

Timetable Policy and Procedures

Effective from 28 September 2015

Version Number: 2.0

Author: Timetabling and Examinations Manager

**Timetabling and Examinations
Student Administration**

Document Control Information

Status and reason for development

Approved version of Timetable Policy and Procedures V2.0.

Revision History

Date	Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised
June 2015	J Welsh	<i>General update and scope change</i>	V2.0	UMT: 15/06/2015
Nov 2009	xx	New policy introducing yearly timetables	V1.0	Exec: 20/09/2010

Policy Management and Responsibilities

Owner: This Policy is issued by the Timetable Strategy Group (TSG) chaired by the Registrar. The TSG has delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to Timetabling and Examinations Team in Student Administration.

Others with responsibilities (please specify): All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.

Assessment	<i>Cross relevant assessments</i>	<i>Cross if not applicable</i>
Equality Analysis	X	
Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information Governance	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consultation

Cross relevant consultations

Staff Trades Unions via HR

Students via USSU

Any relevant external bodies

(please specify)

Authorised by: University Management Team (UMT)
 Minor changes to the policy may be authorised by the Registrar on behalf of the University Management Team.

Date authorised: 15/06/2015

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Review due: 1 year by Autumn 2016.

Document location: University Policy & Procedure Pages
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance/policies-and-procedures>

Document dissemination and communications plan:

Presentations to Heads of School and Associate Heads Academic/Teaching; Briefing Pack for cascade

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Timetable Policy is to specify the rules and requirements for an effective and efficient timetabling service to the University. It will support the following outcomes:

- a. Contribution to the delivery of a high quality learning experience for students
- b. The efficient use of University resources, especially teaching space
- c. Commitment to minimum changes to the timetables, where change is strictly by exception and is approved according to clearly defined escalation routes depending on its size and impact
- d. Provision of accurate, timely timetabling data which, by mandate, is stored in one system, thus creating a 'single version of the truth'

2.0 Scope

2.1 What the policy covers

This document sets out the University's policy on:

- a. scheduling of all teaching activities on University programmes of study delivered at all of the institution's campuses
- b. booking of centrally-managed teaching rooms for non-teaching events including examinations and other assessments, open days and recruitment events, graduation ceremonies, academic event, conferences, festival and public lectures and enterprise and commercial events.

The policy, as it develops operationally, will be supplemented by further documentation and operating procedures which will provide detailed work instructions for all contributors to the academic timetabling process (See Appendix B).

2.2 To whom the policy applies

This Policy applies to all University students and staff. It provides rules for the Units that populate, access and use the timetabling system.

2.3 This Policy does not cover:

- University programmes of study delivered off-campus
- University programmes of study delivered as part of collaborative provision, where teaching activities are scheduled at partners' premises
- Induction timetables.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 Fundamental timetabling commitments

The University is committed to:

1. Publishing a programme level timetable each year at <https://tt.salford.ac.uk> no later than the last week of July. This will be the sole location for programme timetables.
2. The timely release of programme timetables to enable those students with caring and other responsibilities to plan accordingly. This commitment means the University will progressively bring forward release dates over the next 3 years.
3. Minimising post release changes which diminish the value of early timetable publication.
4. Making every effort to construct a timetable which meets the majority of students' needs by balancing unavoidable constraints which arise when constructing a workable timetable for all students. These constraints include those prescribed in programme and module specification, module feasibility, estates constraints and staff constraints.
5. Communicating approved changes to timetables (which will be reflected on the online timetable view) to students via University of Salford student email or programme Blackboard sites.
6. Communicating short notice changes to timetables (e.g. owing to staff sickness), where possible, to students via a text message sent from the relevant School office.
7. Constructing timetables which, where possible, take into account religious observance where there is a concentration of students with a particular religious belief which may affect student attendance at specific classes. However, Staff and Students requiring particular arrangements are required to notify their School office before the scheduling commences (see Appendix A).

