

QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Timetabling and Room Booking Policy

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Summary and Overview

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Timetabling and Room Booking Policy sets out Queen Mary's approach to the management of its teaching space and the provision of timetables for programmes and modules. The policy aims to ensure the best use of space and provide, in a timely manner, comprehensive accessible timetables for staff and students. It has been developed to support a new approach to timetabling and room booking at Queen Mary and the provision of on-line, comprehensive timetables from a single system supported by a definitive set of information.
- 1.2 The Timetabling and Room Booking policy is approved by Senate. The Teaching Room Facilities team is responsible for implementing Policy across

all faculties at Queen Mary. The overall monitoring of the operation of the Policy is the responsibility of the Taught Programmes Planning Group.

2. Scope

2.1 The Timetabling and Room Booking Policy covers the following activities:

- The production of comprehensive timetables for all programmes and modules delivered by Queen Mary
- The booking of centrally-managed teaching space and locally-managed space
- The booking of central teaching space for non-teaching activities, ad hoc events and meetings
- The booking and use of Queen Mary's facilities and spaces for academic conferences and for commercial activities.

2.2 The Policy covers all teaching space (see below for definitions) managed by Queen Mary, its use, and all teaching events, meetings and commercial events.

2.3 All school/institutes and institutes should follow this policy for the booking of space and production of timetables. (The first timetables to be produced under this policy will be those for 2013-14, with the actual timetabling process taking place from January 2013.)

3. Definitions

3.1 Types of space and those managing the space are as detailed below. All bookable space falls into one of the following categories:

General Teaching Space (GTS) (*was Centrally-managed teaching space (CTS)*) refers to all lecture theatres, seminar rooms and other space which is managed by Teaching Room Facilities. These rooms are principally bookable for teaching activities but may be used for non teaching activities such as meetings, research seminars and commercial activities once all teaching requirements have been met. A full list of all central teaching space can be found on the Teaching Room Facilities website <http://www.teachingbookings.qmul.ac.uk/>

Specialist Teaching Space (STS) (*was Locally-managed teaching space (LTS)*) refers to rooms where control over their booking is by the school/institute/institute concerned; they are used mainly for the designated school/institute/institute's activities. However, the designated school/institute/institutes are strongly encouraged to allow external school/institutes to use their space should there be spare capacity.

Events Space (ES) (*was Events and Commercial Space*) refers to those spaces that have a primary purpose of being used for Queen Mary events or may be used for commercial letting to generate income. These spaces may also be used for teaching and assessment activities. ES may be either locally

managed by a designated Professional Service or centrally-managed. This definition covers spaces such as foyers which are used for receptions.

Meeting rooms (MR) refers to rooms that have a primary purpose of being used for meetings. Meeting rooms may also be used for teaching and assessment activities and may also be booked for other types of events. MR may be either locally managed by a designated Professional Service or centrally-managed.

External space (ETS) refers to externally owned teaching and assessment space that QM uses.

3.2 Types of events

Teaching and assessment events are lectures, seminars, classes, tutorials, laboratory sessions, practical sessions or other structured teaching activity and in-class tests. Teaching and assessment events may also apply to activities developed for delivery to PGR students and other such teaching and assessment events organised in support of the delivery of programmes and modules.

In-term assessment events refers to organised assessment that is not an invigilated examination. Typically these assessment events take place during the teaching period and are organised by the school/institute delivering the programme.

Invigilated examinations refers to examinations that are conducted under Queen Mary's invigilated examination regulations. Typically, these events are organised by the central Examinations Unit in ARCS or the SMD Student Office.

Meetings are activities involving a number of people that are not for the delivery of the curriculum to students. Meetings may involve staff, students or a combination of the two.

Public Engagement and Outreach events are those QM organised events with a public engagement or outreach purpose. Typically, they relate to the work of the VP for External Partnerships and Public Engagement.

Open days and recruitment events are those events that are targeted at applicants and potential future students. They may be organised by Marketing and Communications, another central team or a faculty/school/institute.

Queen Mary centrally-managed teaching events are those events that are booked through the central team and process, using general teaching space.

Queen Mary locally-managed Events are teaching and learning activities that use specialist space, typically managed by schools and institutes. The

scheduling of these events follow the overall Queen Mary procedure set by the Teaching Room Facilities team.

