

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR LABS

Be efficient, be sustainable



Laboratory buildings are responsible for over 60% of the University's total energy consumption and carbon emissions.

To address this, the University's Environmental Sustainability team has created the Sustainable Labs programme which specifically focuses on energy reduction and sustainability in labs.

We encourage and support best practice so that sustainability becomes an integral part of everyday lab work.



SIX SIMPLE STEPS

1 Switch off equipment where possible and safe, particularly at weekends and nights. You can use timer switches or built-in functions to do this automatically. Use our colour-coded stickers to ensure everyone knows what can and cannot be switched off!

2 Always close your fume cupboard sash when you leave the room. This makes it safer and reduces the amount of heated or cooled air escaping the room. We have 'Shut the Sash' stickers available to help raise awareness about this.

Shutting a fume cupboard sash reduces its air flow, energy consumption and carbon emissions by 40%.

3 Surplus will often end up as waste, so manage your chemicals and be conscious of what and how much you use:

- Plan ahead to use the minimum amount of chemicals and samples
- Check if your chemical is already available and order only as much as you need
- Avoid disposable sterile plastics if possible
- Consider which samples you really need to keep and for how long, and label accordingly.

4 Share equipment and consider what's available before buying something new:

- Most departments list their equipment and research facilities in this online searchable database: www.research-facilities.ox.ac.uk
- If you need to purchase new equipment, include energy efficiency in your selection criteria
- Get in touch for some guidance and to find out about funding for energy saving projects.

Sharing equipment saves money, helps use space efficiently, and gives you a chance to meet other researchers.

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5 Look after fridges and freezers as they use lots of energy.

- Label samples, including expiry date, and regularly clear out old ones.
- Keep fridges and freezers clean and organised to ensure they keep your samples safe for years to come.
- Don't store items on top of freezers - it reduces the air circulation that they need to work efficiently.
- Report any issues like heavy icing, broken seals or dirty filters to the freezer manager
- Contact us to get our freezer stickers!

A freezer runs about 10% more efficiently after a full defrost.

6 Reduce, reuse, recycle.

Visit our website for information on how to dispose of items in the most sustainable way, and other initiatives:

- WARPit - our online platform for reuse of lab and office equipment
- UniGreenScheme - our equipment and asset resale service.

30 tonnes of waste and 110 tonnes of CO₂ have already been saved across the University by using WARPit.



GREEN IMPACT

Lab teams have taken the initiative and successfully embedded sustainability into their everyday work. The Environmental Sustainability team supports staff and students through Green Impact, an engagement and accreditation scheme which covers areas such as energy, materials, water and waste.

Successful teams will receive a **Gold, Silver or Bronze award** as part of their accreditation. Green Impact achievements are celebrated at the Vice-Chancellor's annual Sustainability Awards.

Many labs participate already - join or create a team today! Contact us to find out who is leading the team in your building.

To meet our new ambitious carbon target of cutting emissions by 50% from their peak by 2030, we need everyone to get involved!

FIND OUT MORE

Find more resources on our website including free stickers, posters and videos, as well as information about funding for energy-efficient equipment, such as freezers.

CONTACT THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

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