UNIVERSITY TIMETABLING POLICY

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1.0	Guidance for staff on the University's teaching timetable, the provision of facilities to support teaching and the booking of central pool teaching space for non-teaching activities.	Timetabling Team	N/A	Guidance as at May 2012.
1.1	Updated guidance for staff on the University's teaching timetable, the provision of facilities to support teaching and the booking of central pool teaching space for non-teaching activities.	Timetabling Team and Education Enhancement	Senate	7th February 2024
1.2	Updated guidance for staff on the University's teaching timetable, the provision of facilities to support teaching and the booking of central pool teaching space for non-teaching activities.	Timetabling Team and Education Enhancement	Senate	28th May 2025

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CONTENTS

Glossary of Terms

1. This glossary sets out key terms used in this policy together with their associated definitions. Key terms are highlighted in *italics* throughout this policy.

Term	Definition
Central Pool Teaching	Central Pool Teaching and learning space which is centrally managed and timetabled and used for *teaching activities* and non-teaching events
Compulsory Module	A *Module* which *must* be taken as part of the *programme* curriculum
Departmental Timetabling Coordinator	A nominated staff member within each academic department responsible for the management of the timetabling process at departmental level
Elective Module	A *Module*, offered by the University, which can be *freely chosen* by a student **or** a *Module* available where students have to choose from a specific list of *modules*
Faculty Timetabling Coordinator	A nominated staff member within each Faculty responsible for management of the timetable at Faculty level
Institutional Timetabling System	The name used for the timetabling software (Syllabus Plus/S+/Enterprise)
Module	The individual components of a *programme*, normally worth 20 or 10 credits
Optional Module	A *Module* chosen by a student from a list *defined* in a *programme* curriculum, for example, specialisms within a *programme*
Personalised Student Timetable	A student's individual timetable which shows all of the teaching activities they have been allocated to
Programme	The full degree *programme* leading to an award
Resource Booker	The name of the software used to book resources (e.g. rooms, desks, equipment) for non-teaching activities on an ad-hoc basis
Specialist Teaching Structure	The study pattern for *programmes* of study which operate an alternative teaching calendar to align with sector requirements, for example teaching, social work, January start postgraduate taught *programmes*; or to meet partner requirements, for example apprenticeship degrees
Standard Teaching Structure	This defines the pattern for teaching across 2 semesters, incorporating Welcome/Consolidation and Development weeks,

	the formal assessment periods and vacation time.
Standard Teaching Week	The *Standard Teaching Week* is Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00 pm with the exception of Wednesday 1.00pm-5.00pm (for undergraduate students).
Teaching Activity	A *teaching activity*, delivered at specific times and locations, including online, involving a member of staff
Teaching Year	52-weeks, numbered consecutively from week 1 to week 52. These week numbers inform timetable scheduling within the University's operational timetabling system. The *Teaching Year* commences the Monday which lies on or between 30th July and 5 August each year
Timetabling Team (TT)	Timetabling Team (TT) within Estates Services
University Academic Week Calendar	A calendar updated annually by the *Timetabling Team*, which maps calendar dates week by week to key dates in the academic year and the *Standard Teaching Structure*

Purpose and Scope

2. This policy sets out the University's approach to the preparation, production and publication of the University's teaching timetable, the provision of facilities to support teaching and the booking of *central pool teaching* space for non-teaching events.

3. This policy applies to the timetabling of John Anderson campus-based undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision (including co-taught undergraduate masters and postgraduate taught *modules*) scheduled in accordance with the framework set out within the Academic Year and Teaching Calendar Policy.

4. Where possible, online, work-based learning and distance learning *programmes* will be delivered within the broad parameters of the *Standard Teaching Structure*, however *programmes* may be aligned to specialist requirements and/or external University partners' requirements through a *Specialist Teaching Structure*. Where this is the case, full information on the *Specialist Teaching Structure* will be provided to all students enrolled on the *programme*, highlighting key areas of divergence with the *Standard Teaching Structure*.

5. The terms of this Timetabling Policy will be applied fully, consistently and fairly across the University.

6. This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Year and Teaching Calendar Policy, Wednesday Afternoon Policy (incorporated as Annex A within the Academic Year and Teaching Calendar Policy), the Guidance and Support for Students on Matters of Religion and Belief, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and related Appendices, and the Policy and Procedure on *Programme* and Module Approval.

