

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK**  
**PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURES FOR SPACE MANAGEMENT**

February 2020

## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 The University of Limerick is committed to the development and maintenance of suitable accommodation to provide students, academic and administrative staff with suitable space to perform university-related activities.
- 1.2 Space is assigned to faculties, divisions, departments, research centres etc based on the needs of the Unit and the availability of space. All space is the property of the University and at its discretion the University have the right to reclaim and reallocate space as necessary based on the needs and changing demands and priorities of the University.
- 1.3 In order to obtain optimum utilization of space, all University space must be used in a responsible manner and in accordance with the strategic interests of the University.
- 1.4 The University regards space as a critical asset and will continually monitor its utilisation against the strategic priorities of the University in order to maximise the use of all available space. This will encourage users to actively manage their space, minimise user demand and lead to the release of unneeded space.
- 1.5 It is intended that all Units will, where practicable, be assigned space which provides physical cohesion and avoids multi-location of offices and related facilities.
- 1.6 A Space Management Committee will be established by the Executive Committee to ensure compliance with the principles of space provision and usage as set out in the Protocol and Procedures for Space management.
- 1.7 The Space Management Committee is responsible for the development and approval of proposals for the provision, allocation, withdrawal and reallocation of accommodation in accordance with agreed strategic objectives. The Committee will principally aim to ensure that large tranches of vacant or under-utilised space are re-allocated based on the strategic priorities of the University as a whole.
- 1.8 The Buildings and Estates Department is responsible for the day-to-day allocation of space and for the implementation of the University's space policy.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1 Space covered by the policy includes:
  - Teaching space including lecture theatres, classrooms, laboratories and computer rooms.
  - Office and related space (including open plan areas) for faculty, support staff, researchers and visitors.

- Research laboratory areas including preparation and other associated space.

2.2 Space not covered by the policy includes:

- Student Residences
- Student Centre
- Catering Facilities
- Library (excluding offices)
- Millstream Common Room
- University Arena
- Plant and Maintenance Facilities
- Research Stations controlled by Vice President Research

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCEDURES**

3.1 The University will maintain a detailed space inventory of its facilities. Space will be categorised by allocation, assignment, description, management utilisation etc. The Buildings and Estates Department will develop and review policies and procedures for updating this inventory and for disseminating this information to relevant parties at the University.

3.2 Requests for space will be facilitated in line with the policy objectives in the Policy Statement.

### **4. SPACE DEVELOPMENT AND RECONFIGURATION**

4.1 The Buildings and Estates Department (B&E) is responsible for overseeing the building and renovation of all university space.

4.2 Proposals for any change of use, development or alteration must be initially discussed with B&E and no work should commence without the prior agreement of B&E. This will apply in all cases including proposed changes in use or occupancy within units, access to buildings and introduction of restricted security systems.

4.3 B&E will engage in continuous analysis and surveys to determine the optimum assignment of current space, plan for future space needs and identify and recommend solutions to space problems such as poor utilisation and the sharing of space to reduce duplication etc.

4.4 As a general rule B&E will, after appropriate consultation with interested parties, make decisions on space development, alteration and allocation. If circumstances arise where there is significant disagreement between B&E and a Faculty/Division concerning major developments or alterations, then the matter may be referred to the Space Management Committee. The decision of the Committee will be final.

