

University of Exeter Business School

Evolving our Space Policy for 2022/23

Communications sent to all UEBS colleagues on 18th November 2022

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to share an overview of the School's evolving approach to the use of space, which we will be beginning to implement throughout the remainder of this academic year. We are focussing on how we allocate office space and make space available which is conducive to the working environment we want for our colleagues and students, and is responsive to the flexibility and variety of needs across the school. We are doing so in line with the wider University project in this area, now known as Workplace 2030.

We have an opportunity to think differently about how we use our space, such that this becomes a positive distinguishing feature of our community. Fundamental to this is our **commitment to ensuring a supportive, inclusive, flexible working environment for all colleagues, enabling them to undertake the highest quality of research, teaching, student support and external engagement.**

Our revised Space Policy for 2022/23 is available [online, alongside a set of Frequently Asked Questions](#). We are moving away from a default approach to allocating offices to individuals, toward a more flexible approach prioritising individual needs and utilising a variety of bookable spaces (for individuals and for collaborative working). We recognise that this is a potentially significant, cultural shift, which is why we will be taking a measured, phased approach over the coming weeks and months – we must regard this as the first step in a journey, on which we can expect the wider university, and sector, to follow. We are keen to engage all colleagues in this process, to consult with you on your needs and current use of space, and how we can improve the working environment for all in a sustainable fashion.

Over the next few weeks, Heads of Department will be leading discussions with you, with a focus on individual needs and a case-by-case approach. We will then provide an opportunity for you to feedback and confirm your preferences and requirements for space, and from early in the Spring Term begin to implement this new approach.

Some key principles should be outlined at this point, which will inform our approach to implementing the revised Policy:

- There will always be dedicated, allocated space available to colleagues who require it, according to the principles of the Space Policy. This accounts for needs according to individual circumstances (including accessibility requirements), as well as requirements of particular role-holders, and those who commit to using an office for more than 60% of the time. A one-size-fits all, rule-based approach will not work here; allocations should be undertaken in dialogue between Heads of Department and individuals, using the combination of the above criteria as a framework.
- We are committed to ensuring flexible, bookable spaces which meet a range of requirements for colleagues, including shared and private working space, informal collaboration spaces and formal meeting space.
- We want to ensure that our use of space is conducive to strong academic communities within our Departments and their constituent units, including thinking about student learning communities. At the same time, our spaces should encourage collaboration across Departments.

We know that this approach represents a significant change to the way in which many of us are used to working, and that there will be challenges for us to work through in taking it forward. I am also very excited by the opportunity we have here, to foster a working environment which reflects the collaborative, innovative ethos of the School and becomes a distinguishing, attractive factor which underpins our future success. I would really encourage colleagues to engage in this spirit, and to know that your feedback will be essential to the success of this approach.

Later in November, we will communicate further on next steps which will be overseen by Jonnie Critchley (School Manager), working with myself and Matt Davey (Deputy Director of Faculty Operations). Do please speak to your Head of Department in the first instance with any feedback or queries. For further information, please see the [FAQs](#) on our website which will be updated regularly.

Best wishes,
Alex

Professor Alexandra Gerbasi, Ph.D.

(she/her)

Dean and Professor of Leadership
University of Exeter Business School

Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor
Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy