



# Room Booking and Usage Policy

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# Room Booking and Usage Policy

## Summary and Overview

### Introduction

- 1.1. The Timetabling and Room Booking Team (TRBT) has responsibility for the preparation of the University's teaching timetable and the management and oversight of the process for the booking of University teaching space for non-teaching activity<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 Purpose and Scope

- 2.1. The Room Bookings and Usage Policy (hereafter 'the policy') applies across the University. Its purpose is to ensure that the process for the booking and use of University teaching space for activities outside the teaching timetable supports the University's mission relating to excellence in education and excellence in research, and is undertaken in a way that ensures the most effective use of University space while meeting the needs of the wide range of University stakeholders and allows the University to fulfil its full range of obligations. In particular, the policy aims to:
  - i. contribute to the University's institutional mission in relation to excellence in education and excellence in research by ensuring the highest possible satisfaction among students and staff regarding room bookings and usage, especially by ensuring a smooth transition between the use of rooms for teaching and non-teaching activity and safeguarding the highest possible priority for research alongside teaching
  - ii. manage the balance between timetabled teaching events and other events that need to take place on the University's campuses for a variety of purposes
  - iii. provide the highest levels of space-related services to the University community

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<sup>1</sup> Separate arrangements are in place at the Loughton campus for the management of room bookings. For the purposes of this policy, TRBT refers to the equivalent teams with room booking responsibility across the University.

- iv. optimise the utilisation of space, in particular for teaching and research, but also for other purposes such as University-wide events and income generating activities, such as conferencing and events management
- 2.1. The preparation of the University's teaching timetable is managed by a separate Timetabling Policy. The Rooms Bookings and Usage Policy should be read in conjunction with the Timetabling Policy and the University's General Regulations as published in the University Calendar.

## **Definitions**

### **3 Teaching**

- 3.1. For the purposes of this policy, the definition of teaching is an event that is associated with an approved module, which contributes to a course leading to an award of the University. For the purposes of this policy, academic activities that do not fall within this definition are not considered to be teaching.

### **4 Room Bookings**

- 4.1. For the purposes of this policy, activities that do not fall within the definition of teaching are considered to be ad hoc room bookings (hereafter "room bookings"). This Policy also covers ad hoc bookings of foyers, alcoves and other spaces within the University's precincts that may be used for University functions or events.

### **5 Teaching Space**

- 5.1. For the purposes of this policy, teaching space refers to space allocated centrally by the Space Management Group to TRBT for teaching use which is recorded as such on Facility CMIS. Unless otherwise stated, throughout the policy, the reference to room bookings refers to bookings within this centrally allocated teaching space.

### **6 Students' Union Student Groups**

- 6.1. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'Students' Union Student Groups' refers to Students' Union clubs and societies, including sports clubs, and course representatives.

# Policy

## 7 General

- 7.1. During the teaching day<sup>2</sup>, teaching, as defined in paragraph 3.1 of this policy, takes priority for the use of all teaching space.
- 7.2. Rooms not required for teaching may be booked by University and Students' Union staff and Students' Union Student Groups validated by the Students' Union. Room bookings can only be made in line with the published procedure using the appropriate booking form and process, as determined by TRBT. All room bookings are subject to use in accordance with the University's General Regulations as published in the University Calendar.
- 7.3. No room bookings are made in any teaching space until the final teaching timetable has been published in accordance with the Timetabling Policy. In the period before the teaching timetable is published, room bookings may only be made with the express permission of the Registrar and Secretary. Such bookings will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where they relate to significant events in support of the University's mission.
- 7.4. Activities relating to research activity, core and annual University events and functions, such as and including Graduation, Examinations, departmental meetings and events, student recruitment activity, the Annual Meeting and Summer Reception and meetings of Council and Senate and their Committees, and core Students' Union activities related the Students' Union's constitutional and legal obligations, are allocated rooms before other room bookings may be made.
- 7.5. After teaching and other core University activities described under paragraph 7.4, priority for room bookings is given to emergency event re-locations and planned general maintenance.
- 7.6. Activities managed by Event Essex, including summer schools, take priority once bookings made in relation to paragraphs 7.1, 7.4 and 7.5 are made. Arrangements are put in place to enable Event Essex to plan effectively, including permitting future bookings for the use of space beyond the current academic year<sup>3</sup>. Any bookings made for future academic years are provisional and are subject to paragraphs 7.1, 7.4 and 7.5.
- 7.7. All room bookings that do not fall into the categories described under paragraphs 7.1 and 7.3 to 7.6 are made on a first-come, first-serve basis. The policy recognises the wide range of

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<sup>2</sup> As defined by the Timetabling Policy.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of the policy, the academic year runs from 1 October to 30 September.

educational provision undertaken but which is not related to a teaching event of the University and room bookings for such provision are made on a first-come, first-serve basis.