Commercial/external hire are events that are managed by the Commercial Sales Team where the space is charged for.

Queen Mary Events are College events that are delivered by central teams and apply to more than one school or department. They may either be managed through the Teaching Room Facilities team or Commercial Sales Team.

Queen Mary Organised Research Events are research seminars, conferences etc that are organised by Queen Mary staff and relate to the College's research. Some events may incur a charge if revenue is being generated from participants.

3.3 People

Teaching Room Facilities refers to the central team based in ARCS, which is responsible for the overall management of the timetabling and room bookings process.

School/Institute Timetablers refers to staff based in schools/institutes who manage timetables and rooms locally.

Commercial sales staff refers to staff whose role it is to sell Queen Mary's space to generate revenue.

3.4 Other

Syllabus Plus (S+) The timetabling software used by Queen Mary.

Normal hours of operation these are the hours which are published to students and staff in which they can expect teaching, learning and assessment activities to occur within the semester dates.

Policy

4. Guiding Principles

4.1 The Policy and its implementation aims to:

- Support the delivery of the highest quality learning and teaching to Queen Mary students
- Optimise utilisation of the Queen Mary's space
- Ensure that students are taught in the most appropriate teaching accommodation

- Provide a single, unified approach to timetabling and room booking across Queen Mary, with all schools/institutes using the same data set held in one corporate system (currently Syllabus Plus)
- Ensure that the timetabling and room booking process, the module selection and registration process, and the advance provision of learning resources work together to improve the quality and timing of the information students have in advance about each year's study.
- Ensure that teaching facilities meet the needs of staff
- Provide transparency about timetables and the allocation of space to different activities
- Provide easy access to timely and accurate timetabling and room booking information via the web
- Provide personalised timetables for both staff and students; available online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Maximise revenue from commercial bookings of unused space
- Provide for meetings and student society events
- Allow for resolution of the potential conflicts where different activities are competing for space resources
- Allow for advance booking of facilities for one-off research conferences and other irregular but important activities.
- Provide management information on room usage, space availability
- Support models of potential new curricula and to inform the provision of new teaching space
- Provide information for other purposes eg key information sets (KIS)

5. Policy statement

- 5.1 All timetabling and room booking activity will take place using the single Queen Mary system following the relevant procedures and deadlines. This includes the allocation of students to seminar/lab and other groups and their timetabling.
- 5.2 Locally-managed rooms will be supported by parameters and authorities set up in the timetabling system to enable school/institute to control the use of these rooms within an overall Queen Mary framework.

6. Teaching Space

- 6.1 All teaching space on all campuses, however it is designated and managed, will be included in Syllabus Plus (S+).
- 6.2 All meeting space on all campuses, will be included in S+.
- 6.3 All commercial space on all campuses, will be included in S+.
- 6.4 Each item of space detailed in S+ will be allocated a manager in S+. The manager of the space will have authority to make bookings for that space.

- 6.5 The authority for management of bookings will be set up in S+ by Teaching Room Facilities in accordance with the scheme of authorities agreed by XX (this will either be SPAG or TPPG – TBA).
- 6.6 All other rights and authorities for access to S+ will be established and maintained by Teaching Room Facilities.
- 6.7 All details of space, managers for the space and bookings of the space will be available for all users of the S+ system to view.

7. Teaching Times

Semester dates and hours operation

- 7.1 Queen Mary publishes semester dates which are approved by Senate that apply to all programmes and modules, and normal hours of operation when teaching and assessment activities take place. There are different semester dates that apply to the undergraduate medicine and dentistry programmes, leading to MBBS and BDS. Teaching, learning and assessment sessions will normally be timetabled in the hours of operation: at present these are 0900 to 1800h, although there are some activities that are delivered outside these times. The Academic Regulations require students to be available during these times.
- 7.2 All teaching and assessment for all programmes and modules must take place in the accordance with the semester dates and examination periods approved by Senate. Exceptions to this requirement where a module is to be taught outside the approved dates must be approved by the Taught Programmes Planning Group.
- 7.3 Space will only be held for teaching and examinations during these periods to enable those who wish to book conferences and other key activities in non-teaching times to do so with sufficient lead time.

