Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Timetabling Policy

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Related Regulations from the Academic Manual are shown in boxes like this.

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1 Introduction

This Policy sets out the agreed principles for academic timetabling covering the annual planning, preparation, production, publication, and ongoing management of changes to the Academic Timetable.

The context for this policy is to work in collaboration across Estates, Student Experience Directorate, and Academic Departments to establish viable timetables for students and staff, while achieving broader College goals around use of space

The policy is to be read with reference to the Space Management Policy (which sets out how space will be used across the College and the Module Selection Policy (which sets how module across programmes will take place). These policies must be mutually compatible.

2 Governance

This policy is owned by the Director of Estates and Facilities Management.

The Directorates of Estates and Facilities, Students and Education and IT&S will work together and with Academic Departments to ensure implementation of this policy. The responsibility for agreeing, reviewing, and amending the policy rests with the Academic Board.

3 Principles for academic timetabling

- To support the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching to students at the College.
- To ensure that students are taught in the most appropriate teaching space.
- To ensure that teaching facilities and scheduling meet the needs of teaching staff; (this would be based on the room is the right size with the right equipment scheduled in the right sequence).
- To optimise utilisation of the University's teaching space and resources.
- To provide efficient and effective management of teaching timetable.

4 Priorities for Teaching Space

These are set out in the Space Management Policy.

5 Areas of Responsibility

- The overall timetabling process for academic activities is overseen by the Directorate of Estates and Facilities Management through the Timetabling Team (TT).

- TT controls the booking and use of all teaching space and meeting rooms, and holds overall responsibility for the construction, dissemination, monitoring and updating of all general timetable information.

- Estates and Facilities manage and control the built aspects of the teaching environment and their ongoing upkeep and maintenance.

- IT & IS are responsible for the AV equipment and IT equipment and software.

- Where departments manage space (specialist and non-specialist) they are responsible for ensuring it is accurately described, releasing non specialist space where appropriate, confirming finalised timetabling requests and communication and approving any post publication amendments with the T&RB.

- School Student and Programme Hub teams will ensure that the curriculum is accurate and up to date within the Student Records System.

- School Student and Programme Hub teams will work with academic colleagues to provide accurate details relating to teaching staff, equipment, type of room, and allocate students to small teaching groups, such as seminar and workshops where there are specific requirements. They will act as liaison between teaching staff and the T&RB.

5.1 Guidance and role of Head of Department

- Ensure that the Department works collegiately to produce and fulfil the best timetable for students' learning experience, within the available resource.

- Ensure that Departmental input and checking is carried out in a timely fashion, according to the published timetable production cycle.

- Work within staff and module constraints to ensure that it support the publication of an accurate timetable ensuring there are no staff/student clashes.

- Authorise any amendments to the timetable information

5.2 Guidance and role of Programme Convenors

- Ensure that programme and module developments and changes are managed so that approvals are completed on time to fit the timetable production cycle, and so enable timely completion of module selection activities as well as supporting timetabling.

- Ensure data which underpins the timetable is accurate, minimising any amendments that are required throughout the timetabling cycle, and that any essential updates are communicated to School Student and Programme Hubs and to students once the timetable has been published to students.

- Support data collection and checking activities, when requested, ensuring they are carried out accurately and in timely fashion, according to the published timetable production cycle.

5.3 Guidance and role of Module Convenors

- Check draft timetables for your students and for yourself and notify the Programme or Module Convenor of any problems, including any known additional requirements for staff or students.
- Adhere to the definitive version of the timetable, as published to students.
- Inform the Programme Module Convenor of any cancellations or additional teaching sessions, as soon as they arise, to enable appropriate timetable updates and communication.
- Support data collection and checking activities, when requested, ensuring they are carried out accurately and in timely fashion, according to the published timetable production cycle.

5.4 Guidance and role of all teaching staff

Reviewing their academic timetable prior to publication and communicating any issues to the Programme or Module Convenor or School Student and Programme Hubs.

6 Standard timetabling period

Standard teaching periods are necessary not only to ensure a sufficient number of appropriate space-hours, but also to accommodate the complexities of shared modules and programme structures. It also clarifies when teaching takes priority for students, staff, and other space users.

