



Annual teaching restrictions – guidance for Colleges in Exeter

Teaching week

To assist in scheduling a timetable which is acceptable to students and utilises space on campus effectively, the University has agreed that all teaching staff should be available to teach at all times in the teaching week, unless a successful teaching restriction application is made.

The teaching week is as follows:

- **Monday, Tuesday and Thursday** – 8.30am to 6.30pm
- **Wednesday** – Undergraduate teaching*, 8.30am to 12.30pm
– Postgraduate teaching, 8.30am to 6.30pm
- **Friday** – 8.30am to 5.30pm

*Undergraduate teaching may be scheduled on Wednesday afternoons for example, when multiple taught sessions are required which cannot be scheduled elsewhere and students have indicated that they are available to attend sessions scheduled on a Wednesday afternoon.

Teaching restriction applications

An annual teaching restriction application is made by an individual who wishes to request to restrict hours of teaching to certain days or times for one year. It does not reduce overall working hours and as such, a successful teaching restriction application will have no impact on the staff member's overall workload.

All teaching staff are entitled to make an application for a teaching restriction but it will not be possible to fully or partially accommodate all requests. The College must consider each application carefully and have a clear process for doing so, including transparency for approving or refusing requests. Applications which are not in the business or operating interests of the University may be refused.

As the number of programmes, students and modules change every year, teaching restriction applications must be made on a yearly basis. Just because a request is approved one year, it does not mean you are obliged to agree it again the following year.

The College approval process is up to the College to decide but a senior member of staff with understanding of the discipline's timetable (e.g. the Director of Education) should be consulted for comment during the approval process and the final decision on an application should either be made by the Associate Dean for Education (ADE)/Vice Dean Education or the PVC. The approval process should be the same for all applications and it is advised that where possible, all applications for one discipline are assessed together. The application form asks academics completing an application to send it initially to their ADE, but individual Colleges will want to confirm their own approval mechanisms and deadlines to be met. Any agreed applications are only **provisionally** agreed by the ADE/PVC until finally confirmed by Timetabling as, in exceptional circumstances, some restrictions may be impossible to accommodate within the timetable. The College's agreed approval process should be made clear to applicants and to those involved in making comment on applications.



In the exceptional circumstance of the Timetabling team not being able to accommodate an agreed restriction, the College will be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss a solution. This may or may not involve further discussions with the staff member. However, the staff member should be informed as soon as possible if a decision is made that an agreed teaching restriction cannot be met.

Process

The details of the administrative and approval process accompanying teaching restriction applications is up to the College to decide what works best. You should agree your process in advance and make it clear to all staff. You are advised to include the following steps.

<p>Contact teaching staff and let them know that they are able to make a Teaching Restriction application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is advisable to include a deadline that allows you plenty of time to assess the applications as a batch before you must update the Web Data Collector and submit agreed applications to Timetabling.
<p>Allow a senior member of staff to comment on the feasibility of applications within a particular discipline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, the Director of Education or Head of Discipline/Department as it is expected that they will have an understanding of the timetable for the discipline.• The ADE/Vice Dean Education for the College is likely to need to comment before a final decision is made.
<p>The PVC/ADE makes the final decision with support as needed from the College HRBP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is felt that by having one person oversee all requests, a level of consistency in decisions will be maintained.• Number of requests will dictate the length of time needed to deal make decisions and meet staff as needed.• HRBP's are available to advise on decisions.
<p>Ensure all agreed Teaching Restrictions are input to the Web Data Collector and a copy of the agreement passed to Timetabling by the agreed date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Web Data Collector will close on a specific date each year which is notified to departments, so decisions must be made well in advance of this date in order for the relevant College team to input the agreed restrictions.• The deadline set by Timetabling must be adhered to in all circumstances.
<p>Inform the applicants of the outcome of their application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please note that in exceptional circumstances, some agreed restrictions may be impossible to accommodate within the timetable. Ensure this is clear to applicants.• Where refused, you should include reference to the applicants right to appeal in any written correspondence.



Considering an application

The following things should be considered when reviewing teaching restriction applications.

Applications will be approved when:

- There is evidence of a contractual agreement between the University and the member of staff which states that a certain working pattern will be followed.
- A formal request for flexible working has been agreed with the College and HR and is in place. For further details of how to make a request, please see <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/employment/leave/flexibleworking/staff/requesting>
- The request relates to a reasonable adjustment required by the Equality Act 2010, for example to accommodate a disability or long term health problem.

Other teaching staff may make a teaching restriction application and the reasons for this may include (but are not limited to) parent/caring responsibilities, religious observances, professional commitments or work-life balance.

