



Procedure: Timetabling

Purpose

To set out the procedures which identify minimal necessary constraints and within those constraints produces a student optimised University timetable.

General Principles

1. Data inputs required to create the timetable come from several key sources in the University as outlined in the sections of this procedure.
2. Data inputs include analysis such as Program of Study (PoS) to establish common enrolment patterns and conflicts in order to minimise these events for students (see **Section Data Required for Timetabling**).
3. The combination of these data inputs, including constraints (see **Section Constraints**) and data analysis create the most optimal timetable for students and staff.

Constraints

4. In the build of the timetable consideration is given to a range of constraints.
5. General constraints include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Programs of Study (PoS) used to minimise student clashes determined by a methodology that combines historical enrolment trends, program orders, and expected changes in the upcoming academic year;
 - b. fluctuations in enrolment numbers impacting the type of venue allocated;
 - c. staff and student access and health and safety requirements;
 - d. staff constraints (see **Section Teaching Staff Availability**);
 - e. activities running in all weeks of semester have priority over classes running in a fewer number of weeks in the semester;
 - f. activities with large enrolments are prioritised due to less room choice;
 - g. teaching activities that require specialised equipment are allocated over those that have standard equipment requirements; and
 - h. specialist location, zone and equipment requirements.

6. Additional equity considerations include:
 - a. the number of 8am starts teaching staff are allocated during the week;
 - b. to avoid early teaching on a day following late teaching on the previous day;
 - c. continuous teaching limited to four hours within one day unless otherwise indicated by academic staff and for those courses that have the most students in common.
 - d. two hours attendance for school meetings and adequate time for specific and agreed research obligations approved (see Section Teaching Staff Availability).

Teaching Staff Availability

7. Teaching staff availability is a key factor in producing an optimal timetable for teaching activities.
8. Full time academic staff are allocated the required teaching hours for their courses during the standard teaching hours of the University: 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday.
9. Full time academic staff unable to teach at particular times during standard teaching hours submit a teaching unavailability request with the recommendation of their report line Supervisor/Manager, via the University approved proforma, for consideration of the Associate Dean (Education) of the relevant College.
10. Teaching unavailability requests submitted after the preliminary deadline in the timetable production timeline are additionally considered by the relevant College Dean or Approved Delegate.
11. Reasons for teaching unavailability requests may include (but are not limited to):
 - a. flexible working arrangements;
 - b. pre-approved and inflexible research or teaching commitments (e.g. clinic session, research requirements);
 - c. pre-approved inflexible administrative commitments (e.g. school meetings);
 - d. University commitments (e.g council, boards, committees).
12. Full time academic staff must be available for at least 35 of the 50 standard teaching hours per week out of which teaching time can be allocated, unless there are university-approved contracts that specifically preclude this.
13. Approved unavailability requests are provided by the College to the Timetabling Office.

Timetable Production Timeline

14. The timetable will be set according to dates that facilitate planning and robust decision making for students and staff.
15. A detailed timeline for the timetable production is released by the Timetable Office and aligns with deadlines regarding the notification of course establishment and availability. The timeline specifies deadlines for:
 - a. collection of data required for timetabling (see **Section Data Required for Timetabling**);
 - b. release of preliminary timetable;
 - c. period(s) of review of the preliminary timetable and deadlines for approved change requests;
 - d. publication of final timetable; and
 - e. commencement of allocation of students to tutorials by Colleges/Schools

It is noted that post publication changes to the final timetable shall be minimised and only approved in exceptional circumstances (see **Timetable Changes** below).

16. The schedule of dates is published on the website <http://timetable.anu.edu.au>.

Data Required for Timetabling

17. The Timetabling Office source and analyse University data to inform current trends in enrolment patterns and data based on PoS. This information is checked, updated and approved by the Colleges/Schools for use by the Timetable Office.
18. A reference committee shall be convened annually by the Registrar including timetabling staff, student representatives and Associate Deans (Education) to agree any University wide priorities to be accommodated in the following year's timetable.
19. Colleges/Schools and Services provide the Timetable Office with the following data according to the deadlines outlined in the timetable production timeline:
 - a. PoS in which each course is included, including core courses and electives;
 - b. classes on offer for each semester;
 - c. teaching pattern and method of delivery, including contact hours, class sizes;
 - d. resource requirements – type of space and technology requirements;
 - e. where known, teaching staff;
 - f. teaching staff unavailability (see **Section Teaching Staff Availability**); and
 - g. recommendations in relation to accessibility considerations for students and for staff

