

Timetabling Policy

Version	Update and Reason	Author and Title	Date of Approval	Effective Date	Review date
1	The Timetabling Protocols document was last updated in 2016 and the RVC will shortly be introducing new timetabling software.	Adam Hall, Head of Course Support	LTAC, March 2024 & Academic Board April 2024	June 2024	June 2025

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1. Introduction and Purpose

This Policy sets out the agreed principles for timetabling teaching, assessment, and room bookings. It ensures that issues of equality and transparency, accuracy, timeliness, accountability, and continuous improvement can be managed within timetabling procedures.

The main overall aim of this Policy is to improve the quality of the student and staff experiences by ensuring that RVC resources are used to their maximum potential and efficiency.

To achieve these aims and objectives, the RVC uses timetabling software, TimeEdit, to construct timetables for all teaching and assessment across the whole institution, on all campuses. Space and staff time are costly and finite resources with often high levels of demand. Timetabling early in a structured, consistent, and accurate manner will maximise the effective usage of these limited resources.

2. Scope

This policy seeks to provide a framework to support all staff with a role in the preparation and production of the teaching and assessment timetables.

This policy applies to all curricula-based teaching and assessment recorded on the central RVC's timetabling software, including room bookings.

3. Timetabling Policy

3.1. Teaching Times

The University operates a 52-week year*, with weeks numbered consecutively from 1 to 52 which is divided into three terms referred to as Autumn, Spring and Summer. The term dates for each course are documented within the Academic Year Plans and published on the [RVC intranet](#).

*A 53-week year is sometimes necessary depending on the annual calendar.

Teaching which is planned to take place in specific terms will be scheduled during the following periods, with some variation to the start and end points within the term depending on the course of study:

- Autumn Term: beginning of the academic year (approx. mid-September) until Christmas
- Spring Term: beginning of January until Easter
- Summer Term: post Easter until the end of the current academic year

The RVC's standard teaching week runs from Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00. Standard teaching events may be scheduled at any time during teaching hours. Examinations and assessments may be scheduled at any time during Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 17:00. Teaching, examinations, and assessment delivered by partner

institutions may be different to the days and times stated above.

On Wednesdays, teaching events for undergraduate students (including foundation year students) will normally be scheduled to take place between 08:00 and 13:00. Teaching events for undergraduate students (including foundation year students) may only be scheduled to take place after 13:00 in exceptional circumstances and when access to an alternative teaching event is provided. Approval must be provided by the Vice Principal for Learning, Teaching and Assessment or Vice Principal for Students, and evidence of this given to the Timetabling Officer before the event can be timetabled. It is not the responsibility of the Timetabling Officer to request approval.

Teaching events for postgraduate students may be timetabled after 13:00 Wednesdays without needing approval.

Lectures last 45 minutes. Lectures begin on the hour or at quarter past the hour (when allowing for a half hour break between sessions).

Where possible, scheduling three consecutive lectures for the same group of students should be avoided. Where it is unavoidable, approval from the Year Leader must be obtained in writing first.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate students must have a one hour scheduled lunch break between 12:00 and 14:00.

When a student or staff member has timetabled teaching on different campuses on the same day, this teaching will be scheduled with a minimum of 2 hours between them to allow for appropriate travel time.

When a student or staff member has timetabled teaching at Boltons Park Farm and Hawkshead on the same day, this teaching will be scheduled with a minimum of 30 minutes between them to allow for appropriate travel time.

3.2. Planning and Production

The Head of Course Support and Timetabling Officer will produce and disseminate a Timetabling Procedures Calendar to all relevant stakeholders, which will outline the tasks, timings, and rationale necessary for planning the course timetables for each academic year. This will include the deadlines to produce the necessary documentation to confirm changes to courses/modules/strands such as Programme Specifications, Module Descriptors, Assessment and Award Regulations, and Academic Year Plans. It will also include timelines for the circulation of data collection, entry and checking, and publication of draft and final course timetables.

An annual review of the tasks and timings will take place to accommodate any general changes within the academic cycle and to take account of feedback and opportunities for enhancement.

