

The University of Texas at El Paso
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Academic Scheduling Guidelines

Background

In accordance with the mission of The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), classroom resources are primarily for use by students, faculty, and staff for educational activities and programs that are directly related to the functions of teaching, research, and scholarly and artistic production. Every effort will be made to ensure that classrooms are assigned fairly, used appropriately, and accommodate the University's academic and instructional needs.

UTEP's classroom facilities are a limited resource; UTEP only has 152 classrooms and 183 laboratories to accommodate over 3500 organized sections each term for our over 170 academic programs. The goal of these guidelines is to maximize utilization as well as schedule space in a transparent, consistent, and equitable manner. These objectives and expectations apply to all academic departments and general classroom space. Classroom scheduling is a dynamic process requiring reevaluation of class size, equipment specifications, and educational changes each term. The assignment of a specific room at a specific time in a given term may not mean continuing assignment of that space.

The Registrar's Office publishes an Annual Term Scheduling Calendar with production dates and deadlines for planning the Schedule of Classes. The Academic Schedule of Classes is provided by Academic Departments and is subject to approval by the Academic Deans and the Provost. The Registrar has responsibility for the assignment of classrooms in the general classroom pool.

I. Scheduling Classes

Each academic college/school provides oversight and sets priorities for scheduling courses within their academic programs and must approve any deviation from best practices in scheduling. Department Chairs will be responsible for assuring that the academic schedule is designed to ensure faculty meet the workload requirements in their department and college. In order for colleges and departments to provide such oversight, schedule development should begin well before the Goldmine scheduling planning window described below.

Each academic department must identify a scheduling coordinator (the department chair or the chair's designee). The coordinator's responsibilities include receiving, updating, and maintaining the department's course offerings by term. This coordinator receives training by the Registrar's Office to use the scheduling application within Goldmine/Banner self-service to create, update, and modify sections that are to be offered. Access to update directly Goldmine is granted only during scheduled planning windows, and update capability will be limited to sections of courses not yet published. All active and published sections that require changes are processed through the Registrar's Office at the request of the department chair.

The following general procedures apply when scheduling and assigning classes to available classrooms:

- A. Twice each year each academic unit submits draft reports to the Registrar's Office listing the course sections it proposes to offer in the upcoming planning term(s), including the days, times and room attributes desired for each course and section. The Registrar prepares each term's Schedule of Classes by using an algorithm to maximize the assignment of sections to classrooms. If the Registrar is unable to schedule all proposed sections to classrooms within a particular meeting time, the Registrar will communicate with the academic department in an attempt to offer alternative meeting options.

- B. Each semester the Registrar's Office will provide the academic departments an updated standard meeting day and time matrix. Regular on-campus organized courses and hybrid courses should be scheduled during these standard times, unless the academic dean has approved a variation from these times.

***NOTE:** Scheduling a course outside of the standard time matrix restricts a student's ability to register for other courses that are scheduled according to the standard matrix. This also affects the availability of the classroom for the semester. Lab courses scheduled in departmentally-controlled laboratories may be offered outside of the standard meeting day and time matrix, but care should be taken to ensure that labs are not scheduled in such a way as to create time conflicts with affiliated required courses.

- C. Course modes – care should be taken during scheduling to review the selected course mode to assure that it reflects the way the course will be offered. Fully online courses are asynchronous and do not require a classroom or a standard time. However, faculty offering online courses must follow the [Distance Learning and Teaching Policy](#). Once students have registered for a course, the mode of a course may NOT be changed without permission from both the chair and the academic dean.
- D. Standard Terms – All undergraduate programs, and the majority of graduate programs, must offer their courses to conform to the standard term patterns, described in this policy: [Standard Term Patterns Policy](#). Each academic dean has the authority to determine which of these standard terms are appropriate for courses in their college/school. Federal Title IV funding guidelines do not allow undergraduate programs to vary from the reported university calendar. The procedure to request a non-standard term for graduate programs can be found here: [Non-standard Parts of Term](#)
- E. Credit-bearing classes have priority. Non-credit events and programs are assigned classroom space after credit classes have been assigned a classroom resource. This classroom assignment date will coincide with the Schedule of Classes final draft deadline as published on the Annual Term Scheduling Calendar.