Guiding Principles

7. The timetable will be designed based on:
   - The primacy of the student learning experience
   - The pedagogic imperatives as identified by the teaching staff
   - The need to achieve and promote equality of opportunity, including equality of access to teaching facilities and fair allocation
   - The need to provide timely and accurate timetabling and room booking information to students and staff
   - The need to make efficient use of space, resources and the teaching estate

8. The timetable will be 'demand-led', constructed on the basis of accurate and up-to-date data, in the knowledge of students' *module* choices where possible (for continuing students) and based on predictions of *module* choices (for new students).

9. Each year the timetable (including room allocations) will be rolled forward to provide a starting point for the timetabling process. The timetable will then be reviewed and updated accordingly thereafter. Please note: room allocations are subject to change following review of data by the Timetabling Team.

10. A range of factors will be taken into account when developing the timetable:

   - Accurate data on all teaching activities
   - Accurate data on all teaching rooms
   - Accurate data on all teaching facilities
   - Central pool (CP) and departmental teaching facilities
   - Student choice – pathways
   - Student availability
   - Staff availability
   - Clustering / distribution of activities
   - Prioritisation of teaching and other 'bookable' activities.

Timetabling Team Responsibilities

11. The *Timetabling Team* (hereafter referred to as "*TT*") has lead responsibility for the production of the annual teaching timetable. In producing the teaching timetable, the *TT* undertakes to recognise and act on the needs and requirements of a range of stakeholders, principally students but also teaching staff and departments. The *TT* aims to produce an equitable and workable institutional timetable that is designed to meet defined qualities, including optional pathways within *programmes*, staff and student availability and the availability of suitably equipped teaching rooms and facilities.

The Teaching Year

12. In accordance with the 52-week academic *Teaching Year*, the *Standard Teaching Structure* is set out below:

Standard Teaching Structure	Duration	TY Week Number[1]
Welcome and Development Week	1 week	Week 7
S1 Teaching Block 1	11 weeks	Weeks 8 – 18

Formal Assessment Period	2 weeks	Weeks 19 – 20

Winter vacation	3 weeks	Weeks 21 – 23
Consolidation and Development	1 week	Week 24
S2 Teaching Block 2	11 weeks	Weeks 25 – 35
Spring vacation	2 weeks	Weeks 36 – 37
Formal Assessment Period	5 weeks	Weeks 38 – 42
Summer vacation	16 or 17 weeks	Weeks 43 – Week 6
Formal Assessment Period	2 weeks (Wednesday - Tuesday)	Weeks 52/53 – Week 2

13. For *programmes* following the *Standard Teaching Structure*, teaching will be scheduled during S1 Teaching Block 1 (Weeks 8-18 inclusive) and S2 Teaching Block 2 (Weeks 25-35 inclusive). For *programmes* following a *Specialist Teaching Structure*, teaching may be scheduled in accordance with an alternative teaching structure.

14. For clarity, and lack of confusion, all published timetables and all timetable communications will use the week numbering as defined above.

15. Further information on the structure of the academic year, the teaching calendar and the relationship with operational timetabling procedures can be found in the University's Academic Year and Teaching Calendar Policy.

The Teaching Week

16. The *Standard Teaching Week* extends from Monday to Friday. Standard teaching hours for students following the Standard Teaching Week are from 9:00am to 5:00pm except for Wednesday (9.00am to 1.00pm for undergraduate students) and students are expected to attend scheduled activities within this period[2].

17. *Teaching activity* outside the standard hours is permitted, provided this delivery was made clear during the *programme* design and approval process (administered via the Course and Class Approval System (C-CAP)), or at least two of the following are required: -
   - In response to student needs or requests
   - Head of Department has approved
   - *Faculty Timetabling Coordinator*, or a nominated person, has been made aware.

18. For *programmes* following a *Specialist Teaching Structure;* in accordance with approved *programme* design, teaching may be delivered at times outwith the *Standard Teaching Week*.

19. Teaching starts at 5 minutes past the hour and ends at 5 minutes to the hour, to allow students and staff sufficient time between *teaching activities*.

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[2] The University recognises that Student Carers may be required off-campus at irregular times in order to carry out their caring responsibilities. Student Carers are invited to meet with their Adviser of Studies at the earliest opportunity to discuss their needs. Further information on support provision can be found in the University's Student Carers Policy.

