

# Energy Projects at University

## About this project

This guide provides ideas and advice about setting up an energy project at your university.



Through your project you'll help the National Energy Foundation to meet our aim of improving the use of energy in buildings while making a difference to the people and places around you.

## What does it involve?

At university there are a range of different buildings, departments and groups of people you could engage about energy issues, making it a great place to set up an energy project. Your project could involve the Students Union, the University Estates Department, academics or a student society, and tackle issues such as behaviour change, key research questions, renewable energy generation or energy efficiency measures in student accommodation.

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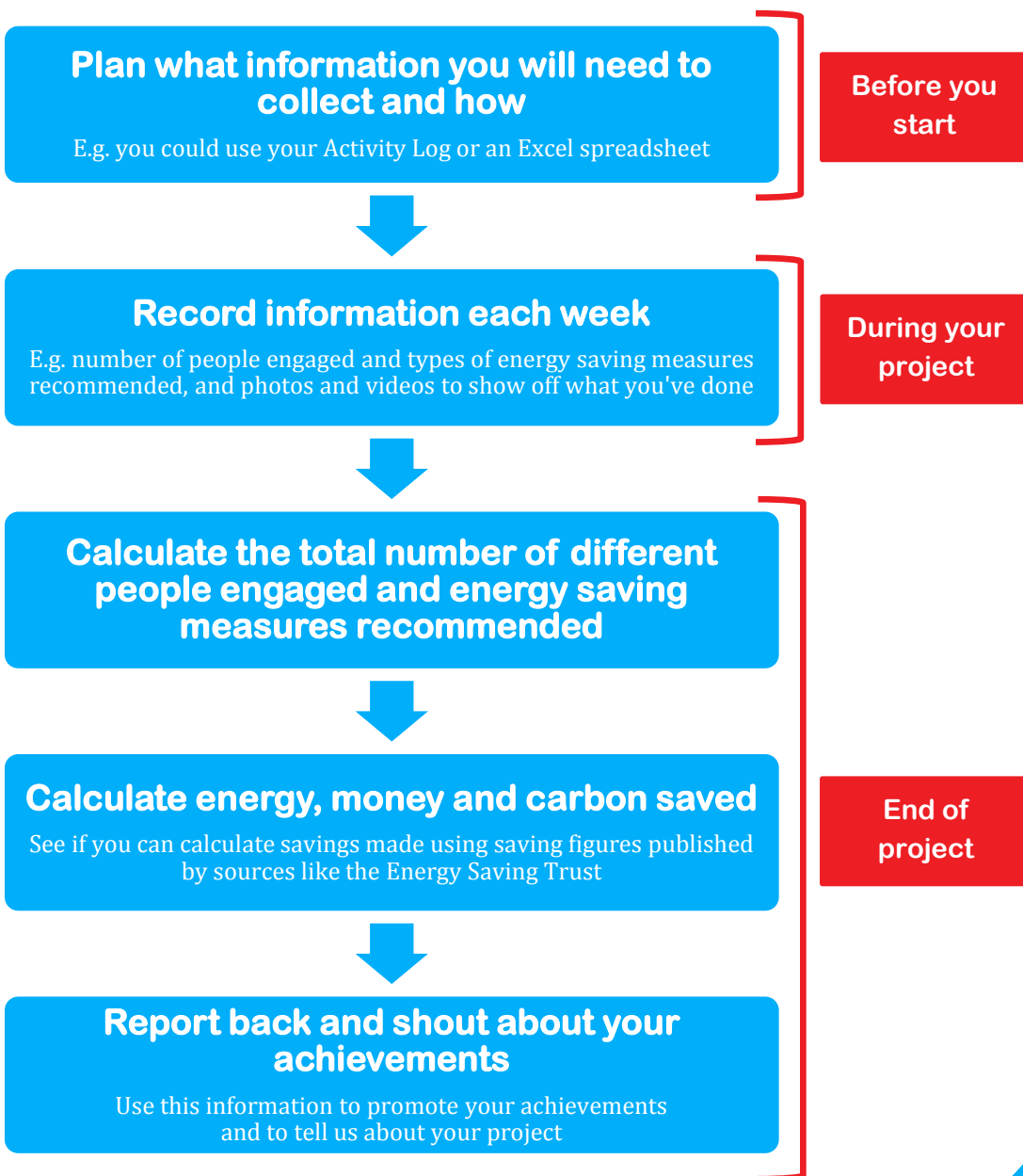


## How to use this guide

- Follow this step-by-step guide to plan, run and evaluate your very own energy saving project. You might take more or less time than is set out in the guide to complete a step – don't worry, this is your project so you can decide how you use the time available. If you have other ideas that aren't included in the guide, feel free to use them and adapt the guide to meet your own needs.
- Refer back to the [Energy Tutorial](#) to get ideas for energy saving tips you might need during your project.
- Make sure you keep safe. When your project involves activities outside of your home, you should carry out a risk assessment and ensure you have appropriate adult supervision if you're under 18. [Click here](#) to download tips and a template risk assessment form.
- At the end of each week, update your Activity Log to keep a record of what you've done and save any photos, videos or other materials you've produced. Download an Activity Log to fill in by [clicking here](#).
- When you finish your project, complete the [End of Project Survey](#) and send information about what you've done, along with your photos, videos and materials produced, to [energyenvoys@nef.org.uk](mailto:energyenvoys@nef.org.uk) to claim your Energy Envoy Certificate from the National Energy Foundation.
- Remember you must spend a minimum of **one hour per week** volunteering for the time required at your level for it to count towards your Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

## Tracking your progress

At the end of your project you'll need to report the number of people you've engaged. This will include people given advice about energy, reached by social media, attending events and presentations, and engaged about energy in any other way! You may also be able to calculate the amount of energy, money and carbon saved through your project. Here's what you should do:



## Before you start (Week 1-3)



If you haven't already, make sure you've completed the three week [Energy Tutorial](#) first to get lots of ideas and tips that will help you with your energy project.

