



March 4, 2024

TO: Deans, Senior Associate Deans, and Department Chairs

FROM: J. Christopher Clemens, Provost
Lauren DiGrazia, Assistant Provost & University Registrar

CC: Student services managers

RE: Updated guidance on general classroom scheduling practices

As outlined in the November 15, 2023, memo on classroom utilization (Appendix A), the University has reached record numbers of applicants to our undergraduate programs, and we are at or near historic enrollment. To ensure that students can continue to enroll in the courses they need to graduate on time and to support future enrollment growth, we must use our classrooms efficiently.

I appreciate your efforts to date, implementing the initial guidance outlined in the November memo. Specifically, increasing classroom use efficiency by entering all class assignments into ConnectCarolina for Spring 2024 and aligning to standard start times plus some shifts to off peak hours for Fall 2024.

Today I am sharing updated guidance on scheduling undergraduate lecture courses for Spring 2025 and beyond. This guidance applies to courses designated as lecture courses in ConnectCarolina. This includes all undergraduate lecture courses taught in all classrooms, including priority-scheduled classrooms and classrooms managed by individual departments. This guidance DOES NOT currently apply to recitations, labs and other instructional meetings.

Additional guidance for Spring 2025 and beyond:

- Strive to ensure that **no more than 70% of lecture courses are offered during peak hours** (MWF 9:00am – 3:00pm and TTh 9:30am – 2:00pm).
 - **See Appendix B for guidance on ensuring an appropriate balance of peak/non-peak lecture courses.**
- Schedule lecture courses that **adhere to the start times in the standard meeting pattern.**
 - **There are six new afternoon 75-minute standard meeting pattern options being piloted for AY 24-25.** The new options are MW, MF, or WF. Courses offered on this new standard meeting pattern must start and end at the following times: 3:35pm - 4:50pm; 5:05pm – 6:20pm.
 - There may be exceptions, such as academic units with compelling pedagogical reasons, common examples include:
 - Courses that require more than three contact hours per week
 - Lab-lecture/performance courses that require set-up and break-down between classes
 - Courses that begin after 6pm or later on MWF and 6:30pm or later on TTh
 - **See Appendix B for guidance on scheduling non-standard meeting pattern lectures**

- Departments should strive for course enrollment caps that represent **at least 66%** of the seats in a classroom. For example, a classroom with 30 seats should be used for a lecture course with an anticipated enrollment of at least 20 students.

Visit the [2024 Scheduling Guidance website](#) for FAQ, contact information and other related resources.

Appendix A. Classroom Scheduling Guidance Memo Sent November 15, 2023

TO: Deans, Senior Associate Deans, and Department Chairs

FROM: J. Christopher Clemens, Provost
Lauren DiGrazia, Assistant Provost & University Registrar

CC: Student services managers

RE: Classroom Utilization

Unlike the enrollment challenges many institutions of higher education are facing, at UNC Chapel Hill we have record numbers of applicants to our undergraduate programs, and we are at or near a historic maximum in enrollment. To accommodate these larger numbers of students, we are going to have to use our classroom spaces more efficiently. As of now, the average weekly course hours scheduled in each classroom is only 20 and the percentage of seats occupied is only 58%, below the system office goals of 35 and 65% respectively.

This underutilization arises from two inefficiencies in our current course scheduling; a significant portion of undergraduate classes are not following the standard meeting pattern or start times, and there is an excessive concentration of undergraduate classes during prime times: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm. This creates conflicts and difficulties for students in finding required courses, while also leading to overcrowding of some classrooms while at times these or other classrooms sit empty. These issues may adversely affect undergraduate students' time to graduation and create fire and other safety hazards for our students.

I am asking for your help to begin addressing these issues using a phased approach. In the first phase, **which will begin in Spring 2024**, we are asking:

- Enter all class space assignments into ConnectCarolina NO LATER THAN a week prior to the start of the Spring 2024 semester and for following semesters.

In the second phase, **which will begin in Fall 2024**, we ask the following:

- All undergraduate classes (<700) will **begin** at standard start times:
 - M/W/F Classes: 8:00am, 9:05am, 10:10am, 11:15am, 12:20pm, 1:25pm, 2:30pm, 3:35pm, 4:40pm, 5:45pm
 - T/R Classes: 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am, 12:30pm, 2:00pm, 3:30pm, 5:00pm
- Begin shifting undergraduate course times (<700) out of peak hours. We will strive to do this collaboratively and equitably.

Note that at this time we are not insisting that courses **end** at standard times, though that may be required in the future.

We appreciate your cooperation in implementing these necessary changes in support of our students and mission.

Appendix B. Guidance for Peak/Non-Peak Course Distribution and Scheduling Non-Standard Meeting Pattern Lectures

Guidance for Moving Lecture Courses Taught During Peak to Non-peak

It will be up to each academic unit that needs to shift lecture courses from peak hours to non-peak hours to determine how best to schedule and staff non-peak courses. Guidance for facilitating these changes include the following:

- Look for openings during non-peak afternoon hours on TTh (8:00am-9:15am, 2:00pm-3:15pm, 3:30pm-4:45pm, 5:00pm-6:15pm).
- Take advantage of new non-peak afternoon MW 75-minute meeting patterns being piloted.
- Schedule some core or required courses during non-peak hours.
- Schedule a mix of courses before and after peak hours.
- Rotate non-peak teaching assignments among instructional personnel. Early morning and later afternoon spots may be more viable for some instructors than others. Again, it is up to each academic unit to determine how best to schedule and staff non-peak courses.

Guidance for Scheduling Non-Standard Meeting Pattern Lectures

Block-scheduled courses are those lasting more than 75 minutes scheduled on a single day of each week. The duration of block-scheduled courses at UNC ranges from 80-180 minutes. Block-scheduled courses often result in poor utilization of classrooms on the remaining days of the meeting pattern.

- There are no restrictions on block courses offered 6pm or later on MWF and 6:30pm or later on TTh.
- Academic units should have compelling pedagogical reasons (see Common Exceptions) for offering block courses *earlier* than these times, especially if being scheduled in GPCs.
- For academic units that manage any of their own classrooms (non-GPCs), every attempt should be made to schedule block courses in those classrooms before scheduling a block course in a GPC.
- Block courses should not be scheduled in any GPC designated as an active learning classroom. See the [current list of GPCs designated as active learning classrooms](#).

Single day courses are those with a standard duration (50-75 minutes) that meet only one day per week.

- Single-day 60-minute or 75-minute lecture courses should be offered on either Tuesday or Thursday, not on MWF.
- Single-day 50-minute lecture courses should be offered on MWF, not on T or Th.
- Academic units that schedule multiple single-day lecture courses should strive to schedule them across the week at a common time and classroom. For example, if a single-day 75-minute lecture course is scheduled on Tuesday at 12:30pm in Graham Memorial 123, the department should schedule another one of its 75-minute single-day sections on Thursday at 12:30pm in the same classroom.