UCL Academic Manual 2022-23
Chapter 14: Teaching and Learning

UCL Timetabling Policy

Policy

1. Scope

This document sets out UCL's Timetabling Policy for 2022/23.

2. Governance

This Policy has been developed by the Central Timetabling Team and is jointly owned by Operations Committee and Education Committee.

3. Purpose

This Policy is required to support the vision of providing an efficient and effective Institutional timetabling service that optimises and enhances the student and staff experience.

4. Objectives

- Deliver a timetable that is student focused; enables success and wellbeing; and is efficient, effective and equitable
- Deliver a single integrated timetable
- Balances space utilisation with the facilities required to deliver teaching
- Minimise the administrative burden of timetabling and rooming across the University.

5. Principles

5.1 Supply of space

- All UCL 'generic' bookable teaching space (including PC cluster rooms), will be centrally managed.

- Excluded spaces are (i) an agreed list of rooms that are unsuitable for teaching but suitable for meetings and (ii) specialist spaces including labs, studios etc.
- Some appropriate external space may be procured, depending on demonstrable demand. Any external space must be procured centrally.

5.2 Delivery of education (including class sizes)

- Departments must plan to deliver their curriculum in accordance with the Teaching and Assessment Model for 2022/23.

5.3 Teaching hours

5.3.1 The 'UCL Hour'

From 2022/23 all teaching (and meetings etc.) will commence on the hour and will end at ten minutes to the hour. The ten minute 'changeover' must be adhered to. This applies to all events (F2F and online).

5.3.2 Teaching day

The core teaching day will be 0900 – 1800 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 0900 – 1300 Wednesday.

Wednesday afternoons should be kept free of teaching for all UG and PGT students (with some agreed programme exceptions that will be approved by the Faculty Education Leadership).

Departments and their staff may choose to teach outside of core teaching hours in order to both improve equality of access to a high-quality education and to facilitate flexible working arrangements. This is an optin arrangement.[1]

5.4 Teaching & Reading Weeks

A Reading Week is held in each of Terms 1 and 2 in CMIS Weeks 11 (w/c 7th November 2022) and 25 (w/c 13th February 2023) respectively (see *Appendix 1*). All departments must adhere to this structure.

Departments are encouraged to run block teaching sessions during Reading Week. This is an opt-in arrangement. [1]

5.5 In-term assessments

Where in-term assessments are delivered F2F these will be roomed after core teaching and will not disrupt the consistency of rooming of teaching events. The timing and/or location of in-term assessments should be arranged at a time – and in a format – that can be accommodated within UCL space.

5.6 Induction Week

UCL Induction Week activities will be a blend of online and F2F.

Departments should normally deliver large information sharing events online, with smaller more interactive events delivered in person. Where a department plans to deliver an induction event F2F, priority will be given to rooming centrally organised Welcome and Induction events.

Induction activities must normally be scheduled into CMIS for Week 5 (w/c 26th September 2022) or earlier. Ad hoc synchronous online and/or F2F induction activities may be arranged for later weeks but will be roomed after teaching activity.

5.7   Timetables for Students and Staff

ALL teaching activities must be entered in CMIS (UCL's timetabling software) in order to provide a complete online timetable for students and staff. This includes all scheduled labs and practice based teaching, and synchronous online sessions.

5.8   Student-facing vs other scheduled activities

5.8.1 Teaching rooms

Teaching will be prioritised in all UCL's bookable teaching rooms, with student informal learning and interaction taking second priority during term time.

All other meetings etc. should be undertaken online where possible. Where F2F meetings need to be arranged they should be booked in accordance with the *Room Bookings Policy*. This includes Exam Boards, SSCCs etc.

5.9   Prioritisation

5.9.1 Demand

Where demand for teaching rooms exceeds supply at a particular type of space/time, the department must reschedule for another day/time when appropriate space is available.

Once alternative days/times/ have been thoroughly investigated, if demand still exceeds supply and there is no appropriate UCL space available, external space may exceptionally be procured by the Central Timetabling Team.

5.9.2 Supply

All generic teaching space is centrally managed.

Teaching rooms will be allocated as follows:

(i)   Allocation of a suitable room for students or staff with a disability will take priority.
(ii)   Allocation of a day and/or time range for staff with a protected characteristic or recognised health requirement will be implemented.
(iii)   Matching the class size to room capacity to ensure that no class exceeds the stated room capacity.
(iv)   Matching the location (e.g. in home or zoned[2] building) and room *requirement* (e.g. LectureCast, whiteboards) will be prioritised over preserving the *exact day/time* of an event.
(v)   Events of more than 5 weeks duration will be auto-roomed first to improve the consistency of rooming.
(vi)   A number of rooms will be allocated to accommodate short, intensive (rather than term long) teaching.
(vii)   Events requiring specific facilities may be treated as higher priority since the pool of available rooms is more limited.
(viii) Research seminars and other sessions that form a core part of a PhD student's programme of study will be scheduled subject to appropriate space being available.

The Timetable Team will hold back a small number of rooms in order to respond to overshoots in class numbers etc.

6   Timeframe and deadlines

The Timetable Production Timeline can be found here https://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/sites/estates/files/timetable_formal_timeline_2022-23.pdf Published deadlines must be adhered to in order to deliver timetables to students in a timely manner.

