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# Contents

Purpose	2
Applicability and Scope	2
Policy	3
Principles	3
Priorities	3
Areas of responsibility	4
Standard teaching periods	5
Bank Holidays	6
Timetabling practice	6
Staff Timetable Constraints	7
Timetable production and publication	8
Changes to the published timetable	9
Ad-hoc Booking rooms for meetings	9
Room audits	10
Commercial and Community bookings	10
Annual Timetable – review	10
Appendix 1: Table of Definitions	11
Appendix 2: High level overview of Timetabling activity	12
Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment	13

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## **Purpose**

- 1 This Policy sets out the agreed principles for timetabling and room booking. It ensures that issues of equality and transparency, accuracy, timeliness, accountability and continuous improvement can be managed within Timetabling procedures.
- 2 At the University, students are at the heart of all we do, and the creation of an outstanding student experience is always paramount. The overall aim of this Policy is to improve the quality of the student experience by ensuring that University resources are used to their maximum potential and efficiency.
- To achieve these aims and objectives, the University uses timetabling software to construct timetables for all teaching and non-teaching activities across the whole institution, on all campuses. Space and staff time are costly, finite resources with often high levels of demand. Timetabling in a structured, consistent, accurate and timely manner will maximise the effective use of these scarce resources.
- 4 The context is for all staff to work together as one university and to provide the best timetables and space utilisation for the benefit of students and staff.

## **Applicability and Scope**

- This policy applies to all activity that can appear on a timetable, including (but not exclusively) teaching sessions, exams and assessments, events such as open days and so on; in essence anything that can and does use University space.
- 6 The policy may also apply to virtual activity, i.e. teaching sessions and similar activities that may take place online and in areas that are not a part of the main University campus, such as the Pinewood Studios' workshop, that are scheduled and/or booked and thus suitable to appear on a timetable.
- The policy will cover all activity outlined in points 5 and 6, with the aim being to have all applicable activity appear on timetables when possible and as appropriate. Ultimately this could involve, for example, student timetables including everything from Welcome Week to exams and Graduation, maintenance slots for rooms to be booked and showing on-system, meeting/board room bookings, equipment available for booking within certain spaces, etc.
  - This policy **does not** apply to non-bookable space or activities, such as staff office space, unnamed corridors, spaces that have little or no use for event hosting etc.

# **Policy**

## **Principles**

- With limited space and changeable requirements, compromise will always be needed in order to construct a working timetable for all activities. To ensure a fair and efficient timetable is possible, this policy is supported by the following principles:
  - To provide the best possible student experience.
  - To have all space, and usage thereof, visible and accessible where required by end users.
  - To make the most efficient use of available space, with activities taking place in the most appropriate and available locations.
  - To provide the best possible staff experience.
  - To provide equitable access or find alternatives where restrictions exists.
  - To minimise changes to bookings and timetables.
  - To have a common approach to timetabling and room booking across the whole university.
  - To produce and provide timetables for all students and staff in as timely a manner as possible.
  - To identify when and where space can be made available to non-teaching events.

#### **Priorities**

- 9 With a finite University-wide pool of available rooms and spaces, it is necessary to give priority to certain types of activity in order to guarantee that core operations, i.e. teaching events, can run accordingly. This prioritisation will also allow for identification of when and where non-teaching activities can take place. Where there are conflicts around priority, this will be managed by the CTT in-line with the Policy, with the Academic Registrar (taking advice as necessary) being the ultimate decision maker.
  - During teaching terms, timetabling of University rooms and spaces will normally take place according to the following priorities:
  - 1. Teaching and other academic contact sessions (eg personal tutor sessions etc)
  - 2. Examinations.
  - 3. Graduation.
  - 4. Enrolment, Welcome Week, Open Days, Induction and Freshers' Fair activities.
  - 5. Public-facing events, such as Professorial Lectures, and commercial bookings etc.
  - 6. Formal University Committees and Boards.
  - 7. Key internal training events (e.g. new staff induction sessions).
  - 8. Students' Union supported co-curricular programming
  - 9. Key maintenance and improvement works (e.g. Estates and/or IT maintenance).
  - 10. Ad-hoc, non-teaching room bookings.
  - 11. All other events and activities.

