University of Wisconsin-Platteville
Classroom Scheduling Policy
Effective: 2013-2014 school year, to be re-evaluated after a year of implementation

General Resource

I. Purpose
This policy was drafted for three purposes: to reduce course section overlap to better serve the needs of students; to improve classroom space utilization on campus; and to assist the Office of the Registrar in efficiently and effectively scheduling and assigning classrooms to courses. College Deans will remain responsible for providing the Registrar’s Office with requested data for scheduling.

II. Definitions
A. Room Spaces

1. Classroom
• Definition: A room or space used primarily for instruction classes and that is not tied to a specific subject or discipline by equipment in the room or the configuration of the space.
• Description: Includes rooms or spaces generally used for scheduled instruction that require no special, restrictive equipment or configuration. These spaces include lecture rooms, lecture-demonstration rooms, seminar rooms, recitation rooms, general-purpose classrooms, and other spaces used primarily for scheduled non-laboratory instruction. A classroom may be equipped with tablet armchairs (fixed to the floor, joined in groups, or flexible in arrangement), tables and chairs (as in a seminar room), or similar types of seating. These spaces may contain multimedia or telecommunications equipment. A classroom may be furnished with special equipment (e.g., globes, pianos, maps, computers, network connections) appropriate to a specific area of study, if this equipment does not render the space unsuitable for use by classes in other areas of study.
i. **Designated Classroom**
A room or space designated for their primary use by one or two programs, disciplines or departments, who will receive highest priority in scheduling courses in that space. See Section V. below for how to request designation or co-designation of a classroom. To retain designated space, these departments, programs or disciplines must **fully utilize** the rooms, defined as: filling the rooms to seat capacity [see section II.D. “Seat Capacity Full Utilization” below], the courses scheduled in them must utilize the technology or other special attributes of the classroom, and must schedule courses in the room for a minimum of 35 hours/week. These spaces may be reallocated as the needs, priorities, and demands of the campus change.

ii. **General Access Classroom**
These classrooms are not designated to any particular group, and are considered “open” or generally accessible by all departments, programs or disciplines. Follow this link to view the list of general access classrooms on this campus: [http://www.uwplatt.edu/master_planning/](http://www.uwplatt.edu/master_planning/).

2. **Laboratory**
   • **General Definition and Description:** A laboratory is a facility characterized by special purpose equipment or a specific space configuration that limits instructional or research activities to a particular discipline or a closely related group of disciplines. These activities may be individual or group in nature, with or without supervision. Laboratories may be found in all fields of study including letters, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, vocational and technical disciplines, etc. The nature of laboratory experiences has changed in many disciplines with the introduction of computer simulation in combination with, or as replacement of, the old “wet lab” experience in both natural and social sciences. Curricular intent should be considered as well as the physical structure of the space. Laboratory facilities can be subdivided into categories such as class and open.

   i. **Class Lab**
   • **Definition:** A space used primarily for formally or regularly scheduled instruction (including associated mandatory, but non-credit-earning laboratories) that require special purpose equipment or a specific space configuration for student participation, experimentation, observation, or practice in an academic discipline. A space is considered to be scheduled if the activities generate weekly student contact hours, the activities fulfill course requirements, and/or there is a formal convener present.
   • **Description:** A class laboratory is designed for or furnished with equipment to serve the needs of a particular discipline for group
instruction in formally or regularly scheduled classes. This special equipment normally limits or precludes the space’s use by other disciplines. Included in this category are spaces generally called teaching laboratories, instructional shops, computer laboratories, drafting rooms, band rooms, choral rooms, (group) music practice rooms, language laboratories, (group) studios, theater stage areas used primarily for instruction, instructional health laboratories, and similar specially designed or equipped rooms, if they are used primarily for group instruction in formally or regularly scheduled classes.

