

CLASSROOM SCHEDULING POLICIES
APPROVED BY THE DEANS AND PROVOST ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2014
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
HATTIESBURG CAMPUS

In 2013 Provost Denis Wiesenburg appointed a University Classroom Scheduling Task Force to develop a draft copy of scheduling policies and procedures for the Hattiesburg campus. Members of the Classroom Scheduling Task Force included the following:

- Arts and Letters – Jeanne Gillespie
- Business – Gwen Pate
- Education and Psychology – Thomas Lipscomb
- Health – Sue Hubble Burchell
- Nursing - Cathy Beasley and Sandra Bishop
- Science and Technology – Joyce Bennett and Kevin Sellers
- Provost Office – Cynthia Easterling, Chair of the Task Force
- Registrar’s Office – Debby Hill and Lem Boyer

The University Classroom Scheduling Task Force submitted a draft copy of the policies to the Provost in August 2013. Various academic administrative groups reviewed the draft policies along with historical schedule of classes and made final edits which were presented to the Provost. The deans and Provost Wiesenburg approved the final copy on September 8, 2014.

Overview

The primary purpose of the facilities at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is to carry out the educational mission of the University. Effective class and classroom scheduling is critical to the academic mission of the University. These procedures enable students to take classes they need in a timely manner and contribute to on-going cost containment efforts through efficient space utilization and good stewardship of our valuable institutional resources.

Space policies and procedures for each of USM’s campuses are independent of each other due to the varying facilities and teaching sites. The policy outlined in this document is exclusive to the Hattiesburg campus.

This policy has been developed jointly by the Office of the Provost, a Scheduling Task Force made up of college representatives, and the Office of the Registrar to ensure that both classes and classrooms are scheduled efficiently to support the needs of students, faculty and the institution as a whole. All units are strongly encouraged to refer to this policy when planning classes or events that require the use of classrooms.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set priorities for academic space usage, define scheduling procedures, and outline guidelines for use of instructional space that will maximize efficiency in use of instructional space while attempting to maintain course offerings that enable students to

get course schedules that will meet program requirements and enhance their ability to graduate.

Statement of Institutional Goals for Academic Space

To optimize the use of academic space on the USM Hattiesburg campus, several areas of concern must be kept in mind as academic space is requested for use:

Improve Utilization and Management of Instructional Space:

The Provost created a task force to study the current class scheduling practices used by the Office of the Registrar and others on campus.

Enhance Student's Ability to Get Schedules Necessary for Graduation

The primary goal of the Academic Scheduling Process is to maximize the probability that students have conflict-free schedule to allow timely graduation while minimizing operating and capital costs.

Decrease Energy Consumption:

Throughout the year, faculty and staff should make efforts to reduce energy costs using recommended strategies (e.g., turning off lights, closing windows, etc.). Particularly during the summer and mini sessions, efforts should be made to limit classroom usage in designated buildings or sections of buildings whenever possible to reduce energy costs.

Guiding Principles for Scheduling

1. As with all types of space on the Hattiesburg campus, classroom space is a valuable resource that belongs to the University. The Provost is the steward of instructional space and is responsible for ensuring that this space supports the academic needs of the University.
2. Deans, directors, department chairs and the University Registrar are responsible for ensuring that all classrooms are scheduled efficiently.
3. All general lecture classrooms need to be shared to support the broader teaching and learning needs of the university.
4. Classrooms and other instructional spaces may be allocated to individual departments, but the assignments are not considered permanent. The space may be reallocated as the needs, priorities, and demands of the department/unit, college, or University change.
5. Credit-bearing courses, their exams, and required class events have scheduling priority over all other activities that require the use of classrooms.
6. Due to limited space, final exams will be given in the same room assignment as the class unless prior arrangements are made at the beginning of the term for an alternate location and time.
7. All units are strongly encouraged to plan and distribute classes across all days of the week (Mon-Fri) and all hours of the day as much as possible to maximize use of campus classrooms and minimize class conflicts for students.

8. IHL guidelines stipulate that sections should have a minimum of 750 contact minutes (including the exam period) per credit hour received. For example, a 3-credit hour course should have a minimum of 2250 contact minutes per term. Some classes may meet more than the required minimum in order to accommodate various accreditation standards and course formats.
9. Time patterns are the configurations of days and hours to be used in setting up the Schedule of Classes. If a standard set of patterns is selected, with compatible starting and ending times, schedules will fit together more easily. If patterns are dissimilar, more conflicts will occur within a given academic week.

