

Timetabling Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The scheduling of classes and allocation of resources are important elements in the University's efforts to support students and to meet operational needs. The University has therefore adopted a structured approach to the timetabling of classes and the attendant booking and allocation of facilities. This policy sets out that approach. It should be read in conjunction with the [Timetabling Procedure](#).

Section 2 - Policy

Policy Intent

(2) This Policy provides the framework within which the University will timetable classes and allocate the teaching and learning spaces and other facilities recorded in the Newcastle University Timetabling System.

Policy Objectives

(3) To schedule classes in a way that best meets the needs of students and staff within the constraints of available resources.

(4) To optimise the use of the University's teaching and learning spaces.

(5) To provide a framework for decision making in relation to timetabling.

(6) To advise staff and students where and how teaching and learning space allocation and timetabling issues should be dealt with and by whom.

Scope

(7) This policy deals with the timetabling of classes and the allocation of those teaching and learning spaces which have been designated by Infrastructure and Facilities Services as available for teaching and which are recorded on the University Timetabling System.

(8) The policy covers University teaching and learning activities for the following campuses and locations: Callaghan and Ourimbah campuses (incorporating TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute and Newcastle City (including the David Madison Building, University House and the Conservatorium) and Sydney city locations.

(9) It does not address the allocation and use of University space by external parties except to indicate the preference given to the University's core activities over the activities of external users.

Timetabling Principles

(10) Timetabling of classes will be guided by four fundamental principles, in the following order:

- a. a commitment to facilitate student learning;
- b. consideration of staff needs;

- c. the effective and efficient use of teaching and learning spaces; and
- d. prioritising resource allocations.

Facilitating Student Learning

(11) In accordance with the University's commitment to providing high quality student-centred teaching and learning, the following will apply:

- a. The timetable will be prepared in a way that takes account of the specific cohorts of students and seeks to ensure that students:
 - i. can access all course resources, including lectures and other classes, in some form (that is, in the face-to-face mode where that is thought to be preferable, or, if necessary, via media-supported technology such as Lectopia); and
 - ii. have a reasonable selection of electives from which to choose in accordance with the student sets for standard programs of study.
- b. Classes will be scheduled at times and locations that will facilitate student attendance and avoid students having to attend, wherever possible, more than one campus on the same day.
- c. Timetable details will be provided in sufficient time to enable students to make informed decisions and to make personal arrangements required by a particular study timetable, wherever possible.
- d. The number of changes made to the timetable after it has been published will be kept to a minimum. Changes requested after publication must be supported by the Head of School or nominee.
- e. To meet the needs of particular groups of students, timetabling will:
 - i. make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with a disability on the advice of the Student Disability Support Service, provided the student is registered with the Student Disability Support Service; and
 - ii. have sufficient class choices available after 5.30pm for programs which are promoted as available on a part-time basis.

Consideration of Staff Needs

(12) Back-to-back teaching will be delivered in the closest appropriate teaching and learning spaces possible and factored into the timetable.

(13) Staff will not be timetabled to travel between campuses more than once in the same day wherever possible.

(14) Consideration will be given to staff's nominated preferences for specific days and times, but accommodation of those requests cannot be guaranteed.

(15) Consideration will be given to accommodating staff with a disability or a special need in an appropriate room nominated by them and approved by their Head of School.

The Effective and Efficient Use of Teaching and Learning Spaces

(16) The University will optimise the use of its teaching and learning spaces by applying the following principles to timetabling:

- a. classes will be timetabled to accord with information in the Course Tracking System (CTS);
- b. preference will be given to scheduling classes on working days and within core teaching times;
- c. classes will be scheduled to make use of teaching and learning spaces over the entire span of working days and core teaching times;

- d. classes may be held on Saturday or Sunday when advised in course documentation;
- e. classes should be conducted within the scheduled times and the allocated teaching space, as shown on the timetable, where possible;
- f. classes will normally commence 5 minutes past the hour and conclude 5 minutes before the hour;
- g. classes should not be conducted in teaching and learning spaces without being scheduled or booked within the University Timetabling System;
- h. A limited number of teaching and learning spaces (eg laboratories, workshops) may be defined as 'specialist' teaching and learning spaces by Schools, Colleges or Units in consultation with Infrastructure and Facilities Services. These specialist teaching and learning spaces will appear on the University Timetabling System but must be timetabled by direct arrangement with the relevant School, College, or Unit.

