



Course Scheduling and Room Assignment

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and procedures for scheduling courses and assigning instructional space.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to academic administration and faculty.

Policy

All space on campus belongs to the university and is subject to assignment and reassignment by the president. Academic space is considered educational and general (E&G) space, which is used for academic instruction and research that supports the university's mission. It does not include auxiliary enterprise space, space that is permanently unassigned, or space used for operations independent of the university's mission. In consultation with both the Registrar's Office and the colleges, the Associate Provost manages scheduling, E&G space, and room assignments for academic space as the Provost's designee. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) coordinates scheduling procedures and the assignment of classrooms and select laboratories in a manner that best serves university needs. As a general rule, academic units will adhere to the following considerations when developing course schedules.

Procedures

Academic Space

The primary E&G spaces for academic instruction are:

1. **Classroom (Type 110):** A classroom is used primarily for regularly scheduled instruction and is not tied to a specific subject or discipline by equipment in the room or configuration of the space (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB], *Reporting and Procedures Manual*, Appendix F, Space Use Codes).
2. **Class Laboratory (Type 210):** A class laboratory is used primarily by regularly scheduled instruction that requires special purpose equipment for student participation, experimentation, observation, or practice in a field of study. Class laboratories may be referred to as teaching laboratories, instructional shops, computer laboratories, drafting rooms, band rooms, choral rooms, or group studios. Laboratories that serve as individual or independent study rooms are not included. All traditionally delivered instruction must take place in Type 110 and 210 rooms. Requests to schedule classes in other room types must be accompanied by a justification and forwarded to the Associate Provost. Teaching space is assigned based on student demand, academic requirements, and efficient utilization of the room.



Academic Scheduling: Academic scheduling is managed to maximize students' ability to make timely progress toward their degree. The academic schedule determines how efficiently E&G space is used. Space utilization efficiency (SUE) data is used in calculations that determine the university's state allocation of operations and maintenance funding for existing buildings and is factored into new construction requests associated with capital construction assistance projects.

Course Offering Analysis Recommendations: Course offering analysis supports course scheduling and student success. Such analysis provides recommendations on the courses students need to fulfill degree requirements, the number of sections needed, and the number of seats per section. Course offering analysis for summer and fall terms is conducted after spring term census, and the spring terms analysis is conducted after fall term census. The course offering analysis considers all currently enrolled students' programs of study, student academic history, historic enrollment data from five previous like terms, and projected freshman class, transfer students, and new graduate student enrollment.

Seat Fill Ratio: The seat fill ratio is a key component of SUE calculations and is determined by dividing the section enrollment by the seats in a room. Room assignments will consider pedagogy and best-fit ratios between section size and maximum room capacity with a goal of meeting THECB seat fill ratios. THECB seat fill ratios recommend each classroom to fill to at least 65% of capacity and each class laboratory to at least 75% of capacity. A section cannot exceed the maximum capacity of the room; this includes online synchronous and hybrid sections (e.g., Zoom).

Room Utilization: Utilization refers to the hours per week that a room is used and is another key component of SUE calculations. THECB guidelines stipulate that a classroom should be in service 38.0 hours per week (HPW) and class laboratories 25.0 HPW for full utilization credit. Academic departments should strive to meet THECB room utilization requirements.

Room Assignment Priority: In determining the priority of room assignments, a comprehensive review will be conducted based on faculty proximity, adherence to standardized meeting patterns, the percentage of the academic unit's class offerings during prime time (8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.), pedagogy, faculty preference, and room utilization factors (seat fill ratio and room utilization).

Specific Classroom Assignments Based on Exceptional Needs: Exceptional needs should be given priority when assigning rooms. Examples of exceptional needs include instructor accessibility and accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, non-portable specialized teaching aids, or materials not available in another room.

Multiple Course Section Meeting Times: Academic units teaching multiple sections of the same course will provide a diverse offering of section meeting times between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, to reduce schedule conflicts and ensure classrooms are in near continuous use throughout the week.

Hybrid (with Face-to-Face component) and Hyflex Sections: Sections that are offered in hybrid (with a face-to-face component) and hyflex modalities are required to schedule a classroom or laboratory as appropriate and must follow standard meeting patterns.



Full Fall and Spring Term Standardized Meeting Patterns

Academic sections with a synchronous delivery component offered during full length terms must use the defined standard meeting patterns for all classes. The standard meeting patterns are

located on the Academic Affairs Web Page. Courses that offer other than three-semester credit hours must align section start times with the university's standard meeting patterns.

Day Classes: Course sections starting between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. offered on the main campus of Stephen F. Austin State University on a Monday, Wednesday, and/or Friday schedule must abide by the following guidelines:

- Lecture classes that have start times between 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon (inclusive) begins on the hour;
- Lecture classes that run for more than 50 minutes cannot begin before 11:00 a.m.;
- Lecture classes that run for more than 75 minutes cannot begin before 1:00 p.m.;
- 1000 and 2000-level non-lecture classes that meet one or more days per week for extended periods of time must start on the hour and no single section class of this type can have a start time before 1:00 p.m.

Classes offered on Tuesday and/or Thursday schedule must abide by the following guidelines:

- Lecture classes begin at 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., or 11:00 a.m.;
- Lecture classes that run for more than 75 minutes cannot begin before 12:30 p.m.;
- Non-lecture classes that meet one or more days per week for extended periods of time must start at 12:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. or 3:30 p.m. No single section class of this type can have a start time before 12:30 p.m.

Evening Classes: (Courses offered on the main campus of SFA that start at or after 4:00 p.m.) Academic units should coordinate the scheduling of evening classes to allow students to take two classes on the same night.

- Three-hour lecture classes that meet one night per week are scheduled at 4:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. and/or 6:45 p.m. - 9:15 p.m.;
- One and two-hour lecture classes that meet one night per week should align start times with the standard meeting patterns on the Academic Affairs Webpage



Other Academic Terms

Courses offered in Fall I, Fall II, Spring I, Spring II, Maymester, and Summer terms must adhere to the standard meeting patterns on the Academic Affairs webpage.

Exemptions

Courses exempt from standard class meeting patterns are:

- specialized programs (e.g., non-university credit training sessions, workshops, conference courses, stand-alone certificate programs that are not part of a degree program, grant-related courses, and off-campus courses) that do not conflict with the use of campus space;
- distance learning courses;
- 5000 and 6000-level lecture courses that begin at 4:00 p.m. or later;
- 3000, 4000, 5000, and 6000-level non-lecture classes;
- non-lecture evening classes; and,
- classes meeting at remote locations.

Variations to this policy must be approved in writing by the requesting academic unit's dean and the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, *Reporting and Procedures Manual*, Appendix F
Space Use Codes

Texas Higher Education Board, *Overview of Space Usage Efficiency (SUE)*, May 2009

SFA HOP 02-207 Credit and Contact Hours

Responsible Executive

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms

None

Revision History

September 1, 2023 (original)