GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC SCHEDULING:
STANDARD MEETING PATTERNS

Purpose

An effective academic class schedule is an efficient academic class schedule. Efficiency begins with the standardization of the days and times when academic classes are scheduled to meet. In implementing and embracing patterns of standard meeting days and times in the scheduling of academic class sections, academic units can not only optimize the overall utilization of academic space at the University, but they can also directly enhance the overall success of students at the University by:

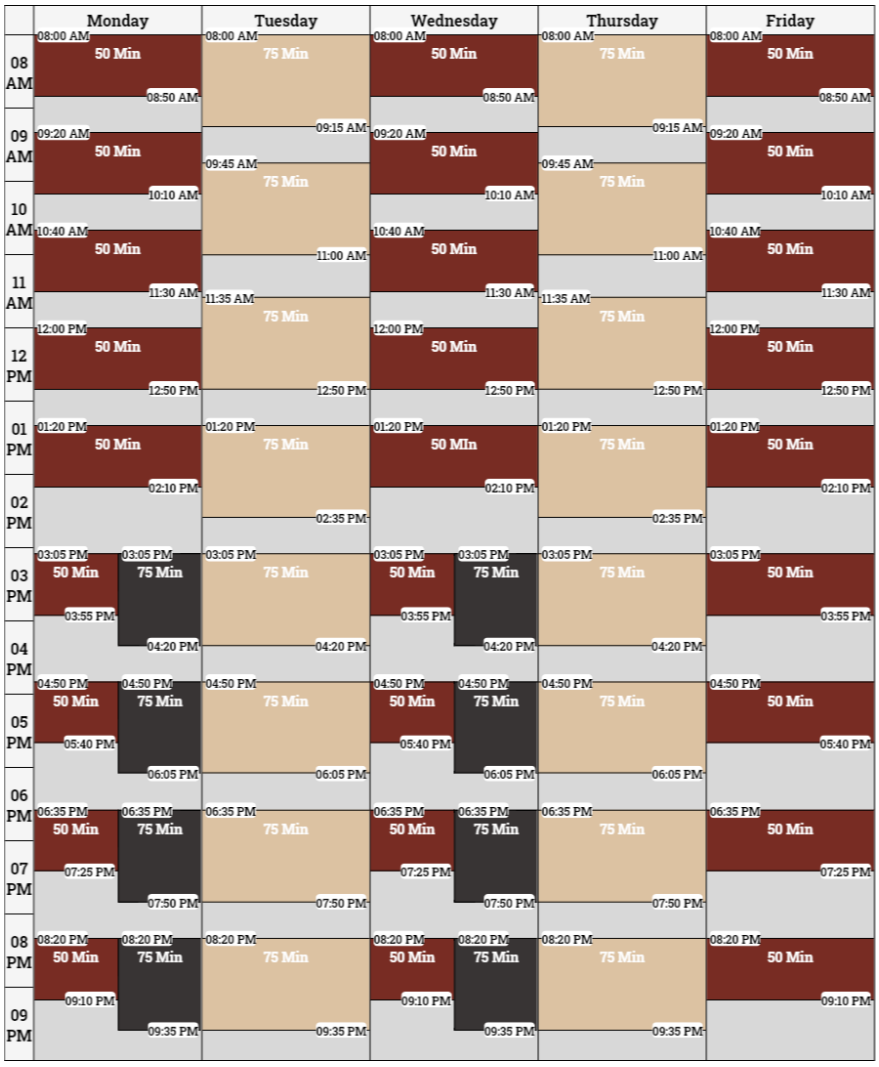
- Enabling students to create optimal academic class schedules, while maximizing their academic class schedule loads;
- Allowing students ample travel time to/from their academic classes*;
- Presenting students with a more intuitive final exam schedule;
- Offering smaller academic class size options to students to help promote further student/faculty engagement;
- Reducing the number of potential academic class schedule conflicts for students, while increasing their chances of access into required/desired academic classes; and
- Providing students with greater opportunities for timely degree completion.

