

**TIMETABLING POLICY**

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose**

1.1.1 This policy sets out the University's procedures, roles and responsibilities in respect of:

- (i) the preparation and production of the University's teaching timetable;
- (ii) the provision of facilities to support teaching;
- (iii) the booking of centrally managed teaching rooms for non-teaching events.

This timetabling policy provides a framework to support all staff with a role in the preparation and production of the teaching timetable.

The guiding principles underpinning this policy are:

- (i) to support the delivery of high quality learning and teaching to students at the University;
- (ii) to ensure that students are taught in the most appropriate teaching accommodation;
- (iii) to ensure that teaching facilities and scheduling meet the needs of teaching staff;
- (iv) to optimise utilisation of the University's teaching space and resources;
- (v) to provide efficient and effective management of teaching timetabling and room bookings.

### **1.2 Scope**

1.2.1 In producing the teaching timetable, the Timetabling Team recognises and acts on the requirements of a range of stakeholders including students and academic staff, and aims to produce a workable and reasonable timetable which will meet defined constraints such as the availability and number of teaching rooms and facilities.

The provisions of this timetabling policy will be applied consistently and fairly across the University.

### **1.3 Definitions**

1.3.1 N.A

## **2 Policy Principles**

2.1 The University operates a 52-week year with teaching normally scheduled in weeks 1 – 11 of two 15-week Semesters for all its programmes. There are two revision weeks (one each semester immediately prior to the examination periods); one reading week (in week 15 of Semester 1) and seven weeks of examinations (two in January and three in May/June and two in late summer each year). Teaching normally commences on the first Monday in October each year. In addition, some programmes may schedule summer semester teaching.

- 2.2 The University's standard teaching week extends from Monday to Friday with a timetable running from 09.00 – 18.00 (except on Wednesdays). On Wednesdays, teaching events for students will normally be scheduled to take place between 09.00 - 12.00. However, optional modules can be scheduled between 12:00-13:00 on a Wednesday. Any exceptions after 12:00 for compulsory modules and 13.00 for optional modules must be agreed by the Director of Student Services & Administration, following consultation with students (affected by the scheduling) and a Students Union Sabbatical Officer. Any lecture scheduled after 12 on a Wednesday should be lecture captured. The University agrees to work towards guaranteeing that there will be no teaching on Wednesday afternoon after 12:00 as the estate grows.
- 2.3 Additionally, teaching events, by the agreement of the relevant Dean of Faculty, may be scheduled to take place between 18.00 and 21.00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Teaching events scheduled post 18:00 must be lecture captured and uploaded for students to access.
- 2.4 The Health and Safety issues related to evening teaching will be addressed by the appropriate Timetabling Officer.
- 2.5 Teaching at Guildford School of Acting (GSA) has the option of running from 08:00 until 22:00 (agreed by Senate in July 2009). The GSA option does not include Theatre Studies or Dance programmes.
- 2.6 Teaching starts on the hour and ends at 10 minutes before the hour to permit students to move on to their next teaching event and teaching staff to prepare. Teaching events are defined as lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory sessions, practical sessions or other structured teaching activity led by academic members of staff and tutors. In addition, students will also be expected to undertake self-directed learning outside of timetabled teaching events.
- 2.7 Teaching may take place at both Stag Hill and Manor Park sites so long as reasonable travel time is incorporated within the timetable for staff and students, and taking mobility needs into consideration. In addition, some teaching may take place offsite at local spaces, in discussion with the Students Union. Long term it is envisaged that offsite teaching will not be required.
- 2.8 The normal pattern is for 60 credits' worth of teaching to be delivered during each semester; exceptions to this will include nursing modules which are taught across the academic year.
- 2.9 In addition, information regarding non-standard units (not modules) will be gathered at the same time and in the same manner as standard module based programmes.
- 2.10 Schools/departments determine the content and format of modules including:
- Number of teaching events per week;
  - The format and duration of teaching events;
  - The teaching staff who will deliver the event.

Non practical based teaching events of three hours duration can lead to an inefficient use of space and can be a poor experience for students (if they are three hour lectures). Three hour teaching events may be appropriate and staff are requested to discuss and agree this format with their Director of Learning and Teaching in advance of submitting such a request. Three hour events will only then normally be scheduled at 0900, 1200 and 1500 to ensure the most effective use of space and to meet an 18:00 finish time. It is recommended, where possible, that a three hour event is broken down into two and one hour events, especially if the third hour is a drop in session or smaller seminar. If a trip is to be scheduled for students and be displayed on the timetable, a room should not be booked, but the time can be blocked out for display purposes. Academics should liaise with the relevant Timetabling Officer in these instances.

