

UCL Academic Manual 2023-24

Chapter 14: Teaching and Learning

UCL Timetabling Policy

Policy

1. Scope

This document sets out UCL's Timetabling Policy for 2023/24.

2. Governance

This Policy has been developed by the Central Timetabling in conjunction with colleagues in Faculties and Professional Services 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 Curriculum Data Maintenance (CDM) Guidance for 2023/24.

5.3 Teaching hours

5.3.1 The 'UCL Hour'

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 opt-in arrangement.

5.4 Teaching & Reading Weeks

A Reading Week is held in each of Terms 1 and 2 in CMIS Weeks 11 (w/c 6th November 2023) and 25 (w/c 12th February 2024) respectively. All departments must adhere to this structure.

(see the UCL Academic Calendar 2023/24:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/sites/estates/files/ucl_academic_calendar_2023_2024.pdf)

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

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. All F2F induction activities should be requested by 17th March 2023.

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 (25th September 2023) 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.

All sub-group allocations must be entered into CMIS.

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 will be required to 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) Events of more than 5 weeks duration will be auto-roomed first to improve the consistency of rooming.
- (v) A number of rooms will be allocated to accommodate short, intensive (rather than term long) teaching.

- (vi) Events requiring specific facilities may be treated as higher priority since the pool of available rooms is more limited.
- (vii) 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.

6. Timeframe and deadlines

The Timetable Production Timeline can be found here:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/sites/estates/files/ucl_timetable_production_timeline_2023-24_v2.pdf

Published deadlines must be adhered to in order to deliver timetables to students in a timely manner.

Events received by the deadline of 31st March 2023 will be prioritised.

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. 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.

10. Changes in class size

Departments must notify the Timetabling Team of any events which may need a room allocation reviewing due to size changes as a result of unplanned undergraduate admissions over-recruitment by 25th August 2023.

Departments must notify the Timetabling Team of any events which may need a room allocation reviewing due to size changes as a result of unplanned postgraduate admissions over-recruitment at the earliest opportunity.

Where recruitment on optional/elective modules exceeds the allocated room capacity departments must not assume that a larger room will be available and must consult with the Timetabling Team prior to accepting more students onto the module.

11. Room changes

Staff are requested to check allocated rooms in person by 2th August and request changes by that date. Changes requested after that date must give at least three working days notice.

12. Change control

Priority will be given to valid event requests received by the 31st March 2023 deadline.

As part of the first stage of auto-rooming, where event requests are received by the 31st March 2023, the Timetabling Team will endeavour to allocate rooms local to the home department location (where event requirements permit this).

New requests and amendments to events received after 31st March 2023 will be roomed subject to available space (time/location/facilities). New requests must be requested via the query logs provided for each faculty.

External space will not be procured to accommodate requested received after 31st March 2023.

13. Key Roles and Responsibilities

The following is not an exhaustive list but summarises the key roles and responsibilities for delivering the 2023/24 timetable.

13.1 Timetabling Team Responsibilities

The Faculty Timetabling Coordinators 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
- Work with academic departments to ensure that timetabled activities are appropriately roomed
- Deliver a roomed timetable in collaboration with Departments and Faculties subject to validity of data; event requirements; available rooms and adherence to deadlines
- 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

13.2 Other Faculty and Departmental Responsibilities

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

- Work closely with the Faculty Timetabling Coordinator – and within, and across, 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.

Departments will:

- Ensure effective liaison with relevant departmental staff responsible for curriculum data management
- Ensure departmental timetablers attend CMIS training workshops and refresher sessions
- Ensure the complete collation of timetable requirements. Ensure all requirements are correctly and completely entered into CMIS by the published 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 accurate 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 25th August to ensure its suitability and immediately communicate any concerns
- Ensure the Faculty Timetabling Coordinator is promptly notified 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 that curriculum data maintenance is completed by the specified deadline to facilitate timetabling
- 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.
- Ensure that departmental staff liaise with, and respond to, Faculty Education Leadership requests and interventions.

Vice-Deans Education will:

- Provide education leadership across the faculty

- Liaise with, and coordinate, departments to ensure that deadlines and policies are adhered to
- Accountable to the Dean for oversight and management of issues across their Departments, taking necessary action where issues impacting on the delivery of the Faculty's timetable
- Work with Faculty Timetabling Coordinators to ensure delivery of an agreed roomed timetable.

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
- Ensure Faculty Leadership sign off of an agreed roomed timetable.

13.3 Campus Experience & Infrastructure

Teams within Campus Experience & Infrastructure will:

- Work closely with Timetabling Team to ensure that the supply of teaching space is aligned with demand
- Ensure that any reactive and planned works are managed to ensure no reduction in the supply of teaching rooms during term time and that any unavoidable loss of space is re-provided and/or re-instated to minimise disruption
- Ensure that interdependencies are managed so that academic activities are not disrupted by adjacent noisy works etc.
- Work to improve the quality of teaching rooms to an agreed plan
- Ensure that teaching rooms are fit-for-purpose with deviations from an agreed SLA promptly addressed.

14. 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).

15. Review

This policy will be updated on an annual basis.

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25 July 2023	29 June 2023	March 2024

Footnotes

ⁱ 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