

Timetabling of Teaching and Learning Space Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This document outlines University policy on the timetabling and ad hoc booking of space for teaching and learning activities. The primary objectives in implementing a University-wide timetable are to produce a timetable that is equitable, effective and complete; takes into account the needs of both students and staff; and maximises the efficient use of space and resources.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy deals primarily with the booking of space which is allocated for the core University business of teaching. Application covers:

- a. all campuses
- b. all programs
- c. all members of the University community

(3) The Policy may provide from time to time for the timetabling of meeting and/or training space for teaching and learning purposes in cases of emergency.

(4) The Policy does not cover:

- a. the University's determination of what space will be used for what purposes;
- b. class and/or tutorial allocations to individual students;
- c. allocation of office or other facilities to postgraduate and higher degree students;
- d. booking of University properties which are managed by Residential Services.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(5) All space at La Trobe University is owned by the University and managed on its behalf by delegated areas.

- a. Central non-specialist teaching and learning spaces are available equally to teaching areas on a shared access basis.
- b. Non-specialist teaching and learning spaces managed by an academic organisational unit (as the principal user) will be booked to that unit as the first priority, and only then made available to the rest of the University community equally.
- c. Specialist teaching and learning spaces managed by an academic organisational unit will be booked only to that unit. Access by others may be only by negotiation with, and permission of, the academic organisational unit responsible for the space.

(6) The University timetable is constructed for students. Timetabling and room bookings will be coordinated to achieve optimal utilisation of all teaching and learning spaces to enhance the student learning experience. The timetable will always be constructed such that a seat will be available for every enrolled student in the timetabled offering. The timetable must enable students enrolled in an award program to:

- a. attend all core subjects in the order prescribed by the course structure;
- b. take combinations of core subjects and subjects that contribute to majors or specialisations or the equivalent, also in the order prescribed by the course structure;
- c. have access to a reasonable selection of the available electives; and
- d. complete a standard program structure in minimum time.

(7) Timetabling processes will be based on the intersection of three main elements:

- a. academic staff availabilities;
- b. subject offerings; and
- c. availability of teaching and learning space.

(8) The Provisional Timetable for any given year must be published by 1 October of the preceding year and the Final Timetable published on the first University working day after 1 January. When changes to the timetable are considered, the interests of students and the accessibility of core subjects will be primary determinants.

(9) Teaching sessions will be timetabled on the basis of priorities and constraints set out in the Timetabling of Teaching and Learning Space Procedures. Where necessary, manual adjustments may be made to the timetable according to criteria and processes set out in the Procedures.

(10) Only subject offerings that have been accredited by the official University processes determined by the Academic Board from time to time and that are deemed to be offered in the forthcoming academic year will be timetabled for that period.

Classes may be scheduled at any time during core teaching hours as defined in this Procedure.

(11) The University's core business requirements for teaching and learning spaces take precedence over other uses. Teaching and learning spaces that are not required for University teaching and learning activities may be booked for other purposes according to the criteria and processes set out in the Timetabling of Teaching and Learning Space Procedures. These purposes must be compatible with the University's mission and goals, and the individuals, groups or organisations booking the space must comply with all relevant University policies and procedures. No adjustment to the academic timetable will be made to accommodate non-teaching and learning activities, except in exceptional circumstances.

Section 4 - Procedure

(12) These Procedures define the process for the development, implementation and ongoing management of student timetables through the optimal and equitable booking of teaching and learning spaces for delivery of the University's award programs and associated teaching and learning activities.

(13) These Procedures apply to the production and ongoing maintenance of University timetables of all teaching activities at all campuses of La Trobe University; to students enrolled; and to staff who are teaching those activities.