3.3. Prioritisation

Rooms are a finite resource which are allocated to activities and prioritised in the following order:

1. External Reviews (AVMA, RCVS accreditation visit etc) take priority over all other bookings. Timely notice of any planned visits should be communicated to the Timetabling Officer.
2. Examination and assessment bookings (inclusive of exam boards).
3. Teaching takes priority in all teaching rooms, including multipurpose spaces such as the Conference Suite. A full list of rooms and their types can be found within the Rooms Information intranet page, see Section 3.7 of this document.
4. Council, Academic Board, Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee have priority over the Council Rooms at each campus and may be booked in advance of confirming the course timetables.

Once the final timetable for a term/s is confirmed by the Timetabling Officer, restrictions on rooms are lifted and provisional room bookings can be confirmed.

5. CPD bookings, Open Days, Applicant Days, and mandatory applicant interviews.
6. Events, such as conferences can only be accommodated if there is availability after all of the above have been confirmed. Room requests should not be submitted until the event has been approved by the Events team. [Please refer to the event guidelines for details.](#)
7. All other ad-hoc room bookings.

Students are not permitted to book rooms (excluding Group Learning Rooms and Study Booths) during the hours of 09:00-17:00, Monday -Friday due to room pressures, unless the booking is for an approved event (see Section 3.8 for further details).

3.4. Teaching Events

All timetabled teaching events must be linked to a course and assigned an activity type within the timetabling software, to provide complete course timetables for students and staff. This information should be communicated to the Timetabling Officer by the Module/Strand/Rotation/Elective Leader, see Section 3.9.3 for further details.

The different types of teaching activities and their definitions can be found within the Naming of Teaching Activities document [on the RVC's Learning and Wellbeing intranet page](#). These should be used when scheduling teaching events.

Queries regarding the Naming of Teaching Activities document should be directed to educationaldevelopment@rvc.ac.uk

3.5. Students and Staff with Accessibility Needs

Access for students and staff with a disability is a priority and will be accommodated. This may include, for example, avoiding timetabling classes in rooms that are not accessible to users with mobility difficulties or allowing for additional travel time between teaching locations.

The Timetabling Officer must be informed by the Advice Centre where a student has access requirements, therefore students should disclose their requirements at the earliest opportunity so they can be appropriately accommodated. Late disclosures may result in delays in providing accessible rooms.

3.6. Amendments and Cancellations to the Published Timetable

Changes should be avoided by the construction of a timetable based on timely and accurate data. In turn, this will avoid negative effects on the student experience and a range of other activities. However, changes can be made in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- A teaching event that is essential to the delivery of the curriculum has been incorrectly timetabled or is missing
- Illness or bereavement
- Adjustments arising from resignation
- Medical appointments or longer-term temporary absence of staff
- An external factor which significantly impacts the ability of both students and staff to attend, for example, adverse weather, transport strikes etc.
- Allocation or removal of rooms due to major works or health and safety as approved by Estates and HR
- Rooms and facilities may vary due to unforeseen circumstances or necessary maintenance work
- Actual number of students exceeds the room capacity
- Actual number of students is significantly smaller than expected and would fit into a smaller room, but ensuring relevant facilities and accessibility requirements are still met
- Identification of student or staff access requirements that mean the current room allocated is not accessible

Changes will not be considered if:

- A change is requested to change a normal teaching day if a reasonable time has been allotted
- Staff room preference
- Staff availability change

Teaching staff wanting to make a change to a published timetable must acquire approval from the Strand/Module Leader and Year Leader before the request is made to the Timetabling Officer.

Once a change to the published timetable has been completed by the Timetabling Officer, the person who made the request is responsible for communicating the change to the students and staff affected.

Each week, Digital Learning take an extract of the timetable and use it to create the Live Lecture Capture (Panopto) recording schedule for the succeeding week. Therefore, changes to timetabled events that occur in the succeeding week will not be included in the Panopto recording schedule if they are made after 5pm on Thursdays. Any request to update the Panopto recording schedule after this cut off period, should be made to [Digital Learning via the Service Desk](#). Please note, Digital Learning will endeavour to include late requests however it cannot be guaranteed that these will be included in the Panopto recording schedule.

