

TIMETABLING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This policy sets out the University's procedures, roles and responsibilities in respect of timetabling and room booking.
- 1.1.2 The policy provides a framework to support and enable colleagues to engage effectively with timetabling preparation and production processes and to contribute to the publication of accurate and reliable timetables.
- 1.1.3 The policy promotes a coherent approach and the delivery of improved service provision and benefits including:
- i. Continuous improvement of staff and student experience;
 - ii. Effective and efficient use of systems and resources;
 - iii. Supporting aims and objectives in respect of delivery and development of the educational portfolio;
 - iv. Supporting the University's commitment to delivering an inclusive learning environment, through the promotion, reference and application of relevant other policies and procedures;
 - v. Effective and optimal use of the University estate.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy covers the preparation and production of the University's teaching timetable, including online and distance learning provision, and associated arrangements for the booking of centrally managed space for ad-hoc events.
- 1.2.2 The provisions of this policy apply to members of academic and professional service staff with responsibilities in respect of the preparation and production of the teaching timetable, this including confirmation of programme content and, at modular level, design and delivery.
- 1.2.3 This policy also applies to students of the university in respect of responsibilities and ability to engage with programme requirements.

2. POLICY

2.1 Guiding Principles

2.1.1 The guiding principles underpinning this policy are:

- i. To ensure that procedures for the production of the timetable, and associated business processes, support and enhance the delivery of a high-quality teaching and learning experience, and enable all students to engage fully with programme requirements.
- ii. To ensure that students are taught in appropriate teaching accommodation.
- iii. To ensure that allocated facilities are informed by learning, teaching and educational strategies and meet the needs of staff and students.
- iv. To provide a consistent and unified approach that enhances staff and student experience through the construction and publication of a stable and reliable timetable, optimising the use of student and staff time and promoting a 'no-cancel' culture.
- v. To produce a timetable that takes account of equality and diversity needs of members of the University community, informed by staff and student engagement with relevant University policy and procedural frameworks.
- vi. To provide efficient and effective management of the teaching timetabling and room booking processes.
- vii. To optimise utilisation of the University Estate and by extension to support the objectives of the Space Policy and Estates Strategy.
- viii. To recognise and act in accordance with the achievement of strategic aims and objectives of the University.

2.2 Timetable Construction

2.2.1 The timetable is constructed on the basis of multiple data sets, including:

- i. Programme module diets
- ii. Student module choice
- iii. The content and format of module delivery (event type, duration and frequency)
- iv. Academic staff availability

- 2.2.2 In order to support timetable construction, stability and reliability, all academic and professional services colleagues engaged in the provision of relevant data sets are required to complete processes in accordance with the deadlines set out in the annual Timetabling Production Schedule (this outlining the key stages of the end-to-end process commencing with confirmation of Programme Specifications and ending with publication of the timetable).
- 2.2.3 Activities are additionally scheduled in accordance with a 3-Block timetable structure (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Faculty of Natural Sciences). This facilitates the co-ordination of combined honours programmes while also accommodating some additional flexibility for single honours programmes and repeat laboratory teaching that cannot be accommodated within block. Details as to the block timetable model and principles are published online (www.keele.ac.uk/intranet/timetabling/blocktimetable/).
- 2.2.4 Activities in respect of programmes in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are scheduled across the year, accommodating both taught sessions, practical and placement activities as applicable.

2.3 Parameters and Protocols: Teaching Days and Weeks

- 2.3.1 Teaching activities are typically scheduled to take place during the first 12 weeks of each semester. Exceptions apply for those programmes that follow non-standard delivery patterns, including programmes in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. The University's semester dates are published at: www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/keydates/
- 2.3.2 Ordinary and standard teaching hours are Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm, with flexibility to extend teaching to 7pm where necessary to meet the needs of a programme, and to 9pm in respect of part-time programmes.
- 2.3.3 Ordinary teaching hours on Wednesdays are 9am-1pm. While the University aims to minimise teaching on Wednesday afternoons, it is necessary in some circumstances to accommodate some postgraduate teaching, enrichment activities and laboratory teaching.
- 2.3.4 Each timetabling slot is one-hour in duration. Each timetabled slot commences on the hour and provides for 50 minutes of teaching and 10 minutes for the teaching room to be vacated and re-occupied.
- 2.3.5 Parameters are incorporated into the University's timetabling software to provide that wherever possible, staff and students:

