Timetable Project

Commenced: April 2013

Timetable Project Manager: Satya Webster
(Portfolio: PVC Information Systems)
The Project Team: DELIVER AN OPTIMISED AUTO-GENERATED TIMETABLE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2015
Institutional Objectives

• To deliver a systems-based optimised timetable to enable the University, in the longer term, to support:
  • Student focussed and flexible course structures
  • Supporting demand for teaching space
  • Optimisation of university resources
  • Reduction in overheads
Desired Outcomes

To enable the University to achieve strategic objectives by creating:

- A policy and procedural framework that underpins the timetabling and room management processes for teaching space
- A centralised and systematised coordination of timetabling activities supporting the needs of all stakeholders (Students and Staff)
- A system-generated 2015 academic year timetable in conjunction with all schools and faculties
For the project to be successful
Challenges for the Project

Technology

• Transition from current to new timetabling system

• Integration between timetabling and other University systems

• Training for staff – new system and process
Challenges for the project

Process

• New business processes
• Managing strict timelines for information gathering
• Accurate data collection-inaccurate data will lead to inaccurate timetables
• Sharing of locations to optimise space and allow more flexibility
Challenges/Opportunities for the project

Policy

- Use of policies and procedures to manage conflicting priorities
- Timetabling information used to inform strategic decisions for the University
- Establishment of policy/procedure to provide equitable outcomes for students and staff
Challenges for the project

People

• Producing clash free University wide timetables can be challenging due to:
  – cultural factors
  – historical expectations

• Staff training – requires time commitment

• Provision of curriculum information to inform the timetabling process
Challenges/Opportunities: In summary

- Implementation and effective use of enabling technology
- Structure of new processes and how these interface with other significant administrative University processes
- Implementation and communication of appropriate policy
- Opportunities for appropriately skilled people (staff)
Proposed changes

BEFORE

- No automated process for checking for clashes
- Constraints information not shared
- Paper based scheduling
+ Students informed of changes via email in real time
+ Web timetable updated in real time
The System - Syllabus Plus

- Web Room Booking (WRB)
- Web Data Collector (WDC)
- Timetable Publisher (SWS)
- Programs of Study/Tuition Pattern
- Scheduling /Timetabler
- Outlook Calendar Sync

Syllabus Plus
Proposed changes

AFTER

+ System generated timetable
+ Model scenarios
+ Ease of finding alternative teaching times/rooms
+ Clash free timetable for popular topic combinations
+ Shared information and central support
+ Equitable shared resources
# Project Plan

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**Critical date**
## Project Plan

### Are we on track?
- **Syllabus Plus software purchased and installed**
- **Team Recruitment – team fully recruited**
- **Engage Stakeholders – on track**
- **Timetable Principles development – Endorsed**
- **Room data collection – commenced**
- **Systems integration analysis - commenced**

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*Flinders University*  
*inspiring achievement*
Project Plan: Phase One
15/04/13 - 31/12/13

- System Integration Testing
- Principles Development
- Software Installation
- Training for key staff
- New Business Processes
- Key Resource Data Collection
Project Plan: Phase Two
01/01/14 - 30/04/15

Scheduling data collection
Draft Timetable
Full System Integration
Publication of Timetable
Process Improvement Review
Web-based room booking system
Areas involved

- Buildings & Property
- Faculties
- Information Technology Services
- Student Admin & Systems
- Schools

University Timetable
Timetable Principles Process

Drafting Principles → Consultation Period → Recommend to Project Board → Endorsed at VCC October Meeting

- Project Reference Group
- Schools / Faculties
- Remote Site

Timescale: May – October 2013
NEW BUSINESS PROCESSES
- Data Collection
  - Topics
  - Staffing
  - Resources
- Auto generated timetable
- Review
- Amendments

Topics/Classes open over 4 days based on Topic code:
Science/Med
Law/Business
Nursing/Health
Arts/Education

Student moves
Minor timetable changes
NEW BUSINESS PROCESS

- Data Collection
  - Topics / Staffing / Resources
- Auto generated timetable
- Review
- Amendments
Business Process Changes:
Scheduling of classes

- Data collection
- Enter/audit information
- Run auto-generated timetable
- Check timetable
- Minor amendments
- Publish timetable
- Post publication to timetable
Business Process no Changes

Timetable Post Publication (Class Registration)

- Timetable Publish date
- Open Enrolments
- Open Class Registrations
- Wait lists
- Student moves between classes

Exception: Minor Timetable amendments
How does it impact me?

• Ongoing organisational structure still to be decided
• School staff to be involved in the data capture
• Capturing the knowledge base
• Opportunities for staff to be involved in the project
• Opportunity to feed into the decision making process
Data Collection

• System - Web Data Collector (WDC)

• Vital process
  – Quality of data will determine the quality of the output;
  – Sound business processes for collection of data
  – First year intensive collection
  – Subsequent collections will be a checking/auditing process
Data Collection

- Programs of Study
- Topic Availability
- Planned sizes (topic and class sizes)
- Teaching requirement (room type, equipment, resources)
- Staff
Data Collection

• Staff Unavailability
  – Part-time staff
  – Restricted access to equipment/resources for teaching and research
  – Approved unavailability (LSL, OSP, etc)

• Approved by School Dean

• Faculty/School Reports
Programs of Study

A combination of topics which the system uses to schedule a clash free timetable.

• Within the course rule parameter
• Clash free timetable
• Nominate most popular topic combinations
• Schools can nominate other preferred combination of topics
Autoscheduling
Constraints

The more constraints that are required then the timetable is less optimised

LESS CONSTRAINTS = MORE OPTIMISED

MORE CONSTRAINTS = LESS OPTIMISED
Non-teaching bookings

- Development of Room Booking Principles
- Consultation period and principles approval
- Configuration of Web Room Booking Module (WRB)
- Development of University business processes
- WRB testing and training
- Implementation
Communication Plan

• Consult with representatives across the University
  – Project Reference Group (Chair: Prof Warren Lawrance)
  – Key Stakeholders
  – Academic Staff
  – Professional Staff
  – Timetable Users Group – representatives from each School

• Flinders media and website:
  – News
  – Events
  – Training

(https://www.flinders.edu.au/staff/timetable-project/about-us.cfm)
Project Team

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Question Time
Flinders University

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