



**PROCEDURE AND PROCESS MANUAL FOR
ACADEMIC TIMETABLES:**

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

Compiled: SALA Timetables- and Assessment Department

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List of acronyms

TG	Timetable Group
SAS	Student Administrative Systems
SFA	Senior Faculty Administrator
MC	Mahikeng Campus (the NWU campus in Mahikeng)
NWU	North-West University
PC	Potchefstroom Campus (the NWU campus in Potchefstroom)
SALA	Student Academic Life Cycle Administration
SALA exco	Student Academic Life Cycle Administration Executive Committee
SRC	Student Representative Council
T&A	Timetables and Assessment Sections
VSS	Varsite Student System
VC	Vanderbijlpark Campus (the NWU campus in Vanderbijlpark)
CEO	Central Examinations Office

PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC TIMETABLES

1 Policy

The handling of timetable matters is in agreement with the Timetable Committee of the NWU and according to the following procedures.

2 Composition of the Timetable Committee

- The Timetable Committee has representation of the following: A Senior Faculty Administrator (SFA) representing SFA's from all faculties, the office of the NWU Registrar, a SRC representative, Student Administrative Systems representative, representatives from the Unit of Open Distance Learning, Assessment- and Timetable officers, SALA Director: overseeing Timetables (chair). The Committee may also engage other persons to provide support and information.

3 Methodology of the Timetable Committee

- The Timetable Committee works under supervision of the SALA Director responsible for timetables.
- The Timetable Committee reports to the Chief Director SALA by submitting the agenda and minutes of each meeting to SALA EXCO.
- The Timetable Committee handles class timetables, test timetables and examination timetables for the NWU and provides input to the NWU official calendar.
- The Timetable Committee has two scheduled meetings per semester. These meetings have as purpose to affirm that the timetables for the next semester are ready and to evaluate the functioning of the timetables of the specific semester.
- The Timetable Committee completes its tasks according to target dates in order to submit the draft timetables to the relevant parties.
- The ideal is that all academic timetables should be available before the commencement of registration at the beginning of the year.
- The Timetable Committee is responsible for the maintenance of the procedure document and for proposing amendments as necessary.

4 Class Timetables

4.1 Timetable Groups

- The composition of the class timetables is based on timetable groups. A timetable group is a set of modules for which exactly the same class periods are allocated. It is therefore not possible for a student to register for more than one module in the same timetable group, unless there is special provision by a lecturer to ensure that clashes in class attendance, tests and examinations are prevented. There are 7 full timetable groups for modules with practical classes (indicated by the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) and 14 half timetable groups (indicated by 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, etc.) for modules without practical classes.
- Certain curricula have special requirements (which may include off campus practical work) and consist mostly of modules which are not shared with any other curricula. They are allowed, with authorisation by the Timetable Committee, to compile their own timetables according to their special requirements. This includes all postgraduate modules.
- The timetable groups are available in table format and remain, as far as possible, fixed from year to year, except where faculties propose shifts, which must be finalized in consultation with the Timetable Committee.
- The timetable groups determine the module combinations that are available to students in accordance with the calendars. These requirements must be strictly maintained in the approval of new module combinations.

