# Procedure

**Title:** Course Schedule Development **Number:** A2400.10
**Type:** Administrative
**Responsible**: VP, Academic Affairs
**Related Policies:** A2400
**Linked Procedures:** A2400.00, A2400.05, A2400.11, A2400.15, A2400.20, A2400.25, A2400.30
**Related Laws:** None
**Related Standards:** None
**HLC Criterion:** 4C, 5C

## Purpose Statement

The course schedule development guidelines and procedures are established to provide a transparent and consistent framework by which the Academic Affairs Division develops and manages the academic course schedule to meet students' needs and expectations. These procedures have been developed to serve the following needs:

1. **Degree Completion:** to ensure that students are able to enroll in the courses they need to complete their degree requirements as quickly as possible, but at least in the timeframe suggested.
2. **Pedagogical Reasons:** to ensure quality pedagogical approaches to instruction of specific groups or lab/clinical work that require a minimum number of students per section.
3. **Resource Utilization:** to ensure that resources like faculty time, classroom space, and materials are allocated efficiently and effectively.
4. **Financial Considerations:** to ensure that courses are transparently and effectively managed to ensure a healthy balance between the commitment to student success and institutional fiduciary obligations.
5. **Equity Considerations:** to ensure concerns about students lacking access to specific courses or programs based upon location or modality.

## Introduction

The development of course schedules require collaboration among several key stakeholders throughout the college. Further, the scheduling process involves consideration of student preferences, faculty availability and preferences, facility limitations, finance and budget constraints, and processes of the Registrar's office. Schedules also seek to accommodate various individual need (students', faculty, and departments) while allocating common resources (space, time, and dollars).

Because faculty best understand the curricula and pedagogical requirements of their courses, a department's requests will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. However, experience suggests that not all requests can be accommodated

due to facility and resource limitations. In addition, overall student needs may produce demands at odds with initial Department recommendations.

To provide an effective process – one which increases student engagement, effectively anticipates and responds to student needs, is more equitable for all users, and provides a transparent allocation of space – the following guidelines for managing this extremely complex process have been developed.

## Guiding Principles/Values

The following principles underpin the scheduling process:

- In order to limit the negative impact on students, efforts will be made to minimize long periods between classes, reduce student travel time between classes and sites, and provide a diversity of delivery options;
- All space, including classroom space, is a resource that belongs to the taxpayers. The Campus President, through authority granted by the Board of Trustees is the steward of instructional space and is responsible for ensuring that this space supports the academic needs of the College;
- Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, and Extension Center Coordinators, are responsible for ensuring that all classrooms are scheduled efficiently;
- Classrooms must be shared to support the broader teaching and learning needs of the College;
- For the purpose of developing initial course schedules, classrooms and other instructional spaces may be initially allocated to individual departments, but the assignments are not considered permanent. The space may be reallocated as the needs, priorities, and demands of the College change;
- Departments that are delegated temporary authority to manage general purpose classrooms are responsible for supporting those classrooms and people who use them;
- Credit-bearing courses, their exams, and required class events have scheduling priority over all other activities that require the use of classrooms;
- The Deans, in collaboration with the appropriate Extension Center Coordinators are authorized to schedule classes and final exams, if applicable, in any available general-purpose classroom to accommodate the broader academic needs of campus during the week;
- All departments are strongly encouraged to plan and distribute classes across four days of the week (Monday – Thursday) and all hours of the day to maximize use of campus classrooms and minimize class conflicts for students;
- Departments are responsible for having consistent class scheduling practices;
- Class scheduling practices must adhere to all College policies and procedures that prohibit discrimination.

## Contact Hour Applications

Establishing a common understanding of the expectations and standards for contact hours is a critical first step in the scheduling process. To that end, the College embraces the widely accepted Carnegie unit of instruction for the contact hour (i.e., one contact hour is equal to fifty minutes of instruction).

In addition, the College recognizes that courses are scheduled in a variety of formats (e.g., traditional, hybrid, online), lengths (2-week, 4-week, 8-week 15-week, etc.) and instructional delivery modes (lecture, lab, clinical, practicum and internship).

