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**MEMORANDUM**

**ATTENTION** Senate  
**FROM** Wade Parkhouse, Chair  
Senate Committee on  
Undergraduate Studies  
**RE:** Scheduling Policy

**DATE** November 8, 2019  
**PAGES** 1/1

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. Parkhouse', written over the 'PAGES' information.

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies at its meeting of November 7, 2019, gives rise to the following recommendation:

Motion:

That Senate approve the replacement of T 30.01, Course Scheduling Policy, with GP XX, Classroom and Course Scheduling Policy, as detailed in the attached document.



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**MEMORANDUM**

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**ATTENTION** SCUS **DATE** November 1, 2019  
**FROM** Steve Birnie  
Associate Registrar, Information,  
Records, and Registration Services  
**RE:** Classroom and Course Scheduling Policy

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**Motion:**

That SCUS approve and recommend to Senate the replacement of T30.01 with GPXX.

**Proposed changes and their supporting rationale.**

The key changes include:

- 1) Recognizing that this policy is misplaced as a Teaching Policy as it is about managing classroom space and its use efficiently. Space policies are normally within our General Policies.
- 2) Ensuring that our classroom and course scheduling policy is aimed at meeting the needs of students in terms of improving course access while recognizing that certain types of classrooms are needed for pedagogy.
- 3) Adjusting the utilization definitions to enhance classroom and scheduling policy flexibility.
- 4) Adjusting prime time restriction requirements while creating flexibility for small academic units to meet these restrictions.
- 5) Increasing flexibility for scheduling patterns after 4:30 weekdays, and during the summer semester.
- 6) Establishing a committee to review requests for exemptions from the classroom restriction procedures.

**Background**

Policy T30.01 (Course Scheduling Policy) was introduced in 2005 and revised in 2008. The major changes in the 2008 revision included the introduction the Standard Day Meeting Patterns, and a 50% limit on the number of sections scheduled in "Primetime". Since that time, issues

have arisen with the current policy that need attention. As such, a detailed analysis of these issues was undertaken, options to address them were developed and many groups were engaged in a discussion of the issues and potential changes to the policy and procedures. For context, SCUS has discussed the data and proposed adjustments at four separate meetings, all faculties had separate meetings, SFUFA and academic Chairs and Directors had the opportunity to comment. What emerged from these meetings was a recognition that the current policy was not meeting its intended function, and that many of our classroom and course scheduling issues arise from having courses with multiple contact hours (2-5 units) coupled with complex scheduling patterns. While a pattern emerging from the Faculty meetings was the need to greatly reduce the number of scheduling patterns with minor exceptions, it is our recommendation to move cautiously given that we have new scheduling software and the desire to increase our delivery of blended courses (face to face plus online) which may require more scheduling patterns than what is traditionally used at other institutions. The new classroom scheduling software should allow us to better schedule courses in relation to key courses taken by students across programs and faculties but harnessing this software capacity will take some time to implement.

### **Key Issues**

While course access and timely completion have always been stated goals of the policy, data from the Undergraduate Student Survey over the years since the original policy was introduced suggests student dissatisfaction with course availability is largely unchanged.

Our analysis has found that current policy is not equipped to tackle many of the course access issues experienced by students. Rather than fix access issues, both the original (2005) and revised policy (2008) merely shifted conflicts around. Two elements contributing to the scheduling conflict are the current primetime restrictions which is based on course sections allowing many seats to be scheduled during prime time (in excess of 90 percent for some academic units), and the number of scheduling patterns which in themselves create course scheduling conflicts. This means that taking a course in one scheduling patterns prevents students from taking courses scheduled in some other pattern. This latter issue can be addressed by eliminating classroom scheduling patterns or reducing the availability of classroom scheduling patterns. For the reasons mentioned above we are not recommending an elimination of patterns at this time, only a reduction in the availability of patterns. In the case of primetime, the recommended approach is to limit the number of seats rather than sections that can be offered in primetime.

Coupling these two approaches with changes to primetime and increased classroom scheduling policy flexibility outside of primetime and during the summer semester including intersession and summer session should allow for a seamless transition to the new policy.

SCUS understands course access cannot be solved by adjustments to classroom and course scheduling policy alone. The 2019-24 Academic Plan has made a few key recommendations regarding curriculum simplification that along with some undergraduate policy work should also further improve course accessibility.