## Areas of responsibility

- 10 A number of different teams and roles are involved in the production of timetables and booking of space. These include:
  - Academic Registry (specifically the Central Timetabling Team)
  - Heads of School
  - School Heads of Teaching
  - School Timetabling Coordinator(s)
  - Other Academic Registry teams
  - Department of Estates and Facilities
  - Department of Digital and Technical Services
  - Academic staff
  - Students' Union
  - Students
  - Commercial Directorate
- 11 The Central Timetabling Team (CTT) in Academic Registry is responsible for oversight, production and ongoing maintenance of all timetables. They also hold responsibility for managing room bookings across the university, for operational use of the timetabling system, and for liaison with schools and other directorates/departments as required.
- 12 Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that school staff are identified, sufficiently trained, and empowered to liaise with the CTT on all School timetabling matters, and ultimately that their staff follow timetabling procedures and deliver to the required deadlines. They will also act as an escalation route in cases of timetabling emergencies or queries.
- 13 School Directors of Education are responsible for working with Heads of School, other School staff with timetabling responsibilities, and the CTT to ensure the accuracy and timely delivery of timetabled activities. They are also an escalation route for queries and emergencies.
- 14 School Timetabling Coordinators are those School staff, normally experienced academic staff member(s) identified by the Head of School, and nominated to act as the key timetabling liaison with the CTT. They are responsible for ensuring all applicable timetabling processes are followed, coordinating school responses to requests for information (such as the regular requirements gathering for each term/academic year), and that deadlines are met.
- 15 Other Academic Registry teams are responsible for ensuring that the CTT has relevant, accurate data as required. This will include teams such as Student Records & Data, Student Course Administration, and Quality and Standards inputting data to the student record system in good time to allow transfer to the timetabling system, to populate data such as module information etc. These processes involve work across the whole University, with dependencies on other areas such as Schools also providing relevant data according to deadlines. Detail of other processes can be found in relevant documentation.
- 16 Estates and Facilities manage the physical estate, and as such are involved in timetabling from the perspective of ensuring all spaces are operational, in good repair, accessible, and as detailed on relevant systems (including the timetabling system). They also liaise with the CTT and

- relevant stakeholders with regards to the standard set-up of rooms, and setting up spaces for specific events. Room timetables should also include any bookings required for maintenance or improvement of rooms as applicable.
- 17 Digital & Technical Services (DTS) colleagues provide technical support for the timetabling system. They liaise closely with the CTT to ensure that the system is working, and that outputs are reliable and accessible as required (e.g. enabling students and staff to view timetables via the website, Blackboard, etc.). DTS will also liaise with the CTT to book out space as required for any IT equipment maintenance or improvements, giving plenty of notice and being mindful of teaching weeks and academic delivery demands.
- Academic staff are responsible for fully engaging with the timetabling process, providing accurate and timely information and working within the timeline for delivery of timetables to students. Initially this will involve liaison with School Timetabling Coordinators to provide all relevant and necessary information for the construction of timetables. This can include raising any errors or concerns with the timetable, either via the School Timetabling Coordinator or (where necessary) direct to the CTT. It can also include reporting problems with physical spaces or IT equipment, e.g. relating to cleanliness or faulty equipment, to Estates and Facilities or DTS as applicable.
- 19 The Students' Union are responsible for supporting CTT to timetable effectively by providing timely and comprehensive information about student co-curricular programmes. This includes, but is not limited to, student club and society events, student committees and other co-curricular activities that require timetabling. The Union, through these student groups, will ensure that timetabled sessions are effectively promoted and utilised. The Students' Union will also communicate and enforce expectations in relation to student behaviour when using timetabled space on campus.
- 20 Students are responsible for providing all information that may be relevant to timetables as early as possible, e.g. notifying Disability Service of any individual requirements. They must also take action to select modules and/or confirm timetables when directed to do so, within applicable deadlines. On a regular basis, students are also responsible for viewing and checking their own teaching timetable (via MyBNU or Blackboard timetable portal) and for reporting any errors as soon as possible.