## **5. TEACHING SPACE**

- 5.1 New programme proposals and modifications to existing programmes must specify teaching space requirements in documentation presented to APRC. Information on new academic programmes and departments and the retiring of programmes will be forwarded to B&E for assessment of space implications.
- 5.2 A database of space available for central scheduling will be maintained and reviewed annually. The VPA&R will determine, in consultation with interested parties, which additional space should be available to central scheduling. Space will not be removed from the schedule without the agreement of the VPA&R.
- 5.3 The VPA&R will be consulted when the provision of additional teaching space is planned in new buildings or refurbished space and will agree on the optimal use of this space. Proposals for new buildings or reconfiguration of existing space will give consideration to teaching space capacities in order to optimise the potential for scheduling purposes.
- 5.4 Units must adopt a flexible approach to use of potential teaching space. In particular, consideration must be given to minimising the amount of laboratory areas which are considered 'dedicated' rather than multi-functional.
- 5.5 Academic departments must ensure that systems are in place to ensure accuracy when submitting teaching space requests. Specifically, faculty should specify if a room is required for only a limited number of weeks in semester and requirements should be assessed for each semester rather than relying on information from previous years. This will capture any changes which have been made to module delivery modes and will identify the consequences this might have on the availability of teaching rooms, laboratories and associated space.
- 5.6 Audits will be carried out as appropriate to determine classroom usage during semesters.
- 5.7 To enable effective use of campus facilities during the summer vacation for conference and events, PCC will manage the use of all meeting space for this period. Campus Community requirements for these facilities during this period should be requested through the PCC office. In addition, B&E may require access to teaching access between semesters and during the summer break to facilitate planned maintenance and upgrading. This will be planned in conjunction with PCC for the summer period, and with the relevant Faculties, Departments and other units for periods outside the teaching semester and summer vacation period.

## **6. OFFICE SPACE**

- 6.1 The Buildings and Estates Department will endeavour to find appropriate office space for faculty and staff. In order to optimise office usage, it is

necessary to maintain accurate records and projections of office occupancy and availability. Units are required to forward information on recruitment, sabbatical leave, retirements, long term sick leave etc.

- 6.2 In order to facilitate physical proximity and minimise multi-location, priority will be given to the allocation of vacated offices to faculty/staff in adjacent units.
- 6.3 Refurbishment works to office spaces are carried out as necessary. Occupants may be required to temporarily vacate to an alternative office location to facilitate these works. When office space is refurbished, standard office furniture, fittings, decor etc. will be provided. Faculty and staff are not permitted to refurbish offices without prior approval from the Buildings and Estates Department via the Minor Works process. Approval for such work is at the discretion of the Director of Buildings and Estates
- 6.4 The HR recruitment pack will include a section indicating whether a post will require additional office accommodation. HR will make monthly returns to B&E including details on units, level of posts etc.
- 6.5 Offices assigned to faculty/staff who are on long-term sick leave may be utilised by B&E for other faculty/staff where the need arises. Once notification is received that the original occupant of the office is returning to work, then the office will be vacated by the temporary occupant.
- 6.6 HR will provide information on retirees, and in instances where contracts have terminated, to B&E. Offices or desk space occupied by faculty and staff who retire or whose employment has terminated will revert to B&E not later than 5 working days following retirement/contract end date. Retirees and former employees have no entitlement to office or desk space save in exceptional circumstances where approved by Buildings & Estates.
- 6.7 HR will notify B&E when faculty/staff are going on sabbatical or other long-term leave. The utilisation of the office during the period of absence will be agreed between the unit manager and B&E. If agreement is not possible, B&E will decide on the appropriate use. Offices cannot be left vacant while faculty/staff are on such leave.
- 6.8 It is intended, where possible, that faculty and senior staff will be provided with individual office space. Where practicable, Senior Research Fellows will be assigned individual offices but individuals with contracts at Research Fellow and below will be expected to share office space.

## **7 RESEARCH SPACE**

- 7.1 Research stations in specified locations are controlled by the VP Research.
- 7.2 Faculties and departments are encouraged to accommodate and develop research activity in existing assigned space. It is expected that all applications below €1m will be accommodated within existing assigned space. For

applications over €1m, space requirement details will be required to be incorporated in the application form. The project proposal authorisation applications form will include a section on space and this information will be supplied to B&E. This will facilitate early planning for successful proposals.

- 7.3 The Research Office process for the establishment of new Research Institutes and Centres will incorporate input from Building & Estates to ensure that any new space requirements identified for these initiatives can be assessed by the appropriate group(s) at the University. Proposals which identify a major impact on space should include a plan, agreed with Buildings & Estates, to address the impact in the submission for approval by the Space Management Committee.