



OHS Unit, Human Resources Division

OVERCROWDING IN TEACHING SPACES GUIDELINES

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Responsible Faculty/ Division & Unit	OHS Unit, Human Resources Division				
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of these guidelines					
References & Legislation	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (NSW) Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 (NSW) Occupational Health and Safety Policy				
Audience	Public – accessible to anyone				
Expiry Date of Guidelines	Not applicable				

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1 Introduction

1. Overcrowding of teaching areas increases the risk of injury to staff and students as it creates OHS hazards in relation to emergency egress, and the general safety of the work/study environment. Overcrowding takes the forms of occupation of aisles, staircases, doorways and introduction of excessive non-fixed furniture such as chairs. Overcrowding in teaching spaces presents
2. The University makes every effort to ensure that the total number of seats available for lectures, tutorials etc are not less than the total number of students enrolled. Detailed information, that determines the allocation of rooms and lecture theatres, is received from departmental timetabling officers to a central timetabling officer mid year for the following year's enrolments. Information includes: subject, main lecture or repeat lecture etc, day, time, theatre preference and estimated student numbers. This process is continually refined until session begins.
3. Notwithstanding detailed planning by University staff, unexpected changes in enrolments at the beginning of session make it difficult to reallocate areas appropriately, and where repeat lectures are available students will attend classes which match their timetable and personal preference. Overcrowding generally only presents as an issue in the first 2-3 weeks of semester.

2 Scope / Purpose

Not Available.

3 Definitions

Not Available.

4 Prevention

1. To avoid overcrowding and reduce the risk of injury, the following procedure should be followed:
 - 1.1. Teaching units have a responsibility to notify the central timetabling officer promptly when it is evident that a room allocation is not large enough to accommodate the class. Planning and notification by the teaching unit is vital in this regard.
 - 1.2. Similarly, notification should be made promptly when a room is no longer required or too large for the number of students.
 - 1.3. Where overcrowding is anticipated or occurs, units should reconsider the number and timing of repeat classes and make any suitable changes to the class schedule to try to accommodate the numbers.
 - 1.4. Students are not permitted to enter a teaching space before the end of the previous class and teaching staff should ask any student doing so to leave.
 - 1.5. If it is known that overcrowding is likely to occur, teaching staff should make it known that "seat saving" is not allowed and that all seats are occupied on a "first-in" basis.
 - 1.6. Once all seats are occupied teaching staff must instruct further students not to enter.
 - 1.7. At the end of a class, students need to vacate the teaching space via the designated exits. This will avoid the outgoing and incoming students colliding.

5 Instructions

1. If overcrowding has occurred, the following procedure should be followed:
 - 1.1. At the beginning of the class, the teaching staff member is to instruct those who do not occupy a seat to proceed to seats that have been saved or are vacant.
 - 1.2. The remaining students are asked to leave and return to the repeat class. In the event that there is no scheduled repeat class, student names should be taken and alternative arrangements for teaching planned by the Unit.
 - 1.3. If excess students refuse to vacate the teaching space, the following action should be taken:



- a. remind students of the obligations under Occupational Health and Safety legislation:
 - i. every employer shall ensure that persons not in his employment are not exposed to risks to their health or safety while they are at this place of work. (OH&S Act, 2000)
 - ii. every employee shall take reasonable care for the health and safety of persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work. (OH&S Act, 2000)
- b. excess students should again be asked to leave.
- c. if students do not leave, the following options are available:
 - i. call Security (Ext 4555) to request their assistance;
 - ii. refuse to begin, in effect cancelling the class.
- d. teaching staff must inform his/her Head of Unit and Dean of Faculty of the overcrowding issue and his/her actions.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to assist teaching staff with any difficulties experienced in relation to overcrowding of teaching spaces according to the following guidelines. These preventative and overcrowding guidelines must be followed by all teaching staff. Any concerns regarding overcrowding in teaching spaces are to be addressed to the Head of School.

7 Version Control & Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	June 1996	OH&S Manager	Document created.
2		OH&S Manager	Document updated to reflect current requirements.
3	November 2005	OH&S Manager	Document updated to reflect current requirements.
4	August 2008	OH&S Manager	Document updated to reflect current requirements.
5	6 May 2009	Vice Principal (Administration)	Migrated onto UOW Procedures Template as per Policy Directory Refresh
6	31 July 2009	OH&S Manager	Updated review date and MDR tag.
7	26 August 2010	Vice-Principal (Administration)	Updated to reflect divisional name change from Personnel Services to Human Resources Division
8	Autumn session 2011	University Council	Updated to reflect the rescission of the Code of Practice – Students.