

Timetabling Policy

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Version Number	Purpose/Change	Date
1	Creation of Policy	
1.1	Update to Policy	2015
2	Full review of Policy: - Reorder and enhancement to include: scope and aim of the Policy; reference to Academic Calendar; Student and Staff Expectations; High Quality Timetable Principles; and Exam Scheduling Arrangements. - Appendix added to detail the Semesterly Timetabling Process including Exam Scheduling.	2025
2.1	Minor formatting Change	2025
2.2	Minor updates to: - Provide further clarity on the role of the University's Central Timetabling Team; expectations of staff; and what students can expect in relation to exam timetabling. - Describe operational requirements in relation to University Exam Scheduling Principles. - Clarify requirement for school communications with students if adverse weather leads to substantial timetable change.	2026

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TIMETABLING POLICY

1. Aims of this Policy

In alignment with the [Student Experience Sub-Strategy](#), Robert Gordon University is committed to delivering high quality timetables which support learners to make the most of their time at the University. To achieve this, the Timetabling Policy aims to ensure that University timetables:

- 1.1 Prioritise a high quality student learning experience with a 'teaching first' approach to scheduling.
- 1.2 Are accurate, up to date, and provide complete scheduling information in one place.
- 1.3 Provide students with the ability to plan their study, work and personal time, in the knowledge that changes will only be made to timetabled events in unavoidable and unanticipated circumstances.
- 1.4 Provide clear teaching schedules for staff which also enable engagement in professional development, research, and corporate/commercial activities as part of their agreed activity plan.
- 1.5 Optimise the vibrancy and utilisation of the University campus through effective use of the whole teaching day and teaching week, with teaching and learning taking place in appropriate spaces, and a 'one campus' attitude to the allocation and use of space

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This Policy applies to the timetabling of campus-based courses and should be applied fully, consistently and fairly.
- 2.2 Where possible, online and work-based learning courses should normally be timetabled in accordance with the Policy.
- 2.3 This Policy provides information on the governance of the timetable, what can be expected by students and staff, and what is expected of them.

3. Academic Calendar and the Published Timetable

- 3.1 [The Academic Calendar](#) is the foundation of University timetables. The Academic Calendar is noted by the University's Academic Council annually in March and released at least one Academic Session in advance.
- 3.2 The University timetabling system utilises the 1-52 week scheme of the Academic Calendar and follows the design of the Academic Calendar for the scheduling of teaching and examinations.
- 3.3 The University timetable is published on a semesterly basis, with students receiving their timetable six weeks ahead of the relevant semester.
- 3.4 To ensure adherence to timetable publication dates, an annual calendar of deadlines is provided by the University's Central Timetabling Team to all Schools and Schools are required to respond to these.
- 3.5 With prior approval, some courses are delivered using a specialised structure and teaching weeks may vary from the usual semesterly structure. In such cases, course information will make this clear to prospective students and course timetables will continue to be guided by the Timetabling Policy.
- 3.6 Individual timetables will be published for all students and staff. These timetables contain the events which individuals are attached to in Celcat, the University timetabling system, which must be attended or viewed online, at a set time. Full details are available from <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/your-timetable>
- 3.7 Following publication of the timetable to students, changes to the timetable are only permitted on an exceptional basis and in compliance with the Timetable Change Control Process.

4. Teaching Times

All times referred to in this policy are in UK time.

- 4.1 The University's full-time teaching week is defined as Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- 4.2 Evening teaching hours are defined as Monday-Friday, 5pm-9pm.
- 4.3 Where weekend teaching is planned within a particular course, weekend teaching hours are normally 9am to 5pm.
- 4.4 Scheduling of campus-based teaching hours will be in line with University teaching hours and within approved building [opening hours](#).
- 4.5 Teaching slots are arranged on an hourly basis and all hourly slots in the teaching week are considered equal.

- 4.6 In support of a high-quality student experience, teaching is not normally timetabled on Wednesday after 12 noon. This allows for student engagement in other personal, academic, or social activities.

5. Staff Expectations

- 5.1 The University prioritises a high quality student experience therefore teaching commitments will form the foundation of academic staff timetables with other activities taking place around these within protected time as part of their agreed individual staff activity plan.
- 5.2 To ensure a balanced working day and week, the volume of consecutive hours of teaching should be reviewed for suitability by the nominated party within each School at the draft timetable stage and any changes requested prior to the student timetable publication deadline.
- 5.3 To ensure compliance with the UK Home Office Remote Delivery Policy, teaching events must reflect the mode of teaching specified within the centrally published timetable, i.e. in-person or online. Any change to the mode of teaching for a specific teaching event should only occur in exceptional circumstances and staff should seek prior approval from the relevant School Management team.
- 5.4 To ensure the sharing of space on campus is a good experience for everyone, staff should familiarise themselves with the 'Room Etiquette' guide which can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this Policy.
- 5.5 In the event that an allocated room, whether for teaching or any other purpose, appears to be occupied by someone other than the scheduled user, staff should direct a query to the University's Central Timetabling Team, who help to resolve any immediate issues.

