

## Principles for timetable planning on full-time degree programmes at Aarhus BSS

These principles form the basis for timetable planning on full-time degree programmes at Aarhus BSS. It is a shared responsibility at Aarhus BSS to contribute to an appropriate and efficient planning process. However, where deemed appropriate, the principles are supplemented by a clarification of the responsibilities assigned to different role holders in the various parts of the planning process.

As there might be changes to specific workflows in connection with the planning and provision of teaching and exams, the principles do not describe specific procedures for obtaining the information necessary for planning. These procedures and workflows are laid down in annual plans.

These principles are an update and clarification of the principles previously in force from 2018 and have been prepared by the Faculty's steering committee for curriculum-based planning and approved by the faculty management team.

Fakultetssekretariatet  
Aarhus BSS

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### Curriculum-based timetable planning at AU

Curriculum-based planning means that the timetable planning takes place before students register courses, and that the timetables are complete before the students start. This replaces the registration-based model, according to which the timetable planning took place after the students' registrations for the following semester and was based on the registrations. In recent years, the registration of the students have been around 1. November and 1. May. The difference between the two planning models is whether the timetable planning takes place in the months leading up to the registration deadline or in the months from the registration deadline up to the start of the semester.

Aarhus BSS strives to ensure that the planning – no later than in the quality assurance phase – takes the lecturers' other obligations arising from their employment at Aarhus University into account. At the same time, the curriculum-based timetabling model should ensure that lecturers' timetables are known early enough to make it possible to plan other activities outside of the lecturers' teaching. The planning process and ongoing dialogue should contribute to achieving a balance in the timetable between teaching duties and other duties as an academic staff member on Aarhus BSS.

The curriculum-based timetabling model and these principles have been adopted in order to establish sensible timetables that support the students' learning outcome, including, to

the extent possible, accommodate the students' opportunity to have a coherent flow of work at the university with reasonable intervals for preparation and follow-up on teaching. The aim is also to optimize the use of premises. The principles are designed to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to make the necessary adjustments to the timetables as a result of unforeseen tasks for the lecturers, as well as illness that prevents teaching at the scheduled times.

### Principles for curriculum-based timetable planning at Aarhus BSS

1. Aarhus BSS uses a curriculum-based timetabling model. This means that timetables and exam schedule are based on curricula and clusters, and that they are made available to students immediately before they are due to register for elective courses.
2. Clusters are used for scheduling and exam planning. The clusters are formed on the principle that there must be no overlap between the subjects that are part of the same cluster.
3. The clusters are published on the study portal before students register for elective courses. This is because publication of the clusters gives the students a clear overview of courses where there is no overlap. It will thus help the students to ensure that they do not unintentionally choose courses with overlaps in teaching or exams.
4. Room allocation for curriculum-based timetabling is based on the specified maximum class size and the number of classes. This information determines the number and size of rooms booked for the course.

Curriculum-based timetabling at Aarhus BSS entails multiple registration rounds for students. In the first registration round, students are asked to register for courses corresponding to the number of ECTS credits they wish to take. Registrations are processed electronically, and if there are more students registering for an elective subject than there are places, places are allocated randomly or according to seniority. It is up to the academic environment to decide whether the allocation of courses on individual programmes should be determined by arbitrary or seniority. Students who do not get the number of courses they registered for in the first round of registration must choose the number of courses they need to complete in the second round.

After the first application round, the department decides which courses are to be cancelled due to lack of number of students signing up. Courses that advance to the second round of applications cannot be cancelled. Students who have chosen a

course that is cancelled after the first registration round will proceed to the second registration round.

5. In case of too few or too many students registering for the same elective subject, this will be regulated in the second round of registration. This means that in the case of too few students, the subject may be topped up with more students or in the case of too many students, they may be registered for alternative elective subjects.
6. Students are allowed to overlap their own teaching.
7. For teaching activities where the lecturer is not known at the time of scheduling, it is possible to plan the activity without stating the name of the teacher, thus taking into account that the activities of the unknown teacher must not overlap. However, this is done on the general assumption that no further restrictions are taken into account at a later date.
8. A title is set for elective subjects, while the full course description can be available no later than when students have to choose elective subjects. If it is not possible to determine a title from the beginning, working titles and, to a limited extent, dummy courses may be used.
9. When employing student teachers, the department should strive to ensure that the instructors hired are able to teach at the scheduled time of teaching. In cases where this is not possible, it may be investigated whether it is possible to shift the class lessons so that there is no overlap between the teaching they are to participate in and the courses they have to teach as student teachers.

