23°C
 - Bathrooms and kitchens: Minimum 19°C during occupied hours
- 3.2 Heating Schedule:
 - Heating will operate from 07:30 to 00:00 (midnight) daily during the academic year and designated vacation periods.

- The heating season may be extended or adjusted in response to external temperatures, particularly when daytime highs remain below 16°C.

3.3 Cold Weather Adaptation:

- The Estates and Accommodation teams will monitor weather forecasts and building performance to ensure proactive adjustments to heating schedules.

4.0 Cooling and Overheating Mitigation

4.1 Cooling Strategy:

- Air conditioning will not be installed in student accommodation except where required for health or operational reasons.
- Instead, the university promotes low-energy cooling measures, including:
 - Use of fans
 - Natural ventilation through windows
 - Curtains/blinds to reduce solar gain
 - Hydration and seasonal clothing guidance

4.2 Overheating Threshold:

- The university aims to keep indoor temperatures below 27°C during warmer months. Persistent overheating will be investigated and mitigated through passive or behavioural solutions.

5.0 Resident Engagement and Responsibilities

5.1 Students are key partners in achieving thermal comfort and energy efficiency. Residents are encouraged to:

- Dress appropriately for the season.
- Keep windows and doors closed when heating is active.
- Use blinds or curtains to manage heat gain or loss.
- Avoid using unauthorised portable heaters or air conditioning units.
- Report persistent temperature issues to the Accommodation Services Helpdesk.
- Use energy-saving settings on personal devices and switch off unused appliances.

6.0 Energy-Efficient Appliances

6.1 When choosing appliances for your room, it's important to think about and look for appliances with an A-G energy rating label:

'A' rated appliances are the most efficient and use less electricity.

'G' rated appliances use the most energy and cost more to run.

6.2 Why it matters:

- Saves you money on electricity bills.
- Helps the environment by reducing carbon emissions.
- Keeps your room cooler in summer by reducing heat from inefficient devices.

6.3 The University will always purchase appliances such as fridges, ovens, dishwashers and microwaves which are A Rated where possible.

7.0 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

7.1 The Estates and Accommodation teams will monitor building performance and respond to reported issues.

7.2 Temperature audits may be conducted in response to complaints or seasonal changes.

7.3 Student feedback will be gathered through surveys and forums to inform future improvements.

8.0 Review

8.1 This strategy will be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in:

- Legislation or regulatory guidance
- Energy pricing or carbon targets
- Student feedback or satisfaction data
- Technological developments