

# TEACHING SPACE COORDINATION GROUP

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## 1 VERSION CONTROL TABLE

Latest changes to the report are highlighted in turquoise

Version No.	Purpose/Change	Date
4.	First draft released for consultation	8/10/20
5.	<b>1.</b> – <b>P7</b> Section 3.1.1 Approach (coordination) – added a section on coordination of factors outside of remit of TSCG. <b>2.</b> – <b>P16</b> Section 6.5 Deliverables (IT/AV) Added provision of instructions for use of IT/AV in UAS spaces and to access support. <b>3.</b> – <b>P16</b> Section 6.6 Deliverables (communication and coordination) – added bid for funding. <b>4.</b> - <b>P22</b> Section 9, Next Steps- added production of a case study on the use of IT/AV for hybrid teaching by Engineering Services based at Ewert Hall Exam Hall. <b>5.</b> - <b>P22</b> Section 9, Next steps - added an action to agree reporting protocol for financial spend for IT/AV and costs related to the sharing of space. <b>6.</b> – <b>P22</b> Section 9 Next Steps – added an action to follow up a bid for funding for a range.	12/10/20
6.	TSCG approved - Final	13/10/20
7.	Commercial, sensitive and personal data removed, also appendices, to allow for University wide access via Focus website.	30/3/21

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## Project Background

### 2.1 CONTEXT

The Covid-19 outbreak and the associated lockdown in early 2020 resulted in all teaching moving to online delivery for Trinity Term 2020. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, the University made the decision to offer a blended approach to teaching in Michaelmas Term 2020. University lectures and teaching for large groups would continue online and departments would be expected to offer as much in-person teaching as possible for smaller groups within the constraints of current social distancing regulations and the teaching space available.

The use and management of teaching space within the University is largely devolved to departments which make decisions about when and how their teaching space is used. Previous studies of teaching space usage across the University have demonstrated a high degree of under-utilisation and identified a number of obstacles to more effective use of space through sharing. It was anticipated that in order to optimise the blend of online and in-person teaching, an approach that overcame these obstacles and facilitated the sharing of space would be needed.

### 2.2 PROBLEM

The overall problem was how to ensure that the University could meet its commitment to deliver in-person teaching across all departments, equitably and consistently in the context of the decentralised management of teaching space. A Focus Teaching Space Utilisation Project undertaken during 2019 had identified a number of obstacles to space-sharing, including:

- Cross charging for use of space.
- Different planning timescales across the University resulting in some departments making space available too late for it to be used by others.
- Multiple room-booking systems in use across the University preventing visibility of space and its availability.
- Departments making 'just-in-case' bookings of their space, preventing its use by others and often resulting in the space being left unused.
- Restricted access to buildings.
- Lack of incentives for sharing space with others and a general reluctance to do so.

In addition to these longstanding obstacles to space-sharing, there were a number of issues specific to the problem that TSCG had been asked to tackle:

#### **Teaching Space Supply:**

- A reduction in teaching space capacity across the Collegiate University due to social distancing regulations and the potential unsuitability of some spaces for teaching due to the risk of Covid transmission.
- Lack of up-to-date information about teaching spaces, their capacities at 2m social distancing, and other available facilities e.g. IT/AV and disabled access

- Requirement for all teaching spaces to be risk assessed for Covid transmission before availability of a room for teaching could be confirmed.
- At least 13 different room booking systems in place across the University creating challenges in implementing a single, unified booking process.

**Demand:**

- Lack of information about likely demand for teaching space to accommodate in-person teaching and the extent to which departments would be able to accommodate this themselves
- Departments working to different timescales for planning and arranging teaching
- Greater uncertainty than usual about student numbers for Michaelmas Term due to Covid, and late, due to changes in decisions about how A level grades would be awarded.

The project was being undertaken in the context of constant change, often being implemented at very short notice. Changes to government guidance on social distancing as lockdown eased, changing University guidance to reflect this and to ensure policies reflected the most up to date health and safety and medical advice, and the reversal of decisions around the awarding of A level grades had particular impact on the assessment of supply of and demand for space and caused delay which had to be accommodated within the overall programme

### 2.3 IMPACT OF PROBLEM

The impact of the problem would be on the ability of the collegiate University to meet its commitment for all students to receive in-person teaching and for that provision to be broadly equitable across all programmes of study. As a consequence, some students' expectations might not be met, and the quality of their experience undermined, creating a risk to the University's reputation and the possibility of student complaints and requests for repayment of tuition fees.

There was also the potential for the University to incur additional, avoidable costs arising from the use of commercial space for teaching if University space was left unused due to the absence of arrangements for effective space-sharing.

