



OU in Ireland Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan

Estates / June 2026

OU in Northern Ireland Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan

Introduction

The Open University in Ireland (OUil) Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan aligns with the Net Zero Carbon policy, outlining a roadmap to achieve the Net Zero 2030 commitment in Ireland.

Scope

The Open University (OU) operates across four nations: England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. A Net Zero Carbon policy is in place and applies to all OU sites. In support of this, nation-specific Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plans have been developed to address the unique circumstances and requirements of each region.

The University has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions for all Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2030. For Scope 3 indirect emissions, the target date is set for 2050. Established processes are already in place to monitor and reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions across all locations. The current focus for Scope 3 emissions is the development of a robust and accurate baseline to inform future reduction strategies.

- Scope 1: direct emissions from carbon-based fuel combustion, fleet vehicles and fugitive emissions, e.g. refrigerants from chiller plant. Please note: there are no fleet vehicles at OUil.
- Scope 2: in-direct emissions which arise from purchased electricity
- Scope 3: all other emissions in the University supply/value chain, notably arising from; staff working from home, purchased goods and services (of which digital and flights are carbon intensive and high spend), business travel, employee commuting, waste disposal, transportation and distribution (up and downstream), leased assets and franchises and investments.

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Net Zero Carbon Principles

The Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan establishes the baseline year as 2020/21. This revised baseline aligns with the **OU Learn and Live Strategic Plan** and more accurately reflects the University's post-COVID operational model, including the adoption of a dynamic working approach.

The plan is structured around the **energy hierarchy** principles, which guide sustainable energy use across the University estate:

- **Reduce/Avoid Energy:** Prioritising effective space utilisation, incorporating passive design strategies, and improving building fabric to minimise energy demand for heating and cooling.
- **Use Energy Efficiently:** Upgrading mechanical and electrical systems to incorporate energy-efficient technologies and advanced controls.
- **Use Green Energy:** Investing in onsite renewable energy generation and securing offsite renewable electricity through dedicated supply contracts.

OUII is a historic listed building and former banking hall situated in the legal and business district of Central Belfast. Originally constructed between 1919 and 1921, it underwent significant refurbishment and expansion in 2009 when the University acquired the freehold. The building spans five floors, offering a gross internal area of 1,455 square metres.

OUII Net Zero Carbon Plan

Table below details the carbon reduction measures and status. It is anticipated the remaining measures will require capital investment of circa £660,000 to complete.

Measure	Category	Status
Secondary glazing to heritage windows in office spaces Double glazing – reception area	Demand reduction	Completed
Construction of lobby to side entrance to reduce heat loss and minimise draughts	Demand reduction	Completed
Upgrade / replace external doors (heritage)	Demand reduction	2026-27

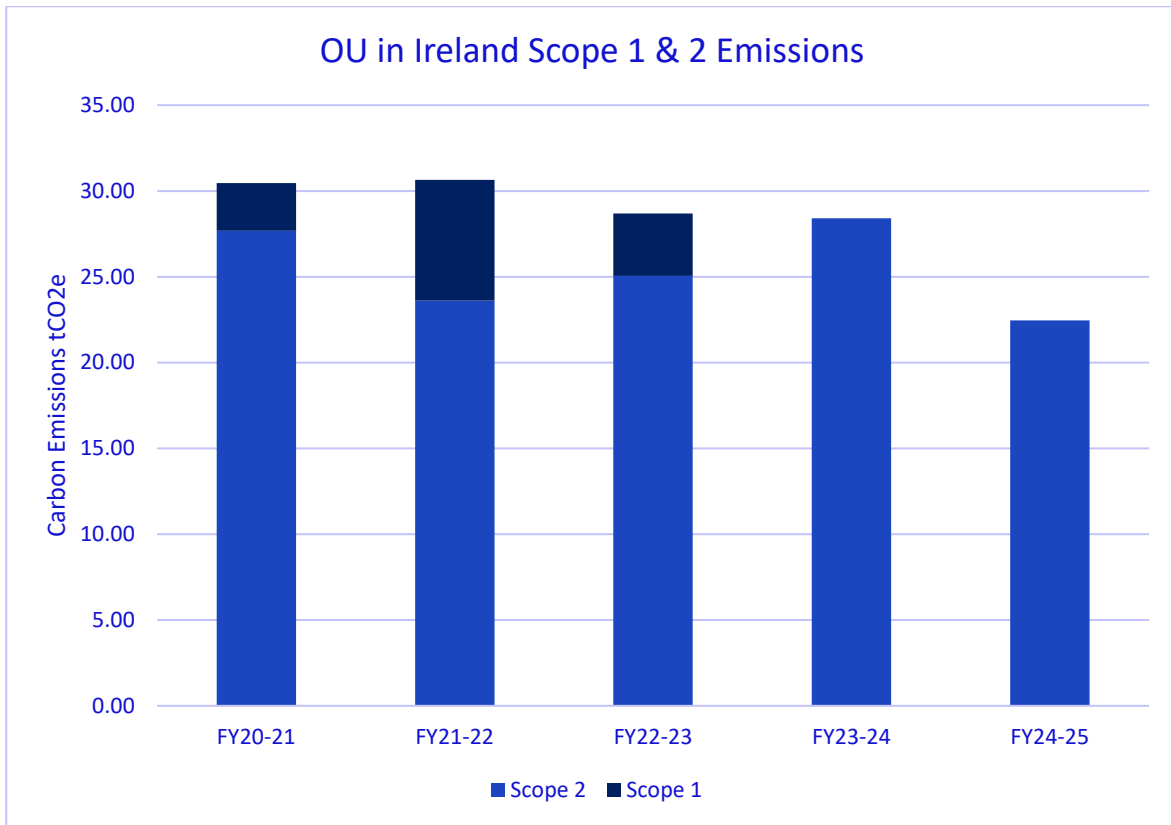
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Internal wall insulation	Demand reduction	Business case required
LED lighting upgrade and controls	Energy Efficiency	Completed
Electrification of hot water and heating systems	Decarbonisation	Completed
Upgrade BMS and controls	Energy efficiency	Completed
HVAC upgrade – phased with end-of-life equipment replacement	Energy efficiency	2027-30
Install Solar PV	Renewable energy	2027-28
100% renewable electricity supply via a power purchase agreement.	Renewable energy	2029-30

Carbon Tracking

In 2023, the building became fully electric following the electrification of its heating and hot water systems. As a result, it now reports only Scope 2 emissions related to electricity consumption. Compared to the 2020–21 baseline, the building has achieved a 26% reduction in carbon emissions in 2024/25.

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Linked policies

Policies, strategies and plans linked to The Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan include:

- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Net Zero Carbon 2030 Policy
- Sustainable Construction policy
- Water Policy
- Waste and Resource Policy
- Waste and Resource Management Plan
- Sustainable Food and Catering Policy

Monitoring and review

The Net Zero 2030 Policy and nations Net Zero Plans are owned by OU Estates. The policy will be reviewed annually, and progress on targets reported to the OU Ireland Senior Management Team, Sustainability Coordination Working Group and Vice-Chancellors Executive. This forms part of the Institutional Performance Reporting and Strategic Risk Register mitigation measures which are updated quarterly.

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Signed By

Dorian Holloway, Director of Estates

Version History

Version Number	Date of change	Originator of change (title)	Description of change
1.0	June 2025	Energy Manager	New OU in Northern Ireland Net Zero 2030 Plan
1.1	June 2026	Energy Manager	Reviewed – carbon data updated

Next review date: June 2027

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