3.2 Principles of Timetable Construction

- a. The Student Administration Timetabling and Examinations Team (TaE) owns the timetabling system and is responsible for the production of the annual academic timetable.
- b. Timetables are constructed according to the course requirements e.g. full-time, part-time or block release (including professional practice requirements).
- c. The University aims to construct a 'best-fit' timetable each year within programme, student, staff and estate constraints.
- d. The academic timetable is in accordance with the University's published semester dates (See Related Documentation) is and is based on:
 1. submission of accurate and timely data (see Appendix A: Annual Timetable Cycle and Event Request data).
 2. knowledge of students' module choices where possible (for continuing students).
 3. known core modules or predictions of module choices (for new students).
 4. programmes of study approved within the Academic Model i.e. have undergone programme approval.
- e. The academic timetable is constructed from scratch each year and neither time slots nor rooms for teaching activities are rolled forward from one year to the next.
- f. TaE will provide Guidance and training to all local Timetables Leads.
- g. TaE will only accept Timetable event requests if the following conditions are met:
 1. data submitted by academics to local Timetable Leads.
 2. local Timetable leads submit event requests to TaE in the permitted format which will be specified each year (see Related Documentation).
 3. Event requests are for programmes of study which have met annual programme specifications and approval deadlines (published annually). Proposed programmes of study which fall outside of the deadline and require the allocation of teaching space in the new academic year will be

considered by the Timetable Strategy Group (TSG) and can only be submitted by the Head of School (HoS). Preferred teaching space and time slots cannot be guaranteed and these programmes will not be given priority in the scheduling process.

3.3 Problem solving during timetable construction

- a. Wherever possible problems should be identified during the construction of the teaching timetable and resolved by negotiation between the affected Schools with the involvement of the Timetable Lead.
- b. Problems which cannot be resolved in this way should be referred, by the Director of Student Administration, to the appropriate Associate Dean Academic or to TSG.

3.4 Priority of timetabling

- a. Teaching activities take precedence over non-teaching activities, however exceptions may be made for business critical activities including (but not limited to) those listed below. Any such exceptions must be approved by TSG.
 - Examinations
 - Graduation ceremonies
 - Annual events which take precedence in specific weeks such as welcome, registration and induction
 - Open days
 - Conference, festival and public lecture events which benefit the student experience
 - Commercial conferences (by exception)
 - Major emergencies affecting the University
- b. Teaching will be scheduled in accordance with operational requirements and the priorities as listed below in order. It is expected that these priorities will not change during the academic year. All Exceptions will be submitted to TSG for impact assessment and approval.
 - cohort size
 - size of resource requested
 - type of resource e.g. MCUK or in specialist spaces
 - programme requirements
 - generally, in the following level order: Level 4 and 6, 5 on undergraduate programmes, with separate consideration by programme complexity and volume of taught sessions for postgraduate teaching
 - large lectures will be locked in place and tutorials/seminars/workshops will be fitted around these events subject to staff availability
 - Two hour academic events will be scheduled from 9am and on the odd hours thereafter
 - Events with long durations e.g. three hours will normally be roomed before those with shorter durations

3.5 Teaching times

- a. Teaching events will be scheduled within core teaching hours when both Staff and Students are expected to be available. Core teaching hours are: Monday – Friday 09.00-18.00hrs, with the exception of Wednesdays where core teaching hours run from 09.00-13.00 hours. This is to allow for sports, volunteering and participatory activities for students on undergraduate programmes. (some exceptions may apply – subject to approval by the Students Union and / or TSG).
- b. When timetable event requests are submitted for a full semester run (e.g. weeks 1-12) it is expected that teaching takes place in each of these weeks. It is not permitted to shorten the teaching run

without approval. Instances will be by exception and must be notified to the relevant Timetable Lead, approved by the HoS and submitted to TaE.

