



Academic Policy 8:

Policy for Making Changes to Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities

2026-2027

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Policy for Making Changes to Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities

Section 1 – Introduction

- 1.1 The University must ensure that the student experience is not compromised by last minute rescheduling, changes to the delivery (i.e. from in-person to online delivery and vice-versa), postponements or cancellations of scheduled learning and teaching activities¹. A cancelled learning and teaching activity leads to loss of learning for the student, and rescheduling, changing the type of delivery, or postponing activities can create significant confusion through failure to reach and inform all affected students. Making changes also places additional burden on other staff who are approached to cover sessions or help students who have not received the relevant information.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to ensure that expectations and procedures for postponing, rescheduling, or cancelling scheduled learning and teaching activities are clear. The guiding principle is that,

Teaching is of the highest priority, and no scheduled activities should be rescheduled, postponed, or cancelled, except where this is absolutely unavoidable and specifically authorised by the responsible Head of Department. Scheduled learning and teaching activities take priority over any other activity.

- 1.3 No member of staff may reschedule, change delivery from in-person to online or vice versa, postpone or cancel a scheduled learning and teaching activity without approval from the responsible Head of Department, or in their absence, the Head of School, Deputy Dean, or in the final instance, the Provost.
- 1.4 It is acknowledged that exceptional circumstances may arise which may impact scheduled learning and teaching activity. For example, strikes and travel disruption, staff illness or absence, clashes with other business critical activity, research commitments, opportunities for staff to contribute to national, international and professional body activities and other development opportunities. The following principles will ensure that any impact to students and staff is mitigated as far as possible and that communication routes where changes are unavoidable are clear.

Section 2 - Principles

- 2.1 It is good practice for departments to make advance arrangements for appropriate 'cover' – i.e., another member of staff who can assist with delivering specific teaching and learning activities (preferably with a

complementary knowledge base) and who may be able to take over in the event of sudden sickness.

- 2.2 There should always be a replacement activity available for modules, preferably stored online in the module area, for staff to use where necessary.
- 2.3 If a guest lecturer is unable to deliver a scheduled learning and teaching activity, a member of the teaching team or module leader must run the activity with an alternative session and module leaders should have substitute activities planned for such instances.
- 2.4 On team taught modules, it is the expectation that another member of the teaching team will cover for others, and the team should agree this in advance. It is the Head of Department's responsibility to ensure that these arrangements are in place. The Head of Department should be updated immediately of any proposed amendments to these arrangements as soon as the need is recognised.
- 2.5 All staff must ensure that they are available during their contracted working hours and therefore be readily contactable by phone, Microsoft Teams, and/or email during working hours and be able to respond promptly to reasonable requests for non-recurrent duties requiring on-site or online attendance (e.g. sickness cover).
- 2.6 Staff will not typically be permitted to attend conferences or other commitments if they conflict with learning and teaching activities which they have been scheduled to deliver. Staff who would like to discuss the possibility of identifying an alternative member of staff to deliver a specific session should speak to their Head of Department as soon as possible.
- 2.7 If an hourly paid lecturer (HPL) is being considered to cover teaching, the Head of Department must ensure that the HPL is suitably qualified to teach the session(s)
- 2.8 Data pertaining to changes to the delivery of scheduled learning and teaching activities, postponements and cancellations will be captured by the Timetabling Team and reported annually to Education Committee to inform the development of this policy.

Section 3 – Procedure in the event of Staff Sickness

- 3.1 If a member of staff is suddenly taken ill and cannot deliver a scheduled teaching or learning activity, they must contact their Head of Department immediately to inform them of their absence. This is a requirement of the University's Sickness Absence Procedure.
- 3.2 It is not normally appropriate for scheduled teaching and learning activities to be moved online to accommodate staff sickness.

- 3.3 Where possible, previously agreed alternative cover arrangements for delivery should be mobilised by the Head of Department (see principles 2.1 and 2.2, above) or the Head of Department will take the lead in finding alternative cover for the activity.
- 3.4 If it is not possible to find any suitable alternate cover, the Head of Department will consider the next most appropriate course of action in line with section 4, below.