*Effective Spring 2021, a minimum of 30 minutes was introduced between class sessions in order to promote safety and to prepare for the eventual expansion of campus. The resulting new standard meeting pattern was subsequently approved by the Faculty Senate to apply to both Spring and Fall semesters as of Spring 2021 onward.

Principles

During the regular Fall and Spring terms, any Undergraduate or Graduate career, in-person and/or synchronous remote or online, academic lecture, lab, discussion, and/or performance class sections scheduled to meet on specified days/times, for the Tallahassee, FL campus, are, where applicable, to abide by the standard meeting patterns set forth in the grid below. Furthermore, any of these academic class sections, which may also require the use of academic space (of both Registrar [general-purpose] and academic unit control), are also, where applicable, to adhere to these standard meeting patterns.

Standard Academic Class Section Meeting Pattern Grid
(Tallahassee, FL Campus)



GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC SCHEDULING:
MEETING PATTERN TYPES

On-Grid Scheduling

Academic class sections whose meeting patterns match the standard meeting patterns in the grid below are considered to be **'On-Grid'** or **Standard**:

Standard Day Sets		Standard Start/End Times								
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	Start	8:00AM ET	9:20AM ET	10:40AM ET	12:00PM ET	1:20PM ET	3:05PM ET	4:50PM ET	6:35PM ET	8:20PM ET
	End	8:50AM ET	10:10AM ET	11:30AM ET	12:50PM ET	2:10PM ET	3:55PM ET	5:40PM ET	7:25PM ET	9:10PM ET
Tuesday/Thursday	Start	8:00AM ET	9:45AM ET	11:35AM ET	1:20PM ET					
	End	9:15 AM ET	11:00AM ET	12:50PM ET	2:35 PM ET					
Monday/Wednesday;	Start	3:05PM ET	4:50PM ET	6:35PM ET	8:20PM ET					
Tuesday/Thursday	End	4:20PM ET	6:05PM ET	7:50PM ET	9:35PM ET					

Predicated on a 'one (1) credit hour is equal to fifty (50) minutes per semester week' convention, the standard meeting pattern grid is optimized for academic class sections of courses worth three (3) credit hours, whereby a single academic class section of this credit hour value is to meet for a total of one hundred and fifty (150) minutes per week for a semester. As such, the established standard meeting pattern distributions for three (3) credit hour academic class sections are:

- Fifty (50) minutes per day, with at least a thirty (30) minute break between class section periods*, three (3) days per week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting at 8:00AM ET and ending at 9:10PM ET
- Seventy-five (75) minutes per day, with at least a thirty (30) minute break between class section periods*, two (2) days per week: Tuesday and Thursday, starting at 8:00AM ET and ending at 9:35PM ET; or Monday and Wednesday, starting at 3:05PM ET and ending at 9:35PM ET

*effective Spring 2021, a minimum of 30 minutes has been introduced between class sessions in order to promote safety and to prepare for the eventual expansion of campus

Off-Grid Scheduling

Academic class sections whose meeting patterns vary even slightly from the standard meeting patterns in the grid above are considered to be **'Off-Grid'**. Although off-grid scheduling of academic class sections is to be avoided at all costs, nevertheless, its existence is unavoidable, due to legitimate term/session, location, course component, specific campus, college, department, other special program/class constraints. Illegitimate constraints, however, such as individualized instructor day/time preferences, are, for the most part, avoidable contributing factors to off-grid scheduling, and, where applicable, should be evaluated and assessed for conversion to on-grid scheduling as soon as possible.

Off-grid scheduling consists of four meeting pattern varieties: (1) the Overlap; (2) the Standard Overlap; (3) the Partial Block; (4) the Partial Week.

The Overlap: Academic class section meeting patterns that consist of a single day or multiple days per week (on some of, all of, or more than the standard meeting pattern day sets, including across standard meeting pattern day sets [e.g.., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday]) and run for time durations that do not begin and/or end according to the start/end times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks, and that, most often, if not always, 'overlap' the start and/or end times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks.