- i. Will not be required to deliver / attend teaching for more than 8 hours in one day
 - ii. Will be provided with at least 1 hour for lunch between the hours of 12pm and 2pm
 - iii. Will not have to deliver / attend teaching for more than 4 hours without a break
- 2.3.6 The process of timetable construction will support the University's objectives in respect of providing an inclusive and accessible learning and working environment, taking into account, for example:
 - the needs of students and staff with disabilities, recognised through use and application of the [Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students policy](#)
 - the needs of those with caring and other commitments, recognised through use and application of the [Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#)
 - adjustments as a result of religious observance, recognised through use and application of the [Religion and Belief Policy](#)
- 2.3.7 Full-time teaching staff will be considered as available for teaching at any time during the teaching hours indicated at 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 and part-time staff on the basis of their contractual arrangements.
- 2.3.8 Heads of School may authorise exceptions and requests for flexibility in accordance with the appropriate policy and procedures (see 2.3.6). Members of staff should liaise with their line manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss either temporary or permanent adjustments that maybe required to working arrangements, and where appropriate, application of the relevant policy and process.
- 2.3.9 The process of timetable construction will aim to provide time during each week which is free of teaching commitments and available for undertaking of research activities for academic staff engaged on Education and Research contracts and who have been allocated time for research in their WAMS. Where possible this would provide, for example, a day clear of teaching activities for full-time staff engaged on such contracts. However, given the complexity and variability of data informing timetable construction, the day / time may vary and, in some instances, may be disaggregated across multiple days.

2.4 Prioritisation of Activities and Allocation of Space

- 2.4.1 In creating the annual timetable and allocating teaching space, activities taking place during each semester will be prioritised as follows:

- i. Compulsory undergraduate and postgraduate teaching
- ii. Optional undergraduate and postgraduate teaching
- iii. Elective undergraduate and postgraduate teaching
- iv. Assessments
- v. Non-teaching events including, for example, academic events and conferences, staff development, outreach events
- vi. Validation events, reviews and other meetings
- vii. Student (non-teaching) bookings
- viii. Social events and activities

2.4.2 Where teaching and learning activities or examinations are required outside the ordinary semester dates, these activities will be prioritised and balanced with advance commitments for conferencing and event activities. Room bookings required outside the ordinary semester dates will be managed by the conferencing and events team.

2.4.3 All teaching spaces including lecture theatres, seminar rooms, other classrooms and training rooms will be managed as University Pool Rooms unless an exception is agreed in accordance with the provisions of the [Space Policy](#).

2.4.4 Space will be allocated taking into account available data relating to accessibility, practical and pedagogical requirements, with the aim of allocating suitable space to individual activities while also promoting optimal use of the University estate.

2.5 Timetable Change Requests

2.5.1 Changes to published timetables will be made on a 'by exception' basis to ensure continuity of delivery and to promote a consistent and positive student experience.

2.5.2 Changes to published timetables will be implemented where critical to the successful delivery of teaching. The following will, in exceptional circumstances, be accepted as reasons for a School to request a change to the published teaching timetable:

- Reasonable adjustments required to accommodate staff or students with identified and recognised accessibility needs
- Allocated teaching space does not meet teaching needs
- Staff absence due to illness