- 7.8. Decisions on priority for room bookings are not made by the TRBT and are referred to the Registrar and Secretary where agreement cannot be reached. The Registrar and Secretary's decision is final.
- 7.9. To ensure that all teaching is recorded accurately in the teaching timetable and student attendance is recorded appropriately, room bookings must not be used for teaching events.
- 7.10. Rooms booked by students, staff, or visitors in accordance with this policy are not to be used for any profit-making activities or commercial gain. To safeguard the University's reputation and ensure a consistent and high-quality experience, all external room bookings and all internal University events attracting a fee for attendance, or where there is a commercial element, are managed by Event Essex. Any bookings submitted to TRBT for such events will be referred to Event Essex automatically. Where a booking is requested by a Students' Union Student Group, validated by the Students' Union, and there is confirmation from the Students' Union that any charges associated with the event will not result in profit or commercial gain, and are made to cover costs and/or for fundraising purposes, the booking will be made without referral to Event Essex. Where the circumstances of an event or booking require it and/or where clarification is needed on whether any booking or event falls within the definition of an event requiring a charge, it is referred to the Registrar and Secretary or nominee for a final decision.
- 7.11. All events involving external speakers are required to adhere to the Policy on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech, the Speaker Code of Practice, and the University's policies and procedures regarding
  - i. the management of external speakers, and
  - ii. associated legal obligations, including those related to the safeguarding of students, staff, visitors, and members of the public.

It is the responsibility of anyone booking a room to familiarise themselves with relevant policies and procedures to meet these requirements.

- 7.12. Any event that may have attendees under the age of 18 is required to adhere with guidance on the Event Safety University webpage:

For staff: [Event safety | University of Essex](#)

For students: [Event safety | University of Essex](#)

- 7.13. All users of University rooms that fall within the auspices of the policy are required to act responsibly and consider the impact of bookings on other users. Room bookings must not be

- i. made to provide additional 'cover' space in case it is needed,
- ii. used as an alternative space for teaching, particularly where space allocated for a teaching event is not deemed appropriate,
- iii. be block booked or booked for more hours than are required. Where this is found to be occurring, TRBT reserves the right to remove or alter a booking.

- 7.14. Rooms are allocated based on the expected attendance provided at the time of booking, nature of the event and room capacity.
- 7.15. Although every effort is made to ensure all needs are met as far as possible, requests for specific named individual rooms cannot be guaranteed.
- 7.16. Where audio visual equipment or other equipment is required during the period of the booking, it is the responsibility of the person booking the room to liaise directly with the appropriate Professional Service team to organise the required equipment.
- 7.17. To manage space effectively and ensure requirements are balanced as far as possible, TRBT reserves the right to move or amend a booking following confirmation of the original booking, taking into account any specialist requirements.
- 7.18. Details of an event must not be publicised until a room booking is confirmed.
- 7.19. It is the event organiser's responsibility to ensure they and other room users familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation procedures provided in the room.
- 7.20. Bookings commence on the hour and rooms must be vacated by the times specified in the room booking confirmation, allowing ten minutes before the hour, for changeover at the end of the session.
- 7.21. A condition of a booking is that where it is no longer required, it must be cancelled to ensure the room is available for another booking.
- 7.22. The Registrar and Secretary may revoke or terminate any room booking at any time in order to protect the health and safety of University students, staff and visitors.
- 7.23. No compulsory segregation may be required in any room booking without written permission of the Registrar and Secretary.
- 7.24. The Registrar and Secretary may at any time nominate an individual to deputise on his or her behalf in relation to any aspect of the policy.

