University of Essex

Energy Management Policy

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Publication date:	January 2026
Issue:	1.0

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Energy Management Policy

Aim

The University's Strategy commits us to excellence in education and research while acting responsibly for the benefit of individuals and communities. Effective management of energy is essential to delivering this ambition.

1. Policy statement

1.1 The University is committed to the responsible and efficient use of energy across all its activities. Energy will be managed in a way that balances the needs of our community with our obligations to address climate change and maintain financial sustainability. Energy management is a shared responsibility across the entire University community.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees, students, visitors and contractors across all the University campuses. It covers the use, management and procurement of energy, including electricity, gas and other fuels. The policy provides the framework for:

- Monitoring and analysing energy consumption.

- Managing heating, cooling, lighting and hot water.

- Improving building fabric and building systems.

- Supporting efficient use of space and occupancy-based operation.

- Increasing on site renewable energy generation.

- Procuring energy through a risk managed and sustainable approach.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Energy price volatility poses a risk to the University's financial sustainability, which could impact our ability to deliver excellence in education and research. While significant enhancements are being made to our physical estate to reduce our energy use, the part our community play is equally significant.

Staff and students

3.2 All members of the University community are expected to contribute to reducing energy use through everyday actions, including:

- Switching off lights when leaving rooms.

- Turning off computers, screens and other equipment at the end of the day and using sleep settings when away from desks.

- Turning off appliances at the socket when not in use.

- Avoiding unnecessary use of hot water, including shorter showers and only boiling the amount of water required.

- Dressing appropriately for seasonal conditions, particularly during winter months.

- In laboratory and research environments, users are expected to engage with the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) and adopt best practice to reduce energy demand where research requirements allow.

Line Managers / Heads of Departments

3.3 Line Managers and Heads of Department play a key role in embedding energy conscious behaviours. They are expected to:

- Promote awareness of this policy and reinforce expected behaviours.

- Encourage good energy practice within offices, teaching spaces and laboratories.

- Support and promote laboratory efficiency initiatives such as LEAF.

- Identify practical opportunities to reduce energy use within their areas and work with the Sustainability and Estates teams to progress them.

- Lead by example through their own behaviours.

Sustainability and Estate teams

3.4 The Sustainability and Estates teams are responsible for strategic and operational delivery of energy management. This includes:

- Develop, implement, and review sustainability policies, including the Energy Policy and Carbon Management Plan.

- Monitoring energy and water use to identify inefficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

- Delivering energy efficiency, renewable energy and decarbonisation projects.

- Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and reporting requirements (e.g. ESOS, DEC, HESA).

- Engaging with staff and students through campaigns, guidance and training.

- Reporting progress against targets to appropriate University committees.

4. Energy hierarchy

4.1 The energy hierarchy in figure 1 below sets out how the University will manage its energy needs. This approach will guide the University in making uniformed choices to reduce energy consumption, mitigate increases in energy price rises, decarbonise its assets in a phased manner, mitigate supply risks and reduce CO_2 emissions.
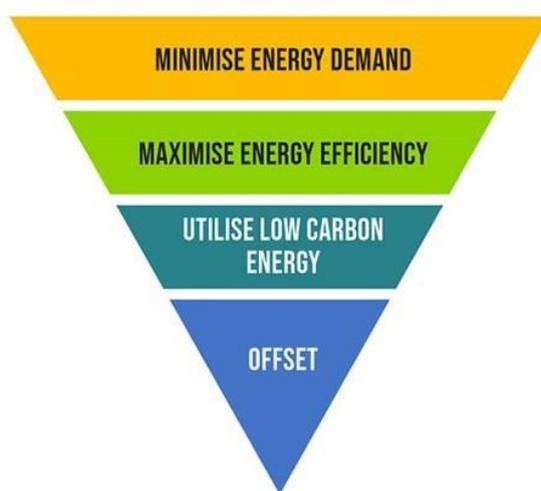
Figure 1 - The Energy Hierarchy

- Minimise energy demand by avoiding unnecessary use of heating, cooling, lighting and equipment.