7   Student and staff movement to/from and around campus

Given extensive student choice, departments should make every effort to limit student and staff movement between UCL campuses on any given day.

8   Student clashes

Student clashes (F2F and synchronous online) on compulsory modules must be avoided. Student clashes on optional modules will be avoided where feasible but timetables free of option clashes cannot be guaranteed.

9   Room changes

Staff are requested to check allocated rooms in person by 15th August and request changes by that date. Changes requested after that date must give at least three working days notice.

10   Auditing of Classes

All students attending F2F sessions must be registered on the relevant module. Students will not be able to audit classes F2F unless there is adequate capacity within the allocated room.

11   Key Roles and Responsibilities

The following is not an exhaustive list but summarises the key roles and responsibilities for delivering the 2022/23 timetable.

11.1   Central Timetabling Team Responsibilities

The Timetabling Business Partners will:

- Produce a schedule of key dates and deadlines
- Maintain regular engagement with Faculties and Departments
- Coordinate training workshops and undertake data validation checks
- Provide timetabling and rooming advice and support
- Deliver a roomed timetable in collaboration with Departments and Faculties
- Maximise the potential of the timetabling system via training, development and sharing best practice
- Review feedback, Timetabling KPIs and 'Complaints and Issues Log' and identify areas for improvement
- Work collaboratively with Faculties and Departments to ensure an effective business partnering relationship and service delivery to drive continuous improvement.

11.2   Faculty and Departmental Responsibilities

Faculty Education Teams (inc. Programme and Module Leaders) will:

- Work with the Central Timetabling Team and academic departments to ensure that timetabled activities are appropriately roomed
- Consider the effect on room utilisation of 'peaks and troughs' e.g. single days or whole weeks. Consider dovetailing with other programmes to flatten out demand
- Provide constructive challenge to ensure that the Faculty and Department is able to offer quality rather than quantity in its educational portfolio and that the timetabling implications of the curriculum have been fully considered

- Consider the timetable experience from a student's perspective, including joint honours routes. Analyse the take-up of options and electives to ensure that the most popular optional module combinations can be accommodated.

Departmental Timetablers will:

- Attend CMIS training workshops and refresher sessions
- Liaise with Module Leaders and Faculty Tutors to collate timetable requirements. Ensure requirements are correctly and completely entered into CMIS by the agreed deadline
- Run clash checks
- Promptly attend to issues raised in clash reports and data validation checks
- First line problem-solving (e.g. managing overshoots through re-allocation of students between groups)
- Inform staff and students via email when short-notice changes occur for F2F sessions
- Promptly notify the Central Timetabling Team when rooms are no longer required
- Oversee the process of 'student fitting' to sub-groups by staff within the Department and ensure that allocations are accutate in CMIS.

Lecturing staff will:

- Submit timetabling requirements and details of personal availability, constraints and preferences by agreed deadlines and in accordance with the approved process
- Read and check timetables as per agreed deadlines
- Visit the rooms by 15th August to ensure its suitability and immediately communicate any concerns
- Notify Departmental Timetablers promptly of errors, or if rooms are no longer required
- Start and finish lectures and other teaching events promptly for changeover
- Report any faults (missing or malfunctioning equipment to the ISD Helpdesk and room issues/malfunctions to the Customer Helpdesk)
- Ensure that Health & Safety requirements are followed, particularly ensuring immediate evacuation of the whole class in event of a fire alarm and ensuring that the room capacity is not exceeded
- Help colleagues to keep the administrative records accurate. Do not undertake informal room swaps with colleagues, or allow non-enrolled students to attend a class, as this impacts attendance monitoring, lecture capture and can exceed safe room capacities.

Heads of Department will:

- Ensure there is sufficient staff resource available to engage with, and respond to, timetabling processes and issues throughout the lifecycle, ensuring that appropriate cross-cover and/or business continuity arrangements are in place to provide a seamless and responsive service in case of absence (i.e. holiday; sickness etc.)
- Ensure that staff availability to teach is maximised
- Ensure that academic staff discharge their responsibilities in respect of timetabled activities
- Ensure information is shared within the Department.

Deans (with Directors of Operations) will:

- Oversight and management of issues across their Departments, taking necessary action where issues impacting on the delivery of the Faculty's timetable
- Sign off of an agreed roomed timetable.

12. Adherence to this Policy

This Policy has been developed to facilitate the delivery of a critical student-facing service as a shared Institutional endeavour. Therefore adherence to this Policy is mandatory. Amendments to room allocations after sign off of the timetable will only be made in exceptional circumstances (i.e. accessibility requirement; staff illness; unplanned class size changes).

13. Review

This policy will be updated on an annual basis.

DATE APPROVED BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE	DATE APPROVED BY OPERATIONS COMMITTEE	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW
26th April 2022	5th May 2022	March 2023

Footnotes

[1]   Departments may decide to run F2F teaching in short, intensive blocks which could be facilitated by longer teaching days; weekend teaching and/or teaching during Reading Week

[2]   Zoning refers to the alignment of buildings and/or departments to teaching spaces on a geographical basis. Wherever possible, students will be roomed within a geographical zone in proximity to their department although this is not always possible where room layout and/or room sizes are not aligned.