- Staff absence due to compassionate leave agreed through the appropriate HR procedure
 - Change to staff availability due to resignation or new appointment
 - Staff unavailability due to other work commitments which could not have been avoided by planning ahead (e.g. late acceptance of a paper at conference, short notice research project/partnership events)
- 2.5.3 Where teaching staff availability changes after the publication of the timetable (for example, through illness or other absence), prior to requesting a timetable change, the appropriate member of academic staff (for example, Module Leader or Programme Director) should explore whether other teaching staff are available to enable the activity to proceed as planned and should agree the potential replacements with the relevant line manager or Head of School.
- 2.5.4 Requests for timetable changes from Schools will not normally be agreed where they are made on the basis of the following:
- Failure to engage with the timetabling process schedule and associated activity deadlines
 - Annual leave
 - Staff unavailability due to other work commitments which could otherwise have been avoided by planning ahead prior to timetable publication
 - Scheduled room is disliked by staff member
 - Scheduled time slot is disliked by staff member
 - Commuting to work arrangements
- 2.5.5 Student requests for programme or module changes must be made within the time periods permitted in the relevant [University Regulations](#) (within 3 weeks of the start of semester). Changes requested within the permitted period will be made where the change can be accommodated within existing timetabled activities and does not generate amendments to the published timetable that would adversely impact other students.
- 2.5.6 Student requests to change allocated timetabled sessions for reasons relating to employment, caring or other commitments will be investigated and accommodated where possible. Such requests should be requested at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise adverse impact and disruption to other students.
- 2.5.7 Student requests for changes to accommodate other one-off or ad hoc activities will be agreed where they can be accommodated within existing timetabled activities and do not generate changes to the published timetable that would adversely impact other students.

2.5.8 Change requests will be monitored and summarised in management reports for consideration by the relevant Faculty Executive Dean or Designate. Where patterns of change request indicate potential negative impact on student experience these will be addressed by the Faculty Executive Dean or Designate with the relevant Head of School.

2.6 Other Ad-hoc Room Bookings

2.6.1 Requests for ad-hoc room bookings of Pool Rooms during semester should be submitted to the Central Timetabling Unit via timetabling@keele.ac.uk. Requests will be accommodated where possible, working around the published timetable and adhering to principles regarding prioritisation of activities (see 2.4.1).

2.6.2 Requests for ad-hoc room bookings of Pool Rooms outside semester should be submitted to vacation.poolrooms@keele.ac.uk. Requests will be accommodated where possible, taking into account advance conference and other bookings and adhering to principles regarding prioritisation of activities.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Central Timetabling Unit

3.1.1 The role and responsibilities of the Central Timetabling Unit include:

- Managing the production of teaching timetables in accordance with University policy.
- Maintaining and developing the University's timetabling systems, liaising with IDS and providing guidance and support for colleagues
- Determining and publishing annually the key dates for the collection, submission and publication of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year.
- Planning and co-ordinating the collection of accurate timetabling information from Schools
- Liaising with School Professional Service contacts to resolve issues and conflicts that may arise
- To note and accommodate where possible locally approved requests for flexibility relating to the availability of teaching staff (agreed in accordance with the provisions of 2.3.8 of this policy), and to resolve with School contacts matters where requests cannot be met
- Allocation of centrally-managed teaching space to teaching events
- Allocation of students to groups, unless subject area exception applies
- Publication of timetable drafts for scrutiny prior to final publication
- Reviewing and resolving timetabling inaccuracies or clashes that may arise
- Undertaking approved post publication changes
- Collating data to provide progress and change request reports for review by the Academic Registrar, Executive Deans, Deans Education and Heads of School.

3.2 Executive Deans

3.2.1 The role and responsibilities of the Executive Deans, or agreed Designate, include:

- Ensuring that the timetabling policy and protocol are applied in Schools by consultation with Heads of School.
- Receiving progress reports in respect of timetabling and associated processes (e.g. creation and submission of programme specifications to QA), addressing any highlighted areas of concern with Deans of Education and relevant Heads of School and ensuring compliance with published production schedules.
- Receiving change request monitoring reports, addressing areas of concern with Deans of Education and Heads of School.
- Receiving and authorising / declining requests from Schools for amendments to programme specifications (post deadline for submission of programme specifications).

3.3 Heads of School

3.3.1 The role and responsibilities of Heads of School, or agreed Designate, include:

- Ensuring compliance with timetabling and associated processes including production of annual Programme Specifications
- Determining the allocation of teaching staff to teaching events
- In instances where absence of key academic staff presents risk of non-compliance with published schedules and deadlines (e.g. in relation to Programme Specification, timetabling data requests), identifying and appointing a deputy / designate to complete relevant activities
- Considering requests from teaching staff for flexibility to working patterns, including application of relevant policy and process where necessary (see 2.3.6, 2.3.7 and 2.3.8)
- Resolving any conflicts which may arise at School level in relation to timetabling and associated processes
- Considering post-publication timetable change requests from academic colleagues
- Ensuring progress and change request reports, in respect of timetabling and associated processes, are considered at School level and that persistent issues are addressed and resolved.