### 2.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Teaching Space Coordination Group (TSCG) was set up by the Michaelmas Term Coordination Group (MCG) to support departments and divisions in identifying their teaching space requirements and to facilitate the efficient and effective use of space available across the University to meet these. Specifically, TSCG was tasked with:

- Assessing the overall quantum of teaching space available for use in Michaelmas Term under social distancing conditions across the collegiate University
- Liaising with divisions and colleges to assess the overall demand for teaching space in Michaelmas Term
- Proposing a policy or set of principles to enable the sharing of teaching spaces across the collegiate University (including both University and college venues).
- Overseeing the development of processes and implementation of a simple booking system for shared teaching spaces, building on the work of the Focus Shared Teaching Space project

The full remit of the TSCG is set out in its Terms of Reference in **Appendix 1**

### 3 PEOPLE AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT

**Appendix 2** identifies the colleagues involved in the project as TSCG members or members of the project group. The role of TSCG members was to act as the representatives of the divisions and colleges and to provide feedback to the project group in terms of development of policy, timelines, processes and check and test of the implementation of the booking process. The Divisional leads acted as a central point of contact for the departments and faculties. In addition, the group was joined by the Oxford University Events Team (OUEV) in supporting the booking enquiry process.

The TSCG co-chairs are grateful to the members of the Group for their commitment and contribution to the project and to colleagues from across the University who supported and contributed to the project.

The project had close links with other stakeholders across the University for their subject matter expertise including; governance groups (RTOSW, BCP, ESG, SECG, College Teaching Space Project, MCG, Bronze, Silver) other professional services; AAD, communications teams, Estates Services, Finance, Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Safety Office, IT Services, Said Business School.

A 'check and test group' involving departmental and divisional staff was also set up on Teams to enable the project team to share proposals and draft guidance and obtain feedback before these were implemented.

### 4 APPROACH

#### 4.1 GENERAL APPROACH

The TSCG was co-chaired by the Director of Estates and the Senior Tutor at Balliol College and the group included a college representative. This was in order to support an approach that took account of available space and teaching requirements across the collegiate University.

Due to the level of uncertainty within colleges regarding arrangements for Michaelmas Term, particularly in respect of student numbers, it was not possible for colleges to take part in TSCG planning and information gathering activities within the timescales agreed by TSCG. Instead, planning information and updates were shared between colleges and TSCG as they became available and space sharing between departments and colleges has been arranged locally as opportunities arise.

TSCG was asked to create a process for sharing and using space in Michaelmas Term but that could be applied in subsequent terms if restrictions were still in place.

The project was split into five workstreams, each with their own project lead but working closely together to coordinate work and develop an end to end process for matching demand for teaching space with the teaching space available to accommodate this.

The Focus methodology and tools were used to diagnose problems and design and test solutions. The Focus approach to daily updates was used effectively for both the project as a whole and for the booking process to maintain oversight of resources and progress, to ensure effective communication of project and other information, to raise concerns and identify solutions, to share and act upon learning and to celebrate success.

#### 4.1.1 Coordination

Coordination with other groups and colleagues across the University was a core element of the TSCG approach. From early on in the project, TSCG and the Lab Teaching Working party (LTWP) recognised the need to coordinate their work. The groups shared a planning timeline, undertook some joint reporting, conducted a shared teaching space demand survey and used a shared project management resource.

As the project progressed, it became clear that there were a number of factors that did not fall within the remit of TSCG but were relevant to the provision of space to facilitate the successful delivery of in-person teaching. In order to ensure that teaching spaces were fit to purpose and that a, TSCG coordinated work with IT/AV, the Safety Office, CTL and the Disability Advisory Service. TSCG is grateful to colleagues in these areas for their responsiveness to the issues raised and their commitment to finding and implementing solutions.

## 4.2 WORKSTREAM A – SUPPLY OF TEACHING SPACE

### 4.2.1 Assessment of overall quantum of teaching space available for MT20

The general approach taken to establishing space supply was to use space information held centrally and to supplement this with data obtained from departments.

Two data collection exercises were carried out. The initial exercise was to gauge overall the quantum of space potentially available for in-person teaching and to correct any out-of-date information held centrally. Information on IT/AV facilities and disabled access was also collected.

The second data collection exercise was carried out after departments had calculated space capacities at 2m social distancing, undertaken risk assessments and, therefore, provided a clearer picture of spaces suitable for in-person teaching. It was timed to coincide with the date by which departments had been asked to complete bookings of their own space so that they could indicate whether any of their space was now available for sharing.

The TSCG project team was conscious of the pressure that departments were under and sought to minimise the impact of the data collection by providing spreadsheets pre-populated with information already available for departments to update as necessary.

The data collected formed the basis of a searchable database of teaching space that was later used in the booking process when searching for space that was suitable to satisfy booking requests.

The approach to assessing space available for teaching also included looking outside of the University estate and included:

- A search of large College lecture theatres, including their capacities, which were added to the database. A Conference-led survey of large lecture theatres provided information about

the likelihood of these becoming available for the University to book and this was used to supplement the information held about college space

- Reviewing large venues within the University estate, which could be used, potentially, as teaching space if required:
  - Exam Schools\*
  - Sheldonian\*
  - St Luke's Chapel\*
  - Ewert House Exam Hall\*
  - Sports Halls at Iffley Road
  - Careers Centre

The spaces marked \* were subsequently brought into use for teaching purposes.

