

Guidance notes for teaching and learning timetable data submissions for 2024/5

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These guidance notes are divided into three sections. The first covers the type of data that Schools will need to submit, the second covers items which will not be timetabled, and the third second section covers how to use the template spreadsheet.

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the [Timetabling & Room Booking Policy](#).

1. Activities to be included on the teaching and learning timetable

1.1. Modular teaching sessions

Modular teaching sessions are the key items on the timetable and must therefore all be included in the data returns submitted by Schools. Include all synchronous taught activities for modules, whether these are on campus or online. Schools must include:

- Lectures, seminars, tutorials etc.
- Practicals, workshops, PC classes etc.
- Field trips, off-site visits, outdoor activities etc. All external visits (i.e. field trips or other excursions off campus) must be included. This will enable us to schedule other modules around them, and prevent unresolvable clashes being built into student timetables
- Other modular activities including:
 - Art showcases/exhibitions
 - Careers sessions
 - Drop-ins
 - Film screenings/rehearsals
 - Guest speakers
 - Revision sessions
 - Studio sessions
 - Study skills sessions

1.2. Assessment information

It is essential that all information about formative and summative synchronous assessments (except for formal examinations scheduled by the Examinations team) is included in your data return. Including this information now means that clash-free slots can be found for all students, and students can receive plenty of notification as to when their assessment will take place. Some examples of types of assessment, and their associated preparation sessions, which should be included are:

- Presentations
- Oral assessments
- In-class tests
- Assessed workshops
- Revision sessions
- Practice sessions for presentations
- Practical assessments
- Vivas

Online assessments to be taken within a defined window of time (e.g. 8hr window, 24hr window) will not be timetabled.

1.3. Activities that are essential preparation for the core curriculum

The Chair of the Portfolio Review Steering Group has agreed that activities described below should be included on the timetable. It is therefore important that details about these sessions are included in the data return so that slots can be allocated in the timetable for them.

1.3.1. Preparatory learning sessions

1.3.1.1. Dissertations or Projects

Where students will select a dissertation or project module for the forthcoming academic year, Schools may wish to provide students with preparatory learning sessions in order to set the students up for success in the module. Preparatory learning sessions for dissertation and project modules should be timetabled and therefore data should be submitted.

Please provide the module code for the forthcoming academic year and indicate the year group which should attend the session e.g.

BIO3PRO: preparatory learning session for Part 2 students moving into Part 3 in 2025/6, to be delivered in Semester 2 Week 12

1.3.1.2. Placements

Where students will select a placement for the forthcoming academic year, Schools may wish to provide students with preparatory learning sessions in order to set the students up for success in the module. Preparatory learning sessions for placement modules should be timetabled and therefore data should be submitted.

Please provide the module code for the forthcoming academic year and indicate the year group which should attend the session e.g.

BIO3PLA: preparatory learning session for Part 2 students moving into Part 3 in 2025/6, to be delivered in Semester 2 Week 12

1.3.2. Module selection briefings

Module selection briefings will be compulsory for all programmes with some element of optionality.

Schools/Departments should request these in the data return spreadsheet. These module selection briefings should be scheduled by School/Department Part, e.g. Part 1 Geography, Part 1 APD, etc., These sessions must be timetabled as online sessions as it will not be possible to find a suitably sized room without disrupting modular teaching. These sessions must be recorded so that students who are unable to attend can catch up at a later date as it will not be possible to find a completely clash-free slot for these sessions.

- All Part 1 programmes with semester 2 optionality must have a module selection briefing in teaching weeks 3 or 4 of Semester 1.
- All Part 2,3,4 programmes with optionality must have a module selection briefing in teaching weeks 6 or 7 of Semester 2 (in the two weeks prior to the Easter break).

1.3.3. Welcome back sessions

Welcome back sessions may be provided at Department or School level in the first few weeks of Semester 1 and/or Semester 2.

These sessions must be timetabled as online sessions as it will not be possible to find a suitably sized room without disrupting modular teaching. It is recommended that these sessions are recorded so that students who are unable to attend can catch up at a later date as it will not be possible to find a completely clash-free slot for these sessions.