### Standard teaching periods

- 21 The standard teaching week is from Monday to Friday and operates across the whole academic year in 4 terms (Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer). It should be noted for the academic year 2023/4 only that Levels 5 and 6 on undergraduate courses will continue to operate in semesters.
- 22 Standard teaching hours are from 09:00 to 19:00 (some longer sessions potentially finishing at 20:00), except for Wednesday which is from 09:00 to 12:00.

- 23 Teaching will not normally be timetabled at weekends, except for any courses that specifically state or focus on weekend delivery.
- 24 Teaching will not normally be timetabled after 12.00 on Wednesdays to facilitate student participation in the full breadth of co-curricular activities.

## **Bank Holidays**

- 25 If a module has been timetabled on a Monday or Friday throughout the year, it is unfortunate but likely that it will have a session on a Bank Holiday. The CTT will make the requestee or department aware of the session's placement and ask that the Module Leader liaises with CTT if a change is needed.
- 26 CTT is not able to move the whole module from its timetabled day because a session is interrupted by a Bank Holiday. The following options must therefore be agreed:
  - a. If requested, an additional session will be held for that module. It will be held either on another day in that week in which the bank holiday falls or it will be in additional session on another day, clash free, within the delivery term/semester of the module. It will also have the academic attached to the event, who normally delivers the session. It is the Module Leader's responsibility to liaise with CTT and request this option as it will not be done automatically.
  - b. No additional session is needed and the notes/text/information for that event will be made available to the students from the department/module leader. It is the department/module team responsibility to make students aware of where to find this information.

### Timetabling practice

- 27 There are four elements of data that are used to undertake timetabling: i) room data, including type, capacity and equipment, this is managed by Estates & Facilities and DTS and is held in the timetabling system; ii) module/teaching requirements this is provided to CTT annually, as per the schedule, by Schools and details what type of space a module needs, what equipment it needs, any scheduling requirements, and which staff are teaching it; iii) student enrolment information (predicted and confirmed) on modules this is provided to CTT by the Schools and through registration information; iv) timetable constraints this is provided to CTT annually, as per the schedule, by Schools and details any restrictions an individual staff member has on their availability to teach; this must be signed-off by the Head of School to be valid (see paragraphs 34-41 for further information).
  - CTT combines all received data to create the whole-University timetable.
- 28 All events that may be scheduled for a student will appear on their timetable. This will include everything, including: induction/Welcome Week activities, normal teaching events,

- examinations and assessments, special events, practical sessions, studio sessions etc, all the way through to their Graduation.
- 29 Other events will also be timetabled. Anything that uses University space must be properly booked and logged on the timetabling system. This will allow all stakeholders visibility of events, enabling activities such as cleaning and maintenance to take place around them as appropriate. This also provides the University with a clear record of usage.
- 30 Where possible, timetables will be constructed to avoid large gaps between sessions (e.g. a 9am lecture and a 4pm seminar with nothing between).
- 31 Where students have a late session (i.e. finishing after 6pm), timetables will be constructed to avoid an early session the next day where possible.
- 32 Rooms should only be booked for use for definite need. Block-booking of rooms 'just in case' results in wasted space that could be used for other events. This relates to both hourly and weekly block-bookings. If a room is needed for 2 hours one week and 1 hour the next, that should be reflected accurately in the timetabled room booking. Likewise, if a room is not needed for every week of teaching, the dates the room is not needed should be released for booking for other events.
- Where room audits (see paragraphs 51-52) gather evidence that scheduled rooms are not being used, the relevant course and/or school team will be contacted to ascertain why. Repeated failure to use booked sessions will result in linked ongoing bookings being questioned and cancelled, and the space will be made available for other bookings.

#### **Staff Timetable Constraints**

- 34 For timetabling purposes, it is assumed that all staff are available to be scheduled for teaching within the full working hours and weeks of the University, as detailed in paragraphs 21-24.
- 35 It is recognised, however, that there are some circumstances where additional constraints on staff availability to teach may be valid.

