

Academic Scheduling: FAQs

How are classrooms assigned each semester?

University classrooms are assigned by the Academic Scheduling office in **two** phases.

Initial Room Assignment

Once department scheduling coordinators submit their edits during the initial scheduling deadline for classroom placement, software (a component of 25Live) is then used to automatically assign classrooms to thousands of sections. The software takes into account the following parameters when determining where to place sections:

- Campus
- Section capacity
- Requested classroom technology

The software does NOT consider any of the following when assigning classrooms:

- Past room placements for a specific section
- Offering history for a specific section
- Past enrollment numbers for a specific section

Once this process is complete, the Academic Scheduling staff then reviews all of the data to ensure that no single department lost out (did not receive a room) on a scale more significant than any other. Additionally, the entire university class schedule and all open space are reviewed and assessed to determine whether any more classes might be hand-placed into rooms. The departments are then given a second opportunity to review their schedules and make changes (see Subsequent Room Assignment).

The entire process is designed to ensure fair and equitable room placement across every single department and college.

Subsequent Room Assignment

Once the initial room assignments are released back to the academic units for review, any remaining available space is then allocated on a first-come/first-served basis via the department scheduling coordinator's requests (made in CourseLeaf CLSS). Sections which did not receive a room assignment must be resolved by the department scheduling coordinator via the following options:

- Request an alternate time (subject to room availability).
- Swap classes internally within department.
 - Eg if Class A did not receive a room but is deemed high priority, the department may request that the room previously given to its own Class B instead be given to Class A.

Sections may only remain on the schedule if they have a room placement.

Why are the semester deadlines for schedule edits so far in advance of the actual term?

Deadlines are set in order to offer units the maximum amount of time to make changes to their schedule while also giving Academic Scheduling staff enough time to run the room scheduling software, run data-quality reports, and do general scheduling clean-up in Banner. All of those processes must be in place before both the schedule is published and before registration for that term.

Why did so many of my department's classes not receive a room this semester?

Several factors determine whether a section receives a room placement or not, including:

- Time-block: rooms are most often requested on M/W/T/R across the 10:30am-4:15pm time-blocks. Scheduling a class during these times can decrease the likelihood that a room might be assigned, simply because the demand is so high.
- Classroom technology: certain types of rooms are less numerous than others (e.g. student computer classrooms, video-conferencing rooms, large 150+ classrooms)

A month ago, I asked for a room at a certain time-block during the initial room run and my class was not placed. A colleague just now asked for a section at the same time, and s/he received a room. Why?

As the start of the semester nears, rooms often open up as classes are cancelled or shifted around. Rooms are first-come/first-served. A room that was not available a week ago might open up some days later. The Scheduling Office reviews each request individually and checks for open space for every single request. The open space pool is constantly changing because of the volume of requests we receive. The Scheduling Office adheres to the following practices:

- There is no waiting list for sections needing classrooms.
- The Scheduling Office does not hold space for any department.
- The Scheduling Office does not hold space for overflow, backfill, or any other unique reason. All classroom space is utilized during all periods of the scheduling cycle.

Is there a waiting list for a time-block/specific room type?

The Scheduling Office does not maintain waiting lists of any type for classroom assignments due to the volume of requests we receive on a daily basis.

Previously, we maintained a list of classes which were scheduled in rooms with no technology, but which needed technology-enabled spaces. Beginning Fall 18, all classrooms will have some sort of technology (BYOD minimum), and therefore this waiting list no longer exists.

Why must I communicate with my department scheduling coordinator? Why can't I just go straight to the Scheduling Office?

The Scheduling Office currently consists of three full-time staff members who serve the entire university. Department scheduling coordinators receive regular communications from the Scheduling Office and are therefore apprised of all changes to policies, classroom inventory, and more. Department scheduling coordinators know exactly what information the Scheduling Office needs in order to process a request in a timely and efficient manner.

I have taught the same class at the same time every year for the past ten years, and this is the first year I did not receive a classroom. Is that a mistake?

Rooms are assigned based on requested time-block, technology, and size. Past placement or offering history are not determining factors in classroom placements.

Does the Scheduling Office take rooms away from classes?

Once initial room assignments are released, the Scheduling Office will never take a room away from a section unless:

- The department scheduling coordinator instructs us to remove the room and put the class elsewhere or cancel it.
- A section has '0' enrollment a week before the first day of class. In this case, the Scheduling Office will email the coordinator to ask if the section will still be offered or if the room may be given to someone else.
- A section is hidden on Patriot Web before registration. Departments will often create 'shadow' sections which they intend to open only if their open sections overflow. If we receive a class request at a time when a 'shadow' section is scheduled, the Scheduling Office will email the coordinator to ask if they still intend to offer that section or if the room may be given to someone else.
- Under extraordinary circumstances, the Scheduling Office may have to contact the instructor regarding a conflict. In such cases, the Scheduling Office strives to find a replacement room as soon as possible.

Classrooms assignments, however, are subject to change. Instructors are always advised to consult Patriot Web the day before their first day of class to confirm their teaching location. The room assignment listed on Patriot Web reflects where the class should be meeting.

Why is my room assignment on Patriot Web different from what it was a month ago?

The class schedule is constantly in flux up until the last day to add for a semester. As classes are cancelled or as enrollment grows beyond the capacity of the initially-assigned room, room assignments often switch.

Room changes may occur for the following reasons:

- ADA request: Mason's Disability Services Office often contacts the Scheduling Office to move a section for accessibility purposes. If a suitable open room is not available, the Scheduling Office will swap rooms with another class. We are required by federal law to find a suitable space in order to fulfill such requests.
- Enrollment exceeds room capacity: if a section enrolls beyond the capacity of the classroom, the Scheduling Office will move the class into a larger open space or swap it into a larger space.
- Classroom technology: if a section is in a classroom which has more/different technology than what was requested, it may be swapped out if another section comes along that requires that specific technology. The most common example would be for classes requesting video-conferencing.

Important:

The Scheduling Office will only ever swap a class into a room of equivalent technology type. We will never move you into a classroom with less technology than what was originally requested.

Notifications:

Because such swaps occur frequently, the Scheduling Office will only notify the affected department if the swap occurred less than two weeks before the first day of class. Instructors should always confirm their room assignment on Patriot Web the day before their first day of class.

Where can I find out more about Academic Scheduling at Mason?

<https://registrar.gmu.edu/facultystaff/scheduling/>