Timetabling Policy

OVERVIEW

In order to establish a uniform approach to timetabling across the whole of the student provision, the University has created a timetabling policy which provides a set of principles guiding the scheduling process.

The policy has three main objectives:

1.1 Improving the student experience and their needs across the University by providing an accurate and timely timetable for each student.

1.2 Prioritising & optimising resource utilisation across the University to provide efficient use of the University's estate and lecturer resource.

1.3 Support high quality and efficient delivery of teaching and learning within the University's resource constraints.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The general principles of the timetable policy are as follows:

2.1 To continually enhance the student experience and support high quality delivery of teaching and learning within the University's resource constraints, whilst providing a consistent approach to the publication of timetables across the University.

2.2 To ensure that students are, where possible, taught in the most appropriate high-quality teaching and learning accommodation.

2.3 To ensure the construction and deployment of the timetable conforms to all requirements regarding equality of treatment and diversity of background of the students.

2.4 To provide dynamic, accurate, and accessible timetabling and room booking information to students and staff through high quality digitalised solutions.

2.5 To provide a unified approach to timetabling and room booking, utilising best & standardised practices across the University using one system and approach to deliver the best utilisation of space & resources.

2.6 To plan and model strategic changes and additions to the University portfolio, including new deliveries and future developments.

2.7 To continuously enhance the quality of timetabling processes, procedures and systems.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

It is important that students have a timetable, which meets their academic needs, while acknowledging that it is not possible to meet all individual personal expectations. Having early access to timetables and having fewer changes to the timetable provides great assurance.

3.1 Timetables will be constructed according to the documented course requirements, i.e Year Planners - approved by Programme Directors e.g. full-time, part-time & programme of study.

3.2 Classes will be timetabled as per the normal teaching day (see 5.1). Where part timers and full timers are taught together, this may vary.

3.3 Where possible, full-time students will have a minimum of one clear day free for individual study.

3.4 Changes to timetable will be alerted to students in the most efficient and appropriate way, particularly being most reactive to short terms changes, such as adverse weather or transport disruption.

EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHING STAFF

These principles recognise that all teaching staff undertake a range of duties for the University other than teaching, such as commitments to design, marking, marketing activities and contact with practice. The principles governing teaching activities are as follows:

4.1 Staff are expected to teach across the standard schedule (see 5.1) and where required on part time courses, this might comprise weekend or evenings. Timetabling staffing will consider balanced workloads.

4.2 Staff will not be scheduled to deliver classes for more than four consecutive hours with no break.

4.3 Adjustments to individual staff timetables will only be made in exceptional circumstances and with the authorisation of the Campus Dean. Leave should be planned outside of teaching time, but it is accepted that emergencies or unforeseen events may intervene.

4.4 It is the responsibility of teaching staff to continuously check timetables, flagging any discrepancies immediately to Campus Timetabling mailboxes.

STANDARD TEACHING HOURS

The standard teaching hours of the University are defined below:

5.1 Day-time teaching is defined as Monday to Friday 9.00am to 6.00pm. All day-time teaching must be scheduled in the following timeslots:

09:00-11:00; 11:15-13:15; 13:30-15:30; 15:45-17:45

5.2 Evening teaching is defined as Monday to Friday 6.00pm to 9.00pm.

5.3 To maximise space use, Weekend teaching is defined as Saturday and Sunday 10.00am to 5.00pm. All weekend teaching must be scheduled in the following timeslots: 10:00-12:00; 12:30-14:30; 15:00-17:00. However, some flex can be exercised if the campus has sufficient space capacity.

SCHEDULING, ROOMING AND SPACE PROVISION

Timetable scheduling and rooming will take place to ensure high levels of student satisfaction, whilst ensuring optimal use of teaching facilities.

Rooming of the timetable will consider the following specific requirements:

6.1 Class size will be matched to room capacity and course validation requirements and size of groups.

6.2 Rooms will be allocated solely based on the specialist requirements for teaching and after any health and safety assessment or risk assessment undertaken by the appropriate technical staff and in accordance with individual student needs

6.3 All space is University space, any decisions for use of space sits under the governance of Space Management Board (SMOB)

6.4 FM Teams are responsible for maintenance of space and will liaise with Timetabling about rooms being taken in and out of commission. Care will be taken to minimise disruption to teaching.