Scheduling Distribution Goal

1. Departments must schedule all multiple lecture and laboratory sections so that student course enrollments will be distributed approximately equally between mornings and afternoons and between the different meeting patterns (TTH vs. MWF).
2. Departments/colleges will have the ability to schedule in rooms they manage first. After this, the Registrar's office will utilize all available classrooms to assist other departments in need of space.
3. Departments must strictly adhere to the approved standard set of time patterns when scheduling course offerings.
4. Because the regular standard meeting lengths are in 50- and 75-minute time blocks, courses offered during non-standard times should be offered in multiples of these times to avoid end times that preclude students from registering for courses that may follow the standard section. For example, one non-standard time on Tuesday and another section at the same time on Thursday.
5. Classroom enrollment and room capacities should be based on the actual enrollment trends over the past few years to ensure a realistic estimate of room needs and proper seat and room assignments. Room capacities will be reviewed each semester by the Office of the Provost in collaboration with the colleges and departments to ensure that actual instructional capacities for each room are assessed.
6. Departments should strive for 80% seat utilization, i.e., on average the number of students enrolled in a class divided by the instructional seating capacity of the room that class is in should be greater than or equal to 80%.
7. Prime-time hours are between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and between 9:30 am and 2:15 pm on Tuesday and Thursday. Departments should strive to provide students a variety of options of course offerings throughout the scheduling week by utilizing non-primetime hours.

Approved Meeting Patterns

Regular (Full-term) courses:

Fall/Spring Semester

MWF CLASSES	START	END
	8:00 a.m.	8:50 a.m.
	9:00 a.m.	9:50 a.m.
	10:00 a.m.	10:50 a.m.
	11:00 a.m.	11:50 a.m.
	12:00 p.m.	12:50 p.m.
	1:00 p.m.	1:50 p.m.
MW CLASSES	2:00 p.m.	3:15 p.m.
	3:30 p.m.	4:45 p.m.
	5:00 p.m.	6:15 p.m.
	6:30 p.m.	7:45 p.m.
	8:00 p.m.	9:15 p.m.
TTH CLASSES	8:00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.
	9:30 a.m.	10:45 a.m.
	11:00 a.m.	12:15 p.m.
	1:00 p.m.	2:15 p.m.
	2:25 p.m.	3:40 p.m.
	3:50 p.m.	5:05 p.m.
	5:10 p.m.	6:25 p.m.
	6:30 p.m.	7:45 p.m.
	8:00 p.m.	9:15 p.m.
FRI AFTERNOON	2:00 p.m.	2:50 p.m.
	3:00 p.m.	3:50 p.m.
	4:00 p.m.	4:50 p.m.
SAT CLASSES	9:00 a.m.	11:45 a.m.
	1:00 p.m.	3:45 p.m.
NIGHT CLASSES	6:30 p.m.	9:15 p.m.

Summer Semester

MWF CLASSES	START	END
	8:00 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
	9:40 a.m.	11:10 a.m.
	11:20 a.m.	12:50 p.m.
	1:00 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
	2:40 p.m.	4:10 p.m.
	4:20 p.m.	5:50 p.m.
MW CLASSES	6:00 p.m.	8:05 p.m.
	8:05 p.m.	10:10 pm

TTH CLASSES	8:00 a.m.	10:10 a.m.
	10:20 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
	12:40 p.m.	2:50 p.m.
	3:00 p.m.	5:10 p.m.
	6:00 p.m.	8:05 p.m.
	8:05 p.m.	10:10p.m.
SAT CLASSES	8:00 a.m.	12:45 p.m.
	1:00 p.m.	5:45 p.m.
NIGHT CLASSES	6:00 p.m.	10:10 p.m.

8W1/8W 2 – (Half Semester) Courses:

Half semester courses (8w1/8w2 – fall/spring or 5w1/5w2 – summer) meet on a ‘double’ timeframe by meeting every day of the week or two periods consecutively.

Fall/Spring Semester

MWF CLASSES	START	END
	8:00 a.m.	9:50 a.m.
	10:00 a.m.	11:50 a.m.
	12:00 p.m.	1:50 p.m.
MW CLASSES	2:00 p.m.	4:45 p.m.
	5:00 p.m.	7:45 p.m.
TTH CLASSES	8:00 a.m.	10:45 p.m.
	11:00 a.m.	12:30 p.m. <u>AND</u>
	1:00 p.m.	2:15 p.m.
	2:25 p.m.	5:05 p.m.
	5:10 p.m.	7:45 p.m.