The Standard Overlap: Academic class section meeting patterns that consist of a single day or multiple days per week (on some of, all of, or more than the standard meeting pattern day sets, but not across standard meeting pattern day sets) and run for time durations that begin according to the start times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks, but do not end according to the end times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks, and 'overlap' the end times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) meeting pattern blocks.

The Partial Block: Academic class section meeting patterns that consist of a single day or multiple days per week (on some of, all of, or more than the standard meeting pattern day sets, but not across standard meeting pattern day sets) and run for time durations that begin according to the start times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks, but that end prior to the end times of the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks, thereby constituting only a 'partial' portion of the total time(s) and/or days of a standard meeting pattern block.

The Partial Week: Academic class section meeting patterns that consist of a single day or multiple days per week (on some of, but not all of, or not more than the standard meeting pattern day sets, and not across standard meeting pattern day sets) and run for time durations that begin and end according to the start and end times for the standard fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) minute meeting pattern blocks, thereby constituting only a 'partial' portion of the total days of a standard meeting pattern block.

GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC SCHEDULING:
STRATEGIES FOR STANDARDIZATION

Strategies for the Standardization of Off-Grid Scheduling

Of all the off-grid scheduling meeting pattern types, the Overlap is the most problematic, as it consistently accounts for the greatest percentage of all meeting pattern types, both on-grid and off-grid, in the overall FSU class schedule. As such, it is of the utmost importance for academic units to adjust any of their Overlap meeting patterns to better align with the standard meeting pattern grids. Meanwhile, it is also just as pertinent for academic units to identify any ways in which they can position their Partial Block/Week meeting patterns to fit into the standard meeting pattern grids. To that end, the following strategies are to aid academic units in their efforts to accommodate standard meeting patterns into their class schedules:

- **Start Times**
  Academic class section meeting pattern start times should always, where applicable, start on the established standard start times for the corresponding standard day sets in the standard meeting pattern grid:

Standard Day Sets		Standard Start Times								
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	Start	8:00AM ET	9:20AM ET	10:40AM ET	12:00PM ET	1:20PM ET	3:05PM ET	4:50PM ET	6:35PM ET	8:20PM ET
Tuesday/Thursday	Start	8:00AM ET	9:45AM ET	11:35AM ET	1:20PM ET					
Monday/Wednesday; Tuesday/Thursday	Start	3:05PM ET	4:50PM ET	6:35PM ET	8:20PM ET					

  Since Partial Block/Week meeting patterns, by definition, already start on standard start times, adjustments to their start times are not required to be made. On the contrary, under most conditions, adjustments to the start times of Overlap meeting patterns are required to be made – some minor, others more involved.

- **End Times**
  Academic class section meeting pattern end times should always, where applicable, end either on or before the established standard end times for the corresponding standard day sets on the standard meeting pattern grid:

Standard Day Sets		Standard EndTimes								
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	End	8:50AM ET	10:10AM ET	11:30AM ET	12:50PM ET	2:10PM ET	3:55PM ET	5:40PM ET	7:25PM ET	9:10PM ET
Tuesday/Thursday	End	9:15AM ET	11:00AM ET	12:50PM ET	2:35PM ET					
Monday/Wednesday; Tuesday/Thursday	End	4:20PM ET	6:05PM ET	7:50PM ET	9:35PM ET					

  In other words, regardless of type (i.e., Overlap, Partial Block/Week), off-grid meeting patterns, where applicable, should never end at times that either fall exactly on standard start times or during the standard minimum thirty (30) or more minute breaks between classes.

- **Days and Time Durations**
  Academic class section meeting pattern days should be determined according to the established standard day sets on the standard meeting pattern grid, i.e., Monday, Wednesday, Friday, starting at 8:00AM ET and ending at 9:10PM ET; Tuesday, Thursday, starting at 8:00AM ET and ending at 9:35PM ET; Monday, Wednesday, starting at 3:05PM ET and ending at 9:35PM ET.

