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**Queen's Now**

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Features

Staff make 'Christmas Switch Off' a success



Alastair Edwards from the School of Education (L), Mark Garrett from the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and Stephen Whiteside (R) also from Education encouraged staff in their Schools to switch off equipment over the holiday period

Queen’s recorded its lowest Christmas Day energy consumption in three years thanks to the efforts of staff to switch off all non-essential electrical equipment before they left for the holiday period.

The statistics from Christmas Day 2011 show a reduction of 20% in energy consumption from 2010 and an 8% reduction from 2009.

The University’s Energy Manager, Tony Schmidt, said: “The results speak for themselves and show that switching off equipment and lights can really make a difference in terms of reducing overall energy consumption. Staff should be congratulated on their efforts.”

The Christmas Switch Off campaign was part of the University’s ‘Embrace a low carbon future’ initiative which aims to raise awareness of environmental issues and to bring about behavioural change among staff and students to reduce carbon emissions.

Two areas which made significant energy reductions on Christmas Day were the Schools of Education and Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.

School Manager in the School of Education Collette Farrell said: “The Christmas Switch Off was a real team effort and we’re glad it achieved some positive results.  We have two very motivated Environmental Champions in the School -  Alastair Edwards and Angela McMenamy - who promote energy efficiency and awareness throughout the year.

“In the run-up to the Christmas holiday period we encouraged staff to switch off in a number of ways. We actively promoted the ‘switch off’ campaign at School meetings in December; one of the receptionists, Margaret Kennedy, composed and issued e-mail reminders in the week preceding the Christmas break; some staff checked all the main teaching rooms and labs on the day before the break; and my colleague, Stephen Whiteside, and I went round all the School buildings and rooms on the last day to check that everything was switched off.  This was actually a waste of our energy as 98% of staff in the School had switched off all the appliances in their rooms!”

Trevor Sewell, Manager of Analytical Services in the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, said: “Our School has four Green Impact teams and they really made the difference this year in helping to reduce our energy consumption.

“Fume cupboards are the most energy intensive piece of equipment within laboratories, so in the run-up to the holiday period, our Green Impact teams focused on encouraging other members of the lab to close the sash on the cupboards and save energy.

“We also had support from our Head of School, Professor Chris Hardacre, who met with each of the Green Impact teams before Christmas.”

**Related links:**

[Green Impact Scheme](http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/CarbonManagementatQueens/GreenImpactScheme/)

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* [Staff make 'Christmas Switch Off' a success](http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QueensNow/Features/Name,279320,en.html)
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