4.2 Timetable for class periods

4.2.1 Composition

- This timetable provides for class periods between 7:30 and 17:45 from Monday to Friday. There are two durations of periods: 75 minutes or 105 minutes. There are 15 minutes available for class changes. There is optional time of 30 minutes at the start/end of the long periods. This optional time is marked with an asterisk (*)
- The allocation of periods per week is standardised, with a pro rata adjustment for less credits:
 - For modules without a practical component:
 - in the first year: 2 periods for 12 credits
 - in the second year: 2 periods for 16 credits.
 - in the third and fourth year, where applicable: 2 periods for 32 credits.
 - For modules with a practical component:
 - in the first year: 2 and 2 consecutive periods for 12 credits.
 - in the second year: 2 and 2 consecutive periods for 16 credits.
 - in the third and fourth year: 2 and 2 consecutive periods for 32 credits.
 - For modules in Educational Sciences the following applies:
 - 1 period for modules with 8 credits.
 - 2 periods for modules with 12 credits.
 - Practical periods are arranged additionally.
- Modules with practical components are determined as modules from the schools listed below, where the practical periods are supported by the executive dean of the specific faculty. With the return to timetable groups it was agreed that only modules from these schools could have practical periods (2 consecutive periods), otherwise it would not be possible to compile the timetable within the given limitations.
 - ACCC (reference to an agreement with the Senate.)
 - Biochemistry
 - Botany
 - Chemistry
 - Consumer Sciences
 - Engineering
 - Geology
 - Geography and Environmental Studies
 - Information Technology
 - Mathematics and Applied Mathematics
 - Microbiology
 - Nursing
 - Nutrition
 - Pharmacy
 - Physics
 - Physiology
 - Statistics
 - Town & Regional Planning
 - Zoology
 - A number of modules from Recreation Sciences, Bio kinetics and Sport Sciences
- Each weekday has three sessions of long periods (without interruption) of 105 minutes providing the advantage that tests can be written. These long periods have a 30 minute optional time at the start/end of the period, should lecturers decide to use this time for more contact time or for tests.
- The allocation of class periods appears in the following table. The symbols v, w, y and z are used to indicate sub-divisions of time-table groups that are used to allocate periods to modules that will make use of one long session or one short session:

	07:30	08:00	09:30	11:00	12:15	13:00	14:30	16:00	17:15
	08:00	09:15	10:45	12:15	12:45	14:15	15:45	17:15	17:45
Mo	5A* 5v*	5A 5v	4B 4z	6A 6v	6A* 6v*	10 10	1A 1w	1B 1y	1B* 1y*
Tu	3B* 3y*	3B 3y	3A 3w	7A 7v	7A* 7v*	5B 5z	2A 2w	2B 2y	2B* 2y*
We	6B* 6y*	6B 6y	6A 6w	3A 3v	3A* 3v*	1B 1z	4A 4w	4B 4y	4B* 4y*
Th	1A* 1v*	1A 1v	2B 2z	11 11	11* 11*	7b 7z	5A 5w	5B 5y	5B* 5y*
Fr	2A* 2v*	2A 2v	6B 6z	4A 4v	4A* 4v*	3B 3z	6B 6z	7A 7w	7B* 7y*

4.2.2 Rules regarding the period grid

- Programmes arranged by this timetable grid are not permitted to use class periods on times other as those determined by the timetable, since this may have unforeseen consequences and may also have implications for the provision of class venues.
- If additional class periods are required, on top of the provision as set out above in the class period grid, this must be approved by the executive dean of the specific faculty. The lecturer must arrange this, it may not lead to any timetable clashes and it is subject to the availability of class venues.
- Complaints and requests that arise from this timetable, must be submitted to the Timetable Officer for the attention of the Executive Committee of the Campus Timetable Committee. In consultation with the faculties concerned, the following stipulation, which appears in all calendars, is applied in cases which cannot be accommodated:

Please note: Although the information in this Calendar has been compiled with the utmost care and accuracy, the Council and the Senate of the University accept no responsibility whatsoever for errors that may occur. Before students finally decide on the selection of modules, they must consult the class timetable. If a clash occurs in the planned selection of a student, the relevant module combination is not permitted.

4.2.3 Interchange

Every three years there is an interchange of Friday periods with Monday periods or another rotation, so that the same timetable groups are not placed on a Friday afternoon every year.

5 Test timetables

5.1 Options for tests

The following options exist for faculties regarding tests:

- Participation in the class free assessment period for which there is provision on the year calendar; approximately in the middle of each semester. According to an existing policy, the maximum duration of such a test is 1 ½ hours.
- Utilisation of long periods during the semester for longer class tests.
- Smaller class tests of approximately 10 minutes each - especially for the purpose of encouraging students to study continuously. Usually these tests are only on the work of the previous week or two.

Faculties have different policies on the use of these assessment options.

5.2 The Assessment period

- The timetable for the Assessment period is currently not based on timetable groups. The ideal would be to base the timetable as far as possible on approved timetable groups. with additional sessions for modules which are placed in more than one timetable group, so that all students registered for such a module may write the same test.
- Five sessions are provided per day and may start at the following time slots: 8:00, 10:00, 12:00; 14:00; 16:00.
- Because of the limited number of sessions, placement of modules in the assessment period is restricted to modules which are placed in more than one timetable group and modules with specific student numbers on PC -more than 100 students; MC and VTC more than 15 students. However, when an aligned test is scheduled, regardless the number of students, this assessment must be catered for by the assessment offices, if scheduled during the assessment week. A list to be confirmed is e-mailed in the first two weeks of the first semester and before the start of the next semester in order to compile data regarding modules that should be scheduled.
- Tests for the Assessment period must be for the duration of one hour or, at the most, one and a half hour.
- A lecturer can arrange for tests with students after the finalisation of the scheduled timetable with regard to modules that did not comply with the set criteria. Should this internal arrangement clash with modules of the Assessment timetable, the arrangement may not take place.

