University of Nottingham Malaysia Timetabling Policy

(1)   Purpose

This document provides the procedures and policy for the central timetabling, room bookings and allocation of academic resources in the University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM). The objectives of the centralized system are:

   (i)   to produce teaching timetable which minimize student clashes;
   (ii)   to achieve optimal utilization of academic resources through better coordination of timetabling, space allocation and teaching requirements for all schools;
   (iii)   to provide users with ease of access to real-time information on teaching timetable, room bookings and space availability
   (iv)   to provide fair and transparent arrangements which manages the potential conflicts where different types of activities are competing for space; and
   (v)   to make utilization and availability of shared resources visible to key stakeholders for monitoring and planning purposes.

(2)   Scope

This policy covers centralized management, timetabling and ad hoc bookings of academic spaces. It provides a framework to support all staff with a role in the preparation and production of the teaching timetable and the provision of spaces to facilitate teaching and other learning or social activities. This document is aimed for the University of Nottingham Malaysia only.

(3)   Definitions

3.1   Central timetabling and allocation of academic resources refers to the coordination of the teaching activities of all Schools/Departments using common and specialist teaching spaces in order to minimize student clashes and maximize resource utilization.

3.2   Timetabling refers to identifying date and time and location of a learning activity, taking account of any conflicts in staff, student and location availability.

3.3   Teaching spaces which include common space and specialist space, are spaces that may be used for teaching activities or other related activities.

3.4   Common space refers to commonly shared facilities such as lecture theatres, seminar rooms, computer laboratories, conference halls and public place (e.g., hall foyer). These spaces are bookable on an ad hoc basis once the teaching timetable has been completed and confirmed.

3.5   Specialist space refers to spaces designed for specialized purposes such as scientific and engineering laboratories. Due to the specialized nature of the facilities and equipment in specialist rooms, the demand for them is less commonly shared beyond the associated Schools/Departments. These spaces are often maintained and supported by specialist staff in the respective Schools/Department.

3.6   Teaching activity refers to a kind of learning and teaching or regular event which forms

part of a plan or programme of study and for which students need to attend, for e.g. lecture, tutorial, laboratory, seminar and etc. All of the teaching activities using both the common and specialist teaching spaces are timetabled centrally unless stated otherwise.

3.7   Ad hoc bookings are referred to bookings made for non-timetabled activities. These may include teaching, meetings, student activities, talks, conferences and other public events considered to be appropriate for the University.

3.8   Draft timetable refers to a preliminary timetable distributed internally to staff for review to enable the identification and resolution of timetable problems in advance of the publication of the final timetable which will be provided to students.

3.9   Final timetable is the timetable for classes in the upcoming semester published for the University community via University web site. Modifications, may have to be subsequently made if information not known at the time the timetable was developed becomes available and in response to unforeseen circumstances.

(4)   Timetabling and Room Booking Principles

4.1   All common academic teaching space is administered by the Timetabling and Room Booking Unit which runs the University's timetabling and web room booking system.

4.2   Common academic teaching spaces are allocated on a shared and on a needs basis.

4.3   Teaching spaces allocated to certain schools are not permanently assigned and shall be subject to review of allocation as and when necessary. Notwithstanding the absence of such a need, an annual review of the space utilization and reassignment will be carried out.

4.4   Allocation of classrooms are based on suitability for intended use, taking into consideration teaching requirements such as expected student number, AV and IS facilities, specific class types and etc.

4.5   All users requiring the use of common facilities on an ad hoc basis must book the facilities via Web-Room Booking (WRB) available online. They may also refer to the Room Booking Team to check for availability. All ad hoc bookings for common spaces will be referred to Room Booking Team for approval (after publication of teaching timetable) on a first-come-first-serve basis. Teaching activities will be accorded higher priority.

4.6   As teaching space is limited they are usually made available outside of the standard teaching hours for society and club activities. Room Booking Services cannot accept room-booking requests from individual students for these activities; such requests are made to the Student Association Office. All cancellations for such bookings must be made via WRB at least three working days before the event.