6. Student Expectations

- 6.1 To provide a high quality student experience the University aims to provide students with a reliable and balanced timetable which supports students to plan their study, work and personal time. Students can expect that their timetable should normally:
- Be published in accordance with the University's semesterly student timetable publication deadline
 - Be easily accessed
 - Provide a well-balanced schedule of classes on each timetabled day

- Include consideration to the practicalities of moving around the campus and finding time for rest and refreshment breaks.
 - Avoid undue travel and associated costs for too few classes in a given day.
- 6.2 It is the expectation of the University that full-time students are available to attend classes throughout the full-time teaching week as determined by their timetable, and that part-time students are available to attend classes in accordance with the teaching hours as advised by their School.
- 6.3 Students with any accessibility requirements should contact the University's Inclusion Team at the earliest possible opportunity within their course of study to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be accommodated within the timetable
- 6.4 Where there is an unforeseen requirement to make a change to the published timetable, students can expect to be notified by their School, and that their timetables will be updated with as much notice as the situation allows.
- 6.5 Where students participate in sporting/artistic/other social/society activities, these Students should inform their school in advance of their participation and any associated scheduled events. Events involving elite athletes will be given special consideration over other sporting activity. It is the responsibility of the student to undertake any study required to offset the impact of related absences.
- 6.6 To ensure the sharing of space on campus is a good experience for everyone, students should familiarise themselves with the 'Room Etiquette' guide which can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this Policy.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Central Timetabling Team

- 7.1.1 The University's Central Timetabling team has responsibility for coordinating the University-wide timetabling process and maintaining the University timetabling system. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of this team to:
- coordinate the Semesterly Timetabling Process detailed in [Appendix 2](#) of this Policy;
 - to provide Schools with advance notification of the timetable development timeline and deadlines to meet school timetabling requests as far as practically possible;
 - to respond to School timetabling queries;

- and to work collaboratively with Schools to ensure the delivery of accurate timetables in accordance with the University's semesterly student timetable publication deadline.

- 7.1.2 The University's Central Timetabling Team will ensure that any planned maintenance will be booked with as minimal disruption to the teaching timetable as possible.
- 7.1.3 In the event of equipment failure or any other room issue, room bookings may need to be changed by University's Central Timetabling Team at short notice. In the event of rescheduling teaching, the University's Central Timetabling Team will inform the School(s) concerned who are in turn responsible for alerting School staff and affected students of any short notice changes. Individual timetables will also update with this information.
- 7.1.4 In the event of such circumstances affecting a non-teaching room booking, the University's Central Timetabling Team will inform the user directly.

7.2 Schools

To ensure adherence to the University's semesterly student timetable publication deadline it is the responsibility of Schools to work collaboratively with the University's Central Timetabling Team in response to the semesterly timetabling process. This includes:

- 7.2.1 Setting and adhering to internal School deadlines for timetable data capture.
- 7.2.2 Distribution of draft timetables to teaching staff for their review to enable required requests for change to be made in advance of the publication of the timetable.
- 7.2.3 Reviewing of the draft timetable by teaching staff, to include review of course/stage, module and individual staff timetables for accuracy and completeness and in accordance with the University's High Quality Timetable Principles detailed in [Section 8](#) of this Policy.
- 7.2.4 In addition, review should include the number of consecutive hours of teaching, review of mode of teaching (online vs on campus), and that the right type of room (with the right equipment) has been allocated.
- 7.2.5 Following confirmation from the University's Central Timetabling Team, Schools are responsible for communicating to their staff and students that the timetable for the semester ahead has been published.

7.3 Minimising Timetable Change

- 7.3.1 Following the semesterly student timetable publication date, Schools are responsible for reviewing and managing any exceptional requests for timetable change. All requests should be reviewed by the School Management Team for the impact on the student experience, including checking the impact of change on student groups which may be in another School or on another course.
- 7.3.2 Where timetable changes are exceptionally approved following the semesterly student timetable publication date, Schools are responsible for recording these as per the Timetable Change Control Process and for communicating timetable changes to students.
- 7.3.3 In the event of planned course changes which may impact on future course timetables, proposals for a change to course or module delivery should be presented at School Academic Boards no later than February of the previous Academic Session. These requests are reviewed and finalised by AQLE Academic Quality Officers during March and made available in the timetabling system by the first week in May.

