

Timetabling Policy

Owner: *Head of Timetabling and Space Planning*

Approved by: *Academic Committee*

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Timetabling Policy and Procedures

1.0. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the processes and information required to produce the academic timetable and to outline the responsibilities of the various stakeholders. It will also define terminology and parameters used such as the core teaching hours per week, standard lesson duration, types of teaching space and types of teaching events. The policy will establish governance arrangements for adherence to and monitoring of the timetabling.

Scope

This policy applies to all curricula-based teaching recorded on the central University timetable. This policy excludes big, regular, events (e.g. Open Days, Graduation, Exams), non-curricula teaching such as vocational short courses, conferences and ad-hoc room bookings.

Structure

The timetabling process is led by the Timetabling team collaborating with the Assistant Provosts and Directors (Content) and (People). They are supported by colleagues in Registry and Estates and Facilities. The timetabling arrangements, including the Timetabling Policy, will be reviewed annually by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee to ensure that they are consistent with developments across the University.

2.0. Guiding principles

1. The timetable is 'student centred' and enhancing student experience is the central guiding principle when creating the timetable. We also aim to optimise space utilisation and make the best use of our estate. Of these two, student experience will be prioritised over efficient space usage.

2. The timetable is based around curriculum information from SITS and staff work allocation from Simitive. Timeslots for activities are allocated based upon student module choices and staff availability (based on contractual working patterns and including Formal Flexible Working agreements). Locations are allocated to fit student numbers and equipment requests.

3. To enhance student experience, we aim to:

- a. Support the delivery of the highest quality learning and teaching
- b. Ensure that timetabling planning cycle is aligned with other related processes
- c. Have consideration of student needs when constructing timetables
- d. Ensure that students are taught in the most appropriate teaching accommodation
- e. Minimise travel across campus
- f. Deliver accurate timetable information as early as possible
- g. Publish timetables in a user-intuitive format and tools.

4. To optimise space utilisation, we aim to:

- h. Provide a University-wide approach to timetabling and room booking
- i. Ensure the use of the full teaching week, the full teaching day and all suitable accommodation
- j. Ensure that all stakeholders use the same data sources.

3.0. Student needs

Where possible, the student timetables will be constructed aiming to meet the following:

- a. Students will have a maximum of four consecutive hours of teaching activity in any one day
- b. Students will have a maximum of six hours of total teaching activity in any one day
- c. Gaps in excess of three hours between classes on a single day will be avoided
- d. At least two teaching hours will be scheduled in any one day.

It should be noted that due to the complexities of timetabling across the University and particular requirements of some programmes the above will not always be possible. This includes timetables for students who have failed and are required to retake modules.

4.0. Teaching times

- 1. Teaching year and terms: Are timetabled in line with the published University academic calendar. Core teaching week: Monday to Friday. Weekends are used for agreed specified programmes
- 2. Core teaching hours: 09:00 to 19:00 hours, up to 21:00 hours for agreed specified programmes
- 3. Class start times and duration: Classes will start on the hour, with a duration integers capped at 3 for Undergraduate students and 4 for Postgraduate students. No classes will be permitted to start at times other than on the hour
- 4. Class finish times: Classes should finish ten minutes before the nominal end time to allow staff and students to move from one class to another, and to allow the next occupants of a room to be ready in time for the next class or event
- 5. Lunch breaks: Lunch breaks will be an hour and will usually be taken between 12:00 and 14:00
- 6. Teaching Activity Types: Teaching is divided into Plenary or whole group sessions and Multi-group sessions where the cohort is divided into sub-groups.

5.0. Teaching Staff

- 1. Teaching staff are defined as academic staff holding posts which include teaching responsibilities, and external staff appointed to teach specific teaching events or modules. Teaching staff may hold substantive full-time, part-time, Associate Lecturer or Visiting Lecturer contracts.
- 2. Directors of People and Content shall determine the allocation of teaching staff to teaching events using the Work Allocation Model and process.

3. Full-time substantive academic staff can be scheduled to teach at any time during the core teaching week.
4. Where possible staff timetables are constructed based on the following constraints:
 - a) Staff will have a maximum teaching day of eight hours including a one hour lunch hour
 - b) Staff lunch hour is usually scheduled between 12:00 and 14:00
5. Constraints on the availability of teaching staff are handled in accordance with business need, contractually agreed working patterns, or formal agreements under the Flexible Working Policy.
6. Part-time substantive, Associate and Visiting staff shall be allocated teaching hours by Directors of People and Content, in accordance with the HR confirmed contractual arrangements relevant to each individual. Any change to this must be expressed in an updated contract or a Flexible Working Agreement.
7. The timetabling system shall hold the definitive record of staffs' teaching allocation and Simitive will hold the definitive record of teaching staff's work allocation.
8. Availability based on other business needs– a. Staff may take part in the Regents PGCE which takes place on Wednesdays between 13:00 and 17:00 during term time.

6.0. Teaching Activities

1. Teaching activities are associated with an approved module and contribute to a programme leading to an award of the University. The format of activities includes the following information:
 - a. Term date of the module
 - b. Module duration in weeks
 - c. Number of teaching events per week
 - d. Format and duration of teaching activity
 - e. Planned size
 - f. Teaching staff who will deliver the teaching activity
 - g. Rooming/equipment requests.
2. Updates to Teaching Activities and other elements of the timetable are completed by Directors of Content and Directors of People and are requested via the Timetable Update Form.

7.0. Teaching Space

1. It is assumed that if the requirements for equipment and room size are met, then the room is suitable for teaching. Any comments, complaints or suggestions regarding the layout, design, decoration, location, or ambience of a room should be directed to the Estates and Facilities Department and will not constitute good grounds for changing location

2. Classes will be allocated to rooms on the basis of forecast requirements. Relocation of a class may be required, subject to significant deviation from the forecast, in order to achieve a best fit later, but there will be an aim to keep the impact to a minimum. The Timetabling Team will request relevant teams from across the University assist with forward planning to ensure that appropriate rooms are booked well in advance for anticipated events in the academic cycle.

3. Teaching space is allocated in accordance with the following priorities (listed in order of priority):

- a. Activities which include a student or staff member with special access requirements as agreed with the Disability Office
- b. Activities which need to take place in specific teaching rooms e.g. Fashion Studios or P.C. Labs
- c. Whole Group activities where the module is a core element of a programme starting with the largest groups
- d. Whole group elective activities large to small
- e. Multi-group core activities large to small
- f. Multi-group elective activities large to small
- g. Non-compulsory teaching activities such as Clinics and Visits
- h. Big recurring important Events –Exams/Welcome Week
- i. Short Courses/Research Activities/Programme validation events/University open days and/or activities/Committee meetings.

Other events will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, e.g. one-off bookings for meetings (governed outside the Timetabling Policy).

4. External bookings including conferences can only be accommodated if there is availability after all teaching activities, open days and other University activities have been booked.

5. Rooms block booked in advance for student events (e.g. registration) should be released as soon as possible if not required so they can be booked externally for events by Conferences or ad-hoc room bookings.

8.0. Module Loading

1. Timetabling will provide Inbound with a set list of modules for Study Abroad students to pick from.
2. Study Abroad students should have same deadline as returning students to pick modules.