  For a single meeting pattern, the selection of any single day (e.g., Monday; Tuesday; Wednesday; Thursday; Friday) or combination of days within a set (e.g., Monday, Wednesday; Wednesday, Friday; Monday, Friday) is acceptable; however, any combination of days across sets (e.g., Monday, Tuesday; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday; Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, etc.) should be avoided, where possible.

The total duration of time (in minutes) desired for any single day within a meeting pattern should also factor in the determination of which day(s) should be selected. Using fifty (50) minutes as the base unit of measurement for time durations on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and seventy-five (75) minutes for time durations on Tuesday, Thursday and Monday, Wednesday (or Friday), as of 3:05PM ET, the following grid of acceptable meeting pattern days for different durations of time has been devised for reference:

Time	Acceptable Days				
Total Minutes Per Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
< = 50	Y		Y		Y
> 50/< = 75	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)	Y	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)	Y	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)
> 75/< = 130	Y (prior to 3:05PM ET)		Y (prior to 3:05PM ET)		Y (prior to 3:05PM ET)
> 130/< = 180	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)	Y	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)	Y	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)
> 180/< = 210	Y (prior to 3:05PM ET)		Y (prior to 3:05PM ET)		Y (prior to 3:05PM ET)
> 210/< = 285*	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)	Y	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)	Y	Y (as of 3:05PM ET)

*although the total minutes per day in a meeting pattern can exceed 285 minutes, currently, <1% of scheduled meeting patterns exceed this value

- **Pairing**

  Academic class section meeting patterns that consist of fewer than the total number of days of the established standard day sets (i.e., Monday, Wednesday, Friday, starting at 8:00AM ET and ending at 9:10PM ET; Tuesday, Thursday, starting at 8:00AM ET and ending at 9:35PM ET; Monday, Wednesday, starting at 3:05PM ET and ending at 9:35PM ET) should be considered incomplete and not fully standardized unless 'paired' with other complementary class section meeting patterns.

  Partial Week meeting patterns, by definition, are prime candidates for pairing; however, Partial Block and Overlap meeting patterns may also serve as likely contenders. As such, academic units should do their best to identify pairing opportunities, in order to complement and standardize both their own incomplete class section meeting patterns and also those of their peers. Please note, though, that the pairing of class section meeting patterns could potentially create final exam scheduling conflicts.

- **Distribution of Meeting Days**

  Academic units should, to the best of their ability, distribute class section meeting patterns evenly across all days of the week (Monday through Friday), in accordance with the standard day sets of Monday, Wednesday, Friday; Tuesday, Thursday; and Monday, Wednesday (starting at 3:05PM ET). Such distribution will prevent academic units from perpetuating only Tuesday, Thursday or Monday, Wednesday, Friday class schedules.

- **Distribution of Meeting Times**

  Academic units should also, to the best of their ability, distribute class section meeting patterns across all hours of the day (8:00AM – 9:10PM/9:35PM ET), in accordance with standard start/end times. Such distribution will prevent academic units from perpetuating class schedules operating only at 'peak' or 'prime' times (Monday through Friday, 9:20/9:45AM – 3:55PM/4:20PM ET).

- **Monitoring**

  In order to aid academic units in their efforts to standardize their off-grid scheduling practices, the Office of the University Registrar, in coordination with Institutional Research, and the Provost's Committee to Review Academic Space Utilization, are continuing to develop/revise various queries and BI/PowerBI dashboards* to surface and provide the necessary data to academic units, so that they may more accurately monitor both the status and success of their endeavors. Please stay tuned for further announcements on the forthcoming release and availability of these tools.

  *Currently (through Spring 2020), a Standard Meeting Times Dashboard (http://ir.fsu.edu/secure/standard_meeting_pattern.aspx) has been provided/refreshed on a regular schedule (either weekly or bi-weekly) to academic deans for monitoring their academic units' class schedule builds for Fall/Spring terms.