The University's Module Catalogue will provide the definitive records of modules that are being delivered during the teaching year. The catalogue data will be driven by Quality and Curriculum Management system (QCM), via approved Board of Studies modifications.

The Timetabling Team will provide the definitive record of the number and format of teaching events associated with a module, the weeks during which teaching events will take place and the names of teaching staff who will deliver events. The Timetabling Team will then use CMIS to produce the timetable.

Departments should, wherever possible, adopt the practice of holding staff meetings on Wednesday afternoons, recognising that student representation may be required at some School/department meetings.

Timetabling clashes must be resolved (wherever possible) prior to the final publication of the timetable. Through each iteration of the timetable, the number of students affected by a clash will be identified and a solution sought. However, timetable complexity will mean this cannot always be achieved.

Changes to the teaching timetable must be kept to a minimum and requested changes or cancellations will be managed in line with the separate cancellation procedure in the appendix.

## **Teaching SPACE**

- 2.11 The Timetabling Team maintains an accurate record on CMIS of all space available for teaching. All bookings in teaching space, whether centrally-managed or departmentally-managed, are made via CMIS in order to provide accurate and comprehensive information about space utilisation and to ensure the publication of timetabling information to staff and students.
- 2.12 Responsibility for rooming all teaching space and laboratory space will pass to the Timetabling Team (and Hospitality Conference Catering Service).
- 2.13 Where previously agreed, laboratory and other specialist space (GSA, Lakeside, Dance studios, Music studios etc) will be allocated locally as appropriate. Timetabling Team will room other

teaching events, with non-standard programmes or units (CPD; modular MScs) being scheduled after semester-based modules have been timetabled.

- 2.14 The number of participants in a teaching event must not exceed the capacity of the room allocated.

### **Teaching STAFF**

- 2.15 Lecturers and tutors defined as staff holding posts which include teaching responsibilities and may hold full-time, part-time, associate or short-term teaching contracts.

- 2.16 The Head of School/Department shall determine the allocation of teaching staff to teaching events.

- 2.17 Constraints on the availability of teaching staff for teaching during the teaching week are handled in accordance with the University's Flexible Working Policy, and as follows:

staff on teaching-only contracts shall be scheduled to teach at any time during the teaching week; staff on teaching and research contracts may be scheduled to teach at any time during the teaching week;

part-time, associate, and short-term teaching staff shall be scheduled to teach at times specified by the School/Department, in accordance with their contractual arrangements;

constraints relating to a Head of School's/Department/Associate Dean teaching load will be considered by the Faculty Dean.

Normally, the limits on consecutive teaching hours for teaching staff will be as follows:

Lectures/tutorials: No more than three consecutive hours

Class/laboratory: No more than four consecutive hours

Local practice may vary in exceptional circumstances. There will be a one hour lunch break every day for all teaching staff.

Heads of School/Department – or their named delegate – will be responsible for ensuring that teaching staff are available for teaching in accordance with this Timetabling Policy.

CMIS will hold the definitive record of teaching staff availability, updated on an annual basis.

In accordance with the University's policy on equality and diversity, the University will make every effort to accommodate staff with individual requirements relating to disabilities. Specific requirements must be reported to the Head of School/Department through the annual Teaching Constraints process (to ensure they can be taken into account when scheduling teaching events).

### **STUDENTS**

- 2.18 Students studying on a full-time basis are expected to be available at any time during the teaching week as defined in 2.1- 2.4. Students studying on a standard programme on a part-time basis (e.g.

a Master's programme taken over more than one year) are normally expected to select modules in accordance with their availability for full-time students.

- 2.19 In preparing the timetable, the Timetabling Team aims to ensure that normally students are taught for no more than 3 consecutive hours, but this may extend to 4 hours in some cases. There will be a one hour break every day for all students.
- 2.20 Students select optional modules by means of a process of module registration. The timetabling of optional modules is informed by the selections students have made via the module registration process. Where module choices are not received in time to inform the production of the timetable (eg for first year students and taught postgraduate students), the Timetabling Team undertakes to minimise the clashing of optional combinations of modules wherever possible.
- 2.21 In accordance with the University's policy on equality and diversity, the University will make every effort to accommodate students with individual requirements relating to disabilities. Students requiring such individual arrangements must contact the Additional Learning Support Office upon initial registration, or subsequently for examinations in line with dates in their Programme Handbook, so that the requirements can be taken into consideration. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, students will be advised by the Timetabling Team .

