

Academic Scheduling Provisions

Piloted for the spring 2021 through spring 2023 build terms

In order to help the institution in meeting the goals, priorities, and enduring commitments established in the Strategic Plan, the following provisions have been proposed to guide academic room scheduling practice as the new Science building comes online, the new Academic Multi-purpose Building (AMB) is completed, and Butte Hall is remodeled. These provisions are not intended to serve as a permanent policy, but rather as a pilot to inform the future policy.

Effective class scheduling is critical to the academic mission of the University. It enables students to take the classes they need to create viable schedules, assures faculty availability to teach, and contributes to efficient space utilization and good stewardship of our valuable institutional resources.

Class scheduling is a complex process that requires collaboration from various stakeholders. Successful scheduling supports pedagogical needs while maximizing space and seat utilization and ensuring that students have access to the courses they need for timely graduation. It requires evaluation of enrollment demand, consideration of course offerings, and academic and space planning.

These provisions apply to all campus departments offering state-supported academic classes for the fall 2021 schedule build cycle through the spring 2023 schedule. This does not affect classes offered through Regional and Continuing Education (RCE).

We recommend that departments adopt these best practices for the spring 2021 schedule build cycle.

Responsibilities

1. Academic Publications and Scheduling Services
 - a. Assignment of classes to rooms allocated for instructional use is the responsibility of Academic Publications and Scheduling Services (APSS), who will make classroom assignments in collaboration with appropriate department heads/chairs or their designees.
 - b. APSS manages the production and publication of the Class Schedule, coordinates academic scheduling, room assignments in general use lecture rooms, and audits class setup in order to facilitate student registration and Academic Planning Database (APDB) reporting.
 - c. APSS will publish a timeline prior to schedule build each term. The Schedule Building Timeline will be based on the continuing student semester enrollment cycle and will establish the scheduling dates and deadlines for that term.
2. Academic Departments and Colleges
 - a. Academic departments and colleges plan course offerings in preparation for schedule build. They are responsible for completing scheduling activities as established in the Schedule Building Timeline and in compliance with class scheduling guidelines and data requirements.
 - b. Each department is responsible for designating a department scheduler to complete

scheduling activities and coordinate with the college and APSS on behalf of the department. Each college is responsible for designating a college scheduler to coordinate scheduling activities across the departments and to coordinate with APSS on behalf of the college.

3. Academic Scheduling Advisory Committee

a. The Academic Scheduling Advisory Committee (ASAC) consists of:

Permanent:

- i. APSS scheduling representative (appointed by Registrar)
- ii. Academic Advising representative (appointed by AVP for University Advisement)
- iii. Institutional Research representative

Two-year term:

- iv. Department Chair representative from each college (appointed by Dean)
- v. Associate Dean representative (appointed by Provost)
- vi. Faculty representative (appointed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate)
- vii. Staff department scheduler representative (appointed by Staff Council)

One-year term:

- viii. AS Student Representative (appointed by AS President)

Officers: The Chair and Secretary will be selected by the committee at the first meeting of the academic year. The duties of the Chair and Secretary include, but are not limited to, conferring about and deciding immediate issues and report to the committee.

b. Committee responsibilities include:

- i. To serve as the referral and review body for resolving disputes and exceptions to the Academic Scheduling Provisions.
- ii. In cooperation with APSS, research and recommend a permanent scheduling policy.
- iii. Research and recommend scheduling best practices.

Provisions

1. Glossary of Terms

- a. Best practice (BP) – recommended scheduling practice for the most efficient schedule.
- b. Credit hour – A credit hour is assumed to be a 50-minute period. In courses in which “seat time” does not apply, a credit hour may be measured by an equivalent amount of work, as demonstrated by student achievement.
- c. Faculty Contact Hours – total number of hours per week that the instructor is physically present with students while delivering instruction.
- d. Prime time – Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. start time.
- e. Room capacity – number of seats/spaces available for students.
- f. Seat fill – ratio of enrolled students to room capacity, expressed as a percentage.

2. Standard Scheduling Convention

- a. In order to maximize utilization of general use lecture rooms, as well as mitigate the potential for class overlap and allow students a wide range of class schedule options, APSS enforces the university approved standard scheduling convention. It is each

department's responsibility to comply with these time blocks to ensure the university is working as one cohesive entity.

