Timetabling Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Procedure supports the Timetabling Policy.

(2) This Procedure applies to all staff involved in timetabling and teaching at The University of Queensland.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to credential programs.

Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(4) The timetable is configured to create an optimal timetable for students, staff and the use of learning spaces using data that is:

a. derived from UQ systems, JAC, SI-NET and Archibus
b. maintained in the timetabling system by Timetabling Coordinators and obtained from relevant School and Faculty stakeholders.

(5) Course Coordinators, teaching staff and other relevant Faculty or School staff check individual timetables immediately after the preliminary release of the timetable and advise Timetabling Coordinator of any issues or concerns.

(6) Any change to the draft or final timetable beyond the authority of Timetable Services requires approval by:

a. the Associate Dean (Academic), or nominee, for the draft timetable
b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or nominee, for the final timetable.

(7) Changes made to the draft and final timetable will be audited, reviewed and reported to Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee (TLSEC) at least once per year.

Section 3 - Key Requirements

Part A - Class Timetabling

Timetabling System

(8) All synchronous activities related to the delivery of a course on a UQ site or online must be timetabled through the timetabling system.

(9) At shared sites such as hospitals the entire timetable must be maintained within a single system; in such cases, it may not be practicable for the allocation of University learning space to be recorded through UQ's timetabling system.

(10) Timetabled activities must not be scheduled on an ad hoc basis, except for one-off scheduled in-semester examinations.

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(11) Heads of School are responsible for the oversight of the correct application of Teaching Activity Types to timetabled activities.

Release of the Timetable

(12) A preliminary timetable will be provided to staff for review prior to the release of a draft timetable to students.

(13) A draft timetable will be published at a time that enables students to make informed decisions regarding course selection for the upcoming teaching period.

(14) The final timetable will be published to students on or before the opening of preferences per the date published on the Academic Calendar.

Enrolments and Central Learning Space Capacity

(15) Estimated course enrolments must be based on realistic enrolment projections supported by relevant data.

(16) A School may elect to exceed the official capacity of a learning space for low-attendance activities by up to 10%.

(17) If class enrolments exceed the official capacity of a learning space by more than 10%, Timetable Services must investigate alternative options in consultation with the School. Alternative options include:

a. requesting a larger learning space
b. video linking to another learning space or online
c. providing repeat sessions
d. investigating the allocation of students to alternative classes.

(18) Any overcrowding of learning spaces should be managed in accordance with the Use and Management of UQ Land, Buildings and Facilities Policy.

(19) Activities scheduled in learning spaces where enrolments are lower than the published seating capacity will be relocated to a more appropriately sized learning space by Timetable Services unless the Senior Manager, Examinations and Timetable Services deems there to be exceptional circumstances.

(20) Where School or Faculty learning space meets the required attributes, they will be prioritised for School and Faculty activities before being timetabled for other activities. This also applies to rooms of a specialist nature that have the capacity to be used as general rooms where necessary and appropriate.

Activity Times

(21) The minimum unit of time for activities is one (1) hour which comprises of fifty (50) minutes of class time followed by ten (10) minutes to facilitate change-over between activities.

(22) Activities must commence on the hour unless approved by the Senior Manager, Examinations and Timetable Services.

(23) Activities will be scheduled during evening teaching hours in any of the following circumstances:

a. when approved by the School for appropriate cohorts, e.g. postgraduate coursework with students engaged in full-time work
b. for undergraduate teaching, where:
    i. alternative timetable options are available for a student to select from; and
    ii. scheduling occurs as close to daytime hours as possible

c. where a staff member elects to be allocated to a scheduled evening activity
d. for one-off scheduled in-semester exams
e. where any required specialist equipment or technical or support staff are available.

(24) Activities will be scheduled on weekends where requested by the School with approval from the Faculty.

(25) Scheduling outside official teaching hours must be approved by an Associate Dean (Academic) except as set out in clause 24.

(26) No approval is needed for scheduling outside official teaching hours if the course structure necessitates that the activity falls outside the official teaching hours (e.g. field trips).

