GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC TIMETABLING

Guidelines to be used in conjunction with [Timetabling and Room Allocation Policy](#)

Guideline Owner: *Director, Student Administration*

Keywords:

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1.   INTENT

These Guidelines contain information for staff who contribute to the timetable production and maintenance.

2.   ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

All ECU staff involved in the production of the academic timetable or decision making relating to unit and activity offerings or who carry out teaching in timetabled University spaces.

3.   DEFINITIONS

Comprehensive definitions are available for staff [here](#).

4.   GUIDELINES CONTENT

4.1   Roles and responsibilities

4.1.1   Timetable Office

4.1.1.1   The Timetable Office produces and publishes an academic timetable in which meets the academic timetable principles set out in the Timetabling and Room Allocation Policy.

4.1.1.2   The Timetable Office determines and communicates deadlines relating to production of all draft and final timetables.

4.1.1.3 The Timetable Office manages requests for changes and adjustment to the academic timetables as required.

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4.1.1.4 The Timetable Office produces training material and information relating to use of specialist University systems and software used for collection of timetabling information and coordinates 'wash-up' and any other information sessions as required.

4.1.2   Schools

4.1.2.1 Schools provide information requested by the Timetable Office, via the appropriate channels and with appropriate detail.

4.1.2.2 The University's Timetabling and Room Allocation Policy requires each School to appoint a staff member to act as a School Timetable Officer who will act as a contact for matters relating to academic timetabling and who will create and provide timetable requirements to the central Timetable Office.

4.1.2.3   The University timetable is created based on information provided by Schools about units, activities and associated offerings for a given period as well as other information provided which may influence when activities are scheduled (constraints).

4.1.2.4 When providing constraint information schools must consider course structure (for example, if there are core units which must be taken by most students in a programme and which therefore should not be scheduled at the same time).

4.1.2.5 Matters relating to staff availability and preference are not included as formal constraints in timetabling requests but should be considered internally by Schools before timetable requests are lodged as part of planning for teaching in a given year.

4.1.2.6 The School Timetable Officer must obtain appropriate training in use of the University systems and software used for timetabling activities so that they may effectively and efficiently contribute to the production of the University's academic timetable. Information on the software and systems used as at time of writing is available in the School Timetable Coordinators' Guide.

4.2 Timetable Data Collection

4.2.1 Data Collection Period

4.2.1.1 At defined periods, the Timetable Office will ask Schools to provide timetable requests via the University's Course and Unit Offering System (CUOS). Timetable requests are the requirements, constraints and preferred options to be used and/or taken into consideration when scheduling a unit's activities

4.2.1.2 The timetable request collection period is normally between February to April for all teaching periods for the following calendar year. The period opens again in July to collect requests for the summer teaching period, which commences in December and continues into January of the following year.

4.2.1.3 Timetable requests provided during the collection period must be via the method requested by the Timetable Officer and with all relevant supporting information. As at time of writing all Timetable Requests must be made through CUOS by the published deadline.

4.2.1.4 The ability to successfully process timetable requests is dependent on the accuracy and completeness of the unit offering information available through CUOS.   Unit offerings

are the teaching period, campus and mode (e.g. on campus, online) for which a unit is available.

4.2.1.5 All units must be approved on the Curriculum Approval and Publication System (CAPS) *before* offerings can be added to CUOS. It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that approval has been obtained in a timely and accurate way prior to the commencement of data collection for Timetabling purposes.

4.2.1.6 Schools are responsible for lodging timetable requests for all unit offerings that will have activities. Not all unit offerings will have activities, *e.g.* online units, research units.

4.2.1.7   In addition to the timetable requests provided as part of 4.2.1.3, supplementary information about school events such as scheduled staff meetings or similar which may assist the Timetable Office to create a timetable which accommodates these events may be provided directly to the Timetable Office during the data collection period as defined in 4.3.1 of the Timetabling and Room Allocation Policy.

4.2.1.8 Supplementary information provided to the Timetable Office after the data collection period has closed may not be able to be accommodated as part of the scheduling process. In this case the School Timetable Officer must provide the Timetable Office with suggestions for changes to the draft timetable to accommodate their requirements. Proposed changes must not impact on other areas' scheduling or must be negotiated between areas before being provided to the Timetable Office.

