



Instructional Space Scheduling Policy

POLICY PURPOSE

This policy implements the faculty's goal of ensuring that students have as much flexibility as possible in developing their schedules so that they can access the full range of educational opportunities offered by the university. It aims to reduce barriers associated with meeting pattern and time-of-day conflicts. It also seeks to distribute classes evenly throughout the day, thus providing the greatest possible number of non-conflicting time patterns. Finally, this policy promotes fair and efficient stewardship of institutional resources, including classroom facilities, equipment, technical support staff, and administrative staff associated with room scheduling activities.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The Instructional Space Scheduling Policy applies to all undergraduate classes meeting between 7:30 am and 4:25 pm on the Ithaca campus during the fall and spring terms.

Graduate and professional classes are exempt from this policy with the exception of:

- Graduate and Professional classes cross-listed or co-meeting with undergraduate classes and
- Law School, Johnson Graduate School of Management, or Veterinary College classes meeting between 7:30 am and 4:25 pm in spaces outside of their respective professional school/college.

To allow for a smooth transition, the objectives will be phased in over the initial three years of the policy. Once implemented, the University Registrar and the Director of Capital and Space Planning will lead the reevaluation of this policy every three years.

THREE POLICY OBJECTIVES

This scheduling policy has the following three objectives aimed at achieving conflict-free schedules for students and faculty and efficient use of classroom resources:

1. Require adherence to faculty-endorsed standard meeting days and times;
2. Distribute classes efficiently across scheduling blocks; and
3. Promote appropriate classroom utilization.

Exceptions to these policy objectives should not be granted simply based on individual faculty teaching preferences or prior historical scheduling practices. Any exception granted should be closely tailored to

preserve best the ability of students to schedule their courses without unnecessary conflicts, and to ensure good stewardship of University resources.

Objective 1: Standard Meeting Days and Times

Fall and spring term classes should be scheduled to comply with the standard meeting days and times established by the University Faculty and published in the Courses of Study. (See [Appendix 1](#) for the University Faculty's current standard meeting days and times).

This objective applies to lectures, seminars, discussion sections, laboratories, and studios.

The University Faculty establishes standard meeting days and times, including defining standard class durations by day of the week, class start and end times by day of the week, and periods of time free from all formal undergraduate classes.

Offering classes based on a standard meeting pattern of days and times is a critical feature of an effective scheduling system. The lack of adherence to standard days, start and stop times, and class durations creates conflicts in student schedules. A student's ability to create an individual schedule without conflicts is contingent upon reducing the number of variables in the overall class schedule. When classes are held at non-standard days and/or times, students are often faced with overlapping classes and the dilemma of deciding whether to seek permission to participate in two distinct instructional activities at the same time or not to enroll in a desired class.

Additionally, a non-standard day and/or time class can effectively block a room for two or more standard time periods, preventing other classes from using the room.

Faculty must work with their department chairperson to make every effort within the academic unit to remove or mitigate the circumstances that might prevent adherence to this objective. Only when local resolution proves impossible may the faculty member request, in writing, an exception. The exception request must first be approved by the unit Associate Dean, or an equivalent individual designated by the unit Dean, who must then seek final approval from the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Scheduling policy exceptions that are granted are valid only for the semester for which they are approved. Faculty will not be granted a permanent exception.

A non-conforming class without an approved exception will not be entered into the Student Information System. It will not appear in the Class Roster (classes.cornell.edu) and will not be available for student enrollment.

Objective 2: Class Distribution

Undergraduate classes held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays that meet between 7:30 a.m. and 4:25 p.m. should distribute enrollment across four blocks of time.

Block	Class Enrollment Distribution	Classes that start at
1	At least 20%	7:30 am, 8:00 am, 8:40 am, or 9:05 am
2	No more than 30%	10:10 am, 11:15 am, or 11:40 am
3	No more than 30%	12:20 pm or 1:25 pm
4	At least 20%	2:00 pm, 2:30 pm, 2:55 pm, or 3:35 pm

There are no distribution guidelines for Monday and Wednesday evening classes.

