



University  
of Glasgow

# Space Management and Timetabling: Communication and Engagement Plan 2021

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## **1. Objectives**

The objective of the SMTT Communication and Engagement Plan is to support the adoption of business processes and activity relating to timetabling in line with the University's objectives in relation to the effective management and utilisation of its estate and to enable the University to realise the benefits of this investment.

To achieve this, we will:

- Implement a methodology for active stakeholder engagement
- Support preparatory and transition activities in readiness for the adoption of central systems and common processes, where required
- Develop and implement a training plan to support and equip staff as users of CMIS
- Implement a communications plan, using appropriate channels to target and engage all relevant audiences
- Design and deploy a devolved support model which ensures for prompt and effective resolution of queries and enhances the knowledge and skills of all staff involved in timetabling and space management
- Ensure the creation and maintenance of documentation and resources to support staff in their effective use of CMIS
- Ensure responsibility and accountability for delivery of activity within the Plan is clearly identified and agreed.
- Work with colleagues on the modelling of timetables and space to encourage improved utilisation and to inform the Estate Development Strategy.

Further, through this activity we will support the effective management and utilisation of all space.

## **2. The role of the Space Management & Timetabling Team (SMTT)**

The SMTT is the designated business owner for the timetabling and room booking processes. In this role they are responsible for:

- Ensuring the timely allocation of suitable teaching space to support the production of student and staff timetables
- Managing changes to the timetable by reallocating space, changing room configurations or updating associated data
- Responding to requests for ad hoc room bookings throughout the year and scheduling this

- Development of resources – user guides, info for local support teams, etc.
- Delivery of training and user support (e.g. via drop-in sessions)
- User support – responding to queries and requests submitted via the UofG Helpdesk
- Liaison with stakeholders to ensure adoption of the timetabling processes and review progress against scheduled activity – including the identification of common problems and trends which may result in suggestions for developments/enhancements in system, process or communications
- Review & evaluation – contributing to the regular review of key business processes relating to timetabling
- Identifying opportunities for improvements to processes and leading the implementation of such
- Supporting external partners, particularly those in shared locations, in their use of University timetabling and room booking systems where appropriate
- Supporting the strategic management of space, including informing planning for maintenance, refurbishment and new build.

### 3. Communications Plan

The communications plan for SMTT covers three aspects, each of which is described below.

a) **Routine communications:** this includes use of the SMTT website and reporting to identified stakeholder groups.

Production of routine communications is detailed in an annual schedule which will ensure regular and timely updates on all aspects of timetabling (see [Timetabling and Space Management](#) webpage).

The SMTT website is the main repository for user resources including checklists, training materials, training schedule and user guides.

Reports on required activities and progress against these are generated on a regular basis and issued to stakeholders.

b) **Ad hoc communications:** as and when required, individuals or groups of users and/or stakeholders will be contacted with additional information, alerts or exceptions relating to timetabling activity. This will usually be managed via email, although University systems such as Spotlight may also be used where the message relates to system availability.

c) **Face to Face contact:** to provide for direct engagement and support effective 2-way communications we will meet regularly with defined stakeholder groups. These will be led by the Manager of SMTT with members of the SMTT and other teams (e.g. SLSD) attending as required.

We are committed to ensuring that all our communications are clear, simple and, as far as possible, jargon-free.

## 4. Stakeholder Engagement

In determining the approach to stakeholder engagement due consideration has been given to previous experience, feedback from colleagues and the needs of users. The approach recognises:

- the need to clearly establish where accountability lies for delivery across various areas in the University so that the staff involved have the necessary accountability/authority to ensure agreed procedures are fully adopted;
- that communication lines that pass information to and from the SMTT need to be established in a way that ensures information reaches the appropriate individuals in a timely manner and that individuals are clear on who to contact either within the SMTT or within the College/School/RI and partner organisations;
- due priority be given to communication and engagement with the user community, with input and feedback being properly acknowledged and responded to;
- that training must be provided in a timely manner, using consistent content, and appropriate support mechanisms are in place to assist users.