3.7. Teaching Spaces

For some specialist teaching spaces, approval to use them must be obtained by the team who manages that space before they can be added to the timetable. It is the responsibility of the person requesting to use the space to obtain this approval in writing. A list of these specialist teaching spaces and those who manage them is listed below:

- Lab space and rooms G5, G6 & G7 in the Clinical Skills Centre (CSC), HH – CSC Team Manager
- Postmortem Lab, HH – PM Technicians via submission of the [PM Room Booking Form](#)
- Equine Hospital, HH – Head of RVC Equine
- Queen Mother Hospital for Animals, HH – QHMA Administration Team
- BP Farm, Obstetrics Barn, HH – BP Farm Ops Manager & Farm Teaching Coordinator
- Dissection Room, Camden – Head of Anatomy Services
- Teaching Laboratory & Category 2 Lab, Camden - Multi-faculty Teaching Laboratory Manager & PPS Laboratory Technician

Subject to accessibility needs, it is assumed that if the requirements for equipment and room size are met, then the room is suitable. The Infrastructure Services Directorate is responsible for the layout, design, decoration, location, ambience, equipment, maximum room capacity and cleanliness of each room. Any comments, complaints or suggestions should be made using the [Feedback and Suggestions for ISD service desk form](#).

Each room has a default seating layout. Requests to change a default room set-up or open/close a partition wall between two rooms should be made using the [Furniture Re-configuration Service Desk form](#). Please note, room set-ups, including the opening or closing of partition walls may be limited due to the working hours of the campus services team.

Additional time before and after the core booking should be included in the initial request to account for the time it will take to complete the request.

Bookings that require video conferencing must include 30 minutes booked set-up time prior to the start of the session.

Dogs are allowed in some teaching spaces provided the correct procedures for approval have been followed and the Dogs on Campus Policy is adhered to, as set out in the [Code](#)

[of Conduct for Dogs on RVC Premises.](#)

Catering is only permitted in certain rooms as listed within the Room Information intranet page, see Section 3.8 of this document.

Rooms should be left clean and tidy with furniture returned to its original position.

Chairs and tables must not be moved between rooms.

Activities within teaching spaces should not cause unreasonable disturbance to anyone else.

Forecasted or historical class size will be matched to room capacity to ensure that no class exceeds the stated room capacity. To make the best use of available space, teaching events with small numbers of registered students will only be placed in large rooms where there is no possible alternative.

3.8. Room Bookings

All room booking requests from staff to use centrally managed rooms that are not linked to teaching or assessment must be submitted using TE Reserve. Students should continue to use the online room booking form on the intranet to request a room booking. Rooms may only be used once the organiser has received a confirmation email.

Staff and students should aim to submit room booking requests a minimum of 2 working days in advance of the start time of the booking. Booking requests submitted less than 2 working days in advance of the start time may not be processed in time.

A small number of rooms are available for staff to book directly up to a maximum of 5 days in advance. These bookings are confirmed instantly and allow the organiser to generate a confirmation email and calendar invite.

With the exception of tutorials and exam bookings for students with additional time, room bookings should not be used in place of centrally timetabled events for course bookings.

Bookings in rooms that have video conferencing facilities must finish at 12:30 on Wednesdays if they are required to accommodate Research seminars.

The points listed within Section 3.7 are relevant to ad-hoc room bookings.

Base, fixed in position, AV facilities will be available without the need for additional booking. Any additional facilities should be booked at the same time as making the original room booking request. A full list of the AV services, contacts and facilities within each room can be found on the [AV Services intranet page](#).

Staff and students wishing to book an RVC room for an event should refer to the [Event Guidelines](#) before submitting a request.

Group Learning Rooms & Study Booths located within the Student Learning Centre, Hawkshead are available for student use only and available to book directly. [Please refer to the Social Learning Space Room Booking Guidance for details.](#)

Further room booking information for staff and students can be found within the [Room Booking Information pages on the intranet](#).

3.9. Roles and Responsibilities

It is expected that the following duties will be completed by the named team/role in accordance with the Timetabling Procedures Calendar to produce accurate course timetables.

