

LECTURE VENUE STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS 2022

INTRODUCTION

Lecture venues act as a vehicle for delivery of teaching and learning in the University. Without a strategy and operational direction, maintenance and upkeep becomes reactive, causing frustration amongst the users of the venues. This document seeks to bring together the different operational legs as well as address the strategic direction that will guide budget requests year on year, as well as inform budget decision makers when funds are scarce. This document should be read in conjunction with Appendix A and Appendix B, supporting documentation for the Timetable and Lecture Venue Oversight Committee. Strategic plans for Teaching and Learning and the decision to remain a contact university with postgraduate growth and some hybrid forms of teaching inform the direction that the Lecture Venue Oversight Committee should take when making decisions. Covid-19 changed the landscape considerably and whilst sustainability is key to the success of Rhodes University, hybrid and distance models of teaching will become evident over the next few years.

GLOSSARY

Timetable (TT)	The allocation of venues and lecture periods throughout the day to courses within the academic program
Lecture Venue (LV)	A room on campus where teaching and learning takes place
Central LV	A room or lecture venue used in the academic program and assigned according to the timetable requirements and size of a class at the beginning of year
I&TS	Information and Technology Services
IOPS	Infrastructure and Operations
CCS	Central Cleaning Services
Ed-Tech	A section within CHERTL wherein teaching technologies are tested and adopted
IPC	Institutional Planning Committee
BEC	Budget Executive Committee
LVOC	Lecture Venue Oversight Committee

PARTS MAKE A WHOLE

Lecture Venues at Rhodes University have never had a dedicated area responsible for all parts of the whole. For many years the budget for lecture venues was managed by a committee with various sections of the University being responsible for the operational roll out of projects and maintenance. In 2019, two posts in the Lecture Venue Facilities office were moved to I&TS. Strategically this could not have come at a better time as the next two years were mostly concerned with distance and hybrid adoption for teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst challenges were new and often frustrating, the outcome has been that the Lecture Venue Oversight Committee (LVOC) has evolved into a functional team, aware of each other's role and the result is that lecture venues are being revamped and modernized at a rate that is financially sustainable for the University.

The roles within the committee are clear.

I&TS	Responsible for ensuring technology is working and supported during academic term as well as modernizing as technology evolves. I&TS ensures that the technology fits within the University technology landscape. I&TS allocates the timetable to the venues at the start of the year and assists with moves and changes when required.
Student Techs	Student techs are employed by I&TS to respond when the lecturer requires assistance. Response is triggered by a WhatsApp message in a LV group.
IOPS	Infrastructure and Operations are responsible for maintenance of the lighting, electrical points, air-conditioners, fabric, seating and tables in lecture venues.
CCS	Responsible for the cleaning of lecture venues
EdTech	Responsible for adoption and training of technology within the academic departments and also for scanning the horizon for changes in T&L in the future
IPC	Institutional Planning Committee sets the strategy for contact and distance teaching culminating in an agreed Enrolment plan. Growth can be planned for by aligning the budget to the enrolment plan growth areas.
CPU	CPU are responsible for locking and opening of venues

Recommendation

- 1. The LVOC recommends that the IPC and T&L Committees set the strategy and the LVOC continues to manage the operational requirements for lecture venues**
- 2. ARCHIBUS is the preferred method of reporting faults unless the assistance is for the actual lecture at hand via the WhatsApp group**

CHALLENGES

Besides budget constraints which are obvious, there have been, and still are, some challenges related to the lecture venue management and strategy.

Lecture venues are divided into centrally booked and departmentally booked venues. The University Space Use Policy states that all space is University space and must be used for the University needs first. The reality is that departments hold on to the space, creating an impression of activity within the space and restricting the use of the space for central needs.

Bookings are not put onto the central booking system and movement of lectures and tutorials within the TT are difficult to plan.

Requests for support – on demand and upgrades - have overflowed from central venues into all venues and there is not enough capacity, financial or human to support all and be everything to everyone.

Ad hoc booking of venues remains a challenge. Conference bookings and the perception that I&TS will deliver a technology to a venue off campus remains a problem. Conferences and ad hoc student bookings in venues outside of after-hours results in venues being “broken” for start of lectures the following day. Often there are after-hour venue bookings which require technical support, and the only way to support that, is with student techs.