4.7   There are caveats to the approved bookings and teaching activities having precedence during the teaching period: (1) University annual approved events, such as Open Days and Graduation ceremony, will be likely to require temporary usage of rooms otherwise booked for teaching activities or other events; (2) Major "one-off" events

such as visits by Ministry of Education and on-location visits by UNUK; in such cases prior teaching schedules and approved bookings would be superseded where alternative arrangements will be made.

4.8   In addition, activities relating to essential University functions, including Examinations, Student Registration and Induction are allocated rooms before general bookings are invited.

4.9   Rooms should only be booked for the exact time, day and weeks required.

4.10   Block booking space for extended periods per day or week, whether on a one-off basis or a regular basis, to reserve it for possible use and thus preventing others from booking the space on an equitable basis is not permitted.

4.11   Users are required to leave the room, at the end of their booking, in good condition and in the standard configuration ready for the next occupants.

4.12   Space bookings must be cancelled if the activity is cancelled. Users may cancel a room booking through the Web Room Booking online or email to Room Booking Team if they wish to release any rooms scheduled for classes. It is imperative that cancelations are notified as soon as possible as other users may wish to book these rooms.

4.13   Ad hoc bookings should not be used for regular teaching activities (except for replacement classes) as the activities will not be reflected in the online teaching timetable, Instatt attendance monitoring system, nor appear in usage statistics.

4.14   Staff must not use rooms they perceive to be free of teaching without first requesting use of the room via Web Room Booking or Room Booking/Timetabling Team. Rooms may be empty for a number of reasons and may well be timetabled for use in future weeks.

4.15   The use of all common space booked in the timetable and room booking system will be visible to all staff and students.

4.16   Timetabling and Room Booking Team will undertake room survey on a yearly basis to determine space utilization rates and monitor usage.

4.17   Standard teaching hours for undergraduate students on campus are between 9am to 6pm, Mondays to Fridays. Weekend and evening classes (between 6:30 pm to 9:30pm) may be scheduled for postgraduate courses. In addition MPU modules are extended to Saturday as necessitated by resource constraints. However, the common teaching rooms will be made accessible for additional or replacement classes as and when required.

4.18   Classes will be scheduled to begin on the hour or half-hour and must conclude 10 minutes before the next scheduled start time to allow staff and students to travel to the next class and to allow staff to set up the classroom if required.

4.19   Schools whom request to schedule classes beyond the standard teaching hours and on weekends must communicate to Security services and Estate to ensure that arrangements for access and securing of facilities are made.

4.20   Classes timetabled should be spread out across the week to allow for a reasonable

combination of class times without prejudice to any cohort of students where possible.

4.21 Every effort will be made to minimize the number of classes scheduled on Wednesday afternoons to allow arrangement of school meetings and other activities (except MPU and laboratory sessions or necessitate by constraints such as part-timers' availability).

4.22 Regular teaching activities scheduled on a semester basis (as compare to activities scheduled on weekly basis such as that for School of Pharmacy) will not take into consideration of public holidays. Teaching staff should consider making alternative provision (e.g. online resources, alternative sessions, ad hoc bookings, etc.,) to replace these lost days.

4.23 Where at all possible, lunch break of at least 1 hour will be provided for students and staff (if they have continuous contact hours either in the morning and /or in the afternoon). This does not need to be at the same time across all cohorts of students and should be scheduled between 11am to 2pm.

4.24 The maximum number of contiguous teaching hours in a day for a teaching staff is 4 hours, exceptions to this are for certain specialist classes due to the nature of the discipline such as science laboratory.

4.25 Classes should not be scheduled between 1.00pm to 3.00pm on Fridays to allow for Muslim staff and students to perform their religious obligations.

