

# REGULATIONS

## E17 TIMETABLING POLICY

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the agreed principles for timetabling and room booking. It has been developed to help address issues of equality and transparency, accuracy, timeliness, accountability and continuous improvement.
- 1.2 The main overall aim of this Policy is to improve the quality of the student experience by ensuring that costly University resources are used to their maximum potential and efficiency.
- 1.3 The objectives of the Policy are as follows:
  - to improve the University's utilisation and management of teaching space; and
  - to ensure that teaching takes place in the most appropriate accommodation available; and
  - to ensure that appropriate timetable information is available to both staff and students in an appropriate and timely manner; and
  - to make available information regarding all University space, whether controlled by the University centrally or a Faculty, either for teaching or other purposes, to the entire University community.
- 1.4 To achieve these aims and objectives, the University uses CMIS timetabling software to construct timetables for all teaching across the whole institution, on all campuses. Space and staff are costly, finite resources with often high levels of demand. Early timetabling in a structured, consistent and accurate manner will maximise the effectiveness of usage of these scarce resources.
- 1.5 Working together, ASA, EFM, OBIS and Faculties ensure the implementation of this Policy.

### 2 Areas of Responsibility

- 2.1 Final responsibility for agreeing up-dates and amendments to this Policy rests with the Academic Board.
- 2.2 The overall timetabling process for academic activities is overseen by the Directorate of Academic & Student Affairs (ASA) through the University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team in the Academic Registry. The University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team also controls the booking of all pooled teaching space, and holds overall responsibility for the construction, dissemination, monitoring and up-dating of all general timetable information.
- 2.3 Estates and Facilities Management (EFM) manage and control the built aspects of the teaching environment and their on-going up-keep and maintenance.
- 2.4 Use of CMIS is overseen and managed by the University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team and supported by Oxford Brookes Information Solutions (OBIS).

- 2.5 Faculties control the booking of their own dedicated space, through CMIS. The University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team also acts as support for users of CMIS in Faculties.
- 2.6 Senior responsibility within Faculties lies with the Heads of Department with support in timetabling matters provided by Faculty Timetabling Officer(s). Each Faculty will ensure that the University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team have been informed of the name(s) of those individuals(s) empowered to resolve conflicts between modules in respect of the use of pooled spaces.
- 2.7 The use of all University pooled teaching space is monitored and audited on a regular basis by the Space Management Team in EFM. This data is used to identify areas where space could be better utilised.
- 2.8 Faculty dedicated space is managed and booked by the relevant Faculty. Faculties are responsible for the most effective utilisation of their own dedicated space and undertake their own audit of the use of their facilities on a regular basis.
- 2.9 Use of University space for conferences, summer schools or other external purposes is managed by EFM through Conference Services. Conference Services are able to book available rooms via the University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team, with agreement from Faculties where necessary.
- 2.10 All meeting rooms (space which is not dedicated to teaching) are managed and booked by the University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team, with the exception of meeting rooms agreed for exclusive use of individual Faculties (or other part of the University) where responsibility will lie with that Faculty or Directorate. Such dedicated space must still be viewable to other users in CMIS and CMISGo (the online room booking portal).
- 2.11 Students also accept a level of responsibility for their own activities. It is the student's responsibility, for example, to check their timetable regularly for accuracy and changes, and to advise relevant staff in the event of any issues. Students should also notify relevant staff of any specific personal requirements, i.e. access, disabilities, religious or other responsibilities, etc.

### **3 Policy and Principles Expanded**

- 3.1 Early planning will help achieve a clear, predictable picture of workloads and timetables to students and staff. Excessive, late or unnecessary changes are likely to cause problems and weaken the validity of the timetables produced.
- 3.2 Draft indicative timetables should be produced at the earliest possible opportunity. For example, draft indicative timetables for Semester 1 should ideally be produced before the examinations at the end of Semester 2 and draft indicative timetables for Semester 2 should ideally be produced before the examinations at the end of Semester 1
- 3.3 Early publication will enable returning students to begin to plan personal schedules (including part-time work, childcare etc.) well in advance. There will also be benefit to potential and new students who will be able to make decisions and plans based on actual information. A proviso will be in place that some changes are likely, but that large-scale change is to be avoided.
- 3.4 Access to at least view timetable information should not be unreasonably denied to anyone. Students and staff should be able to view personally relevant timetables. CMIS users should be able to view scheduling information for all rooms, including Faculty dedicated space.
- 3.5 All timetables produced using CMIS will be considered to be a reliable and accurate reflection of reality; CMIS will be the repository and ultimate source of all timetable information. Any timetables or changes to timetables produced or made using other methods, means or systems are not considered authentic. Following this Policy will ensure that unofficial bookings do not clash with legitimate ones.