Teaching Activities

1. *Teaching activities* are associated with an approved *module* and have a time and location, including online, which will be represented in the timetable. The process for setting up and approving new *modules* and amending existing *modules* is defined in the University's [Policy and Procedure on Programme and Module Approval](#).

2. *Modules* are designed and delivered by departments. Each department will determine the format of the *module* it delivers, including: -

   - The start date of the *module*
   - The number of weeks for which it will run
   - The number of teaching activities per week
   - The format and duration of each *teaching activity*
   - The teaching staff who will deliver the event.
   - The suggested day and suggested time of the event
   - The modality of the event (e.g. on campus/online)

3. Each Department is responsible for advising the TT team of any particular teaching resources they require to deliver teaching.

4. Each Department must endeavour to accurately forecast an appropriate cohort size based on previous module cohort size. Where a Department's forecast is higher than the historical pattern, an explanation for the predicted numbers must be provided to the *TT team* together with associated evidence, to support further space planning.

5. The Student Records System holds the definitive record of *modules* that are being delivered during a particular *teaching year*, in accordance with the [Policy and Procedure on Programme and Module Approval](#).

6. The *Institutional Timetabling System* shall hold the definitive record for the purpose of timetabling of the number and format of teaching activities associated with a *module*, the weeks during which the teaching activities will occur, and the teaching staff who will deliver activities. *Departmental Timetabling Coordinators* shall provide the TT with the necessary information via the defined institutional process.

7. The *Institutional Timetabling System* will also hold the record of ad hoc/non-teaching activities, booked via *Resource Booker*, for the current academic year only.

Teaching Space

8. All bookings in teaching space, regardless of whether they are in centrally-managed or departmentally-managed rooms, must be reflected in the *Institutional Timetabling System* in order to provide comprehensive information about space utilisation and to support the publication of full and accurate timetabling information to staff and students.

9. Where 'ownership' of the space is retained by departments, departments will be able to utilise those rooms as required for teaching activities.

10. Any additional teaching activities required for *programme* delivery must be made through the *Institutional Timetabling System* and not *Resource Booker*.

11. All ad-hoc use of any teaching space should be booked via *Resource Booker*.

12. The number of participants in any teaching activity must not exceed the capacity of the room allocated, unless a mechanism to manage attendance is in place and is equitable to all students. Under no circumstances should the number of participants in a teaching room exceed the capacity of the room allocated (see paragraph 50).

Teaching Staff

13. The Head of Department, or nominee, shall determine the allocation of teaching staff to teaching activities.

14. In accordance with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and related Appendices, the University will make every effort to support staff with a disability or health condition. Staff requiring reasonable adjustments must inform their line manager, Head of Department and/or the University's Occupational Health Service as soon as possible in order that these can be considered when scheduling teaching.

15. Departments must strive to provide information on the allocation of teaching staff to teaching activities within the University Timetabling Timeline. Doing so will minimise the impact that any potential staffing clashes will have on changes to the published timetable. Where Departments do not or cannot provide staff names within the teaching data review timelines, the Head of Department or nominee will be responsible for allocating the teaching staff to the scheduled *teaching activity* and for communicating this information to students. Amendments to the final timetables to accommodate problems arising from the non-allocation of staff can only be made in exceptional circumstances.

16. In relation to staffing constraints, staff on academic contracts (including external staff) can be scheduled to teach at any time during the *standard teaching week*, as specified by the Department. This is subject to their contractual arrangements and any agreed agile and flexible working arrangements. Constraints on staff availability for teaching are authorised by the Head of Department. The Head of Department is required to consider the potential impact of these constraints on the viability of the teaching timetable.

17. When scheduling compulsory modules within a programme, teaching staff must strive to ensure any clashes for modules (including those delivered across faculties) are avoided. When developing a new module, making changes to an existing module, or introducing an existing module to a programme, teaching staff should consult with the Course and Class Approval System (C-CAP) (as appropriate), relevant stakeholders (including the current module leads for any existing modules and other programme teams and faculties), general regulations and relevant Faculty operating procedures prior to the approval of a module's inclusion in a programme to ensure that timetabling constraints are considered in advance.

