

TITLE: TIMETABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR PROGRAMS AT RED DEER COLLEGE

POLICY STATEMENT:

An Official Timetable of all courses scheduled for approved programs is prepared for each academic year by March 1. This Timetable provides a schedule of all lectures, laboratories, seminars, tutorials and practica for all modes of course delivery.

PURPOSE:

Red Deer College develops an Official Timetable for a given academic year in an orderly and consistent manner to address the scheduling of all courses. The timetabling of courses maximizes teaching and learning opportunities by:

- a. Increasing student access to desired courses.
- b. Meeting instructors' pedagogical requirements.
- c. Optimizing all space through effective and efficient scheduling of College facilities.

The Official Timetable is developed well in advance of any given year to provide for the early registration of students, to facilitate course selection for continuing students and to ensure adequate time for academic and operational planning.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all credit and non-credit programs and courses. It is recognized, however, that there are times when externally mandated requirements affect our internal Timetable processes and require exceptions to the policy. Such exceptions are authorized and documented by the Registrar. The Registrar is responsible and accountable for the construction of the Official Timetable.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The timetabling of courses is designed to meet the needs of students, first and foremost.
2. The Official Timetable is developed through the use of an 'optimizing algorithm' which ensures that a conflict-free schedule of requisite courses is produced for students, instructors, and rooms, resulting in equitable treatment of all stakeholders.
3. The benefits of the algorithm are achieved through a batch process applied when all relevant data is inputted and can be lost when manual changes are made to the optimized Timetable. It is expected, therefore, that changes to the Official Timetable will be minimal.
4. Timetabling constraints ensure that key requirements which benefit students, teaching, and learning are taken into account when the Timetable is created. These constraints also place limits on how teaching assignments are timetabled within a department.
5. Any constraints (other than the timetabling constraints in Section C of the Procedures) can potentially compromise the availability of space and times to other departments and/or instructors. Only those constraints which are deemed to be absolutely necessary by the Divisional Leader are considered in the building of the Timetable.

6. The wide variety of programming at the College necessitates diverse timetabling requirements. To most effectively assign a conflict-free Timetable, patterns are expected to be kept within those specified under General Constraints. Any Timetable patterns other than those specified are initiated by the Scheduling Office and require the approval of the Divisional Leader and Registrar.
7. Every effort is made to maximize learning opportunities for all Red Deer College credit and non-credit students. College facilities are booked in order to effectively utilize their designed purposes. Rooms are assigned to match projected class sizes and optimize instructional methodology.

DEFINITIONS:

Academic Blocks: Courses grouped together by term and program to be scheduled conflict-free, and are developed in consideration of General, Instructor, Departmental and Course Constraints.

Academic Term: The academic year is divided into three standard academic terms:

Fall – September to December

Winter – January to April

Spring – May to June or July

Chair: Program Chairperson or Continuing Education Coordinator.

Course: A course may be in the form of lectures, laboratories, seminars, tutorials and practica, including all modes of delivery, which are normally scheduled with a start and end date within an academic term.

Course Loading Sheet: Form used to collect Timetable data from program areas for scheduling purposes. It includes, but is not limited to: course limit, term, pavilion, room attribute(s), pattern, academic block, and instructor.

Divisional Leader: Dean, Director, or Vice President of a Division.

Final Draft Timetable: The final draft of the Timetable prior to the submission of appeals.

Scheduling Office: The Office responsible for scheduling and allocating college space for all courses.

Scheduling Tie: A method of tying courses together. For example, a lecture and lab that need to be scheduled back to back.

Service Course: Courses that are required to graduate from a program but are offered and delivered by another academic department.

Space Expert: A college staff member assigned as the primary contact for the booking and use of specialized space on campus.

Official Timetable: The Official and final version of the Timetable inclusive of changes approved by the Appeal Committee.

Timetable Appeal Committee: The committee responsible for resolving outstanding conflicts, disputes and change requests that arise from the creation of the final draft of the Timetable and is comprised of Divisional Leaders, the Registrar, one Chairperson, one faculty representative, the Scheduling Coordinators and one Students' Association representative.

Timetabling Constraints: Parameters placed on the scheduling system to ensure that key requirements which benefit students, teaching and learning are taken into account when the Timetable is created.

PROCEDURES:

