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Timetabling Policy

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1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

1.1 This policy sets out the University's procedures, roles and responsibilities in respect of timetabling and room booking across the BIMM Group.

1.2 The policy provides a framework to support and enable colleagues to engage effectively with timetabling preparation and production processes and to contribute to the publication of accurate and reliable timetables.

1.3 The policy promotes a coherent approach and the delivery of improved service provision and benefits including:

i. Continuous improvement of student experience;
ii. Effective and efficient use of systems and resources;
iii. Supporting the aims and objectives in respect of delivery and development of the educational portfolio;
iv. Supporting the University's commitment to delivering an inclusive learning environment, through the promotion, reference and application of relevant other policies and procedures, ensuring BIMM values are always adhered to
v. Effective and optimal use of specialist rooms and equipment

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy covers the preparation and production of the University's teaching timetable, including online provision

2.2 The provisions of this policy apply to members of all staff with responsibilities in respect of the preparation and production of the teaching timetable, this includes confirmation of programme content and, at modular level, design and delivery.

2.3 This policy also applies to students of the University in respect of responsibilities and ability to engage with programme requirements.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Guiding Principles

3.1 The guiding principles underpinning this policy are:

i. To ensure that procedures for the production of the timetable, and associated business processes, support and enhance the delivery of a high-quality teaching and learning experience and enable all students to engage fully with programme requirements.
ii. To ensure that students are taught in appropriate teaching accommodation.
iii. To ensure that allocated facilities are informed by learning, teaching and educational strategies and meet the needs of staff and students.
iv. To provide a consistent and unified approach that enhances student experience through the construction and publication of a stable and reliable timetable, optimising the use of student and staff.

v. To produce a timetable that takes account of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion needs of members of the University community, informed by staff and student engagement with relevant University policy and procedural frameworks.
vi. To provide efficient and effective management of the teaching timetabling
vii. To optimise utilisation of all teaching spaces
viii. To recognise and act in accordance with the achievement of strategic aims and objectives of the University.

4. POLICY

4.1 Timetable Construction

4.1.1 The timetable is constructed on the basis of multiple data sets, including:

i. Curriculum Development including core and optional modules
ii. Student numbers and module choice
iii. The content and format of module delivery (event type, duration and frequency)
iv. Academic staff availability
v. Room and resource availability
vi. Student individual support plans

4.1.2 In order to support timetable construction, relevant staff are required to complete processes in accordance with the deadlines set out in the document:

'Key Milestones & Deadlines for Development of the Academic Teaching Timetable'.

4.2 Parameters and Protocols: Teaching Days and Weeks

4.2.1 Teaching activities are typically scheduled to take place during the first 12 weeks of each semester. Exceptions apply for those programmes that follow non-standard delivery patterns.

4.2.2 Ordinary and standard teaching hours are Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm, with flexibility to extend teaching to 8am - 9pm where necessary.

4.2.3 Where possible, and appropriate, programmes will be condensed over as few days as possible to deliver the full academic content of the programme.

4.2.4 The process of timetable construction will support the University's objectives in respect of providing an inclusive and accessible learning and working environment, considering, for example:

- the needs of students with proactive individual support plans, and accessibility needs
- Student Wellbeing Strategy
- where possible, a limit to the number of hours teaching without a break

4.3 Prioritisation of Activities and Allocation of Space

4.3.1 In creating the academic teaching timetable and allocating teaching space, activities taking place during each semester will be prioritised as follows:

- Staff and students with known access considerations
- Largest cohorts and most constrained resources
- Programmes that require specialist spaces
- Assessments bookings
- Non-teaching events including, for example, Open Days
- Student bookings via Ref Tab
- Staff (non-teaching) bookings via Ref Tab

4.3.2 Where teaching activities are required outside the ordinary semester dates, these activities will be prioritised during that period

4.3.3 Space will be allocated considering available data relating to accessibility, practical and pedagogical requirements, with the aim of allocating suitable space to individual activities

4.4 Timetable Change Requests

4.4.1 The University will endeavour to accommodate timetable change requests as far as reasonably possible. Students who are experiencing challenges with their timetable should contact their Course Leader as quickly as possible in order to discuss any changes required, and the reason why the change has been required.