4.26 Classes will be scheduled so as to best utilize academic resources. The Timetabling Unit reserves the right to reallocate classes scheduled in central timetabling system based on enrolment numbers, location size and unavoidable circumstances.

4.27 All known constraints on classes and academic resources will be applied when creating the timetable unless modified by negotiation with the school concerned.

4.28 Students can expect to attend all compulsory modules in accordance with standard program progression and to have a reasonable selection of electives/optional courses from which to choose. While the University attempts to accommodate student choices, the timetable may not allow for every student to attend their preferred combination of electives. Elective courses will not be guaranteed to be clash-free.

4.29 The reasonable needs of staff will be accommodated in the University-wide timetable. It is recognized that academic staff have diverse responsibilities which include teaching, research, community engagement, consultancy and administrative functions. However, staff commitments to teaching will take precedence over other activities to which greater scheduling flexibility applies.

4.30 When determining availability for teaching, Deans/Head of schools will also take into consideration the needs of staff with significant care responsibilities, disabilities and medical requirements. Unless a specific time commitment necessitated by external factors beyond the control of the staff member can be demonstrated and endorsed by the Deans/Head of Schools, staff will not designate any specific time for teaching activities.

4.31 Once the timetable is finalized, it is acceptable for schools to adjust the allocation of staff to teaching activities as long as this doesn't result in changes to the timetable of other schools.

(5)   Timetabling Timeline

The University-wide timetable will be produced using Syllabus Plus (S+) Timetabling System which downloads the timetabling data principally from Web Data Collectors/Campus Solutions. The schedule of dates for preparing and generating the timetable will be established on a yearly basis and communicate to the school prior to the start of the academic year. A sample of the timetabling timeline for 2019-20 academic year is included in Appendix A.

All programs approved by the University have priority use of teaching facilities during the approved term-times that apply to those programs. Schools are required to ensure that their program structure and timetabling information are entered into Web Data Collector or made known to Timetabling Unit in accordance with the publicized timeline; where timetabling information or teaching requirements are not provided according to deadlines, every effort will be made to accommodate these, but there is the risk that suitable rooms may already have been scheduled for other classes or activities.

(6)   Timetabling Procedures

<u>General Procedures</u>

6.1   The Timetabling Team will be provided with timetabling information updated from Wed Data Collector to work on. Where initial data is not complete or not entered into Web Data Collector due to complexity of teaching requirements, the School Timetabling Coordinators are responsible to collect and provide the data for direct entry into the Syllabus Plus (S+) timetabling system in a timely fashion. In such case the Timetabling Team will provide the School Timetabling Coordinators with
- Details of the data to be collected
- The format in which the data is required
- The timeframe in which the data is to be collected and entered into S+

6.2   Module conveners are responsible for providing accurate information to their school timetabling coordinator or administrator by the dates published in the annual schedule for plan and course catalogue maintenance including relevant timetabling requirements or information.

6.3   Timetable requirements should detail exactly the number and type of activities (lecture, practical, seminar, etc.,) required to deliver a course, how many students are expected to attend, staffing, durations of activities, their week patterns and room suitability. Other information may include audio visual, teaching equipment and facility requirements and any further special requirements essential to successful delivery of teaching.

6.4   It is the responsibility of School Timetable Coordinators to validate the accuracy of timetable teaching requirements and ensure information is gathered and/entered into Web Data Collector for all courses running in the new academic year.

6.5   Schools should observe the timeline for student course pre-enrolment and

completion of bulk data entry of student course choices into Campus Solutions to facilitate the generation of more efficient timetable that minimize clashes.

6.6 The Syllabus Plus database is updated annually in March with new and revised plan and course information from Campus Solutions; it is the responsibility of Head of School to verify that all plan and course data for the new academic year is present, and the mandatory and optional course structures are correct.

6.7 Access to rooms for staff and students with a disability is a priority and their requirements must be identified as early in the timetabling data entry period.