Students

18. Full-time students are expected to be available at any time during the *Standard Teaching Week*. Teaching for students studying part-time in modular mode, e.g. on a 'day-release' basis, will be scheduled in accordance with constraints specified by the relevant department.

19. The TT undertakes to schedule combinations of *compulsory modules* on *programmes* so that they do not clash. The timetabling of optional combinations of *modules* is informed by the selections students have made via the *module* selection process and is expected to be scheduled

by the departments to accommodate the options available within the *programme* regulations. However, the TT undertakes to minimise the clashing of *elective modules* wherever possible, but cannot guarantee to do so (see point 47). Where a student enrols for two *modules* with a timetable clash between lectures, they are advised to seek academic advice, from their Department/Adviser of Studies.

20. In accordance with the University's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and [related Appendices](#), the University will make every effort to support students with a temporary or permanent disability or health condition and during pregnancy or maternity related conditions. Students requiring reasonable adjustments must inform their department or the University's Disability and Wellbeing Service as soon as possible in order that these can be considered within the scheduling of teaching.

21. The University's Disability and Wellbeing Service offer a broad range of support to students with any disability, mental health and wellbeing related needs, including 1-1 disability needs assessments and mental health assessments, general health support, 1-1 counselling and assistance with adjustments for learning, teaching and assessment, and the development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs).

22. The Disability and Wellbeing Service will liaise with the TT regarding reasonable adjustments and will advise students on alternative arrangements where adjustments could not be considered reasonable.

Prioritisation of Teaching Activities

23. The following are guidelines for the allocation of activities in teaching spaces:

- Precedence will be given to teaching activities associated with *modules* which are offered to students across multiple *programmes*, departments or Faculties. (These activities may also be scheduled earlier in the process, because of the greater number of student availability constraints).
- Teaching activities for *modules* with a student or staff member requiring reasonable adjustments relating to disability or health conditions will be given precedence.
- *Modules* with a high number of planned students will have precedence over smaller *modules* with lower planned number of students.
- Teaching activities which are regular will have precedence over sporadic or single-week activities.
- In the case of specialist resources, precedence will be given to learning activities which explicitly require access to the specialist equipment and/or accommodation.
- Learning activities, including module tests and student placements, timetabled during the annual timetabling process will take precedence over all other activities.
- In person assessments, such as exams, exam boards and graduations will be scheduled after teaching activities, but within the same delivery window as the teaching timetable. Bookings for Departmental Open Days and UCAS events may be requested as part of the timetable construction process, however, due to the demand on teaching space there is no guarantee that the rooms required will be available.
- Events such as departmental receptions, internal conferences and symposia and research seminars will be scheduled after the scheduling of teaching activities, examinations, exam boards and graduations.
- The impact of the request for late changes to the timetable will predominantly be borne by the Faculty making the late change request.

Prioritisation and Notification of Quality Indicators

24. The timetabling process 1111recognises two quality indicators; 'essential' quality indicators, and 'desirable' quality indicators. These indicators must be notified to the *TT* by *Departmental Timetabling Coordinators*. Essential quality indicators are inflexible restrictions, while desirable quality indicators express preference and can be applied flexibly.

25. Essential quality indicators will include the following:

    1. Suitabilities (Equipment or facility attached to location) – Where teaching activities have set equipment requirements.
    2. Sequencing – When tutorials must always follow lectures for *modules* taught on a *Programme*. The expectation is that Departments will consider this when planning their timetables.

26. Desirable quality indicators will include the following:

    1. Avoiding large unscheduled gaps for students between teaching activities on the same day, e.g. a teaching event on a Monday 9.00am to 10.00am with no further event scheduled until Monday 4.00pm to 5.00pm.
    2. Avoiding an undesirable distribution of lectures for students and staff e.g. all teaching on the same two days or conversely spread sparsely across all five days.
    3. Locations – where a *central pool teaching* room in a building or zone is requested.
    4. Where possible, consecutive teaching for students should not exceed four hours

27. Quality indicators will be set at institutional level and will be applied based on the Guiding Principles (point 7) set out within this policy.

Non-teaching Events

28. Centrally-managed teaching space may be used for a wide range of internal non-teaching events. With the exception of centrally-managed examinations and graduation ceremonies, teaching activities (see section *Teaching activities, points 20-26)* will take precedence over bookings for non-teaching events.