Batteries and mice are removed from venues, cables disappear and the settings are fiddled with so that the default settings for lectures no longer function.

Co-ordination of maintenance requests over the past few years has been difficult, but in 2022 has definitely seen a turnaround. Similarly with cleaning and locking and opening of venues.

The timetable allocation programme is difficult to use and results in a very senior I&TS staff member running the batches and making the changes. Over time, this should be changed to be done via CELCAT, a modern front-end GUI technology that will result in an administrator being able to process the timetabling.

Recommendations

- 3. All bookings, including ad hoc student and conference bookings, should be on the central booking system. The central booking system should remain with the Registrar's Division and communication between the various teams - Lecture Venues and Timetabling - must be adequately managed**
- 4. Students should not be allowed to book central lecture venues where hybrid and expensive technology is fitted without proper supervision. Sign off after use that all equipment is intact will be required**
- 5. Central Venues are to remain the priority for technical response and spend of budget**
- 6. Over time, the departmental venues must move into the central lecture venue realm; budget and capacity must grow as the supported list grows**
- 7. Budget for technology and fabric/furniture should remain two separate budgets (under I&TS and IOPS resp.) but plans for major refurbishment of venues must incorporate both budgets and be approved by Major Projects**
- 8. Lecture Venue norms and standards must be guided by IDP strategy as well as venue size and usage. A norm/standard may not necessarily result in a tick box of items as some venues may not be designed for some technologies or might have specialised needs**
- 9. CPU must continue to secure the venues - open at the start and close securely at the end of the day. CPU receive emails that a booking is after hours and must open and lock up securely**
- 10. CCS must continue to clean the lecture venues every morning and report faults in the vicinity of the venues to Infrastructure and Operations via ARCHIBUS**
- 11. Timetabling and Lecture Venue Oversight committees must continue to work together when moves and changes are required**
- 12. Timetabling Committee should create a protocol to guide lecture allocations**
- 13. CELCAT Timetabler should be enhanced to manage the Timetable allocations and the administration of timetabling should ideally move away from I&TS once it has been properly supported with tools that make it an administrative function.**
- 14. LVOC and Timetabling committee must be kept informed when venues are removed or decommissioned due to refurbishments or re-deployment.**

STANDARDS

Standards can broadly be fitted into three categories: small, medium and large lecture venues. However, design and layout as well as dominant use of a venue may adjust the technology, refurbishment cycle and spend for a particular venue. Once a standard has been agreed, each venue should be categorized and a projected cost to get the venue to the standard should be recorded on the register. Exceptions and deviations to the standard should be recorded in an inventory. Budget request and budget refurbishment cycles should be guided by the inventory and appetite for allocation of budget for the venue. Standards should be reviewed annually to ensure that changing technology is being implemented. IPC approves the standards presented by the LVOC in the third quarter. The refurbishments, going forward, then follow the new standards.

The standard of equipment installed in lecture venues is dependent on the size of the venue. The aim is also to ensure that there are sufficient venues that adopt the latest technology to support teaching and learning.

The installation of technology into venues is driven by attempting to ensure that users of the venues find it easy to use and that changing of the setup of cabling, connections etc is kept to a minimum to ensure that the venues are always functional.

AUDIO VISUAL STANDARDS FOR LARGE VENUES

- Adequate data projector
- Good sound quality
- Microphones (lapel, gooseneck or handhelds).
- Document camera
- PC and laptop capabilities (HDMI)
- Recording capabilities (Zoom, recording functionality and adequate sound)
- Clocks are networked

- UPS to desktop and projector
- Backup power (generator/solar).

AUDIO VISUAL STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM VENUES

- Adequate data projector
- Good sound quality
- Document camera
- PC and laptop capabilities (HDMI)
- Clocks are networked

- UPS to desktop and projector
- Backup power (generator/solar).

AUDIO VISUAL STANDARDS FOR SMALL VENUES

- Adequate data projector
- PC and laptop capabilities (HDMI)

- UPS to desktop and projector
- Backup power (generator/solar)

In order to bring the venues up to the desired standards, at least one project will be undertaken every year. The following projects will be undertaken at the end of 2022:

1. Install HDMI in all venues which only have VGA projector capabilities (project plan to follow).
2. Document cameras will be installed in all large and medium venues (project plan to follow).
3. Art Major revamp – this will include seating, lighting, AV equipment (project plan to follow).