Delegated Responsibilities for Teaching and Learning Space

(14) The University has delegated responsibilities for teaching and learning space as follows:

Vice-President (Administration)	Act as final arbiter in the case of disputes over the allocation of teaching and learning space that cannot be resolved at local level.
Infrastructure and Operations Division	<p>Designate central teaching and learning space.</p> <p>Ensure that teaching spaces meet regulatory compliance requirements (i.e. that they are accessible to staff and students with mobility and physical disabilities and meet occupational health and safety standards).</p> <p>Allocate space to organisational units.</p> <p>Set the room capacity and layout for all University teaching and learning space.</p> <p>Furnish central teaching and learning space (e.g. general furniture, window furnishings, fixed instructional equipment such as whiteboards or noticeboards).</p> <p>Advise of any changes to Space Utilisation and Occupancy Target Rates.</p> <p>Refurbish and generally maintain teaching and learning space.</p> <p>Audit room usage across the University and advise central Timetable Unit of any issues.</p>
Executive Director, Student Services and Administration	<p>Maintain overall responsibility for timetabling processes. Resolve matters associated with timetable clashes or room disputes that cannot be resolved by the Timetable Unit.</p> <p>Present a review report to the Education Committee on an annual basis, including recommendations for process improvement.</p>
Student Services Division Timetable Unit	<p>Ensure that correct and complete advice is provided to students on the timetabling process and timelines.</p> <p>Optimally and equitably book designated central teaching and learning space through the timetabling of the University's programs and associated teaching and learning activities.</p> <p>Reset allocated furniture in timetabled teaching and learning spaces at least once each month. Resolve as required day-to-day furniture layout issues.</p> <p>Receive reports of maintenance and repair requirements and forward them to the appropriate service area (Infrastructure and Operations, Audio-Visual Services).</p> <p>Produce and review audits of room usage and liaise with College Timetable Coordinators to resolve issues.</p> <p>Conduct an annual review with stakeholders of the effectiveness of the timetabling process.</p>
ICT Audio-Visual Services	Support and maintain centrally provided audio-visual equipment in all central teaching and learning spaces.
College Pro Vice-Chancellors (or nominees)	<p>Authorise changes to the final published timetable.</p> <p>Nominate at least one administrator to serve as College Timetable Coordinator.</p>
College Timetable Coordinator	<p>Provide support and advice to Schools (or equivalent academic sub-units) within the College relating to course and subject timetable matters.</p> <p>Coordinate Schools' requests for changes to the final published timetable and submit to the College Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) for authorisation.</p> <p>Resolve timetabling issues between Schools in the Colleges.</p> <p>Liaise with the central Timetable Unit to resolve timetabling problems that cannot be resolved within the College.</p>
Heads of Schools (or equivalent academic sub-units of Colleges)	<p>Nominate at least one administrator to serve as School Timetable Officer.</p> <p>Ensure that staff in the School comply with the Timetabling of Teaching and Learning Space Policy and Procedures.</p> <p>Approve requests from staff to apply for special accommodations in timetabling on the basis of family or religious obligations or disabilities.</p>
Course Coordinator	<p>Ensure accurate data are provided when the timetable is being prepared as per the published schedule.</p> <p>Make timely adjustments to the draft timetable, including changes arising from staff or student requests for reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Advise the School Timetable Officer of surplus space as soon as possible but prior to the census date for the teaching period in progress.</p> <p>Receive and deal with requests from teaching staff for special accommodations in timetabling on the basis of disabilities.</p> <p>Receive and deal with requests from staff or students for special accommodations in timetabling on the basis of family responsibilities.</p>
Subject Coordinator	<p>Assist course coordinators in resolving operational matters, including timetabling matters.</p> <p>Alert the course coordinator of any surplus space as soon as possible but prior to the census date for the teaching period in progress.</p> <p>Check the timetable before the start of each teaching period to be informed about any recent changes to day, time or venue.</p>