Timetable Constraints are considered in 3 categories:

- a. Flexible Working Requests
- b. Medical Adjustments
- c. Part Time/Fractional Constraints
- 36 Flexible Working Arrangements

All staff have a legal right to request flexible work arrangements and these must be requested through HR. For academic and some technical staff this may impact on the Academic Timetable.

- 37 Medical Adjustments
  - Adjustments are recommended by Occupational Health and must be provided on an annual basis as adjustments can change.
- 38 Part Time / Fractional Contracts

  Details on working patterns for staff on part-time contracts should be provided on an annual basis.
- 39 If a member of staff believes they qualify for one of these constraints, then they must submit a timetabling constraint to their Head of School for sign-off and then subsequently to CTT. The published deadline for submission of constraints is the date by which any fully completed requests are submitted to CTT, not when they should be submitted to the Head of School, and staff should not leave it until the deadline to request sign-off from their Head of School. All agreed constraints will be reviewed annually, they do not automatically roll over from one year to the next.
- 40 Constraints received from Schools after the deadline can only be considered where there is the ability to make adjustments for events already timetabled. It is expected that local adjustments (eg cover arrangements in School) will be made first, as any changes to the timetable itself result in a poor experience for students. Constraints received after the timetable is published will not be considered.

  The detailed process for submitting Constraints will be published by CTT each academic year.
- 41 Constraints that have not been approved and are not in-line with the above 3 types will not be accepted by CTT.

## Timetable production and publication

- 42 Draft indicative timetables for the next academic year will be produced at the end of the Spring term of each year. These will be subject to approved amendments, due to academic and/or estate pressure unforeseen at the start of the timetable construction, that are subsequently approved through the Timetabling process. Amendments, however, are expected to be kept to an absolute minimum. These drafts will subsequently be finalised through the process and published to students.
- 43 Final timetables will be published at least four weeks before the start of teaching.
- 44 Appendix II outlines the high-level overview of timetabling activity across the academic year.
- 45 Each year, CTT will produce a detailed delivery plan covering each activity and specific dates for completion.

## Changes to the published timetable

- 46 A reliable timetable, that students can base their personal study and other commitments around, is vital for a positive student experience. As such, changes to the timetable once it is published are not normally permitted.
- 47 Issues such as staff changes should be managed locally so the timetable can remain unchanged once published, and any problems should be discussed with the CTT.
- 48 It is recognised, however, that there may be unavoidable situations requiring a cancellation of a booked space; in these instances, the CTT must be notified. Where possible this notification should be with as much notice as possible. It is recognised that some circumstances may result in very late-notice cancellations. The CTT can only pass on news of cancellations when they receive them. Students will be notified of cancellations via their digital timetable and directed to check by the Module Leader. This removal of the event from the timetable will be actioned to be completed within as short a time as possible of receipt of cancellation notification by the CTT.
- 49 Student-requested changes to their personal timetable must be sent via the module tutor. Students will only be able to request a move on a seminar group up and until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of teaching. These changes can only be requested if the following reasons are met, and requests will be evaluated case by case:
  - a. Caring commitments for students who are registered carers
  - b. Regular appointments for medical reasons
  - c. Mental health or well-being reasons
  - d. Sporting commitments at elite levels
  - e. Student rep activities
  - f. Religious observances
  - g. Extenuating circumstances

If a student's request is for one of the above reasons, they must contact their School/module tutor and they should get in touch with CTT on the student's behalf.

Although the CTT will make every reasonable effort to complete the requested change, it is very important that students are aware that it is not guaranteed. This may be due to clashes within the existing timetable or there is no further space in the room to accommodate additional students. Please be mindful that changes will take up to 3 working days to action.

## Ad-hoc Booking rooms for meetings

50 Ad-hoc bookings for meetings can be made once the academic timetabling process is completed. This will normally be around August of each year, when the Web Room Booking

portal will be opened to everyone for bookings in the next academic year. Key meetings such as Executive Committees or recurring events will be booked onto the timetable in advance of ad-hoc booking going live.