- c. The scheduling of reading weeks is strictly by exception and must be notified to the relevant Timetable Lead, approved by the HoS and submitted to TaE. A reading week is: an optional structure implemented by academic teams solely on the basis that it provides necessary opportunity for the students to focus on significant and specific learning tasks/projects additional 'value added' opportunities; a designated week confirmed and finalised at Directorate level or equivalent as part of the annual timetabling process; a week in which a normal academic timetable does not run. In keeping with the necessary reasons behind the tool of reading weeks, should a reading week be implemented, an explicit purpose should be stated along with an alternative timetable of events and sessions to address this purpose; a week in which the alternative timetable of events and sessions will be published to students in advance.
- d. Where required as part of programme delivery, teaching may be scheduled outside of core hours (e.g. early starts, evening teaching). Requirements for such exceptions must be submitted by the local Timetable Leads in line with timetable construction principles. These will be arranged and agreed by Timetable Leads; students will be consulted and the timetable will be communicated in advance
- e. Where required, in exceptional circumstances, for operational reasons, teaching may be scheduled outside of core hours. Local Timetable Leads will be sent a proposal by TaE and students will be consulted. The timetable will be communicated in advance
- f. Local Timetable Leads must inform TaE when scheduled teaching is due to take place off-site (e.g. fieldtrips), in order to free up teaching space and ensure the timetabling system is up to date.
- g. **Lunch breaks, timing of sessions and study time**
 1. Timetables are constructed with the intention of allowing staff and students at least one hour free of teaching activities for lunch, wherever possible, between 12.00 and 14.00hrs.
 2. Where teaching activities are scheduled to run for two hours or more, including across lunchtime, staff and students must agree an appropriate opportunity for a break.
 3. Staff and students will not normally be scheduled for more than three hours consecutively for lecture and seminar activities.
 4. Timetable construction will consider travel between buildings and campuses and attempt to minimise the distance travelled between consecutively scheduled events. Teaching sessions finish at 10 minutes to the hour to allow for efficient changeover and travel between buildings. Wherever possible, timetables will be constructed in such a way as to avoid large gaps between teaching sessions on any one day.
 5. Special consideration will be given to programmes taught in part at MCKU. Wherever possible, students and staff will have a one hour gap in timetables to allow for travel back to main campus. Travel time should not normally be included as part of a lunch break.
 6. Wherever possible, full-time students will have one clear day free for individual study.
 7. During core hours, teaching start times are on the hour from 09.00 to 17.00. It is recognised that some areas of the University operate practical sessions on the half-hour. These will be explained and communicated to students locally by the programme leader or teaching staff.

3.6 Categories and management of Teaching and Specialist space

- a. All space, irrespective of its nature or management is recorded on CMIS. All teaching events associated with any programme of study is recorded on CMIS – this is mandatory in order to achieve 'one version of the truth'.
- b. Teaching space is divided into 3 categories:
 1. General teaching space – including lecture theatres and classrooms
 2. School managed teaching space

3. Specialist space – including computer rooms, laboratories, workshops and performance space
- c. General teaching space (managed and maintained by Estates, Property & IT Services) is allocated by the scheduling principles outlined above and is controlled by TaE.
- d. Some teaching space (classrooms) is managed by a particular School. The list of these spaces is reviewed and agreed annually by TSG in consultation with the relevant stakeholders (see Section 5.0). The managing School has a priority call on this space during timetable scheduling. TaE then manage and allocate any unused slots in these teaching spaces, to any requester.
- e. Specialist space is managed by the relevant School. Scheduling to specialist space is done in collaboration with TaE and the relevant School. Approved exceptions may apply where local building policies are in operation (e.g. at MCKU or in performance or space suitable for external events).

3.7 Checking of Draft Timetable

- a. Draft timetables are distributed to academic / teaching staff for checking in accordance with the annual timetable cycle (see Appendix A). The local Timetable Lead (in conjunction with teaching staff) is responsible for ensuring draft timetables match the requested requirements particularly with regard to:
 1. inclusion of all academic events they expected to teach
 2. delivery arrangements
 3. correct type, size and layout of room.
- b. For the avoidance of doubt, checking of the draft timetable is not intended to produce requests for changes to dates and times.
- c. All draft timetables should be checked and returned to TaE by the published deadline in accordance with the annual timetable cycle (see Appendix A), including timetables where no errors and omissions have been identified in which case the returned document should confirm this position.
- d. Thereafter, changes will be discouraged and will only be accepted by TaE if they arise from one of the below criteria. Change requests will only be accepted on the permitted Change Control form and will require local Timetable Lead sign-off. Depending on the scale of the impact, change requests may be referred to the HoS or TSG for approval.
 1. Staff clash
 2. New staff appointments, transfers or periods of notice
 3. Student clash
 4. Insufficient room capacity or facilities to enable effective teaching
 5. Event requested is now redundant (with approval) (e.g. insufficient numbers)
 6. Extra groups required due to student numbers
 7. Unexpected absence or illness affecting teaching staff availability
 8. Health and Safety reasons affecting the safety of both teaching staff and students

3.8 Timetable Publication

- a. **Programme Level timetables** are viewed online using the University's online timetable view at <https://tt.salford.ac.uk>. Programme level timetables:
 - Are published by TaE, in accordance with the annual timetable cycle (see Appendix A) and not later than the last week in July
 - Are designed to provide an initial view of all possible times when a student will be required to attend teaching
 - Contain all teaching events relevant to the entire programme of study – they may therefore contain multiple instances of modules and students will not be required to attend all of the events displayed.