To this end the following engagement activities will be undertaken:

- a) A named member of the SMTT will be assigned to each College as their primary point of contact;
- b) Annual meeting with College/School/Institute managers (e.g. HoASA, HoPS, HoRIAs, Lead Timetablers) to agree timetabling activity and support arrangements for the year and to confirm accountability and resource availability;
- c) Virtually delivered support (March – April) to work with STTs on preparation, timetabling, data quality and local requirements;
- d) Regular meetings with lead staff in partner organisations to support their timetabling and space management activities;
- e) Exception reports produced as required where it is identified that either there is a risk of the work not being completed within the required timeframe or an issue has arisen which may impact progress;

- f) Development of a suite of reports available to designated staff on various aspects of timetabling and space utilisation;
- g) Review meeting with stakeholders following the start of teaching each year to evaluate the effectiveness of the process and identify any areas for improvement;
- h) Regular meetings with the Students Representative Council officers to ensure the student experience is understood and taken account of in planning and service delivery;
- i) Regular meetings with the Management of Teaching Space group to provide oversight of timetabling and space management;
- j) Regular meetings with Catering & Events and Development & Alumni to ensure their requirements for space are understood and to collaborate on the effective use of space to meet the various and differing needs of the business;
- k) Routine liaison with colleagues in ITS, AV-IT, Estates Directorate and Bedellus Office to ensure effective planning and enhance service delivery.

## 5. Training Plan

### 5.1 Audiences and Demand

There are 2 categories of user who will need to be trained:

*Existing Users* who will require:

- Annual updates on changes and requirements
- Training in new/changed functionality or processes
- Customised training (e.g. individual assistance in specific areas)

*New Users* who will require comprehensive training. This may include staff such as:

- Employees returning from leave (e.g. maternity, sabbatical, long term absence)
- Back-fill or temporary staff
- Staff changing roles
- New recruitment

### 5.2 Approach to Delivery

A number of different approaches will be needed to meet anticipated demand within the resource available and to reflect the differing needs of the audiences identified. This will range from intensive 1:1 coaching for individuals returning to work, through conventional 'classroom' style training, to on-line self-directed learning and drop-in sessions.

The full range of options will be provided, with refresher training being scheduled annually in advance of the main timetabling activity being undertaken.

Arrangements for the delivery of 1:1 coaching will need to be discussed with the SMTT Manager as and when the demand for this arises (e.g. for staff returning from extended absence). It is anticipated that much of this will be delivered by the assigned SMTT staff working with Schools March to April.

A timetable for training will be published in January each year.

Collaboration between the SMTT and the MSDI team in the development and delivery of training and the production of guidance materials will be essential in meeting both our own objectives and user expectations of comprehensive training which covers the end-to-end process.

Staff will be required to have completed relevant training prior to being given access to update CMIS. Within the SMTT we will maintain appropriate records and tracking mechanisms in order to ensure users have completed relevant training.

### **5.3 Resources and Documentation**

A full suite of training materials, user guides (both detailed and summary versions), including video resources, will be made available to users via the SMTT website.

These materials will be subject to regular review and update in the light both of user feedback and further enhancements to either the system or underpinning business process in order to ensure they remain current and relevant to users.

## **6. Operational Support Model**

Operational support for CMIS and timetabling is delivered through a devolved model which sees the involvement of staff across the University according to their expertise and/or responsibilities. We adopt a 3 level approach (see below), in line with good practice in the delivery of user support.

The success of this model is dependent upon having suitably trained, knowledgeable and experienced staff available to provide timely support, particularly during peak periods.

We use the UofG Helpdesk as the primary channel for reporting problems and submitting queries in relation to CMIS and timetabling. Consistent use of this channel provides significant management and operational benefits, including:

- Staff working on the call can view the whole call history
- Trends and common issues can be identified, allowing for consideration of remedial action (e.g. further guidance; revised processes)
- Standard responses to common queries and issues can be created and used consistently

- Enquiries are not 'lost' as they are transferred around the business by email, phone or 'post-it' note
- Routing all enquiries through one system also simplifies the messaging to staff and enables the University to gain a more accurate picture of the amount of resource devoted to enquiry management and support activity.

### ***3 level approach***

All calls will be routed to the first point of contact which is determined, based on the subcategory associated with the call, as the team who has direct responsibility for and knowledge of the subject or function.

Calls may then be reassigned in line with the 3 levels described below in order that the problem is fully resolved.

- a. Level 1 – routine enquiries requiring a standard response, handled at first point of contact in the business
- b. Level 2 – requiring individual intervention/response, potentially by a more senior member of staff or designated 'expert'
- c. Level 3 – problems which cannot be resolved within the business and need to be referred to the system supplier

## **7. Review and Evaluation**

The impact and effectiveness of this communication and engagement plan will be reviewed informally on an ongoing basis in the light of feedback from members of the team, users and stakeholders. This may result in additional actions being agreed and planned activities being adjusted.

There will be a formal review conducted annually each autumn and the outcomes of this will be reflected in a revised plan which will be published in January each year.

The SMTT Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating this review and producing a report including any recommendations for change or improvement.