City University Timetabling Policy

City University undertakes to:

- Provide, maintain and where necessary further develop an automated timetabling system for use in constructing the University timetable
- Provide policy coordination, training and access to users of the system
- Be responsible for coordinating the timing of both inputs and the publishing of timetables
- Coordinate the allocation of centrally managed teaching space and all general teaching space during the scheduling period.

In developing timetables, City University aims to recognise and act on the needs and interests of a range of stakeholders in a University that offers an extensive academic program, across a number of campuses. The University's teaching timetables are prepared using a software system that considers each stakeholder's requirements and aims to produce an equitable timetable from the information provided. The data required to create timetables are gathered, collated and prepared by Schools and Departments in conjunction with Central Timetabling.

City University's timetabling policy incorporates the following key principles:

- The timetable for the forthcoming academic period will be published at a time, and in a manner, that permits students to be informed of the timetable prior to registration
- Changes to the timetable after publication will be kept to a minimum
- Class sizes should not exceed the seating capacities of allocated rooms
- Scheduling of classes should make efficient use of the University's teaching resources and facilities, before considering external hire
- Late submissions will not be included in the initial room allocation and are therefore likely to be penalised by the fact that required room sizes may not be available
- Not cancelling booked space may incur penalty charges
- Excessive alteration of student timetables may incur penalty charges
- Considering the necessary University approval has been sought, the Timetabling Manager and/or Space Management Group reserve the right to add, remove, and amend policy terms as necessary.
1  **Student Experience**

1.0.1 The University Timetable is constructed for Students.
1.0.2 When considering changes to the timetable, students and core program interests are of paramount importance.
1.0.3 As far as practicable, students should not attend more than 4 continuous hours of teaching without a break.
1.0.4 While the University attempts to accommodate student choice, the timetable may not allow for every student to attend their preferred combination of units.
1.0.5 Classes in courses advertised as being available for part time students will be scheduled such that there are sufficient classes at times suitable for students to complete the course at a normal progression rate for the part-time mode of the course.

2  **Roles & Responsibilities**

The following sets out the roles and responsibilities of the key entities and staff involved in delivering on the University's undertaking with regard to the timetabling of classes.

2.0 **Timetabling Manager**

2.0.1 Responsible for final scheduling of the timetable.
2.0.2 Produce a diary of key dates that outlines dates for collection, submission and publishing of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year.
2.0.3 Provide timelines for preparation of the University timetable.
2.0.4 Understand and coordinate the timetable process from an institutional perspective rather than a particular academic area.
2.0.5 Oversee the collection of teaching requirements and constraints.
2.0.6 Ensure that the needs of students are considered.
2.0.7 Manage the web data collection system.

2.1 **Students**

2.1.1 Provide information and requisites as soon as possible after enrolment so adjustments may be accommodated. Requests from students related to:
2.1.1.1 Disability or medical condition should be directed to the Disability Liaison Unit.
2.1.1.2 Religious beliefs should be directed to School Timetablers.
2.1.2 Read the published timetable and advise module/course coordinators of concerns relating to issues such as clashes between core units, or unreasonable cross-campus travel to attend core classes.
2.1.3 Read the relevant published University Handbook that sets out course requirements.
2.1.4 Attend only those classes into which they are timetabled.
2.2 School Timetabler

These positions are responsible for a range of the following tasks, according to their School requirements:

2.2.1 Manage timetabling and associated business processes across the School/Department
2.2.2 Prepare and distribute timelines for data submission
2.2.3 Monitor adherence to Central Timetabling deadlines
2.2.4 Provide timely advice to staff and Heads of their requests regarding overall workload and equity issues, and ensure that these issues are reflected in the timetable
2.2.5 Ensure provision of accurate data to the School/Department when the timetable is being prepared
2.2.6 Ensure collection of accurate data from Schools/Departments, and transfer it to Central Timetabling via the appropriate system
2.2.7 Liaise with Central Timetabling, Programme Directors and Module Leaders to resolve timetabling anomalies and request adjustments to the preliminary timetable
2.2.8 Check the preliminary timetable to ensure that:
   2.2.8.1 Adequate provision has been made for all offerings for the coming teaching periods
   2.2.8.2 All details of teaching activities have been entered correctly
   2.2.8.3 Teaching staff are available at allocated times
   2.2.8.4 There are no clashes in students’ standard programs.
   2.2.9 Keep abreast of timetabling related policies, procedures and processes and implement changes as necessary
2.2.10 Coordinate School/Department ad hoc room bookings and ensure cancelled bookings are recorded
2.2.11 Educate students to regularly check the timetable for amendments before and during term
2.2.12 Distribute relevant timetabling policies and procedures to affected parties

