

Timetabling and Room Booking Policy

Contents

1. Introduction 1
1.1 Purpose 1
1.2 Scope 1
1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply? 1
1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply? 1
1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored? 1
1.3 Definitions 2
2. Context 3
2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context 3
2.2 Other Context 3
3. Policy Statements 3
3.1 General Principles for Timetabling 3
3.2 Principles for Class Timetabling 3
3.3 Principles for Room Booking (including *ad hoc* room booking) 4
3.4 Principles for Change 4
3.4.1 Data Requirement Change 4
3.4.2 Post-publication Change 5
3.4.3 Exceptional Circumstances 5
4. Roles and Responsibilities 6
4.1 Governance 6
4.2 Stakeholders 6
4.3 Scheduling & Examinations Team (Academic Registry) 6
4.4 Building & Estates 6
4.5 Scheduling Coordinators and HoDs 6
4.6 Academic/Teaching Staff 7
4.7 Students 7
4.8 Information Technology Division (ITD) 7
4.9 UL Global 7
4.10 Management Planning and Reporting 8
4.11 Admitting Offices 8
4.12 Cooperative Education & Careers Division 8
5. Related Documents 8
6. Document Control 8

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Timetabling and Room Booking Policy is to set out the principles by which the centrally scheduled class timetable is produced and room bookings managed. It also documents the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the process of creating the timetable. A Timetabling and Room Booking Procedures document will support this policy and should be read in conjunction.

This policy aims to:

- Operate across all activities a fair and transparent procedure that prioritises attendance and space utilisation and supports a positive student experience within an appropriate learning environment
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all those involved in the centralised class scheduling and room booking processes
- Ensure that the class timetable is delivered in a timely manner to staff and students through efficient processes that minimise duplication of effort, resources and late changes
- Reduce the risks associated with current and future class timetabling processes and procedures
- Advance human rights, equality, diversity and inclusion in line with university policies. This policy will aim to foster consistency and adopt common approaches where these serve the best interests of students and staff and ensure compliance with UL's public sector duty requirements.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all UL staff, associates, students and contractors who either use or support the creation and delivery of the centrally scheduled class timetable and room booking processes.

1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all situations where a module has been centrally scheduled by Academic Registry for a lecture, laboratory or tutorial as well as other practical sessions across UL. The policy also applies to all instances of room bookings that are handled by Academic Registry Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

It is the responsibility of the Office of the Provost & Deputy President to ensure that this policy is implemented as approved. It is the responsibility of all deans and heads of department/school (HoD) within the faculties and heads of the units referred to in section 4 to ensure compliance with responsibilities and timelines that lie within their remit in relation to this policy.

1.3 Definitions

1.	Centrally managed teaching space	Spaces that are managed centrally by Academic Registry
2.	Centrally scheduled	Modules that are scheduled by Academic Registry
3.	Concurrent scheduling	Two or more timetable events scheduled for the same day/time, such as a series of lectures that happen at the same time
4.	Co-scheduled	The scheduling of students from different modules to be taught together, at the same time and in the same room, such as a joint lecture for students from different courses. It could be for some or all of the module contact hours.
5.	Data gathering	The process of gathering all scheduling requirements, including staff availability and classroom requirements
6.	Event	An individual scheduled lecture, laboratory or tutorial
7.	Locally managed teaching space	Laboratory teaching spaces that are managed locally by departments/schools.
8.	Non-standard requirements	A request by academic staff for a scheduling requirement that falls outside of standard parameters or requires manual set-up
9.	Orderings	The order in which module events will be scheduled across the teaching week
10.	Post-data-gathering changes	Changes requested after data gathering has been completed
11.	Post-publication changes	Changes requested after the timetable has been published
12.	Reasonable accommodations	Timetable arrangements to facilitate staff or students with mobility challenges
13.	Requirements	Specifications added to events, courses, students, group of students or teaching staff. Includes items such as co-scheduled modules, groupings and orderings. – Hard requirement: A requirement that cannot be broken during scheduling – Soft requirement: A requirement that may be broken during scheduling
14.	Scheduler	The member of the Scheduling & Examinations team (Academic Registry) responsible for creating the timetable
15.	Scheduling coordinator	The designated academic unit staff member who takes responsibility for completing the data-gathering process and acts as liaison with the Scheduling & Examinations team
16.	Standard requirements	A request by academic staff for a scheduling requirement that falls within standard parameters, i.e. can be scheduled freely from Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm and requires no manual set-up of requirements

2. Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has developed a maturity model and performance metrics on the use of space. One of the themes of the maturity model is policy and governance and, accordingly, the HEA recommends that each higher education institution publish its own policies that specify the governance structure and roles and responsibilities relating to the use of space within the institution. This Timetabling and Room Booking Policy complies with that recommendation in relation to the use of teaching space.

2.2 Other Context

This policy was developed as part of the Class Timetabling Project and Academic Transformation of the Operating Model Project. During the comparative analysis stage of the former, it was identified that there was no policy in place to support class timetabling within UL.

This policy is supported by the UL Space Management Committee in relation to teaching space.