8. High Quality Timetable Principles

To deliver a high-quality student and staff-friendly timetable, the following principles should be integral components of timetable design.:

8.1 The Teaching Week

- 8.1.1 Teaching patterns should be consistent throughout the semester with, as far as possible, classes scheduled in the same timeslots each week.
- 8.1.2 Classes should not normally be scheduled on Wednesday afternoons. Where considered absolutely necessary, exceptional Wednesday afternoon teaching arrangements may be considered for approval via the University's Wednesday Afternoon Teaching Request process.
- 8.1.3 Where approval for Wednesday Afternoon Teaching is given through the formal process, Schools should take all possible steps to address any clash with important fixtures/events for elite athletes and make all reasonable adjustments. This excludes final year summative assessments which will not normally be rescheduled.

8.2 The Teaching Day

- 8.2.1 In accordance with the University teaching week, classes should not normally start before 09:00 and should not normally end after 17:00.
- 8.2.2 Classes for full-time students should not normally be scheduled after 12 noon on a Wednesday.
- 8.2.3 Students should not be scheduled for only one hour of teaching in any day. A minimum of two hours is required.
- 8.2.4 Each timetabled day should be clash free.
- 8.2.5 The gap between on-campus classes in any given day should not exceed three hours.
- 8.2.6 To allow time for lunch, students and staff should not normally have back-to-back classes between 12:00 and 14:00, where possible.
- 8.2.7 Students should not normally be timetabled for more than three consecutive hours of teaching.
- 8.2.8 Staff facilitating consecutive hours of teaching should include a short informal break within these classes.
- 8.2.9 Movement between buildings should be manageable and where movement between buildings is required the timetable should allow for time to travel between locations.
- 8.2.10 Online and on campus classes must not be scheduled in sequence. If they cannot be scheduled on different days, then a minimum of a 2-hour commute time between the different modes of teaching must be provided.

9. Exam Scheduling

9.1 Role of the University's Central Timetabling Team

- 9.1.1 The Central Timetabling Team is responsible for creating and publishing a University-wide timetable for each semesterly exam period in accordance with the University's Academic Calendar which details the formal 'Exam Weeks' of each Semester. This timetable is normally made available 4 weeks prior to the start of exams, except for the re-sit period, which is normally 3 weeks prior.
- 9.1.2 The Central Timetabling Team is also responsible for creating and maintaining the In-Semester exam timetable for supported assessments taking place outside of the formal exam weeks.

- 9.1.3 To enable effective scheduling and coordination of support provided by other central teams, e.g. IT and Digital, all exams, both In-Semester and formal Exam Week exams, must be requested through Central Timetabling. No exams can be scheduled and supported unless through Central Timetabling.

9.2 Staff Expectations

Staff are expected to adhere to the following with regard to the scheduling of exams:

- 9.2.1 Staff with responsibility for modules which include examinations are required to thoroughly check the completeness and accuracy of all exam data in accordance with activities and deadlines specified within the University's Exam Scheduling Timeline.
- 9.2.2 To ensure no exam changes are requested after rooming and publication, staff with responsibility for modules with exams must carefully check all exam data including exam type e.g. open book, and exam duration at the Module Audit checking stage.
- 9.2.3 Any proposal to change assessment category, type, description or examination duration must follow the Approval Process for amendments to existing modules, found in Section 1 of the Academic Quality Handbook, sub-section 6.1. This includes discussing the impact of a change with the Central Timetabling Team to determine capacity for the requested change, which is a requirement in order to complete the School Academic Board (SAB) Course and Module Change Proforma, prior to submission of the Proforma to SAB for approval.
- 9.2.4 Changes to assessments should be approved by SABs at least 6 months prior to implementation (i.e. the February SAB meeting ahead of the start of the next session in September)
- 9.2.5 Exam dates must not be communicated by staff in advance of publication of the University exam timetable.
- 9.2.6 No changes to the main cohort exams are to be requested by staff once the exam timetable is published.
- 9.2.7 To provide AQLE and IT and Digital Services with an out-of-hours point of liaison, Schools are required to nominate an out-of-hours contact during each Assessment Week (with appropriate arrangements such as flexible working and time off in lieu managed locally at School level). This person must be contactable throughout their scheduled period with an alternate appointed if the original individual is to be out of the office.