### **General principles for timetable planning**

1. The start date for each semester can be found in the current annual plans. In connection with the start of the autumn semester, the study start programmes planned by the departments take precedence over ordinary teaching.
2. The semester lasts a minimum of 15 weeks. In some cases, a few more weeks. The teaching takes place during this period, taking into account the subject's number of lessons and the exam.
3. The following days and periods are generally non-teaching: 23. December, the days between Christmas and New Year, the day of the AU regatta in spring. On the second Friday in September, the afternoon is teaching-free due to AU Sports Day. The individual degree programmes decide for themselves whether the autumn break/week 42 and the week leading up to Easter will have no teaching for all or some subjects.

4. The teaching takes place Monday to Thursday 8am-6pm and Friday 8am-4pm. VIPs are available for teaching during this time period, and special circumstances must be approved by the head of department of the individual VIP at all times, and for the specific semester.
5. For the sake of the staff, the individual's hours are not – unless requested – immediately after each other, and as far as possible the aim is to achieve a distribution where the same employee does not get hours in the period 4-6pm several times a week. As a general rule, the period from 4-6pm is only when all other possibilities have been exhausted. Every effort is made to ensure that neither teaching staff nor students have teaching until 6pm and class again the next morning at 8am.
6. With a view to make the best possible use of the premises, teaching will generally take place in the time intervals 8-10am, 10am-12 noon, 12 noon-2pm, 2-4pm or 4-6pm for two-hour lectures and, as a starting point, 8-11am, 11am-2pm or 2-5pm for three-hour lectures. If this results in the same or better utilisation of resources, the three-hour course can be changed to 9am-12n noon, 12 noon-3 pm and 3-6pm. However, in order to optimize the use of the available premises, special conditions may apply – especially in relation to the planning of the larger auditoriums – as a result of the special pressure on these room types.
7. External teaching staff/part-time academic staff may have special requests for when they can teach, and these requests should be accommodated wherever possible, but the teaching must be concluded no later than 6 pm and 4pm on Fridays.
8. If a course includes both lectures for the whole year/large group and teaching in smaller classes/practice classes, the lectures are scheduled before the class teaching (unless the VIP in charge of the course has a pedagogically founded request for the reverse order).
9. As a starting point, courses that include a large number of practice classes must be organized in a way that supports a flexible timetable planning, i.e. not all practice classes will be scheduled to take place at the same time.
10. The premises administered by Aarhus BSS are shared. This means that the institutions and study programmes do not generally have rights to specific classrooms. However, a fundamental principle in the timetabling process is to, as far as possible, place teaching in rooms close to the "home" of the study programme in close proximity to the academic environment, the department, student organizations, related academic environments, etc.
11. Rooms are only booked for the number of hours stated in the master data for the courses being offered next semester.

### **Principles for managing changes to the timetable**

1. If there are large fluctuations in the intake figures at the first semester from year to year, there may be a special need to adjust the timetables for the compulsory courses based on the current intake figures. This will be resolved in dialogue with the relevant programme(s).
2. In principle, splitting teaching into several classes cannot take place except where this duplication can be held at the same time as the original teaching activity and a suitable classroom can be found.
3. Rooms on assigned courses will not be changed unless significant educational or study-related circumstances warrant it.
4. If the student does not discover an overlap in teaching until after the first or second registration deadline, it is possible to choose among the courses on which places are still available up until the start of the semester, unless otherwise stipulated in the curriculum.
5. If teachers have to cancel classes and need to move individual classes, it must be examined whether the teaching can be moved to a time where there is no overlap for the registered students. If it is not possible to avoid overlap for all students, the teaching will be moved so that the students who have chosen within the cluster avoid overlap. If it becomes necessary to find a new lecturer for a course for the entire semester, and the new lecturer is unable to teach at the set time, the first step is to examine whether the teaching can be rescheduled to a time when there is no overlap between the registered students. If it is not possible to avoid overlap for all students, an alternative time slot for the teaching will be found which does not overlap with the cluster's other courses.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