There are some prompts below to help you consider the feasibility of these applications:

Is the request for a permanent change or a reduction in contracted hours?

- If the request is of a permanent nature or for a reduction in contracted hours, you may wish to consider the application as a [request for a change in work pattern](#).
- This should be discussed with your HR Business Partner.
- You may wish to progress the teaching restriction application for this year and consider a permanent change at a later date.

How much time is being requested?

- Whole days will be more difficult to accommodate for timetabling purposes than part days.
- The request should be considered in line with the number of hours teaching allocated to that staff member.
- For example, a member of staff requests to restrict their teaching to three days of the week. Due to the number of hours allocated to that staff member, it may not be feasible to schedule all of their teaching in three days.
- You should also be clear about whether the application means the member of staff will not be on site at the requested times – if so, you may wish to consider whether the times that they will be on site will allow them to adequately meet other duties such as office hours for students or other discipline/departmental support work.

Does the staff member share teaching with another member of staff?

- The availability of the staff members sharing teaching (team teaching) should be considered together to ensure the module(s) can be timetabled.
- For example, one staff member may request no teaching on a Friday afternoon but the staff member they share their teaching with, may be part-time and have a contractual agreement



that they will only teach on Friday afternoons. The request would therefore not be possible to accommodate.

The size of the discipline/department may influence the decision

- A discipline/department with fewer teaching staff may find it hard to accommodate requests than larger departments.

The number of staff within the discipline/department who have existing agreements may influence the capacity to agree further requests

- It is possible to reach a saturation point where no further requests can be accommodated. This may be because you have a number of staff within a discipline who are not fully available for teaching due to sabbaticals and contractual arrangements. Agreeing a number of requests could impact upon your ability to deliver the course to students or affect the quality of the teaching delivered. Therefore, it would be permissible to reject an application where it is not possible to arrange the teaching within the remaining time available.
- In situations where you may be able to accommodate one further request but have had several requests and you are certain they have equal effects, you may be able to accommodate one request for the upcoming term, another for the following term and another for the final term.

Is all of the time requested actually required?

- This may not be possible to determine from the application form and so a discussion with the staff member may be needed.
- For example, a staff member may request to restrict their teaching to before 2.30pm every day but when you discuss the reason for this, it transpires that teaching any time up to 3.30pm would also be acceptable.

Are there other factors that may influence your decision?

- For example, there may be restructuring within your discipline/department that means resources are uncertain and you cannot agree a request until the situation is clearer.

Reaching a compromise

If a teaching restriction application looks as though it will not be able to be agreed, it might be possible to meet with the staff member to discuss their application further. You may be able to reach a compromise that suits both parties.

Refusing a request

You may find that you are unable to approve a teaching restriction application. **Refusal of an application MUST be for a clear, business-related reason and confirmed in writing to the member of staff.**



You should be clear about your reason for not approving the request. It is advised that you use the 'Teaching restriction outcome' form which is attached to the application form and ensure that the staff member is aware of your decision and reasoning.

The possible **business reasons** for refusing a teaching restriction application are outlined below:

- detrimental effect on ability to meet student/work demand (e.g. where timetabling cannot be re-scheduled to accommodate all the requests for restrictions)
- inability to re-organise teaching among existing staff;
- detrimental impact on quality;
- insufficiency of teaching during the periods of proposed availability;
- the burden of additional costs (e.g. the only way to accommodate an application would be to hire additional staff or increase hours for existing staff to carry out additional teaching)
- inability to recruit additional staff to cover teaching requirements;
- detrimental impact on performance of the discipline/department;
- planned structural changes (e.g. where changes to modules offered; courses provided are planned or in progress).

In some circumstances, a refusal to approve a request could be considered discrimination (either direct or indirect) so it is important that you are very clear how you have reached your decision. In cases where you are envisaging rejecting an application, particularly in cases where it might be necessary to select between applications, it is advisable to discuss your decision with your HR Business Partner before proceeding.

Appealing a decision

A member of staff has 14 days from the date of receiving your notification of refusing their application for a teaching restriction to appeal, in writing to the Director of Human Resources. As soon as possible, and recommended within 14 days of receipt of that letter, a meeting will be arranged with a Deputy Vice Chancellor, Registrar or nominee. The outcome of the appeal is final and must be confirmed as soon as possible.

You should include reference to the staff member's right to appeal your decision in any written correspondence.

Further guidance

Please speak to your [HR Business Partner/Advisor](#) for anything further or to discuss your general approach to teaching restrictions or to discuss a particular case.