



### Should timetabling change at Leeds

Taught Student Education Board (TSEB) has asked for a period of consultation on a proposed change to the approach taken to timetabling at Leeds.

As a university we want to offer students the best opportunity of obtaining a degree, and as part of this experience we want to give them the chance to study and learn with high quality academic staff who are teaching them in the most suitable location available. If the location can be as close as possible to the home school and the activity scheduled when all the students are available then all the better!

This would be improved by a timetable that combines the module enrolments of the students along with the availability of research intensive teaching staff and the provision of a suitable room with the right equipment.

Combine all three of those key timetable elements and we would have the building blocks for a more successful timetable.

It will be appreciated however that each of those demands for students, staff and space produce very real constraints on the

timetable and how it is constructed. The proposed change to the timetable process aims to help redress the balance for those three key demands, so one element does not dominate the overall timetable construction above all others.

To consider how best to do this, consultation is still ongoing regarding key information required and how this is structured and used in the timetabling process. This will ensure all the key users of the timetable have their views taken into consideration and understand the rationale behind the decisions taken.

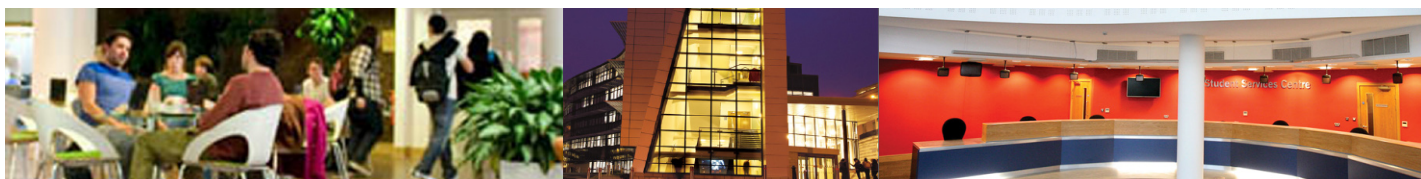
Further proposals will then be submitted for consideration by TSEB. Consultation will continue as the details are worked out and all staff are invited to read and comment on the proposals on the project website: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/timetable/consultation/> If you have not yet commented on the consultation, your comments would be appreciated.

Further discussions have also been undertaken with a variety of other institutions that all run the same or similar models of timetabling to the one being proposed.



The best comparison being with Liverpool University who have successfully run their timetable scheduling process which takes into account students, staff availability, and rooms, for the past two years. Further details on their project can be found on their website - <http://www.liv.ac.uk/orbit/index.htm>

Across the HE sector 'demand led' timetabling is coming to the fore as universities realise it offers the best opportunity to engage students as partners in the provision of their education. By implementing this at Leeds we would put ourselves in a position where we can continue to attract students on the basis of the large selection of module choices available to them, whilst at the same time creating the flexibility within the timetable that enables those choices to be successfully delivered.



### Deadline for module and programme changes

The deadline for approvals to new and amended modules and programmes is 31 March 2012. To ensure there is enough time to action all approvals in the catalogues please ensure all modules and programme proposals are approved at School and Faculty level by this date. The 2012/13 catalogues will be published on the web on Tuesday 1 May.

### Student administration workshops

Workshops for staff involved in student administration and support are taking place over the next six months. Full details of all courses are available on the SDDU website: <http://goo.gl/fQ78B>

The next courses take place in March with topics including graduation; programmes, modules and registration; and examinations and assessment.

### Postgraduate Development Record system project

The Postgraduate Development Record (PDR) web-based system, which records meetings with supervisors, records training, and tracks postgraduate student progress, has been live across the University since September 2011.

Thirty out of thirty-seven school units now have over 60% postgraduate researcher use of the PDR (based on PGR student use since September), with 22 of those units at over 70% postgraduate researcher use. Further training in the PDR offered to staff users at the end of January is being used to support further take up.

The PDR Project was completed in January 2012, following a period of support to improve, embed, and monitor the system. The success of the project has been the culmination of effort by the faculties and schools, Student Systems Administration, RSA, and ISS. Particular thanks go to the developer Steve Paxton and all those in faculties and schools who have informed the development of the PDR and supported its implementation. The possibility of further 'phase 2' development of the PDR will

be explored in 2012, as the system is reviewed. The PDR will continue to receive dedicated support, through continuation of Faculty Implementation Teams of academic, administrative, and IT staff in faculties and schools, and through support for calls routed through the ISS Helpdesk.

It will be owned strategically by Professor Paul Harrison, Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies, with technical and business support provided by Steve Paxton and Student Services Administration. Change requests will be managed through the PDR User Group, which convened in December (contact for the Group, Catherine Mills, [c.m.mills@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.m.mills@adm.leeds.ac.uk)).