Prioritising Resource Allocations

(17) The following key principles will be adopted by Faculty Timetable Officers when timetabling and allocating teaching and learning spaces:

- a. activities requiring particular teaching facilities (e.g. media equipped lecture theatres) will be given priority in the allocation of those spaces;
- b. larger classes will have priority access to larger teaching and learning spaces over smaller classes;
- c. full term teaching periods as defined in the Course Tracking System will have priority over courses which are taught only in part of the term;
- d. classes will have priority over facility hire bookings by external parties;
- e. requests for space allocation based on personal preferences will not be permitted if the allocated teaching and learning space is functional; and
- f. over-allocation of spaces to classes will not be permitted.

Timetabling Roles and Responsibilities

(18) Student and Academic Administration has primary responsibility for timetabling.

(19) The University Timetable Coordinator is responsible for:

- a. managing and maintaining timetabling information on the University timetabling system;
- b. rolling over timetable data in preparation for the following year;
- c. supporting Faculty Timetable Officers;
- d. publishing of the teaching timetable;
- e. arranging regular audits of teaching space and usage; and
- f. actioning outcomes from audits.

(20) Faculty Timetable Officers are responsible for the initial and ongoing process of timetabling College classes within the University Timetabling System. Faculty Timetable Officers will consult with their respective Assistant Dean (Education) when timetabling issues require resolution.

(21) Infrastructure and Facilities Services:

- a. are responsible for notifying the University Timetable Coordinator of:
- b. available new or refurbished teaching and learning spaces;
- c. building work in progress and estimated time of completion;
- d. equipment located in each teaching and learning space; and

e. designation of specialist teaching and learning spaces.

(22) Students are required to regularly check the online timetable for class changes.

(23) At each stage of the timetabling process all parties are responsible for negotiating and communicating in good faith.

(24) Where competition for use of particular facilities for classes emerges, the matter will be resolved in line with the principles outlined in this policy.

(25) Where agreement is not reached, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar in the first instance, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President in unresolved cases, will be responsible for resolving the disagreement.

(26) The University's core requirements for rooms and facilities take precedence over their use by external persons, groups, or bodies. No adjustments to the academic timetable are to be made to accommodate external use except in exceptional circumstances. These would be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President.

Publishing the Timetable

(27) The University Timetable Coordinator will publish the timetable on the University's website for the forthcoming year.

(28) Changes to the published timetable will be kept to a minimum. Valid reasons for changes are included in the [Timetabling Procedure](#). Where changes to the timetable are required, the Faculty Timetable Officer will update the timetable.

(29) Students will be reminded by Schools to check the timetable on a regular basis to ensure they are aware of changes that affect their study timetable.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Lisa Wood Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Lisa.Wood@newcastle.edu.au
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Published timetable" - The timetable that is published on the University's website as at the re-enrolment date.

"Student set" - A set of activities within a standard program of study which must be scheduled to avoid clashes. This set of activities may involve more than one College or School and more than one Campus.

"Class" - When referring to a class attended by Students, a class is any teaching and learning activity of a course. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Core teaching times" - Are between the hours of 8am – 9pm.

"Elective" - Any non compulsory course which may be undertaken within a program of study.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Disability" - As defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (as amended from time to time, or as per any replacing legislation).

"External parties" - Any individual or organisation external to the University.

"Lecture" - Any timetabled activity labelled 'lecture' in the University's timetabling and room booking system.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Term" - When referring to an academic period, term means a period of time aligned to an academic year for the delivery of a course in which students enrol and for which they are usually charged fees for example semesters, trimesters, summer, winter or full-year term. The academic year for a term is determined by the academic year in which the course commences, not concludes. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.