Timetabling Procedure

Section 1 - Context

(1) This procedure supports the University's Timetabling Policy and should be read in conjunction with that document.

Section 2 - Overview

(2) Existing base timetable data will be rolled over by April each year and advised by the University Registrar.

(3) The University Timetabling Coordinator will schedule core University activities (examinations, graduations, commencement ceremonies, etc.) prior to the Timetable Officers accessing the University timetabling system.

(4) Timetable Officers will make adjustments to the previous year's data on the advice of College and School staff to align contact hours with the provisions in the curriculum management system and to accommodate the coming year's requirements.

(5) Times and locations will be allocated to teaching activities.

(6) Corrections to errors, excluding preference changes, during the draft timetable review period will be undertaken in a manner that ensures data validity by the Timetable Timeline.

(7) The timetable will remain in draft form until "published" according to the Timetable Timeline. This published version will be available to the public on the University website.

Section 3 - Background Preparation: Data Collection

(8) The following information will be used as base data for the preparation of the new timetable. It must be provided within the scheduled timeline.

Finalisation of University Course and Class Offerings

(9) Courses and classes being offered in the forthcoming academic year must be finalised before the timetable can be prepared.

(10) Schools must finalise their course and class offerings for the forthcoming academic year in the curriculum management system as set out in the Timetabling Timeline.

(11) Courses being offered in the forthcoming academic year must be finalised in the Course Availability List (CAL) by the Timetabling Timeline.

(12) College Education and Innovation Officers will advise Timetable Officers of any new courses or programs approved by Academic Senate or any changes to current courses and programs.

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Finalisation of the TAFE Course and Class Offerings

(13) Classes being offered in the forthcoming academic year must be confirmed before timetables can be prepared. Schools must confirm their offerings for the forthcoming year by the date specified by the University Registrar.

(14) All classes must be entered into CLAMS.

(15) Head Teachers will advise the Timetable Officer, through the Director of the Campus, of any new subjects, modules or courses approved after this date.

Roll-Over Base Timetable Data

(16) Base data from the previous year's teaching activities will be rolled over at a date set by the University Registrar, to provide a foundation for the following year's timetable. This data will include courses, teaching activities, programs of study and student sets, but does not include times or rooms.

(17) The University Timetabling Coordinator will then adjust any core University events in the timetable (e.g. graduation ceremonies, examinations etc) in preparation for the forthcoming year's schedule and to accommodate changes between the years. This will ensure that new courses receive equal access to space and preferred teaching times, allowing space utilisation to be optimised and allow some management of traffic flow into and out of campuses.

(18) Timetable Officers will then be able to make adjustments to the activities for the coming year.

Validation of Initial Base Data

(19) Finalised course offerings (from NUSTAR and CLAMS) will be compared with roll-over timetable data to ensure consistency.

(20) Where discrepancies are identified, amendments will be made by the Timetable Officers to ensure it accurately reflects the offerings.

(21) Only course offerings that are on NUSTAR or CLAMS for the year in question will be timetabled in the University Timetabling System.

Review of Base Data

(22) The Timetable Officer will liaise with Schools regarding any changes to the following:

a. courses (alternatives and options);
b. classes (delivery structure, equipment and teaching requirements, variations to teaching week pattern); and
c. staffing (allocation to courses).

Collection of New Data

(23) Information relating to staffing availability will be provided to the Timetable Officers by the School Timetable Contact, using the Timetable data collection form. This information regarding availability can then be entered into the University Timetabling System.

(24) Casual staff placeholders can be used in the University timetabling system, if the actual staff member is not known.

Section 4 - Development of an Annual Timetable

(25) From the timetable preferences collected by the School Timetable Contact and provided to the Timetable Officers an annual timetable can be prepared. Due to demand for space Timetable Officers may need to utilise all core teaching hours.

(26) The Timetable should be prepared using the key principles as outlined in the University's Timetabling Policy.

(27) Use of the auto-timetable feature will then guide the preparation of the new timetable within the preferences already entered (e.g. academic availability, room preferences or location preferences).