The PDR is available to all Postgraduate Research Students and academic and administrative staff who are involved in the career of a research students at <https://www.pdr.leeds.ac.uk/>. System handbooks and further Information about postgraduate research progress and monitoring can be found at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/rsa/>

## Electronic thesis (eThesis) development

### Background

The eThesis submission development went live at Leeds in February 2010 following work between RSA and the University Library. Since then, successful doctoral candidates have been invited to deposit the final version of their thesis in both the traditional hard bound format and also in PDF (eThesis) format. This approach is becoming common practice both in the UK and internationally and allows long-term preservation and easy access to doctoral research. At Leeds, deposited eTheses are allocated an ISBN and housed in White Rose Etheses Online (WREO), a repository of doctoral theses from the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York.  
<http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/>

### Voluntary uptake of the electronic thesis service

At the last count in October, WREO holds 1,357 doctoral eTheses in total; 1,003 awarded by Leeds. Some are new eTheses, voluntarily deposited by candidates; others are older theses which either the library or the customer has paid to have digitised as part of the British Library's Electronic Theses Online Service (ETHOS) <http://ethos.bl.uk/About.do>. eThesis deposit is still in the voluntary stage and overall uptake across the University is

around 16%, although this varies by Faculty. So far the Faculties with the highest proportion of doctoral eThesis submissions have been Environment and Medicine and Health where 25-30% of students deposit an eThesis. Overall traffic to WREO shows that in the period November 2010-2011 there were 53,675 visits to WREO from 43,365 unique visitors coming from 180 countries/territories.

### Mandatory eThesis deposit

As previously agreed by the Graduate Board, eThesis deposit is mandatory for all doctoral students commencing study from September 2009 onwards and is a condition of award. The first mandatory deposits of eTheses can be expected from August 2012.

### Guidance and further advice

Where necessary, candidates may restrict access by users to both the hard bound thesis and the eThesis for a specified period of time, for example where there is a journal article, monograph or other publication on the thesis pending. Further information on this, and advice on producing an eThesis is available online: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/rsa/thesissubmissionandexamination/students/ethesis/ethesis.html>

## 2012/13 Fees & Financial Support Implementation

Work is now well underway to implement the new fee and funding regime that will come into effect for UK/EU Undergraduates in 2012/13. Staff in Student Administration are working with SIMS and Sungard to configure and develop Banner Financial Aid so that we can effectively administer the new "choice" support model that the University is introducing, as part of the commitments in our Access Agreement.

Under this model, eligible students with household incomes below £42,600 will be able to receive support of up to £6,000 in the form of a tuition fee discount, accommodation

discount or a cash bursary. Further information on this is available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/yourfinances>

If you would like a more detailed understanding of the changes for 2012/13 in terms of student finance, support or policy then you may be interested in a course being jointly run by Student Administration and SDDU on 1st February, 19th April and 13th June.

You can read more and book a place by visiting the SDDU booking system (<http://go.gl/GL0bM>) and searching for "2012".

## Staffing changes

Leavers in admissions: Aishah Pathak and Catriona Forbes who left Admissions Enquiries. New staff joining admissions are: Barbara O'Brien joined Direct Admissions in October; Fionn Brennan joined the PGT Engineering Admissions Hub in October; Rebecca Darnill joined Admissions Enquiries in November; and Amy Wiggins, joined Admissions Enquiries in January. Steffi Bontoft and Sophia Dudman will be joining Taught Postgraduate Direct Admissions team in February. Rachael Howden has accepted the post of Pathways and Qualifications Officer (split between Taught Student Admissions and Access and Community Engagement).

Janet Smith retired from Exams. Andrea Haworth left Research Student Administration.

Michael Whittaker and Jamie Proctor joined the Catalogue team.

Sarah Woodruff, formerly of RSA, joined the Counter Team on her return from maternity leave.

Sarah Hargreaves will start as Administrative Officer in RSA in April (replacing Andrea).



## December ceremonies

The December degree ceremonies mark the celebration and culmination of study for a lot of our students. The Events team ensured these ceremonies ran smoothly, along with the assistance of staff throughout the University as a whole.

The new Banner graduation module has been a great success, ensuring that the attendance at the ceremonies was greatly improved. The new system has meant that students are able to register themselves for the degree ceremonies on-line via the Portal, send information about any special requirements and order their tickets. The process is similar to that of student registration where students

## Student Services Centre survey 2011

A survey went to schools to find out opinion on the service provided by the Student Services Centre (SSC). Of the expected 350 respondents to the survey, the response rate was 51 – roughly in line with previous years. These were mainly administrative staff with a fairly even split across faculties.

Overall, staff in schools are 88% satisfied or very satisfied with the service from the SSC – with no staff being dissatisfied. This is an improvement of 6% on the previous year. There are 93% of staff happy with the arrangements for the main registration period for students, a slight improvement on last year.

The survey showed 86% of staff are aware of the services provided by the SSC, indicating that we are communicating our services well. Comments on areas that are not clear have been very helpful.

There are only 8% of staff who are unhappy with areas of the website. The SSC is currently working on a project to review all areas of our website so will incorporate comments from this survey into the planning.

Other information sent out from the SSC had a largely positive response (newsletter, email communications, etc). One area that had a slightly higher rate of dissatisfaction was guidance materials for staff and students, showing 9% of staff are dissatisfied. Focus groups are planned over the next year for staff and students, so this area can be covered here.

### Actions following the survey :

- Development of a form on Counter that would be filled in by Counter staff if they are referring a student back to their school or another area, or vice versa. Counter would write down the reason for the referral so that students do not have to relay information themselves.
- [help@leeds](mailto:help@leeds) website – can draw more attention to any help guides or documentation for students that are particularly relevant.

## help@leeds

<http://help.leeds.ac.uk>  
Whatever the problem, [help@leeds](mailto:help@leeds) can point you in the right direction