- F. The Registrar will make every effort to accommodate room requests (e.g., need for disabled access by a faculty member) and resource requests (e.g., technology, furniture). HyFlex courses will have priority in connected classrooms.
- G. Initial scheduling priority will be given to classes that follow the standard course offering times. Highest priority will then be given to sections with specific technology, equipment or seating style requirements in conjunction with projected enrollment. Once capacity limitations and technology needs are accounted for, building location preferences will be optimized. All sections offered within a department at a given day and time pattern will be reviewed to assure equity in space allocation (e.g., a department offering multiple courses/sections at the same time may not be fully accommodated with its first choice of general classrooms at the expense of departments offering limited sections at the same time.)

Room and resource assignments will be scheduled for those classes that are active for the term, available for registration, and have a capacity assigned to them greater than zero. To optimize classroom space use, the Registrar's Office will match as closely as possible the capacities of classrooms to the maximum enrollment cap stated by the department.

- H. Requests for the creation of additional sections and requests for changes of instructor after Census Day require the academic Dean's approval.
- I. The Registrar's Office requires specific notice of classes that are to meet off-campus. Off-campus and out-of-the-country courses require prior approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) arranged through the Director of Academic Reports and Curriculum in the Provost's Office. In some cases approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is also required. Department scheduling coordinators are encouraged to contact the Director of Academic Reports and Curriculum in the Provost's Office as soon as planning for off-campus or out-of-the-country courses or programs begins to ensure approvals are obtained in time to offer the courses.

II. Shared Resources

- A. The General Classroom Pool comprises rooms scheduled solely by the Registrar's Office Scheduling Department.
- B. For classrooms scheduled jointly by an academic department and the Registrar's Office Scheduling Department, the academic department has priority in assigning courses to these classrooms through the first draft deadline as published in the Annual Term Scheduling Calendar. After this deadline, those classrooms will be available for general assignment through the Registrar's Office.

- C. Facilities that have both academic and auxiliary use are available for academic needs based on a memorandum of understanding with the facility and the Scheduling Department (e.g., Union Cinema and Magoffin Auditorium).
- D. Departmentally-controlled classrooms and labs are scheduled by the department that controls the room. The department should use these spaces to minimize demands on the general classroom pool. Deans have the authority to prioritize assignments to departmentally-controlled rooms and will assist in mitigating conflicts regarding assignments in these spaces.
- E. Faculty who have been approved for HyFlex teaching and who request the HyFlex mode will have priority in the connected classrooms (but any faculty member scheduled in a connected classroom may use the technology). Courses with capacities of 30 or less may be able to utilize an owl camera to create a HyFlex mode classroom space, even in rooms that are not originally designated as connected classrooms.
- F. Pursuant to Texas Education Code, Section 51.452.e, students must have the ability to search for courses with low-cost and no-cost textbooks during registration. In order to facilitate this process, all scheduling coordinators must identify sections that meet these criteria, during the scheduling process. Definitions of low-cost and no-cost materials can be found at [Library OER Resources](#).

III. Best Practices for Department and Program Scheduling

- A. Monday –Friday between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm are defined as “prime” teaching hours for undergraduate courses. Monday – Thursday between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm are defined as “prime” teaching hours for graduate courses. Please recognize that all classrooms are at a high demand during prime hours and plan accordingly.
 - a. In most cases, no more than 2 sections of the same course should be offered at the very same time, during prime hours
 - b. Overall, at least 25% of sections of core curriculum or high-demand required courses should be scheduled outside of prime hours or online.
 - c. Departments may not schedule a room during prime hours that will not be in use at least once per week (e.g. held empty and used for exams only)
- B. The academic dean of each college/school is responsible for setting the priorities and providing oversight of scheduling practices to assure student success needs, faculty workload guidelines, and financial resources are optimized.
- C. The academic dean of each college/school has the authority to determine which course modes and which standard terms are available to faculty and students in their respective college/school (see policy in I.C. and I. D., above).

- D. Course capacities should be based on best pedagogical practice (as judged by department chair, in consultation with the dean) as well as historical and projected enrollment. The [Small Course Policy](#) will apply to all organized courses, unless a specific exclusion or exception is granted.
- E. Where possible, faculty teaching hybrid courses should coordinate required on-campus days in a consistent fashion, such that high-demand classrooms may be used efficiently and not held empty during online days.
- F. When surges in enrollment or other factors create demand for additional sections of a course, the Registrar, AVP of Enrollment Services, or AVP of Advising will notify the relevant college/school dean or designee. The college/school will work with the chair of the relevant department to identify and approve staffing. The Registrar will work with scheduling to assure classroom space and indicate the times/days that space will be available.

