



Code of practice for the scheduling of teaching and assessment

Academic year 2022/23

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Context

1. This *Code of practice* applies to scheduling of University's teaching activity and assessments events at Foundation Year, undergraduate and taught postgraduate levels.
2. As part of the University Quality Framework, this *Code of practice* should be read in conjunction with the [Regulations for taught programmes](#), [Regulations for Foundation Year programmes](#), as well as the [Code of practice for assessment and feedback](#) and [Code of practice for programme life cycle](#).

Purpose

3. The purpose of this *Code of practice* is to establish the University's procedures, roles and responsibilities in respect of:
 - (i) the preparation and production of the University's teaching and examination timetable;
 - (ii) the provision of facilities to support teaching;
 - (iii) the booking of centrally managed teaching rooms for non-teaching events.
4. This *Code of practice* provides a framework to support all staff with a role in the preparation and production of the teaching timetable.

Scope

5. In producing the teaching and assessments timetable, the Student Scheduling Team recognises and acts on the requirements of a range of stakeholders including students and academic staff, aiming to produce a workable and reasonable timetable which will meet defined constraints such as the availability and number of teaching rooms and facilities.
6. This *Code of practice* seeks to ensure that the timetabling provisions are applied consistently and fairly across the University and that the student experience and academic standards are maintained.

Principles

Guiding principles

7. The guiding principles underpinning this *Code of practice* are:
 - (i) to support the delivery of high-quality teaching and assessments to students at the University;
 - (ii) to ensure that students are taught and assessed in the most appropriate teaching accommodation;
 - (iii) to ensure that teaching facilities and scheduling meet the needs of teaching staff;
 - (iv) to utilise the University's teaching space and resources in the most effective way;
 - (v) to provide efficient and effective management of teaching timetabling and room bookings.

Disability

8. 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).

Religious and Cultural Observance

9. The University recognises religion and belief as a protected equality characteristic. The University and our students have a mutual responsibility for accommodating religious observance within the University environment and the University works with students and their representatives to ensure that during the course of their studies, students can access appropriate environments, such as designated Quiet Rooms, to allow religious fulfilment. The University will make every attempt to assist students in moving seminar groups where capacity allows to facilitate attendance at religious events.

Academic year structure

10. The Academic Registry oversees the structure of the academic year and confirms dates based on the following conventions. Significant amendments to the academic year structure require approval from Senate.
11. The University of Surrey works to an academic year (52 weeks) based upon two 15-week semesters. Teaching normally commences on either the last Monday of September or the first Monday in October each year. In addition, some programmes may schedule summer teaching and clinical placement modules. The standard teaching pattern adopted by the University is as follows:
 - Teaching is normally delivered in weeks 1 – 11 of each Semester plus
 - two revision weeks (one each semester immediately prior to the examination periods),
 - one reading week (in week 15 of Semester 1)
 - eight weeks of examinations (three in January and three in May/June and two in late summer each year).
12. Usually, there are four 15-credit modules being taught each semester, however a few programmes introduced large credit volume modules which are being taught across the academic year (for example, Health Science, BVMSCi and other programmes).
13. The University's Module Catalogue will provide the definitive records of modules that are being delivered during the academic year. The catalogue data will be driven by the Quality and Curriculum Management system (QCM), via approved Board of Studies modifications¹.
14. Schools/Departments determine the content and format of modules based on the validated version of the programme (and its modules) including:
 - Number of teaching events per week;
 - The format and duration of teaching events;
 - The teaching staff who will deliver the event.

Teaching week structure

15. 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.
16. Academic Schools/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.