2.3 Heads of School/Department

2.3.1 Allocate teaching loads consistent with University policy, taking into account teaching staff’s overall duties, and making reasonable adjustments in line with the City University Equality & Diversity Policy
2.3.2 Check and approve Full Time Staff Unavailability Forms
2.3.3 Check and approve Part Time Staff Availability Forms
2.3.4 Approve changes to the preliminary timetable, which are not listed as acceptable. Room availability for changes is not guaranteed
2.3.5 Ensure adherence to Central Timetabling deadlines.

2.4 Programme Directors

Liaise with the School Timetabler to:

2.4.1 Adhere to timetable preparation deadlines
2.4.2 Ensure accurate data at time of submittal
2.4.3 Make timely adjustments to the preliminary timetable including changes arising from staff or student requests
2.4.4 Request adjustments to the published timetable, if necessary.
2.5 Teaching Staff

2.5.1 Provide timely advice to Heads regarding overall workload and equality issues within the School

2.5.2 Provide Heads with their time constraints via the Full Time Staff Unavailability Form

2.5.3 Provide full and accurate information of timetable requirements for each module at time of submittal

2.5.4 Provide timetable data in a timely manner in accordance with the Central Timetabling deadlines

2.5.5 Notify the School Timetabler of any disability or medical requirements that should be accommodated by Central Timetabling

2.5.6 Check the preliminary timetable for each module they are involved in when it is first published and advise the School Timetabler of problems

2.5.7 Educate students to regularly check the timetable for amendments before and during term

2.5.8 Adhere to the timetable published by Central Timetabling (see section 5.6 Adherence to the timetable)

2.6 Disability Officers

2.6.1 Following interviews with each student at the beginning of each year, ensure that the School Timetablers are made aware of any adjustments that may be required

2.6.2 Notify School Timetablers when additional support personnel are employed to assist students in classes.

3 Teaching Week

3.0.1 Other than in exceptional circumstances the standard teaching week is from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday

3.0.2 When a course is available in a full-time mode classes may be scheduled any time during these hours provided all other constraints are met

3.0.3 Full time Staff and Students will be expected to be available to attend teaching during these times, unless approved exceptions apply

3.0.4 Part-time teaching staff will only be scheduled to teaching during the time they are paid to teach

3.0.5 A one-hour lunch break between the hours of 11:00am and 3:00pm will normally be allocated to all teaching staff, where possible

3.0.6 As far as practicable, students should not attend more than four continuous hours of lectures without a break

3.0.7 All centrally managed teaching space will be available for teaching use within these hours during teaching weeks as specified in the Academic Calendar, until the final timetable is published. After this date unused teaching space will be made available for external hire via the Conference Service and internal bookings

3.0.8 Evening class will be scheduled where required between 6pm-9pm Monday to Friday
3.0.9 Classes may be held on Saturday or Sunday if requested by the specific School or Department; however a charge will be made by Security for providing access to buildings which are not usually open at these times.

3.0.10 We aim to keep Wednesday afternoons free from undergraduate teaching but this cannot be guaranteed.

3.0.11 All activities start on the hour and vacate promptly at 10 minutes to the final hour. These 10 minutes are to allow travel time for staff/students that have consecutive classes, and to allow the prompt start of the next class scheduled in the room. Activities requested to start or finish on the half hour will be accommodated where possible.

3.0.12 Breaks within the teaching are at the discretion of the teaching staff.

4 Timetable Construction

4.0.1 Schools should aim to deliver the majority of their teaching in the same manner as the previous year, to reduce the workload of amending teaching requirements.

4.0.2 Teaching will not be arbitrarily scheduled at the same time every year. In particular, activities will not be routinely assigned to more favoured times.