#### Room audits

- 51 The CTT will run regular audits of space usage. Room Auditors will check every timetabled space, logging the frequency (how often) and occupancy (how many people are in the room) of use, during each hour of the teaching day. These audits will take place across the teaching weeks and any additional weeks if requested or required.
- 52 Data gathered will be used to determine the efficiency of usage of the university estate (the room utilisation rate). The audit outcomes will also be used to challenge non-use of booked rooms. A policy of 'three strikes' will be adopted in the case of serial non-use of booked spaces. If no adequate reason is given for three consecutive cases of non-use, the ongoing booking will be cancelled, and the space released back into the pool for other event bookings.

## **Commercial and Community bookings**

53 These bookings can only be made by appropriate staff within the University on behalf of an external requestee. Bookings of this type can only be made after the timetables are published and all teaching, exams, graduation, enrolment etc are scheduled. Please see priority list detailed in paragraph 9.

#### Annual Timetable - review

54 CTT will hold an annual review meeting attended by the relevant Timetabler, the School Timetabling Coordinator(s), and any other main liaison/s from the School of which they timetable for. These reviews will be a helpful meeting where CTT and the School discuss what worked well, what needs improving and plans for future successful timetable and academic delivery. These will be held during November and December, thus helping in the planning of the upcoming Timetable Request Data deadline. At the conclusion of the meeting, the notes will be shared and used as a record by both Schools and the CTT to help generate positive improvements.

# **Appendix I: Table of Definitions**

	Ten Colonia de la colonia de l							
Attendance	The presence of the learner during the scheduled teaching or learning activity for the entire session (including remote attendance for online, live sessions);							
Engagement	Active participation by the learner with their studies (attendance or							
	distance-based) and use of resources to support their learning, including:  • Attendance of scheduled learning and teaching sessions and activities;  • Active contribution to personal and group tutorials, lectures and seminars;							
	<ul> <li>Use of library facilities and other learning resources;</li> </ul>							
	<ul> <li>Engagement with and submission of assessment tasks set;</li> </ul>							
	<ul> <li>Attendance at examinations or time-constrained assessment activities;</li> </ul>							
	Responding in a timely manner to formal communications from the							
	University or Partner institution, such as letters, emails, text							
	messages and telephone calls;							
	The use of the Aptem Apprentice platform to record 'off the job'							
	training hours for apprenticeships.							
Scheduled	These include:							
teaching and	Lectures, seminars and tutorials							
learning	Pre-sessional English language or programme preparation courses							
sessions/	where these are a condition of entry							
activities	Project and dissertation supervision meetings							
	Practical classes, demonstrations and workshops							
	Presentations and performances							
	External visits							
	Study abroad and distance learning activities							
	Clinical, work experience and work-based placement sessions							
	Apprentice tripartite progress reviews							
Attendance	The University will monitor learners' attendance and engagement and may							
and Engagement	<ul> <li>draw upon the following records to inform an overall profile:</li> <li>Submission of assessment tasks as recorded on the University's</li> </ul>							
Records	Student Records System;							
records	Engagement with the University's Virtual Learning Environment							
	(VLE), e.g accessing of materials and participation in discussion board activities;							
	<ul> <li>Attendance patterns as recorded on Attendance Monitoring System, AMS and MyBNU;</li> </ul>							
	<ul> <li>Usage of the University Library and other learning resources, e.g.</li> </ul>							
	borrowing of books, and accessing e-books or journal articles;							
	<ul> <li>Swiping of the Student ID card to gain access to University premises;</li> </ul>							
	An apprentice's engagement with the Aptem Apprentice platform to							
	log 'off the job' activity							
	Partner equivalent of the above mechanisms, resources and record							
	keeping systems.							

