New Approach to Timetabling

Approved block structure to be implemented in phases from 23/24 academic year.

27/03/2023 V1.0

The new block structure

As part of the new approach to timetabling, a partial block structure will be implemented in phases starting from 23/24.

This is to enable the delivery of a progressively more stable timetable earlier within the year.

The project will deliver a phased migration of timetabled activities onto the block structure where necessary, starting with Level C taught activity in 23/24. By 25/26 all block-required teaching will have been migrated to the block structure.

How do I know if my teaching is required to be 'on block'?

The University has worked closely with SUMS consultancy to identify which subject areas are required to adopt the proposed block structure. This was determined by volume of shared curriculum in the subject area at module and programme level alongside ensuring the contact hours were suitable for the block structure. The block structure provides opportunities for collaboration and integration between different subject areas, leading to increased interdisciplinary learning and research opportunities. The block structure also enables a clash free timetable to be coordinated across shared curriculum.

The list of subjects required to be 'on block' have been split into pillars to enable sharing with subjects in other pillars. If your subject is featured in the below list then any whole class taught, shared curriculum within that subject must be timetabled within the allocated block for the pillar and level. Timetabling and Exams will identify the shared modules which sit under each subject area.

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4
Business Management	Ancient History	African Studies	Anthropology
Classical Literature and Civilisation	Applied Mathematics	Archaeology	Catalan
EMFL	Chemistry	Classical Languages	Computer Science
Film	Chinese	English Literature	Digital Media & Communications
History	Creative Writing	Law	Drama
International Business	Criminology	Mathematics	Economics
International Relations	Education	Theology & Religion	French
Italian	English Language	Sociology	Philosophy
Japanese	German	Spanish	Theoretical Physics
Music	History of Art		
Russian Studies	Politics/Political Sciences		
Social Policy	Portuguese		

How do I know specifically which timeslots are associated with which level for my pillar?

The below table indicates the levels assigned to each block depending on which pillar a subject is in and the slot to blocks are identified in the subsequent diagram. The Timetabling and Exams team will be scheduling the required module activities into the appropriate slots.

Rotations	Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Pillar 1	LC	LI	LH	LM
Pillar 2	LH	LM	LC	LI
Pillar 3	LM	LC	LI	LH
Pillar 4	LI	LH	LM	LC

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri
09:00	B	D	C	A	SPARE
10:00	B	D	C	A	SPARE
11:00	C	A	B	D	A
12:00	C	A	B	D	A
13:00	B	D	PG only	SPARE	C
14:00	A	B	PG only	B	D
15:00	A	B	PG only	A	D
16:00	C	A	PG only	D	C
17:00	D	C	PG only	B	C
18:00	D	C		B	

*PG only slots on a Wednesday afternoon still require approval to be used, they remain reserved for exceptional circumstances

Sharing curriculum

Subjects in different pillars should be able to share curriculum with subjects in other pillars within reason. For example, a joint honours programme consisting of History (Pillar 1) and English Literature (Pillar 3) should experience clash free module placements between the two subjects because the shared curriculum for those subjects is constrained to other timeslots.

Subjects which are not placed within pillars are considered 'off-block' and this is likely to be the case for one of a few reasons.

1)   They are not part of enough joint honours programmes e.g. Psychology
2)   They do not have specific course parts, just a small number of shared modules e.g GECS
3)   They have too many contact hours to fit into the block structure
4)   They have a lot of fixed slot activities such as labs

Subjects which are considered 'off-block' may still share with 'on-block' subjects but these need to be worked out with the timetabling team to ensure that other discipline areas are able to be fixed in to accommodate both programmes.

Curriculum development

The block structure will remain effective whilst it is adhered to. There may be times when the structure must be reviewed to continue to serve the needs of the University, however this should be a considered consultation with representatives from each impacted area.

Therefore, as part of business as usual it is important to consider the block structure as part of the curriculum development process. The pillars identify opportunities for shared curriculum which can be maximised with reduced timetabling impact. Where curriculum development needs are identified and are not currently supported by the block structure, it is worthwhile consulting with the timetabling team so they are able to advise on potential impact at the point of proposal.

Questions?

If you would like to discuss what this means for your area with a member of the Timetabling team, please get in touch:

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