<p>School Timetable Officer</p>	<p>Manage and coordinate the timetable processes across the School. Submit timetabling requirements (staff details, non-standard teaching patterns and other delivery criteria such as audio-visual requirements) to the timetable data collection system. Ensure the integrity of the data in the University timetable. Notify students of changes to the timetabling of subjects controlled by the School. Notify the central Timetable Unit immediately if, on the advice of a course coordinator, a booked space is no longer required, either permanently or for a period of time. Check the timetable before the start of each teaching period to be informed about any recent changes to day, time or venue.</p>
<p>Teaching staff</p>	<p>Provide timely advice to Heads of School in response to any requests regarding overall workload (including times unavailable to conduct teaching activities, via the Staff Unavailability Form). A staff member's unavailability must be consistent with the University's EBA and University policy. Provide specific timetable requirements to the School Timetable Officer for each subject in a timely manner. Review the Draft and Provisional timetable details for each subject in which they are teaching and report problems to the School Timetable Officer before the end of the allocated review period. Notify the Timetable Unit of any venue issues related to furniture or safety. Notify the ICT Audio-Visual Unit of any issues related to technical delivery. Check the timetable before the start of each teaching period to be informed about any recent changes to day, time or venue.</p>
<p>Students</p>	<p>Develop an individual timetable and register for classes as required. Check the Provisional Timetable and discuss with the subject or course coordinator any concerns relating to issues such as clashes between core subjects, unreasonable travel between campuses to attend core classes, and reasonable requests arising from matters such as family responsibilities, religious obligations or disabilities. Check the timetable before the start of each teaching period to be informed about any recent changes to day, time or venue.</p>
<p>Manager, Equality and Diversity Centre</p>	<p>Manage requests from staff and students for special timetabling provisions related to family responsibilities or religious obligations.</p>
<p>Disability Liaison Adviser</p>	<p>Receive and deal with requests from students for special arrangements in timetabling on the basis of disabilities. Arrange room adjustments in advance as far as possible, following interviews with students early in the year.</p>

Single University Timetable

(15) All teaching and learning activities requiring the use of teaching space are to be timetabled through the University's central timetabling system.

Timetable Dependent on Finalisation of Subject Offerings

(16) Colleges must indicate in the Subject Database, at the time determined in the timetabling schedule, all of the subject availabilities for the following academic year in order for the subjects to be timetabled. They must also indicate the specific class requirements for a student (e.g. one 2-hour lecture, one 1-hour tutorial).

Communication Between Colleges

(17) Colleges must communicate with each other as required in relation to the timetabling of subjects offered in double degrees which are taught by more than one College. This communication will normally occur between the relevant College Timetable Coordinators.

Operational Hours for Teaching and Learning Activities

(18) The University's core operating hours for timetabling purposes are:

- a. Monday through Friday from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm (Day Session)
- b. Monday through Friday from 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm (Night Session)

(19) Teaching and learning activities will be scheduled first during the Day Session and then during the Night Session, except where a time slot during the Night Session is specifically requested. Teaching and learning activities may, on request, also be scheduled for weekend periods, i.e. block mode teaching. Core operation hours on weekends are:

- a. Saturday and Sunday from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm (Day Session); and
- b. Saturday and Sunday from 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm (Night Session).

(20) University teaching and learning activities will not be scheduled during declared University Closedown periods (e.g. over the Christmas period).

Operational Hours for Non-Teaching and Learning (Ad-Hoc) Room Bookings

(21) The University has established the allowable hours for non-teaching and learning (ad hoc) room bookings as Monday through Sunday from 7.00 am to 12.00 midnight, 52 weeks per year except for designated University Shutdown periods. Individual campuses may choose not to remain open for the full range of hours permitted.

Bookings Outside Core Day Session Hours

(22) Bookings outside the core Monday through Friday Day Session hours will, as far as possible, be rooms in buildings that offer the best security and the lowest power consumption and maintenance costs, as identified by Infrastructure and Operations.

Teaching 'Hours'

(23) All teaching activities will preferably be scheduled in full hour units and timetabled to commence on the hour. Classes are to start promptly at the scheduled time and to finish at least ten minutes before the end of the booked period. The class that follows should use the ten minutes as set-up time.

Availability of Teaching Staff

(24) Full-time academic staff who have teaching responsibilities will be available for teaching during core teaching time. The allocation of teaching duties will be managed by College Pro Vice-Chancellors in accordance with La Trobe University's Enterprise [Collective Agreement](#) and workload management policies and procedures.