3.9.1. Head of Course Support & Timetabling Officer

It is the role and responsibility of the Head of Course Support and Timetabling Officer to:

- Ensure the timetable is produced in accordance with the RVC Timetabling Policy.
- Consider the needs and requirements of a range of stakeholders, principally students and teaching staff.
- Produce a working timetable within the constraints of the programme specifications, module descriptors, teaching space and teaching staff.
- Create accurate course timetables based on the information provided from Module/Strand/Rotation/Elective Leaders for each teaching event.
- Agree and circulate key dates for the collection, submission, and publication of timetable information for the forthcoming academic year to relevant staff.
- Make provisional timetable information available to staff to scrutinise for a reasonable amount of time prior to final publication.
- Notify staff affected by changes to the published timetable.
- Provide advice to colleagues on proposed large-scale timetabling changes
- To create and produce reports from the timetabling software on request.
- Maintain an accurate and definitive record of courses and modules to be timetabled in each academic year.
- Consider the impact to other RVC systems when making changes to naming conventions or configurations in the timetabling software and liaise with the relevant teams accordingly.
- Maintain an accurate record of centrally managed teaching rooms and related resources in the timetabling software, liaising with the Estates team as appropriate.
- In liaison with IT, to update student and staff facing timetabling information on the intranet and access links to the timetable viewer.
- Identify and resolve clashes in the course timetables.

3.9.2. Course Directors and Year Leaders

Below lists the roles and responsibilities of Course Directors and Year Leaders:

- Course Directors and Year Leaders are responsible for the overall course timetables, including non-module/strand timetabled events.

- Year Leaders are responsible for organising exam and assessment arrangements for strands in agreement with the Exams Team.
- Course Directors and Year Leaders of all UG and PG courses are required to confirm the Academic Year Plans for the coming year in agreement with the Head of Course Support and Head of Examinations and Assessments. For the BVetMed/BVSc course this should also include the Rotations Officer and Director of Rotations for the production of the Graduating in plan.

All changes affecting the reordering of modules/strands must be approved by the appropriate committee prior to the Academic Year Plans and 'Graduating in Plans' being approved and published.

3.9.3. Module/Strand/Rotation/Elective Leaders

There may be some variation in who is the designated person responsible for the tasks outlined below depending on local agreements, but largely, Strand/Module/Rotation/Elective Leaders are responsible for the following tasks:

- Consult with the Year Leader, Course Director, Head of Course Support and Head of Examinations and Assessments prior to:
 - formal submission of documentation related to validation or major amendments to a course of study,
 - teaching and assessment methods which may impact on the timetable
 - the amount and type of teaching facilities required
- Ensure all planned module/strand/elective/rotation teaching is communicated to the Timetabling Officer.
- Provide the necessary details to the Timetabling Officer to create each timetabled teaching event prior to the circulated deadlines, these details include:
 - the names of any staff involved the session
 - the activity type (lecture, seminar, practical etc.) and modality (onsite, digital, hybrid,), see definitions in the Naming of Teaching Activities document on the [RVC's Learning and Wellbeing intranet page](#).
 - the name of the strand or module and course it is taught on
 - the title of the session
 - the type of room required
 - the estimated size of the group and group details
- Organise staffing of a module/strand in discussion with the HoD and Teaching Coordinator.
- Organise exam and assessment arrangements for a module in agreement with the Exams Team.

- Agree the final version of the timetable with the Timetabling Officer in conjunction with the Year Leader and Course Director and communicate this to the staff contributing teaching.
- Ensure modular timetables are scheduled during the corresponding timeframes as outlined within the Academic Year Plans.
- Release timetabled space in good time if it is decided the space is no longer needed for teaching.
- Liaise with the Timetabling Officer to resolve clashes or outstanding issues with the timetable.

3.9.4. Teaching Staff

It is the role and responsibility of Teaching Staff to:

- Prioritise teaching and be available to teach at any time during contracted teaching day(s) except when restricted by individual agreement with Heads of Department.
- Be responsible for checking their own timetables at regular periods and adhering to the schedule by using the online timetable viewer.
- Communicate agreed timetabling changes post publication of the timetable to affected students, in liaison with the Programme Support Coordinator.
- Provide feedback to Module/Strand/Rotation/Elective leaders to help inform future timetabling arrangements.
- Teaching staff may subscribe to their teaching commitments through the online timetable viewer once they have received confirmation from the Module/Strand/Rotation/Elective Leaders that the timetable has been confirmed. This allows all teaching events assigned to a staff member (including future updates) to be imported into their calendar programme. Staff will be required to create a new subscription once the date range assigned to the subscription has ended, e.g. for each new term.