(27) Specific days and times will not be configured in timetabled central learning spaces without the prior approval of the Senior Manager, Examinations and Timetable Services.

Teaching Staff Availability and School Meetings

(28) Consistent with the operational requirements for producing the timetable set out in clause 37, academic staff with a workload allocation for teaching are expected to:

a. be available for teaching during daytime and evening teaching hours across their allocated study periods
b. prioritise scheduled teaching activities over other workload commitments during those allocated study periods.

(29) Allocation of teaching to weekend teaching hours must be by agreement between the Head of School and the affected staff member(s).

(30) To be declared unavailable during daytime or evening teaching hours, teaching staff are required to complete a teaching unavailability form under clause 31 or clause 32. The form must be submitted prior to the production of the preliminary timetable unless the Senior Manager, Examinations and Timetable Services deems there to be exceptional circumstances.

(31) Staff unavailability will be considered where the Head of School verifies that a staff member:

a. is absent on University approved leave on the relevant days or dates of the teaching period
b. is part time and does not attend work on the relevant days or dates of the teaching period
c. has an approved flexible working arrangement under the Flexible Work Policy that varies their weekly work pattern, including any workplace adjustment under the Disability Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustment for Staff Procedure which provides that the staff member is not at work on the relevant days, dates, times of the teaching period
d. is currently participating in a University approved suitable duties program, return to work program or receiving workplace rehabilitation support under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Procedure that limits their ability to teach on the relevant days or dates of the teaching period.

   A Head of School will not act unreasonably in approving unavailability under the circumstances above.

(32) Staff unavailability may also be considered and approved by the Head of School where the staff member:

a. is a parent or carer of a school-aged or younger child for time periods outside the operating hours of childcare or outside school hours care
b. has a workload allocation for research and a significant and on-going research commitment with an external party that is either fixed in time, or cannot reasonably be rescheduled

c. is an elected or ex-officio member who is required to attend Senate or Academic Board, or any of their Committees
d. is a casual employee and is the only specialist available that can teach an activity.

(33) School meetings required during teaching weeks can be considered by Timetable Services before the release of the draft timetable as follows:

a. one (1) general School meeting of up to two (2) hours duration per week
b. up to two (2) other School meetings (such as HDR Progress Reviews, Seminar Series) of up to two (2) hours duration each per week.

(34) Additional meetings cannot be requested during teaching weeks until the timetable is final and preferences are finalised.

(35) School meetings must commence on the even hour to allow flexibility for student centred changes to the timetable.

(36) School meetings allocated to a central learning space will be required to investigate alternative options if the space is required for teaching purposes.

Timetabling Scheduling Practices

(37) The timetable will be produced in accordance with:

a. the principles set out in the Timetabling Policy
b. the structure and design of courses
c. UQ operational requirements, encompassing functions related to students and staffing, and available resources.

(38) The staff and student constraints that will be considered and automated in the production of the timetable are to:

a. limit maximum contact hours per day
b. limit consecutive hours in activities to normally no more than four (4) hours
c. limit the span of hours per day (from start of first activity to the end of the last activity)
d. allow for days with no scheduled activities
e. minimise distance between timetabled activities
f. avoid movement between locations on the same day and, where unavoidable, allow appropriate travel time
g. assign teaching hours suitable for the program cohort.

(39) The learning space constraints considered and automated in the production of the timetable are to:

a. maximise the usage of learning spaces
b. ensure learning space capacity meets the size of the activity
c. ensure learning spaces have the attributes required for the activity
d. prioritise access to learning spaces with specific attributes required for activities.

(40) Timetable Services will analyse every stage when producing the timetable and make any necessary changes to the timetabling system.

(41) Timetabling Coordinators must ensure that intensive or irregular timetabled activities do not fall on public holidays during the preliminary phase of the timetable.

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(42) Ad hoc bookings for one-off scheduled in-semester examinations within standard official teaching times can only be considered by Timetable Services after the final timetable is open for preferences.

(43) Where a weekly activity falls on a public holiday, makeup classes can be considered by Timetable Services after the final timetable is open for preferences.