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Steve Birnie  
Associate Registrar, Information,  
Records, and Registration Services



## Classroom and Course Scheduling Policy

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
**Policy**

**Date**  
November 7, 2005

**Number**  
GPXX

**Revision Date**

**Revision No.**

Policy Authority: Vice-President, Academic and Provost

### 1. Principles

- 1.1 Instructional space is a scarce and valuable resource that belongs to the University as a whole.
- 1.2 The Provost is the steward of instructional space and classroom scheduling and is responsible for ensuring that they support the academic needs of the University.
- 1.3 Instructional spaces should be allocated in a manner that supports the learning needs of students and the teaching needs of faculty.
- 1.4 Classroom and course scheduling should facilitate timely degree completion for SFU students, ensuring required courses are, within reason, available, accessible, and conflict free.
- 1.5 Classroom and course scheduling should assist departments and instructors in meeting the pedagogical requirements of their programs and courses.
- 1.6 Classroom and course scheduling should ensure space and time blocks are allocated in a manner that is fair, efficient and equitable across all department and Faculties.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that classrooms and courses are effectively scheduled such that:
  - a. Classroom spaces are efficiently utilized;
  - b. Students can access courses in a reasonable and timely manner;
  - c. The educational experience for students and instructors is accounted for;
  - d. Course scheduling conflicts for students are minimized;
  - e. Course access in general is improved;
  - f. There is scheduling equity across academic units;
  - g. Instructors can reasonably integrate their professional duties of teaching, research, and service;

### 3. Scope and Jurisdiction

- 3.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate courses and courses that are jointly offered as undergraduate and graduate courses, and their classrooms.
- 3.2 This policy applies at all SFU campuses.

### 4. Definitions

- 4.1 "**Course**" - a lecture and/or seminar.
- 4.2 "**Instructional Hours**" - 08:30 to 22:30 Monday to Friday, and 08:30 to 18:00 Saturday. Sundays and Saturday evenings may be scheduled with permission of the Registrar.
- 4.3 "**Standard Timetable Patterns**" - a set of established course scheduling patterns.
- 4.4 "**Prime Utilization Period**" - a period of high demand during instructional hours where restrictions beyond the Standard Timetable Patterns may apply.
- 4.5 "**Standard Utilization Period**" - a period of average demand during instructional hours where

Standard Timetable Patterns apply.

- 4.6 **"Low Utilization Period"** – a period of low demand where Standard Timetable Patterns do not apply.
- 4.7 **"Lower division courses"** – courses numbered 299 and below, including those prefixed with an X, principally taken by students in the first half of their degree.
- 4.8 **"Upper Division Courses"** - courses numbered 300 through 499, principally taken by students in the last half of their degree.
- 4.9 **"Centrally-Scheduled Classroom Space"** – classrooms managed by the Registrar's Office.
- 4.10 **"Space Conflict"** – when more than one course scheduling request requires the same classroom at the same time.

## 5. Policy

- 5.1 Allocation of Classroom Spaces
  - a. Some general classroom space is controlled and managed by specific academic units. This space should be used efficiently, first by the department for their scheduled courses, and then made available as a centrally scheduled classroom space if needed.
  - b. All other courses will have classroom spaces allocated from the centrally scheduled pool by the Registrar's Office.
  - c. To comply with safety standards, no individual or unit may allow the occupancy of a room to exceed its listed capacity.
- 5.2 Scheduling of Courses
  - a. Courses must be scheduled within instructional hours, and distributed in a way that:
    - i. Minimizes course conflicts for students and facilitates timely degree completion;
    - ii. Minimizes common course conflicts for students between departments, particularly between those across the lower division, and those across the upper division.
    - iii. Is based on actual historical enrollment, and where possible, demand.
  - b. The Registrar may put restrictions to optimize scheduling and room allocation including (but not limited to) the use of standard timetable patterns, and designated High, Standard, and Low Utilization periods.
  - c. The Registrar's Office will consider a department's preferred scheduling of an individual course, within the standard patterns and utilization periods.
  - d. The Registrar's Office will work collaboratively with departments to adjust the days and/or times of courses to ensure compliance with the policy, and to address classroom allocation difficulties, as challenges arise. Changes to the schedule after enrollment begins requires approval of the Registrar or designate unless otherwise published.
  - e. The final authority on scheduling courses resides with the Associate Vice-President, Academic.
- 5.3 Scheduling procedures will be published on the Registrar's Office website.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Provost is the steward for all instructional space on campus, the course schedule, and is responsible for ensuring that these support the academic needs of the University.
- 6.2 Under delegated authority, the Associate Vice President, Academic and the Registrar are responsible for the administration, interpretation and application of this policy.
- 6.3 The Associate Vice-President Academic is responsible for the allocation of space at SFU.
- 6.4 The Registrar is responsible for:
  - a. Monitoring compliance with the policy and related procedures;
  - b. Regularly reviewing the policy and related procedures for improvement;
  - c. Proposing changes to the appropriate governance body;
  - d. Maintaining an inventory of centrally scheduled classroom space, which includes room capacity, facilities, design features and disability access.
- 6.5 IT Services is responsible for providing and maintaining technical equipment in centrally scheduled classrooms.
- 6.6 Facilities Management is responsible for maintaining, renovating, cleaning and furnishing centrally scheduled classrooms.
- 6.7 The security of scheduled classrooms is the responsibility of Safety and Risk Services.
- 6.8 The Office of Institutional Research and Planning will prepare an annual report on classroom utilization.