Computer rooms used primarily to instruct students in the use of computers are classified as class laboratories if that instruction is conducted primarily in formally or regularly scheduled classes.

ii. **Open Lab**

- **Definition:** A laboratory used primarily for individual or group instruction that is informally scheduled, unscheduled, or open.
- **Description:** An open laboratory is designed for or furnished with equipment that serves the needs of a particular discipline or discipline group for individual or group instruction where 1) use of the space is not formally or regularly scheduled, or 2) access is limited to specific groups of students. Included in this category are spaces generally called music practice rooms, language laboratories used for individualized instruction, studios for individualized instruction, special laboratories or learning laboratories (e.g., speech, hearing, law, psychology, and health-related professions) if discipline restricted, individual laboratories, and computer laboratories involving specialized restrictive software or where access is limited to specific categories of students. For example, a computer laboratory with only engineering or CAD software or a computer-based writing laboratory available only to English Composition students would be classified as an open laboratory because of the restricted usage of the space for a particular discipline or discipline group.

B. **Meeting Patterns** for Fall and Spring Semester Regular Sessions

1. **Standard Meeting Patterns**:

   i. **For 3-credit courses or the 3-hour lecture portion of a higher credit course (usually those containing an additional lab or discussion component)**

   - For MWF classes, a standard meeting pattern is a 52-min. “class hour” beginning on the hour and ending at 52 minutes past the hour, between 8 a.m. and 3:52 p.m.
   - For TR classes, a standard meeting pattern is a 78-min. “class hour”, as follows: 8:00-9:18 a.m.; 9:30-10:48 a.m.; 11:00 a.m.-12:18 p.m.; 12:30-1:48 p.m.; 2:00-3:18 p.m.; 3:30-4:48 p.m.
   - For evening courses meeting one time a week, the course should start on the hour, beginning as early as 4:00 p.m.
ii. For 4- or 5-credit courses that do not have a lab or discussion component
   • These courses should start on the same hour each day of the week they are offered, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

2. Non-Standard Meeting Patterns
   Any course that does NOT fall within the above-described patterns is considered to follow a non-standard meeting pattern. Courses offered in a non-standard meeting pattern or offered during a regular semester session (such as 1st 8 weeks or 2nd 8 weeks) are encouraged to be scheduled during non-peak hours or to schedule along with other non-standard or session courses in such a way as to occupy a classroom in the most efficient manner.

C. Meeting Times for Fall and Spring Semester Regular Sessions
   1. Peak meeting times fall within the hours of MWF 9:00 to 11:52 a.m. and 1:00 to 2:52 p.m., and TR 9:30 a.m. to 3:18 p.m.
   2. Non-peak meeting times are those with any other meeting pattern.

D. Seat Capacity Full Utilization
   A classroom or laboratory is considered fully utilized when it is occupied as follows:
   • Rooms with 1-55 seats should be filled to at minimum 67% seat capacity.
   • Rooms with 56-75 seats should be filled to at minimum 75% seat capacity.
   • Rooms with 76-110 seats should be filled to at minimum 80% seat capacity.
   • Rooms with >111 seats should be filled to at minimum 87% seat capacity.

III. Policies
   A. Scheduling
      The Office of the Registrar will use a computer program [such as Ad Astra] to optimize room scheduling; if a back-up plan is needed, they will resort to the historical method.

   B. “Historical” Room Use
      Instructors or courses may have a history of using a particular space. However, that does not mean a course or instructor is automatically guaranteed the same classroom assignment each semester or session.

   C. Allocating Courses during Peak and Non-Peak Meeting Times
      Departments shall schedule no more than 75% of their classes during peak times (at least 25% of the courses should be during non-peak times)\(^1\).

---

\(^1\) This percentage was reached by analyzing Fall 2012 data for all sections of all courses, which showed an overall campus average of 73.7% courses held during peak times.
D. Seat Capacity

All courses held during peak meeting times, and all using general access classrooms must fully utilize that room (see section II.D. “Seat Capacity Full Utilization” definition above). All other courses are encouraged, but not required, to do the same.