Appendix 2: High level overview of Timetabling activity

_				University		
Term	Month	School tasks	Timetable tasks	activities/programmes		
End of	Aug		Finalised Timetables published to continuing students			
Summer Term (from previous academic year)	Sept	Schools update CTT with adjusted numbers following Clearing	Updating overall module sizes and checking room allocations  Finalised Timetables published to first-year students	Welcome week/ Teaching starts		
Autumn Term	Oct	Schools update CTT with adjusted numbers for Jan starts	Updating overall module sizes and checking room allocations for Jan starts			
	Nov	Prep for Timetable Request Data (TRD)	Annual review/wash-up and CTT review of the Timetabling cycle			
	Dec					
Winter Term F	Jan	TRD submitted to CTT  Confirmation of modules running	Inputting TRD	Jan intake of students		
	Feb			Graduation		
	Mar		All TRD in system by end of month			
Spring Term	Apr		TT - Generation	T2 - Marks deadline  Apr intake of students		
	May		Drafts to all relevant parties	Aprilitake or students		
	Jun	Amendment requests to CTT by end of month				
Summer Term	July		Working on Amendments	T3 - Marks deadline Graduation		
	Aug		Finalised Timetables published to continuing students	Re-sits		
	Sept	Schools update CTT with adjusted numbers following Clearing	Updating overall module sizes and checking room allocations  Finalised Timetables published to first-year students	Welcome week/ Teaching starts		

For each academic year, CTT will produce a delivery plan that will provide exact dates for which the above activities must be completed in that academic year.

## **Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment**

## 1. What is changing and why?

A Timetabling Policy is being introduced to the University.

## 2. What do you know?

The introduction of a Timetabling Policy creates a standard and equitable approach to timetabling across the University. It also introduces clarity around teaching hours/days/weeks, publication schedules, changes post-publication, validity of requested constraints, and outlines responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the timetabling process

## 3. Assessing the impact

	Could benefit	May adversely impact	What does this mean? Impacts identified from what you know (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do?</b> Actions (or why no action is possible) to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations
a) How could this affect different ethnicities? Including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.		⊠	Religious festivals commonly related to different ethnicities are not identified as a valid timetabling restriction.	Ensure clear communication and expectations around the BNU Timetable and being a BNU staff member or student.
b) How could this affect cisgender and transgender men and women (including maternity/pregnancy impact), as well as non-binary people?			No particular impact on identified group.	N/A
c) How could this affect disabled people or carers? Including neurodiversity, invisible disabilities and mental health conditions.	⊠		Timetables are produced earlier and to a clear schedule, giving students the ability to plan their responsibilities better.  It also identifies a clear methodology for students with, for example caring	N/A

		responsibilities, on how they can request changes to accommodate them.	
d) How could this affect people from different faith groups?	×	Religious festivals commonly are not identified as a valid timetabling restriction.	Ensure clear communication and expectations around the BNU Timetable and being a BNU staff member or student.
e) How could this affect people with different sexual orientations?		No particular impact on identified group.	N/A
f) How could this affect different age groups or generations?		Student who are from different age groups may have other responsibilities.  Timetables are produced earlier and to a clear schedule, giving students the ability to plan their responsibilities better.	N/A
g) How could this affect those who are married or in a civil partnership?		Student who are married or in a civil partnership may have additional responsibilities.  Timetables are produced earlier and to a clear schedule, giving students the ability to plan their responsibilities better.	N/A
h) How could this affect people from different backgrounds such as: socio- economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people		No particular impact on identified group.	N/A

experiencing domestic							
and/or sexual violence, ex-							
armed forces, looked after							
children and care leavers.							
i) How could this affect			No particular impact on identified group.		N/A		
people with multiple							
intersectional experiences?							
4. Overall outcome							
No major change needed   ✓		Adjust approach □		Adverse impact but continue		Stop and remove $\square$	
5. Details of further actions needed							
N/A							
6. Arrangements for delivery and future monitoring							
Policy will be delivered by Timetabling Team's ongoing timetabling work. Timetabling Team and associated groups will monitor policy and update as							
necessary.							
7. Completed by:	F	Paul Radford		Head of Registry Services	&	Date	21/09/2023
				Systems			
8. Signed off by:	5	Stephen Wiggi	ns	Academic Registrar		Date	21/09/2023



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