1.4. PAL sessions

Working in collaboration with the Student Success & Engagement Team, Schools should provide as much information as possible about PAL sessions in their data return. At this stage, the important information to submit is:

- Module code if PAL is being delivered within a module
- Duration of sessions
- Likely number of groups
- Number of sessions per semester and the weeks in which they take place

2. Activities which will not be included on the teaching and learning timetable

The Chair of the Portfolio Review Steering Group has agreed that modular teaching will be prioritised in the teaching timetable for 2024/25 and that other activities (which may have previously been included on an ad hoc basis) should be facilitated through the other available means to notify or promote student related activity. This aligns with the Purpose and Scope of the [Timetabling & Room Booking Policy](#) and will ensure that modular teaching is prioritised and that, wherever possible, students will have a regular weekly pattern of teaching.

2.1. Complementary and enriching activities

Activities which are complementary to and enriching of the curriculum should be notified or promoted to students via other means. Examples of these activities are:

- Art showcases/exhibitions which are not part of a module
- Careers sessions which are not part of a module
- Film showings which are not part of a module
- Guest speakers which are not part of a module
- Research seminars which are not part of a module

As students access their timetable via the Student App which renders their Outlook calendar (including their timetable), the best way to advertise events to students is via an Outlook calendar invitation. Further information about the Student App and how to advertise events to students via Outlook can be found on the [Timetabling & Room Booking webpages](#).

2.2. Support activities

Activities which provide support to students should be notified or promoted to students via other means. Examples of these activities are:

- Academic tutor meetings¹
- International student meetings
- Student engagement talks
- Study skills sessions which are not part of a module
- Visa information sessions

Where staff need to invite individual students or small groups of students to meet with them, MS Bookings provides the facility to be able to offer a range of dates which match the available slots in your own Outlook calendar. Guidance on how to set up MS Bookings can be found on [DTS's webpages](#). Bookings made in MS Bookings will appear in students' Outlook calendars and be rendered alongside their timetable in both Outlook and the Student App.

3. How to complete the spreadsheet

Each header indicates a column on the spreadsheet. The headers are numbered here to make it easier to refer to these notes.

3.1. Module code

Please enter each individual module code required. If a session requires multiple module codes, then please ensure all of these are stated.

If it is a session that is not covered by a module code, i.e. a programme or department level event, then this can be noted in the Additional Comments column.

3.2. Mode of delivery

Please specify whether the session will be taught on campus or will be delivered live online.

3.3. Session Type

For 24/25 onwards Schools will need to title their sessions so that they match one of the scheduled teaching and learning categories given within Appendix C of the [module description guidelines](#).

A drop-down list of these session types has been provided in the timetabling data return spreadsheets. Staff should select the relevant session type for each activity from this list.

If the session type 'In class test' is selected, we will assume that double spacing is required and factor this in when building the session.

¹ Tutorials which are part of modules as described in the section on Scheduled Teaching and Learning Activities in Appendix C of the [University guidelines on module descriptions](#) will be timetabled (see [section 1.1](#). above).

3.4. Group letter (or number of groups required)

This can either be set up as a line per group needed or given as a total number of groups required i.e.:

Group A

Group B

Group C

OR

3x Groups

It may make more sense to use a line per group if you have different lecturers assigned to each group and need to note that.

For programmes with optionality in Part 0, Part 1, and PGT in Semester 1, please note that group teaching cannot start until Semester 1 teaching week 2. As module selection ends on the Thursday of Welcome Week, allocation of these students to timetabled groups cannot take place until the following week.

3.5. Who is responsible for group allocations

Where group teaching is required for a module, please use the drop-down list to indicate whether the Timetabling Team should allocate the students (this will be done on a best fit basis to create coherent timetables for students), or whether the School will do this because certain students need to be in specific groups.

3.6. Semester session is taught in

Please indicate, using the drop-down list, whether the session is taught in Semester 1, or in Semester 2.

Where an exception has been agreed through PRP to have a scheduled timetabling activity within the assessment periods, or vacations, please select the relevant option.

3.7. Teaching weeks

Please enter the relevant teaching week(s) that each session(s) will be taught in.

