

2015 Winter Data Collection Utility (DCU) Important Additional Information

The DCU is now open for 2015 Winter scheduling data entry. You've recently received the Call Memo from Timetable, but there is other important information that you should know regarding the scheduling data entry and some significant changes made to DCU since the last DCU scheduling data entry period. This document details the changes and provides handy scheduling tips. Should you encounter any DCU issues not identified in this document, please contact Aaron Boadway at 585-5168 or Aaron.Boadway@uregina.ca for an answer. We (Timetable) need to know whether the DCU is operating as it should be or if we have technical issues that need to be resolved. We also need your feedback so that we can make the DCU experience better for you and your academic unit in future scheduling runs.

This document contains the following sections: Major Changes, DCU Sections, Time Requests, Room Requests, Instructors, Requirements Notes, Blackout Period, and Conclusion.

Major Changes

There are a few changes that you may notice in DCU for 2015 Winter. The biggest change is that the Faculties of CAMP (Campion College), CE (Continuing Education), FNUN (First Nations University of Canada), and LUTH (Luther College) have virtually disappeared. These Faculties still exist in the new timetabling system, but there are almost no courses housed within them. These "Faculties" primarily contain instructors now. Schedulers in Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), Campion College, First Nations University of Canada, and Luther College have access to these remaining DCU Departments.

The impact of this change is that multiple schedulers now have access to many U of R Faculties' DCU Departments because the federated colleges and CCE schedule the same types of courses. Previously, the federated colleges and CCE had their own "shadow" DCU Departments, but this necessitated the need for multitudes of extra Departments in DCU. Also, federated college and U of R Faculty schedulers could not easily view each others' scheduled components. Furthermore, course combinations excluded the federated colleges in some instances, further complicating matters. Therefore, be aware that other units may be accessing courses in your DCU Department(s). Typically, each federated college uses component IDs unique to their respective college. For example, Campion College uses C01 through C99, Luther College uses L01 through L99, and First Nations University uses S01 through S99. U of R Faculties/Departments use 001 through 099 (with some exceptions).

Because many DCU Departments are now accessible by multiple academic units, it is advisable to modify only those components that you've personally scheduled. And because we've assigned many new Departments to the federated college and CCE schedulers, please advise should you not be able to find a course you need to schedule in an existing DCU Department you can access. You may need access to another DCU Department.

A more subtle change that most of you will not notice is that the Room Types CAMP, FNUN, and LUTH no longer exist. This is important for those who schedule offerings in the CM, FN, and LC Buildings. The remaining Room Types are CAPS, NTIS, PLAI, and TIES (Room Type CCE is used for CB rooms only and by CCE schedulers only).

DCU Sections

Now more than ever, it is critical to be aware of the DCU sections in which you are scheduling your components. Recall that a DCU section is a category/division/grouping of components within a course (eg: for Fall term: F-1, F-2, F-3, etc.; for Winter term: W-1, W-2,

W-3, etc.). Potentially, there may be up to 5 different academic units utilizing one DCU Department. Take ENGL100 as an example. Campion College, CCE, First Nations, Luther College, and U of R Department of English may be scheduling at least 1 component of the course ENGL100 each! This becomes particularly problematic when there are multiple Schedule Types involved (ie: Lectures, Labs, Seminars, Fields, etc.). Recall that courses with components of multiple Schedule Types will have Banner Link Identifiers based on the DCU section in which the components are scheduled. That is, if there is a Lecture and a Lab component scheduled in the same DCU section of a course, then these components will be linked when they are transferred from DCU to Banner (ie: a Lab and a Lecture in section W-1 will be assigned Banner Link Identifiers L1 and C1 respectively upon transfer to Banner). For any labs and lectures (or fields or seminars, etc.) that are not to be linked, these components must be scheduled in *different* DCU sections.

The convention we've adopted with respect to DCU section IDs is the following: W-1 (note there are no spaces beside the hyphen and there is 1 letter to represent the term (F = Fall and W = Winter) and 1 digit after the hyphen. 2 digits is invalid, so use only the numerals 1 through 9. Eg: W-1 (3 characters; uppercase W followed by a hyphen followed by a numeral with no spaces in between).