A. General

1. The timetabling process is initiated in the fall of the prior year by the Registrar and the Scheduling Office staff with the distribution of Course Loading Sheets to department Chairs. Scheduling Office staff manage the timetabling process and oversee the collection of information from departments. The Scheduling Office staff is assisted in the data collection process by the Chairs; and provides guidance to the Chairs in completing the Course Loading Sheets upon request by the Chairs.
2. a. Each Chair is responsible to submit all required courses on Course Loading Sheets to the Scheduling Office by a specified date. Late submissions of Course Loading Sheets impact the timetabling process for the entire institution; therefore, adherence to the deadline for submission of Course Loading Sheets is crucial. Course Loading Sheets must include:
 - Instructors assigned (Instructor Name or TBA [to be announced] grouping), and any constraints related to that Instructor or TBA group.
 - Room requirements (preferred pavilion or wing of College, required room attribute[s]).
 - Academic Block information (confirm precise course sections in academic blocks to ensure they are scheduled conflict-free for a select group of students) and any constraints related to the block. For example, a required end time for classes.
 - Course Patterns.
 - Scheduling Ties.
- b. Each Chair is also responsible to complete and submit the following additional forms, if required, to the Scheduling Office by a specified date:
 - Detailed Instructor Constraint form.
 - Department Constraints form.
3. Each program Chair is responsible for negotiating and coordinating approved service courses with other departments to ensure that service courses are included in each academic block.
4. In cases where credit and non credit share space (example: studios), the Chairs must negotiate and agree on sharing arrangements.
5. By early February, the Scheduling Office submits a final draft Timetable to the Academic Chairs for approval, and to Academic Advising for review. Approval of, or revisions to the draft, must be returned to the Scheduling Office by the specified date.

6. Changes made to the final draft of the Timetable are conducted manually, and interferes with the system's ability to optimize and deliver a conflict-free Timetable for students, instructors and rooms. While acknowledging that some changes to the final draft Timetable are necessary, one of the following criteria must be met when submitting a change:
 - a. Change improves student access.
 - b. Change is required because of a change in faculty assignment when a TBA is assigned or there is unexpected staff turnover.
 - c. Change improves availability of part-time instructors.
 - d. Change creates resource efficiencies.
 - e. Change assists in meeting enrolment targets.
 - f. Change accommodates student/instructor disability.
 - g. Current room is unable to accommodate number of registered students.

B. Requesting/Approving Changes to the Official Timetable

1. Process for requesting/approving changes (other than classrooms) to the Official Timetable (post-publication):
 - a. All change requests are submitted electronically on the 'Timetable Change Form' to the Chair of the Program.
 - b. Only requests that are supported by the Chair and the Divisional Leader are considered.
 - c. The Chair forwards supported requests to the Registrar.
 - d. The Registrar's decision on changes is final.
 - e. Updates to the Timetable are made by the Scheduling Office; the Scheduling Office coordinates the notification to any registered students.
 - f. Scheduling Coordinators have the authority to make changes to classrooms after the Official Timetable is approved without Chair and Divisional Leader support, providing the classroom attributes are satisfied with the new room assignment.
 - g. Faculty is responsible for confirming all information on the Official Timetable prior to the commencement of classes.
 - h. If the Scheduling Office cannot accommodate an approved request, the Registrar will be notified and the Registrar will notify the Chair.

C. Assignment of Academic Space

1. Priority for booking of College Facilities:
 - a. College courses and related activities Timetabled annually in batch process (using the optimizing algorithm).
 - b. College courses and related activities Timetabled via non-batch process.
 - c. College meetings, activities and events.
 - d. External meetings, activities and events for which the college is a partner or sponsor.
 - e. Other external meetings, activities and events.
2. Programs that build their Timetable after the annual timetabling process is complete, or who cannot fit into recommended patterns may be assigned dedicated times to ensure space is available when they create their Timetable.
3. Space can be deemed 'non-shareable' by the Registrar.

4. Spaces may have a 'space expert' assigned who is responsible for understanding the requirements of the space, the space's schedule, and the needs of all students and instructors using the space. Space experts will be assigned by the Registrar, in consultation with the Divisional Leader(s).
5. The space expert must adhere to certain rules for the allocation of space and may reject a request for space if the following criteria are not met:
 - a. Safety of the individuals using the space.
 - b. Protection of the equipment and furnishings contained within the space.
 - c. A Technician or Supervisor that is present to oversee the use of the space, unless otherwise authorized by the space expert.
 - d. Maximization of learning opportunities for the College as a whole.
 - e. Scheduled drop-in times that meet the needs of students, while maximizing learning opportunities for other departments.
6. Use of the space cannot be denied by 'holding the space open' for a non-confirmed event or use.
7. Requests for space must include sufficient lead time for the set up and take down of equipment in the room.
9. In cases where a space request is denied by a space expert, the requestor can appeal the decision to the Registrar. The decision of the Registrar is final.

D. General Constraints

1. The timetabling schedule shall normally be from 0800 – 2200 (with the exception of some Trades courses which may begin at 0700). The college day is broken into three major blocks of time defined as:
 - a. Day starts at 0800 and ends by 1650.
 - b. Late Afternoon starts at 1430 and ends by 1820.
 - c. Evening starts at 1600 and ends by 2200.
2. Evening courses of three-hour duration are normally scheduled to start at 1800 hours and normally on MTWR nights.
3. Timetable Patterns:
 - a. 80 minutes 2x/week, separated by one day
 - b. 50 minutes 3x/week (not three consecutive days)
 - c. 50 minutes 4x/week
 - d. 170 minutes 1x/week
 - e. 170 minutes 2x/week, separated by one day, two days for context based learning
 - f. 50 minutes 1x/week
 - g. 80 minutes 1x/week
 - h. 50 minutes 5x/week
 - i. 3 hour labs will normally start at 0800, 1100, or 1400
 - j. Additional patterns may be created to assist scheduling courses offered in buildings not located on the main campus.