6.5 Operational Timetabling & Academic Teams will develop a plan based on forecasts (particularly for new starters) provided by marketing, which will assume a level of attrition (known as "melt") – this means that numbers will drop to actual levels as teaching commences. This may also include contingency groups too.

PRIORITISATION OF SPACE: ALLOCATIONS AND BOOKINGS

7.1 The University has determined the following priorities for scheduling: -

1) Agreed Open Day Events that must be planned ahead of time (during the planning phase) and before planning for teaching begins

2) Physical Assessments must also be planned in advance according to the dates / time provided to students, these should be provided ahead of teaching requirements to avoid clashes and disruption to timetables

3) Induction & Teaching

Any changes received outside of the time windows determined in 1 & 2, will be fitted in **where possible** with a view to minimising changes to the Timetable

      7.2 Satellite Campuses – Satellites are the responsibility of the "owning" ULAW Campus – Campus Managers are tasked with agreeing location requirements ahead of planning windows to provide the optimum rooms for timetabling purposes.

      7.3 Ad-Hoc Bookings – will only be open following settlement of teaching and induction – in practice this is likely to be during or shortly after induction week

TIMETABLE PUBLICATION

The timetable will be published by Timetabling staff and will provide all staff and students with clear and accurate information suitable for their needs. The following principles will apply:

      8.1 Students will be able to view their own individual timetables via the online timetable.

      8.2 Students with disabilities will, where required, be provided with help to view their timetable by the Disability and Inclusion Service.

      8.3 Academic, administrative and management staff will be able to view their own and colleagues' individual timetables via the online timetable.

      8.4 Academic staff and students will only see validated teaching sessions in their personal timetables which will be drawn from the documented course requirements i.e the year planners

TIMESCALE FOR PUBLICATION OF THE TIMETABLE

Timetabling staff will publish the timetable to students no later than four weeks before the start of the course. In year or continued publication will be within the timescales set in the annual cycle for Timetabling. To meet this, Timetabling Teams & Academics will work together to ensure dates, components (see below) & milestones are met.

- Draft Timetables – Draft Timetabling will be engaged between Teams at least 8 weeks ahead of course start dates and Teams have at least a week to flag queries to Timetabling, once the draft is signed off

- Group Information – will be supplied to SI Teams by Timetabling at least 16 weeks ahead of course start dates. Details of Classing Guidelines can be found here (link)

- Forecast – it is the course or Campus Lead's responsibility to work with Timetabling and agree on a robust forecast for numbers. This will be driven by Sales Data and a standardised methodology. Timetabling Teams will use this to create group requests. This must be agreed at least 20 weeks ahead of course start date with Timetabling. Considerations for contingency groups will be taken into account too.

- Timetabling Teams develop course components based on Timetabling Year Planners – it is the Course Leader Responsibility to ensure Year Planners are up to date.

- Staff Availability should be kept up to date (including working & employment FTE) throughout the year and be ready for timetabling use at scheduling periods – this is a Campus Responsibility.

REPORTING

The Timetabling Database has a rich set of information that can be used to support stakeholders operationally, whilst assisting with planning. A set of business intelligence reports are available for Campus Teams. For any ad-hoc reporting, requests must be made via (Timetabling.Reporting@law.ac.uk). New reports or amendments to existing reports can be requested but will be assessed and a timescale for completion will be provided by the Reporting Officer.

COURSE DATA

As well as liaison with Campus & Course Colleagues, the Timetable is contingent on the clean supply of information coming from systems within the University. The following applies:
-

11.1   It is Business Systems responsibility provide course data to Timetabling no later than 20 weeks ahead of scheduling to meet timescales, and to make sure students are aligned against the right course level at the right time. Students are also required to be fully enrolled to view timetables.

11.2   IT Teams must also provide a timetabling database for the following year at the required and agreed window – typically this is the first week in April for the following Academic Year starting in September.