Time Requests

One change that you may or may not notice at the delivery level in DCU is the Schedule Type. You will no longer need to identify the Schedule Type of the delivery, the assumption being that the Schedule Type of the delivery will always be same as the Schedule Type of the component. For example, ENGL100-001 is typically scheduled with Schedule Type A – Lecture. Previously in DCU, you would have to indicate the Schedule Type for each delivery. If you did not indicate the delivery Schedule Type but attempted to save, then you would receive an error message that “the delivery Schedule Type must be indicated.” Currently, there is no need to schedule deliveries of different Schedule Types at U of R. Please advise should this pose an issue for your unit.

All Time Requests containing Forced Times and all Time Requirements notes entered in the 2014 Winter scheduling data entry period have been deleted. This was done because these needs should be reviewed; circumstances may have changed since last year. Pattern requests give the system added flexibility whereas Forced Times constrain the system. Should a Forced Time be required, you *must* enter all pertinent data in the Time Requirements area. The only reasons that times should be forced are for pedagogical reasons or other external factors beyond your unit's control. If the Forced Time is due to the availability of the instructor, then this should be handled through Instructor Unavailabilities (Tier I for medical reasons and Tier II for all other reasons). Remember that you can select day patterns or evening patterns, depending on your needs.

Finally, use the Time Requirements area to indicate any preferences such as morning vs. afternoon or any times of day that the delivery simply cannot be offered. An example is the availability of facilities on campus. We can prevent the scheduling of any deliveries at certain times of day, depending on the rationale. For example, if required facilities are not available until 0930, then we can create a “component blockoff” to prevent scheduling of the delivery prior to 0930. Also, if it is a pedagogical requirement that your delivery must be scheduled either before or after another delivery (or deliveries), then indicate that in the Time Requirements

area as well. We can create “scheduling ties” in the database in order to accommodate these requests (but we need to be told this ahead of time!). Provide rationale for the requests.

Room Requests

The biggest change in this area is the deletion of the Room Types CAMP, FNUN, and LUTH. These Room Types represented the classroom space in Campion College, First Nations University of Canada, and Luther College. These 3 partners are now fully-integrated into the new timetabling system and, as such, now use the same Room Types as U of R academic units. A relatively minor inconvenience to these partners – as a result of this change – is that all of their previous Room Requests have been deleted and new Room Requests must be entered in DCU.

All Forced Times were deleted from the Winter database, therefore you will find that there are Room Requests containing rooms of Room Type SPEC that do not have a Time Request. Once the DCU scheduling data entry period comes to a close on September 8, 2014, there should be no components containing a Room Request without a Time Request. Please ensure you enter Time Requests wherever you have a Room Request.

The Room Requirements notes entered in the 2014 Winter scheduling data entry period have been deleted. As with the Time Requirements notes, Room Requirements notes were deleted because these needs should be reviewed; circumstances may have changed since last year. This area is intended in situations where, for instance, an instructor has mobility issues and must be assigned to a certain Pavilion; there are pedagogical reasons justifying a certain Pavilion; or perhaps there are disability issues (ie: wheelchair accessible or special needs situations). Another situation is that you’ve requested an instructor teaches back-to-back classes (we can set this up with a scheduling tie) and that the same room is preferred. Recall that attaching a Room Characteristic to a delivery will ensure that the delivery is assigned a classroom containing that Room Characteristic.

Instructors

All instructors were deleted when the 2015 Winter database was created. Therefore, there are no Instructors attached to deliveries in DCU. In Banner, several updates to Faculty and Department were made and some new Departments were created, so an updated list of all instructors was produced, new Departments were organized, and these were added to the 2015 Winter database. The result is a cleaner list of instructors and Departments. Be sure to attach instructors to your deliveries prior to the closing of DCU.

If you cannot find an instructor, please contact Aaron Boadway. It could be that the instructor is housed in a different DCU Department. If this is the case, then you will not be able to add any Instructor Unavailabilities to this instructor, but you can still attach the instructor to your deliveries. You have the ability to create a TBA instructor, but this should be done as a last resort and only if you are certain your intended instructor is not in the system (ie: you *know* the instructor is brand new and not yet in Banner).