¹ For further information about these processes, see the [Code of practice for programme life cycle](#)

17. Normally, the University's teaching scheduling principles require that there is no teaching on a Wednesday afternoon after 12:00, except for optional modules that can be scheduled between 12:00-13:00 on a Wednesday. Any exceptions after 12:00 for compulsory/core modules and after 13:00 for optional modules must be agreed by the Chief Student Officer, following consultation with students (affected by the scheduling) and the Students' Union President. Any lecture scheduled after 12:00 on a Wednesday should be lecture captured and uploaded for students to access.
18. Additionally, teaching events may be scheduled to take place between 18:00 and 21:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays with the agreement of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean of Faculty. Teaching events scheduled after 18:00 must be lecture captured where practical and uploaded for students to access.
19. Teaching at Guildford School of Acting (GSA) has the option of running from 08:00 until 22:00 (agreed by Senate in July 2009).
20. The Health and Safety issues related to evening teaching will be addressed by the appropriate Timetabling Officer.

Teaching staff: allocation of teaching events

21. 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. The definitive record of teaching staff availability is being held on CMIS and it is updated on an annual basis.
22. The Head of School/Department shall determine the allocation of teaching staff to teaching events. Heads of School/Department, or their nominees, are responsible for ensuring the availability of teaching staff for teaching in accordance with this *Code of practice*.
23. Constraints on the availability of teaching staff for teaching during the teaching week are handled in accordance with the [University's Flexible Working Policy](#) (login to SurreyNet is required), 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, Education teaching load will be considered by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean of Faculty.
24. 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 hoursLocal practice may vary in exceptional circumstances. There will be a one-hour lunch break every day for all teaching staff.

Students' engagement with scheduled learning and assessment events

25. Students studying on a full-time basis are expected to be available at any time during the teaching week as defined in pp. 15-19 above. Students studying on a part-time basis (e.g., a Master's programme taken over more than one academic year) are normally expected to select modules in accordance with the availability of the module for full-time students.
26. In preparing the timetable, the Student Scheduling 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.
27. Students select optional modules by means of a process of module registration. The timetabling of optional modules is informed by the students' selection choices made via the module registration process. Where module choices are not received in time to inform the production of the timetable (e.g. for First year students and taught postgraduate students), the Student Scheduling Team undertakes to minimise the clashing of optional combinations of modules wherever possible.
28. 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 [Disability and Neurodiversity team](#) upon initial registration so that the requirements can be taken into consideration. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, students will be advised by the Academic Registry.

Scheduling of teaching events

Format of teaching events

29. 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, although this will be minimised.
30. 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.
31. The Student Scheduling 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 Student Scheduling Team will then use timetabling software CMIS to produce the timetable.
32. 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 including engagement with captured content and guided learning activities. Definitions of key teaching event formats can be found in Appendix 2.
33. Three-hour events will only normally be scheduled at 09:00, 12:00 and 15:00 to ensure the most effective use of space and to meet an 18:00 finish time and with agreement of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic. 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.

34. Where a field trip is to be scheduled for students and displayed on their 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.

Non-Teaching Events

35. 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.
36. 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.
37. 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.
38. Conflicts of interest which may arise when centrally-managed rooms are required simultaneously for teaching bookings and commercial bookings will be referred to the Chief Student Officer whose decision will be final.

Changes to the teaching timetable due to clashes, cancellations, etc

39. 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
40. 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 1, *Cancellation Procedure for Teaching Events*.
41. The University recognises that students may have caring responsibilities, religious or medical related instances where another relevant teaching session for a module may be more applicable to their needs. In such an instance, students may request one relevant teaching session change per Semester via the Academic Hive, who will check that there is capacity within the new teaching session and action the change.
42. In the case of University Student based events, such as Varsity Sports, students are responsible for determining whether they attend teaching events where there is a clash. However, where a major event is known to be taking place, the capturing of content should be encouraged to limit the impact on students wanting to attend such events.

Scheduling of assessment events

Examinations and Class Tests

43. The University has a set of agreed conventions which the Student Scheduling 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.