4.2.1.9 The Timetable Office can create activities for online units if required. To request creation of activities for online units a written request should be lodged with the central Timetable Office via timetable@ecu.edu.au. Preferably, these requests should be received after the publication of the academic timetable. Irrespective of the time of receipt, these requests will only be actioned after the release of the final academic timetable.

4.2.1.10   The Timetable Office is not responsible for managing data about unit offerings or teaching periods; advice on these matters can be obtained from Strategic and Governance Services.

4.2.2   Draft Timetable

4.2.2.1 Once the collection period has closed no more changes can be made through CUOS. Once the draft timetable has been received, any extra information for the Timetable Office should be added to the draft timetables provided to the Schools for review.

4.2.2.2 Requests for changes to the draft timetable must be clear, concise and contain relevant information as detailed below.

- Unit Code
- Activity number
- Teaching period
- Campus
- Reason for change
- Approvals (if required)

4.2.2.3 Once actioned, changes to the timetable system will display in CUOS, Callista and other relevant systems, the next day. School staff are encouraged to verify their change requests to ensure that they satisfy requirements.

4.2.3 Changes to the published or finalised timetable

*4.2.3.*1 Significant timetable changes can only be made to the published or finalised timetable in exceptional circumstances and are subject to approval.

*4.2.3.*2 All requests for changes to the published or finalised timetable must come from the School Timetabling Officer in writing to the central Timetable Office via timetable@ecu.edu.au. Staff may discuss possible changes with the Timetable Coordinator in advance but the formal request must be put in writing.

*4.2.3.*3 Acceptable reasons for changing the published or finalised timetable include:

- Clashes (unit, lecturer, room)
- Sessional Lecturer availability;
- Significant difference, higher or lower, between planned and actual enrolment numbers.
- Loss of staff scheduled to teach activity and no other staff available at time activity has been timetabled.
- Loss of venue due to damage or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Student enrolled in the activity has a disability that prevents them access to the timetabled venue.

*4.2.3.*4 The Timetable Office may make changes after the timetable has been published or finalised in cases where a change in circumstance will allow a more effective use of teaching space. This includes but is not limited to situations where a unit has been merged or cancelled or where a timetabled activity has zero actual enrolments and the allocated teaching space is therefore available for reallocation or alternative use.

4.3 Scheduling and allocation of spaces

4.3.1 Basic scheduling principles

Teaching activities are scheduled at times and in places that are:

- consistent with University policies and procedures relating to:
  - work health and safety, and
  - space planning
- takes into account, where practicable, ECU's commitment to equity and diversity
- consistent with best pedagogic practice
- sensitive to the needs of new curriculum and curriculum renewal
- consistent with facilitating student attendance and maximising student choice
- responsive to student feedback
- consistent with utilising teaching space and resources efficiently and sustainably
- consistent with the requirements of the Edith Cowan University Enterprise Agreement (or other industrial instrument in effect for teaching staff)

*4.3.*1.1 Where possible and appropriate, the nature of the teaching activity and the number of students expected in the class will inform the size and type of teaching space allocated.

*4.3.1.*2 Schools are required to provide timetable requests accompanied by the minimum constraints for activities that require general teaching rooms.

*4.3.1.*3   Additional constraints, such as specific times or room types will be considered but must be accompanied by a rationale for the request. The Timetable Office can provide advice on what are considered appropriate reasons. See also section 4.3.2 Specialist and Dual-Specialist Rooms and Section 4.2.3.3.

*4.3.1.*4 In some cases, University Agreements in relation to use of University space will impact on the above scheduling principles.

4.3.1.5 At the end of scheduling there may be some activities that are not scheduled and/or not allocated a room. A reason will be provided in the draft timetables sent to the Schools.

4.3.2 Specialist and 'dual-specialist' rooms

*4.3.2.*1 The Facilities and Services Centre defines the allocation of specialist rooms to schools. Timetable requests for activities in school specialist rooms can be specific, including the day, time and room number. Schools will be given first preference on specialist rooms that they have been allocated.

*4.3.2.*2   Requests to use a specialist room allocated to one business area by another business area will be considered only once the activities from the allocated area have been timetabled.

