



Senate

Paper Title	Timetabling improvements
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the communication that has been circulated to schools in the faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QMSE has approved a number of changes to the process by which the teaching timetable is constructed. • The timetable will be determined by student choice and staff availability, together with the availability of teaching space and soft constraints based on student experience. • These improvements will require some changes to current processes, including the schools' submission of programme and module availability earlier in the process, together with student module selection taking place earlier in the year. • It will be necessary to collect data on staff availability. ARCS will enter the data into the system but this will require the cooperation of schools and institutes to ensure that the collection process is managed fairly and reflects existing local arrangements. • In order to mitigate the challenges of these earlier deadlines, the deadline for submitting details of assessment changes will now be much later in the process. This change has been introduced following feedback from schools on this issue.
Questions for Senate to consider	Is Senate content with the revisions to the timetable process for 2018-19? Do members have any additional comments in relation to the proposals?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	n/a
Strategy and risk	n/a
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	n/a
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Sponsor	n/a

Dear all

As part of the work under way for *Going for Gold*, and following on from the Student Processes Improvement Project, QMSE has recommended a number of improvements to the timetabling process for schools in Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering.

The rationale for these changes is to ensure the student is at the heart of the process, with the aim of creating clash-free timetables that are more reflective of student preferences.

How will this be done?

Current timetabling practice is to allocate students to teaching activities after the scheduling has been completed. This means that when once students have chosen their modules they may experience any of the following issues:

- Long gaps between sessions, or, too many consecutive hours of teaching without a break.
- Intensive, compact timetables spread across few days, or, timetables that require attendance on campus for just one hour each day.
- Timetable clashes, where chosen module combinations are not possible.

In order to address these issues we aim to free the timetable of set times for teaching activities and instead use student module selections and teaching staff availability as the basis for timetable generation. Constraints on the availability of teaching staff will of course be respected, however the specific timings of sessions will be determined by student and staff availability, the availability of suitable teaching space and weighted soft constraints designed to steer timetables closer towards student preferences.

In order to put student choice at the heart of the teaching timetable, we will require students to make their module selections in advance of its construction. This in turn will require amendments to existing timeframes for schools to approve and confirm aspects of their programmes and modules offered in the next academic year.

In response to earlier feedback, the deadline by which schools must confirm changes to assessment criteria has been extended significantly in order to allow more time for schools to make the majority of changes that are processed each year. The separation of the tasks of confirming module availability and the confirmation of assessment details should then enable schools to confirm the former much earlier in the cycle.

Please see below for the revised timings for key tasks as confirmed by QMSE:

Task	Current Deadline	Revised Deadline
Schools to confirm programme, module and diet changes (proposals, amendments and withdrawals - including module availability), before module registration commences. Requests for changes to assessment not required until 1.8.19 (see below)	01 February 2019	14 December 2018
Students to make module pre-selections	29 April – 14 June	11 March -12 April
Schools to confirm module selections	29 April – 28 July	11 March -12 April
Schools to confirm assessment changes (if relevant)	01 February 2019	01 August 2019

Further information relating to the changes to timetabling and module selection procedures will be circulated in due course. These will build on the outcomes of the Student Processes Improvement Project in which students, schools and institutes are already fully involved.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact your school representative in the Academic Secretariat should you have any queries relating to the changes outlined above. If it would be helpful to contact or request a meeting with David Boyle (Timetable), Katherine Bevan (Academic Model) or me, do please get in touch.

With best wishes,

Jane Pallant
Deputy Academic Registrar