This policy supports UL's Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and related policies.

3. Policy Statements

3.1 General Principles for Timetabling

1. Timetabling is conducted in line with the published timetabling procedures and Academic Calendar.
2. Two timetables will be published annually, one for Autumn and one for Spring.
3. Centrally scheduled teaching activities are timetabled during Teaching Weeks 1–12 of the Autumn and Spring semesters in accordance with the Academic Calendar. Teaching may be scheduled outside of these weeks where such requirements have been noted at Academic Programme Review Committee.
4. Core teaching hours are 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.
5. Teaching will not be scheduled during the Easter break.
6. Teaching will be scheduled, where requested, during the evening and weekends.
7. Teaching activity is scheduled in a manner that uses UL teaching space as effectively as possible.
8. The timetable is published in a timely manner to all staff and students.
9. Teaching events will be scheduled, where possible, in accordance with the requirements submitted during the data-gathering process.
10. The timetabling process will be consistent, transparent and student-focused to support teaching excellence and staff research time.
11. The timetabling process will provide all students and staff with an equal opportunity to attend their scheduled events and support reasonable accommodations.
12. A cohesive approach is taken to class timetabling and room booking.
13. The timetabling process will ensure that accurate and appropriate timetable and room booking information is provided to students and staff in an appropriate format.

3.2 Principles for Class Timetabling

1. Requirements should be carefully considered, and only those essential to module or course delivery should be submitted to avoid unduly restricting scheduling flexibility.

2. Post-data-gathering changes to requirements must be justified by significant reasons, such as accessibility needs or essential staff availability.
3. To reduce complexity, the number of non-standard scheduling requests should be minimised. Only essential non-standard requirements will be accommodated.
4. Only modules that indicate a requirement for central scheduling during the Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) process as per published deadlines will be included in the central class timetable.
5. The scheduling process will strictly adhere to the lecture, laboratory and tutorial contact hours as approved through the APRC process, and these hours cannot be modified by the scheduling team.
6. Whole-class sessions, such as lectures delivered to all students simultaneously, will be given priority in the sequencing of room allocation. Tutorial and laboratory sessions will be scheduled around these allocations.
7. Classes will be scheduled in rooms based on capacity to optimise the use of high-demand rooms and where possible, in accordance with the requirements submitted during the data-gathering process.
8. Classes will be scheduled, where possible, in the laboratory spaces requested.
9. The Scheduler will endeavour to minimise the distance students or staff need to travel between class venues.*
10. In consultation with the relevant academic department, the Scheduler will endeavour to provide appropriate travel times for students when off-campus class attendance is required.*
11. Where approved by APRC, modules or programmes will be scheduled online or in a blended format.

*While the Scheduler will endeavour to apply these principles, it may not be possible to accommodate them in all cases for every student or member of teaching staff.

3.3 Principles for Room Booking (including *ad hoc* room booking)

1. Classrooms managed by central scheduling will be available to book during Autumn and Spring.
2. Classrooms will be released for room bookings on a week-by-week basis while post-timetable publication changes are being processed. Once all required changes have been completed, classrooms are released for room bookings for the remainder of the semester.
3. Outside of Autumn and Spring, room bookings are managed solely by Plassey Campus Centre.
4. The Building & Estates Department will have final authority for approving out-of-hours and external room bookings. Requests must be submitted through the designated online system at least two weeks in advance of the date to be booked.

3.4 Principles for Change

3.4.1 Data Requirement Change

The cut-off dates and timelines for the submission of data requirements are outlined in the Timetabling and Room Booking Procedures document. It is critical that data requirements are submitted in a timely manner and are as accurate as possible. Changes after these dates will be made only in exceptional circumstances. (See section 3.4.3 for list of exceptional circumstances.)

Requests for change after the requirements cut-off date and pre-publication should be approved as follows.

Type of change	Requested by	Approval required
Staff name change	Scheduling Coordinator	n/a
Any change that requires a change to room or time allocation	Scheduling Coordinator/HoD	Faculty Dean

3.4.2 Post-publication Change

To provide certainty for students and staff, changes to the published timetable should be made only in exceptional circumstances (section 3.4.3).

Post-publication changes will be accepted only within two weeks of the start of the relevant semester. Academic units are responsible for informing staff and students of changes to their timetables.

In the event of a clash between central and local scheduled events, the central schedule shall take precedence over the local schedule.

Requests for change post-publication should be approved as follows:

Type of change	Requested by	Approval required
Staff name change (where there is no other impact on the timetable)	Scheduling Coordinator/HoD	Faculty Dean
Any change that requires a change to room or time allocation for one or more cohorts	HoD/Academic Registry	Provost

3.4.3 Exceptional Circumstances

The following circumstances are accepted as being exceptional:

- Late changes to accessibility requirements for staff or students
- Changes in the availability of staff who are essential to class delivery (e.g. staff who, for various reasons, no longer work in UL)
- Actual student numbers exceed or are significantly less than the capacity of the allocated room

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governance

- The Timetabling and Room Booking Policy is owned by the Provost & Deputy President and approved by Academic Council
- The Space Management Committee will be consulted on matters relating to the utilisation of teaching space and changes to the use or availability of rooms, as required.
- The Timetabling and Room Booking Policy and associated timetabling procedures will be managed by the Scheduling & Examinations team in Academic Registry.