#### **NON-TEACHING EVENTS**

- 2.22 With the exception of bookings for centrally-managed examinations and graduation ceremonies (where appropriate), bookings for teaching events including those running across semesters will take precedence over bookings for non-teaching events.
- 2.23 Normally non-teaching events out of semester time, those timetabled after 18:00 in the evening and all events during vacation time will be dealt with by the Hospitality Conference Catering Service. The number of participants in any non-teaching event should not exceed the size of the room allocated.
- 2.24 All non-teaching events must adhere to the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and must comply with the University's room booking policy.
- 2.25 Conflicts of interest which may arise when centrally-managed rooms are required simultaneously for teaching bookings and commercial bookings will be referred to the Director of Student Services & Administration whose decision will be final.

#### **EXAMINATIONS and CLASS TESTS**

- 2.26 The University has a set of three primary principles which the Timetabling Team would adhere to when creating the three Examinations Timetables (Semester 1, 2 and Late Summer Assessments). These principles are as follows:
- (a) Scheduling will be between 09.00 and 21.00 each day, including Saturdays.
  - (b) Students will not normally have more than 1 examination in 18 hours. Where a student has an

examination in the evening one day (i.e. finishing after 6.30pm), then the student will not have an examination before 12.30pm the following day.

- (c) If a student has two assessments on one day, the minimum period of time between assessments will be 90 minutes.
- 2.27 Examination timetables will always be scheduled with the student workload in mind and will seek to provide an acceptable period between each examination, in line with the above principles.
- 2.28 In Semester 1, the Saturday directly before examinations weeks will be used for the scheduling of examinations. In Semester 2, the Friday and Saturday before examinations weeks will be used for the scheduling of examinations, where a Bank Holiday may fall within normal examination weeks.
- 2.29 Currently, in-semester tests should be scheduled in line with the guidelines laid out in 2016/17. In future years a move to digital assessment should be considered for all in-semester tests.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The central teaching rooms are the responsibility of multiple Schools/Departments within the University and a Central Teaching Room Facility Manager co-ordinates support for these spaces. Guided by the Student Experience Sub-Committee of the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, this manager coordinates input from all Schools/Departments involved to monitor and report on teaching rooms which are not fit for purpose.

### **Student Experience Sub-Committee of ULTC**

- 2.30 The role of this sub-committee, inter alia, is to guide the direction of travel on the provision of teaching spaces, the equipment within and the support provided.
- 2.31 This sub-committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the quality of student learning experience and all policies related to the student experience.

### **Estates Management Working Group**

- 2.32 The role of this working group is to ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate space to support the delivery of teaching, operating within the financial constraints determined by the University.

- 2.33 The terms of reference of this group are as follows:

to review annually the requirements for space, including teaching space, taking into account the changing patterns of student recruitment, academic development, strategic decisions affecting academic provision;

to review the consequences for teaching space of any capital developments, minor works or internal re-organisations, ensuring that any centrally-managed teaching space removed from the Timetabling Team pool of rooms is replaced with space of similar size and facility as appropriate;

to advise the University about requirements for teaching space and facilities.

2.34 The Timetabling Team includes designated Faculty Timetabling Officers who liaise directly with academic staff.

The role of the Timetabling Team is:

- to manage the production of the teaching and examination timetables in accordance with University policy;
- to develop and maintain the University's timetabling policy in consultation with Faculties and other key stakeholders;
- to maintain and develop the University's timetabling system, CMIS, in conjunction with Corporate Systems Team, including the provision of training and support for users;
- to provide a room bookings service for non-teaching events during the teaching day, liaising with the Hospitality Conference Catering Service as appropriate;
- to determine and publish annually the key dates for the collection, submission and publication of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year;
- to plan and co-ordinate the collection of accurate timetabling information within Schools/departments and Faculties in line with published deadlines;
- liaising with staff about issues arising from the data collection and resolving any conflicts which may arise;
- to record agreed constraints in CMIS and communicate outcomes to staff, in liaison with the relevant Faculty Student Services Manager;
- to maintain an accurate record of centrally-managed teaching rooms and related resources, liaising with Estates & Facilities Management (E&FM), AVS and IT as appropriate producing the teaching and examination timetables using the scheduling process in CMIS;
- to allocate centrally-managed teaching space to teaching events;
- to publish timetable drafts for scrutiny prior to final publication;
- reviewing and resolving any timetabling inaccuracies or clashes that may arise; to produce the timetables;
- communicating adjustments as appropriate to submitted timetable information that may arise from late changes to staff or module availability;
- to advise staff and students of changes to teaching timetable where these occur after teaching has started (e.g. cancellations or changes of room) in line with cancellation policy;
- to maintain the Timetabling Team section on the Student Services & Administration website;
- to communicate relevant aspects of the timetabling policy to staff and students as required;
- to undertake the annual room audit and prepare a report on the findings;
- to liaise with relevant administrative and academic staff to manage situations where individual teaching rooms booked for specific timetabled teaching events are being used for other teaching or non-teaching activities.