6.8 Academic staff are expected to teach during Standard Teaching Hours from 9am - 6pm, Monday to Friday. The following staff preference or constraint may apply but will require relevant Dean' or Head of School's approval:
- limit the span of teaching hours in a day (start of first class to end of final class or early teaching on the day following late teaching)
- health Issues, disability/medical condition
- other approved School commitments, such as free time slots for staff holding academic administrative positions (HODs,etc).

6.9 These constraints will be respected and complied with wherever possible. It may occasionally be necessary to break the constraints where there are compelling reasons affecting the quality of the timetable.

6.10 Room allocation will be made on the best-fit basis using data entered into Web Data Collector by the School Timetabling Coordinators/administrators during the data entry period where specific room requirements for the course can be selected.

6.11 Scheduling priorities are guided by principles outlined in Section (6.16): **Scheduling and Space Allocation Priorities**. Schools are expected to meet the Timetable data submission deadline to facilitate the scheduling of classes, otherwise the allocation will be constraint by the remaining available time slots and space.

6.12 The School Timetabling Coordinators will be responsible to coordinate with module conveners for the checking of the draft timetable within the timelines published in the **Timetabling Timeline** when the draft is made available.

6.13 Modification to the draft timetable will be made in accordance with the following procedure:

6.14 Where there are conflicting requirements between schools, a resolution will be negotiated between the Schools along with, if necessary, the associated Heads of Schools. Scheduled activities will not be moved into a different location unless the scheduled location is inappropriate for the class (e.g., wrong class size, inadequate fixed equipment, etc.). Constraints on the activity will be modified to rectify this situation.

6.15   Modifications after publication of final timetable may be made according to the principles outlined in Section (6.3): **Timetable Changes and Clashes Resolution**.

Scheduling and Space Allocation Priorities

6.16 Criteria used to determine a scheduling priority:

6.16.1 Teaching will have priority over other activities during the standard teaching hours within University teaching periods

6.16.2 Larger classes take precedence over smaller classes for lecture theatres and seminar rooms of comparable capacity. Room capacity against course enrolment will be a determining factor in the scheduling outcome.

6.16.3 Core courses are given a higher priority than optional courses unless a particular optional course is identified as a common elective shared across schools by the School Timetabling Coordinators during the timetable data entry/collection period.

6.16.4 Classes that occupy large blocks of time take precedence over those that occupy small blocks of time.

6.16.5 Classes that have preset resource requirements (e.g., specific room size and type, visualizer, video conferencing facilities, blackout blinds for screening, and etc.,) are given priority over those which have a wildcard requirement. Efficiency of space usage will be taken into account in prioritization.

6.16.6 Specialist or dedicated teaching space will be preset for classes requiring designated facilities.

6.16.7 Classes for any given course will not be scheduled to run sequentially. Staff may submit such request however efficiency of space usage will be taken into account in prioritization.

6.16.8 Teaching that follows a regular pattern or delivery takes priority over that delivered in ad hoc or non-regular weeks

6.16.9 Lecture timetable will normally be scheduled prior to tutorials but scheduling preference will be afforded to tutorials where few alternative times are available, as opposed to large courses that have abundant tutorial choices.

6.16.10 Access for students with disabilities takes precedence over other considerations, unless this causes unjustifiable hardship

Final Timetable Changes and Clashes Resolution

6.17 The School Timetabling Coordinators should ensure that information used to prepare the School Timetable is accurate and subsequent changes to the Timetable must be kept to a minimum and are only made under valid conditions /reasons.

6.18 All enquiries regarding timetabling and requests to change the School Timetable from schools/academic staff may be directed through the School Timetabling Coordinators.

6.19 Requests for changes to the final timetable must be submitted in writing using the Timetable Change Request Form (Appendix C – Timetable Change Request Form).

6.20 Turnaround on the requests should generally be within 3 working days from the receipt of the request. However, this shall be subject to urgency, nature of the request and the availability of resources.