The approved instructional delivery mode sets the expectations for the number of contact hours a course meets. When determining the length of time a course should meet, the following contact hour standards apply to standard instructional delivery modes:

- Lecture – 1 credit equals **15** contact hours of instruction;
- Lab – 1 credit equals **30** contact hours of instruction;
- Clinical – 1 credit equals **45** contact hours of instruction;
- Internship – 1 credit equals **75** contact hours of instruction.

For the purpose of determining the amount of contact hours a particular course should be scheduled, a 15-week semester is assumed. The following table identifies the minimum number of minutes to be scheduled for each 1-credit course of a specific mode type:

| Mode | Credit | Contact Hours | Contact Minutes | Minutes Scheduled (Total) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lecture | 1 | 15 | 50 | 750 |
| Lab | 1 | 30 | 50 | 1,500 |
| Clinical | 1 | 45 | 50 | 2,250 |
| Practicum | 1 | 45 | 50 | 2,250 |
| Internship | 1 | 75 | 50 | 3,750 |

**Note:** A course can be scheduled for any number of weeks (e.g. 1, 2, 4, 8, 12, etc.). Regardless of the actual length, a 15-week semester is used to determine the minimum number of contact hours required for the class.

When courses exceed the 1-credit amount, each course should be delineated by how many credits are related to lecture, lab, clinical, and internship and then multiplied by the appropriate contact hour. For example, ENG 111, a 3-credit course where students engage primarily through lecture/discussion-oriented instruction, the number of contact hours would be found as follows

ENG 111: 3 credits lecture X 15 contact hours = 45 contact hours total.

As an example of a course where students engage through both lecture/discussion-oriented instruction and laboratory-oriented participation, BIO 218, the number of contact hours would be found as follows

BIO 218: 3 credits lecture X 15 contact hours = 45 contact hours lecture
1 credit laboratory X 30 contact hours = 30 contact hours lab
Total Contact hours for course = 75

***Contact Hours/Week***

Once the total of contact hours for a course is known, then the number of contact hours to be scheduled per week can be calculated by dividing the number of contact hours by the desired number of weeks that the class will be offered. For courses lasting the entire 15 week fall or winter terms, then the contact hours will be divided by 15. For courses lasting the entire 8-week Summer I or Summer II terms, then the contact hours will be divided by 8. For courses that are to be offered for some term less than the standard term, then the contact hours will be divided by the desired length. For example, a course that is to be offered over a 12-week term, then the number of contact hours will be divided by 12.

As noted in the prior example, ENG 111 has 45 total contact hours of instruction and BIO 218 has 75 total contact hours of instruction. To illustrate how courses might be scheduled over terms of multiple lengths, the following examples are offered:

| Total Contact Hours | ENG 111<br>45 | | BIO 218<br>75 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hrs./Wk. | (Calculation) | Hrs./Wk. | (Calculation) |
| 15-Week Term | 3 | 45 ÷ 15 = 3 | 5 | 75 ÷ 15 = 5 |
| 8-Week Term | 5.625 | 45 ÷ 8 = 5.625 | 9.375 | 75 ÷ 8 = 9.375 |
| 12-Week Term | 3.75 | 45 ÷ 12 = 3.75 | 6.25 | 75 ÷ 12 = 6.25 |
| 4-Week Term | 11.25 | 45 ÷ 4 = 11.25 | 18.75 | 75 ÷ 4 = 18.75 |

***Contact Hours/Day***

Once the number of contact hours per week is known, then the number of contact hours to be scheduled per day can be calculated by dividing the number of contact hours per week by the desired number of days that the class will be offered. Note: once the number of contact hours is known, it is often helpful to multiply the contact hours by 50 to get the total number of contact minutes needed per week – the contact minutes, then, can divided by the desired number of days to determine the minutes per day needed. Additionally, when calculating number of minutes and hours needed for a course, it is necessary to adjust for holidays and other days the college is closed.