## Your project (Week 4 onwards)



### **First steps – find out what's already happening!**

Before diving straight in to set up your own energy project at your university, the best first step is to check what's already taking place on your campus. The majority of universities have Sustainability or Environment teams, typically based in the Estates Department. Check out their website and meet with them to find out what they have set up already – you don't want to reinvent the wheel! They may be able to point out certain areas of the university that could do with some energy-related assistance.

Early on it's also a really good idea to meet with your Students Union or Students Association. Again, they may also have their own energy-related projects you could get involved with or have ideas for potential new projects that you could set up.

As well as setting the context and potentially providing ideas, the university Sustainability Team and Students Union may be able to provide resources to help bring your idea to fruition – whether financial resource for awareness raising events or informational materials to give out to students. They might be able to direct you to student societies such as People & Planet and academics who have an interest in the area or help with providing extra team members or advice to help run your energy project.

### **Project ideas**

Detailed guidance on setting up a variety of energy projects is provided on the ["Your Project" page](#) of the Energy Envoys website – you might be able to use one of these project ideas or adapt one to run at your university.

Specific projects relevant to the university sector that could be worth checking out are:

## 1. Student Switch Off

[Student Switch Off](#) is a National Union of Students (NUS) campaign that gets halls of residence to compete against each other over the academic year to see which one can save the most energy on their campus. The campaign currently runs at 48 universities across the UK and uses electricity meters to identify the impact of the campaign – typically achieving a 6% reduction in usage compared to pre-intervention levels. Students are trained up as Student Switch Off Ambassadors to engage with their peers in halls and a variety of events such as halls visits, photo competitions and climate change quizzes are run over the year to keep awareness high. It's worth checking out the Student Switch Off website to see if the campaign is running on your campus – if so, there will be energy awareness-raising activities that you can get involved in directly.

Website: [www.studentswitchoff.org](http://www.studentswitchoff.org)

## 2. Blackout

[Blackout](#) is a night out with the lights out! Another NUS campaign that brings together students and staff for a night going around campus switching off lights and appliances in university buildings that have been left on unnecessarily over the weekend. The campaign currently runs at 10 universities and provides an excellent opportunity for students to get practical energy auditing experience and to meet new people. Again, check out the Blackout website to see if the campaign is running on your campus.

Website: [www.nus.org.uk/en/greener-projects/greener-institutions/blackout/](http://www.nus.org.uk/en/greener-projects/greener-institutions/blackout/)

## 3. Energy-saving in student lets

A number of Students' Unions across the UK have run projects to help students living in the private rented sector to save energy and money by adopting simple energy-saving habits or by making practical changes, such as changing boilers and heating controls. Other projects have included conducting energy audits of houses in the private rented sector and helping students to request improvements to their properties from their landlord.

Staffordshire Students' Union even set up their own green lettings agency called GreenPad, which you can find out about here:

[www.staffsunion.com/greenpad/greenpad/](http://www.staffsunion.com/greenpad/greenpad/)

If you want more information on projects that Students' Unions have run in the past or to request a copy of the GreenPad how to guide on setting up a green lettings agency, contact [neil.jennings@nus.org.uk](mailto:neil.jennings@nus.org.uk).

#### 4. UniSolar

UniSolar is a student-run clean energy initiative, aiming to bring solar panels and community benefits to UK universities. Projects involve university students, staff, alumni, friends and the wider community crowd funding solar panels to install on unused roofs of university or community buildings. After the panels are installed, monetary returns are collected from the Feed-in Tariff (a government subsidy to incentivise green energy) as electricity is generated. The electricity produced can either be used on-site, or sold to the national grid. Money earned from generating energy and selling it back to the grid is then partially given back to investors and partially invested further in clean energy projects or other community ventures chosen by the investors.

Setting up solar projects can be complicated, and will require you to establish a legal structure and identify suitable sites for installing solar panels, so it's a good idea to get some experts on board and buy in from your University Estates Department. For more information about current projects (e.g. Solar SOAS) and what's involved, visit the UniSolar website.

Website: [www.uni-solar.org](http://www.uni-solar.org)

#### **During your project**

Don't forget to keep a record of what you've done, the number of people you've engaged and the different energy saving measures you recommend, and save any photos, videos or other materials you've produced during your project. Remember that you must spend a minimum of **one hour per week** volunteering for 6 months (26 weeks) or 12 months (52 weeks) for it to count towards your Silver Award.

Make sure you allow time to spread the message about your project throughout your wider community, particularly at the end of your project. You could give a talk, use



social media (tweeting [@EnergyEnvoys](#) or tagging [Energy Envoys](#) on Facebook), contact the local newspaper or write an article for the student paper. Try to share your achievements as widely as possible!

## End of project (Week 26 or 52)



At the end of your volunteering, evaluate your project and reflect on your achievements by filling in the End of Project Survey. To claim your Energy Envoys Certificate from the National Energy Foundation, please fill in the survey by [clicking here](#) and send your photos, videos and other materials produced to [energyenvoys@nef.org.uk](mailto:energyenvoys@nef.org.uk).

Thank you for volunteering with us!