Timetabling Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy sets out how the University will prioritise the timetabling of learning and teaching activities in a manner that facilitates optimal course delivery, meets course progression requirements, and optimises the student experience.

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to timetabling processes that help support learning and teaching activities across the University for students and staff, on the Wallumattagal Campus and Macquarie City Campus, including:

a. undergraduate and postgraduate coursework in the standard sessions; and
b. programs and courses offered within the 4 and 6 term timetables.

(3) This Policy does not apply to:

a. microcredentials;
b. courses delivered through arrangements with an approved third-party partner (where applicable);
c. courses offered through Open Universities Australia; and
d. casual room bookings (see Room Booking Policy and Facilities Hire Policy)

(4) Teaching and learning activities will be scheduled in accordance with the Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement and the Core Business Hours Policy.

(5) Asynchronous online activities can be accessed by students at any time and do not need to be timetabled.

Section 2 - Policy

(6) Data collection and scheduling of learning and teaching activities will be undertaken to ensure timely release of the timetable to students.

(7) The timetable will give priority to:

a. units offered in multiple courses;
b. units with larger enrolments;
c. providing pathways for students to ensure that a clash free timetable which allows for course progression and completion;
d. units with learning and teaching activities that require specialised facilities or units with specific location requirements;
e. units with more teaching hours before activities with fewer teaching hours; and
f. units taught by highly accredited external professionals.

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(8) To create a stable and reliable timetable for students, changes to a published timetable should be minimised. Timetable changes will be considered under the following circumstances:

a. risks to student progression including avoidance of timetable clashes;
b. hazards, health and safety concerns, natural disasters, or emergency repairs affecting room availability (accessibility or equipment specific);
c. to accommodate identified reasonable adjustments for staff or students, working in collaboration with Wellbeing and Human Resources;
d. unexpected staff changes: and / or
e. renovation requirements disestablishing learning and teaching spaces.

(9) Amendments to the timetable post publication will be considered and approved as per Table 1 (clause 16).

Classes

(10) The number of classes initially scheduled in the timetable is based on previous enrolment patterns and strategic planning, such as anticipated growth or decline.

(11) Coordinated communication through Service Connect must be provided to students when a timetable is to be changed because of an exceptional circumstance, with information relating to the circumstances of the change to teaching activity and providing alternatives.

(12) Management of scheduled classes will occur based on the following:

a. opening of class registration in a standard session - classes must be open to accommodate at least 80% of the forecast enrolled students to register;
b. on hold classes - must be minimised and will be used only for the purpose of ensuring viability and an even distribution across classes;
c. additional classes - where enrolments exceed available class space, additional space will be allocated within the specified resources / parameters; and
d. class cancellation - classes with zero enrolments and on-hold classes at the commencement of week three (3) of a session or week two (2) of a term will be cancelled and become available for other units.

(13) In consideration of in person attendance, classes will be timetabled to enable students to attend according to the standard time at which classes start and finish, being five (5) minutes past the hour / half hour and five (5) minutes before the hour / half hour, respectively.

Section 3 - Procedures

(14) The timetable will be published for student registration at least eight (8) weeks prior to a standard session commencing or for smaller terms, no later than the Monday of the last week of the previous teaching period.

(15) The timetable timeline will be developed in consultation with the Faculties in June for the following academic year, and will include dates for the following activities:

a. collection of data;
b. building of the timetable;
c. consultation and Quality Assurance;
d. finalisation of the timetable;
e. systems synchronisation;

f. class management;
g. opening of class registrations; and
h. management and communication of timetable amendments.

(16) The roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the timetabling of teaching and learning activities are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities

Position Title / Staff	Responsibility in relation to Timetabling
Timetable Office	Lead the development of timetabling timelines (clause 15). Coordinate and action the phases of each timetable cycle - planning, building, consultation / review, finalisation, upload to the Student Management System and maintenance for change. Allocate teaching space effectively and efficiently, working with Faculties regarding specialist teaching spaces. Use handbook and enrolment data to ensure that a student can have a clash free timetable for course progression and completion. Set up and coordinate teaching data collection systems / processes. Deliver the appropriate scheduling of activities in accordance with teaching delivery. Provide support to allow for innovative teaching delivery. Provide timetable related communications and updates. Action approved change requests during draft and published timetable phases.
Academics	Provide accurate information during timetable data collection. Verify the information in the draft timetable.
Heads of Department/ School	Allocate teaching duties for academic staff in sufficient time to allow the creation of a stable timetable. Support timely engagement during timetable data collection.
Head of Faculty Operations	Ensure staff allocation is consistent with faculty workload model. If applicable, support strategies and implementation regarding the use of specialist teaching spaces. Escalation as required to Faculty Executive Director.
Faculty Educational Services Staff	Coordinate the collection of information for teaching delivery. Manage communications and follow-ups at key deadlines. Support complex design of timetables at a cohort / student level. Collate requests for changes and review for approval. Class management tasks including monitoring and opening / closing of classes as required.
Head of Educational Services	Support the Faculty's learning and teaching strategy and initiatives into operational plans for the Faculty, noting alignment with the University's strategies. Ensure the timely and accurate entry of information into the relevant timetabling application according to all relevant timetable timelines. Confirm and approve changes to the timetable relevant to their faculty. Escalation as required to Deputy Dean, Education and Employability.
Faculty Executive Director	Work with Faculty staff to resolve escalated timetabling issues, and to ensure the timetable supports course viability.
Deputy Dean, Education and Employability	Ensure teaching delivery is in accordance with teaching offerings and as governed by the Curriculum Management System. Determine the mode of offering of classes and ensure teaching delivery is in accordance with modes. Lead and support the Faculty's learning and teaching strategy and initiatives into operational plans for the Faculty, noting alignment with the University's strategies. Escalation as required to Faculty Executive Dean.
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Oversee and plan the delivery of the University's undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programs. Approve exceptional changes to the published timetable.
Information Technology	Provide technical support for the information systems and interfaces associated with the timetable process.

Position Title / Staff	Responsibility in relation to Timetabling
Service Connect	Work in collaboration with Faculty Educational Services regarding student communications for exceptional changes.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(17) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(18) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

a. asynchronous means educational activities, discussions, and assignments that engage students in learning at their own pace;
b. class size means the maximum number of students that can be scheduled into a particular teaching activity;
c. elective units means a unit not in the core zone which is chosen from a defined option set. Elective units are not guaranteed to be clash free with other elective units in the timetable;
d. essential unit means a specific compulsory unit that all students enrolled in the course must complete;
e. learning and teaching activities mean lectures and classes (including tutorials, laboratories, practical sessions) that require physical space on campus or online space that is synchronous as defined below. These activities must be approved through the Curriculum Management System;
f. standard session refers to sessions 1, 2 and 3 of the University Academic calendar year;
g. synchronous means an interactive learning activity in which all students are participating simultaneously either on campus or virtually e.g. tutorials;
h. timetable change refers to any change where:
    i. there are staff changes due to unexpected staff turnover;
    ii. there is a significant change in enrolment numbers which requires additional space be allocated;
    iii. there are risks to student progression including avoidance of timetable clashes;
    iv. hazards, health and safety concerns, natural disasters, or emergency repairs affect room availability (accessibility or equipment specific); and / or
    v. renovation requirements disestablish learning and teaching spaces.
i. timetable exceptional change / change in exceptional circumstance refers to any change that affects the whole of University timetable aspect such as, but not limited to, University-level timetable delivery, mode and offering; and
j. unit means the individual components of study within a course.

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Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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