- b. All class meeting patterns must begin on the hour or half-hour.
 - c. Two- or three-hour time blocks are scheduled to accommodate a break at approximately the mid-point of the meeting pattern.
 - d. Non-standard class times require prior approval through the exception process and will be reviewed on a regular basis.
3. Optimization
- a. APSS coordinates room assignments during schedule production via optimization in Astra Schedule. Optimization is based on scheduling preferences, which are generally based on pedagogical needs, enrollment limit vs. room capacity, and other campus priorities such as community engagement. Classes scheduled to standard time patterns receive priority; priority may also be given to classes with instructor assignments scheduled back-to-back.
 - i. BP: Departments with 4-unit courses can help ensure priority placements by splitting their meeting patterns into a standard (MWF) and not standard (T or R) pattern.
 - ii. BP: Departments should maximize their exclusive use spaces. All academically related activities in those spaces should be scheduled in Astra.
 - iii. BP: Departments should communicate changes in course preferences to APSS as early as possible.
 - b. Entry of lecture room assignments by departments in PeopleSoft (PS) prior to optimization is not permitted and will be removed.
 - c. Meeting pattern changes during the optimization period will not be allowed.
 - d. Assignment of a specific room in one term does not guarantee assignment of that room in a future term, even if the room was utilized efficiently. It should not be expected that courses would be able to use the same room or rooms from term to term on a continual basis.
 - e. All room assignments will be provided to colleges for review following the optimization period. Classes that do not receive a room assignment via optimization may require use of another standard time pattern and/or an adjustment to the enrollment limit in order to obtain a room that meets its pedagogical needs. Classes without a room assignment when the Class Schedule is published will be suppressed from the Class Schedule and closed for enrollment pending room assignment. Classes added to the Class Schedule after publication are subject to room availability and an 85% target seat fill.
4. Prime time scheduling
- a. Prime time is defined as Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. – 2p.m. start time. Facility limitations make it necessary for each college to schedule 50% of classes using general use lecture rooms outside of prime time.
 - b. Dean or designee is responsible for the development and implementation of their college's prime-time distribution process.
5. Enrollment and Room Capacity
- a. Each enrollment capacity should reflect the total number of students expected to enroll in the section. Setting capacity to facilitate preferred room assignments is not permitted.
 - i. The use of enrollment capacity manipulation to control enrollment of the section is permitted only after the room assignment process is complete (e.g. reserved seats).

- b. Room capacity shall not be exceeded. Please note that room capacity is set by state standards based on assignable square footage and under the oversight of the state fire marshal. The standard furniture in the room conforms to that capacity; tables and chairs moved in or out of the classroom by students or employees do not affect the official capacity of the room. Classes with enrollment that exceeds capacity of the assigned room may be suppressed from the Class Schedule, closed for enrollment, and subject to adjustment by APSS based on room availability.
6. Changing Room Assignments
- a. Room assignments should be finalized during schedule build prior to the Class Schedule being published.
 - b. Once the Class Schedule is published, a general use lecture room assignment may be changed in order to better accommodate a change in enrollment demand or university space needs. Such changes are subject to room availability, must be coordinated with APSS, and may require Dean or designee approval.
7. Cancellations
- a. Departments and colleges are responsible for cancelling classes that will not be offered. Untimely class cancellations have a variety of negative consequences:
 - i. Faculty members teaching cancelled sections may need to be assigned to different courses, requiring new preparation with little lead time
 - ii. Students in these sections may be unable to find open seats in alternate class sections; their study load may fall below what is required for financial aid and other services that require full-time enrollment certification.
 - iii. There is also little chance for the now-available classroom to be utilized at such a late date.
 - b. For these reasons, Deans or their designee are asked to lead their colleges in closely reviewing low enrollment classes. These cancellations should be done in close consultation with department chairs and with full consideration of pending registration dates, historical course demand, and other relevant analyses.
 - c. Once registration for the term begins, cancellations require Dean or designee approval.
8. Exceptions
- a. All class schedules are expected to conform to the guidelines above. Requests for exceptions are submitted to APSS and may be subject to approval by the Academic Scheduling Advisory Committee. **criteria and process to be developed by APSS and ASAC.*

Appendices

[Policy for University Facilities Allocation and Use \(EM 13-078\)](#)

[University Facilities Scheduling and Use Procedures \(Addendum to EM 13-078\)](#)

[Policy for Online Education \(EM 14-014\)](#)

[Schedule Build Timeline for 2020-2021 AY](#)

[Standard Scheduling Convention](#)

[Course Classification \(CS number\) List and Definitions](#)

Academic Scheduling Exceptions procedure **to be developed by Academic Scheduling Advisory Committee*