## 7. Related Legal, Policy Authorities and Agreements

- 7.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following University Policies:
  - a. GP 18 Human Rights Policy
  - b. GP 36 Use of University Space
  - c. T20.02 Final Examinations

## **8. Authority**

8.1 This policy is administered under the authority of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost.



## Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

### SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY Procedures

Policy Authority: Vice-President, Academic and Provost

Parent Policy: GPXX Classroom and Course Scheduling

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that classrooms courses are effectively scheduled such that:
- Classroom spaces are efficiently utilized;
  - Students are able to access courses in a reasonable and timely manner.
  - The educational experience for students and instructors is accounted for;
  - Course scheduling conflicts for students are minimized;
  - Course access in general is improved;
  - There is scheduling equity across academic units;
  - Instructors are able to reasonably integrate their professional duties of teaching, research, and service.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **"Course"** - a lecture and/or seminar.
- 2.2 **"Tutorial"** - a component of a course.
- 2.3 **"Instructional Hours"** - 08:30 to 22:30 Monday to Friday, and 08:30 to 18:00 Saturday.
- 2.4 **"Standard Timetable Patterns"** - a set of established course scheduling patterns.
- 2.5 **"Prime Utilization Period"** - a period of high course scheduling demand during instructional hours where restrictions beyond the Standard Timetable Patterns may apply.
- 2.6 **"Standard Utilization Period"** - a period of average course scheduling demand during instruction hours where Standard Timetable Patterns apply.
- 2.7 **"Low Utilization Period"** - a period of low course scheduling demand where Standard Timetable Patterns do not apply.
- 2.8 **"Lower division courses"** - courses numbered 299 and below, including those prefixed with an X, principally taken by students in the first half of their degree.
- 2.9 **"Upper Division Courses"** - courses numbered 300 through 499, principally taken by students in the last half of their degree.
- 2.10 **"Centrally Scheduled Classroom Space"** - classrooms managed by the Registrar's Office.
- 2.11 **"Space Conflict"** - when more than one course scheduling request requires the same classroom at the same time.

## 3. Procedures

- 3.1 Schedules created for Fall and Spring enrollment must comply with the Standard Timetable Meeting Patterns:
- 3.1.1 The general principle for timetabling is the use of the following standard meeting patterns for courses: \*
- 50-minute courses meeting MWF, three times a week. (Table A)
  - 50-minute courses meeting twice per week. (Table B)
  - 110-minute courses meeting once per week. (Table C)
  - 110-minute course plus a 50-minute course meeting per week. (Table D)
  - 80-minute classes meeting MW, MF, WF, twice a week. (Table E)
  - 110-minute courses meeting twice per week. (Table F)

## Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

- g. 170-minute courses meeting once per week – lower division courses. (Table G.1)
  - h. 170-minute courses meeting once per week – upper division courses. (Table G.2)
  - i. 230-minute classes meeting once per week – upper division courses. (Table H.1)
  - j. Tutorials associated with courses can meet on any day. They must begin on the half hour.  
(\*NB The Tables noted above are available only in PDF version, see Schedule A attached.)
- 3.1.2 The Registrar's Office will review standard meeting patterns regularly and, in consultation with the Faculties, may make changes to ensure courses are effectively scheduled in accordance with the Purpose of the Classroom and Course Scheduling Policy <<(link to GPXX)>>.
- 3.1.3 Departments not able to schedule a course within the Standard Timetable Meeting Patterns due to special course-specific considerations may seek a scheduling waiver from the Scheduling Exemption Committee.
- a. A Scheduling Exemption Committee is to be maintained by the Registrar, and consist of:
    - The Associate Registrar, Information, Records, and Registration Services (chair);
    - The Manager, Schedules (secretary);
    - The Assistant Registrar, Senate and Academic Services;
    - Two representatives from the Faculties;
    - At least one undergraduate student;
  - b. Course scheduling waiver applications may be for a one-time exemption or an extended exemption.
  - c. An extended exemption may be sought when the department believes the special course-specific considerations will be the same every time the course is offered in the future.
  - d. An approved extended exemption will ensure the department does not need to re-apply for a waiver for that particular course for 5 years, or until the waiver is discontinued.
  - e. Extended exemptions may be discontinued by either the department or the Registrar's Office at any time.
- 3.2 Schedules created for **Fall and Spring** enrollment must also comply with designated utilization periods and associated restrictions
- 3.2.1 **Prime Utilization Period:** 10:30 to 14:29, Monday through Thursday
- a. Standard timetable meeting patterns apply
  - b. No more than 40% of lower division course seats and 40% of lower division tutorial seats within a department can be scheduled during the Prime Utilization Period.
  - c. No more than 40% of upper division course seats and 40% of upper division tutorial seats within a department can be scheduled during the Prime Utilization Period.
  - d. When the start and end times of a course are not fully contained within the Prime Utilization Period, the percentage of its seats charged against the 40% maximum will be prorated to match the percentage of course time within the Prime Utilization Period.
- 3.2.2 **Standard Utilization Period:** 8:30 – 10:29 and 14:30 to 16:29, Monday through Thursday, and 8:30 – 14:29 on Friday.
- a. Standard timetable meetings patterns apply.
- 3.2.3 **Low Utilization Period:** 16:30 to 22:30, Monday through Friday; 8:30 to 18:00, Saturday
- a. Scheduling during the Low Utilization Period is unrestricted.
- 3.2.4 The Registrar's Office will review utilization periods regularly and, in consultation with the Faculties, may make changes to ensure courses are effectively scheduled in accordance with the purpose of the scheduling policy.
- 3.2.5 To ensure departments with fewer course offerings are not disproportionately affected by the utilization period rules, Faculties may, with the approval of the Registrar, group departments together for the purposes of these procedures.
- 3.2.6 Departments not able to comply with utilization period restrictions due to special course-specific considerations may seek a waiver from the Registrar's Office.
- 3.2.7 Extended exemptions are not available for utilization period waivers.
- 3.3 Schedules created for **Summer** must follow the procedures listed under 3.1 and 3.2, though some special considerations and exceptions may apply:
- 3.3.1 The Standard Timetables listed in 3.1.1 may have adjustments to the frequency of patterns to better accommodate the special demands brought by Summer term:
- a. Table H.1 is replaced with Table H.2.
- 3.3.2 Summer Term, Intersession, and Summer Session sections are combined when evaluating compliance with the Utilization Period restrictions.
- 3.3.3 The Prime Utilization Period seat percentage caps listed in 3.2.1 are raised from 40% to 50%.
- 3.3.4 Special requests will be considered by the Registrar.
- 3.4 Schedules created for **Intersession (May-June) and Summer Session (July-Aug)** must follow all procedures listed under 3.1 and 3.2, though some special considerations and exceptions may apply:



## Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

- 3.4.1 Summer Term, Intersession, and Summer Session sections are combined when evaluating compliance with the Utilization Period restrictions.
  - 3.4.2 3.4.2 The Standard Timetables still apply. To accommodate longer class durations, classes may be scheduled by:
    - a) Combining two patterns with equal start/end times within a single table (e.g. F7+F8).
    - b) Combining two patterns with back to back start/end times within a single table (e.g. A1+A2)
  - 3.4.3 Special requests will be considered by the Registrar.
- 3.5 Instructor Constraints
- 3.5.1 Instructors may request constraints on teaching time availability, with the approval of their Dean, for reasons including, but not limited to:
    - a. Human rights accommodations (as per GP 18 Human Rights Policy);
    - b. University academic or administrative responsibilities;
    - c. Circumstances of a serious personal nature.
  - 3.5.2 Instructors should refer to their departmental policies on requesting teaching accommodations.
  - 3.5.3 Departments should refer to Procedure 3.1.3 above regarding Special Course-Specific Considerations as necessary when accommodating Instructor Constraints.
- 3.6 Changes to Assigned Rooms
- 3.6.1 Changes to an assigned classroom may only be made with the approval of the Registrar or designate when:
    - a. Enrollment increases beyond the capacity of the classroom assigned and a larger classroom is available;
    - b. The assigned classroom does not have all or some of the room facilities (technical or other) requested and a classroom with the facilities is available;
    - c. The number of students enrolled in a course can be accommodated in a smaller classroom, allowing another course with more students to use the larger classroom.
- 3.7 Changes to the Schedule
- 3.7.1 Changes to the schedule after enrollment begins requires approval of the Registrar or designate with the exception of:
    - a. Adding additional sections of a course or tutorial.
    - b. Cancelling a section that has zero students enrolled.
  - 3.7.2 All schedule changes once enrollment begins are subject to room availability.
- 3.8 Space Conflicts
- 3.8.1 If a space conflict exists between two or more scheduled courses, priority will be given to:
    - a. Credit courses;
    - b. A classroom assignment to address a disability need of an instructor or a student(s);
    - c. A large course (to the upper limit of classroom capacity) over a smaller course, regardless of requests for permanent (installed in the room) technical equipment;
    - d. Requests by departments that make full use of the teaching week and utilization periods over requests made by departments that cluster their courses during the Prime Utilization Period.
- 3.9 Removal of Spaces from the Centrally Scheduled Pool
- 3.9.1 Classrooms will not normally be removed from the centrally scheduled classroom pool. Requests to remove one or more classrooms from the centrally scheduled classroom pool must present a business case, supported by a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis, to the Associate Vice-President, Academic. The Associate Vice-President, Academic, in consultation with the Registrar, will decide whether the classroom space will be converted to other uses as proposed in the business case.

Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

Schedule A

1. Standard Day Meeting Patterns

Table A: meeting 50 minutes 3 times per week

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30	1		1		1
9:30	2		2		2
10:30	3		3		3
11:30	4		4		4
12:30	5		5		5
13:30	6		6		6
16:30					

**Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures**

**Table B: meeting 50 minutes twice per week**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30	1 3		1 2		2 3
9:30	4 6		4 5		5 6
10:30	7				7
11:30	8 9		8		9
12:30	10 12		10 11		11 12
13:30	13		14		13 14
14:30	15 17		15 16		16 17
15:30	18 20		18 19		19 20
16:30					

**Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures**

**Table C: meeting 110 minutes once per week**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30	1	2		3	4
9:30					
10:30	5	6		7	8
11:30					
12:30	9	10		11	12
13:30					
14:30	13	14		15	16
15:30					
16:30					

Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

**Table D1: meeting 110 minutes plus 50 minutes per week**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30	1		1		2
9:30			2		
10:30	3		3		4
11:30			4		
12:30	5		5		6
13:30			6		
14:30	7		7		8
15:30			8		
16:30					

Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

Table D2: meeting 110 minutes plus 50 minutes per week

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30	2	1		2	1
9:30					
10:30	4	3		4	3
11:30					
12:30	6	5		6	5
13:30					
14:30	8	7		8	7
15:30					
16:30					

Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

**Table E: 80 minutes meeting 2 times per week**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:00	1				1
9:30					
15:30	2		2		3
16:50	4		3		4

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**Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures**

**Table F: meeting 110 minutes twice per week**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30					
9:30		1	2	1	2
10:30					
11:30		3	4	3	4
12:30					
13:30		5	6	5	6
14:30					
15:30		7	8	7	8
16:30					



Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures

Table G.1: meeting 170 minutes per week for lower division courses

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30					
9:30					
10:30					
11:30					
12:30					
13:30					
14:30					
15:30	1	2	3	4	5
16:30					
17:30					

**Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures**

**Table G.2: meeting 170 minutes per week for upper division courses**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30					
		2		4	
9:30					
	1		3		5
10:30					
11:30					
		6		7	
12:30					
13:30					
14:30					
15:30	8	9	10	11	12
16:30					
17:30					

**Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures**

**Table H.1: meeting 230 minutes per week for upper division courses (Fall & Spring)**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30					5
9:30					
10:30					
11:30					
12:30					6
13:30					
14:30					
15:30					
16:30					7
17:30	1	2	3	4	
18:30					
19:30					
20:30					

**Classroom and Course Scheduling Procedures**

**Table H.2: meeting 230 minutes per week for upper division courses (Summer)**

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30					
9:30					
10:30	1	2	3	4	5
11:30					
12:30					
13:30					
14:30	6	7	8	9	10
15:30					
16:30					
17:30					

Policy T30.01 – Course Scheduling Procedures

Table I: meeting after 16:30

	M	T	W	R	F
8:30					
16:30					
17:30					
18:30					
19:30					
20:30					
21:30					
22:30					

*On or after 16:30, almost anything goes!  
Your class can meet for 50 minutes,  
110 minutes, 170 minutes, 180 minutes, etc.*