Note: Depending on the calendar year, the 8w1 and/or 8w2 courses may need to meet on a regularly scheduled holiday to meet contact minutes. Please refer to the Academic Calendar at www.usm.edu/registrar

5W1/5W2 – (Half-Semester) Courses:

Summer Semester:

Summer classes can meet either every day of the week using the schedule above OR can meet a double period as shown below to meet contact minutes.

MWF CLASSES	START	END
	8:00 a.m.	11:10 a.m.
	11:20 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
	2:40 p.m.	5:50 p.m.
TTH CLASSES	8:00 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
	12:40 p.m.	5:10 p.m.

Mini Session Courses:

Mini session courses are offered before each term begins and count as a part of a student’s academic load for the term it precedes.

2-week	START	END
	8:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.
	1:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.

Block Schedule Courses:

Block scheduling is advantageous within some degree programs; however, the programs that use block scheduling should arrange blocks that use approved meeting patterns. Classroom meeting times will be reviewed each semester by the Office of the Provost in collaboration with the colleges and departments to ensure that the University provides opportunities for students to complete degree programs in a timely manner while allowing the University to utilize space in an efficient manner.

Block scheduled courses must start on the regularly scheduled meeting times in order to prevent room and schedule conflicts. To utilize space efficiently when using block-scheduled courses, departments should schedule appropriate block times on corresponding days of the week [i.e., Monday 8:00 am – 10:45 am and Wednesday, 8:00 am – 10:45 am. (See Appendix 1 for details)].

M, W, F CLASSES (one day each week)	START	END
	8:00 a.m.	10:45 a.m.
	11:00 a.m.	1:45 p.m.
	2:00 p.m.	4:45 p.m.
T, TH CLASSES (one day each week)	8:00 a.m.	10:45 a.m.
	1:00 p.m.	3:45 p.m.

Alternative Scheduled (CE1) Courses:

Classes that meet within a term but on an irregular weekly basis are coded as CE1 sessions but still must adhere to contact-minute guidelines. Departments are responsible for ensuring that irregular meeting times comply with contact minutes by utilizing various instructional modes such as online, chat, IVN, etc. These courses usually do not fall into standard meeting patterns and MUST be coordinated with the Registrar’s Office for the most appropriate classroom assignment.

Classroom Scheduling Strategies

1. The purpose of using Ad Astra scheduling software is for maximum space utilization and efficient room usage. The Registrar's Office will assist the colleges with space utilization reports and other data to allow for evidence-based scheduling for future terms.
2. Colleges need to provide written justification for "restricted" rooms. Some room restrictions are acceptable based on room type, such as Laboratories, Studios, and Conference rooms. However, written justification to the Provost must be requested when changing the purpose of all Lecture, Lab/Lecture, Auditorium, Starboard, and Seminar rooms. The Provost will determine if the restriction is warranted.
3. Highly Visible Undergraduate Classrooms (HVUC) will not be restricted to any departments. However, priority scheduling to a specific department may be given by the Provost for some HVUC rooms.
4. The Provost grants the Registrar's Office authority to arrange the transfer of a class in which the enrollment is low and could be moved to a smaller classroom to allow a larger class to be scheduled in the room, if done in consultation with the appropriate departments.
5. Once-per-week classes can start at any of the standard start times. Once-per-week classes that start prior to 3:00pm, however, should be paired according to one of the two-day per week patterns (MW, TTH) indicated above. For example, a Monday class starting at 2:00pm should be balanced by a Wednesday class starting in the same period.
6. Auditoriums are very limited; therefore, classes with enrollment capacities of 100 or greater must meet during standard meeting patterns and should strive for a minimum seat fill of 80% to retain the use of the room.
7. Classes that have five unique meeting patterns or less must coordinate times and locations that will best suit the overall schedule.

Schedule Entry Procedures

1. In October, after Executive Cabinet has approved the upcoming academic calendar, the Registrar's Office will copy the last summer and current fall terms forward to the next like terms. At that time departments will be notified of schedule entry availability via the Deptchrssec listserv and the Registrar's website. In early May, the current spring schedule will be copied forward to the future spring term. See the Timeline for Schedule Entry in Appendix 2 for complete details.
2. The Registrar's Office will offer training sessions for departmental schedulers in October. A one-time training session is required for departmental access.
3. Once schedule entry opens in October, the departments will be able to adjust offerings, days, times, rooms, instructors, etc.
4. Schedule entry will be closed approximately one month PRIOR to pre-registration for the term in order for students and advisors to establish a schedule during advisement.