**Course Section and Room Scheduling Targets**

Targets and guidelines have been established to ensure that both class sections and classroom facilities are scheduled efficiently to support the needs of students, faculty, and the college. To ensure good stewardship of our resources, it is important for academic departments to participate in achieving these targets and following the guidelines presented. To that end, Deans will discuss their scheduling performance compared to the targets identified during annual budget conference with the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

***Scheduling Balance & Distribution Targets***
Historically, the most popular times for scheduling classes have been Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between the hours of 9:00a and 2:00p. During these times, there are more requests for classrooms than there are classrooms available.

Unfortunately, having too many class sections offered on these days and times regularly results in scheduling conflicts for our students and limits the number of general-purpose classrooms available. Further, this clustering effect appears to have additional unintended consequences including: limiting student access to needed courses; dramatically impacting (in a negative way) the intellectual climate and culture of the college; overburdening facilities and services; and restricting opportunities for student-faculty interaction. Moreover, the clustering of course sections into a limited number of time zones or days has a significant ripple effect on the entire scheduling and registration process.

To minimize these issues, each academic unit is expected to offer a schedule distributed across the full week and throughout the entire day.

***Scheduling Balance & Distribution Guidelines***
The following guidelines will assist departments in achieving the aforementioned scheduling balance and distribution targets.

Guideline 1 – Map class start times to established time zones.
To assist with achieving these targets, the College has established standardized time zones for class start times. Having consistent start times, scheduling patterns, and blocks of scheduled and open times not only makes it more efficient for students to plan their schedules (allowing for more back-to-back classes), but also makes it easier for the Deans and Extension Center Coordinators to locate available classrooms and place classes, when necessary.

Furthermore, establishing standardized time zones is the most effective and efficient way to ensure the maximum use of the instructional week, and to facilitate scheduling of facilities. This is done while recognizing that College facilities must accommodate the needs of many academic programs serving a variety of student populations. Making use of the standard time zones offers the best possible chance for departmental schedule requests to be accommodated. Class sections at non-standard time zones can only be scheduled after receiving prior approval from the VPAA.

The following time zones are established for traditionally-offered lecture-based fall and spring semester courses. The BASIC semester class periods last for 50 OR 80 MINUTES; thus, a three-credit course normally meets on M, W, F for 50 minutes each day OR on T, TH or M, W for 80 minutes each day. The 80 minutes provides for a five-minute break during class time. Once-a-week three-credit courses meet for 160 minutes. The 160 minutes provides for a ten-minute break during class time. At a minimum, ten-minute intervals separate the time zones to allow transition time from one class to another.

To assist with mapping classes to appropriate times zones, the following direction is offered:

- Courses offering two, four, five, or six credits, should make every effort to observe the start times for the time zones of days on which the class is held. This minimizes the number of standard time zones occupied by the course and will give students the greatest flexibility to take other courses during the standard times.
- Courses meeting four or five times per week for 50 minutes each must fall within a **single** T, TH time zone. For example, a course meeting Monday through Thursday for 50 minutes each day could be scheduled for 9:00a – 9:50a on MW and any 50 minutes within the 8:00a – 9:20a T, TH time zone (i.e., 8:30a – 9:20a) OR the 9:30a – 10:50 time zone (i.e., 9:30a – 10:20a). Any request for a course section offered outside the normal time zones may not be able to be accommodated.
- Unique start and end times (e.g., 10:15 a.m. or 1:45 p.m.) should be avoided since they often result in unnecessary gaps in student schedules and classroom schedules. Departments that wish to schedule a class at a unique start time for pedagogical reasons must first get approval from the Vice President of Academic Affairs before entering the class in Colleague. If multiple unique start time classes are proposed by the Departments, then, once approval is given, these classes must be scheduled back-to-back in the same room, whenever possible.

Guideline 2 – Lab sections, when possible, should be scheduled before 10:00a, after 2:00p, or on Fridays.