Wednesday afternoon teaching

- 7.4 The use of Wednesday afternoons (after 1300h) for undergraduate teaching will not normally be permitted. Where a school/institute requires a different arrangement, a formal exclusion to this policy should be obtained from the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning). This policy does not apply to postgraduate teaching.

Reading weeks

- 7.5 Where reading weeks operate (typically undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in HSS), the reading week is identified in advance and any uncommitted space is available to others to use.

Teaching slots

- 7.6 Each allocation of teaching space will occur in a slot during the opening hours. Normally teaching space slots will be allocated in hour long sessions, starting on the hour at the Mile End Campus; on the half hour at the Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square campuses; and XXX at the Lincoln Inns' Field campus.
- 7.7 Teaching sessions start five minutes after the start of the slot and end five minutes before the end of the hourly slot. This allows for set up, arrival and departure without impinging on other slots. Specialist teaching sessions may require more set-up time which is factored in accordingly.
- 7.8 The normal minimum duration for a teaching slot is one hour. The maximum duration for a teaching slot is normally 3 hours.

Examination periods

- 7.9 Senate has agreed three periods in which examinations occur during the year (Winter, main period in Spring/Early Summer and Late Summer). The vast majority of examinations take place in these periods and space is booked accordingly.

Out of hours activities

- 7.10 Teaching and learning activities using general teaching space may be scheduled outside the normal hours of operation e.g. Saturday, Sunday or evenings with appropriate prior arrangements made with Teaching Room Facilities. Out of hours activities should be confined to the Bancroft Building wherever possible as this makes for a more efficient use of security, portering, lighting and heating which can be costly.
- 7.11 College events and other school/institute activities may take place in other buildings as appropriate.

8. Teaching Events

- 8.1 Teaching events are associated with an approved module and programme. Modules are operated during the semester dates and may be delivered in one or two semesters.
- 8.2 Schools/institutes determine the number of teaching events for each module, whether these are on a repeating weekly basis or different pattern, whether each event is for all students registered on the module or for sub-groups (eg seminar group, lab group etc), and the staff who will deliver each event.
- 8.3 Queen Mary's student information system (SITS) provides details of the definitive record of modules that are being delivered during the academic and the students registered for each module.
- 8.4 Syllabus Plus provides the definitive record of the number and format of teaching events associated with a module, the weeks during with teaching

events will take place and the teaching staff who will deliver events. This information is provided by School/Institute Timetablers.

- 8.4 The definitive list of students registered for a module is provided from SITS (mySIS).
- 8.5 Syllabus Plus is used by Schools/Institutes to allocate students to sub-module groups (eg for seminars, labs, practical events).
- 8.6 Syllabus Plus is used by Schools/Institutes to allocate academic staff to the delivery of teaching events associated with a module.
- 8.7 Each teaching event will have a duration (in hourly slots), a student group (either whole module or seminar etc group), at least one member of academic staff who is responsible for the delivery of that teaching event and a room.

9. Timetabling Priorities

Teaching activities

- 9.1 In all cases, the priority for timetabling and the use of the College's space during the teaching periods is teaching and learning events.
- 9.2 In all cases, priority will be give to those room booking/timetabling requests that are submitted via S+, in the way prescribed by the Timetabling Procedure, by the specified deadline. Requests that are submitted incorrectly or after the deadline will be considered after those received correctly and in time. The allocation of all centrally booked teaching space for the teaching timetable, and all school/institute use of centrally booked space, is the responsibility of Teaching Room Facilities.
- 9.3 For CTS, teaching activities that occur within the approved semester dates and normal hours of operation teaching times for Queen Mary take precedence over non-teaching activities.
- 9.4 Students should not normally be required to take three or more consecutive hours of lectures/teaching without a break, unless a student had particularly selected to do this.
- 9.5 In the allocation of rooms, larger classes will take priority over smaller classes. This rule will not apply to 'eleventh hour' bookings;
- 9.6 Regular, full semester bookings will take precedence over single week or sporadic week bookings. For undergraduate medicine and dentistry programmes that do not fit this pattern, space on the SMD faculty campuses (WC, ChSq, WS), will be prioritised for the delivery of these curricula according to the relevant term dates.
- 9.7 Where the week patterns are the same, activities with a two-hour duration will take precedence over those with a one-hour duration. Activities with a

duration in excess of two hours will normally be of lower priority. The reason for this is that longer sessions are harder to schedule and place too many constraints on the other sessions' scheduling.

