

Timetabling Policy

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Timetabling Policy

1. Introduction

a. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to confirm guiding principles used in timetabling, clarify the responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the process, define terminology and establish governance arrangements for adherence to and monitoring of the timetabling.

b. 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), non-curricula teaching such as vocational short courses, Regent's School of English, conferences and ad-hoc room bookings.

Any designated role (e.g. Head of School or Director of Programme) will be taken to include 'or nominee'.

c. Structure

The timetabling process is led by the Timetabling Team, collaborating with the Course Team and supported by colleagues in Registry, Academic Business Partners and Estates & 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. Guiding principles

- a. The timetable aims to balance an excellent student experience whilst optimising the use of Regent's facilities effectively and accounting for staff availability. The student experience will be prioritised over efficient space usage.
- b. The timetable is based around curriculum information from the student records and workload allocation systems. Timeslots for activities are based on student module registrations and staff availability. Locations are allocated to fit student numbers and equipment requests.
- c. It is expected that students will be available to attend timetabled activities throughout the teaching day during term-time.
- d. To enhance student experience, we aim to:
 - i. Support the delivery of the highest quality learning and teaching.
 - ii. Ensure that timetabling planning cycle aligns with other related processes.
 - iii. Support any agreed reasonable adjustments that may be required.
 - iv. Ensure that students are taught in the most appropriate teaching accommodation with the correct equipment required for the delivery of the module content.
 - v. Deliver accurate timetable information as early as possible.
 - vi. Publish timetables in a user-intuitive format and tools.
- e. To optimise space utilisation, we aim to:
 - i. Provide a university-wide approach to timetabling and room booking.
 - ii. Ensure the use of the full teaching week, the full teaching day and all

- suitable accommodation.
- iii. Ensure that stakeholders use approved systems when making ad-hoc bookings or requesting amendments to existing bookings.

3. Student Constraints

- a. Where possible, the teaching-timetable will be developed respecting the following guidelines:
 - i. Students will have a maximum of four consecutive hours of teaching activity in any one day.
 - ii. Students will have a maximum of six hours of total teaching activity in any one day.
 - iii. Gaps of more than three hours between classes on a single day will be avoided.
 - iv. At least two teaching hours will be scheduled in any one day.
- b. It is recognised, however, that due to the complexities of timetabling, the need to support students and staff with reasonable adjustments and those students who are re-taking with attendance, it may not always be possible to apply the constraints described.

4. Teaching times

- a. The teaching year and terms are timetabled in line with the published University academic calendar.
- b. The core teaching week is Monday to Friday. Weekends may be timetabled by agreement.
- c. Core teaching hours are 09:00 to 19:00 hours, up to 21:00 hours by agreement.
- d. Classes will normally start on the hour, with a duration integers capped at 4.
- e. Classes should finish ten minutes before the nominal end time to allow for room preparation time.
- f. Lunch breaks will be an hour and will usually be taken between 12:00 and 15:00.
- g. Teaching activities are categorised into Plenary or whole-group sessions and multi-group sessions where the cohort is divided into sub-groups. Teaching events will be titled as "Lead Events" instead of "lectures". Studio and lab sessions are used for practical courses.

5. Teaching Staff

- a. 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.
- b. To ensure the most accurate dataset is used, staff teaching availability data will be reset annually in the timetabling system. Staff availability data (including contracted hours, flexible working, reasonable adjustments and other approved arrangements) will be provided by the HR team for populating the timetabling system. Only staff availability data provided by HR will be accepted and any changes must be agreed and provided to the Timetabling Team by HR.
- c. Directors of Programme shall determine the allocation of teaching staff to teaching events using the Work Allocation Model and process.
- d. Part-time substantive, Associate and Visiting staff shall be allocated teaching hours by Directors of Programme, in accordance with the HR confirmed contractual arrangements relevant to individuals. Any change to this must be expressed in an updated contract or a Flexible Working Agreement or other

- arrangement as agreed by HR.
- e. Full-time substantive academic staff can be scheduled to teach at any time during the core teaching week.
- f. Where possible staff timetables are constructed based on the following constraints:
 - i. Staff will have a maximum teaching day of eight hours including a one-hour lunch hour.
 - ii. Staff lunch hour is usually scheduled between 12:00 and 15:00.
- g. Availability based on other business needs:
 - i. Staff may enrol on the Regent's PGCHE which takes place on Wednesdays between 13:00 and 17:00 during term time.

6. Teaching Space

- a. 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.
- b. Classes will be allocated to rooms based on forecast requirements. Relocation of a class may be required, subject to significant deviation from the forecast, 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.
- c. Teaching space is allocated in accordance with the following priorities (listed in order of priority):
 - i. Activities which include a student or staff member with special access requirements as agreed with the Student Wellbeing & Disability Team.
 - ii. Activities which need to take place in specific teaching rooms e.g. Fashion Studios or P.C. Labs.
 - iii. Whole Group activities where the module is a core element of a course starting with the largest groups.
 - iv. Whole group elective activities large to small
 - v. Multi-group core activities large to small
 - vi. Multi-group elective activities large to small
 - vii. Non-compulsory teaching activities such as Clinics and Visits
 - viii. Large recurring important events (e.g. graduation)
 - ix. Short courses/research activities/ validation events / University open days and/or activities / Committee meetings.
 - x. Other events will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, e.g.: One-off bookings for meetings (governed outside the Timetabling Policy).
- d. Where a room / timetabled slot is no longer required staff must notify the Timetabling Team through the published process that the room may be released.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

7. Publication, Changes and Modifications

- a. The primary source of publication to students is the Regent's App.

- b. The primary source of timetabling information for staff is the PowerBi Dashboard.
- c. To provide stability and predictability to students, once published, the timetable will normally only be changed in the following limited conditions:
 - i. Changes required as part of a reasonable adjustment for either staff or student access.
 - ii. Changes required due to change of staff contract / or as a result of staff turnover.
 - iii. Specific facility requirements for the delivery of module content.
 - iv. Unforeseen timetable clashes.
 - v. Unexpected facilities issues.
- d. Cancellations of individual sessions due to staff illness or other unavoidable reason should be notified through the published process.
- e. Once approved, it is the responsibility of the person requesting the timetable change to inform the students about that change.