### **Head of School/Department**

2.35 Heads of School/Department are responsible for:



- ensuring that departmental policies and procedures relating to staff and module availability correspond with the University timetabling policy;
- liaising with the Faculty Student Services Manager and their staff over the provision of information required by the Timetabling Team to produce the timetable;
- determining the allocation of teaching staff to teaching events, determining and agreeing constraints as appropriate;
- resolving any conflicts which may arise at School/departmental level in relation to timetabling;

### **Academic Staff**

2.36 Academic Staff and Tutors are responsible for the following:

- agreeing their availability for teaching with their Head of School/Department in accordance with the University's Timetabling Policy, advising them of any constraints in the agreed timeframe, and on their availability in accordance with the University's Flexible Working Policy;
- responding promptly to requests for information from the Timetabling Team ;
- providing Head of School/Department with information about particular requirements relating to disabilities;
- ensuring any requests for specific requirements/facilities are submitted to the Timetabling Team in the agreed timeframe;
- checking draft timetables in good time in advance of publication;
- ensuring that teaching events commence on the hour and end at 10 minutes before the hour;
- ensuring teaching rooms are left in an appropriate condition for the next event, including the cleaning of white boards, and that the room is returned to the standard layout where changes have been made during the teaching session;
- informing the relevant Timetabling Officers of any difficulties arising from teaching activities (eg size of rooms);
- reporting any problems with teaching rooms (e.g. relating to equipment, furniture or cleanliness) to IT/Estates & Facilities;
- releasing promptly any rooms no longer required.

### **Students**

Full-time students are normally expected to be available between 9.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and between 09.00 and 12.00 on Wednesdays to attend scheduled teaching sessions, noting exceptions listed under section 2 above.

2.37 Students are responsible for:

- selecting optional modules using the relevant SITS functionality in a timely manner;
- viewing and checking the teaching timetable regularly;
- notifying the appropriate Faculty Student Services helpdesk or Programme Administrator of any timetable clashes or general problems with attendance at timetabled events;
- ensuring that they notify the Additional Learning Support staff of any individual requirements

relating to disabilities in order that these can be verified and taken into account during the timetabling process before the appropriate deadlines;

- ensuring that they leave the facilities as they would wish to find them.
- Central Teaching Room Facilities Manager (CTRFM)

2.38 The Central Teaching Room Facilities Manager is responsible for:

- coordinating the University's support of the central teaching room via the multiple departments involved;
- determining the layout and maximum capacity of teaching rooms, in consultation with E&FM and Timetabling Team ;
- determining the cyclical refurbishment, ensuring co-ordination between the required departments;
- agreeing specifications for AV, furniture, refurbishment etc. with the appropriate stakeholders.
- Estates and Facilities Management (E&FM)

2.39 Estates and Facilities Management is responsible for:

- determining the layout and maximum capacity of teaching rooms, in consultation with the Timetabling Team ;
- the allocation of room numbers (and names) to new or refurbished teaching space;
- the provision of effective signage to teaching rooms;
- the cleaning, heating, lighting and ventilation of teaching rooms;
- the adequate supply of relevant stationery in teaching rooms (eg whiteboard markers and cleaners);
- cyclical refurbishment of teaching rooms in consultation with CTRFM, Timetabling Team , Computing Service and AVS as appropriate;
- rectifying faults reported in teaching rooms, normally within two working days;
- advising the CTRFM, Timetabling Team and the Hospitality Conference Catering Service in good time of issues affecting the availability of teaching rooms (or planned maintenance or refurbishment);
- ensuring compliance of teaching facilities with relevant legislation;
- ensuring the security of teaching facilities.
- Information Technology Services

2.40 IT Services are responsible for:

- the provision of adequate and appropriate technical support of the timetabling system, including support for upgrades of software;
- the provision of adequate and appropriate AV and computing facilities in centrally timetabled rooms with supporting network infrastructure, in line with financial constraints;
- the network infrastructure for centrally timetabled teaching rooms and PC labs;

- determining the demand for various sizes of PC labs in consultation with the Timetabling Team ;
- arranging the design and installation of PC labs;
- monitoring the PC labs, installing updates to software and arranging preventive maintenance;
- responding to software and hardware faults and problems in PC labs;
- managing the rolling programme of equipment replacement and PC lab refurbishment in conjunction with Estates and Facilities;
- arranging training for teaching and support staff on general software applications; (x) reporting on usage of PC labs for booked classes and open access.
- Corporate Systems Section (CSS), Student Services & Administration

