Academic Timetabling Policy – 2020/21

1. Teaching Day and Week

   a. The standard teaching day runs from 9:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday. All full-time academic staff should be available to teach within these hours unless alternative patterns of working are agreed with HR in accordance with the ‘Flexible Working and Time-Off for Training Policy’ or other recognised College procedures.

   b. Teaching for undergraduate students should not be scheduled after 13.00 on Wednesdays to allow for sports, volunteering and participatory activities unless exemptions are agreed.

   c. Teaching activities will only be scheduled in multiples of 30 minute units (all units of an hour should be scheduled to start on the hour unless consecutive activities are being run).

   d. Teaching should commence at the scheduled start time (which is usually on the hour) and should finish promptly 10 minutes prior to the scheduled end time to allow for the changeover of activities.

   e. To achieve optimum room utilisation two hour classes should only start at the following times: 9:00, 11:00, 13:00, 15:00, or 16:00, three hour classes at 9:00, 12:00, and 15:00, and four hour classes at 9:00, 13:00 or 14:00.

   f. The timetabling calendar will consist of 38 weeks with week 1 being Welcome Week, then weeks following consecutively until week 38 (the last week of term) with the exception of Bedford Square/Senate House and PC laboratories which we continue to timetable until week 52. Specific term dates will follow those on the College Website.

2. Constraints on Teaching Availability

   a. All full-time research active academic staff are guaranteed the equivalent of at least one day a week free from timetabled teaching activities over the teaching terms.

   b. Any members of staff with formally agreed arrangements under the ‘Flexible Working and Time-Off for Training Policy’ (see 1a) should be notified to the Timetabling Team during the data collection process.

   c. Availability of part-time staff should be notified to the Timetabling Team during the data collection process

3. Priority of Space

   a. During standard teaching weeks regular teaching by Academic Departments and the International Study Centre (Study Group) takes priority in all teaching rooms during teaching times as listed above (1a and e);

   b. Priority will then be given to activities relating to essential College events and functions, encompassing the following:

      o Applicant Visitor Days (AVDs)
Requests for these bookings must be given at the earliest opportunity and by the advertised deadline to ensure the requests can be incorporated into the timetabling process. Dates for annually recurring events must be booked each year and will not be automatically transferred from year to year. On occasion it may be necessary to move these bookings after the academic timetable has been published but a suitable alternative room will be found and the relevant department informed.

4. Timetable Construction

Prior to Publication

a. To ensure the efficiency of the space allocation process and the appropriateness of allocated space, School Timetablers must check and/or provide as appropriate the following information for each teaching activity:
   - Course code
   - Description
   - Activity type
   - Weeks the event will run in (see 1.f)
   - Duration
   - Number of students expected to attend
   - Teaching staff who will deliver the activity
   - Any staff or student accessibility requirements
   - Equipment or room specific requirements

b. Wherever possible School Timetablers should request block mode teaching, and alternate week teaching to make least demand on overall room availability and by using the agreed week pattern numbering system (see 1.f). Requests for these activities must be given at the earliest opportunity and by the advertised deadline to ensure the requests can be incorporated into the timetabling process.

c. All teaching activities, including those in School space, must be notified to the Timetabling Team, so they can be included on student timetables.

d. Large and mandatory course activities will be given first priority when allocating rooms. Optional course activities and other teaching should be timetabled around these activities.

e. Once activities have been scheduled they must not be changed (even within the department’s timetable footprint) without reference to other departments affected and the Timetabling Team.

After Draft Publication

f. Schools Timetablers should check the Academic Timetable and report any issues to the Timetabling Team.

g. Academic Staff should check the Academic Timetable and report any issues to their School Administration by the required deadline.

After Final Publication

h. Changes after the publication of the final timetable to Schools should be kept to a minimum and a detailed explanation of why the change is required at this stage given. Timetabling can only accept changes for the following reasons:
- Changes in staffing that are unavoidable
- Significant student teaching clashes
- Number of students exceeds safe capacity of room
- Venue unsuitable due to Health & Safety or maintenance issues
- Cancellations/Rescheduled activities
- Staff sickness

Any amendments have implications pertaining to student experience and the availability of suitable rooms. The Timetabling Team reserve the right to refuse a request.

i. Any additional teaching activities should be arranged through the School Timetabler and Timetabling Team to enable them to appear on student timetables and to ensure students are able to attend.