3.8. Timetabling Weeks

Please enter the timetabling weeks; details are given below of how they link to the teaching weeks:

Semester 1: Timetabling weeks 5-9, 11-16, Teaching weeks 1- 5, 7-12

Semester 1 Assessment Period: Timetabling weeks 21-23, S1 Assessment weeks 1-3

Semester 2: Timetabling weeks 24-26, 28-30, 34-38, Teaching Weeks 1-3, 5-7, 8-12

Semester 2 Assessment Period: Timetabling weeks 39-41, S2 Assessment weeks 1-3

Timetabling weeks 10 & 27 are the mid-semester weeks (S1 teaching week 6, and S2 teaching week 4)

For reference, the full calendar can be found [here](#).

3.9. Length of session

Ideally, teaching sessions are 1 or 2 hours, although practical sessions are typically longer. Please avoid sessions of 1.5 hours, 2.5 hours, etc. unless absolutely necessary; it is a better use of the rooms to have multiples of 1 hour. Where a session is a of a whole hour(s) duration (i.e. 1hr, 2hr, 3hr, 4hr), these sessions must start and finish on the hour.

3.10. Day

If a session has to be taught on a specific date, please enter these details in the data return spreadsheet. This should only be used for activities where a date has been agreed with an external provider, for example off-site field trips.

3.11. Time

If a session has to be taught on a specific date, and at a specific time, please enter these details in the data return spreadsheet. This should only be used for activities where a date and time has been agreed with an external provider, for example off-site field trips.

3.12. Expected class size

For 24/25, it is essential that Schools provide us with estimated class sizes for their Part 0, Part 1, and PGT modules. Normally we would roll over the class sizes from the previous year to use as a baseline, but due to the number of changes resulting from semesterisation this information cannot be rolled over, and Schools will need to provide new information.

This needs to be as accurate as possible as it is used to allocate rooms of the correct size. Please enter the most realistic higher expectation, as this is generally safer.

3.13. Lecturer/s

Please enter the name of the lecturer who will be teaching the session. If the session will be taken by a new hire who is not yet known, please enter New lecturer A, New lecturer B, etc., as appropriate.

Unless the module convenor is taking the session, do not add them to sessions, as this will block out possible timetabling slots. They can use CMISGo to review the timetable, even if they are not personally assigned to the session.

3.14. Technician support

If Schools have practicals, or other teaching, where technicians are required during the session, please enter the name(s) of the technician(s) required. This ensures that we schedule the session at a time when the technicians are available.

3.15. Is technical set up time required?

If Schools have practicals, or other teaching, which requires set-up or take-down time within a specialist space, please give details of the length of set-up and take-down time required.

We can then factor this in when building the timetable, to ensure that the room isn't in use directly before/after the session.

3.16. Any essential room(s)?

This could be a lab, a studio, or any other type of departmentally owned room. In all cases, please supply full details of the room, including the room number.

3.17. Type of room required

This can be a PC lab, a flat classroom, lecture theatre or a room that is good for group work. It is important that it is the type that is essential for delivery and not just a preference of a particular room. If there is no specific requirement then this should be left blank.

3.18. Time requirements for session?

It is very important that this information is captured accurately and as completely as possible. For example, we need to know if a session needs to take place in the morning (e.g. farm visit), or if the sessions in particular locations (e.g. MERL) are restricted by opening hours.

3.19. Running order

If a module has multiple sessions in a week, we need to know if there is a requirement for the order in which they take place. The clearer the instruction, the better. This ensures that we get it timetabled right the first-time round.

For example, we need to know if there are pedagogical reasons for a lecture to take place before the seminar/s for a module, or if there needs to be a gap between sessions (e.g. you may ask that one session has a two day gap after another session to allow students to complete a task from the first session), or if a session needs to take place on the same day as another.

We do not make assumptions as to the ordering of sessions, so if no instruction is given then the sessions will be scheduled in any order.

If orderings are not requested in the initial data return, it may not be possible to accommodate these at a later date.

Note that lectures may be scheduled at the end of one week, with seminars scheduled in the following week. This makes best use of the teaching estate and ensures that all cohorts have access to the rooms that they need to deliver the teaching successfully.

3.20. Additional information

This section is for anything that you think doesn't fit in any of the other categories or where you're unsure where it should go.