2.41 CSS is responsible, in conjunction with IT Services, for the following:

- the provision of technical assistance to the Timetabling Team in the following areas:
  - CMIS upgrades and patches;
  - CMIS technical problems – advice to the Timetabling Team ;
  - Interfaces to other administrative systems;
  - Interfaces from other systems (eg HR);
  - Assisting with the selection, purchase and implementation of relevant software developments;
  - the provision and administration of the hardware servers and underlying databases
  - including the provision of database back ups, a test server environment and the handling of user requests for database restores in the event of user errors;
  - developing a strategy for the management and archiving of the timetabling databases on an annual basis.

2.42 Audio-Visual and Media Services (AVS)

AVS equipment in centrally-managed rooms is managed by the IT department and responsibilities include:

- Determining the demand for various types of electronic and electrical facilities in consultation with the CTFM and Timetabling Team ;
- Provision of information about availabilities of facilities across the campus;
- Provision of the design and installation of AV facilities including security equipment, in conjunction with CTFM and Estates and Facilities;
- Monitoring and maintenance of AV facilities;
- Responding to AV faults and problems (normally within 10 minutes);
- Rectifying faults or providing alternative equipment;
- Managing a rolling programme of equipment replacements;
- Arranging AV training and support staff;
- Investigating and deploying new teaching technologies.
- Faculty Student Services

2.43 Faculty Student Services/ALS is responsible for:

- notifying the Timetabling Team of students requiring a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) so that health and safety requirements can be considered;
- liaising with Timetabling Officers over the individual needs of students to make reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

### **3 Governance Requirements**

#### **3.1 Implementation / Communication Plan**

3.1.1 Available through University of Surrey Policies website and from Timetabling Office.

#### **3.2 Exceptions to this Policy**

3.2.1 N.A

#### **3.4 Review and Change Requests**

3.4.1 This policy will be reviewed annually and major changes to be agreed via Senate. Minor changes will be updated accordingly.

#### **3.5 Legislative context**

3.5.1 N.A

#### **3.6 Stakeholder Statements**

3.6.1 Equality: The policy is compliant from an Equality and Diversity perspective.

3.6.2 Health & Safety: Health and Safety implications have been considered during the drafting of this policy and are incorporated (where necessary) into the policy

3.6.3 Other:

## Appendix – Cancellation Procedure for Teaching Events

### Summary:

This appendix briefly outlines the procedure taken on cancellations, delayed starts and monitoring associated with this.

In line with the University Timetabling Policy (2.6), teaching events are defined as lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory sessions, practical sessions or other structured teaching activity led by academic members of staff and tutors.

It is recognised that students have a reasonable right to expect their teaching to be delivered at the times indicated on their timetables and that we should not unnecessarily deviate from these times.

The general goal is **never to cancel sessions outright** but, where possible, to find cover or to reschedule and give students ample advance warning that this will happen.

### Procedure:

- Except in cases of force majeure, events will not be cancelled outright. Where possible, events that cannot occur at the advertised time will be re-scheduled to occur within the normal semester teaching period. Academic staff are expected to deliver their scheduled teaching at the times advertised to students on their timetables and should therefore plan accordingly.
- Where academic staff find that after the publication of timetables they are required to be elsewhere at a time when they are teaching, they must make a request to be absent to their Head of School/Department.
- Any changes or cancellations must be facilitated through the Faculty Student Services Manager in the first instance: the affected module, a clear rationale and the proposed resolution should be provided via email. The Faculty Student Services Manager will liaise with the Head of School/Department as necessary and a decision taken.
- A record will be kept by the central timetabling team of all such occurrences.
- The Faculty Student Services Team will contact students to inform them of any cancellation, delays in starting lectures and any details of re-scheduled lectures.
- Where an academic calls in ill to inform HR or their Line manager of their absence, this should be passed on to the appropriate Head of School/Department, who will take action either to find a replacement lecturer or to reschedule classes and inform students through the Faculty Student Services office accordingly. It would normally be expected that the lecture will be re-scheduled if arranging teaching cover is not possible.
- Where an academic calls to say they intend to deliver their particular session, but will be late for the start, the Faculty Student Services Office should be notified as soon as possible and the Office will inform the students by making an announcement at the normal start time. It is expected that the lecturer will ensure the material that was to be covered is covered either within the remainder of the session or by scheduling an additional session as necessary.
- Monitoring information will be provided to Faculty Student Services Managers to raise at Boards of Studies and Joint Staff Student Liaison Committee (JSLC) meetings as necessary.