*4.3.2.*3   Where a specialist room may also be used for general teaching these are known as 'dual-use specialist rooms'. Dual-use specialist rooms will only be timetabled for general use after all requirements for specialist use have been met.

4.3.3   Quota

*4.3.3.*1   Although quotas can be allocated for both unit offerings and activities it is the ***activity quota*** which is used to determine the size of the room allocated during scheduling as it is the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in an activity (e.g. seminar, lecture).

*4.3.3.*2 Quota nominations should, where possible, be based on previous years' actual data but may be adjusted. Changes to activity quota requested by Schools during timetable data collection are subject to review and approval.

*4.3.3.*3 During scheduling a report showing the requested quotas, the previous four year's enrolments, plus the average and the percentage increase will be sent to Schools. Schools seeking to increase quotas more than 20% will be required to supply a rationale and the request will be subject to approval.

*4.3.3.*4 Quota cannot be set to be greater than the approved maximum capacities of teaching rooms as set by the Facilities and Services Centre. It is the School's responsibility to actively monitor their units' enrolments and decide on a course of action if the enrolments go above the maximum allowed room capacity.

4.4.   Use and management of University teaching spaces

4.4.1 At the start of each semester and examination period the Campus Support Office (CSO) will set up general teaching rooms in a configuration set by the Facilities and Services Centre. Staff moving desks and chairs in a general teaching room must return the room to its original configuration. Any matters requiring attention relating to room configuration or the state of the room following use should be referred to the CSO.

4.4.2 The Timetable Office can provide an assessment of the impact of proposed changes to general teaching spaces which will change their availability for use (for example, non-urgent repairs, renovations or reconfiguration). Approval for any changes is the responsibility of the Facilities and Services Centre.

4.4.4 To facilitate an orderly change-over of classes, lecturers and students shall vacate the room at least 15 minutes prior to the end of the classes' scheduled time, e.g. 8.30-10.30am classes should normally commence at 8.30am and all staff and students should vacate the room by 10.15am.

4.4.5 Ad-hoc and other room bookings are the responsibility of CSO. Staff should refer to the [Timetable Office Website](#) for more information on ad-hoc or miscellaneous room bookings.

4.4.6 Ad-hoc and other room bookings will be actioned after academic timetable requirements and other specialist requirements, such as space obligations mandated by agreements or to facilitate core University events, such as Orientation, have been accommodated.

4.4.7 Ad-hoc and other room bookings will normally be opened once the timetable is finalised, which is usually 2 weeks after the publication of the final academic timetable.

4.4.8 The Timetable Office and the Resources and Asset Planning Office will attend regular meetings to discuss issues relating to teaching rooms on all the campuses, including planning refurbishment, repair and renovation.

4.5 Authority in Relation to Timetable Decisions

4.5.1   Responsibility for operational decision making relating to Timetabling rests with the Timetable Office, on delegated authority of the Director, Student Administration.

4.5.2   Changes may not be actioned in cases where an appropriate rationale or other justification or approval for a specific request or change has not been provided as requested.

4.5.3   Schools or other groups with competing or conflicting timetabling requests who wish to have a particular timetabling decisions reconsidered are required to, in the first instance, negotiate between themselves to determine an appropriate solution. In cases where a solution cannot be determined the matter must be referred to the Timetable Office who will, after consultation and taking appropriate advice, make a final decision.

4.5.4   Queries or requests for reconsideration of a decision taken by the Timetable Office must be referred in writing and with appropriate supporting documentation by the relevant Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) to the Director, Student Administration.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In relation to these guidelines, the following positions are responsible for the following

Guidelines Owner

The Guidelines Owner, Director, Student Administration has overall responsibility for the content of these guidelines and its operation in ECU.

All members of the University community are expected to comply with contents of these Guidelines.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

6.1 The policy and guidelines are supported by the following:

- School Timetable Coordinators' Guide
- Timetable Office Website

6.2 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of the policy and guidelines are as follows:

- Miscellaneous Room Bookings policy
- Facilities Hire policy
- Curriculum Approval policy

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Guidelines Owner	Director, Student Administration
All Enquiries Contact:	Timetable Coordinator
Telephone:	(61 8) 6304 3913
Email address:	timetable@ecu.edu.au

8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Guidelines Approved by:	
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