4.4.2 Changes to published timetables will be implemented where critical to the successful delivery of teaching. The following will, be accepted as reasons for a request to be changed to the published teaching timetable:

- Reasonable adjustments required to accommodate staff or students with identified and recognised accessibility needs. This may include to facilitate access to appointments outside of the University. Students with long term support needs will be accommodated as far as reasonably practicable, and should meet with either their Course Leader or Learning Support Adviser.
- Where allocated teaching space does not meet teaching needs
- Where students are required to work to support their studies, students should speak to their Course Leader about the recommended hours of study required to complete the course. Where possible, adjustments will be made to accommodate work schedules.
- Where students or lecturers are engaged in professional practice (such as recognised industry placements or work) this will be accommodated as far as reasonably practical.
- Students with caring responsibilities will be accommodated as far as reasonably practical.
- Students who are undertaking optional modules and wish to change their module of study can request these changes up to Week 3 of the semester by arranging a tutorial with their Course Leader.

4.4.3 The University will endeavour to re-arrange sessions which are unavoidably cancelled. Where necessary this may take an alternative format of online sessions, extra tutorials or self-directed study resources.

4.4.4 Student requests for programme or module changes must be made within 3 weeks of the start of semester, noting that course or campus changes will not usually be possible in Trimester 2 or 3.

Changes requested within the permitted period will be made where the change can be accommodated within existing timetabled activities and does not generate amendments to the published timetable that would adversely impact other students.

Changes requested outside the permitted period will be by exception only and will need to be approved by Course Leader and verified that the change will be possible. Exceptions are likely to be made for students who have sudden and unforeseen circumstances which affect their attendance or ability to complete the module, for example in cases of injury or illness. For changes to be approved, it must be reasonable for the student to catch up on missed content and engage with the support planned by the Course Leader.

4.4.5 There may be occasions where adjustment requests can not be accommodated. These may be, but are not limited to:

- Where modules require the use of specialist equipment, spaces or lecturing staff and another feasible session cannot be suggested due to the availability of such.
- Where sessions are at capacity and further changes would lead to oversubscribing the session. Maximum class sizes are determined by the type of session and rooming requirements.
- Where the change requested would interrupt the scheduled timetable for other students or for the lecturer.
- Where the change requested would impact upon the weeks of delivery received by the student (for example where a change of module would result in the late joining of a student to the course).
- Where the module requested is no longer being delivered by the University.
- Where the student's timetable will be adversely impacted by the change (for example, rest breaks would not be sufficient in the new timetable).
- Where the requested change would cause a clash with another event or would interrupt the usual flow of Campus activities.
- Timetablers will endeavour to create the best possible schedule for all students. Where this has been reached, Timetablers may be unable to accommodate further adjustments.

4.4.6 Change requests will be monitored and summarised in management reports for consideration by the relevant Head of School and Head of Timetabling.

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Head of Timetabling

The roles and responsibilities of the Head of Timetabling include:

a) Strategic delivery of Timetabling across the BIMM Group.
b) To monitor and update any relevant Policy and Procedures in relation to Timetabling.
c) Business Owner of the Timetabling Software.
d) Determining and publish annually the key dates for the collection, submission and publication of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year.
e) Work closely with the Campus Timetablers and Campus Deans on operational aspects of timetabling and related work
f) Work closely with Heads of Schools and Faculty Deans regarding Academic delivery of timetabling
g) Overseeing resource usage and future planning

5.2 Campus Timetablers

The roles and responsibilities of the Campus Timetablers include:

a) Management of the production of teaching timetables in accordance with University Timetabling policy
b) Liaising with the Technology Team to ensure that the University's timetabling system is maintained and developed as appropriate
c) Providing guidance and support for colleagues in relation to timetabling and the timetabling software
d) Working with the Head of Timetabling to determine and publish annually the key dates for the collection, submission and publication of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year
e) Planning and co-ordinating the collection of timetabling information from Faculties
f) Allocation of appropriate space provision for the module delivery
g) Working with Academic Administration, that each student is allocated to the activities befitting their enrolment status and course of study
h) Publication of timetable drafts to academic staff involved in the timetabling process for scrutiny, prior to final publication to all staff and students
i) Reviewing and resolving timetabling inaccuracies or clashes that may arise
j) Undertaking approved post publication changes

5.3 Campus Deans

The role and responsibilities of the Campus Dean to include:

- Line Management of Campus Timetablers
- Support the work of the Timetablers in relation to deadlines to determining Publication dates
- Work closely with Head of Timetabling to ensure operational compliance with Timetabling Policy
- Consult with Campus Timetablers and Head of Timetabling in relation to future space developments in advance of the commencement of timetabling process

