



TIMETABLING AND ROOM BOOKING POLICY

Section	Campus Facilities
Contact	National Timetable Office
Last Review	July 2010
Next Review	March 2017
Approval	VCEC 04/64

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to govern the resource management process associated with the scheduling of Massey University's academic offerings and ad hoc room bookings.

Principles:

The policy is based on the fundamental principles of:

- effective teaching and learning;
- efficient utilisation of resources; and
- equitable and impartial allocation of resources.

Policy:

Timetables and room bookings are to be constructed in accordance with the following thirteen (13) policy statements:

- 1. All scheduled teaching activities within each region are to be timetabled and managed by the relevant Regional Facilities Management Office, with all teaching space recorded on a national database. Regional timetabling will allow for both *exclusive* and *preferential* usage, where justified and authorised at the Campus Registrar level (or a suitable delegated authority).**

Regional timetabling and management is essential for the efficient utilisation of teaching space. This will avoid unnecessary clashes of staff and facilities and will enable the University to better focus on and adapt to trends in space utilisation. Recent audits of teaching space indicate under-utilisation and a mismatch between the rooms required and the rooms currently available. It is recognised that some Colleges/Sections have valid exclusive and preferential claims over certain teaching or meeting spaces, however, these requirements can be effectively managed regionally.

Regional scheduling of teaching space does not preclude Colleges/Sections from claiming exclusive or preferential usage of particular venues such as science labs or other venues with specialised facilities. However, such claims would need to be both reasonable and justifiable.

- 2. In scheduling teaching activities, priority will be given to matching the size and nature of the teaching space with the nature of the teaching activity and the number of students expected in the class.**



Effective teaching and learning takes place in an appropriate environment. To the extent that this can be facilitated through the allocation of suitable teaching space this should clearly be a priority. It makes no sense to have a class of ten in a room designed for forty when staff in need of a room for forty are unable to find one. Requests for rooms based on historical use or preference for proximity cannot take precedence over the need to ensure staff are allocated the teaching spaces most suited to their mode of teaching and class size.

- 3. Where possible, the location of the teaching space be matched with the location of the College making the request.**

While the first priority is to ensure the most appropriate teaching spaces are allocated for the teaching/learning activity, it needs to be recognised that the campuses are quite spread out and there is a significant distance to travel from one end to the other. For this reason it is desirable for staff to be allocated teaching space within reasonable proximity of their College. It is also desirable for students studying papers in a course to be within reasonable proximity and their timetable needs may outweigh the staff needs in some cases.

- 4. There be a clear description of all teaching spaces with details recorded of design features, facilities and suitability for various teaching modes, the maximum student numbers for each mode, and disability access.**

This information will enable a better matching of teaching space requirements to staff/student needs for teaching and learning. Rooms are currently described via their seating capacity for lecture or traditional tutorial mode and this is not appropriate for different teaching styles. A room currently described as seating thirty students may only be suitable for twenty as a more interactive workshop venue. The characteristics of each teaching space, the audio-visual and other facilities available, wheel-chair access etc all need to be recorded on a national database. Staff can then make more informed requests therefore minimising dissatisfaction and the need for changes.

- 5. The teaching mode, required facilities and expected class size be clearly stated by staff when lodging a request for teaching space.**

This goes hand-in-hand with 3 above. The clearer the requests for teaching space, the more likely it is to be delivered. It must, however, be possible for staff to make their requirements known within a framework of clearly defined options.

- 6. Available teaching space and the characteristics of that space, to be viewed via the Massey University website.**

This will improve efficiency in the room-booking process by enabling staff to determine what space is available for a given time before making a request. The University has implemented an on-line room booking facility.

- 7. In accordance with University policy, there be provision within each Region for one common non-teaching break per week.**

This is already current practice within each Region.

- 8. Normal hours of teaching are 8:00am to 6:00pm (i.e. the last class scheduled at 5.00pm) from Monday to Friday. Later classes available on request.**

This statement does not preclude the scheduling of teaching activity beyond 6:00pm or Saturdays, particularly where this is necessary to cater for the needs of part-time students or where teaching space is scarce.