- 9.8 Where a room request for a specified time cannot be accommodated, Teaching Room Facilities will suggest an appropriate room at an alternative time or explore the availability of rooms on a week-by-week basis.
- 9.8 Activities requiring specialist facilities will have priority access to specialist teaching spaces. This does not apply to 'eleventh hour' bookings.
- 9.10 Class sizes should not normally exceed the size of rooms allocated, however, a school/institute may request rooms based on a maximum assumption of a 10% no-show of students where previous attendance patterns support such an approach. The user is responsible for adhering to the published seating capacity limits for rooms as exceeding these limits could result in health and safety risks and impact on the quality of the student experience. Class sizes submitted to Teaching Room Facilities should be based on estimated module registrations, which will be matched against actual registrations once they are known.
- 9.11 School/institutes are responsible for checking the facilities that are provided in each allocated room meet their requirements, and booking any supplementary audio visual assistance or equipment with avbookings@qmul.ac.uk. Room facilities can be checked on the Teaching Room Facilities website at <http://www.teachingbookings.qmul.ac.uk/>

Students and staff with a disability

- 9.12 Access for students and staff with a disability is a priority and will be accommodated wherever possible. Teaching Room Facilities must be notified in advance of any special requirements;

Queen Mary centrally-managed events

- 9.13 Bookings for Queen Mary centrally-managed events normally occur outside the normal hours of operation, after the end of the Semester dates or, for examinations in the approved examination periods. These bookings take priority over all other events.

Queen Mary Locally-managed events and Research Events

- 9.14 Bookings for Queen Mary locally-managed events such as academic conferences can be made in the periods that are not designated in the semester dates as teaching periods. These bookings can be made in advance at any reasonable point once the semester dates are known; they do not need to wait until the teaching timetable deadlines for the relevant academic year. Research events organised by Queen Mary have priority over commercial events but space is allocated on a first-come first-served

basis and space that has been contracted for lease externally cannot normally be released.

Meetings

- 9.15 Meetings can be scheduled in meeting rooms at any time and do not need to adhere to the semester dates or timetabling procedure deadlines. Meetings that are to use teaching rooms, however they are designated and managed, should not be booked until all teaching events have been timetabled.

Commercial bookings

- 9.16 Commercial bookings may be made in events space when it is not designated for Queen Mary events. Commercial bookings may be made for teaching space when it is not being used for teaching. During the teaching periods, teaching space can only be booked commercially when all teaching and events has been timetabled.

Use of S+

- 9.17 All teaching and other events must be timetabled within S+ (regardless of whether they take place in general teaching space or specialist teaching spaced managed by schools/institutes). This is necessary to enable complete timetables to be provided to students and staff. It also ensures that clashes are minimised. Schools/institutes can book rooms using S+ for non teaching activities during non-teaching periods; this also applies to the commercial use of space. Commercial bookings should be recorded in S+ so that there is comprehensive information about room usage.

10. Teaching Staff

- 10.1 The Head of School/Director of Institute is responsible for ensuring that teaching load and teaching staff availability is arranged for individual staff in his/her school/institute, whatever their contract type. This can take account of allocated research days, part time working and other factors in relation to an individual. Schools/Institutes manage teaching staff availability in S+, which will hold the definitive record of teaching staff availability.
- 10.2 As a general rule, staff may expect to have teaching events timetabled in the normal operating hours of the College: 0900-1800h, Monday to Friday during semesters.
- 10.3 Where S+ generates the research day for a member of staff, based on best fit for teaching, there is greater flexibility therefore, wherever possible, the default position is that research days are system-generated based parameters set in the system.

11. Students

11.1 Requirements for student attendance and participation in teaching and learning activities are set out in the academic regulations and school/institute handbooks.