Information on groups and exactly which modules students are expected to attend will be released in one of two ways:

1. Via an online Personal Timetable available online using the University's online timetable view at <https://tt.salford.ac.uk>. (see (b) below).
 2. Via the School Office and /or module and programme leaders or relevant teaching staff
- Can be accessed by anyone at the university and do not require students or staff to enter a username and password
- b. **Personal Timetables** are viewed online using the University's online timetable view at <https://tt.salford.ac.uk>. Personal level timetables:
- Are published by TaE, in accordance with student group information supplied by the School. They are available in September, usually at the beginning of the first week of teaching
 - Are 'fitted' and therefore display only those teaching events to which a student has been assigned
 - Students are therefore required to attend all of the events displayed.
 - Are accessed via the University's online timetable view and require students to enter their network ID (abc123) and password.
 - Are not available for every subject area – most students will use a Programme Level timetable with information from their School about which group sessions they should attend (as described above at 3.8a 2.)
- c. The University's online timetable view can be viewed on or off site (where compatible browsers are used)
- d. The University's online timetable view is optimised for viewing on desktop devices. The full range of timetable event information may not render completely on mobile devices
- e. Academic staff will be able to view their own individual timetable using the online timetable view; module view is limited to the draft timetable checking phase of timetable construction which requires access to e-Portal (see Section 5.0)
- f. TaE staff, academic/teaching staff and staff in School offices (i.e. frontline support roles) will be able to view individual student and staff timetables in order to assist with student and staff queries

3.9 Students are expected to:

- a. Be available for teaching in accordance with their course requirements: those studying full time undergraduate programmes will be available during core teaching hours (specified above at 3.5a) across the week (and for teaching sessions outside of core hours where specified); those studying part time undergraduate programmes will be available for teaching sessions as specified (which may include evenings); similarly, those on postgraduate programmes will be available at times as specified
- b. Make optional module choices in accordance with their course requirements and in line with the annual Online Module Enrolment (OME) deadlines and procedure
- c. Make optional module choices known to their School via the locally advertised procedure for all modules not included in OME
- d. Submit module choice change requests, by exception, during the second teaching week of the module. In particular:
 1. Module change requests should be directed to the relevant School Office and must be made by 4pm on the final Friday of the second teaching week of the module.
 2. Module change requests are entirely at the discretion of the School. Every effort will be made by the School to accommodate the change, however changes which adversely impact the

timetable (e.g. result in student or staff clashes, room capacity issue, or render the module unviable) will not be considered

- e. Accept and attend the relevant module group sessions to which they have been 'fitted'. Students will not be allowed 'self-fit' in order to maintain module viability, the student experience of fellow students and in compliance with health and safety regulations. Failure to do so will see the start of a process which could result in disciplinary action.

3.10 Expectations of Academic Staff

- a. The University recognises that staff undertake duties apart from teaching. Time is made available for these activities (see Restrictions and Constraints below).
- b. Staff need to have access to their timetables at the earliest opportunity to be able to plan all their activities effectively.
- c. The principles governing teaching activities are as follows:
 1. Full-time staff will normally be expected to be available to deliver day-time classes within core hours as defined in above (with the exception of block delivery and other course specific requirements).
 2. Given the professional nature of the academic contract and the need to have evening classes, staff may also be timetabled for some evening work as determined by the academic lead or Head of School. A reasonable teaching load will be created which will not make unreasonable demands on staff or cause hours to be unsocial or excessive within the meaning and terms of the staff teaching contracts.
 3. Staff will not be expected to deliver classes for more than six consecutive hours in line with the European Working Time Directive and, under normal circumstances will be much less than this in order that quality of delivery will not be adversely affected; if a member of staff is teaching in the evening then, where possible, they will not be required to teach early sessions during the following morning.
 4. For staff with specific and funded research or knowledge transfer contract commitments (e.g contractual obligations to a research council), timetables will be constructed to ensure that these commitments can be met.
 5. For staff on fractional posts or paid by the hour, timetables will be constructed in such a way as to ensure that their time at the University is effectively optimised.
 6. Timetables will be constructed wherever possible to reduce staff travel between buildings to a minimum and particularly so for those with mobility issues.
 7. Staff will be expected to report immediately to TaE when rooms booked are no longer required.

