

University of Exeter Business School Space Policy

Update for 22/23

Date of this version: 17th November 2022

Introduction

The Business School space policy has been updated to:

- a) recognise the changing way in which we choose to work due to changes in digital technology;
- b) meet the growing needs of our estate in line with a growth of the school and specifically in academic staff and;
- c) recognise the School and University's commitment to carbon neutrality.

In the last year several surveys and reviews have been undertaken to understand working practices (office, blended, off campus) of our staff. These have reviewed both intended and actual usage of offices and spaces, with an emphasis on a holistic view of space usage and not on the monitoring of individuals.

Recognising that such evaluation can never be fully comprehensive, and that due caution should be taken in interpretation, key findings included:

- Overall average occupancy of 28%;
- From review of 93 single-use academic offices, the survey results found that 71% had less than 50% occupancy and 64.5% had less than 40% occupancy.
- From review of 45 multiple occupancy rooms (including bookable meeting spaces), the survey found that 100% had less than 50% occupancy and 95.6% less than 40% occupancy.
- Bookable meeting rooms (G01 and G09) were found to be unused during the survey checks.
- Overall average occupancy by department was less than 50% in all cases, the highest percentage being Economics with 43%.

This evaluation indicates a gap between planned and actual office usage, and opportunities to better optimise our use of space to contribute to the strength of our academic communities and ensure a supportive, inclusive, flexible working environment for all colleagues.

As a result of the surveys, in year, we have adapted a number of offices space to provide a larger provision for touchdown spaces and bookable meeting spaces. We will continue to adapt further spaces in this way throughout 2022/23.

If we maintain our current policy for office allocation, planned office usage is at capacity (whilst recognising our usage is very low) and in 22/23 we have c35 staff joining us in the months of September and October. A good reason to amend our space policy to accelerate the make-up of our estate.

It is recognised that the changes outlined below will be met with a level of resistance. A strong leadership position will be required, supported with a robust, positive narrative to articulate the exciting, changing nature of the workplace and the community and culture that as a school we wish to build.

This policy aligns closely with the institutional Workplace 2030 (formerly Adaptive Estates) Project, and we will continue to engage with this project and the [Future of Work](#) workstream, to evaluate the potential to repurpose our space to meet our long-term aspirations to build on our evolving culture and sense of community.

New Space Principles for 22/23

As set out above (a-c), we need to change and adopt a new set of principles for office allocation. These are predicated upon an approach which prioritises individual needs and which utilises a variety of bookable spaces to create a supportive, inclusive, flexible working environment.

These principles should be initially applied to our facilities at Streatham, a separate assessment will be made for Penryn in 22/23.

Space allocation will be overseen by the Business School Manager (BSM), led by the Head of Department (HOD), and supported by the ASA and Estates teams. Emphasising an individualised, case-by-case basis, as a team they will primarily consider:

- a) the specific specialised needs and circumstances of individual staff
- b) If the member of staff holds a significant leadership role,
- c) The percentage of time the member of staff plans to spend in the office
- d) How staff intend to use the office and

It is recommended that:

- **staff with documented accessibility needs or need pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion matters, should qualify for their own office;**
- **those who hold a leadership role should qualify for their own office (it will be necessary to qualify what is meant by a 'leadership role'; it is anticipated that HoDs should judge this when reviewing staff responses holistically, with a view to making pragmatic, consistent decisions)**
- **staff who spend greater than c60%* of their time in the office, should qualify for an office/shared office**
- **all other staff will be asked to share an office, use touchdown space, book meeting spaces, and/or remotely work.**

Additional principles to be applied:

1. There will always be dedicated, allocated space available to colleagues who require it, according to the criteria above.
2. To support a sense of community, wherever possible, staff will be located close to other members of the department.
3. The space needs of new starters should be identified and planned well in advance and communicated to the incoming member of staff in good time.
4. The capacity of our estate provides flexibility to recognise that individual working patterns and the needs of staff may change.

5. Staff are asked to communicate their movements (e.g. leave (annual and sick) to their ASA to facilitate and manage any urgent office requests.
6. In the overall allocation of space, the HOD, BM and ASA team will take into the consideration the needs of the needs of our staffing establishment. For example, Occasional Lecturers, Honorary fellows, Visiting academics: official visiting professors or scholars.
7. That the HOD and the ASA request that staff leaving the employment of the University are asked to vacate their room within one week of the conclusion of their contract.

Space allocation process

Staff will be asked to confirm to their HOD and ASA their preferred working arrangements for the year ahead.,

Other useful information:

1) Dialogue and Appeals process

An individualised approach is emphasised, with colleagues encouraged to discuss their requirements with their Head of Department (and/or Line Manager), who will be supported by the School Manager. Any member of staff who wishes to appeal their allocation of space should contact their HOD; these will be discussed with the BSM.

2) Continual Review

The HOD, ASA team and BSM will continually review the ongoing implementation of this policy, including assessing space usage. This may require changes to allocations made through the policy, which will be handled through dialogue between individuals and their HOD.

3) Booking an office or meeting room

Staff who occupy shared office space will be entitled to book private space for meetings/consultations with students, as well as a variety of other spaces for individual and collaborative work. An online booking system will be established, to be managed by the Academic Support Administration (ASA) Team.

4) Storage

For staff who require ad-hoc storage, lockers will be made available. Staff are asked to speak with their ASA team for information.

For staff who do not qualify for an office/shared office belongings (including books) should be taken home. Where this is not possible speak with your ASA team who will liaise with the BSM and HoD to agree a sensible solution and provision.

5) Blended working/remote working

In line with the school's IT policy:

- 1) every effort will be made to ensure staff have the equipment required to successfully complete their role. Staff should utilise the IT helpdesk for support/requests.
- 2) we will not however duplicate IT set-up. It is the responsibility of staff to decide their primary work location.