9.3 Student expectations

Students can expect the following with regard to the scheduling of exams:

- 9.3.1 Exam sessions normally run between 9:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday.
- 9.3.2 There will be a two-period exam day (AM and PM) and within this, students should normally have no more than 1 exam per day.
- 9.3.2 Students should make themselves available for the entire semesterly exam period where an examination has been specified as the mode of assessment for a subject area. Semesterly exam dates are made available on the Academic Calendar, which is released at least one Academic Session in advance.
- 9.3.4 Students requiring additional exam arrangements (AEAs) are urged to make their needs known to the University's Inclusion Team as early as possible in the Academic Session, and at the latest by the semester deadline. Deadlines are available from Schools and the University's Inclusion team. Requests for AEAs made after the deadline cannot be guaranteed.

9.4 University Exam Scheduling Principles

To assist with the effective and fair scheduling of exams, the University aims to adhere to the following exam scheduling principles:

- 9.4.1 Large cohorts should be front-loaded in the timetable to allow more time for marking.
- 9.4.2 Final year students should normally have no more than 2 examinations in a week with at least 1 day in-between each.
- 9.4.3 Final year students should normally have their exams spaced over two weeks to allow maximum opportunity for successful revision.
- 9.4.4 Where possible, all students should normally have 1 clear day between exams e.g. Mon, Wed, Fri. However, during the main examination period this may not be possible. During this period exams may be scheduled on up to three consecutive days however, every effort will be made to minimise instances of this, particularly in relation to final year students.
- 9.4.5 To allow efficient re-use of resources, exam durations should normally be in accordance with the University's hourly approach to scheduling, i.e. 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours etc. AEA exam length may vary due to requirement for additional time.

- 9.4.6 Exams of 3 hours or more should be scheduled in the morning
- 9.4.7 For online exams with an extended window of time in which the exam may be taken, e.g. a 3-hour exam within a 12-hour window, this window must not exceed 12 hours.*
- 9.4.8 For online exams, any exam window exceeding 12 hours cannot be accommodated on the timetable for technical and support reasons.
- 9.4.9 For online exams, where a student is entitled to extra time as an alternative exam arrangement, this extra time applies to the duration of the paper e.g. a 2-hour exam with a 12-hour window of time and 25% extra time, would be taken as a 2.5-hour exam within a 12-hour window.
- 9.4.10 Any exam taking place in more than one time zone should be highlighted as part of checking exam requirements before scheduling takes place. This will affect the time in which the exam should take place.

* Any exceptions must be discussed and agreed with the Director of AQLE.

9.5 In-Semester Exams

In -Semester exams are defined as summative examinations or assessments requiring central support during teaching weeks. All requests for the scheduling of these exams must be made to the University's Central Timetabling Team, who schedule the requests and pass on the information to support teams to provide Online support, IT support, Estates support, and/or Invigilation support as required. No central support can normally be provided for In-Semester exams after 5pm.

9.6 Adverse Weather Impacting on Campus-Based Exams

The University will make every effort to ensure that exams can go ahead. However, where an exam must be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, the University will update the MYRGU home page, social media channels, and e-mail all staff and students by 7am for morning exams and 11.30am for afternoon exams.

10. Data Retention

Timetables will be retained by the Central Timetabling Team for the current academic year and 4 years previous.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required.

Appendix 1: Room Etiquette

Robert Gordon University operates a 'one campus' policy, where general teaching space is to be shared by all Schools, to ensure efficient and optimum utilisation of the estate.

In order for this to be a good experience for all room users there are a few courteous guidelines to help:

- All teaching events are to be scheduled to start on the hour and finish at 10 minutes to the hour, to allow time for changeover to the next event. Those in the room should be allowed time to exit.
- Please try not to alter the furniture but if you need to change the layout for any reason, please put it back to classroom set up before you leave. Please also take any equipment you have brought along with you.
- Any unique arrangements should be requested at the time of scheduling with your School Timetabler / Central Timetabling Team who will confirm whether they are possible.
- If the room appears not to be booked after you use it, please turn out the lights and close any open windows. At the end of the day, please switch off the PC/Podium.
- Floor boxes should always be closed for Health and Safety reasons e.g. to prevent trip hazards.
- No eating or drinking in teaching rooms, except for bottled water, which is allowed.
- IT issues should be reported by staff during a timetabled event via extension 3737, or may be logged after the event using the ITS self-service portal or Freddy.