Section 4 - Procedure where alternate cover is not available

- 4.1 If it is not possible to find suitable cover the Head of Department will consider the following in order of preference:

Change to the delivery of the teaching and learning activity (online to on campus or vice versa)

- 4.2 If it would enable the activity to run, and if there is scope within the structure of the course and it will not significantly disadvantage students, it may be possible for an in-person activity to exceptionally be moved to be delivered online, or vice versa.
- 4.3 In these circumstances, the Head of Department will need to consider the impact to students who may be travelling into campus for other activities or may not have the technological or space resources to join an online session unexpectedly.
- 4.4 If, on balance, the Head of Department determines that this is the most appropriate course of action, they will ensure:
- that the timetabled room/delivery details are updated immediately via the Timetabling Team.
 - that students are informed immediately via a range of different media including as a minimum by email and by Canvas of the amendment, offered an apology for the disruption and given some indication of what to do if they cannot engage with the amended session. Additional communications can include text message and social media.
 - that information relating to the session is loaded onto Canvas as soon as possible (if not already available).
 - that arrangements for an additional delivery of teaching are made if it is possible that the change in delivery format will have created disadvantage or exclusion for some students.
 - that any unintended impacts to the change of delivery (if applicable) are carefully monitored to ensure that the overall percentage of online delivery *on the course* does not exceed 20% (as required by the Home Office Remote Delivery Policy). If in doubt, contact the QAE Team.

Postponement of the teaching and learning activity

- 4.5 If an activity cannot be delivered in its original time slot it might be possible to postpone the activity so that it is rescheduled to take place at a later date.
- 4.6 In these circumstances care should be taken to ensure that any alternative timeslot does not cause any timetable clashes, does not result in an overcrowded timetable, and does not clash with any assessment due dates. If applicable, the impact of students potentially having to come onto campus on a different day should also be considered.
- 4.7 If a suitable alternative timeslot is identified, the Head of Department will ensure:
- that the room (if applicable) and timetabled sessions are amended immediately via the Timetabling Team.
 - that students are informed immediately via a range of different media including as a minimum by email and by Canvas of the amendment, offered an apology for the disruption and given some indication of what to do if they cannot attend at the rescheduled time. Additional communications can include text message and social media.
 - that information relating to the session is loaded onto Canvas as soon as possible (if not already available).

Cancellation of the teaching and learning activity

- 4.8 If as a last resort, approval is given by the Head of Department for the teaching activity to be cancelled, the Head of Department will ensure:
- that the room (if applicable) and the timetabled session is cancelled immediately via the Timetabling Team.
 - That students are informed immediately via a range of different media including as a minimum by email and by Canvas of the cancellation, offered an apology for the disruption and given some indication of what the next steps will be for making up the activity. Additional communications can include text message and social media.
 - That information relating to the missed session is loaded onto Canvas as soon as possible (if not already available).

Section 5 - Managing an unexpected, reported absence from a teaching and learning activity

- 5.1 Should an issue arise where a member of staff has not informed anyone of their absence, and a member of staff is alerted to this, then the person informed of the situation should ask the students to discuss their assignment or last week's class for a few minutes whilst the situation is resolved. It is advisable here to request that students themselves are involved in running an appropriate session for example a peer run session on study skills; course representatives and/or student mentors could be

asked to help (this has been agreed with the Students' Union as part of the development towards student-staff collaborations).

- 5.2 The person informed of the staff absence must then contact the Head of Department immediately who must attempt to find cover or an appropriate member of staff that can offer a suitable relevant activity for students to complete or work with students on a student-led activity, depending on which is deemed most appropriate.
- 5.3 If it is not possible to find cover in an appropriate timescale, the Head of Department (or their nominee) must attend the scheduled activity and explain why it has not been possible to find cover, apologise for the disruption and explain what the next steps will be for making up the activity.

Section 6 - Managing unforeseen wide-spread impacts to teaching and learning activities

- 6.1 From time to time, educational provision will be affected by unforeseen wide-spread events which may disrupt campus-based, online or taught provision in other formats.
- 6.2 Examples might include (but are not restricted to):
 - The temporary closure of part of the campus
 - A significant IT outage
 - Inability of people to travel due to circumstances such as adverse weather, travel strikes or public health restrictions
- 6.3 If the campus is closed this will be announced on StaffSpace and MyKingston and the recorded information telephone line (020 8417 2000).
- 6.4 These circumstances may last for a short period of time (i.e. for just a few hours) or for a more significant period. Each situation is different and requires the exercise of professional judgement in line with the principles outlined in this policy

APPENDIX 1

Policy/Regulation Detail Information	
Policy/Regulation owner	Academic Registrar (RASC)
Policy/Regulation Department owner	Academic Registry
Committee(s) responsible for review and approval	Education Committee to Academic Council
Version number	2026-2027.1
Periodic review frequency	Every six years
Last review date	2025-2026
Next review date	2031-2032