4. Friday classes are scheduled using only the day pattern from 0800 to 1650.
5. There is a minimum of 10 minutes between scheduled classes when students are moving between classes at the same Campus.
6. Additional constraints needed to accommodate travel between campuses will be made by the Director of Student Services in consultation with Deans' Council, Registrar, Scheduling Office, Divisional Advisory Groups (DAGs), Department Councils and the Students' Association.

E. Instructor Constraints

1. Full-Time Faculty:
 - a. A teaching day does not normally exceed nine (9) hours from the beginning of the first teaching hour to the end of the last teaching hour, except when practicum, clinical, work experience, lab, or shop supervision is included in the workload.
 - b. Teaching does not exceed six (6) hours in any day, except when practicum, clinical, work experience, lab, or shop supervision is included in the workload.
 - c. The maximum number of consecutive classes is three (3), and the maximum number of consecutive teaching hours is four (4), except when practicum, clinical, work experience, lab, or shop supervision is included in the workload.
 - d. The minimum break between courses after the maximum number of consecutive hours taught is one (1) hour.
 - e. A minimum of twelve (12) hours elapses between the completion of teaching one day and the commencement of teaching the next day.
 - f. The Scheduling Office makes all reasonable attempts to accommodate individual faculty requests approved by the Dean for reasons of:
 - i. Religious accommodation.
 - ii. Family or dependent care for documented medical or disability reasons.
 - iii. Documented medical condition.
 - iv. Documented disability.
 - v. Other individual requests for college-related initiatives, including scholarly activities, as approved by the Dean.
 - vi. Travel time between campuses.
2. Part-time Faculty: Teaching time requested by part-time faculty must be approved by the Divisional Leader.

F. Departmental Constraints

Departments may request a common meeting period, maximum 2 hours per week, per term to accommodate meetings. To ensure meeting times do not conflict with scheduled classes, these requests are made when Course Loading Sheets are forwarded to the Scheduling Office.

G. Student Constraints

The Timetable system considers the following constraints when scheduling courses. It is understood, however that students may select options and electives according to their preference and convenience.

1. A student's day in scheduled classes does not exceed 12 hours, except when it includes practicum, clinical or work experience, lab or shop time.
2. The maximum number of scheduled hours for students per day is 6, except when it includes practicum, clinical or work experience, lab or shop time.
3. The maximum number of consecutive scheduled hours per day is 4, except when it includes practicum, clinical or work experience, lab or shop time.

H. Room rules

1. All instructional space must be scheduled through the Scheduling Office.
2. Room capacity is determined by the Director of Facilities.
3. Double booking of rooms and the booking of multiple rooms for one learning activity is not permitted, except by permission of the Divisional Leader.
4. A blended/hybrid delivery course may only be booked for the portion of the class that requires classroom or lab time.
5. A program may specify a requirement for additional time prior to, or following a scheduled activity to allow time for preparation, clean up and maintenance for labs or shops as needed.

I. TIMETABLE APPEAL PROCESS

1. Scheduling conflicts within the Timetable are normally recognized by the Scheduling Office. The Scheduling Coordinators address all conflicts that can be resolved with minimal impact.
2. For conflicts that cannot be resolved, the Scheduling Office notifies the Chairs involved in the conflict, copying the Divisional Leader(s) and Registrar.
3. Department concerns with the final draft of the Timetable are reported to the Chairs. The Chairs summarize the change requests for the department and reviews it with their Divisional Leader.
4. The Chairs submit the change requests, reviewed by Divisional Leaders, to the Registrar.
5. The Registrar collates all change requests and submits a summary to the Timetable Appeal Committee.
6. The Timetable Appeal Committee meets annually after the final draft of the Timetable is released and prior to the publication of the Official Timetable.
7. The Timetable Appeal Committee includes the Academic Divisional Leaders, Registrar, Scheduling Coordinators and one representative each from Faculty, Chairpersons and the Students' Association.
8. The Timetable Appeal Committee attempts to collaboratively resolve outstanding conflicts, disputes, and change requests arising from the creation of the final draft of the Timetable.
9. The Registrar makes the final decision on conflicts, disputes, and change requests not resolved at the annual Timetable Appeals meeting.

10. The Registrar notifies the Chairs of the decisions related to conflicts, disputes, and change requests.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Chair, Academic Council

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Academic Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: Academic Policy Committee, Deans' Council, Registrar, Scheduling Office, Divisional Advisory Groups (DAGs), Department Councils and the Students' Association

POLICY REVIEW DATE: September, 2015

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2010

REVISION HISTORY: October 15, 2009
November 1, 2010

RELATED POLICIES:

- Final Examinations Policy and Standard Practice
- Academic Schedule
- Facility Booking and Rental

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors operational policies.