

King's College London Timetable Policy

Policy ownership: Students and Education Directorate

Policy approval: College Education Committee

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Preamble

The university Timetable Policy promotes a proactive approach to the timetabling of academic activity in order to:

- support students' learning;
- maximise the utilisation of departmental and centrally timetabled teaching space;
- make the most effective use of staff and student time;
- ensure that, where possible, students are not disadvantaged due to religious commitments or participation in Wednesday afternoon activities;
- ensure the provision of information to the university community in respect of the academic timetable.

Ruling from General Academic Regulations

Section: College Calendar

G16 On Wednesday afternoons after 1pm during term time, students should be free to participate in recreational activities and as such attendance should not normally be required at lectures, classes or practicals.

G17 Between noon and 1pm on Mondays during Semesters one and two no lectures or other classes at which attendance is obligatory will normally be held to allow students to attend the Associateship of King's College lectures.

To achieve these objectives the Policy will determine the parameters within which timetabling and room allocation takes place, including for example definitions of the teaching day and week, identifying protected periods for example, for AKC lectures or for sport or other co-curricular activities; and the availability of teaching staff. There are approved guidelines with regard to academic availability to ensure consistency of practice across the university.

The Policy acknowledges the important role of King's Venues in marketing unallocated capacity in centrally timetabled space to maximise efficiency of usage and generate income for the university to be reinvested in line with the Finance Policy.

Opportunities for third party hire are obviously limited by academic priorities. Facilities will not be considered to be available until the teaching timetable is in place unless a definitive window for marketing has been previously agreed. It is recognised that teaching takes place all year round, but it is possible to make advance bookings in non-teaching space, outside published semester dates and in selected central rooms outside core teaching hours.

Staff or students must not enter into contracts with external agencies that involve a commitment of central space without prior consultation with Timetabling Services, King's Venues or Space Planning.

Clearly, there will be occasions when disputes arise over room booking or timetabling issues of principle. If these cannot be resolved at a local level between the parties concerned then the relevant Dean(s) of Faculty should adjudicate. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level then the relevant Vice Principal or their appointee should deal with the matter directly.

It is a key role of Timetabling Services to safeguard protected times and to provide support in making any necessary changes.

Scope

This policy is primarily targeted at full-time undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study. The university provides CPD activities for individuals who fall outside this policy, which typically includes part-time programmes and study days commissioned by employers. However it is expected that the spirit of this policy should be followed by supervisors of postgraduate research students.

1. Teaching Day and Week

Teaching is normally timetabled between the hours of 09.00 – 18.00, Monday to Friday, 09.00 – 13.00 on Wednesdays. It is recognised that core teaching occurs outside these hours.

For timetabling purposes, 'morning' is defined as the period before 13.00, 'afternoon' is defined as the period 13.00 – 18.00, and 'evening' is defined as the period after 18.00.

Staff and students should have access to teaching rooms on the hour. Allowing time for setting up equipment and finding seats, this means that formal teaching would be expected to start at 5 minutes past the hour and finish at 5 minutes to the hour, to ensure that the room can be emptied by the hour.

When a student or staff member has classes on different campuses, these classes will be scheduled with a minimum of half an hour between them to allow for appropriate travel time. Should an individual require longer to travel (see Accessibility on page 4), Timetabling Services will work to accommodate those specific requirements.

Religious Observance

King's College London has, since its foundation, honoured the religious obligations of its students and has made a place for worship in its academic life. Religion and belief is a protected characteristic

under the Equality Act 2010 and as such, the university aspires to ensure that students should not have to choose between religious obligation and study.

The university notes a distinction between a necessary religious observance that is required by a faith community in order to be a faithful member, and a desirable observance that allows staff and students to be faithful members of their faith community, but is not required. In particular, the university will, as far as possible, allocate the following **two** periods for necessary religious observance:

- Friday lunchtime 13.00 – 14.00 – Muslim Prayer Time
- Friday afternoons (to travel home by sunset, which is evidently more applicable in autumn and winter) – Jewish Sabbath

The university chapels conduct services throughout the year for the entire university community. Where possible, the following times will be kept free for students and staff who wish to attend as part of a desirable religious observance:

- Wednesday lunchtime 13.00 – 14.00 – College Eucharist (Strand), Roman Catholic Mass (Guy's)
- Thursday lunchtime 13.00 – 14.00 – Roman Catholic Mass (Strand), College Eucharist (Guy's)

The university will make all reasonable efforts to avoid scheduling teaching at these times; the university will also be mindful of other religious festivals and holidays that occur throughout the academic year that may impact staff and students. Where the scheduling of teaching is unavoidable, steps will be taken to ensure students who are unable to attend due to religious obligations are not disadvantaged. Such steps might include:

- making available electronic recordings on the relevant virtual learning environment;
- making available alternative learning materials;
- the provision of repeat sessions at times which do not conflict with religious obligations or any other protected times within this policy.

Staff and students are encouraged to speak with their departments at the earliest opportunity to identify locally workable solutions and compromises. Both staff and students seeking advice on this matter should refer to the Dean.

Any breach of this part of the policy will be referred to the Vice-Principal (Education) by Timetabling Services if it is unable to be resolved at faculty level.

Sport, recreation and other co-curricular activity

It is the policy of the university that any student (undergraduate or postgraduate) who wishes to take part in sport or other co-curricular activities on Wednesday afternoon shall be free to do so. No lectures, classes or practicals organised by King's College London shall be held on Wednesdays after 13.00. Faculties / Institutes will negotiate alternative arrangements on an individual basis if attendance at such an activity on a Wednesday afternoon is obligatory or if failure to attend is likely to prejudice a student's academic progress or be detrimental to their final grade.

Timetabling Services will place a soft scheduling constraint against the Wednesday 12.00 – 13.00 slot; teaching is **not** excluded from this hour, but it will be avoided wherever possible.

Any breach of this part of the policy will be raised with the relevant departmental office and referred to the Vice-Principal (Education) by Timetabling Services if the issue cannot be resolved.

Professional programmes

A large proportion of the teaching delivery for professional programmes is devolved to partner providers across placement sites. During placements, student timetables are subject to the specific service environment and its expectations. As such, students can expect some teaching to occur outside the normal timetabling periods outlined above.

2. Accommodating study towards the Associateship of King's College

Students from all Schools are encouraged to register for the AKC and the timetable will be constructed so as to allow all students sufficient access to the series of nine one-hour live or recorded AKC lectures per semester on their main teaching site.

3. Accessibility

Disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. As such, all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that activities involving staff or students with a declared disability will be appropriately timetabled. Individuals making room bookings should seek information about access issues as early as possible.

4. Adherence to the published timetable, and cancelled courses and room bookings

Teaching timetables for students will be available either via their Student Records page or their virtual learning environment. Staff timetables should be available either from their departments or by using the online timetables.

All members of the university community have a responsibility to ensure that published timetables are adhered to and the most effective use is made of teaching space. Timetabling Services should be informed as soon as possible in the event of cancellations or perceived clashes.

Resolving issues: escalation procedure for students

Should you have teaching organised by King's College London during one of the protected times and wish to change sessions, in the first instance contact your module leader who can liaise with the Departmental team and Timetabling Services to assist with resolution.

If you feel the issue has not been dealt with appropriately then you should contact your Head of Department, or in the case of religious observances, the Dean's Office.

If the matter is still not resolved then it can be escalated to your faculty's Vice Dean for Education or ultimately, the Office of the Vice-Principal (Education).

Timetabling Services should be involved throughout.