## 8 Students' Union Student Groups

- 8.1. All provisions of this policy apply to Students' Union Student Groups validated by the Students' Union, noting paragraph 7.7 above, in addition to the following paragraphs.
- 8.2. Room booking requests are not accepted from individual students unless being made on behalf of a Students' Union Student Group validated by the Students' Union, its officers and part-time officers or the Students' Union's Faculty representatives. The president or registered official (as determined by the Students' Union) of a recognised Students' Union Student Group or other representative may request a room in accordance with the published procedure and by giving at least two working days' notice.
- 8.3. Students' Union Student Groups inviting an external speaker or attracting an audience that will include individuals from outside the University's staff or students are required to (i) give at least 15 working days' notice; and (ii) receive security clearance, in accordance with the published procedure. In this context, an external speaker should be present to speak on the business of the Students' Union Student Group and requires approval from the Students' Union. All events involving external speakers are required to adhere to the provisions described in paragraph 7.11. While every effort is made to support requests that are not able to provide the full 15 day requirements, the booking may not be possible if 15 days' notice is not given.
- 8.4. Room Bookings for Students' Union Student Groups are made after the publication of the final teaching timetable in September ahead of the forthcoming academic year.
- 8.5. On the Colchester campus, during term time, bookings are normally expected to commence outside teaching hours and be restricted to Monday to Friday (18.00 – 23.00). It is at TRBT discretion whether a booking may take place before 18.00. Rooms may be booked over the weekend (9.00 to 23.00). Weekend bookings are only made in the LTB building and rooms off squares 3 and 4. All room booking requests out of term time must be referred through the Students' Union and are dependent on room availability. Such bookings may be made between 9.00 and 23.00. On the Southend campus, hours outside of teaching are up to 21.45 Monday to Saturday and up to 17.45 on Sundays for both The Forum and The Gateway Building. The Forum's Learning Hub is open 24/7.
- 8.6. On the Colchester campus, Students' Union Student Groups are not normally permitted in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall, Senate Room, and the Essex Business School. Any requests from Students' Union Student Groups for the use of this space are subject to approval by the Academic Registrar or their nominee based on the nature of the event and the impact on teaching. The decision of the Academic Registrar or their nominee is final. On the Southend campus, requests for the use of The Forum Lecture Theatre must be agreed in advance with the Campus Management Team.



## 9 Responsible Room Usage

- 9.1. The following paragraphs describe the University's expectations in relation to responsible room usage for all room bookings made by TRBT in accordance with this policy. TRBT reserves the right to restrict or refuse future bookings from anyone in breach of the policy in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.
- 9.2. A room must only be used for the purpose for which it has been booked, as specified at the time of booking.
- 9.3. A room must be vacated by the time specified at the confirmation of booking.
- 9.4. The event organiser is responsible for ensuring the appropriate risk assessments have been carried out in accordance with Estates Managements health and safety advice.
- 9.5. Where a large-scale event is planned, for more than 250 participants, it is the responsibility of event organiser to ensure the appropriate security risk assessments have been carried out.
- 9.6. To protect the health and safety of University students, staff and visitors, no rooms may be locked at any time during the period of a booking.
- 9.7. The number of people permitted to attend must not exceed the stated capacity of the room. Where the number of attendees for an event exceeds the room capacity after a booking has been made, the booking must be amended accordingly.
- 9.8. In accordance with the University's General Regulations, noise levels must be kept to a minimum at all times, especially during teaching hours. Events in neighbouring rooms and offices must be considered and respected at all times. In accordance with the Timetabling Policy, teaching may take place up until 19.00 (Monday to Friday). Those involved in activities in rooms booked after 18.00 are required to consider the impact on any teaching or other events that may be taking place nearby.
- 9.9. No food or drink, including alcohol, may be consumed in rooms, with the exception of bottled water and functions serviced by Hospitality Services or Wivenhoe House Hotel.
- 9.10. At the end of the booked period, rooms must be left clean, tidy, and free of rubbish and in a condition suitable for the primary function as teaching space. All catering equipment must either
  - i. be cleared, removed from the room, and left outside after the event in order to enable collection by Hospitality Services; or
  - ii. left in the room in as tidy a state as possible and in a manner that minimises disruption for any events taking place in the room subsequently.