6.21 The School Timetabling Coordinators may request modification to timetable without authorization of the Head of School/Dean under the following conditions:

- Location change if course enrolment numbers are more than expected and a larger space is required to accommodate the class
- Location change if course enrolment numbers are less than expected and a smaller space will suffice
- Location change if equipment or AV facilities not suitable
- Location change if it may cause health and safety hazard
- Location swap, within existing school allocation
- Staff/student clash with other activity
- Staff swapped on a class
- Reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with special needs
- Classes closed/removed if course enrolment numbers are less than expected or course becomes inactive and the classes are no longer required
- Classes added if course enrolment numbers are more than expected and extra classes are required
- Course delivery changed (e.g. duration of lecture, week patterns, lecture /tutorial changed to lecture/tutorial/seminar/etc.,)
- Unexpected unavailability of staff (e.g., resignation or long medical leave or other commitment) that requires a possible change of teaching staff for an activity and possibly a change of day/time
- Visiting lecturer/professor availability
- Part-time lecturer availability

All other modifications may require authorization by the Head of School. Any out of normal approvals by Head of School/Dean need to be discussed soonest with the Timetabling Unit to determine whether it can be accommodated.

6.22 All changes will be subject to resource availability.

6.23 The Timetabling Unit reserves the right to change the location to better monitor space allocation after final timetable publication or after finalisation of student numbers. In the event of adjustments, affected schools shall be notified.

6.24 The School Timetabling Coordinators or staff requesting the modification will keep auditable records of changes and associated approvals.

6.25 The following are modification requests that will not be attended:
- Room allocated is not the one preferred
- Day / time is not the one preferred
- Long travel distance to work and /or transport issues

- Family obligations (e.g., sending and picking up children from schools/childcare, etc.,)
- Request to change teaching timetable slots according to the ad hoc bookings made by staff

6.26 Requests for modification may include a suggested time and location for the timetabling system to schedule the best-fit time and space.

6.27 Where the modification involves more than one school (e.g., a shared course) the School Timetabling Coordinators should negotiate the change prior to submitting the request so that all parties are satisfied.

6.28 In resolving timetable clashes where a central timetable exists, principles in Section: Scheduling and Space Allocation Priorities will be applied.

6.29 Schools are responsible for updating Instatt and notifying students as well as all other stakeholders impacted by the modification after the change has taken effect. The amended timetable will be reflected on the University web site and the Timetabling Unit will not assume responsibility for any misunderstanding as a result of staff and students being misinformed.

Appendix A: Timetabling Timeline

Month and Year	Date	Day	Event	Process	Contact
October 2023	02	M	Email to schools on the curriculum update exercise for 2024-25	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
October 2023	02	M	CS open to schools to update 2024-25 QAA information in plans and course catalogue	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
January 2024	08	M	Submission dateline of 2024-25 curriculum updates. Schools to submit changes to Curriculum Team for existing POS and courses as well as new programs/ plans/POS and courses.	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
February 2024	15	T	Final deadline for exceptional changes to curriculum updates provided by schools	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
February 2024	23	F	Deadline for 2024-25 plan and course QAA updates by schools	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
February 2024	26	M	Send 2023-24 teaching activities for schools to provide updates on 2024-25 timetabling requirements/information	Teaching Timetable	Timetabling Office
March 2024	4	M	UK to run APT request for 2024-25 returning students to build compulsory courses into students' APT (planning mode)	Course Enrolment	Timetabling Office
March 2024	15	F	Deadline for schools to submit 2024-25 timetabling requirements	Teaching Timetable	Timetabling Office
April 2024	15	F	Download 2024-25 course and POS updates, and returning students/compulsory courses (planning node) from CS to S+	Teaching Timetable	Timetabling Office
March 2024	18	M	Official publication of Course Catalogue, Online Supplementary Regulations /Program Specifications for 2019/20	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
March 2024	18	M	Publication of Online Course Pre-enrolment (OCE) website	Curriculum	Timetabling Office
March 2024	25	M	Online Course Pre-enrolment (OCE) for 2024-25 begins	Course Enrolment	Timetabling Office
April 2024	19	M	Download POS and course updates and returning students/restricted course choice from CS (planning node) to S+	Course Enrolment	Timetabling Office
July 2024	22	M	Draft 2024-25 timetable issued on web (temporarily link) for schools' checking purposes	Teaching Timetable	Timetabling Office
July 2024	22	M	Timetable freeze period- Schools will have 2/3 weeks to check timetables in a static environment	Teaching Timetable	Timetabling Office
August 2024	26	M	Publication of Definitive teaching timetable for 2024-25 issued onto the web	Teaching Timetable	Timetabling Office