(28) School preferences in respect to time and location of activities will be accommodated, wherever possible.

(29) Student sets will ensure that a clash-free timetable is developed for students, wherever possible.

Section 5 - Dispute Resolution

(30) In the event that a dispute arises in relation to timetabling or space usage, the Timetable Officers are expected to resolve the dispute considering the principles outlined in the University's Timetabling Policy.

(31) Resolution of disputes will also consider the following factors:

a. the needs of students;
b. the importance of the activity to the University;
c. the justification for requiring a specific location;
d. the justification for requiring a specific time;
e. the availability/unavailability of alternative teaching space/time;
f. the extent to which the alteration of existing arrangements will impact on other staff and students;
g. the need to consider sharing/turn-taking;
h. the use of specialist teaching spaces only for designated purposes (e.g. science laboratories);
i. the priority given to activities requiring specialised teaching facilities (e.g. media equipped lecture theatres);
j. the priority of access to larger facilities given to larger classes over smaller groups;
k. priority is given to activities which occupy large blocks of time (i.e. hours) over those which occupy small blocks of time; and
l. the need to provide students with reasonable adjustments unless this causes unjustifiable hardship.

(32) Disputes that cannot be resolved in the context of the principles listed above will be referred to the Senior Manager, Student Administration.

(33) Where agreement is not reached, the University Registrar in the first instance, or the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) will be responsible for resolving the disagreement.

Section 6 - Publication of Timetables and Changes

Official Timetable Publication

(34) The timetables for all teaching sessions held in the next year will be published at a date specified by the University Registrar. While the University endeavours to limit changes to its published timetables, changes may still occur.

(35) The University timetable will be published on the official University web pages only.

Timetable Changes

(36) Changes that impact the published timetable should be kept to a minimum. It is the responsibility of the School and College to ensure that information used to prepare the University timetable is accurate and subsequent changes to the published timetable are only made for valid reasons. Reasons for changes include:

a. unexpected staff turnover;
b. unexpected surge or decline in student numbers;
c. a location that is or becomes a health or safety risk;
d. an approved change in the Course Availability List (CAL);
e. a course is no longer deemed viable; and/or
f. reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with special needs.

(37) Requests are to be submitted using the Request to Amend Class Timetable Form.

(38) Requests for changes to TAFE offerings after the timetable is published will be submitted to the Timetable Officer by the Head Teacher, through the TAFE NSW Director of the Campus.

(39) Where changes occur, students will be notified of the change via the myTimetable system. Where changes occur with less than 24 hours notice Schools must advise students via the learning management system.

(40) A record of all changes with appropriate authorisations will be kept by the Timetable Officer for a minimum of 12 months from the date of authorisation.

Section 7 - Timetable Usage Monitoring and Review

(41) Once a timetable has been established and bookings confirmed, staff and students are expected to utilise facilities in accordance with the official timetable. This means that all classes should be conducted within the scheduled times. Teaching spaces will be vacated five minutes prior to the start of the next class to facilitate student movement.

(42) In situations where more than one party presents at a room to use it at the same time, the party that is booked on the University Timetabling System will be granted use of the room.

(43) Timetable data and actual usage of facilities will be subject to periodical evaluation by Infrastructure and Facilities Services. Therefore all parties should take care to ensure that the information supplied and their requirements are consistent and up-to-date. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that timetabled space is in fact required and has been utilised in accordance with stipulated booking requirements.

(44) When rooms are found to be unused, despite having a booking, the Head of School will be advised. The Course Co-ordinator will then be required to provide a justification for not using the space as booked.

(45) A second instance of an un-utilised room may result in all the bookings for that activity being cancelled for the remainder of the relevant term.

Section 8 - Non Teaching Room Booking Procedures

(46) Ad-hoc bookings are not intended to replace course or ‘ongoing’ teaching activities. Some regular School, College or Division activities such as research seminars, guest lectures, meetings and honours presentations may be

scheduled in appropriate locations using a multi-week booking via UoN Scientia Web Room Booking.