3.4 School Academic Staff

3.4.1 The role and responsibilities of School Academic Staff include:

- Responding to requests for review and confirmation of Programme Specifications and submitting to QA in accordance with relevant process and deadline

- Responding to requests from the relevant School Professional Services contact and providing accurate information in relation to publication of module descriptions and confirmation of module constraints in accordance with the published schedule
- Providing accurate module delivery information to the relevant School Professional Service contact in accordance with annual schedule for timetable production.
- Notifying relevant School Professional Service contact of unavoidable post scheduling/publication changes
- Reporting any identified problems or faults in respect of teaching rooms to Central Timetabling Unit in a timely manner.
- Liaising with the relevant Head of School with regard to any needs in respect of flexible working requests in order that agreed provision can be considered in the timetable production process
- Adhering to University Regulations in respect of student requests for module and course changes and provision of advice in relation to the same

3.5 School Professional Services

3.5.1 The role and responsibilities of School Professional Services include:

- Ensuring requests for Programme Specification review are distributed to relevant academic colleagues in accordance with annual guidance and published schedule.
- Ensuring processes for publication of module descriptions and confirmation of module constraints are completed in accordance with annual guidance and the published schedule
- Collating teaching activities and ensuring that they are correctly defined within the relevant data collection system, so that requirements are considered at the point of scheduling
- Ensuring teaching activity group sizes are accurately recorded so that appropriate space can be allocated
- Ensuring academic staff are allocated against activities within the relevant data collection system so that activities are reflected on personalised staff and student timetables
- Allocation of students to groups where agreed with the Central Timetabling Unit
- Ensuring that authorised change requests are communicated to the Central Timetabling Unit in the required format

3.6 Student Records and Examinations

3.6.1 The role and responsibilities of Student Records and Examinations include:

- Managing the creation of programme module diets, including the identification of route anomalies, confirmation of module constraints and registration caps, creation of collections, liaising with and providing associated instruction and guidance to Schools

- Managing the confirmation and publication of module specifications and the online Module Catalogue and Modules Website, liaising with colleagues in IDS and providing associated instruction and guidance to Schools
- Managing the student module selection process using eVision, including creation and maintenance of relevant web-pages, associated guidance and communication

3.7 Student Services

3.7.1 The role and responsibilities of Student Services include:

- Monitoring of student engagement with module selection processes and completion of process
- Receiving and processing student module registration change requests, including compatibility of change requests with published timetable

3.8 Quality Assurance

3.8.1 The role and responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Team include:

- Managing the annual process for review and confirmation of Programme Specifications, providing associated guidance and instruction to Schools
- Validation of submitted Programme Specifications to support and enable Student Records and Examinations to commence diet creation processes
- Managing and co-ordinating related module proposal and amendment processes
- Monitoring engagement with and adherence to the published deadline for confirmation of Programme Specifications, and collating progress reports for review and, in respect of non-completion, action by Executive Deans, Deans Education and Heads of School.

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4.1 This policy should be read alongside other policy and procedural frameworks including:

- [Examinations Code of Practice](#)
- [Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Religion and Belief Policy](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students](#)
- [Space Policy](#)
- [Staff Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure](#)

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION

5.1 The Timetabling Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Timetabling Steering Group. The Steering Group will be Co-chaired by the PVC Education and the

Academic Registrar, with secretarial support provided by a member of the Central Timetabling Unit. Membership will include:

- Students' Union Representative
- KPA Representative
- Director of Estates or Designate
- Chief Information Officer or Designate
- Faculty Deans of Education
- Timetabling Manager

5.2 The Timetabling Policy will be approved by University Education Committee.

5.3 The Timetabling Policy will be published on the University's [Policy Zone](#) webpages, with links available in the University's [Timetabling](#) webpages.

6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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Owner	Academic Registrar
Version Number	1.1
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	-
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Related University Policy Documents	Examinations Code of Practice Flexible Working Policy and Procedure Religion and Belief Policy Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students Policy Space Policy Staff Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
Updates	28/2/2022 Clause 5.1 updated to reflect a correction to three yearly review from annual
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	