Appendix B: Timetabling Roles and Responsibilities

The following are roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of central timetabling service:

Stakeholder	key roles and responsibilities
Timetabling/Room Booking team	- to deliver and manage the production of the University teaching timetable, in accordance with the University's Timetabling Policy; - to determine and publish annually the key dates for the collection, submission and publication of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year. - to plan and coordinate the collection of timetable information from School Timetable Coordinators (whom timetabling data is to be entered directly to timetabling system); this includes the collection of teaching requirements and constraints on timetabling, relating to staff, courses and students; - to liaise with School Timetable Coordinators about issues arising from the data collection, including the resolution of any conflicts that may arise; - to publish timetable drafts for School Timetable Coordinators to review prior to final publication; - to resolve any timetable clashes that may arise, in consultation with School Timetable Coordinators; - to publish the University's final timetable on the University website; - to manage ad hoc room bookings and record all bookings in centrally-booked space.
School Timetabling Coordinators	- to manage timetabling activity for the School(s) in a Faculty; - to co-ordinate the collection of accurate and timely timetable information, principally relating to academic staff and teaching requirements within the school and update it in Web Data Collector/ submit it to the Timetabling Team in accordance with the deadlines, format and procedures given; - to review and check timetable to ensure that all teaching activities have been entered correctly and resourced appropriately - this includes ensuring that staff, students and locations are assigned to the respective activities; - to work with the Timetabling team to resolve any inaccuracies or timetabling clashes; - to communicate timely adjustments to submitted timetable information that may arise from late changes, principally in relation to staff or course availability; - to advise staff and students of changes to the teaching timetable where these occur once teaching has commenced, e.g. cancellations or changes of room;

	- to provide the information of students with physical challenges or other special needs, if any, to allow for reasonable adjustments as appropriate so that health and safety requirements can be incorporated when timetabling.
Estate	- to clean and maintain air-conditioning and lighting of teaching rooms; - to carry out cyclical refurbishment of teaching rooms, in consultation with Timetabling Unit and IT Service as appropriate; - to rectify faults reported in relation to teaching rooms, normally within five working days, however, duration of rectification is also subject to the nature of default; - to communicate with the Timetabling Unit and other relevant stakeholders about issues affecting the availability of teaching rooms, e.g. in relation to planned maintenance or refurbishment; - to update Timetabling Unit on the newly available non-teaching rooms and facilities; - to ensure that teaching facilities are in good working order and compliant with relevant safety requirement.
IT Services	- to provide network infrastructure for centrally timetabled teaching rooms and computer labs; - to coordinate with Schools on ICT teaching requirements and provide information about what facilities are available in which teaching rooms; - to arrange the design and installation of computer labs; - to monitor the computer labs, install updates to software, and arrange preventative maintenance; - to attend to software and hardware faults and problems in computer labs; - to determine the demand for various types of electronic and electrical AV facilities; - to arrange the design and installation of AV facilities including equipment security; - to monitor the AV facilities and arrange preventative maintenance with Estate; - to respond to AV faults and problems, rectify faults or provide alternative equipment if necessary; - to arrange AV training for teaching and support staff with IT services.

Appendix C: Timetabling Change Request Form

Timetable Change
Request Form.xlsx