Lunch Hour

(25) When timetabling, all efforts will be made to schedule classes so that staff and students have a one-hour lunch break between the hours of 11.00 am and 2.00 pm. Notwithstanding this, optimal utilisation of all teaching and learning spaces is the objective across all hours.

Equity Considerations

(26) Consistent with University policies on equal opportunity and diversity and various anti-discrimination laws, the University's timetabling processes aim to make reasonable accommodation for staff and students with family responsibilities, religious obligations or disabilities.

- a. Students and staff seeking such accommodations should provide information and requests before the timetable is developed. Staff require prior approval from their Head of School or manager before submitting such requests.
- b. Requests from students related to disabilities are made to the Disability Liaison Officer; requests from staff, to

the relevant course coordinator.

- c. Requests from staff and students related to religious obligations are made to the Manager, Equality and Diversity Centre.
- d. Requests from staff and students related to family responsibilities are made to the relevant course coordinator.

Research Time

(27) As far as possible, provision will be made for College-approved blocks of time for research activity. However, such provision should not unduly constrain the timetable.

Timetable Rollover

(28) Except in years of a spill (see section 14 below), the timetable will be created by rolling over the timetable of the preceding year and modifying it as required to match the new academic year. The Timetable Unit has the authority to develop, publish and maintain rolled timetables; they do not require approval by the University's academic governance bodies.

Timetable Spill

(29) It will sometimes be necessary for the timetable to be spilled in its entirety (i.e. fully recreated). A spill of the timetable will normally take place every three to five years to:

- a. ensure that teaching activities are not arbitrarily scheduled at the same time every semester/year
- b. realign the University's teaching programs
- c. provide an equitable and efficient use of physical resources
- d. take advantage of developments in teaching and learning technology.

(30) Spills will be undertaken on the basis of recommendations from the Education Committee as endorsed by the Academic Board.

Stages of Timetable Development

(31) There are three distinct stages of timetable development:

- a. A Draft Timetable is released directly to Faculties and Schools at the end of August each year. It is not posted to the web for public access. The function of the Draft Timetable is to allow comment, feedback, system and manual adjustments, inclusion of recently approved subjects and information not known at the time of the initial submission (e.g. staff, program or other constraints).
- b. A Provisional Timetable is released to the web in October each year to coincide with the re-enrolment period. This is for student use. Changes to this published timetable should be minimal.
- c. The Final Timetable is released to the web on the first working day after 1 January of the new academic year. Changes will be made only in exceptional circumstances, on the provision of a request and justification by the College Pro Vice-Chancellor(or delegate)of the College concerned.

Valid Reasons for Changes to Final Timetable

(32) Valid reasons for changes to the Final Timetable include only:

- a. unexpected staff turnover
- b. unavailability of equipment
- c. changes to estimated class size

- d. identification of a hazard in the booked room
- e. reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with special needs
- f. other issues approved by the Timetable Unit.

Key Dates for Inclusion of Courses and Subjects in Timetable

(33) Subjects will be timetabled only after they have cleared certain stages of the formal course or subject approval processes.

Approval Stage 1

For inclusion in the Draft Timetable, the following conditions must be met by 1 May:

- a. A subject must have a status in the Subject Database as 'School approved' or higher.
- b. For a course, the course concept must have been approved by the Course and Load Planning Sub-committee (CALPS) and the Programs Committee.

(34) Approval Stage 2

For inclusion in the Provisional Timetable, the following conditions must be met by 31 July:

- a. A subject must have a status in the Subject Database of 'Faculty approved' and must have been published.
- b. For a course, the course proposal must have been approved by the Academic Board.

(35) Subjects and courses with Stage 1 approval which have not received Stage 2 approval by 31 July will not go forward to the Provisional Timetable.

(36) Where subjects and courses are approved later than 31 July, the central Timetable Unit will make every effort to add them to the timetable; however, the existing timetable will not be revised.