- 3.6 Any changes to timetables should only be made if absolutely necessary and via the appropriate channels. Changes must be notified to stakeholders without delay. Students and staff are advised to check their timetables regularly for any updates, via the appropriate channels (currently Google Calendar).
- 3.7 All events using Oxford Brookes University space resource must be recorded on CMIS. This will enable all stakeholders to have access to timetabled events, through CMISGo.
- 3.8 Target numbers should be used to provide an estimate of cohort and group sizes, until such time as more accurate information becomes available.
- 3.9 Staffing details are to be included, i.e. which staff are teaching on which modules, for how many weeks and at what times, and associated availability constraints. Ensuring this information is available is the responsibility of Faculties.
- 3.10 If a booked room is not needed for any reason, for the whole of a booked period or any part thereof, it must be released without delay.

#### **4 Standard Teaching Periods and Timetabling Practice**

- 4.1 Wherever possible, academic contact sessions (i.e. lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory sessions, practical sessions etc) are timetabled according to the regulations set out in this Policy, but the delivery arrangements for specific programmes may require alternative arrangements to be put in place. This may include, for example, teaching outside of the scheduled times for academic contact sessions or to allow for more intense modes of delivery. The needs and desires of individual students may also be taken into account to allow a student to undertake a combination of modules which, whilst practically possible, might fall outside of the terms of this Policy.
- 4.2 Formal academic contact sessions for all programmes may be held at any point during the standard teaching periods in semester time. These periods are as follows:

Monday	9.00 am to 8.00 pm
Tuesday	9.00 am to 8.00 pm
Wednesday	9.00 am to 8.00 pm
Thursday	9.00 am to 8.00 pm
Friday	9.00 am to 4.00 pm

Academic contact sessions for compulsory modules on a Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday will only normally be held between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm (i.e. the slots starting each hour from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm). On Wednesday, contact sessions for compulsory modules will normally be held between 9.00 am and 12.00 noon (i.e. the slots starting each hour from 9.00 am to 11.00 am). Compulsory modules may be held at any time on a Friday. Compulsory modules may be held outside of these times if there is a clear reason to do so..

Optional modules will be run at any point during the standard teaching periods.

- 4.3 The timetable is divided into one hour slots within these periods. Academic contact sessions will generally end at ten minutes to the hour. This is to allow academic staff to prepare and set up for the coming session, and for students and staff to move on to their next session.
- 4.4 Academic staff and students are expected to be available for academic contact sessions at any time during the standard teaching periods defined in 4.2 above. Academic staff who are unable to teach regularly during certain slots must have the reasons for their unavailability approved by their Head of Department through the Annual Staff Teaching Constraints process before these slots can be excluded from their timetable, for example, to accommodate caring responsibilities
- 4.5 Guidance for Heads of Department for the approval of exclusion of standard teaching periods in semester time from academic staff timetables is as follows:

- 4.5.1. Potentially acceptable grounds for the exclusion of a standard teaching period from an individual timetable fall into five broad categories:
- a. Caring responsibilities: Academic staff whose caring responsibilities for children, people with disabilities, or other dependent, require them to be away from the University at specific times of the day or week will normally be excluded from teaching in the relevant periods. When seeking an exclusion, colleagues should be prepared to provide evidence that alternative caring arrangements could not be put into place without significant difficulty or expense.
  - b. Travel arrangements: Academic staff whose personal travel arrangements to the University are such as to make it difficult or impossible to teach in specific periods, and who are able to demonstrate that alternative arrangements would involve substantial inconvenience and/or extra expense may be excluded from relevant teaching periods. The University expects staff to live within a travel distance of the University that allows them to fulfil their teaching, and other work commitments; travel arrangements involving long distance residence are not generally covered by this potential exclusion.
  - c. Significant personal commitments relating to formal education, training, public or voluntary service: Engagements of this type which fall into one or more of the standard teaching periods may warrant exclusion of those periods if they occur on a sufficiently regular basis. Colleagues should be prepared to provide evidence that alternative arrangements could not be made to fulfil these commitments without significant difficulty or expense.
  - d. Staff with a disability or impairment may request to be excluded from specific teaching periods where this would amount to a reasonable adjustment
  - e. Any other constraint covered by the Equality Act 2010 (such as religious observance).
- 4.5.2. Where the head of department has declined the request to be excluded from a specific teaching period, the staff member may refer the decision to the PVC/Dean of the faculty for review. S/he should do this in writing, setting out the reasons why s/he considers that the request has been unreasonably refused. In the case of requests under d. above, the PVC/Dean may seek advice from Occupational Health. The PVC/Dean should inform the staff member of his/her decision within 15 days of the written request for review. Where the request is turned down, written reasons should be given.
- 4.5.3. If the staff member is not satisfied with the decision of the PVC/Dean, s/he may refer the matter to be considered under Stage 3 of the [University Grievance Procedure](#).
- 4.6 Academic staff and students may be expected to deliver or attend academic contact sessions at any of the University's campuses in Oxford. This is irrespective of where the majority of academic contact sessions occur for that staff member or student. Nevertheless, unreasonable amounts of travel are not supported by this policy.