(47) Temporary and casual bookings for rooms that are included in the University's timetabling system and that are not already in use may be made for non-teaching purposes. Any member of staff who would like to use a room that appears to be free, and who has a valid reason for doing so, may use the on-line UoN Scientia Web Room Booking facility to make the request. Such requests will be considered by the Timetable Officer.

(48) The proposed use of University facilities by individuals, groups or organisations external to the University must be compatible with the University's mission and goals. Any enquiries and bookings should be referred to Infrastructure and Facilities Services before a commitment is made.

(49) Individuals or groups seeking to make a casual room booking for teaching spaces should contact Student Central.

(50) Requests for ad-hoc use of space that is allocated to a College should be approved if the room is available and poses no threat to the welfare of the occupant (e.g. biological, mechanical or chemical hazards (Refer to section 7 for more details)).

(51) Where the College has provided additional resources and equipment to a room, these resources should be used with care. The School should be notified of any breakages, missing equipment or faulty equipment during, or at the conclusion of the ad-hoc booking.

(52) Should the group with the casual room booking be responsible for the damage to resources, they may be requested to reimburse the College for repair or replacement. This request will be made by the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor.

Section 9 - Reporting Teaching and Learning Space Refurbishment and Maintenance

(53) Refurbishment of teaching and learning spaces is undertaken on a cyclical basis, and should be planned to fall outside core teaching times.

(54) Infrastructure and Facilities Services must send notification to the Senior Manager, Student Administration and University Timetabling Coordinator with as much notice as possible, of any unavailability of teaching spaces for the purposes of refurbishment or maintenance. This notification should include:

a. the location/s affected;
b. the dates/times affected;
c. the reason for the unavailability (for example, indicating if there are safety issues); and
d. the details of a contact person from Infrastructure and Facilities Services.

(55) A preliminary analysis of the impact of the unavailability of the teaching and learning space will be performed and one of the following courses of action will be followed:

a. where the impact is minimal and it is feasible to address the unavailability by rescheduling, relocating etc, this will be carried out and consultation will occur with all affected parties; or
b. where the impact appears to be considerable, but rescheduling or relocating is feasible, then this will be done in consultation with affected parties; or
c. when the impact is considerable and relocation or rescheduling is not feasible, and the work is considered urgent, consultation will be undertaken to consider other means of addressing the unavailability; affected parties will be advised of the outcome.

Section 10 - Teaching and Learning and Other Spaces Classification

(56) The University Timetabling Coordinator will maintain a list within the University Timetabling System, containing the location of all the spaces the University has designated for use in teaching and learning, meetings and conferences.

(57) Changes to locations, equipment, seating numbers or purpose must be clearly documented and provided to the University Timetabling Coordinator at the time that the change is completed. This applies to all spaces including specialist teaching spaces, allocated spaces and common teaching and Learning spaces. (Common Teaching Spaces are defined as general, non-specialised areas used for teaching and learning and other related activities by the academic community at large. Typical examples are lecture theatres, lecture rooms, tutorial/seminar rooms and the computing and information technology laboratories.)

Specialised Teaching Spaces

(58) Specialised Teaching Spaces are designated as teaching areas which provide specialist teaching facilities for use by the academic community at large. They are not suitable for lectures, tutorials or general teaching and learning functions.

(59) Control of such areas is vested in a specified School/College however their use is allocated using the University Timetabling System. The controlling School/College will have first preference in the allocation of these facilities.

(60) Such spaces are typically configured and equipped for teaching a particular discipline and are supported by specialised technical staff (for that discipline only). The space however, is available to all students and staff wishing to acquire or impart the particular knowledge and skills associated with the specialised functions of the space.

Restricted Specialised Teaching Spaces

(61) Restricted Specialised Teaching Spaces are areas intended for highly specialised use. Such areas are normally developed by specific Schools and controlled by them. The use of these locations will be scheduled via the University Timetabling System but they are available to the academic community only at the discretion of the controlling School/College.

(62) Specialised technical support is required for restricted specialised teaching spaces. This is to ensure that these facilities are configured or equipped in a manner to mitigate risks to staff and students working within these spaces and to ensure effective operation of their facilities.

