

University of Wolverhampton

Timetabling Policy

Introduction

The Registry's Central Timetabling Unit (hereafter the CTU) is responsible for the production and publication of the annual teaching timetable, encompassing all faculties and campuses.

In producing the teaching timetable, the CTU considers and attempts to balance the needs and requirements of students, academic staff and Corporate Services to produce an effective and efficient timetable that best utilises the University's available teaching space whilst maintaining a high quality student experience.

The University Timetabling Policy is approved by the Academic Board and its initial implementation will be overseen by Timetabling Project Board, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The Timetabling Policy is applied fully, consistently and fairly across the University.

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Timetabling Policy is to provide an efficient and effective management framework for the delivery of all teaching activities.

The policy covers the scheduling (timetabling and rooming) of all undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral level, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), any synchronous teaching activities on distance learning programmes and non-credit bearing teaching activities delivered on University campus. (It does not cover independent learning or the use of non-University space for teaching activities.) It also provides a framework and governance structure for the management of University rooms that contribute to a student timetable and/or are used for non-teaching events such as meetings and external income activity such as conferences.

This document sets out the University's policy and guiding principles for all staff and students, in respect of:

- the preparation and timely production of the University's teaching timetable;
- accommodating the diverse needs of our students;
- the publication of the timetable to students and staff;
- the scheduling of staff and student teaching and learning activities;
- the provision of facilities to support teaching and the curriculum;
- ensuring efficient use of University teaching accommodation.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 Institutional

The timetable will support the strategic objectives of the University to a) deliver at least six weeks in advance of teaching a personalised timetable to all students and b) incorporate

requirements and initiatives relating to teaching and learning spaces as outlined in the Estates and Teaching and Learning Strategies.

The timetable will use the full working day and working week (refer to 4.2 below) to accommodate all requirements and to make the best possible use of the accommodation available.

Space utilisation will be monitored, using data collected from a number of sources including Space/Room Audit activity, against Key Performance Indicator (KPI) No. 11, which is considered annually by the Board of Governors and informs the University's Estate Management Record (EMR) and annual return to HESA.

2.2 Student experience

When considering changes to the timetable, the interests of students are of primary importance.

The timetable and allocation of rooms will support the delivery of the highest quality learning and teaching to students in the most appropriate teaching accommodation.

Wherever practicable, the following principles will also operate:

- Students will not be timetabled to attend more than four continuous hours of teaching without a break of at least one hour.
- The timetable will attempt to accommodate full choice of optional modules for students.
- As far as possible, the same room will be scheduled for the same group at the same time each week.

Students studying on a full-time basis are expected to be available at any time during the teaching week. However, full-time students will normally be scheduled for daytime teaching (9.00-6.00pm) and any students who are timetabled to attend morning teaching sessions (or other learning activities) will not normally be scheduled to attend evening sessions on the same day (see 4.2 for the definition of morning, afternoon and evening teaching). Should students be expected to attend timetabled sessions at more than one University campus during the same day, the timetable will ensure that sufficient travel time is allowed between teaching events.

Students studying on a standard course on a part-time basis (e.g. a Master's programme taken over more than one year) are normally expected to select modules in accordance with their availability.

The University aims to designate Wednesday afternoons for extracurricular or co-curricular student activities, including sporting fixtures for full-time undergraduate students. Teaching sessions will normally only be scheduled during this time where there is module choice or where undergraduate core modules offer other iterations for students during the week. The approval of the Academic Registrar will be required for any full-time undergraduate module to be delivered on a Wednesday afternoon.

Schedules should allow staff and students to have at least one hour's break between 11.00am and 2.00pm.

2.3 Staff

The construction of the timetable will take into account the following staff restrictions, where approved by the Dean of Faculty, relating to availability on certain days of the week or hours of the day and/or restrictions on rooming due to physical/health related matters:

- Contracted part-time hours;
- An approved flexible working agreement;
- Occupational Health recommended adjustments to work patterns/duties arising from a health-related condition;
- Regularly scheduled internal or external commitments which cannot be accommodated around the timetable, such as scheduled KTP company visits, research data collection that has to take place at a particular date or time, or required attendance on a supported taught programme;
- Other restrictions which may affect availability but not at specific times or days, including agreed allocation of a teaching free day per week for research or consultancy;
- Any religious events or requirements where the University is legally obliged to grant an adjustment.

Where none of the above approved arrangements are in place and have been notified to the CTU, it is assumed that all full-time academic staff are available to teach at any time during the standard teaching week. However, staff will not normally be scheduled to teach for more than four hours without a break of at least one hour. Staff will not normally be required to teach more than two evenings per week, without prior agreement, and where they are scheduled for morning teaching they will not normally be allocated to teach on the evening of the same day (see 4.2 for definitions of morning, afternoon and evening teaching).

As the University is multi-campus, staff are expected to teach as necessary at any appointed location. However, the timetable will ensure that sufficient travel time is allowed between teaching events.

The timetable is developed on an annual basis and weekly teaching activity requirements, time slots and specialist rooming requests to facilitate the proposed teaching activities must be checked by academic and administrative staff in the Faculty and confirmed within the published deadlines.