12. Module selection, student allocation to groups and module clash resolution

12.1 The process of timetabling modules for the next academic year occurs in Semester 2 of the preceding year after the module availability confirmation process is completed. The timetabling of modules occurs before students select modules for the following academic year. The module selection process is managed by ARCS through MySIS in accordance with the ARCS calendar dates. Prior to the opening of the module pre-selection period (where students identify their preferred choice of elective modules for the following academic year), schools/institutes are required to confirm the availability of modules and approve new curricula, following the QM process managed by ARCS. Following student registration for modules, there may be some adjustment to room bookings to take account of class sizes and any clashes.

12.2 As a general rule, clashes between teaching activities on core and compulsory modules are unacceptable. In the event of a clash being identified, one or both activities must move in order to resolve it. The parent school/institute is responsible for ensuring that any such clashes are resolved. Any clashes that can not be resolved should be referred to the appropriate Deans for Taught Programmes. Every effort should be made to reduce clashes between compulsory/optional modules and optional/optional modules within a programme of study.

12.3 Allocation of students to groups in is the responsibility of the teaching school/institute and should be managed in S+ using the data on module registrations from SITS.

12.4 Student allocations should be updated regularly to ensure that student timetables are as up to date as possible.

13. Timetabling Changes

13.1 Requests for changes to the timetable after the publication date should be kept to an absolute minimum.

12.2 Changes to the teaching schedule after the production date cannot be guaranteed and will be dealt with on a strict rotation basis.

12.3 School/institutes are responsible for notifying all staff and students affected by an unforeseen change to the original room allocation.

12.4 Teaching Room Facilities may occasionally need to move a class to a different location after the publication date. Such changes should be kept to a

minimum and noted well in advance. Teaching Room Facilities will communicate any reason for this to School/institutes.

14. Ad Hoc Room Bookings

- 14.1 All one-off bookings for teaching or academic meetings should be submitted to Teaching Room Facilities, using the online booking form with further details provided by email if necessary.
- 14.2 Ad hoc bookings must be received at least 48 hours in advance for Teaching Room Facilities to be able to guarantee processing the booking. This will be longer during the yearly room allocation process.
- 14.3 Users are advised that, even where they see a room unoccupied, if they wish to use it, a booking must still be submitted to allow for full and accurate statistics on central teaching space usage to be provided to HEFCE, which has a direct affect on funding;
- 14.4 Ad hoc bookings can only be made and confirmed for the current academic year. Bookings required for the following academic year cannot be confirmed until the teaching timetable for the forthcoming academic year has been set, unless they are in non-teaching periods, including Reading Weeks.
- 14.6 Should a user wish to make a short notice booking (same or next day) where a speedy confirmation is required, they should contact Teaching Room Facilities by telephone, with further details provided by email for complex requests.
- 14.7 Service users are responsible for booking any supplementary audio visual services with avbookings@qmul.ac.uk.
- 14.8 Students should contact school/institute administrators should they wish to make a booking for academic purposes. All Student Societies activities must be booked in accordance with the Student Societies booking process found at <http://www.teachingbookings.qmul.ac.uk/docs/10295.pdf>.
- 14.9 Any booking that is non-teaching related must be booked in accordance with the Venue Booking Policy for Non Teaching Activity (Events) found at <http://qm-web.conferences.qmul.ac.uk/Documents/73597.pdf>.

15. Fair Use of Space

- 15.1 In line with the policy of openness, schools/institutes are required to cancel any bookings they have made for space which is no longer required as soon as they become aware, to ensure that the space is made available to other School/institutes with outstanding requests;
- 15.2 Space audits will be conducted each semester to monitor centrally booked space usage. The results of these will be sent to School/institutes and a request for absence explanations made.

15.3 Repeated booking of rooms that are not used may lead to a lower prioritisation for bookings in the future.

16. Conflict Resolution

16.1 In line with the policy of openness, service users are expected to co-operate fully in sensibly negotiating resolution to any conflicts that arise.

16.2 The live on-line timetable is the definitive version of who is entitled to occupy any central teaching space at any given time.

16.3 Where satisfactory solutions cannot be found through colleagues working with one another and the Teaching Room Facilities team, the issue will require escalation. The arbiter of such disputes will be the Vice Principal, Teaching and Learning, who will decide how the matter should be dealt with, The decision of the Vice Principal is final.

Approved by Senate: 6 December 2012

INSERT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

INSERT when finalised, timeline and procedures

Procedures

INSERT when developed as part of the SMART project