- h. room and resources (e.g., AV) availability as it affects the University teaching pool rooms

Timetabling and Room Allocation

- 20. Class teaching activities are spread evenly over the week (8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday).
- 21. Where a course is taught at the Acton campus, at least one class free hour in each week of semester during the core teaching hours is set aside for student-based activities which is allocated as at 1pm - 2pm Thursday (suspended through 2020 academic year).
- 22. Intensive classes timetabled for the whole day on Thursdays during semester at the Acton Campus are required to break between 1pm and 2pm (suspended through 2020 academic year).
- 23. Timetabling and room allocation for central teaching spaces, shared department, and departmental teaching spaces agreed to be made available to the Timetable Office, are the responsibility of the Timetable Office.
- 24. The University ensures it meets its health and safety obligations and classes cannot exceed the size of allocated rooms except as directed from time to time by the University's Risk and Audit Committee.
- 25. Where possible, rooms made centrally available by schools are allocated to classes as first preference for that school unless otherwise specified in the approved room usage agreement
- 26. Frequency of use of rooms made centrally available to Timetabling will be communicated to each school by the Timetable Office.
- 27. Time slots for school allocated rooms not required by the Timetable Office are released back to schools two weeks after semester starts.

Production and Publication

- 28. A working document titled 'preliminary timetable' is prepared and published. The timetable remains in preliminary form for two weeks during which time, Colleges and Schools are responsible for checking:
 - a. adequate provisions have been made for the required activities; and
 - b. teaching staff are made aware of their required teaching hours.
- 29. Colleges and Schools are responsible for providing feedback and requesting changes to the preliminary timetable to the Timetable Office.

30. Changes to the preliminary timetable are only permitted as described in the **Timetable Changes** section and must remain in line with the objective of a student focussed timetable.
31. The final timetable is published on the web at: <http://timetable.anu.edu.au>. Upon publication, changes can only be made to the timetable for extenuating circumstances as described in the **Timetable Changes** section.

Timetable Changes

32. The following change requests are accepted:
 - a. location becomes a health and safety hazard or no longer meets accessibility requirements for students and/or staff;
 - b. changes to class activity type.
33. Requests for change resulting in a change to teaching activity patterns (e.g. timing, duration and/or weeks on offer) are approved by the Dean of the relevant College or Approved Delegate where extenuating circumstances exist. Impact to students must be minimised and detailed in the request. Reasons include (but are not limited to):
 - a. unexpected increase/decline in enrolment numbers;
 - b. unexpected staff turnover;
 - c. mandated changes to research requirements unknowable at time of initial availability submission;
 - d. other unexpected events outside of the control of the College/School;
 - e. creation of a new course (clash-free scheduling cannot be guaranteed and depends on available resources); and
 - f. disestablishment of course.
34. All requests for changes are submitted via the University approved proforma, by the College/School timetable coordinators. A form is completed for every change required, unless the course is co-taught and only one form is required. If a course is co-taught, the requestor needs to have coordinated the change with the other Convener/Lecturer.
35. The Timetable Office notifies the College/School timetable coordinators and the original change requestor of the outcome of the request in writing.
36. Colleges/Schools notify all students enrolled in the affected courses of any changes to the timetable after final publication.

Escalations

37. The Timetable Office is responsible for ensuring that clashes are avoided where possible and resolving timetable disputes in the first instance. The proposed resolution seeks to minimise impact on students and staff, while optimising room utilisation.
38. For requested changes:
 - a. the Timetable Office seeks to resolve any requests with the requestor and indicate any reasons why the change cannot be accommodated as requested; and
 - b. any timetable change requests that cannot be resolved by the Timetable Office are referred to the Registrar in the first instance and thereafter to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Non-Teaching bookings

39. Teaching events will take priority in all University teaching spaces over other approved activities. If a teaching space is not in use for timetabled activities, it may be booked for other purposes subject to University policies and procedures. Please refer to relevant booking policies and procedures at:
<https://services.anu.edu.au/campus-environment/venues-functions/anu-teaching-learning-commons-tlc-venue-hire>

Reporting

40. Reporting is submitted each semester to the Senior Management Group (SMG), the Teaching and Learning Development Committee, and Director, Facilities and Services demonstrating adherence to the Timetable Policy. The report contains data on the following:
 - a. compliance to deadlines set by the Timetable Office for each College; and
 - b. number and type of change requests processed by College/School.

Document information

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