4.0.3 The preliminary timetable will be prepared and published to staff by end June.

4.0.4 The final timetable will be published to staff and students by end August.

4.0.5 The construction of timetables (and any modifications, subsequent to publication, that are necessary to alleviate problems) will take into account the following considerations:

4.0.5.1 The equitable treatment of students.

4.0.5.2 The equitable treatment of staff.

4.0.5.3 The efficient and effective use of physical resources.

4.0.5.4 Availability of resources.

4.0.6 Where possible the construction of the timetable will allow:

4.0.6.1 FT Staff an hour free from teaching between 11am and 3pm.

4.0.7 The following will not be included in the construction of the timetable:

4.0.7.1 Subjects that have not received prior Programmes Committee approval.

4.0.7.2 Short courses. All short courses must run outside term time unless specific dispensation has been granted by Central Timetabling.

4.0.7.3 Examinations and test sessions held during term time that have not been granted an exception to the academic year structure.

4.0.7.4 Courses running outside the standard academic year structure that have not been granted an exception.

4.0.8 Where Schools/Departments provide no specific information of room requirements, the activity will be treated as requiring a standard teaching room.

4.0.9 Where required Central Timetabling may:

4.0.9.1 Move 10am starts to 9am or 11am providing they are taught by full time staff and are clash free for the students.

4.0.9.2 Move 2pm starts to 1pm or 3pm subject to the same criteria, and staff/students having a 1 hour lunch break.

4.0.9.3 Impose a limit on the number of classes which any programme or module can run simultaneously to 6 classes per hour.

4.0.9.4 Impose a limit of 80 students for computer rooms for any timeslot.
5 Constraints on the Timetable

5.0.1 The order which modules fall within the week will not be prioritised for sequencing unless the relevant Department/School presents a strong academic case.

5.0.2 Teaching activities within a module can be sequenced by a Department/School. However, Central Timetabling cannot guarantee that all sequencing requests can be met.

5.0.3 Where a module has its teaching activities split across periods 1 and 2, Central Timetabling will aim to schedule both at the same time but this cannot be guaranteed.

5.0.4 Certain courses will require class free periods to facilitate off campus practical work. This may include half or full day time constraints to control the scheduling.

5.0.5 Where collaborative arrangements exist between City University and another teaching institution then suitable timetable blocks will be allocated for those subjects with a priority ranking.

5.0.6 Where possible, activities for cohorts or individual staff will not be scheduled at different campuses on the same day unless requested. Where this is unavoidable, travel time will be allowed for in the schedule.

5.1 Staff Availability

5.1.1 Staff will continue to agree the number of timetabled hours per week with their Head of School/Department.

5.1.2 All staff must be available to deliver their agreed teaching commitments between the hours of 9am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, except where any of the following apply:

5.1.2.1 Teaching activities require to be delivered in an evening or weekend slot.

5.1.2.2 Flexible working arrangements are in place.

5.1.2.3 The member of staff requires slots free from teaching in order to undertake research, consultancy, clinical practice or other activities agreed with the Head of School. Note any “free slots” will be determined by the timetable process unless there are valid reasons for allocating particular times.

5.1.2.4 The member of staff must attend a regular University, School, Trade Union or external meeting.

5.1.2.5 Public or University holidays.

5.1.3 Where the above exceptions apply, staff can apply to the Head of Department for permission to be unavailable and submit a Staff Unavailability form.

5.1.4 Part-time staff should agree their availability to teach with their Head of Department and submit a Visiting Lecturer Availability form.

5.1.5 Visiting Lecturers availability should be supplied to the Central Timetabling as early as possible and submit a Visiting Lecturer Availability form.
5.2 Allocation of staff

5.2.1 Academic staff must be allocated to all activities before a timetable can be produced.

5.2.2 Where a Department or School is yet to recruit the staff member who will teach a particular unit, they will be required to enter a dummy profile for the prospective staff member in order to produce the timetable. It is then expected that the newly recruited staff member will teach at the times already allocated during timetabling, unless there are exceptional reasons for change.

5.3 Allocation of Teaching Rooms

5.3.1 Teaching rooms are allocated on a best-fit basis.

5.3.2 Central Timetabling reserves the right to move any teaching to an alternative room in order to accommodate all teaching.

5.3.3 Access for students and staff with disabilities takes precedence over other considerations, unless this causes unjustifiable hardship. It is therefore important that Central Timetabling is informed of staff and student disability requirements at the earliest time in order to minimise disruption to the timetable.

5.3.4 Schools will be allocated rooms on the basis of their forecast requirements and will be capped at the allocated room’s capacities. It is the Schools’ responsibility not to exceed these room capacities when recruiting as it is unlikely alternative accommodation will be available.