Timetable Changes

(44) Timetable Services may change the timetable at any time to:

a. delete an activity that is no longer required due to lower than projected course enrolments
b. add an activity where course enrolments exceed projections
c. change a learning space where course enrolment numbers exceed projections, which may require a change to the day or time of the activity
d. change a learning space where course enrolment numbers below projections, which may require a change to the day or time of the activity
e. accommodate required changes for professional and clinical practitioners with secondary employment
f. reduce the number of weeks the activity is scheduled to run, where approved
g. address safety hazards or undertake urgent repairs to a learning space
h. accommodate staff and students with accessibility needs, which may require a change to the day or time of the activity.

Changes to the Preliminary Timetable

(45) Course Coordinators, teaching staff and other relevant Faculty or School staff must review the preliminary timetable and may request changes from Timetable Services. Requests may only be made where:

a. the scheduled day or time does not meet specific activity requirements
b. the allocated learning space lacks required attributes
c. the total, consecutive or span of hours, or movement between locations on the same day, is unreasonable
d. a preferred day, time or learning space is available.

(46) To minimise disruption for students, preferences for alternative days, times or learning spaces under clause 45d. must only be requested before the draft timetable is released to students.

(47) Prior to making a timetabling change, Timetable Services will consider the learning space requirements of the activity and the impact on students and teaching staff.

Changes to the Draft Timetable

(48) Changes to the draft timetable released to students must be kept to a minimum to enable students to make informed decisions that best fit their academic interests as well as their work and life commitments.

(49) Requests to change the draft timetable that may be approved by the Associate Dean (Academic), or nominee, include:

a. a late course offering
b. changes to course delivery (i.e. mode of delivery, duration of activity, lecture/tutorial changed to lecture/tutorial/practical)
c. changes necessitated by the sudden unavailability of a scheduled staff member, e.g. a medical emergency.

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Changes to the Final Timetable

(50) Requests to change the final timetable must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or nominee, and must include:

a. details of the extenuating circumstances
b. a proposed solution which identifies the least impact on students
c. the total number of students impacted, including those impacted by a related change.

(51) All stakeholders impacted by changes after the final timetable is open for preferences, such as enrolled students and teaching staff must be notified of the change by staff within the School or Faculty.

(52) When a change has been made within twenty-four (24) hours prior to the activity taking place, appropriate signage must be displayed by Timetable Services (or assigned staff) at the relevant learning space/s to notify students of the revised timetable. Signage must also be removed at the end of the activity.

Timetable Issues Resolution

(53) Where there are conflicting requirements for the same resource between two or more Schools, Timetable Services will resolve the outcome in consultation with the relevant Senior Manager, Academic Services or School Manager.

Part B - Booking of Learning Space

Central Learning Space

(54) Ad hoc booking requests for central learning space during daytime teaching hours in teaching weeks are not normally considered until semester starts.

(55) Ad hoc booking requests for central learning space during evenings and weekends within teaching weeks can be considered at any time, noting that clause 57 will apply.

(56) If an important University event requires early confirmation of learning space availability during teaching weeks, written approval by a member of the Senior Executive or Senior Management within the Faculty must be submitted to the Senior Manager, Examinations and Timetable Services with the booking request.

(57) If a timetabled activity needs to be changed, the relocation of the timetabled activity will take priority over any ad hoc room booking previously confirmed.

(58) Any set up or pack down time required as part of a booking, must be incorporated in the requested booking times.

(59) Ad hoc bookings must conclude ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled end time.

(60) Staff may not request the use of central learning space on behalf of third parties external to the University looking to run events on UQ campuses or sites.

(61) Registered student groups and external clients wishing to hire centrally controlled teaching spaces are subject to application under the Third Party Hire of UQ Land, Buildings and Facilities Policy and required to agree to set terms and conditions available from the Public Room Booking Request form.

(62) A schedule of hire charges applies for the use of central learning spaces by the public and is available from the Public Room Booking Request form.

School, Faculty and Institute Bookable Space

(63) Learning spaces not controlled centrally may be made available for ad hoc room bookings at the discretion of the organisational unit once the final timetable is open for preferences.

Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

(64) Timetable Services is responsible for:

a. determining the annual business process calendar to ensure appropriate timeframes for producing the timetable and its timely release to staff and students
b. managing timetable production, including supporting the central timetabling system
c. overseeing and managing changes to the timetable
d. considering requests for makeup classes and ad hoc central learning space bookings
e. resolving timetabling issues where necessary
f. reporting to the Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee (TLSEC) as required
g. arranging signage where the timetable is changed within 24 hours of a scheduled activity.

(65) Timetabling Coordinators are responsible for:

a. liaising with Faculties and constituent Schools to understand and accommodate their timetable needs
b. estimating class enrolments and student pathways through core and common course combinations in conjunction with Faculties, Schools and other organisational units
c. ensuring relevant data used to produce the timetable is maintained in the timetabling system
d. receiving and configuring teaching staff unavailability and School meetings in the timetabling system
e. analysing the preliminary timetable with relevant staff, making necessary changes, and receiving and considering requests for preferred changes from teaching staff.

(66) Executive and managerial staff within each Faculty and School are responsible for:

a. ensuring the academic requirements of their programs and courses are accurately identified in the relevant systems
b. communicating any planned changes to course offerings to Timetable Services, in a timely manner
c. approving change requests to the draft timetable
d. allocating teaching staff to all activities, including casual staff to activities which are not taught by permanent staff members.

(67) Course Coordinators are responsible for:

a. providing accurate data to produce the timetable, including activity relativity, activity size, activity duration, learning space requirements and week patterns
b. reviewing the preliminary timetable and identifying necessary changes for Timetable Services
c. referring student or staff issues to Timetabling Coordinators for resolution.

(68) Teaching staff are responsible for:

a. checking individual timetables immediately after the release of the preliminary timetable and advising Course

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Coordinators of any issues or concerns.

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(69) The Academic Registrar will periodically review the effectiveness of this Procedure which may include as needs consideration of any of the following:

a. relevant data
b. local business or operating processes
c. issues identified through feedback.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(70) In addition to the requirements of the Information Management Policy and Privacy Policy, details of all activities related to the delivery of a course are recorded in the timetabling system.

(71) Timetable Services will provide reports to Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee (TLSEC) as required.

Section 7 - Appendix

Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
Academic Calendar	The official University calendar, comprising information about the academic use of the year, including semesters and other teaching periods.
Activity Size	The number of students enrolled in a timetabled activity.
Ad Hoc Bookings	Activities that are allocated to central learning space, usually once semester starts.
Business Process Calendar	A calendar of timetable production activities, milestones and deadlines.
Central Learning Space	Learning space that is managed by Timetable Services that is allocated to timetabled activities in UQ’s higher education programs according to requirements.
Class Allocation System	The system that allows students to plan, preference and allocate to available classes to produce a personalised timetable.
Draft Timetable	The working iteration of the timetable published to students after changes to the preliminary timetable from staff.
Final Timetable	The final timetable published to students at the start of preferencing.
Intensive Activity	A timetabled activity that is taught in a continuous block of time over a shorter week pattern.
Learning Space Capacity	The official number of students who can be accommodated in a learning space.
Official Teaching Hours	Daytime teaching hours are between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday Evening teaching hours are between 6pm and 10pm, Monday to Friday Weekend teaching hours are between 8am and 6pm, Saturday and Sunday.
Preliminary Timetable	The working iteration of the timetable published to Staff for checking prior to the release of the draft timetable for students.
Repeat Activities	Activities of the same type with one or more options for students to choose from.

Term	Definition
School Controlled Learning Space	Learning space that is managed by the relevant School or Faculty.
Synchronous Activities	Teaching and learning activities occurring in real time often within a set time in a physical or virtual space, in contrast to asynchronous learning where activities are available to access at any time.
Teaching Weeks	Official semester and other teaching periods as identified in the Academic Calendar.
Timetabling Coordinators	Timetable Services staff embedded in Faculties.
Timetable Services	The unit within Academic Services Division (ASD) that manages the use of central learning spaces and coordinates the production and release of timetables.
Timetabling System	The central system that uses data and constraints to produce a timetable.

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