



Net Zero Carbon 2030 Policy

Estates / June 2026

Net Zero Carbon Policy

Introduction

The Open University (OU) acknowledges the urgency to act on the Climate Crisis and our action now will help to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees. The OU's Learn and Live Strategy 2022-2027, sets a new and ambitious goal of achieving Net Zero emissions from energy use (scope 1 and 2) by 2030 and from all indirect emissions no later than 2050.

Target

The Net Zero Carbon by 2050 target has two notable milestones:

- Milestone 1: achieve net zero carbon from scope 1 and 2 by 2030
- Milestone 2: achieve net zero carbon from all other indirect emissions no later than 2050

Scope

The OU operates sites across the four nations, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Net Zero Carbon 2030 policy and Net Zero 2030 Plan applies to all OU sites. The below lists the emissions that is associated with the University activities:

- Scope 1: direct emissions from carbon-based fuel combustion, fleet vehicles and fugitive emissions.
- Scope 2: in-direct emissions which arise from purchased electricity
- Scope 3: all other emissions in the University's supply/value chain, notably arising from:
 - employee working from home
 - purchased good and services
 - business travel
 - employee commuting
 - waste disposal
 - transportation and distribution (up- and downstream)
 - leased assets and franchises and
 - investments.

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Objectives

The objectives are set to ensure the University meets its Net Zero Carbon commitment and to continually reduce direct and indirect emissions related to its operations. All staff, students, consultants, and contractors are expected to collaborate to help deliver energy and carbon reductions.

The University is committed to:

- Implement the Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan
- Monitor and report on energy consumption and carbon emissions
- Identify areas of significant energy use and set action plans to reduce energy demand and improve efficiency
- Implement strategy to decarbonise the estate by phasing out fossil fuelled equipment with electric or zero carbon technologies
- Adopt Net Zero Carbon building standard for new buildings and major refurbishments
- Integrate whole life carbon assessment and costings in business case and financial decision-making
- Embed net zero measures in architectural, mechanical, and electrical design standards and contractor handbook
- Increase onsite renewable energy generation and the procurement of energy from renewable sources
- Continue to reduce operational energy use through retrofit projects to improve building energy performance
- Minimise energy demand through building fabric and service retrofits to improve building energy performance
- Heating and cooling policy that balances energy efficiency whilst maintaining thermal comfort levels
- Engage and embed energy responsible behaviours with all stakeholders through Go Green Program, SPARK tool and carbon literacy course
- Comply with all relevant legal and legislative requirements relating to energy consumption and reporting

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Linked policies

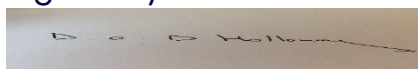
Policies, strategies and plans linked to the Net Zero Carbon 2030 policy include:

- Environmental sustainability policy
- Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan – England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- Sustainable Construction policy
- Water Policy
- Biodiversity Plan
- Waste and Resource Policy
- Waste and Resource Management Plan
- Sustainable Food and Catering Policy

Monitoring and review

The Net Zero Carbon 2030 Policy is owned by OU Estates. The policy will be reviewed annually, and targets reported to the OU Executive Sustainability Steering committee and OU Institutional Performance Measures.

Signed By



Dorian Holloway, Director of Estates

Version History

Version Number	Date of change	Originator of change (title)	Description of change
1.0	May 2023	Energy Manager	New Net Zero Carbon 2030 Policy
1.1	June 2024	Energy Manager	Reviewed – no change
1.2	June 2025	Energy Manager	Reviewed – no change
1.3	June 2026	Energy Manager	Reviewed – no change

Next review date: June 2027

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