5.3.5 Schools requesting rooms which are larger than required should be aware of the space charging implications.

5.3.6 Specialist space, such as laboratories, will be preset against an activity requiring designated facilities.

5.3.7 Whilst Central Timetabling will attempt to timetable classes in a building near to the department, no guarantee can be made and there is no distinction to be made between the various buildings located at or around Northampton Square. There are two exceptions: Social Science and Language & Communication Sciences postgraduate teaching which are given priority in the Social Sciences building and Business School postgraduate teaching which is timetabled in Cass Business School, subject to appropriate class sizes.

5.3.8 All centrally managed teaching rooms are set up at the start of each day by university portering staff in a classroom format, in accordance with health & safety regulations. Staff and students should not alter this set up.

5.4 Avoiding clashes

5.4.1 Optional modules will not be guaranteed clash-free. All Schools/Departments are required to nominate clash-free paths for the most common module combinations for a course.

5.4.2 After the preliminary release of the timetable, a School/Department that initiates a change is responsible for avoiding clashes, and should liaise with other Departments to avoid clashes where possible.

5.4.3 Ultimate responsibility for resolving conflicts which arise from School timetabling decisions rests with the relevant Head of School/Department.
5.5 Requests for change

5.5.1 Changes to the timetable after publication will be kept to a minimum as students use the timetable to make enrolment decisions that best fit their academic interests as well as their family, disability support and work commitments. Any amendment has implications pertaining to student service and the availability of physical resources.

5.5.2 All requests to change any part of a timetable must be made through the appropriate School Timetabler.

5.5.3 Central Timetabling can only accept changes for the following reasons:

- 5.5.3.1 Staff clash with other teaching
- 5.5.3.2 Student clash with other teaching
- 5.5.3.3 Number of students exceeds safe capacity of room
- 5.5.3.4 Room too large
- 5.5.3.5 Venue unsuitable due to Health & Safety or maintenance issues
- 5.5.3.6 Cancellations
- 5.5.3.7 Staff sickness.

5.5.4 All other changes must be approved by the appropriate Head of Department prior to submission to Central Timetabling.

5.5.5 Adding or deleting subjects listed on the timetable after publication must have prior approval of the Head of Department or School Dean.

5.5.6 Any changes to the total number of hours timetabled for a subject will need Departmental approval as there may be student handbook implications or influence on course assessment.

5.5.7 All requests should be submitted on the Timetable Change Request form.

5.5.8 Cancellation/addition charges may be applied at the discretion of the Director of Property and Facilities in cases of excessive change to the timetable after initial submission.

5.6 Adherence to the timetable

Academic staff are asked to take an individual responsibility to:

5.6.1 Adhere to the version of the timetable published by Central Timetabling.

5.6.2 Report to their School Timetabler when:

- 5.6.2.1 They are unable to teach in their allocated room as someone else is using it (it will assist if you can find out who is occupying the room).
- 5.6.2.2 Courses are cancelled.
- 5.6.2.3 When rooms they have booked are no longer needed. A penalty is levied for all bookings which are not used.
- 5.6.2.4 Staff must not use rooms they perceive to be free of teaching without first requesting use of the room from their School Timetabler. Rooms may be empty for a number of reasons, and may well be timetabled for use in future weeks. Illicit occupation of rooms is the main contributor to room clashes. Such action leads to chaos and an undeserved reputation of inefficiency. Penalty charges may be incurred for such behaviour.

5.6.3 Each School Timetabler must ensure that the information distributed to staff and students matches the published timetable. Central Timetabling will not accept responsibility for timetable problems created by staff and students being misinformed.
6 Room Audits

6.0.1 The Property & Facilities Department periodically conducts room audits for the following reasons:

6.0.1.1 To accumulate figures relating to the utilisation of rooms
6.0.1.2 To provide information to relevant funding bodies
6.0.1.3 To ensure that facilities and equipment meet teaching requirements
6.0.1.4 To conduct lighting and other maintenance checks
6.0.1.5 To ensure unfulfilled bookings are recorded and penalised, returning unused space to the University
6.0.1.6 To monitor un-booked room occupation.

6.0.2 Central Timetabling and their representatives have the right to enter any teaching space at any time.

6.0.3 Space that is booked but found to be unused will incur a penalty charge. (Bookings are re-checked during the allocated slot to ensure that the space is definitely unused).