1. At Aarhus BSS, the head of department has the overall responsibility for all the department's activities. This means that the head of department is also responsible for striking the right balance between the available resources, staff issues and the pedagogical/didactic planning of teaching. The head of department has the power to delegate responsibility for trade-offs in relation to the organization of teaching internally in the department. In such cases, the delegation must be clear and unambiguous, and the Aarhus BSS Studies (Studieplan) must be informed so that the collaboration between the departments and Studieplan is as fruitful as possible. In the

following, "the department" is used as a generic term for the head of department or the person to whom the head of department has delegated responsibility.

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2. The departments are responsible for ensuring that the course's number of hours is fixed, and that this figure is reported prior to scheduling.
3. Studieplan is responsible for preparing a draft timetable.
4. Within the quality assurance period, each lecturer is responsible for ensuring the quality of his or her own course in relation to the draft timetable sent by Studieplan. The individual lecturer must also check that there is consistency between the restrictions that the department has approved and agreed with the person concerned and submitted to Studieplan and the timetable draft.
5. The director of studies must confirm that the overall form looks reasonable from a student perspective. The department is responsible for ensuring an overall report on any corrections to the timetable draft for Studieplan. When the deadline for corrections has expired, the form (after adjustments based on the registrations) is considered final.
6. By virtue of his or her overview of the study programme and the lecturers, the director of studies is responsible for ensuring that courses that include a large number of classes are organized in a way that supports flexible timetable planning, i.e. not all classes necessarily have to be scheduled for the same time.
7. When employing external teaching staff/part-time academic staff, the department is responsible for matching expectations with the external employee/part-time academic staff about the opportunities for influencing the teaching timetables.
8. The department is responsible for approving any changes to the approved and published timetables prepared by Studieplan.
9. The director of studies must approve if an entire course of study, in exceptional circumstances, needs to be altered.
10. In the event of a sudden need to cancel/reschedule classes, the lecturer will inform the department of this and include the grounds for cancelling/rescheduling. The department is responsible for assessing whether a change in timetable should take place, and if so, forwarding the information about the change to Studieplan, who is responsible for making the change.
11. Studieplan only makes changes reported by the department.

### Student-friendly considerations in relation to timetable planning

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1. It must be ensured that the room is suitable for the given teaching activity, including that the room is large enough to accommodate the number of students registered and that the equipment and layout (e.g. flat rooms) is adequate for the teaching planned.
2. For the sake of the study environment, students will as far as possible be taught in proximity to their degree programme's "home", i.e. close proximity to the academic environment, department, student organizations, related academic environments, etc.
3. If a course has several teaching blocks per week, the aim is to have at least one day between teaching sessions, so that the students' workload is spread out over the week as far as possible.
4. If it proves necessary to place the same day's teaching in two different locations due to planning considerations, adequate time is given for the students to move between the premises, e.g. by placing such deviations from the general rule of teaching close to the "home" of the degree programme at the beginning or end of the day or by placing an interim lesson between the lessons in question.
5. If teaching is to take place at a location other than close to "home", there is a principle that the first year students on the Bachelor's degree programmes and Master's degree programmes must be given the highest priority in relation to proximity to their "home" for the sake of the study environment. This means that if teaching is to be moved to another location, this will primarily happen for the second and third year students on the Bachelor's degree programmes.
6. For the sake of the student, the individual hours are not, as a rule, scheduled in direct continuation of each other, unless this is a specific request from the department, or it is necessary to create a more even workload for the student throughout the week. As far as possible, the aim is to achieve a distribution where the student does not get lessons in the period 4-6pm several times a week. As a general rule, the period from 4-6pm is only when other possibilities have been exhausted. Every effort is made to ensure that neither teaching staff nor students have teaching until 6pm and class again the next morning at 8am.