5. Teaching rooms

a. All teaching rooms and their use will be recorded on the timetabling system.
b. All general purpose teaching space will be pooled.
c. Highly specialist space, including; science laboratories, drama and dance studios and rooms with specialist equipment such as instruments, will be owned by Schools. This will be reviewed periodically to ensure that criteria of good utilisation.
d. PC laboratories used for teaching will be managed by the Timetabling Team.
e. School space which does not have a specialist function or contain specialist equipment and could be used for general teaching without detriment to the space should be made available for central timetabling during periods that it is not being used for school teaching. Timeslots when it is not in use should be given over to the Timetabling Team by the deadline given in the calendar of key dates and future bookings would need to fit around any activities scheduled by the Timetabling Team.
f. Teaching rooms are allocated on a best fit basis according to size, constraints and resources.
g. Food and drinks (other than water) should not be consumed in the teaching rooms.
h. The activity size should not exceed the size of the room allocated. The School is responsible for adhering to the published room capacities. If the activity size exceeds the room capacity, the School and Timetabling Team will work together to find a solution. This could involve double teaching or changing the day and/or time of an activity.

6. Sources of Data

a. The authority on the right of occupancy of a teaching room shall be the Timetabling System (Scientia).
b. Banner will be the source data for departments, programmes of study, courses and student information appearing in the Timetabling System.
c. CAFM will be the source data for room locations appearing in the Timetabling System.
d. CAFM/Estates and the Audio Visual Department will be the source data for room information.
e. Academic Departments/Schools will provide information on activities and staff availability.
f. Up to date timetabling information will be made available to staff and students via the web timetables.

7. Roles and Responsibilities
Student Administration Timetabling Team

- Construction and production of the College’s teaching timetable in liaison with Schools.
- Production of individual teaching timetables for Students.
- Production of individual teaching timetables for Staff.
- Producing a calendar of key dates to be published online which outlines dates for collection, submission and publishing of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year.
- Allocating teaching space in accordance with College policies.
- Mediating and assisting in resolving timetable clashes.
- Providing an up to date version of the timetable on the staff intranet for staff to view.
- Ensuring initial group allocations are completed.
- Providing user support to all Scientia Timetabling software users in the College.
- Managing the Room Booking system.
- Following up with Schools, if issues arise for timetabling as a consequence of restricted working patterns for teaching staff (e.g. large numbers of requests for one Department or very restricted working patterns for individuals).

Heads of Department/Heads of School

- Ensuring that Department/School inputs into the timetabling process are completed in a timely and accurate fashion, according to the calendar of key dates published.
- Ensuring that staff availability to teach is managed in accordance with 1.a. and 2 above. Restrictions imposed by external commitments should be carefully considered by Heads of Department/School. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department/School to approve any exemptions to an academic’s availability that are not flexible working.
- Responsibility for ensuring that their programme and course validations and required information are submitted in accordance with required dates.
- Responsibility for ensuring that course registrations are chosen and inputted on the student record system in a timely manner.

School Timetablers

- Liaising with academics to collate required timetabling data and submit all required information for teaching activities. These must be compatible with the programme structure and most popular pathways. It is the responsibility of the School Timetablers to provide details of all key requirements for activities (e.g. blackout, large whiteboard) prior to the start of the scheduling process.
- Providing accurate academic availability data for effective timetabling.
- Checking provisional, draft and final timetables to ensure accuracy and that there are no clashes in students’ standard programmes and common pathways. Changes after publication can negatively affect a student’s experience.
- Requesting changes after publication only if essential (see 3.f.)
- Ensuring that group allocation changes are dealt with appropriately.
- Ensuring that identified clashes are dealt with quickly.
- Informing the Timetabling Team of any students or staff that have special requirements which will affect timetabling.
- Consulting web timetables if informed of a room clash to resolve the issue.
- Informing the Timetabling Team of any cancellations or problems with the timetable.

Academic Staff

- Notifying the School Timetabler of any special requirements for teaching e.g large whiteboards at data collection stage.
- Reading and checking timetables when published and advising School Timetabler of errors as soon as possible. This must be done before the deadline for the final timetable production.
- Adhering to the latest version of the published timetable. Academic Staff are advised to check their timetable regularly for changes.
- Notifying the School Timetabler of teaching requirements and inform them of cancellations or additional teaching activities so that, where appropriate, electronic timetables can be updated.
- Notifying their Departmental Timetabler if they are unable to teach in their allocated room owing to someone else using it.
- Starting and finishing lectures promptly to allow smooth changeover (see 1.d.)
- Ensuring teaching spaces are left in a clean and tidy condition, and furniture is returned to its standard configuration before the scheduled end of the class.
- Ensuring availability for teaching during College teaching hours except when Head of Department has approved exemption or a flexible working agreement is in place.

**Students**

- Selecting optional courses by the deadlines given.
- Regularly checking the published timetable for room changes, additional activities, cancellations etc.
- Ensuring availability for all teaching weeks.
- Informing relevant School Administration of any special arrangements required as a result of a disability.