Guideline 3 – Departments are strongly encouraged to schedule classrooms with back-to-back classes or events to eliminate unusual gaps in the room schedule that can't be used for another class or event. As a matter of practice, open times in a classroom calendar should be at least an hour in duration.

***Course Rotation Guidelines***

In order to improve students' ability to access courses, especially required courses, departments should rotate offerings into different times and days over the fall and spring semesters. To that end, the following guidelines apply:

Guideline 4 – Multiple sections of the same course should be distributed throughout the week – both day and time of day. Specifically, when more than one section of the same course is offered in a semester, it should be offered on different days (M, W, F/M, W and T, TH) and at a different time of day. Recognizing the possible impact on faculty schedules, this may not always be possible. However, sections of the same course should not be offered in the same or immediately adjacent time zones as this limits students' flexibility unless there are additional sections of the course available at different days and times.

Guideline 5 – Courses offered every semester should alternate between a M, W, F or M, W schedule in one semester and T, TH schedule in the other semester. Time of day could also be alternated, for example, in the morning during one semester and in the afternoon for another.

Guideline 6 – Faculty and department preferences will be accommodated to the greatest degree possible.

Guideline 7 – If a department were to ever offer two courses that complement one another (e.g., Organic Chemistry Lecture and a complement Organic Chemistry Lab), which are clearly designed to ensure students enroll in both, each course should be rotated as if they were a single course so that a student's ability to enroll in both courses is not adversely impacted.

***Section Integration between Departments Guidelines***

Students, particularly Career Technical Education students and students pursuing articulated transfer program majors, often have a prescriptive program of study that require courses be taken from multiple disciplines within the same semester. Further, many of the health science courses are subject to clinical site availability, which limits scheduling flexibility for students. Therefore, to enhance student's ability to complete their program of study, make satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes, and increase scheduling efficiency, academic departments must work to ensure that students can schedule the course required for their program of study for a given semester. To that end, the following guidelines apply:

Guideline 8 – Departments whose courses support multiple majors will coordinate the scheduling of sections to ensure that the student can schedule an appropriate section as noted in their program of study.

To assist with cross-department schedule development, each affected academic department must work in collaboration to develop course schedules that provide students that opportunity to take the courses required for their program of study in the semesters identified. As such, academic departments must collaborate to schedule major specific courses and align general education offerings to common times to maximize students' availability and enrollment.

***Section Fill Rate (Seat Utilization) Guidelines***

Guideline 9 – Departments should select classrooms where they can expect an 75% fill rate for the number of seats provided (on average the number of students enrolled in a class section divided by the instructional seating capacity of the room that class section is in should be greater than or equal to 75%). It is important to ensure that class sections be assigned to rooms that have an appropriate number of seats. Similarly, sections caps should be reflective of room capacity or accreditation, state, or federal regulations.

## *Communication of Expected Course Availability Guidelines*

Guideline 10 – By the December catalog production deadline, departments must produce a schedule that communicates to students when each course assigned to the department will be offered throughout the academic year. Specifically, the schedule must identify which courses are offered by semester, annually, or periodically (i.e. once every few semesters).

## *Additional Scheduling Considerations and Guidelines*

Guideline 11 – Departments should consider pressures that individual faculty may face outside of the work setting when planning course and teaching schedules and try to accommodate these needs, when possible, while also seeking to meet the overall class scheduling distribution targets and guidelines mentioned previously in this document. Teaching early or late in the day may be preferred by some faculty but could also create non-work-related challenges for others. To initially identify faculty who favor the opportunity to teach early in the morning or later in the day, department chairs should:

- Encourage faculty who prefer earlier/later teaching times to identify themselves.
- Consider faculty whose arrangements with caregivers (e.g., availability of before or after school-day care, availability of adult care arrangements) make early or late afternoon hours especially appealing.
- Encourage faculty to take into consideration the number of class sessions taught within a week and the time the class is offered (e.g., it may be more desirable to teach an early morning class if the class meets fewer times per week).