Appendix 2: University Semesterly Timetabling Process

1. Provision of Teaching Request Data

- 1.1 Course/Subject Leads must provide all requests for teaching to the School in accordance with School timetabling deadlines, each semester for the semester ahead.
- 1.2 Requests should be according to need and estimated student numbers.
- 1.3 Block-booking is not permitted - events should only be timetabled for the precise time, duration, day and weeks required
- 1.4 Schools must provide the Central Timetabling Team with complete and accurate data in accordance with the University's semesterly timetabling process.
- 1.5 Deans are responsible for ensuring adherence to the University's semesterly timetabling process and associated School timetabling deadlines and ensuring the University's Timetabling Manager is informed of any issues with regard to provision of Teaching Request Data to enable the Central Timetabling Team to work with the School to resolve obstacles.

2. Timetabling Order of Precedence

- 2.1 Teaching, including corporate teaching, takes precedence over non-teaching events during teaching weeks (excepting key University events such as supported enrolment and graduation).
- 2.2 During the University's designated 'Exam Weeks', scheduling of examinations takes precedence over scheduling of teaching and all other events, and will include booked time for set up and clear up of the exam rooms before and after the exam weeks.
- 2.3 Semester-long teaching normally takes precedence over shorter periods of teaching (i.e. 1-2 weeks only).
- 2.4 Events with large capacity requirements will normally be roomed before those with smaller capacity requirements.
- 2.5 Events with long durations (i.e. 3 hours) will normally be roomed before those with shorter durations.

3. Teaching Space and its Use

- 3.1 All teaching space and use of this space will be recorded in the University's timetabling system, Celcat, including specialist space which is booked locally by Schools. This is essential for clash checking, the provision of room utilisation statistics, and to allow complete timetables to be produced for students and staff.
- 3.2 Rooms will be allocated to events by the Central Timetabling Team on the basis of:
 - Specialist equipment/accommodation required (this includes access/facilities for students/staff with disabilities)
 - Capacity
 - Location
- 3.3 Schools may not request specific rooms but may note specific requirements.
- 3.4 All teaching space (including rooms assigned to specific Schools but excepting certain specialised rooms which cannot be used for another purpose) must be made available for general timetabling once the semester timetabling is complete. Timetabling will timetable the available space as appropriate.
- 3.5 'Open Access' rooms are available for use by any user without pre-booking across the University and therefore are not available for booking.
- 3.6 To comply with regulatory Health and Safety requirements, class sizes must not exceed the capacity of the room allocated. As such, Schools have a responsibility to convey accurate (or best estimate) student numbers to the University Central Timetabling Team. Schools are required to alert the University Central Timetabling Team to a need for room change due to capacity.
- 3.7 Teaching events should start on the hour and finish 10 minutes to the hour (prior to the next event) to allow time for room changeover.
- 3.8 All bookings must normally finish 30 minutes prior to building closure hours unless prior permission has been granted and expressed by Estates.
- 3.9 Teaching spaces should be used in accordance with the 'Room Etiquette' guide which can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of the Timetabling Policy.

4. Requesting change to the published student semesterly timetable

- 4.1 Where there is no solution to honour a published teaching event at the date and time booked, requests to change the published timetable must adhere to one of the following criteria:
- Student clash exists (a student or student group is scheduled to attend more than one compulsory module at the same time)
 - Change in student numbers (requiring a smaller / larger or additional room for the same event)
 - Mobility / accessibility requirements for either staff or students
 - Staff turnover or absence affecting ability to honour the published timeslot
- 4.2 All change requests will be monitored by the Dean of School or nominated approver who will request further additional information to assess whether the request is essential.
- 4.3 Approved requests are sent to the Central Timetabling Team who will maintain an overview of change and provide a process for the management of change.
- 4.4 Where a large number of changes are requested due to adverse weather, Schools should also send out a School notification to students, advising them to stay at home.

5. Wednesday Afternoon Exemption Process

In order to request exemption from non-scheduling on Wednesday afternoon, the following steps must be taken:

- 5.1 The Course Leader is required to explore all possible alternatives for Wednesday PM teaching to establish whether there is a clear justification why Wednesday afternoon teaching is the only viable option.
- 5.2 If there is a clear justification for Wednesday afternoon teaching, a subsequent request should be passed to the Dean of School or their nominated School approver.
- 5.3 The Dean or their nominated School approver should consider whether the proposed justification for Wednesday afternoon teaching is valid and whether all alternative options have been examined.
- 5.4 Should the Dean or their nominated School approver agree that there is no alternative, School approval along with details of the event for rooming should be forwarded to the University Central Timetabling Team who will seek approval

from the Vice Principal Academic Development and Student Experience or their nominated approver.

- 5.5 If approved, the University Central Timetabling Team will then allocate rooms to the event and confirm to the School.
- 5.6 The Timetabling Manager will contact the School, where justification is unclear or approval cannot be given.