After schedule entry has closed, the Registrar's Office will assist in assigning classrooms throughout campus based upon enrollment and availability.

5. Once schedule entry for the term(s) has expired, Change of Schedule forms with the appropriate signatures to the Registrar's Office will be required to adjust the class schedule.
6. Once registration has begun, Change of Schedules for sections with students enrolled should be in extreme cases and will require justification, student impact, etc. with the approval through the appropriate Academic Dean.

Other Points Regarding Classroom Use

Cancellation of Classroom Space

The University Registrar's Office should be notified immediately if the scheduled room(s) is no longer required so allocation of the space may be granted to alternate users.

Changes in Classroom Assignments

Departments must coordinate with the departmental scheduler and the Registrar's Office in the event a change in classroom assignment is needed after the term has started. Recording changes in classroom assignment ensures accurate reporting and proper notification in case of emergencies. Instructors should not assume that because a classroom is empty that the room is available.

Classroom Capacity

Classroom capacities are determined by fire marshal codes. Furniture in classrooms should not be removed from classrooms since it affects all sections and gives the false impression that the official room capacities are incorrect. Seating capacities should be checked at the beginning of each term by the Building Liaison and any adjustments need to be emailed to the Registrar's Office in order to maintain accurate reporting data and assignments.

Classroom Custodial Servicing

Classrooms should be left orderly and food and drink should not be allowed in instructional spaces. Leaving the classroom 'better than you found it' for the next user also reduces expenses for non-scheduled cleaning. Any deficiencies in the classroom environment should be reported to the Building liaison and the Physical Plant.

See appendices on pages 9 and 10

Appendix 1 – Regular and Block Meeting Patterns

FALL or SPRING REGULAR AND BLOCK STANDARD MEETING PATTERNS

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
8:00 - 8:50 am	8:00 - 10:45 am	8:00 - 9:15 am	8:00 - 10:45 am	8:00 - 8:50 am	8:00 - 10:45 am	8:00 - 9:15 am	8:00 - 10:45 am	8:00 - 8:50 am	8:00 - 10:45 am
9:00 - 9:50 am				9:00 - 9:50 am				9:00 - 9:50 am	
10:00 - 10:50 am		9:30 - 10:45 am		10:00 - 10:50 am		9:30 - 10:45 am		10:00 - 10:50 am	
11:00 - 11:50 am	11:00 - 1:45 pm	11:00 - 12:15 p.m		11:00 - 11:50 am	11:00 - 1:45 pm	11:00 - 12:15 p.m		11:00 - 11:50 am	11:00 - 1:45 pm
12:00 - 12:50 pm		12:15 - 1:00 pm No class		12:00 - 12:50 pm		12:15 - 1:00 pm No class		12:00 - 12:50 pm	
1:00 - 1:50 pm		1:00 - 2:15 pm	1:00 - 3:45 pm	1:00 - 1:50 pm		1:00 - 2:15 pm	1:00 - 3:45 pm	1:00 - 1:50 pm	
2:00 - 3:15 pm	2:00 - 4:45 pm	2:25 - 3:45 pm		2:00 - 3:15 pm	2:00 - 4:45 pm	2:25 - 3:45 pm		2:00 - 2:50 pm	2:00 - 4:45 pm
3:30 - 4:45 pm		3:50 - 5:05 pm		3:30 - 4:45 pm		3:50 - 5:05 pm		3:00 - 3:50 pm	
5:00 - 6:15 pm		5:10 - 6:25 pm		5:00 - 6:15 pm		5:10 - 6:25 pm			
6:30 - 9:15 pm		6:30 - 7:45 pm		6:30 - 7:45 pm		6:30 - 7:45 pm			
8:00 pm - 9:15 pm		8:00 - 9:15 pm		8:00 pm - 9:15 pm		8:00 - 9:15 pm			

Classes with a block schedule is for a class meeting only one day per week. To maintain contact minutes, the class would have to meet 14 times during the term.

Timeline for Class Schedule Entry

- Schedule entry by departments should be complete a minimum of one month PRIOR to pre-registration for that term.