Instructor Unavailabilities is a topic that formal policy is yet to address. Eventually, the authorization of these will likely be the responsibility of each academic unit, sometimes in conjunction with Human Resources (for medical unavailabilities). In the meantime, how should these be handled? First and foremost, be sure to enter all medical unavailabilities as Tier I. There will be very few of these in your unit (if any) but it is important to enter them. As for Tier II, some units prefer to limit these so as to allow the system greater flexibility in creating the schedule. Other units prefer to apply these liberally. There is a much higher probability that the

unavailability constraint will be broken if too many are applied, however. The suggested methodology is to use Tier II Unavailabilities only when necessary. Using restraint will result in the system respecting more of these constraints. Remember to indicate whether the Tier II Unavailability is for Research, Administrative Duties, or Other. If it is for Other, then provide a detailed explanation in the Instructor Requirements area. We sometimes use this information to make additional adjustments to the programming of the database or the notes prompt us to investigate other data (eg: the instructor must co-ordinate his/her schedule with another instructor for childcare issues; we can check on the unavailability entered for the other instructor to ensure appropriate scheduling).

We've installed "transfer times" between all buildings on campus for 2015 Winter. This ensures that your instructors will not be assigned back-to-back deliveries in separate buildings! This was not done for 2014 Fall and we encountered problems for many instructors as a result. This has been rectified.

Requirements Notes

This document has touched on the Time Requirements, Room Requirements, and Instructor Requirements notes in the preceding sections. In general, notes should be used only in situations where additional programming to the database must be done (and that you cannot do through DCU). Notes stating the desired meeting days/times (eg: TR 1000-1115), the desired room assignment (eg: prefers CL 435), the desired Room Type (eg: must be a smart room), or arrangements with other academic units (eg: must be at ___ day/time in order to coordinate with Faculty of ___) are both unnecessary and ineffective. The system evaluates all Time Requests, Room Requests, Instructor Unavailabilities, Scheduling Ties, Blockoffs, Alternate Room Types, Alternate Pavilions, Course Combinations, and a host of other factors in order to produce the master timetable. It will accommodate the needs of all stakeholders, assuming the scheduling data is accurate and is entered correctly (your job) and the database is programmed correctly (our job). The notes should reflect data you cannot otherwise enter in DCU but must be considered during the scheduling process. We will contact you should we need clarification on any of your notes.

As a fail-safe, it is suggested that you provide Aaron Boadway with a document containing all pertinent scheduling data for your academic unit. This can be as simple as a Word document containing instructor needs, component needs, room needs/unavailability, components that satisfy course combinations of other units, combinations of components that are to be conflict-free, including an expected number of students (these are called manually-created Academic Blocks), and any other scheduling data that may impact your timetable negatively if ignored. Keep in mind we can force back-to-back teaching or prevent it for some (or all) of your instructors.

Blackout Period

Once the DCU closes on September 8, 2014, you will not be able to access any of your scheduling data for up to one month while the database is programmed with your scheduling data, course combinations are installed, data is cleaned-up, the academic blocks are generated and validated, the timetable is created, the CRNs are validated and then transferred into Banner, and the final exam timeslots are assigned. You will get the opportunity to review your CRNs prior to public viewing on UR Self-Service, however. Before the DCU closes, we plan to provide you with a report which details all scheduled components and related data. Of course,

this will not include day/time or room assignments or CRNs. The Timetable staff works as efficiently as possible to get the master timetable to you in the shortest time possible.

Conclusion

The new timetabling system is powerful and highly complex. It requires a mountain of data input, database maintenance, time, effort, and coordination between the Registrar's Office and all academic units. The result of valid, complete, and accurate data entry is a master timetable that satisfies the vast majority of scheduling requests for all stakeholders. This system is very new to the U of R and its federated college partners and, as such, scheduling policy and procedures will evolve over time, so your unit's feedback is important. Please feel free to send your feedback/questions/concerns/suggestions to Time.Table@uregina.ca or Aaron.Boadway@uregina.ca .