3.10.1 Restrictions and Constraints (Staff)

- a. Timetable construction allows the recording of restrictions to availability of resources and staff. The process is administered by TaE in accordance with the annual timetable cycle (see Appendix A).
- b. Staff constraints will be summarised and reported to the University's senior management team after submission and a nominee of the VC will have authority to reject them if the timetable is overly constrained.
- c. Staff constraints may arise from:
 1. Approved research commitments
 2. Membership of University committees
 3. Membership of approved University working groups
 4. Approved constraints arising from the member of staff's:
 - Health/ disability considerations
 - Trade union representative duties

- d. Flexible working arrangements will not be recognised as approved staff constraints unless they have been approved by the relevant HoS in accordance with HR policy and submitted to TaE.
- e. Staff constraints must be reviewed and approved annually on the authority of the HoS using the permitted documentation which will be specified each year (see Related Documentation). If this process is not followed, they will not be accepted or recognised by TaE.
- f. Departments should, wherever possible, adopt the practice of holding staff meetings on a Wednesday afternoon.
- g. Timetables will not be altered to suit the availability of part-time staff or new full-time staff **after** the draft timetables have been signed-off in accordance with the annual timetable cycle (see Appendix A)
- h. It is expected that staff constraints will not change during the academic year. Exceptions will be requested by the HoS for TSG approval.

4.0 Policy implementation and monitoring

- a. TaE is responsible for monitoring adherence to this policy and is required to refer all instances of practice which is contrary to the purpose and spirit of the policy to TSG. TSG is responsible for reviewing whether the timetables meet the set of expectations they have established and agreed.
- b. TSG will receive monthly reports on room utilisation (from regular room use audits coordinated by TaE against CMIS data) and changes to timetables, in particular.
- c. TSG will raise issues with the relevant Head of School or Director of professional service who will address non-adherence through focused attention to issues via management processes and potentially, the University's performance management policies.
- d. Timetabling policy and procedures at the University are informed by external benchmarking and through involvement in national forums such as the Academic Registrars Council (ARC) Timetabling Practitioner Group, the Association of University Administrators (AUA), the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE), or through projects run by HEFCE, JISC or other agencies.
- e. An annual review of teaching and specialist space and its management will be conducted by TSG in consultation with Estates in order to make the parameters for space allocation clearly defined and agreed.

4.1 Timetabling Metrics

- a. In order to monitor the effectiveness of Timetable Policy and Procedures, TSG will select and monitor an annual set of timetabling metrics. These will be set with guidance from the university's Planning team and contribute to university objectives and strategic goals.
- b. They will be focused on the need to improve timetabling performance in the following areas:
 1. Student experience
 2. Estate utilisation

5.0 Related Documentation

Related policies are located on the University Policies pages <http://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance/policies-and-procedures>

- Ad hoc room booking procedure
- Teaching room bookings for non-academic events
- Contact info for TaE e.g. Mon-Fri x office hours, tel number, functional email, website URL

University semester dates: <http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/almanac>

5.1 Training & Support

TaE training and support for use of the Timetabling system by contacting Timetabling and Examinations at sa-timetabling@salford.ac.uk or by telephoning x56948.

Appendices

Appendix A: Annual Timetable Cycle (including Timetabling Roles and Responsibilities)

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Appendix A: Annual Timetable Cycle (including Timetabling Roles and Responsibilities)

Date	Action/Activity	Responsibilities
2016/17 teaching timetable milestones will be presented to Timetable Strategy Group in December 15 and will be published in January 16	Timetable Roll- Forward: Data clean-up and creation of new database.	Carried out by Timetabling and Examinations
	Request for Timetabling Data: Collection of all timetabling information for 2015/16, to include all teaching activities and staff constraints.	Collated by Timetabling and Examinations Monitored by Timetable Leads Supplied by Academic Staff
	Timetabling Data Collection Deadline: Deadline for receipt of information about staff constraints and teaching activities.	Collated by Timetabling and Examinations Monitored by Timetable Leads Supplied by Academic Staff
	Draft Teaching Timetable Released: Draft Timetables released to Academic staff for evaluation and subsequent change request.	Distributed and monitored by Timetabling and Examinations Reviewed by Timetable Leads & Academic Staff
	Change Request Deadline: Final date for requests for changes to the draft timetables.	Collated by Timetabling and Examinations Supplied by Timetable Leads & Academic Staff
	Provisional Timetable Released to Academic Staff: Provisional Timetables released to Academic staff for final checks.	Distributed and monitored by Timetabling and Examinations Reviewed by Timetable Leads & Academic Staff
	Final Timetable Amendment Deadline: Deadline for requests for amendments to Provisional Timetables from Academic staff.	Collated by Timetabling and Examinations Supplied by Timetable Leads & Academic Staff
	Public Release of Teaching Timetables	Live Support provided by Timetabling and Examinations
Release of Student Personalised Timetables	Live Support provided by Timetabling and Examinations	