Classes held in classrooms, meeting rooms, and assembly areas (as defined in the University's Facilities Inventory) are included in the class distribution objective. Laboratory and studio classes are exempt.

The Office of the University Registrar will communicate the class distribution guidelines at the start of each scheduling period.

Unit Associate Deans, or an equivalent individual designated by the unit Dean, are responsible for achieving the desired class distribution within their unit. Where academic units fail to meet the distribution guidelines, the Office of the University Registrar will work with them to seek to meet this objective in subsequent semesters.

Objective 3: Classroom Utilization

Academic units should strive for a seat fill of 50% across unit instructional spaces.

This objective applies to classes held in classrooms, meeting rooms, and assembly areas (as defined in the University's Facilities Inventory). Laboratory and studio classes are exempt.

The learning environment is enhanced when a class is held in an appropriately sized classroom. Seat fill provides a measure of how efficiently the seats within a room are used. Scheduling small classes into large rooms prevents those rooms from being used by larger enrollment classes that need them. Smaller classes should be carefully matched to appropriately sized rooms to avoid putting undue burden on University classroom resources.

Unit Associate Deans, or an equivalent individual designated by the unit Dean, are responsible for achieving seat fill compliance within their academic unit. Where academic units fail to meet the seat fill guidelines, the Office of the University Registrar will work with them to seek to meet this objective in subsequent semesters.

CLASS SCHEDULING ORDER

During bulk scheduling, the Office of the University Registrar will schedule classes into classrooms in the following order.

- The largest classes (those with expected enrollments of 300 or more) will be scheduled first regardless of their meeting pattern.
- Remaining gateway classes will be scheduled next.
- The remainder of classes will be scheduled based on expected enrollment (largest to smallest) and the weekly meeting frequency (three or more meetings vs. fewer than three meetings).
- Classes approved to meet at non-standard days and/or times will be scheduled last.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Office of the University Registrar will make available a series of scheduling effectiveness reports to monitor adherence to the standard meeting patterns, classroom utilization, and class distribution objectives and thereby assist the responsible units with compliance. The reports will be generated and can be used throughout the scheduling cycle to track compliance as classes and classrooms are

scheduled.

After the end of each semester, scheduling effectiveness reports for that semester will be provided to college Associate Deans and Registrars. Classes will be monitored and reports made available to ensure that expected enrollments are accurately based on a two-year rolling average of actual enrollments.

At the end of the academic year, the Office of the University Registrar will deliver scheduling effectiveness and trend reports to the University's Space Use Advisory Committee. The Space Use Advisory Committee advises the development of the University's capital plan.

CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Key contacts

- University Registrar, 607/255-4232, univreg@cornell.edu, <https://registrar.cornell.edu>
- Director of Capital and Space Planning, 607/255-2557, spaceplanning@cornell.edu, <http://dbp.cornell.edu/home/offices/space-planning/resources/>
- University Scheduling, 607/255-9090, univ_scheduling@cornell.edu, <https://registrar.cornell.edu/service-resources>
- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, 607/255-3062, ovpue@cornell.edu.

University Procedures and Policies

- Faculty Handbook, <http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/the-new-faculty-handbook/>
- Policy 2.7 Reporting the Use of Facilities, dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/facilities/facilitiesreporting.cfm
- Advance Scheduling Procedure, https://blogs.cornell.edu/dbpsite/files/2016/11/space_Advance_Scheduling_Procedure_Final_16_1104-1cd3cus.pdf
- Space Management Principles as Applied to Cornell Instructional Space, https://blogs.cornell.edu/dbpsite/files/2016/11/space_Principles_SpaceMgmt_with-Instruction_16_1109-1ijmif1.pdf
- Use of Central Scheduling Tools, https://blogs.cornell.edu/dbpsite/files/2015/09/Space_Use_Central_Scheduling_Tools-2649mvn.pdf

