

# NYU Indoor Space Temperature Guideline

## Final January 31, 2022

**Title**

Indoor Space Temperature Guideline

**Effective Date**

1/31/2022

**Supersedes**

n/a (new guideline)

**Issuing Authority**

Provost (Katherine Fleming)  
Executive Vice President (Martin Dorph)

**Responsible Officer**

Vice President, Capital Projects & Facilities (David Alonso)

**Statement of Guideline**

NYU is building a healthier and more sustainable future. Through strategies that span every area of university life, we aim to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and establish a culture of sustainability throughout our community. By setting a clear guideline on indoor space temperature targets, NYU intends to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across campus, aiding progress towards NYU's climate goals; help provide comfortable environments for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and visitors; and improve affordability and reduce costs resulting from overuse of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning to maintain space temperatures beyond those laid out in these guidelines.

This guideline sets community expectations and provides NYU Facilities and the Client Services Center clear guidance on how to respond to feedback from the NYU community about indoor space temperatures. This guideline helps educate the NYU community that these ranges have been developed after careful consideration of policies of peer institutions and with respect to best practice and research of the buildings and engineering industry, including New York City building codes and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

**To Whom the Guideline Applies**

This guideline applies to all occupants of NYU indoor spaces, including residential, office, academic, and support spaces. Exceptions may be made after review of the Vice President, Capital Projects & Facilities, if it is determined they are necessary for documented human health issues, humidity control for conservation of books, art, or other sensitive materials, for computers or other equipment, or for research purposes.

NYU Capital Projects & Facilities may be contacted for further clarification about this standard, its development, and how it is applied across campus.

Residential spaces with local temperature controls (thermostats) may have allowable temperature ranges set separately from this guideline. Office or academic spaces with local temperature control are expected to match the temperature ranges described in this guideline.

**Guideline and Procedures**

NYU strives to maintain buildings in the temperature range of 68° to 77° Fahrenheit during normal operating hours, year-round. Within this temperature range, NYU attempts to balance comfort and academic needs with NYU's climate goals, while conserving energy and cost.

Therefore, regardless of the time of year, during normal operating hours, if the indoor temperature is within this range, it will be considered acceptable and no further action will be taken by NYU Facilities, unless it falls into the scope of the exceptions listed above as approved by the Vice President, Capital Projects & Facilities.

Recognizing the wide range of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in NYU buildings and the engineering difficulties associated with operating older buildings, it may be difficult or impossible to maintain a single temperature in all spaces within a single building. If space temperatures remain outside the established range for a sustained period, occupants should contact the Client Services Center.

**Definitions**

n/a

**Related Policies or Information**

n/a

## Frequently Asked Questions

- How does this guideline support NYU's affordability and sustainability goals?
  - By providing clear guidance on the expected range of indoor temperatures, the NYU community can be prepared appropriately. This allows NYU Facilities to set heating and cooling systems to their optimum efficiency, reducing costs, energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The temperature in my area is outside these guidelines — what should I do?
  - If your indoor space temperature has been outside of these range for a sustained period, please contact the Client Services Center.
- How was this temperature range set?
  - NYU developed this temperature range in accordance with the best practice and research of the buildings and engineering industry, including New York City building codes and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). In addition, an extensive review of similar policies and guidelines showed that this range is in line with those of peer institutions. This was then reviewed by the Provost, Executive Vice President, Facilities & Construction Management, Office of Global Inclusion, and the Sustainability Advisory Group before adoption.
- Was diversity, equity, and inclusion taken into consideration?
  - Individuals experience temperature and comfort differently, and some of these differences may be correlated with personal identity or demographic characteristics. The overall temperature range is very broad and therefore tends towards inclusion of a wide range of individual and group preferences. If you believe the range of temperatures in your space could better respect diversity, equity, and inclusion, please contact the Office of Sustainability.
- Shouldn't the target indoor temperature range be warmer in summer and colder in winter, instead of the same year-round?
  - Yes, in most instances, indoor temperatures may be higher in summer than in winter, and in the winter, temperatures may be lower than in the summer. However, because it is difficult to maintain the exact same temperature throughout many NYU buildings, and including the issue of reheats ([link](#)), it is more realistic to give a range of expected temperatures that is similar for all seasons.
- Are building temperatures the same whether my building is full or only partially occupied?
  - NYU strives to provide a comfortable temperature range for any occupants in the building during its scheduled hours of operation. As an energy conservation measure to reduce costs and confront climate change, temperatures may tend towards the outer part of the range during periods where a building is lightly occupied. With that said, it is expected that buildings outside normal operating hours will be outside the temperature range described in this guideline.

- Why do temperatures feel outside this range if I come in very early (or stay very late)?
  - To reduce costs and greenhouse gas emissions, temperatures are set outside of the guideline range during scheduled unoccupied periods. Therefore, temperatures very early or late in the day may be at the very edges of the guideline range, and the first or last occupants in a building should prepare accordingly.
- Isn't it wasting energy that my building is so cold in summer?
  - Certain NYU buildings (*list or link?*) use a system called "reheat" in summer. In this system, on hot and humid days, incoming air is cooled to remove moisture. Additional energy is then used to reheat the air to a comfortable temperature for delivery to occupied spaces. Therefore, making these buildings warmer in summer actually increases energy use. These "reheat" buildings, and any building with stringent humidity requirements, may operate at cooler summer temperatures. This, and other issues related to heating or cooling, is something that NYU examines when buildings undergo renovation or other work.
- What happens when there is a city-wide risk of a brownout due to an overstrained electric grid?
  - NYU participates in utility-sponsored programs to preserve the electric grid during times of very high demand. Generally, this entails afternoons on extremely hot and humid days in the summer. Building temperatures may fall outside of the guideline range during utility-requested energy curtailment periods to maintain the safety and integrity of the electrical grid.
- Will these guidelines reduce health and safety in NYU buildings?
  - Following these temperature guidelines will not compromise NYU's COVID-related ventilation requirements; in fact, sometimes to the opposite may be true, that in order to maintain ventilation it may be difficult to maintain perfect temperatures with existing building infrastructure.
- How can I be more comfortable in NYU buildings?
  - Some ways to optimize comfort and consistent temperature include:
    - Use blinds or shades to reduce heating from the sun
    - Close windows to allow building systems to work properly
    - Use heating mats or fans for local temperature control
    - Dress appropriately for the season and have layers available
- Can I use a space heater?
  - No, you should not use a space heater. In addition to being high energy users, they can be dangerous fire hazards. Instead, we recommend a [heating mat](#), which provides comfort with greatly reduced energy use and risk. *Link to page with heating mat model recommendations and iBuy links.*