- 9.11. Anyone making a room booking is responsible for ensuring that, where the standard layout is published in the room, it is returned to that layout if changes have been made during the booked period. If a special layout is required, this must be arranged with the appropriate Professional Service team after receiving confirmation of a booking. It is the responsibility of the person undertaking the booking to ensure there is adequate time within the booking to organise an appropriate layout and return the room to its original state. Failure to comply may result in portage charges and action in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.
- 9.12. In accordance with the University's General Regulations, furniture and equipment and other property owned by the University must not be moved within any building to another room or removed from any building without written permission from the Academic Registrar or their nominee.
- 9.13. Escape routes, fire exits, and fire extinguishers must not be blocked or obscured, and any items should not be stored on stairwells or near sources of heat or ignition.
- 9.14. Any faults or damage must be reported immediately in accordance with guidance issued by TRBT to enable the appropriate Professional Service team to resolve the matter.

## **10 Room use for activity relating to students formal and private study**

- 10.1. Students may request group study facilities or teaching spaces outside of provision made in the University libraries and social learning spaces. Requests should be within normal teaching hours and made directly via their Departmental or School Office or course representatives (to be booked via approved Students' Union staff members).
- 10.2. Students may use teaching computer cluster spaces and general teaching rooms for private study if the room is available and has not been booked for a formal teaching activity. Students must ensure they vacate rooms in adequate time as to not delay the start of the next scheduled booking or teaching event and must leave the room in a clean and orderly state. Students should observe any signage that states a room is in use for teaching and must not disturb closed teaching sessions in teaching computer clusters.

## **11 Requirements relating to specific areas of the University**

### **Colchester Campus**

- 11.1. Foyer and alcove spaces in the Tony Rich Teaching Centre, North Teaching Centre, Causeway Teaching Centre, Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall, LTB Building, Essex Business School and Silberrad Building may be used for events and activities as follows:

- i. Foyer and alcove bookings for static exhibitions and interactive stands supported by a maximum of two people may be made during the standard teaching day
  - ii. All other foyer and alcove bookings are expected to take place outside of the standard teaching day<sup>4</sup>
  - iii. Foyer and alcove booking sponsors are required to ensure:
    - a. health and safety requirements are identified and followed
    - b. impacts on teaching, staff offices or other activities taking place in the building are identified and managed accordingly
- 11.2. Bookings outside of these parameters may be made with the permission of the Academic Registrar, or their nominee.
- 11.3. To safeguard the health and safety of staff, students and visitors, the University reserves the right to request an event taking place in a foyer or alcove to end immediately or be relocated.
- 11.4. The use of the Lakeview Room in the Silberrad Centre falls within the auspices of this policy. The primary purpose of the room is for meetings and roundtable discussions. Activities relating to core University events and functions and meetings of Council and Senate and their Committees are allocated to the Lakeview Room (where required) before other room bookings may be made in the room. Subsequently, the Lakeview Room may be booked by University and Students' Union staff and Students' Union Student Groups validated by the Students' Union, subject to availability. Events involving physical activity or where a significant movement of furniture are required may not normally be booked in the Lakeview Room. Such activities will be allocated to a more appropriate venue, as determined by TRBT. Decisions on the use of the Lakeview Room are made by TRBT in consultation with the Academic Registrar or their nominee where required. Where agreement cannot be reached, booking requests are referred to the Registrar and Secretary. The Registrar and Secretary's decision is final. All users of the Lakeview Room are required to ensure it is returned to its standard layout at the end of an event to enable subsequent events taking place in the room to start on time. Failure to adhere to Section 9 of this policy in full (regarding responsible room usage) will be handled in accordance with Section 12 of the policy.

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<sup>4</sup> The Timetabling Policy section 5 sets out definitions of standard teaching hours

## **Southend Campus**

- 11.5. The foyer of The Forum may be booked for displays, stalls and functions supported by Event Essex.
- 11.6. Use of the foyer in The Gateway Building must be agreed in advance with the Campus Management Team.

## **12 Policy Breaches**

- 12.1. Breaches of the policy may result in a ban on future bookings for the remainder of the academic year in which the ban is imposed. Any ban is imposed by the Academic Registrar or their nominee following a recommendation by TRBT. Anyone subject to a ban may appeal to the Registrar and Secretary in writing, who will determine whether the ban should remain in place. The Registrar and Secretary's decision is final.

## Document Control Panel

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