3.9.5. Academic Quality Team

It is the role and responsibility of the Academic Quality Team to:

- Confirm the outcome of the validation (approval) of new programmes of study and minor/major changes to programme specifications and module descriptors and publish these definitive documents.

3.9.6. Learning and Wellbeing (LWB)

It is the role and responsibility of various teams within LWB to:

- Confirm all room bookings required for timetabled events delivered by colleagues from the LWB team such as Welcome Week, 5 Ways to BE Well, Study Skills Introduction etc.

- **Advice Centre** - Liaise with the Timetabling Officer to inform them of students with specific accessibility needs that require reasonable adjustments to the timetable.
- **Digital Learning** - To create an accurate Lecture Capture (Panopto) recording schedule for each course based on the information in the timetable viewer, in collaboration with PSCs and in accordance with the [Lecture Capture policy](#).

3.9.7. Exams Team

It is the role and responsibility of the Exams Team to:

- Confirm to the Timetabling Officer all room bookings required for examinations and assessments, including examination boards, and release rooms in good time when they're no longer required.
- Create and publish Assessment and Award Regulations and Exam Timetables.

3.9.8. Student Records Team

It is the role and responsibility of Student Records Team to:

- Update the RVC's student management information system (SITS) to reflect changes to modules and courses following confirmation of agreed changes.

3.9.9. Registry Room Booking Staff

It is the role and responsibility of Registry Room Booking Staff to:

- Be a first point of contact for staff wanting to book centrally managed rooms that are not linked to teaching or assessment.
- Manage, review, and confirm provisional room booking requests and inform other teams of additional requirements as necessary, e.g. ensuring ISD are aware of a room booking that requires video conferencing (VC).
- Contribute to the accuracy of new data entered in the timetabling software.
- Escalate complex room booking queries to the Timetabling Officer and Head of Course Support.

3.9.10. Programme Support Coordinator (PSC)

It is the role and responsibility of Programme Support Coordinators to:

- For certain cohorts, the PSC assists the Course Director/Year Leader/Module/Strand Leader to timetable their module/strand by communicating changes to the Timetabling Officer on their behalf, and the organisation of practical and smaller-group activities. The PSC may also support the Year Leaders and Course Directors to produce the Academic Year Plan.
- Create student groups where necessary and maintain an accurate record of these.

- Be responsible for reading the online timetable viewer to make relevant updates to LEARN to ensure the information is aligned.
- To update links to the timetable viewer on course pages within LEARN.
- Where a course includes optional modules, the PSC is responsible for supporting this process and confirming allocations to the Student Records Team in addition to informing the Timetabling Officer of room requirements.

3.9.11. Infrastructure Services Directorate

It is the role and responsibility of Infrastructure Services Directorate to:

- Manage the infrastructure on each campus.
- Complete AV/VC requests linked to room bookings.
- Complete furniture reconfiguration requests, including the opening and closing of partition walls, and resetting the partitions to their default position after bookings.
- Manage and confirm student bookings for Group Learning Rooms and Study Booths.
- Upon request, communicate changes to the availability and functionality of spaces to the Head of Course Support, Head of Examinations and Assessments and Timetabling Officer in advance of changes taking place.

3.9.12. Students

It is the role and responsibility of Students to:

- Provide details of accessibility requirements to the Advice Centre as soon as possible, see Section 3.5 of this document.
- Check the published timetable regularly for updates.
- Attend teaching as scheduled and be available during the core teaching times as described in Section 3.1 of this document.
- Make appropriate use of any self-service student study spaces.
- Read the Room Booking Information for Students document before submitting a room booking request.

3.10. Adherence to this Policy

This Policy has been developed to facilitate the delivery of a critical student-facing service as a shared institutional endeavour, therefore, adherence to this Policy is mandatory.