5.4 Heads of School

The role and responsibilities of Heads of School to include:

- Ensuring that the timetabling policy and protocol are applied in Schools
- Ensuring that any deadlines are met in conjunction with Campus Timetablers
- Communicate any curriculum changes which may impact on resources
- Resolving any conflicts which may arise at School level in relation to Timetabling and associated processes

5.5 Course Leaders

The role and responsibility of Course Leaders to include:

- Collection of all relevant timetabling data.
- Ensure that published deadlines are met.
- Disseminate this data to Campus Timetablers.
- Work closely with Campus Timetablers to ensure timetables are efficient and provide an excellent student experience for their relevant course.
- Liaise with Campus Timetablers over any Timetable changes before publication
- Inform Campus Timetablers of perceived clashes or event cancellations as soon as possible.
- Provide Campus Timetablers of any requested changes to teaching after timetables have been published.
- Verify and approve any student changes outside the permitted period on an exception basis.

5.6 Academics and Freelance Lecturers

The role and responsibilities of Academics and Freelance Lecturers to include:

- Ensuring Registers of attendance are taken and are correct
- Report any problems within the teaching space to Building and Technical Services Team
- Vacating teaching spaces within the time frame of the activity booked and ensuring appropriate resources are left in place
- Provide alternative learning materials where timetabling changes for students cannot be accommodated
- Liaise with Course Leaders in respect of any timetabling related issues

5.7 Academic Administration

The role and responsibilities the Academic Administration Teams include:

- Assisting with the collation of data in relation to optional module processes and module changes
- Assisting with the course transfer process
- Ensuring student data is shared frequently with Timetablers to reflect student status changes and progression outcomes, particularly within high priority timeframes such as Registration and Enrolment and after Assessment Boards

5.8 Student Wellbeing

The role and responsibilities of Student Wellbeing include:

- Providing a whole spectrum of student wellbeing and pastoral support, ranging from proactive Individual Support Plan development to reactive support for students who are not attending classes or are in crisis.
- Additional learning support, disability support and queries about Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

5.9 Quality Assurance

The role and responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Team include:

- Managing the Periodic Course Reviews and confirmation of Course Specifications, providing associated guidance and instruction to Schools
- Validation of submitted Course Specifications to support and enable the Academic Administration Teams to commence creating new Student Records for the following Academic Year.
- Managing and co-ordinating related module proposal and amendment processes
- Monitoring engagement with and adherence to the published deadline for confirmation of Course Specifications.

5.10 Technology

The roles and responsibilities of Technology Team include

- Creation of new databases for Timetabling for each Academic Year
- Ensuring access to new databases for all approved users
- Creation and updating of the transfer of data as needed
- Release of timetables as required
- Continuous maintenance and support of the timetabling databases
- Build and support for Timetabling Related Power BI Reports

5.11 Building and Technical Services Team

The roles and responsibilities of Building and Technical Services Team include

- Ensuring teaching and learning spaces are fit for purpose
- Act upon any reported issues within these spaces
- Provide capacities of spaces to Campus Timetablers
- Communication to relevant teams, of any changes of room and space availability

5.12 Students

The role and responsibilities of Students include

- Expected attendance to all contact points as timetabled
- Check timetables regularly for any changes that may have taken place
- Report unexpected or unavoidable absence to the Information Hub

- Ensuring that the register for attendance is correct. Students will be provided attendance information through the Student At Risk Project (SARP).
- Contact Course Leader and Student Wellbeing Advisor for absences of more than six days, with evidence for the reasons of absence.
  Furthermore, students holding a student route visa should also inform the international compliance team
- Inform your Course Leader and Learning Support Adviser of any additional support needs. This includes students who do not have a medical diagnosis, or are awaiting one.
- Abide by any deadlines indicated for module or course transfers

6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 This policy should be read alongside other policy and procedural frameworks including:

- Student Engagement Policy
- Exceptional Circumstances Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy
- Student Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy
- Universal Values Statement
- Safeguarding Policy
- Academic Framework
- Student Charter
- Student Registration and Enrolment Policy
- Student Wellbeing Strategy
- HE Campus Transfer Policy
- HE Internal Course Transfer Procedure

These can be found here: Policies, procedures and key documents | BIMM University