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Guideline 12 – Departments should use actual enrollment trends provided by institutional research to determine the appropriate number of sections and room capacity needed.

**Schedule Building Procedures**

| Timeline | | Step | | Performs Task |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 weeks prior to registration | | Issue a new master **scheduling tool** with the updated ICCB course master file; update the Add Course Spreadsheet; place in Academic Affairs network drive<br><br>Review c**ourse sequence sheets** for accuracy; update as needed<br><br>Create department-level **scheduling tool for each Dean;** place in Academic Affairs network drive<br><br>Send memo to Faculty and Student Affairs professionals noting the start of the scheduling process with deadlines/timeline included | | VPAA/Associate<br><br>Deans<br><br>VPAA/Associate<br><br>VPAA |
| 12 weeks prior to registration | | Input provided to Deans & Chairs for courses to offer, along with recommended days, times, and delivery<br><br>Review input from various institutional sources (faculty, Chairs, Extension Center Coordinators, Advisors, Registrar, Coordinator of High School Pathways and Partnerships, **section and enrollment history data** on the dashboard, **course sequence sheets,** etc.)<br><br>Coordinate general education courses with other departments, resolving conflicts, and aligning general education courses across programs | | Faculty & Student Affairs<br><br>Deans & Chairs<br><br>Deans & Chairs |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 weeks prior to registration | | Build student schedules on the department-level **scheduling tools**, ensuring sufficient schedule choices and course harmony, strategically grouping courses, ensuring courses meet minimum class contact time<br><br>Schedule rooms/labs on master **room chart**, resolving room/lab conflicts<br><br>Develop faculty workloads on department-level w**orkload cost calculator,** resolving faculty scheduling issues | | Deans<br><br>Deans & Administrative Assistants/Associates<br><br>Deans & Administrative Assistants/Associates |
| 7 weeks prior to registration | | Student schedules and workloads are sent to Chairs & Faculty in draft form for feedback<br><br>Review feedback and revise, as needed | | Deans<br><br>Deans |
| 6 weeks prior to registration | | Consolidate all department schedules into **master scheduling tool**<br><br>Draft master schedule sent to Student Affairs for feedback | | VPAA/Associate<br><br>VPAA/Associate |
| 5 weeks prior to registration | | Review/revise schedules (on the Course Scheduling Tool) and workloads (on the Workload Cost Calculator) using the faculty and Student Affairs feedback.<br><br>Review and coordinate room scheduling with other divisions by utilizing the shared Google calendar for individual rooms. | | Deans<br><br>Administrative Assistants/Associates |
| 4 weeks prior to registration | | Institutional schedule meeting for final discussion (Schedule is downloaded, printed, and reviewed for accuracy at the meeting)<br><br>Make final recommended changes on the master **scheduling tool** | | VPAA/Associate, Deans, Student Affairs<br><br>Deans & Administrative Assistants/Associates |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 weeks prior to Registration | | Enter data into Colleague<br><br>Review Schedule for accuracy in Colleague against scheduling tool;<br>Student schedules are completed and sent to Student Affairs professionals as converted PDF files.<br><br>Faculty workloads are finalized. | | Administrative Assistants/Associates<br><br>VPAA/Associate, Deans, Student Affairs<br><br>Executive Associate |
| 1 week prior to registration | | Schedule goes live; send notification to registrar. | | Executive Associate |
| Schedule Live forward<br><br>*See Class Cancellation Procedures | | All changes to the schedule must be presented to the Office of the VPAA on the Schedule Change Form; VPAA will review and approve.<br><br>Make changes in Colleague, log all changes, update the Course **Scheduling Tool** and **Workload** document, notify the Dean, Chair, instructor, Administrative Assistant, and the Director of Recruitment and Enrollment (as well as any other impacted parties – i.e. Extension Center Coordinators, Registrar, etc. - of the outcome) | | Deans/VPAA<br><br>Executive Associate |

| **Change Log** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Description of Change** | **Governance Unit** |
| 03.28.24 | Initial Adoption | Academic Affairs |
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