E. Priorities for Room Assignment

1. Instructional Courses
   i. Class Labs and Designated Classroom Space
      Departments, programs or disciplines that have laboratories or classrooms designated for their use will receive the highest priority in scheduling courses in these designated spaces. To maximize the use of classroom space, classes should be scheduled in rooms for which capacity is as near as possible to the class enrollment size. These rooms may be assigned to other courses or instructors once priority scheduling is done.
   
   ii. Open Labs
      Open labs may be utilized by programs or disciplines outside of the designated program or discipline group associated with the lab if scheduled activities do not unduly impact the primary use of the open labs as determined through consultation between the affected programs.
   
   iii. General Access Classroom Space
      Courses or instructors who meet one or more of the following criteria will receive priority in scheduling courses in these spaces. Once these have been honored, then general access classrooms will be assigned to courses or instructors who do not meet these criteria. The criteria listed below are ranked with Tier I receiving higher priority than Tier II, but the bulleted lists under each tier are not ranked. Instructors requesting a priority consideration categorized below as “Tier II Priority” must send a justification statement to the College Dean for approval that clearly explains the rationale for the request.

   TIER I PRIORITY (in no particular order):
   - Standard Meeting Patterns – Courses offered in a standard meeting pattern will have priority over those offered in a non-standard pattern.
   - Seat Capacity – All courses held during peak meeting times and utilizing general access rooms must fully utilize that room (see section II.D. “Seat Capacity Full Utilization” definition above).
   - Room Attributes – Specific rooms or buildings may be requested for courses or instructors requiring specific equipment, layouts or nearby facilities only available in certain locations. High-level
technology should only be requested when that technology will be used.

- **Region Preference** – In order to minimize time spent traveling across campus, an instructor, program or department may request a particular building or building region for their courses. These requests will be honored when appropriate size rooms with necessary attributes are available.

**TIER II PRIORITY** (in no particular order):

- **Special Needs** – Specific rooms or buildings may be requested when the instructor or student(s) has special physical accessibility or learning needs only met by those facilities.
- **Consecutive Courses** – To alleviate time constraints, an instructor with back-to-back classes may request specific nearby rooms, but these will most likely only be honored when there are matches between technology, class size and seat capacity.
- **Large Amount of Class Materials** – Instructors who have to carry a sizeable amount of materials between their office and classroom may request specific nearby rooms, but this will most likely only be honored when there are matches between technology, class size and seat capacity.
- **Instructor Set-Up / Preparation Time** – Some courses or instructors require access to the classroom before class starts for the set up or preparation of materials or equipment. When this amount of time needed exceeds the between-class time period, then instructors may request to reserve the room for the preceding class hour.

**NOTE:** Instructors requesting space categorized above as "Tier II Priority" must send a justification statement to the College Dean for approval that clearly explains the rationale for the request.

2. **Other Events and Activities**
   i. Class-related supplemental activities that fall outside of class time (such as exams, group presentations, PAL times, open reviews) may be scheduled beginning five days after the start of the session.
   ii. Events unrelated to courses may be scheduled in classrooms and laboratories beginning ten days after the start of the session.

F. **Winterim and Summer Session Courses**

In order to minimize costs associated with maintaining multiple “active” buildings, courses offered during these sessions may be scheduled in only a few buildings. “Historical” instructor preferences may be ignored in these cases, although priority needs will be honored to the best of abilities.
IV. Procedures for Requesting or Scheduling a Room

Each semester, the Office of the Registrar will send an email to the College Deans and/or Assistant/Associate Deans stating class scheduling guidelines, and requesting details such as enrollment sizes, class times, room attributes, exam times, instructor prep time needed, etc. Any course change requests that are made after a schedule was originally submitted must come from the College Dean.

V. Requesting Classroom or Lab Space Designation to Your Unit(s)

Departments, programs or disciplines that wish to have a room or rooms designated for their primary use or for co-designation must submit a well-justified statement to their College Dean that includes an outline for how the room will be fully utilized (see section II.A.1.i. above). The Deans and Associate Registrar will meet once a year or each semester to discuss requests and make recommendations. Final approval will be at the Provost level.