IV. Changes in Classroom Assignments

All changes affecting classroom assignment, such as scheduling special events, must be requested and arranged through the Registrar's Office. Changes in meeting days or meeting times will be processed based on classroom availability. The academic department requesting the change is responsible for contacting the impacted students if the time and/or meeting days change.

- A. Instructors may not move their class from a room assignment without prior approval from their department chair and notice to the Registrar's Office (scheduling@utep.edu) for update in the Student Information System. This is especially important for campus safety and emergency purposes (e.g., active shooter, power outage, etc.) Additionally, updates in the Banner Student Information System are required for informational purposes for students and proper reporting (e.g., State and UT System accountability reports).
- B. Exceptions to capacity restrictions may only be granted in the event that enrollment will not exceed mandated Fire Code room capacities.
- C. In the event of maintenance requirements or evacuation of a classroom or a building, the Registrar's Office will attempt to relocate classes to temporary locations.
- D. Within the first 12 days of the semester, the Registrar's Office may reassign sections to smaller rooms if they do not reach projected capacities. Classroom assignments may also be changed when a location is determined inadequate for a disabled student or instructor. Upon receiving a request from the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to relocate a class, the Registrar's Office will make every effort to work with the instructor and department chair to relocate the section to an appropriate and accessible space. However, compliance with federal ADA laws will supersede room and building preferences that are not required for compliance with federal law.

V. Examinations

- A. In accordance with the Handbook of Operating Procedures (§4.8.4) all final examinations are to be administered on the day and hour indicated in the Schedule of Classes. Any departure from the regular schedule of final examinations must have prior approval of the College Dean. Such changes must not create conflicts with other final examinations for students enrolled in the course. The Registrar's Office will make every attempt to locate adequate space.
- B. Requests for additional or alternative space for exams may be made to the Registrar's Office.
- C. In an effort to minimize disruptions during final exams, events and review sessions are discouraged during finals weeks.

VI. Course Cancellation

- A. Departments are expected to work with their Academic Dean to strategize about how best to combine sections when enrollments are low, so as to maximize efficiency.
- B. Department chairs should notify the Registrar's Office when these decisions are made as soon as reasonably possible, and not later than fourteen days before classes start, to permit the room reassignment and automatic drops for enrolled students.
- C. Financial Aid is disbursed 10 days prior to the start of the semester and students must be notified of cancellations in time to make schedule changes that will allow them to remain eligible for aid. Departments must work with advisors to support students in this situation. Every effort should be made to enroll students in another section of the course or another course on the student's degree plan.

VII. Classroom Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment

- A. Information on the capacity of each classroom is maintained by the Registrar's Office in conjunction with Facility Services to enable appropriate assignment of classes to rooms on the basis of projected enrollment. Room capacities are determined by Fire Code Regulations. Chairs or other furniture affect the rooms' capacity and thus should not be moved from one room to another. If a larger classroom is required, arrangements should be made with the Registrar's Office.
- B. Classroom deficiencies, repair requests, or equipment issues should be reported to the Registrar's Office (scheduling@utep.edu) in order to route the request to the appropriate entity. The Registrar's Office will work with Information Technology and Facilities Services to update, repair, or address issues in classroom spaces.

VIII. Ad Hoc Classroom Scheduling Requests

- A. When a general classroom is not being used for instructional purposes, the room may be available for non-instructional use, with the exception of the UGLC. Non-instructional activities in the UGLC must be coordinated with the UGLC Scheduling Coordinator directly. The Registrar's Office may assist with UGLC requests for section assignments, course study sessions, and exam needs.
- B. Special requests for activities related to regularly scheduled classes, (i.e., thesis defense, review sessions, exams, films, combined lectures) must be requested through the Registrar's Office to secure appropriate space.
- C. Special requests for use of classrooms for events or activities that may attract visitors to campus are subject to the approval of the appropriate Dean and/or Assistant/Associate Vice President collaborating with visitors on the event. Outside organizations may request use of classroom space only after approval is granted by the Dean and/or Assistant/Associate Vice President.
- D. Student organizations registered with the Student Engagement and Leadership Center (SELC) may request classroom space. Student organizations should submit a request through the appropriate process identified by SELC.

IX. Conflict Resolution

The Registrar's Office will make every effort to resolve any room conflicts. In the event that conflicts cannot be resolved, the Registrar, Deans, and Provost's Office staff may assist in resolving the conflict. In case a conflict cannot be resolved the Provost holds final authority over assigning space.