- Maximise energy efficiency through improvements to building fabric, systems and controls.

- Utilise low carbon energy by maximising on site renewable generation where viable.

- Offset residual emissions only where emissions cannot yet be eliminated and in line with university policy.

5. Working and learning environment

5.1 The University aims to provide a safe and reasonably comfortable working and learning environment while minimising energy use, carbon emissions and costs, within what is reasonably achievable from our buildings and financial sustainability.

- Internal temperatures will be managed in line with CIBSE guidance and Health and Safety requirements.

- Comfort levels may vary between buildings due to age, construction and existing infrastructure, particularly within the 1960s estate.

- Building Management Systems (BMS) are used to control heating, ventilation, cooling and lighting to ensure systems operate only when required.

- Improvement of building controls, systems and fabric will be undertaken to enhance comfort and reduce energy demand over time.

6. Monitoring energy use

6.1 Robust monitoring underpins effective energy management. The University will:

- Install and maintain Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) on fiscal meters.

- Expand sub metering at building and system level.

- Use energy data to identify inefficiencies, reduce waste, improve billing accuracy and inform investment decisions.

7. Energy mix

7.1 Gas is a fossil fuel, and we produce carbon emission when we use it. Electricity from the national grid is becoming less carbon intensive due to the introduction of renewables such as PV Solar and wind. The University will:

- Reduce gas use wherever feasible, recognising its carbon intensity.

- Procure its electricity through 100% certified renewable tariffs, with emissions reported using national grid carbon factors.

- Further roll out PV Solar systems providing zero carbon electricity and reduce reliance on grid supply.

- Aim to generate at least 25% of its electricity demand from solar PV

8. Energy reduction work

8.1 University has committed significant investment to improving the energy performance of its estate. Key areas include:

- LED lighting upgrades with occupancy controls.

- Expansion of PV solar installations.

- Roof insulation and window upgrades.

- Optimisation of heating, cooling and control systems.

- Improved metering and BMS upgrades.

8.2 These measures support the target to reduce grid energy use by 76% per m² from a 2019 baseline and achieve net zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2035.

9. Estate heating and cooling

9.1 Heating and cooling systems will be operated to balance comfort, energy efficiency and cost. There is no maximum temperature requirement set by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations. The minimum temperature requirement as set by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations is 16°C. Note this does not apply to residential space.

- Set points and operating times will be optimised based on occupancy.

- Equipment should be selected, used and maintained to minimise unnecessary energy consumption.

- Portable electric heaters are not permitted unless authorised and supplied by Estates due to safety, energy and system risks.

10. Occupancy and space use

10.1 Heating, cooling and lighting based on occupancy provides opportunities to reduce energy use and carbon emissions, while also providing our community an appropriate environment for studying and working. Efficient use of space supports energy and carbon reduction:

- Lighting and HVAC systems will increasingly respond to occupancy through sensors.

- New installations and refurbishments will prioritise automatic controls.

- Space utilisation will be reviewed to avoid heating, cooling or lighting unused areas.

11. The built environment

11.1 A fabric first approach will be taken to reduce heat loss and cooling demand. Priority measures include improvements to roofs, insulation and windows. New buildings will only be developed where essential and must be designed to be low carbon. For new and existing buildings, we will:

- Prioritise automatic and occupancy controls.

- Install LED lighting.

- Replace fossil fuel heating systems with low carbon alternatives where feasible.

- Improve heating controls, including TRVs and smart controls.

- Install low flow water fittings.

- Expand sub metering and BMS capability.

12. Procuring energy

12.1 Energy procurement will support financial sustainability and climate commitments by:

- Using a risk managed contracting approach.

- Prioritising renewable electricity.

- Reviewing procurement strategies to reflect market conditions and decarbonisation goals.