29. Conflicts of interest may arise where centrally-managed rooms are required simultaneously for internal bookings and commercial bookings. Such conflicts will be referred to the Vice Principal for their resolution. The Vice-Principal may delegate their authority in this respect.

Student Elective Modules

30. Where degree *programmes* incorporate provision for student choice of *optional* or *elective modules*, giving rise to multiple pathways, the timetable will provide for a reasonable amount of choice for the most popular pathways, but it must be recognised that the larger the number of pathways included the more difficult it is to achieve a clash- free timetable. All departments must therefore identify and prioritise the reasonable feasible pathways within their degree *programmes*. Departments should, when developing and reviewing academic pathways, give full consideration to the timetabling issues and should seek to minimise complexity wherever possible.

31. Uncertainty in student numbers for any *teaching activity* is a major challenge of timetabling. Where students are continuing (either for a new session or for Semester 2 (S2)) the deadlines for student choice should be robustly enforced by departments.

Timetable Publication

32. Provisional *Programme* and *Module* Timetables (reflecting the broad shape of the teaching timetable) are available to view on the web from the Timetables webpage prior to publication of the timetable, from April to August. These remain subject to substantive change.

33. The teaching timetable (including teaching room allocation) is published (released) by the TT in the first week of August. Only minor or essential changes, e.g. those arising from a late change to student numbers, are expected to be made after its publication.

34. *Personalised Student Timetables* are available on the mobile app and/or Myplace only when students have completed registration, confirmed their curriculum choices and been allocated to groups. Further information is available on the Timetables webpage.

35. Following publication, *Departmental Timetabling Coordinators* are responsible for ensuring that the timetable is appropriately reviewed and checked to ensure that all teaching activities have been entered correctly and to check resourcing has been appropriately reflected in the TT system. This includes ensuring that staff and locations are assigned to teaching activities.

36. Changes to the teaching timetable after publication should be kept to a minimum.

37. Changes requested to *TT* by departments will only be made at the request of the *Departmental Timetabling Coordinator*.

    Valid reasons for changes include:

    - unexpected staff changes;
    - a location that is/becomes a health or safety hazard;
    - a *module* is no longer deemed viable to run;
    - reasonable adjustments to accommodate students/staff with individual needs;
    - actual *module* size exceeds the capacity of the room allocated;
    - actual *module* size is considerably lower than the capacity of the room allocated
    - additional occurrences have to be scheduled to take account of a growth in student enrolments on the *module*.

    Reasons for changes that are not valid include:

    - room preference
    - time preference
    - historical allocation of particular location

38. *Departmental Timetabling Coordinators* are responsible for notifying all those staff and/or students affected by a change they have made to the published timetable after the start of teaching. Changes instigated by the *TT* will be notified directly to the DTCs for onward communication to those impacted by the change.

Room Bookings

39. The use of rooms for teaching activities takes precedence over use for non-teaching events. However, there are non-teaching events which are essential to the management and operation of the University. Therefore, specific non-teaching events will be accommodated as follows:

- rolled forward University Calendar of Dates activities for the academic year will be accommodated within the timetabling process;

- institutional quality assurance and enhancement activities. The *TT* will act on advice from the relevant stakeholder offices within the University;

- essential centrally-managed University events and functions, including examinations, graduation, student recruitment events and core Freshers' events will be allocated appropriate space prior to the scheduling of the timetable. The *TT* will act on advice from the relevant stakeholder offices within the University;

- departmental-level activities and *programmes* in Freshers' week will be allocated appropriate space at the same time as the scheduling of the timetable and after the core activities have been included;

40. Upon final publication of the teaching timetable, departments, and professional services may make room booking requests for any available centrally-managed space. The process for making a room booking is outlined on the University Room Booking webpage. Additionally, any available Departmental space can also be booked via *Resource Booker*.

41. Room booking requests for conferences or any event which involves external parties or the charging of any fee must be made via Conferencing and Events.

42. The *TT* will not accept bookings directly from individual students (other than Postgraduate research students). Student Clubs and Societies which are recognised by Strath Union may use the room bookings service provided by *TT* in accordance with published policy and procedures.

43. In the event that a room booking is no longer required, the person who has booked the room must cancel the booking themselves prior to the event using *Resource Booker* or inform *TT* by e-mail as soon as is practicable. The *TT* will confirm the cancellation and release the space back into the available room pool.