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Academic unit	A school or college that offers classes.
Assembly	A room designed and equipped for the assembly of many persons for events such as dramatic, musical, devotional, livestock judging, or commencement activities. The room can also be used for instructional or classroom activity purposes to a minor or incidental extent. Inventoried as room type 610.
Bulk scheduling	Bulk scheduling is the process of running an algorithm to place classes in the most appropriate space.
Class	A class is an instance of a course offered for a specific period of time by specific instructors. Some elements that define a class are determined at the course level, including subject, course #, grading option, credit hours, title, and component. The main elements that are specific to the class level are: term offered, instructor(s), meeting times, meeting days, room.
Class laboratory	A class laboratory is a room characterized by special purpose equipment or a specific space configuration that limits instructional activities to a particular discipline or a closely related group of disciplines. These activities may be individual or group in nature, with or without supervision. Class laboratories may be used for scheduled or unscheduled instruction. Class laboratories include wet laboratories (such as most chemistry and biology laboratories), dry laboratories (such as instructional computer labs), dance studios, design studios, teaching kitchens, etc. Inventoried as room types 210-247.
Classroom	A room or space used primarily for academic instruction. Includes general purpose classrooms, lecture halls, recitation rooms, seminar rooms, and other spaces used primarily for scheduled, non-laboratory instruction. Inventoried as room type 110.
Co-meet class	An undergraduate and a graduate or professional class meeting at the same time and in the same location.

Term	Definition
Conference room	A room serving an office complex and used primarily for staff meetings and unit activities that are not directly related to instruction. Conference rooms are used by a specific organizational unit or units, whereas meeting rooms are used for general purposes such as campus or community group meetings not associated with a particular unit. Inventoried as room type 350.
Class Roster	A searchable website of class information including meeting items, locations, instructors, etc. – published each semester by the Office of the University Registrar.
Courses of Study	The official University catalog or bulleting for a given academic year. The Courses of Study includes courses, programs of study, and University and college policies. Published each year by the Office of the University Registrar.
Expected Enrollment	The expected enrollment in a class or combined section, as indicated by the Requested Room Capacity field in the student information system.
Gateway classes	Classes that enroll more than 200 students <u>and</u> are required for a major, concentration or pathway (pathway is a grouping of courses that must be taken sequentially). At least 75% of the enrollment is freshmen and sophomores, and no more than 75% of the enrollment is from a single college.
Graduate and professional classes	Classes offered at the graduate level identified by catalog numbers greater than 4999.
Meeting frequency	How often a class meets each week.
Meeting room	A room used by groups for general purposes for a variety of non-class meetings. The key defining characteristic is public availability. Although it may be assigned to a specific organizational unit, a meeting room is more available and open to various groups than a conference room. Meeting rooms may be configured like classrooms (i.e., with participant focus to the front of the room) and may be equipped with a variety of furniture types (e.g., tables and chairs, lounge type furniture, tablet armchairs, or a large table) in various combinations and arrangements. Inventoried as room type 680.
Nonstandard meeting days and times	Any meeting pattern that deviates from the faculty-approved class meeting start and end times and days of the week on which classes may be taught, as published in the Courses of Study.
Permission only classes	Classes that require consent of the instructor or department before a student can enroll.
Professional school	The Johnson Graduate School of Management, Law School, or College of Veterinary Medicine.
Room type	Room types are defined in Cornell Policy 2.7, Reporting the Use of Facilities, and stored in the central facilities inventory.

