

Wednesday Afternoons and Timetabling	
Meeting and date:	Union Assembly, 6 th February 2024
Purpose of paper:	To reaffirm the Union’s position that there should be no timetabling of core materials outside the core teaching hours
Intended outcome:	For approval
Paper submitted by:	Samuel Hedges, Vice-President Education
Restricted business:	No
Key contact(s):	<p>Samuel Hedges Vice-President Education lusu.vp.education@lancaster.ac.uk</p> <p>Jack Watson Vice-President Sport lusu.vp.sport@lancaster.ac.uk</p> <p>Santi Siabato Trujillo Vice President-Societies and Media lusu.vp.societiesandmedia@lancaster.ac.uk</p>
Persons/committees consulted to date including student engagement (where appropriate):	<p>Academic Representatives</p> <p>Student Engagement in “Question of the Week”</p>
EDI considerations	<p>Students with Disabilities, especially those with Neurodivergences will face increased difficulties in being able to access core materials outside of core hours. Similarly, those students with chronic illnesses should not be expected to access core materials if being asked to do such long days. Without the constraints of the Core hours students with disabilities may end up unable to attend all core material, disadvantaging them on an academic level.</p> <p>Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately affected by non-core hours teaching. Part-time Jobs will be harder to maintain, thus meaning that they will be increasing relying on a student loan, which has already been outstretched by inflation leading to increased likelihood of missing lectures, and/or dropping out of programs without the ability to fund themselves.</p> <p>Students with dependants will be massively disadvantaged by the non-core hours teaching. Core modules being taught outside of core hours will result in the inability to cover childcare on their own, requiring high fees for nurseries and afterschool programs, or the skipping of modules in order to cover the childcare. This will leave them economically and Academically disadvantaged when compared to their non-dependant counterparts.</p>
Date paper produced:	19 th January 2024

This Assembly notes:

1. As laid out in the University's Timetabling and Room Bookings Policy circa May 2019:
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2.3. The core University teaching hours are:
09:00 to 18:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday
09:00 to 13:00 on Wednesday

Where requested or deemed necessary, sessions may be scheduled outside these hours with due consideration and mitigation of any equality impact issues. The Equality Impact Assessment will be carried-out by the requestor, and approved by the PVC Education or their nominee.

Normally, Wednesday afternoons (13:00 onwards) are reserved for undergraduate sports activities. As such no core, credit-bearing undergraduate teaching which isn't repeated elsewhere in the week will be scheduled during this time except with the express consent of the PVC Education or their nominee."

2. Many Officers have been contacted by concerned students who have been unable to attend sport fixtures, societies, and part-time work due to the extension of teaching hours into times outside the core hours stated above.
3. Lancaster University is currently undergoing the "Curriculum Transformation Program" (CTP) which will involve changes to modules, and timetabling. This is not expected to reach the implementation phase until 2026/27 meaning current Union members face limited benefits from the proposed work.
4. We are currently living in a cost-of-living crisis disproportionately affecting students. Living costs are up meaning there are higher incidents of Students requiring working part-time whilst also on a "Full-Time" Degree course. This results in higher incidents of "time poverty" (*Time poverty is the concept that individuals do not have enough discretionary time – the time available after engaging in necessary activities like sleep and in the committed activities of paid and unpaid work – to engage in activities that build their social and human capital*) resulting in lowered student mental health and expected degree outcomes.

This Assembly believes:

1. The University's Timetabling and Room Booking Policy as it currently stands with the hours stated above reflects a reasonable and fair expectation of students and the time they should be committing to their degrees. That it should be Union policy to ensure the University maintains this agreement with students and promises to end the timetabling of sessions outside the set hours
2. Ensuring that Wednesday Afternoons are free for sport, society, and recreational activity is crucial for student mental health. The increased workload and inflation of student contact hours is leading to greater risk and incidents of burnout within the student populous.

3. Student sporting performance, both on campus and off, from intramural leagues to national competition such as BUCS leagues and knockouts has been, and will continue to be, impacted by the university teaching hours extending beyond those listed in their policy.
4. Students must be given a say when it comes to alterations of the Timetabling and Room Bookings Policy. Teaching outside these hours must be agreed upon by both students, and staff; we need to be treading lightly on students already limited free time.
5. Students should not be given work outside of termtime unless it is necessary.

This Assembly resolves:

1. The Union will engage with the University's subcommittees to ensure the adherence to the current Timetabling and Room Bookings policy.
2. The Union will engage with Curriculum Transformation Program to ensure that changes are made to the curriculum in order to reduce the amount of teaching and work outside the core hours set out in the Timetable and Room Booking Policy.