Formal academic contact sessions for all programmes may be held at any point during the standard teaching periods in term time. Staff will be expected to teach across these times unless it is outside their part time hours, or they have an approved flexible working agreement in place. These periods are as follows:

- Monday 09:00 to 18:00
- Tuesday 09:00 to 18:00
- Wednesday 09:00 to 13:00 (Unless approved exceptionally by the Pro Warden Academic/Head of School)
- Thursday 09:00 to 18:00
- Friday 09:00 to 18:00 (Avoiding 13:00 to 14:00 where possible for religious observance

Some programmes may formally operate outside of the standard academic week.

Classes should start and finish promptly. Teaching events commence on the hour and end at 10 minutes before the hour to allow enough time to move around campus to and from lectures.

7 Amendments or cancellations to bookings

Amendments to the published timetable have a negative effect on the student experience and a change in one part of the timetable can have knock on effects on a range of other activities. Amendments should be avoided by the construction of a timetable based on timely and accurate data.

However, amendments can be made in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- Staff illness
- Approved change in staff availability
- Replacement of leaving staff
- Actual number of students exceeds room capacity
- Actual number of students is significantly smaller
- Actual number of students requires additional groups.

Where amendments are required, these need to be approved by the Head of Department or their nominee.

Where cancellations or amendments are made students must be informed as far in advance as is reasonably possible by the Department.

Where cancellations or amendments disadvantage certain students then reasonable arrangements must be put in place to rectify the situation for those students.

Where amendments need to be made, an alternative choice of facilities will be offered, and relevant staff will be informed so that they can advise students.

Any amendments to timetables should only be made if absolutely necessary and via the approved appropriate channels (timetabling change request form (TCR).

Late amendments may not be permitted where they are unnecessary or unreasonable. Students and staff are advised to check their timetables regularly for any updates, via the appropriate channels https://www.gold.ac.uk/students/

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 by informing TT.

8 Production of the academic timetable

TT is responsible for issuing detailed guidance each year, setting out the process for constructing the teaching timetable and requesting bookings in centrally managed rooms for the following academic session, including deadlines for the various processes involved.

TT will produce and disseminate an annual production cycle timeline each autumn for the forth coming year. This will include deadlines for programme, module changes, data collection/entry, checking, and for the delivery of draft and final teaching timetables.

Early planning helps achieve a clear, predictable picture of workloads and timetables to students and staff. Excessive, late, or unnecessary amendments are likely to cause problems and weaken the validity of the timetables produced. TT manages the timetabling procedure to reduce as much as it impacts on the validity of the published timetable.

All teaching (including dedicated space such as laboratories and studios) events using Goldsmiths space resource must be recorded on the timetabling software. This will enable all stakeholders to view timetabled events.

For 1st year UG/PG cohorts target numbers will be used to provide an estimate of cohort and group sizes, until such time as more accurate information becomes available. Changes to anticipated module numbers must be communicated to TT as soon as they are known.

Any constraints that may affect when a module can be delivered must be fed into the timetabling process at the appropriate time in the year using the standard data collection processes and formats. Ensuring this information is available is the responsibility of Departments.

TT will ensure that compulsory activities do not clash. Every effort will be made to ensure that optional modules do not clash, however, due to various timetabling constraints, some clashes between optional modules may be unavoidable.

TT is responsible for the allocation of time slots to teaching. Teaching space bookings must follow the agreed and advertised time slots for the module. Requests for new modules to have time slots or for existing modules to change slots must be made using the advertised processes and deadlines in the annual production cycle timeline.

Timetabling information submitted after the published deadline will still be processed and teaching sessions timetabled but within the limits of the timetable as it stands at that point without affecting departments who have submitted their data on time.

9 Publication of timetables

Draft indicative timetables showing day, time and campus should be produced at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the start of the academic year and published to staff and students to enable their planning.

Personalised timetables detailing rooms and set allocations should be produced later but at the earliest possible opportunity and prior to the start of teaching in the academic year. They should be published to students once the likelihood of significant change is minimal but allowing reasonable time for students to plan their attendance.