4.2 Stakeholders

- Stakeholders have responsibility for conducting timetabling activities within the parameters of this policy and its associated timetabling procedures and timelines.
- Should data or timetable changes be required, all staff will work collectively in line with this policy and associated procedures to address issues in a manner that has the least possible impact on students.

4.3 Scheduling & Examinations Team (Academic Registry)

The Scheduling & Examinations team is responsible for:

- Coordinating the creation of and executing the Autumn and Spring central teaching timetable and room bookings
- Ensuring timetabling is conducted according to this policy
- Creating, disseminating and updating all centrally scheduled timetable information
- Monitoring compliance with timetabling principles, including data submission deadlines and post-publication change requests
- Providing support, as required, to academic unit staff in relation to training on timetabling process and system usage
- Maintaining the timetabling system
- Overseeing and granting permission to obtain access to the timetabling system, including ensuring that all active user accounts are maintained as appropriate

4.4 Building & Estates

The Building & Estates Department is responsible for:

- Managing and maintaining the built aspects of the teaching space
- Consulting with the Scheduler on the availability of teaching space and facilities and on room capacities in line with the UL Protocol and Procedures for Space Management
- Monitoring and providing feedback on utilisation rates across the centrally scheduled and locally scheduled spaces
- Responding to teaching staff requests relating to teaching space access, seating and ventilation

4.5 Scheduling Coordinators and HoDs

Scheduling coordinators and HoDs are responsible for:

- Representing and coordinating timetabling activity with their academic unit in response to timelines for timetable preparation and agreed timetabling processes

- Submitting to the Scheduler complete and accurate requirements via the data collection system as per the timelines in the Timetabling and Room Booking Procedures document
- Resolving minor timetable issues locally within the requirements of this policy
- Informing teaching staff and students of any changes to their published timetable
- Promptly informing the Scheduler of rooms that are no longer required

4.6 Academic/Teaching Staff

Academic/teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring they communicate their complete and accurate teaching requirements to the relevant scheduling coordinator in accordance with the timetable process and agreed timelines
- Being available for teaching during the designated teaching weeks, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm
- Reporting any issues with assigned teaching space, equipment or access to the relevant unit, such as Buildings & Estates (e.g. lighting/ventilation), ITD (e.g. AV issues) or Scheduling & Examinations (e.g. student with mobility challenges in unsuitable room)
- Promptly reviewing and confirming to scheduling coordinators any issues with timetable details for their modules

Where applicable, course directors will provide student numbers or module combinations for particular courses (e.g. Common Entry programme, denominated programme, five-year master's, etc.) to the Scheduler in accordance with the timetable process and agreed timelines.

4.7 Students

Students are responsible for:

- Completing registration and module selection by the required deadline(s)
- Where necessary, liaising with Disability Support Services as early as possible to advise of any special arrangements or requirements
- Checking the published timetable for accuracy and again before the semester starts and promptly reporting any issues or clashes to the Module Leader
- Being available for classes, labs or tutorials during the designated teaching weeks, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm

4.8 Information Technology Division (ITD)

ITD is responsible for:

- Providing AV maintenance and support, lecture theatre support and AV Design Services in ITD-maintained teaching spaces (as outlined in the ITD Service Catalogue)
- Maintaining supporting and enhancing bespoke timetabling systems (ASCS, timetable.ul.ie, associated workflows, timetabling system integrations), including service availability, disaster recovery and planned upgrades

4.9 UL Global

UL Global is responsible for:

- Providing a list of Mobility students' top module preferences to the Scheduler to assist with forecasting

- Advising the Scheduler in a timely manner of any expected increase in Mobility student numbers

4.10 Management Planning and Reporting

The Management Planning and Reporting section of the Finance Department prepare data on the approved target intake numbers for undergraduate and taught postgraduate first-year students for the next academic year. This data is made available to the Scheduling & Exams team.

4.11 Admitting Offices

The Admitting offices are responsible for providing to the Scheduling & Examinations team, in a timely manner, estimates and regular updates of expected intake numbers of students for the next academic year.

4.12 Cooperative Education & Careers Division

The Cooperative Education & Careers Division is responsible for advising the Scheduler of the numbers of students unplaced for Cooperative Education for both Spring and Autumn semesters in line with the Timetabling and Room Booking Procedures.

Note: The above list of roles and responsibilities is not exhaustive and can be expanded or modified.

5. Related Documents

- Timetabling and Room Booking Procedures
- UL's Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and related policies
- ITD Service Catalogue
- UL Protocol and Procedures for Space Management

6. Document Control

Document Version	Version 1.0
Document Owner	Provost & Deputy President
Approved by	Executive Committee
Date	25 March 2026
Approved by	Academic Council
Date	24 June 2026
Approved by	Governing Authority
Date	22 September 2026
Effective Date	01 September 2026
Scheduled Review Date	22 September 2027