(63) These spaces will not be available for ad-hoc bookings via UoN Scientia Web Room Booking, but will be available for bookings within the School via the Timetable Officer using the University Timetabling System.

Section 11 - Responsibilities

(64) The following bodies/positions have particular responsibilities in relation to timetabling:

a. The School is responsible for nominating a School Timetable Contact.
b. Student Central is responsible for coordinating the timetable process for the University. Timetable Officers oversee the collection and entry of data in the University Timetabling System and are responsible for final scheduling of the timetable, adhering to the principles outlined in the Timetabling Policy and to appropriate timelines. Timetable Officers will consult with the respective Associate Dean (Education) or Deputy Head of

College when timetabling issues require resolution.

c. There is a team of Timetable Officers who are responsible for coordinating the timetable process for the TAFE NSW classes.
d. The School Timetable Contact is responsible for the collection of the timetabling data for their School and reporting timetabling needs and requests to the Timetable Officer. The School Timetable Contact is the conduit between the Program Convenor, Course Co-ordinator and the Timetable Officer.

(65) The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that:

a. the information in the curriculum management system is correct;
b. accurate data is provided when the timetable is being prepared (including requests for reasonable adjustments for staff or students with disability);
c. liaising with the School Timetable Contact for timetabling needs.

(66) The Associate Director, Student and Academic Administration is responsible for:

a. timetabling formal examinations within the period designated for central exams;
b. publishing an examination timetable;
c. arranging appropriate rooms for students with a disability to undertake formal examinations; and
d. in consultation with Infrastructure and Facilities Services, auditing room usage and room requirements throughout the year.

(67) The University Timetabling Coordinator is responsible for:

a. rolling over base timetable data in preparation for the ensuing academic year;
b. ensuring all formal examination timetabling requests are catered for prior to the scheduling of classes;
c. liaising with Infrastructure and Facilities Services and Digital Technology Solutions; and
d. initiating negotiations when there is a conflict about the use of a particular space and/or the use of space at a particular time.

(68) Digital Technology Solutions provides a range of services to support teaching and learning at the University. These include:

a. audiovisual equipment services to classrooms and lecture theatres;
b. checking, maintenance and repair of audiovisual equipment in student learning areas;
c. support and administration of the University's video communications;
d. provision of security measures for University audiovisual equipment including library and computer laboratory video surveillance;
e. advice to Colleges and Schools on technology installations;
f. monitoring of physical maintenance (lights, seats, etc) of teaching areas;
g. Lectopia support and administration of the Lectopia video streaming system; and
h. notifying the University Timetabling Coordinator of any changes to equipment.

(69) Infrastructure and Facilities Services is responsible for:

a. coordinating the furniture and equipment requirements of staff and students with a disability, in collaboration with AccessAbility and Support, and the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Unit;
b. assisting with examination set up;
c. allocation and definition of space usage; and

d. notifying the University Timetabling Coordinator of any changes in the set up or capacity of space.

(70) AccessAbility and Support is responsible for advising:

a. the appropriate Timetable Officer of students registered as having particular needs so that reasonable adjustments can be made to room allocations; and
b. the staff within the Graduations and Examinations Units of those students who are registered as having specific needs for their examination.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	Bridene Doherty Senior Manager, Student Administration 0249215923 Student Central

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.

"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.

"Timetable data collection form" - The form used for the collection of data to inform the timetable, specifically regarding staff availability for the upcoming year.

"Base timetable data" - The data from the University Timetabling System that is retained from year to year. This data does not include variable data such as the time or location of classes but does include set up data such as student sets and activity templates.

"CLAMS" - The TAFE NSW's class management system.

"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.

"Course Availability List (CAL)" - The list of courses approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellors of the Colleges, and under some circumstances by the President of Academic Senate, for offer in a particular term.

"Draft timetable" - The timetable that is a work in progress available to staff only on the University website.

"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.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Program Convenor" - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

"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.

"Learning Management System" - The web-based system used to help facilitate online interactions between staff and students in their learning and teaching activities.