Timetable Project Teaching Activities – FAQs

What information is being collected?

Each course conducted in the University can have a number of associated activities such as tutorials, lectures, workshops or seminars. Some courses may have more than 40 planned activities.

To ensure a clash free and efficient timetable can be produced we need to confirm the following:

1. Staff Teaching Activities – who (if known) is planned to teach an activity.
2. Number of Activities/Class Size Plan– are the number of activities correct, is the class size plan complete?
3. After 6pm – Should an activity should be scheduling after 6pm.

Who needs to complete it?

This is a school level activity that will be managed by the Head of School. Administratively this may be delegated to the School Executive Officer (SEO) or similar.

Why is this information being collected?

Staff Teaching Activities - We need to know the staff who are planned to teach an activity (SEM2, TRI3) in order to create a clash free timetable for staff and to allow for sufficient time to travel between campuses. We also need to know any Ancillary staff associated with an activity that need to be factored into room setup e.g. Staff setting up lab experiments prior to actual teaching activity if those staff members are involved in other teaching activities or the time involved in setting up needs to be factored into the timetabling.

Number of Activities/ Class Size Plan – We would like the school to review the number of activities generated to ensure we have the correct understanding of what needs to be timetabled.

We generate activities from the following data sources:

- Actual Course Enrolments – we have access to the actual enrolment figures from Nustar (2016). We do have gaps when a course has never been run before, we have highlighted these in yellow.
- Class Size Plan – as part of the survey we asked staff to tell us the maximum number of students in a class (Lecture, Tutorial, Workshop etc).

Example - A course had 90 students enrolled last year and a tutorial size plan of 30, we expect that UoN will need to create 3 tutorials to cater for demand.

After 6pm – We need to know if the activity should be run after 6pm to capture part time students who may not be able to attend during the day.

When does this information need to be provided to the project team?

For the Timetable team to begin modelling and create the best timetable possible, this data is required by 20th December 2016. Our new way of timetabling means that more data is required upfront before a draft is produced.

Why now?

We recognise that we are asking for staff information much earlier than usual, our new way of timetabling requires data to be collected upfront before a draft timetable is produced.

As part of this exercise, we will be asking you to tell us about your plans. We know that you may not have had a chance to think about this yet, we encourage you to use the next two weeks to work through your staffing plans.

The more information we have 'up front' the less rework you will need to do later after the draft is produced. The timetable we produce will be 'better' for staff, as they will have breaks factored in and enough time to get from A to B. This have never been 'guaranteed before' under manual scheduling.

How does this information need to be provided?

We have processed information from the survey and generated all the activities that we think you need for 2017 (Sem2, Tri 3). This data has been extracted into a simple spreadsheet and colour coded. On the right, you will see a number of columns shaded in orange, these are the columns we need you to confirm and complete. Rather than give you a blank canvas we have extracted the names of staff who taught activities in 2016. Please review these names to see if they are still correct for 2017.

How should staff be named in the spreadsheet?

Where possible please provide the name of the staff member planned to teach an activity. This will help us create a clash free timetable for them and reduce rework for both us and you.

If you plan to use a person who is employed on a casual basis then please add an additional flag to note that they are 'Casual Staff'. We will use this flag to ensure we do not display the casual staff member's name on the Web Timetable as casual staffing may need to be adjusted as enrolments occur.

What if we have not decided who will teach an activity?

The first rule of thumb is **tell us what you know**. If there is a plan to employ a staff member next year to teach multiple activities but the person is not yet known, then please use a 'virtual staff' placeholder.

The second rule of thumb **tell us your plan**. If you cannot confirm exactly who will teach an activity, then tell us your plan. You can use the concept of a 'virtual staff' placeholder as an interim measure and advise us at a later date. Using a 'virtual staff' placeholder means that the activities flagged in this way will be kept clash free.

When should you leave the staff details blank?

There are times when you will not need to use a 'virtual staff' placeholder. This is when the plan is to determine a staff member to teach this activity **after the timetable** is produced in April 2017 but the school agrees to employ a staff member who can cover the time/date slot allocated in scheduling rather than scheduling the activity to suit the staff.

This might occur when:

- A subject is not specialist in nature and there are many possible applicants to fill the role.
- If the course has never been run before, and it is hard to know how popular the course will be.

Virtual Staff Naming Convention

We ask that you use the following naming convention for virtual staff. If you have any doubts please contact your Faculty Timetable Officer or email: timetabling@newcastle.edu.au.

> **Naming Convention**
> VS = Virtual Staff
> 01= Sequential Number
>
> **Example**
> VS-01
> VS-02

Why is a course offering highlighted in yellow?

The courses highlighted in yellow are courses which currently have a module size of '1' or '0', meaning the course was not offered in 2016 and therefore no size plan was available to calculate how many activities are required. These courses will need to be reviewed and module and class sizes added. One of each activity type have been created, if it is anticipated that more than one will be needed, .e.g. repeat lecture or multiple tutorials, please include this in the notes field.

Why do I need to flag casuals?

We would like you to flag casuals so that we can hide these records from view in the timetable system. We will record the name in a User Text Field so that it is not visible in the Web Timetable system.

What about fixed term staff?

If your school employs fixed term staff and you are unsure if their contract will be extended please flag them in a similar way to casuals. This way we know that you do not wish to publicly display this information on the Web Timetable.

What if a staff member also works for another school or faculty?

We acknowledge that sometimes staff will undertake a teaching activity in another school or faculty. In this case please discuss it with the other faculty involved or provide information in the notes. Please contact the project manager if you have any queries on this.

How do I indicate that a staff member will teach more than one activity?

If you would like a staff member to teach multiple activities then please include the staff member's name against each activity.

If you plan to use a casual to teach multiple activities, then please indicate with either the casual staff members name or a virtual staff placeholder with the same sequential number.

Example

Activity 1 and 2 will be taught by a single person VS-01

Worked Example

Course Code	Course Name	Campus	Activity	After 6pm (Y/N)	Staff Member	Casual Staff (Y/N)	Notes
LING1100	Foundations of Language	Callaghan	Lecture		John Smith		**Complete as shown for Known Member of Staff where employment is already determined.**
LING1100	Foundations of Language	Callaghan	Tutorial 1		John Smith		
LING1100	Foundations of Language	Callaghan	Tutorial 2		VS- 01	Yes	**Complete as shown for each virtual member of staff flagging if casual.** **Note – in this example VS-01 is also teaching LING1111 tutorial 1 and 2**
LING1100	Foundations of Language	Callaghan	Tutorial 3	Yes	VS-02	Yes	**Complete 'After 6pm' column to indicate night time class.**
LING1100	Foundations of Language	Callaghan	Tutorial 3	Yes	VS-02	Yes	
LING1100	Foundations of Language	Callaghan	Tutorial 3				**Complete as shown where Staff member will be determined after the timetable has been published.** **When the school chooses this option, the expectation is that the school employ casuals who can cover the time/date slot allocated in scheduling.**
LING1111	Introduction to Linguistics 2	Callaghan	Lecture		John Smith		
LING1111	Introduction to Linguistics 2	Callaghan	Tutorial 1		VS-01	Yes	
LING1111	Introduction to Linguistics 2	Callaghan	Tutorial 2		VS-01	Yes	
LING1111	Introduction to Linguistics 2	Callaghan	Tutorial 2		Susan Jones	Yes	**Complete as shown for Known Member of Staff where employment is HAS NOT yet been confirmed**