All of the projects for the end of 2022 will be funded by the Lecture Venue Budget. No further budget is required

LIGHTING STANDARDS

All large venues are fitted with dimmers or are arranged into “zones” where lighting can be switched on/off for certain areas. The future strategy is to ensure that all new or revamped venues are installed with dimmers.

TABULAR SUMMARY OF VENUE CONDITIONS 2022

Public Lecture Venues - 2022	Capacity	Category	Budget Cycle	Fit for Purpose	Recording Enabled	Document Camera	Amplifier	Speakers	HDMI/VGA
Barratt Lecture Theatre 1	411	L		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Barratt Lecture Theatre 2	411	L		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Eden Grove Lecture Theatre - Red	350	L		N	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Chemistry Major (Decommissioned)	320	L	Major Project	N	Y	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	HDMI
General Lecture Theatre	249	L		Y	Y	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Bioscience Major	235	L		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
BLT Education	200	L		N	Y	Y	None	None	HDMI/VGA
Arts Major	178	L	2022	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Chemistry Minor (decommissioned)	173	L	Major Project	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI
Steve Biko Lecture Venue (Old Bar)	170	L		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	None	None	N/A
Economics B	159	L		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
Eden Grove Lecture Theatre - Blue	150	L		N	N	Y	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Geography G11	132	L		Y	Y	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Psychology Major	128	L		N	Y	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
HKE Lecture Venue	120	L		Y	Y	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA

Botany Major	119	L		N	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	
Economics A	118	L		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
Bioscience Minor 1	99	L		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI
Bioscience Minor 2	99	L		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI
Geology C11	87	L		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
MLT Education	87	L		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	None	None	N/A
Graham Room Law	84	M		Y	Y	to be fitted 2022	None	None	
Moot Room Law	84	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	None	None	N/A
Steve Biko Seminar Room 1	80	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	
Arts Minor	79	M	2022	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Physics Upper	72	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	N/A
Council Chambers	70	M	Major Project	N	N	to be fitted 2022	None	None	
Geography G10	70	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	HDMI
St Peter's Room 34	70	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
St Peter's Room 36	60	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	N/A
Barratt Lecture / Seminar Room 3	58	M		N	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Sociology a	57	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
Sociology b	53	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	VGA
Physics Lower	44	M		Y	N	to be fitted 2022	Y	Y	N/A
Eden Grove Seminar Room 1	40	S		Y	N		Y	Y	VGA
Eden Grove Seminar Room 2	40	S		Y	N		Y	Y	VGA
Geography G09	40	S		Y	N		Y	N/A	
Botany Minor	35	S		N	N		Y	Y	VGA
Barratt seminar room 1	30	S		N	N	N	Y	Y	HDMI/VGA
Eden Grove Seminar Room 3	30	S		Y	N		Y	Y	HDMI
Steve Biko Seminar Room 4	30	S		Y	N				
Steve Biko Seminar Room 5	30	S		Y	N				
Barratt seminar room 2	20	S		N	N	N	Working	Working	HDMI/VGA

To summarise the 2022 Standards noting that not all the venues meet the agreed standards but the standards are what are being worked towards

	Large	Medium	Small
Adequate data projector	YES	YES	YES
Good sound quality	YES	YES	NO
Microphones (lapel, gooseneck or handhelds).	YES	NO	NO
Document camera	YES	YES	NO
PC and laptop capabilities (HDMI)	YES	YES	YES
Recording capabilities (Zoom, recording functionality and adequate sound)	YES	NO	NO
Clocks are networked	YES	YES	NO
UPS to desktop and projector	YES	YES	NO
Backup power (generator/solar)	YES	YES	NO

Recommendation

15. Creation of an inventory and categorisation of each venue and budget cycle allocation, as well as reason for deviations from the standards. Update the inventory as technologies change

TIMETABLING

As with lecture venues, timetabling should be guided by policy and principles. Allocation and movement of lectures to venues should be done with the university interest and not departmental interest as a guideline. Deans should be the decision makers regarding who gets what when there are supply and demand challenges. I&TS will juggle the allocation as best they can to find a fit for all but the final decision on who should get the hybrid venue or who can do without, who should teach twice on one day or who should be allocated a “dawnie” or a “5pm” should be agreed with the Deans. In some departments, lectures slots are requested and not used. A survey and “reality check” of lecture venue use is long overdue.