5.3 Tests during long periods

In the timetable grid (4.2.1), each half timetable group has a long period and in 5 cases the long period is at the beginning of the day. The long periods are used for tests as indicated in a test timetable.

The tests are placed per a full week cycle of 5 days each, since calendar weeks are often not full weeks. The test periods are the long periods which are used for theory. The placement is as such that there is no more than one test per day and that tests are preferably distributed over the week cycle. Modules which use a full timetable group, use the long period of the A part of the timetable group. In a semester of 13 week cycles, the test timetable can be compiled as follows:

Week cycle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Assessment period	10	11	12	13	Examination
Timetable groups	Open	Open	Open	5A, 7A, 4B, 2A	6A, 2B, 1A	5B, 4A, 1B, 3A	7B, 3B, 6B	5A, 7A, 4B, 2A	6A, 2B, 1A		5B, 4A, 1B, 3A	7B, 3B, 6B	Open	Open	

6 Examination timetables

The aim at the Student Administrative Systems (SAS) is to generate a stable, fixed timetable, so that students can register according to the examination timetables that should be available in the beginning of the year.

During the period for comments, the Timetable Officer on each campus forwards the requests from the campus to the timetable officer tasked with compiling the examination timetable by means of a shared spread sheet (Google Docs).

Communication to students is emailed to the Chair of the Student Council as well as the Chair of the Students' Academic Council.

Assignment of venues

The Timetable Officers allocates venues for the class and assessment timetables as well as venues for examination sessions on MC and VC. However, on PC the Office head for the NWU Assessment Office allocates venues for the examination sessions.

7 Guidelines for the adjustment of timetables

7.1 Lecture timetables

Reasons that cannot be considered to affect a change in lecture timetables

- To shift from unpopular time slots, e.g. Monday mornings and Friday afternoons.
- Travel circumstances of lecturers.
- Distance between venues of consecutive classes.
- Should a shift result in a shortage of venues on the relevant session/day.
- Request to split timetable groups.
- Requests submitted after the deadline for comments.
- Should a change result in a ripple effect that would aggravate other students' timetables.
- If a clash occurs because of students repeating modules.

Reasons that can be considered to affect a change in lecture timetables

- If a group of students in the relevant timetable group is too big for the allocated venue.
- Clashing of modules that may be registered for concurrently, according to the faculty calendars – excluding elective modules.
- If a shift to another timetable group does not result in clashes or venue problems, it may be considered on request.
- If a request that was submitted during the period for comments, has not been processed.
- If a clash occurs due to curriculum specifications.

7.2 Assessment timetables

Reasons that cannot be considered to affect a change in assessment timetables

- A request to include a module in the list for assessment, although it does not meet the set criteria.
- An individual/group's inconvenience with regard to distribution, e.g. examinations scheduled for consecutive sessions/dates or a "long" period of free sessions before the last examination.
- Students' participation in sports, e.g. tournaments.
- Individual circumstances, e.g. dates of flight tickets, weddings, etc.
- Marking of examination scripts of big groups before the deadline for finalisation of marks.
- Requests submitted after the deadline for comment.
- Should a change result in a ripple effect that would aggravate other students' timetables.
- Should a shift result in a shortage of venues on the relevant session/day.

Reasons that can be considered to affect a change in assessment timetables

- A module that was confirmed for assessment has not been included in the timetable.
- A module has already been phased out and must be removed from the examination timetable.
- A module has not been included in the examination timetable and must be added.
- A request was submitted during the time for comments, and due to an oversight, has not been considered or forwarded to the Institutional SAS.
- If there has been an oversight by the responsible timetable officer regarding a request that has been forwarded in time.
- The date for equivalent modules on different campuses differs and must be aligned.
- Clashes of modules that a student / group of students is registered for.