

Prime Time Procedures for the Academic Year

Academic scheduling practices at UNC have historically included attempts to ensure optimal efficiency in scheduling of University classroom space. As per Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) Space Utilization Planning Guidelines (<http://highered.colorado.gov/Finance/Capital/guidelines/sug.pdf>), all institutions need to be able to document efficient utilization of existing classroom space before any new requests for capital construction can be entertained.

An important example of a scheduling practice intended to accomplish this efficiency goal is the designation of “prime time”, as applied to time blocks within which class sections could be scheduled. The prime time parameters at UNC have varied over time, but the current prime time parameters are described below.

- Time blocks within the hours of 9:00 am and 2:30 pm are considered prime time. All courses are to adhere to the scheduling blocks in order to maximize space utilization.
- Applicable percentages are:
 - **65%:** no more than 65% of classroom-based sections may be scheduled within prime time;
 - **35%:** at least 35% of sections must be scheduled outside prime time.
- Effective Spring 2011, percentages will be calculated at the prefix level and include all course sections that require Monday-Friday general instructional space. Highly specialized space (e.g., swimming pool, chemistry lab, gymnasium, etc.) that can only be used for specific classes should not be included in the calculation. At the Dean’s discretion, cases where multiple prefixes are offered by a particular program or school, data may be aggregated for this calculation.

In general, the goals of the University’s various scheduling practices are intended to achieve the two main goals listed below. Prime time, as a particular scheduling practice, should include definitions that either support those goals directly, or at a minimum do not conflict with those goals.

Goals of University scheduling practices:

- Ensure that class sections are scheduled in ways that allow students to build coherent schedules that facilitate graduation in a timely manner (e.g., 4-year full-time for an undergraduate student):
 - Distribution of course offerings throughout the instructional day to help alleviate conflicting course schedules for students;
 - Support for special scheduling needs of various groups in order to improve the likelihood of building schedules at times that satisfy their needs;
 - Support for the needs of priority registration block scheduling, as coordinated by the New Student Orientation Office;

- Support for alternative scheduling models that would assist students in maintaining timely progress toward degree completion;
- Support for scheduling of hybrid courses at alternative times that do not limit students' options in selection of classroom-based courses.
- Ensure that use of University classroom space is optimized, by:
 - Distribution of course offerings throughout the instructional day, avoiding excessive reliance on time periods in the middle of the day;
 - Distribution of course offerings throughout the instructional week, so that the distribution of course offerings throughout the week is relatively even;
 - Distribution of course offerings throughout the academic year, so that the balance of fall course availability and spring course availability is proportional to enrollment;
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