4.7 When the timetable is devised, the following travelling periods are allowed:

<b>From / To</b>	<b>From / To</b>	<b>Travel Time</b>
Headington (Gipsy Lane & Headington Hill)	Wheatley	1 slot/hour
Headington (Gipsy Lane & Headington Hill)	Harcourt Hill	1 slot/hour
Headington (Gipsy Lane & Headington Hill)	Headington (Marston Road)	1 slot/hour
Wheatley or Harcourt Hill	Headington (Marston Road)	2 slots/hours
Wheatley	Harcourt Hill	2 slots/hours

4.8 Students should not normally have more than 4 consecutive hours of academic contact sessions, nor more than 6 hours in a single day.

4.9 The timetable for individual staff and students will be arranged so that all individuals have a one-hour slot free at 12.00, 1.00 or 2.00, and at either 4.00 or 5.00.

4.10 For students who have made the university aware of special needs, timetables may need to be constructed or adapted to ensure those students do not experience any difficulties in attending contact sessions. (This may include, for example, avoiding timetabling classes in rooms that are not accessible to students with mobility difficulties.)

4.11 Whilst effort will be made to maintain consistency in the timetable from year to year, this may not be possible in the greater interest of maximising the University's use of space.

4.12 By preference, week-on-week activities for the same module will be scheduled in the same room but this may not always be possible in the greater interest of maximising the University's use of space.

4.13 Timetabling priorities arise from the strategic importance of events and associated constraints, and are as follows:

- Academic contact sessions
- Examinations
- Graduation
- Enrolment, Induction and Freshers' Fair activities
- Open Days, Applicant Days and mandatory applicant interviews
- OCSLD and other internal training events
- High-profile and public events (e.g. Professorial lectures)
- Formal University committees
- All other events

4.14 The University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team will set aside space as required for the priority events listed in paragraph 4.13.

## **5 Non-teaching Activities**

- 5.1 Outside of core teaching periods, the majority of rooms will be made available to Conference Services as a priority. Core teaching periods are defined in the specific semester or term dates for individual programmes. This excludes dedicated meeting rooms and other spaces as deemed necessary for reasons such as re-sit examinations, maintenance, etc. Where a room can be made available, however, it will be made available to Conference Services so that the University can ensure it achieves the maximum potential in income from external bookings.
- 5.2 Students are permitted to book pooled rooms for society events or for work related to their courses. Such bookings must be made through the University Timetabling and Room Bookings Team with a minimum of 7 days' notice; 14 if there is a visiting speaker to allow time for any necessary security checks to be made.
- 5.3 For work related to their courses, student bookings must be accompanied by a booking form counter signed by their module leader.
- 5.4 For bookings relating to Students' Union society events, student bookings must be accompanied by a booking form counter signed by the nominated Student Union staff member.
- 5.5 In the event that a visiting speaker is attending the University please refer to the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech including Guidance on Visiting Speakers.
- 5.6 The University also permits staff to book pooled rooms for teaching-related events. In the event that a room is booked for a non-teaching or personal event then a charge may be enforced (cf 6.2 below).

## **6 Charging**

- 6.1 In principle, all ad-hoc bookings for University business in either University pooled space or Faculty dedicated space (committees, student society meetings, etc.) are made free of charge.
- 6.2 In the event that any charges are involved then, whether the booking is made by an internal or external party, a hire fee for the room will be charged to the event organiser and the booking will be processed through Conference Services. An example situation may be a workshop organised by a Brookes academic department or member of staff where there is a charge for attending the workshop.
- 6.3 Bookings made by external clients, or for externally organised events that are subject to charges, are to be made with Conference Services.
- 6.4 Bookings made by University staff for activities related to the business of the University are not charged (except, as noted in 6.3 above) where those attending the event are charged by the event organisers.

## **7 Additional Comments**

- 7.1 Notwithstanding the commitments made above, teaching will be timetabled across the full range of hours within the standard teaching periods listed, to enable the University to meet its commitment to delivering all taught modules, and maximise the utilisation of teaching space across the University.

For further information about these regulations, please contact the Head of Academic Office.

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