11.3   IT Teams provide the infrastructure for publication of timetables – this is to be in place and tested 12 weeks ahead of the induction period for the new academic year

11.4   The METLO Team is responsible for creating and maintaining the VLE, utilising Timetabling data as master data – the ELITE Team oversee the accuracy of this data and ensuring it is consistent

TIMETABLING METRICS / TRACKER

A tracker is provided by the Timetabling Team (using POWERBI) that will allow all interested parties to gauge progress of timetable construction and achieving targets. The principal target is that all courses should be published four weeks ahead of start. The Tracker process is in continual development and improvement cycle and updates will be communicated as it progresses.

ESCALATION

Appendix 1 outlines the Team Structure within Timetabling and the escalation process. The emphasis is on resolving issues at the most appropriate level. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback for improvement, but also for good work at (link). All feedback and recognition is treated seriously. Timetabling Teams keep an ongoing measure of Stakeholder Satisfaction via this route and regularly review this in October, March of each year.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

14.1 In line with the University's policy on equality and diversity, the University will make every effort to accommodate staff and students, with any specific requirements (e.g. disabilities, carer responsibilities, religious beliefs)

14.2 Staff or Students requiring special arrangements should make their needs known ahead of publication of the timetable to ensure any special arrangements can be accommodated therefore minimising post-publication changes to the timetable

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Space Planning & Estate Utilisation Manager	First Draft	20/03/19
V2.0	Space Planning & Estate Utilisation Manager	Second Draft	10/07/19
V2.1	Space Planning & Estate Utilisation Manager	Third Draft	26/07/19
V2.2	Space Planning & Estate Utilisation Manager	Final Version	19/09/19
V2.3	Timetabling Team (FS/PR/IGJ)	First Re-Draft	27/12/2023
V2.4	Submitted to Exec for consideration (Lesley Hill)	First Draft	11/03/2024
V2.5	Final Draft	Final Draft	23/04/2024
V2.6	Final	Final	02/05/2024

Appendices

1) Team Escalation Structure

The overall aim is for issues to be dealt with at the appropriate level and for relationships to be developed between the Camus Timetabling Team and Academic / University Stakeholders. For the vast majority of queries Timetabling Team Officers should be equipped to deal. However, we do recognise that, at times, escalation may need to occur.

Therefore all efforts should be made to resolve and deal wirh issues in this way. The below sets out the route of escalation.

- **Reporting issues** – Campus Timetabling inbox

- **Escalation point at Campus Level** – Deenwanth Kaur / Rani Choudary – Timetabling Operational Managers

- **Next line of support (Quality)** – Fabio Smith, Deputy Head of Timetabling or Ian Gould-Jones, Head of Timetabling

- **Strategic Support –** Paul Ritchie, Director of Timetabling & Space Management / Ian Gould-Jones, Head of Timetabling

- **Changes to Courses structures or Year Planners –** Karen Hanson, Head of Timetabling Planning / Eranga Wickramasekera

- Reporting queries – please contact Ian Gould-Jones or Sai-Roja Gunda

2) Key Dates

The University has a rolling calendar of courses. Planning milestones are worked backwards using start dates, however September is a significant event as part of the new academic year, when the majority of courses start and the timetabling year as a whole can be assessed.

2024 Dates – September / October Starts

Induction

30th April – 31st May Scheduling of Induction Activity

5th June – Publication to Academics for Induction (Draft Timetable for Induction)

Non Teaching Activity

1st to 30th April – Collation of Data Requirements for Non-Teaching Activities & Assessment for the forthcoming academic year

Academic Data and Timetabling Provision – Main Timetabling Year (September / October)

- Staff Availability & Skills Form Returned - 21st May
- Number / Forecasts Groups agreed with Campuses – 27th May
- Workshop Groups agreed with SI – 27th May
- Continued Students numbers agreed with SI – 27th May

Data Provision by IT for 2024/2025 (Sept / Oct) – 27th May

27th May – 19th July – Timetabling Team Produce Draft Timetables (shared with Academics)

19th July – 5th August – Academic Teams Review Draft

19th August (LPC / BPC) – commencing Publication of Courses

On a rolling course start basis :-

- Agree forecasts and numbers (20wks) before course starts – this is a joint commitment between Course Leads / Campuses and Timetablers
- Group Information passed to SI (14wks)
- Draft Timetables (8wks)
- Publish to Students (4wks) – at the least