Recommendations

16. Timetabling Committee should meet to review the Terms of Reference and update for 2022

17. Timetabling Committee should meet at least twice a year for a status review

18. A review of the number of lectures, tutorials and practicals per week per course should be completed and recorded in a repository visible to the I&TS Division. As the pedagogy of teaching principles change, lecture venue requirements should similarly be reviewed and changed to enhance teaching and learning requirements

THE WAY FORWARD

Growth and modernization of technology and lecture venues should continue. Appropriate staffing and support mechanisms should be reviewed annually and should adapt to the demands. When there is growth, resources will need to increase and when, and if, there is a decrease in the number of venues required, resourcing should be adjusted.

CONTACTS

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APPENDIX A Lecture Venue Oversight Committee Rhodes University 2022

The membership of this committee must be in support of the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the University and incorporate the operational entities tasked with setting up and maintaining all aspects of lecture venues. It should consist of

1. A Chair person who is a member of the Academic staff appointed by the Vice- Chancellor
2. Chair of the Deans Forum
3. Deputy Director Facilities, Infrastructure and Operations
4. Manager: Electrical, Infrastructure and Operations
5. Deputy Director: Residential Operations
6. Director: I&TS
7. Manager Service Delivery, I&TS
8. Educational Technologist, CHERTL
9. TWO experienced members of the active teaching staff who use the venues under the committee's oversight, approved by Senate

The terms of reference should be defined by the Committee but broadly should cover

- Oversight of proposed budget spend for refurbishment for the following academic year
- Oversight of service delivery protocols and problems occurring within the technologies in the lecture venues and report back on resolution of recurring problems
- Facilitate delivery of Faculty as well as Teaching and Learning requirements to I&TS and Infrastructure and Operations
- Clear articulation of the Roles and Responsibilities with respect to Lecture Venues of:
 - o I&TS
 - o Infrastructure and Operations
 - o Registrar's Division
 - o Conferencing
 - o Campus Protection Unit
 - o Central Cleaning Services
- Procedures for booking venues, standby support when this is needed, reporting faults, and the mechanisms for ensuring that users are made aware of these.
- The committee should be a sub-committee of the Teaching and Learning Committee, and report bottlenecks and other operational problems to the

DVC: A&SA, the DVC R&I and
the CFO as appropriate to
the issue at hand

*Approved by /PC, 2 March 2020, revised Feb
2022.*

APPENDIX B Timetabling Committee Proposal

Proposal for the Timetable Committee Rhodes University 2020

Until recently, Professor Pat Terry has been the sole person who served as the Committee Timetable. The risk associated with such a singular/individual-based structure is enormous. Changes to the reporting lines of the Central Lecture Venues and Timetabling Support team resulted in a proposal that the Timetable Committee needs to be revived. It is proposed that the membership of this committee must be in support of the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the University and should consist of:

DVC Academic and Student Affairs

Deans of Faculties or alternatively Deputy Deans as elected by Dean

Director: Institutional Research, Planning & Quality Promotion

Director I&TS or representative

Registrar

The terms of reference should be defined by the Committee but broadly should cover

- Policy development regarding Timetable venue and times
- Oversight of operational setting of the Timetable slots and departmental allocation
- Recommendations regarding hurdles limiting best fit of resources e.g. temporary venues to be used when refurbishment projects remove major lecture venues from the system for periods of time
- Decision-making regarding adoption of new programmes and subjects and timetable grouping
- The Committee will receive reports and updates regarding decisions taken but will delegate the operation to the I&TS Division. - Setting the timetable and movement of the classes to fit within the available venues will be processed by the team in MIS in I&TS.
- The committee should be a sub-committee of IPC similar to the sub committees of Size and Shape and Infrastructure and Planning.

Approved by IPC, 2 March 2020