

Heating and Comfort Policy

Policy Control

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Introduction

In recent years, natural gas used for space heating has accounted for approximately two thirds of the Glasgow School of Art's operational carbon emissions (Scopes 1 and 2). In response to the Scottish Government's target for Scotland to achieve net zero emissions by 2045, the Glasgow School of Art has committed not only to meet this target but to go further, with an ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2037.

Reducing unnecessary gas consumption such as overheating buildings or heating spaces when they are not in use is a critical step in achieving these ambitions. Alongside carbon reduction, improved control of heating and cooling will also deliver financial savings, which can be reinvested across the estate.

Through effective use of its Building Management System (BMS), the Glasgow School of Art aims to provide comfortable conditions for staff and students in the most environmentally and financially responsible way. This policy sets out the GSA's approach to space heating and cooling, ensuring that buildings are maintained within defined internal temperature ranges that support reasonable thermal comfort while minimising carbon emissions and energy costs. Providing appropriate thermal comfort is also an important factor in supporting the health, wellbeing and productivity of both staff and students.

Scope

This policy applies to all buildings and spaces across the Glasgow School of Art's Glasgow Campus, including academic and residential areas. It excludes Forres Campus, as its systems operate separately.

Target Temperature Range

The estate's target temperature for its buildings is 18-20°C during working hours. This is in line with Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 which state that internal temperatures should provide "reasonable comfort" and goes on to specify that this should normally be at least 16°C. Lower temperatures may apply in areas where work is non-sedentary or where a process or activity in the space requires a lower temperature such as corridors, workshops and some laboratories. There is no maximum temperature defined in Health & Safety legislation.

Heating Policy

During the heating season (which is usually 1st October to 30th April, but may be altered dependent on external temperatures), the GSA's Heating and Comfort Policy aims to maintain a temperature of 18-20°C during working hours. This is an average range temperature and actual temperatures may vary within buildings and at different times of day.

Outside working hours, the heating will be 'set back' to lower temperature appropriate to the background condition, level of use and to ensure protection of property. Outside of normal working hours, heating (and cooling where installed) can be provided if this has been previously arranged with Estates.

The estate acknowledges that there are limitations with some of the heating systems due to their age and layout which may mean that it is not always possible to meet the above criteria. For staff who are concerned with the level of thermal comfort, they should submit their complaint through the helpdesk.

Estates will provide equipment to monitor and record (dates and times) over the working week the temperature to verify whether the issue is a recurring problem or caused by a one-off event.

Estates will carry out their own investigation and if temperatures are found to be below the stated levels, will provide a solution. **Under no circumstances should staff use their own supplementary heating appliances.**

Supplementary/Portable Heating

The use of personal electric heaters is not recommended due to their potential fire risk and impact on the Building Management System (BMS). The heating system will be controlled via BMS and introducing other heating sources can interfere with both the thermal comfort of the wider building, and the efficiency of the main fixed heating system. **Portable heaters not provided by or authorised by the Estates Department will be removed without notice during routine health and safety inspections.**

Where it has not been possible to resolve a heating issue and where a Maintenance Manager has determined that temporary heating is necessary, the Estates team will provide a supplementary heating appliance. Building users who are issued with a supplementary heating appliance will receive instructions on its safe and effective use and will be expected to use the appliance as instructed. Estates will undertake a regular review of the performance and operation of the appliance. Estates will ensure that supplementary heating appliances are collected once a heating issue has been rectified. Users will be asked to sign for the appliance and agree to return it when requested by Estates.

Under no circumstances should recipients of a supplementary heating appliance remove it from the room it was issued for (this includes use in another room or removal from campus).

Supplementary heating is permissible only where authorised by the Estates team.

Cooling Policy

During the cooling season, which typically runs from 1 June to 30 August, the Glasgow School of Art aims to manage internal temperatures in a way that balances thermal comfort, energy efficiency, and carbon reduction.

In spaces with natural ventilation and no dedicated cooling systems, internal temperatures will generally be allowed to operate within a range of 26–28°C during normal working hours. In spaces where mechanical cooling or air conditioning is installed, systems will be operated to maintain temperatures within a range of 23–24°C. These temperatures represent average target ranges, and actual conditions may vary between buildings and throughout the day due to factors such as occupancy, solar gain, and external weather conditions.

Where mechanical cooling is provided, it will normally be controlled through the Building Management System (BMS). Default cooling set-points will be set to 24°C.

Desk fans may be used to provide local comfort, provided they have been PAT tested within the previous 12 months. Schools and Departments are responsible for the purchase and management of their own desk fans.

How you can help to stay comfortable all year round

It is difficult to satisfy everyone's needs in terms of thermal comfort and therefore users should take reasonable measures to adapt to the environment and limit the effects of extremes in temperature:

- Dress appropriately for the weather. Each additional layer can improve comfort by 2-3°C
- Only open windows, when necessary, when radiators are off and the room needs to be cooled down
- Use the thermostat, where fitted, to control radiators rather than open a window
- Use window blinds to reduce solar gain
- Take regular breaks and don't stay in a sedentary position throughout the day

- Ensure radiators are not blocked by furniture or other obstructions
- Switch off unnecessary electrical equipment and lighting; in the summer these can significantly increase the temperature in a room
- On warm/hot days open doors and windows to increase natural ventilation
- Appreciate that their view of an acceptable temperature may not be the same as other users of a building – thermal comfort is very subjective.
- Report any heating/ventilation/window blind maintenance issues on the helpdesk portal promptly

Revision

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure that it remains up-to date and effective in achieving GSA's Goal of Net Zero by 2037 balanced with the need for user comfort.