Classroom and Course Scheduling Policy

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Policy

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Policy Authority: Vice-President, Academic and Provost

Associated Procedures: Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedure

Schedule A: Standard Day Meeting Patterns

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1 Instructional space is a scarce and valuable resource that belongs to the University as a whole.
1.2 The Provost is the steward of instructional space and classroom scheduling and is responsible for ensuring that they support the academic needs of the University.
1.3 Instructional spaces should be allocated in a manner that supports the learning needs of students and the teaching needs of faculty.
1.4 Classroom and course scheduling should facilitate timely degree completion for SFU students, ensuring required courses are, within reason, available, accessible, and conflict free.
1.5 Classroom and course scheduling should assist departments and instructors in meeting the pedagogical requirements of their programs and courses.
1.6 Classroom and course scheduling should ensure space and time blocks are allocated in a manner that is fair, efficient and equitable across all department and Faculties.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that classrooms and courses are effectively scheduled such that:
   a. Classroom spaces are efficiently utilized;
   b. Students can access courses in a reasonable and timely manner;
   c. The educational experience for students and instructors is accounted for;
   d. Course scheduling conflicts for students are minimized;
   e. Course access in general is improved;
   f. There is scheduling equity across academic units;
   g. Instructors can reasonably integrate their professional duties of teaching, research, and service;
3. SCOPE AND JURISDICTION

3.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate courses and courses that are jointly offered as undergraduate and graduate courses, and their classrooms.

3.2 This policy applies at all SFU campuses.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 “Course” - a lecture and/or seminar.

4.2 “Instructional Hours” – 08:30 to 22:30 Monday to Friday, and 08:30 to 18:00 Saturday. Sundays and Saturday evenings may be scheduled with permission of the Registrar.

4.3 “Standard Timetable Patterns” – a set of established course scheduling patterns.

4.4 “Prime Utilization Period” – a period of high demand during instructional hours where restrictions beyond the Standard Timetable Patterns may apply.

4.5 “Standard Utilization Period” – a period of average demand during instructional hours where Standard Timetable Patterns apply.

4.6 “Low Utilization Period” – a period of low demand where Standard Timetable Patterns do not apply.

4.7 “Lower division courses” – courses numbered 299 and below, including those prefixed with an X, principally taken by students in the first half of their degree.

4.8 “Upper Division Courses” - courses numbered 300 through 499, principally taken by students in the last half of their degree.

4.9 “Centrally-Scheduled Classroom Space” – classrooms managed by the Registrar’s Office.

4.10 “Space Conflict” – when more than one course scheduling request requires the same classroom at the same time.

5. POLICY

5.1 Allocation of Classroom Spaces

a. Some general classroom space is controlled and managed by specific academic units. This space should be used efficiently, first by the department for their scheduled courses, and then made available as a centrally scheduled classroom space if needed.

b. All other courses will have classroom spaces allocated from the centrally scheduled pool by the Registrar’s Office.

c. To comply with safety standards, no individual or unit may allow the occupancy of a room to exceed its listed capacity.

5.2 Scheduling of Courses

a. Courses must be scheduled within instructional hours, and distributed in a way that:
   i. Minimizes course conflicts for students and facilitates timely degree completion;
   ii. Minimizes common course conflicts for students between departments, particularly between those across the lower division, and those across the upper division.
   iii. Is based on actual historical enrollment, and where possible, demand.

b. The Registrar may put restrictions to optimize scheduling and room allocation including (but not limited to) the use of standard timetable patterns, and designated High, Standard, and Low Utilization periods.

c. The Registrar’s Office will consider a department’s preferred scheduling of an individual course, within the standard patterns and utilization periods.
d. The Registrar’s Office will work collaboratively with departments to adjust the days and/or times of courses to ensure compliance with the policy, and to address classroom allocation difficulties, as challenges arise. Changes to the schedule after enrollment begins requires approval of the Registrar or designate unless otherwise published.

e. The final authority on scheduling courses resides with the Associate Vice-President, Academic.

5.3 Scheduling procedures will be published on the Registrar’s Office website.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Provost is the steward for all instructional space on campus, the course schedule, and is responsible for ensuring that these support the academic needs of the University.

6.2 Under delegated authority, the Associate Vice President, Academic and the Registrar are responsible for the administration, interpretation and application of this policy.

6.3 The Associate Vice-President Academic is responsible for the allocation of space at SFU.

6.4 The Registrar is responsible for:
   a. Monitoring compliance with the policy and related procedures;
   b. Regularly reviewing the policy and related procedures for improvement;
   c. Proposing changes to the appropriate governance body;
   d. Maintaining an inventory of centrally scheduled classroom space, which includes room capacity, facilities, design features and disability access.

6.5 IT Services is responsible for providing and maintaining technical equipment in centrally scheduled classrooms.

6.6 Facilities Management is responsible for maintaining, renovating, cleaning and furnishing centrally scheduled classrooms.

6.7 The security of scheduled classrooms is the responsibility of Safety and Risk Services.

6.8 The Office of Institutional Research and Planning will prepare an annual report on classroom utilization.

7. RELATED LEGAL, POLICY AUTHORITIES AND AGREEMENTS

7.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following University Policies:
   a. GP 18 Human Rights Policy
   b. GP 36 Use of University Space
   c. T20.02 Final Examinations

8. POLICY REVIEW

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every 5 years.

9. AUTHORITY

9.1 This policy is administered under the authority of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost.

10. INTERPRETATION

10.1 Questions of interpretation and application of this policy or its procedures shall be referred to the Associate Vice-President, Academic who will make a decision, which will be final.
11. ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

11.1 Classroom and course scheduling procedures
11.2 Schedule A: Standard Day Meeting Patterns