- 9. The teaching and examination timetables be constructed with reference to one another and within a consistent policy framework.**

Many of the problems and issues experienced in scheduling the teaching timetable are also experienced in the examination timetabling process, with the logical conclusion being that these two processes be linked. The need to avoid clashes is inherent in both processes, and knowledge gleaned from the development of one timetable should enhance the efficiency of developing the other. This having been said, the complexities involved in developing the teaching timetable should not be allowed to restrict the scheduling of examinations which is a much more straight-forward process. Within the current University framework, the scheduling of dates and times for examinations is a national responsibility, and the allocation of rooms is a regional responsibility.

- 10. Teaching and examination timetables be published to students concurrently with the release of enrolment publications (generally 1-Oct each year). Teaching locations, as a function of class size, to be advised as soon as practicable and prior to the commencement of the teaching period.**

Early finalisation of the teaching timetable is essential to enable both staff and students to plan their activities for the subsequent teaching period. Students invariably have commitments other than study such as employment and child-care, and staff have a wide variety of non-teaching responsibilities including research, administration, university and community service. Where teaching and learning commitments can be established well in advance of the teaching period, staff and students have the opportunity to organise and coordinate these activities in an efficient manner.

- 11. All post-publication timetable change requests must be authorised by the Academic Director (or a suitable nominee eg Head of Department/School/Institute or Regional Timetabling Committee) in consultation with the Departmental/School/Institute Head and advised to the relevant Timetabling Officer for consideration and action.**

Allocations must be done on an impartial and equitable basis with regard to the principles of effective teaching and learning and efficient utilisation of resources. This will mean that all Colleges will receive a share of both popular and unpopular teaching times and staff must not be given the opportunity to seek to change one for another without proper authorisation. Timetable changes have significant flow-on effects for others, both staff and students, and result in confusion, inconvenience and inefficient planning.

Bearing in mind the ramifications, changes to the teaching timetable should only be made in extenuating circumstances after all other available options have been considered. All changes need to be authorised to ensure the impact has been properly evaluated, and to enable changes to be made in a coordinated manner.

- 12. The teaching timetable includes the names of Paper Coordinators.**

This information would enable students to seek accurate information concerning papers in a timely and effective manner. It should also serve to reduce confusion and the level of distress experienced by students seeking to satisfy information needs unable to be handled by general or academic staff unfamiliar with the study discipline.

- 13. That the approval process for all new degree/programmes and/or papers include an assessment of the teaching and examination timetabling implications.**

Before new programmes or offerings are approved, or variations are permitted to existing programme structures, there should be an "administrative impact study" to determine the effect on demand for facilities, timetabling issues, room utilisation and suitability.



Definitions:

All teaching space includes:

- Teaching rooms (lecture theatres/rooms, tutorial/seminar rooms)
 - Scientific laboratories and workshops
 - Computer laboratories
 - Workshops/work rooms
 - Meeting/board rooms

The following criteria are to be used for assessing whether a College/Section shall have *preferential* or *exclusive* use of a teaching space.

Preferential use

- The College/Section had paid a substantial amount from its own budget for the upgrading of facilities or for equipping them, and they have current teaching and learning in them
- The space has been purpose-built for particular teaching related activities of the College, and they have current teaching and learning in them
- The space houses expensive equipment which requires special security or where there are occupational health and safety issues

Exclusive use

- The security or occupational health and safety arguments are overwhelming, and the venue is secure outside teaching times
- The venue is unsuitable for use by others

Audience:

All staff

However it is recognised that to produce effective teaching timetables requires an understanding of the teaching space available and relevant operational issues within each Region. This may mean each Region has different requirements and constraints. These must be given due consideration, and built into the timetabling business rules for each Region.

Relevant Legislation:

None

Legal Compliance:

None

Related Procedures:

- Post-Publication Change Request Process



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