Term	Definition
Seat fill	<p>The percentage of seats occupied for those times when a room is in use. This variable measures the match between section (class) size and room size. Also known as Station Occupancy Ratio, it can be calculated for one class, for one room, or for an aggregation of rooms.</p> <p>The policy's 50% seat fill expectation is lower than the 60-75% requirement stated in Cornell's 2017 Classroom Space Guidelines. As the Space Planning Guidelines are revised and/or as experience is gained in working with the 50% goal, seat fill guidelines expressed in this policy will be reviewed to reflect new expectations.</p>
Space Management Principles	A set of overarching principles and goals regarding space allocation.
Space Management Principles as Applied to Cornell Instructional Space	The Space Management Principles adapted to the specific needs and circumstances of use of instructional space.
Space Use Advisory Committee (SUAC)	The Space Use Advisory Committee is responsible for developing policies, procedures and other recommendations concerning the use and renovation of space and the allocation of existing space; recommending allocations of University space, including off-campus leased space; and developing procedures to synchronize unit space planning during the annual capital plan development process.
Standard meeting days and times	The faculty approved class meeting start and end times and days of the week on which classes may be taught as published in the Courses of Study.
Undergraduate classes	Classes offered at the undergraduate level identified by catalog numbers less than 5000.

APPENDIX 1: Policy on Scheduling (from Faculty Handbook, 2010)

The policy on scheduling was established by the University Faculty and the Faculty Council of representatives in 1950 and last amended in 1981.

- All lectures, laboratories, recitations, or similar exercises start at specified times and continue for durations of 50 minutes, 75 minutes, one hour and 55 minutes, two hours and 25 minutes, or 3 hours. The University times are printed in the "Courses of Study."
- On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the hours of 4:25 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., on Fridays the hours after 4:25 p.m., on Saturday after 12:05 p.m., and all day Sunday shall be free from all formal undergraduate classes or laboratory exercises.
- Evening classes shall be used only on Monday and Wednesday and only when regularly scheduled and included in written college announcements; evening lectures, recitations or similar exercises shall start at 7:30 p.m. and 8:35 p.m., and evening laboratories or similar exercises at 7:30 p.m.

No exceptions to the above class schedules – including the provision for free time on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday between 4:25 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., on Friday after 4:25 p.m., on Saturday after 12:05 p.m., and on Sunday – shall be allowed except by the permission of the dean of the college or the director of the school offering the course; such exceptions as are approved shall be regularly scheduled and included in written university announcements.

Standard Meeting Patterns

Classes

Block	Time	50 minute classes		
1	8:00 am-8:50 am	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
	9:05 am-9:55 am	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
2	10:10 am-11:00 am	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
	11:15am-12:05 pm	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
3	12:20pm-1:10 pm	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
	1:25pm-2:15pm	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
4	2:30pm-3:20pm	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
	3:35pm-4:25pm	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	Friday
n/a	7:30pm-8:20pm	Monday, Wednesday		
	8:35pm-9:25pm	Monday, Wednesday		

Block	Time	75 minute classes		
1	8:40 am-9:55 am	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	
2	10:10 am-11:25 am		Tuesday & Thursday	
	11:40 am-12:55 pm		Tuesday & Thursday	
3	1:25 pm-2:40 pm		Tuesday & Thursday	
4	2:55 pm-4:10 pm	Monday & Wednesday	Tuesday & Thursday	
n/a	7:30 pm-8:45 pm	Monday, Wednesday		

Laboratories and similar exercises

Block	Time	1 hour 55 minute classes				
1	8:00 am-9:55 am	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	10:10 am-12:05 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	12:20 pm-2:15 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	2:30 pm-4:25 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
n/a	7:30 pm-9:25 pm	Monday		Wednesday		

Block	Time	2 hour 25 minute classes				
1	7:30 am-9:55 am	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	10:10 am-12:35 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	2:00 pm-4:25 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
n/a	7:30 pm-9:55 pm	Monday		Wednesday		

Block	Time	3 hour classes				
1	8:00 am-11:00 am	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	10:10 am-1:10 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	1:25 pm-4:25 pm	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
n/a	7:30 pm-10:30 pm	Monday		Wednesday		