Invigilated (traditional face to face) examinations:

- (b) Students will not normally have more than 1 examination in any 18 hour period. For example, where a student has an examination in the evening on one day (i.e. finishing after 18.30), then the student will not have an examination before 12.30 the following day

Timed Assessments:

- (c) If a student has two in semester timed assessments on one day, the minimum period of time between assessments will be 90 minutes

Online examinations:

- (d) In the case that the examination is online, students will be given a specific time window in which to complete the assessment. Students will not normally have more than 1 examination underway at any time.
- (e) Online exams of less than 24 hours duration will be scheduled on the same basis as traditional face to face exams, see points (b) above.
- (f) Online exams of duration of 24 hours or more can be scheduled back to back although this should be minimised where possible.
44. Where a student has to retake trailing credits from their previous level/stage of study, every attempt will be made to adhere to the above principles (as described in para. 38) where the timetable allows, but this may not be possible in some cases.
45. 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.
46. 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.
47. Currently, in-semester tests should be scheduled in line with the guidelines laid out in 2016/17². In future years a move to digital assessment should be considered for all in-semester tests.

Changes to the assessment timetable due to Religious and Cultural Observance

48. The assessment scheduling process contributes to achieving the legitimate aim of managing University business effectively. In order to safeguard the best opportunities for all our students in terms of their academic attainment, progression and awards and to minimise the impact on staff, the University does not permit moving any centrally scheduled assessment events to avoid clashes with significant dates in any world religion, traditions and customs.
49. Exceptionally, the following arrangements have been agreed following consultation with The College of Chaplains:
- In the case of Shavuot, affected students should alert the University Rabbi so that they can be considered in the assessments scheduling.
 - In years where Eid falls within the examination period, there will be no evening examinations and, where possible, examinations will not be scheduled on the first day of Eid.

² See [Code of practice for assessment and feedback](#), Appendix 4 - Guidelines for in-semester tests.

50. Any future addendums and exceptions to this *Code of practice* should be raised by Faith and Belief groups at the earliest opportunity at the start of a new academic year. Requests from individual students will be considered on a case-by-case basis provided these are received in good time. In considering requests the University will obtain advice from the Religious Life and Belief Centre on aspects of the particular religious observance cited by the student.

Management of teaching space

51. The Student Scheduling 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.
52. Responsibility for rooming all teaching space and laboratory space will pass to the Student Scheduling Team (and Hospitality Conference Catering Service).
53. Where previously agreed, laboratory and other specialist space (GSA, Lakeside, Dance studios, Music studios etc) will be allocated locally as appropriate. The Student Scheduling Team will room other teaching events, with non-standard programmes or units (CPD; modular MScs) being scheduled after semester-based modules have been timetabled.
54. The number of participants in a teaching event must not exceed the capacity of the room allocated.

Appendix 1 - 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 Student Scheduling 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 staff member 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 staff member 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 (JJSLC) meetings as necessary.

Appendix 2 - Definitions of structured and non-structured teaching and learning formats

Lectures	a teacher meets all students (usually) together to provide an introduction to, overview of, or elaboration of, key ideas, core principles or theory
Seminars	smaller class groups discussing or exploring the key ideas in further depth such as through interactive activities, debates, discussions, group work, role-playing and question & answers
Tutorials	supporting students in small student groups or on a one-to-one basis to discuss specific subject areas or find workable solutions to problems or challenges, such as in deriving and solving equations or supporting designing and other project work
Laboratory/Fieldwork	researching, measuring, or exploring phenomenon using a range of hands-on methods / techniques / equipment
Practical/Performance	learning or refining a skill through deliberate practice
Workshop	focus is on how to translate the key ideas into practice, delivered in smaller class groups
Clinical/ Veterinary Placement	work-based learning in a clinical or veterinary setting
Independent Learning	self-directed learning which may include for example, additional reading, assessment preparation, discussions with peers
Guided Learning	further essential learning activities as directed by the teacher outside of timetabled hours such as quizzes, essential reading, participating in discussion forums
Captured Content	delivered through recorded concepts /content relevant to the module