Space Management Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) is strongly committed to optimising the use of it's spaces to provide efficient, effective, safe, and supported environments. Benefits include:

a. provision of contemporary, fit-for-purpose staff work environments;
b. reduction in property operating costs incurred through under-utilised spaces;
c. reduction in carbon emissions through a reduced total building footprint;
d. re-use of freed up spaces for industry partners;
e. removal of end-of-life buildings that cannot be re-purposed;
f. alignment to workplace safety regulation obligations of safe work design.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This policy establishes the principles for the planning, allocation and design of University spaces.

(3) The Space Management Allocation Procedure and the Interior Design Guidelines are supporting documents to this Policy and should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

(4) This Policy should be read and understood by all staff.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This Policy applies to all space owned, operated, leased or licensed by the University.

(6) This Policy must be implemented in such a way that ensures compliance with the University's obligations under relevant legislation, including the Work Health and Safety Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Workers Compensation Act, and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act.

Section 4 - Policy Principles

(7) "Space" is a University owned asset. As such, the University will manage space to maximise the benefits to the University as a whole, allocating space to best meet its strategic and operational needs that may change over time.

(8) All University space should be used safely and efficiently to maximise utilisation. This requires ongoing active management by organisational units. Usage will be periodically measured against target utilisation benchmarks.

(9) Consolidation and rationalisation of the University campus footprint will be necessary where occupancy is identified to be low. This will maximise utilisation and minimise operating and maintenance costs. Approaches to consolidation and rationalisation will be managed through risk-based assessments, change impact assessments, and consultation.

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(10) The University is seeking to create a flexible, contemporary, safe and supported work environment for its staff as workspace is refurbished or new workspace is built (refer Interior Design Guidelines).

(11) Workspace planning allocation for new and refurbished projects will align with the principles of safe work design and any applicable Australian Standards or Codes. Staff work-point ratios will support an agile occupancy model.

(12) The requirement for private office space and allocation of these will be subject to availability and the necessary requirements of the work and the role.

(13) Any allocation of dedicated work-points in activity-based working environments will consider the need for an individual's specific reasonable adjustment requirements. Reasonable adjustments are generally associated with a disability, a specific ergonomic requirement, the nature of the work to be performed and/or the efficiencies necessary for the individual to perform work effectively.

(14) In circumstances where a staff member has a primary and secondary workplace allocation which includes an office space (ie. due to multiple campus locations), the secondary office will be a shared bookable resource made available to others when not in use.

(15) Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidate workspace will be a shared bookable resource to maximise utilisation and promote sharing across Colleges and Schools, with the understanding that full-time candidates are generally required to be on-campus and have access to a suitable workspace for their studies.

(16) Access to general teaching spaces is shared via the University's centrally managed Timetable system in accordance with the Timetabling Policy and Timetabling Procedure.

(17) Research space will be considered as a shared resource, where possible, to maximise utilisation. This will include the co-location of specialist equipment in a way that enables effective use of resources. Requirements and allocation of research space will be considered through mechanisms involving safe and optimal equipment management, legislative requirements of high-risk work, research confidentiality, and appropriate sharing of laboratory environments. University policy relating to research conduct and research facilities must be complied with.

(18) Space will be provided to staff and students that is of an appropriate quality and that meets any relevant regulatory compliance requirements, workplace health and safety standards, environmental standards, and professional obligations, as reasonably practicable.

(19) The refurbishment and design of new workspaces will apply the principles of safe workplace design and include consultation and assessment of change impact.

Section 5 - Roles and responsibilities

(20) The Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services (DIFS) is responsible for:

a. the allocation and reallocation of space in consultation with relevant parties; and
b. the measurement of space usage against relevant performance indicators, including, but not limited to, benchmarks published by the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association (TEFMA).

(21) Executive Leadership Team members are responsible for:

a. ensuring that the space allocated to a College or Division is used efficiently and for the agreed purpose;
b. informing the Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services of any forthcoming request(s) for change of use. Approval from the Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services is required if the planned changes represent a significant change to the use or function of allocated space; and

c. ensuring that allocated spaces are kept tidy and clear of obstructions and hazards to ensure safe evacuation egress; and
d. ensuring that all statutory and regulatory requirements within their control are adhered to.

(22) Organisational unit leaders must consult with IFS regarding space allocation needs.

Section 6 - Terms and Definitions

(23) In the context of this document, the following definitions apply:

a. “efficient” means a measure of space cost per square metre against use;
b. “activity based workplace (ABW)” focuses on creating varied workspaces for different activities, promoting flexibility and staff choice. It is not the same as hot-desking which involves sharing an open-plan office (with little workspace variety), in that desks are unassigned, allowing employees to choose a different desk each day. ABW is a broader concept encompassing various work environments to better support our varied activities, while hot-desking specifically addresses maximum utilisation of desks within an open-plan environment.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Morven Cameron Chief Operating Officer
Enquiries Contact	Morven Cameron Chief Operating Officer Infrastructure and Facilities Services

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.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Asset" - Any tangible or intangible item (or group of items) that the University owns or has a legal or other right to control and exploit to obtain financial or other economic benefits.

"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.

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

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"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.

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