7 Ownership of Teaching Space

7.0.1 All space is ultimately owned by the University
7.0.2 On behalf of the University all teaching space is under the control of Central Timetabling, which is responsible for the efficient utilisation of such space through timetabling and room allocation
7.0.3 All teaching spaces (centrally managed, departmental and specialist) must be recorded in the timetabling system for reporting purposes. All teaching activities must be timetabled on one system to allow complete timetables to be provided to students and staff. This also ensures clashes are avoided
7.0.4 Teaching spaces identified by the University as specialist space will be reserved for use by suitable classes conducted by the specialist School/Department
7.0.5 Other Schools/Departments wishing to use specialist space must make arrangements with the School/Department that owns the space before they can be timetabled to use the space
7.0.6 Certain teaching space is regarded as departmental space. This means that certain Schools/Departments have the preference over using these rooms. However these rooms are able to hold teaching of other courses, and are therefore made available to other Schools and Departments once the prioritized School’s timetable is finished.

8 Ownership of Meeting Rooms

8.0.1 On behalf of the University, all meeting rooms are under the control of Central Timetabling, which is responsible for the efficient utilisation of such space through timetabling and room allocation
8.0.2 All meeting rooms (centrally managed and departmental) must be recorded in the timetabling system for reporting purposes
8.0.3 Certain meeting rooms are regarded as departmental space. This means that certain Schools/Departments have priority over using these rooms. However meeting room space will be released for use by other departments on a rolling two week window.
9 Other Bookings

9.0 Ad Hoc bookings

9.0.1 When producing the timetable, teaching activities will be scheduled before ad hoc activities.

9.0.2 Rooms that are not scheduled for use during the timetabling process may be booked for ad hoc purposes via the Web Room Booking form.

9.0.3 Ad-hoc bookings can only be made for durations/repetitions of up to three weeks. Bookings which require a longer period of time should be made during the timetabling process.

9.0.4 Where a major event is known to take place each year this request should be submitted to Central Timetabling as soon as possible. If the request does not disrupt the timetable it will be confirmed. If it disrupts teaching it will be kept on file and dealt with after the timetable has been completed.

9.1 Student bookings

9.1.1 Students, Clubs and Societies affiliated with City University may avail themselves of room booking facilities which must be booked with Central Timetabling through the Student Union office or relevant Department Office.

9.1.2 Bookings will not be accepted directly from Students.

9.2 External Hirers

9.2.1 The University welcomes events that promote its missions and goals and will endeavour to accommodate them within the existing timetable providing minimum disruption to staff and students can be guaranteed.

9.2.2 The University's requirements for rooms and facilities will take precedence over external persons, groups or bodies.

9.2.3 No adjustments to the timetable will be made to accommodate external use except in those exceptional circumstances specifically approved by Central Timetabling.

9.2.4 The hiring of University facilities by external persons, groups or bodies can only be undertaken through the Conference Service.

9.2.5 Permission from a Head of School must be sought where there is equipment belonging to that School in a room to be hired or used.
9.3 Events

9.3.1 Profit and ticketed events must be booked through the Conference Service.

9.3.2 If your event involves an external sponsor who will be paying for City University facilities, or you are charging your delegates to attend the event, you need to contact the Conference Service.

9.3.3 The Conference Service supports the University in the following ways:

9.3.3.1 Generating income for re-investment through selling services.

9.3.3.2 Improving customer service, by implementing a customer care program ensuring external visitors to the campus depart satisfied with our levels of care.

9.3.3.3 Improving customer service, by ensuring that all internal relationships are treated with the same professionalism as an external customer.

9.3.3.4 Improving external communications, ensuring all marketing material produced by the Conference Service sends a clear and correct message into the market place.

9.3.3.5 Improving internal communications, by growing relationships with our marketing department, informing them of any opportunities to improve communication internally or externally.

9.3.3.6 Improving internal communications, by building relationships with our academic departments, working together to hold profile events at City and marketing ourselves internally.

10 Equality and Diversity

10.0.1 Central Timetabling will ensure that their procedures make reasonable accommodation for staff and students with respect to the City University Equality and Diversity Policy and various anti-discrimination laws.

10.0.2 Students and staff should provide requisites in advance of the timetable being developed so that reasonable accommodations can be attempted, and post-publication changes to the timetable minimised.

11 Data Protection Act

11.0.1 Central Timetabling procedures take into consideration the City University Data Protection Policy.

12 Further Information

http://www.city.ac.uk/paf/timetabling/general_info/school_timetablers.html