Other Key Dates

January - February	Timetable Unit is planning and preparing Syllabus Plus database enterprise setup.
March - April	Subject Database opens for review by Faculty/School of subjects and class requirements for approved subject offerings for the following academic year.
May - June	School Timetable Officers provide critical data elements (non-standard teaching package information and additional teaching requirements such as audio-visual and delivery attributes) to the Timetable Unit to inform the build of the Draft Timetable.
July	Timetable Unit develops a Draft Timetable.
August - September	Draft Timetable is released to Faculties/Schools.
October	Provisional Timetable is published on the web on 1 October to provide for student re-enrolment.
January	University Timetable is deemed Final on the first University working day after 1 January.

Timetabling for Non-Standard Teaching Periods

(37) Timetable information for non-standard teaching periods will be collected at the same time as timetable information for the University's standard teaching periods. Timetabling of classes to be taught during standard teaching periods will be given priority over timetabling of classes in non-standard teaching periods. The timetable for standard teaching period subjects must be taken into account when finalising the scheduling of subjects in non-standard teaching periods in order to avoid clashes for students.

Software Scheduling Constraints

(38) While the University attempts to accommodate student choices, the timetable may not allow for every student to attend their preferred combination of units. The Timetable Unit prioritises timetable scheduling based upon a number of criteria:

- a. In terms of a class timetable, constraints will be placed upon activities to ensure an optimum and equitable timetable. These constraints may be hard constraints (i.e. 'always adhere to') or soft constraints (i.e. 'will adhere to at varying degrees of importance') and are often preset by staff of the Timetable Unit.
- b. Various 'Constraint Profiles' will also be attached to staff and students to allow scheduling restrictions based on staff work span in a single day, allowance for a lunch period, campus-to-campus travel allowance, research activity periods, maximum class hours before a break and so forth.
- c. Computer laboratories and other specialist space used by students for informal learning, assignment work, exam preparation, etc. will have blocks of unscheduled times amounting to approximately 30 per cent of the core teaching time.
- d. Scheduling priority will be afforded to activities according to how highly constrained they are. These are the applicable constraints:
 - i. recognition of core subject programs through 'student pathway' data (student subject combinations)
 - ii. teaching program constraints (e.g. off-campus days)
 - iii. number of teaching hours required by a program at a year level
 - iv. student elective choices
 - v. staff availability
 - vi. room availability
 - vii. class size
 - viii. need for specific room furniture and equipment
 - ix. need for specific audio-visual equipment
 - x. need for videoconferencing facilities
 - xi. need for disabled access
 - xii. need to sequence specific activities
 - xiii. requirements of cross-Faculty offerings such as double degree programs.

Section 5 - Definitions

(39) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Academic Organisational Unit: a part of the University such a faculty, school, department or academic division that has delegated authority over specific teaching and learning spaces.
- b. Central Teaching and Learning Space: space that the University designates as space available to the University community as shared space for teaching and learning purposes.
- c. Draft Timetable: the first version of the annual class timetable, released directly to Faculties and Schools at the end of August each year. It is not posted to the web for public access. The function of the Draft Timetable is to allow comment, feedback, system and manual adjustments, inclusion of recently approved subjects and information not known at the time of the initial submission (staff, program, constraints).
- d. Exceptional Circumstances: for example, in the case of a directive by the Vice-Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor or their delegate. Other circumstances deemed exceptional will be determined on a case-by-case basis and precedents built up over time.

- e. Provisional Timetable: the second version of the annual class timetable, released to the web in October each year to enable students to be informed about their class timetable when selecting the units in which to enrol. Changes to this published timetable should be minimal.
- f. Final Timetable: the last version of the annual class timetable, released to the web on the first working day after 1 January of the new academic year. Changes will be made only in exceptional circumstances, on the provision of a request and justification by the College Pro Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) of the College concerned.
- g. Specialist Teaching and Learning Space: space designed for specific teaching and learning purposes, e.g. scientific labs, computer labs, clinical and professional training labs such as nursing labs and moot courts, editing suites, observation facilities.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Executive Director, Student Services and Administration.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Education Committee.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
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