Due to legal requirements around student published information and the operational needs of the University, staff are required not to vary the teaching sessions on a module without seeking the appropriate approvals.

2.4 Communication

Deadlines for key activities involved in the preparation and production of the timetable are approved annually by the University Academic Enhancement Committee.

The published timetable information must be clear and understandable for use by students

and staff. From the academic year 2019/20 onwards, it is the University's aim to provide individualised timetables for students and staff.

Changes to the timetable after publication will be by exception only and all requests will require approval by the appropriate Associate Dean or named nominee, followed by further approval by the Academic Registrar or nominee. Exceptional circumstances will normally be limited to changes in teaching personnel that cause a clash to occur. Timetable requests related to changes in teaching requirements will not normally be considered; these must be approved in advance via the University's minor modifications procedure.

2.5 Accommodation

From the academic year 2019/20 onwards, all teaching accommodation, defined as space that will ultimately form a part of a student's individual timetable, is booked centrally. The University timetable takes priority over any local room booking requirements. Once the central timetable is published, rooms will be released for staff and students to book for meetings and ad hoc use.

The Learning and Teaching Spaces Advisory Group (LATSAG) manages the list of University teaching rooms and is responsible for overseeing the condition of rooms and non-specialist equipment, in collaboration with Estates and Facilities, and using general feedback from staff and data drawn from the results of the Annual Space Audits and ITS Equipment Review. An annual scheme of work and updates to teaching rooms is maintained by the Estates and Facilities Directorate.

The CTU maintains an up-to-date catalogue of University rooms to include room details, equipment specification and images of all space available for teaching and publishes details for all staff through their webpages. <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/ctu>

All teaching rooms will be subject to teaching space audits to ensure efficient use of space and the most appropriate allocation of activities to rooms.

Rooms should be left clean and tidy and all furniture should be returned to its standard configuration if moved during the booked session and all boards are to be left clean. Any issues should be reported to timetable@wlv.ac.uk as soon as possible. Problems with IT equipment in the room are to be reported directly to IT Services using the contact number located on each AV desk and maintenance/caretaking issues to be reported to the Facilities Helpdesk. Staff are asked to commence the session on the time allotted and finish 10 minutes before the end time (hour or half hour) to allow for changeover of the room.

3. Process and Procedure

3.1 Academic Calendar

The University operates a 52 week year, with weeks numbered consecutively from 1 to 52.

Academic Board approves the University's academic calendar. The academic calendar outlines standard and non-standard teaching weeks, exam periods and non-teaching periods around which the teaching timetable is constructed.

3.2 Teaching Week

The University's standard teaching week is Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 9.00pm, and on Friday from 9.00am to 6.00pm with the exception of Wednesday afternoons as noted in paragraph 3.2. For the purposes of this Timetabling Policy, morning teaching is defined as taking place between the hours of 9.00am and 1.00pm, afternoon teaching takes place between 1.00pm and 6.00pm, whilst 6.00pm to 9.00pm is designated as evening teaching.

Teaching may only be scheduled on weekends where there is a clear demand from stakeholders with prior agreement of the CTU, Estates and Facilities and IT Services. When proposing to teach outside of the normal teaching week, in order to ensure the building and booked teaching rooms are open, Estates and Facilities must be informed and these requests may be subject to additional charges. Where approved, all weekend teaching sessions will be timetabled centrally by the CTU.

3.3 Timetable structure

Information and data that informs the construction of the University timetable is held on the CMIS software managed by the CTU. The course and module data, teaching requirements (see 4.4) and student numbers are drawn from the University's Student Management System (SITS). Option choices will be requested of continuing students by Easter each year, and records for non-progressing students will be updated from SITS prior to the timetable being published.

Timetabled classes must reflect the validated and approved provision and the information provided to students in course and module guides.

Specific constraints may lead to a need to prioritise some students and courses ahead of others such as:

- Students with disabilities or additional requirements for whom appropriate facilities may not be available in all rooms;
- Part-time/block release courses with teaching identified for a specific day;
- Placement students who can only be taught on specific days or specific periods.

3.4 Teaching Requirements

The delivery of a module may be made up of a number of teaching events which are defined as lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, laboratory sessions, practical sessions or other structured teaching activity.

The following information on teaching requirements will be held centrally by Registry, in approved course and module records:

- the University weeks in which the module will run;
- the number and type of teaching events per week;
- how students will be managed during these events (e.g. as a whole cohort or split into groups);
- maximum group sizes for each event;

- the format and duration of each of the teaching events;
- required room type (flat floored or tiered lecture theatre);
- any specific equipment required within a room to facilitate teaching.

Any changes to this information must be approved via the University's Minor Modification procedures, in order to ensure an accurate timetable and correct information published to students in course and module guides.

Faculties are required to confirm annually the named teaching staff who will deliver each event and any special access requirements for individual staff members.

All teaching events will be scheduled in blocks of one or two hours.

3.5 Room Bookings

All teaching, assessment, student induction and graduation activities will be timetabled centrally by the CTU.

Room bookings for all other activities will be managed in accordance with the University's Room Booking Policy.