- A commercial search to identify spaces outside of the University which could be used for teaching should additional space be required. Information was gathered and regularly updated to provide:
  - Booking/leasing costs
  - Availability
  - Room capacities
  - Other venue considerations (capacity cap etc.)

The commercial search was limited to the city centre and a few close to the ring road as historically departments have only considered space within the city centre. Some venues could not provide appropriate facilities or were not sufficiently large to accommodate small teaching classes under social distancing. A number were already hired out for community projects. Ascertaining availability for some venues was difficult due to their own uncertainty about re-opening.

A list of the commercial venues identified as suitable for teaching use is provided at **Appendix 3**

Although it has not been necessary to use any commercial space identified to meet booking requests, it should be noted that Said Business School entered into a separate lease arrangement with the Oxford Playhouse, through the normal Estates governance approvals arrangements. SBS has made available any times when it is not using the Playhouse for its own teaching for other departments to book. To date it has been necessary to place only one booking at the Playhouse and this was later cancelled.

#### 4.2.2 Capacity planning

The Space Management team developed detailed guidance around capacity planning and safe use of space under social distancing for the Return to On Site Working (RTOSW) guidance document. In addition to providing support to departments this helped to ensure that information held about space capacity was accurate and reliable. The support included:

- A significant amount of work to determine capacity restrictions under social distancing.
- A number of worked examples to provide both percentage calculations and graphical representations to assist departments in calculating their own room capacities.



- As guidance developed, 1-metre, 1.5-metre and 2-metre social distancing points were considered along with their effect on room capacities.
- Detailed guidance on how to work out room capacities was produced.
- The Space Management Team provided support to departments to determine room capacities, with guidance and where appropriate, layout plans.

#### Lab teaching working party

The Space Management team also assisted the LTWP

- Developing initial guidance.
- Providing guidance and capacity planning support to the project and departments.
- Producing a number of worked examples to inform guidance and assist departments in determining their lab capacities.

Guidance on calculating capacities and worked examples of room layouts are provided in **Appendix 4 and Appendix 5**

### 4.3 WORKSTREAM B – DEMAND FOR TEACHING SPACE

#### 4.3.1 Teaching Space Demand Survey

Demand for teaching space was unknown at the start of the project and would remain uncertain until departments had completed their planning for Michaelmas Term teaching. In the absence of information about the amount of in-person teaching that departments were planning, class sizes, or the extent to which departments could accommodate this themselves, it was difficult to assess the processes TSCG would need to put in place to manage the use of space.

A Teaching Space Needs Survey (**Appendix 6**) was, therefore, carried out during July 2020 to obtain departments' initial assessment of:

- the amount of in-person teaching they were expecting to deliver
- expected class sizes
- whether they expected to be able to accommodate all of that teaching during core teaching hours and, if not, how they would seek to accommodate it, e.g., teaching in the evenings or at weekends, looking elsewhere for space available during core teaching hours
- whether they expected to have space available for other departments to book

Fifty-one departments responded to the survey and these responses, combined with information from the initial supply data collection exercise, enabled TSCG to establish that:

- The amount of in-person teaching being planned was higher than anticipated
- Class sizes were larger than expected
- Although a significant number of departments expected to be able to accommodate their own teaching and a third of departments expected to be able to release space for others to use, indications were that there was a potential shortfall in space to accommodate teaching involving larger group sizes (above 15 students) due to the reduced capacity of teaching spaces under social distancing and the level of demand for space to accommodate larger groups.

An analysis of the survey responses is provided in **Appendix 7**

#### 4.3.2 Confirming demand for teaching space

Actual demand for space would not be confirmed until after the date by which time departments had been asked to submit their requests for additional teaching space. The project team therefore used targeted, personal phone contact to keep abreast of developments in departments which:

- had indicated in the demand survey that they expected to seek space elsewhere or had space to share
- were expecting larger undergraduate intakes as a result of the use of Centre Assessed Grades for A Levels results
- were expecting to over-recruit to PGT courses

Potential challenges were thereby flagged in advance of booking requests being received.

The booking requests received reflected closely the expectations arising from responses to the initial space demand survey.

#### 4.4 WORKSTREAM C - POLICY

The project team began by developing a set of working principles that sought to:

- Address some of the known obstacles to space sharing that had been identified by the Focus Teaching Space Utilisation Project and reported to BESC in February 2020.
- Achieve equity in the delivery of in-person teaching across departments and student cohorts by taking into account unequal provision of teaching space across departments and prioritising space requests from departments with the least teaching booked in their own space.
- Avoid any department's space being left unused when it could have been used by another department by requiring departments only to book their space for confirmed teaching sessions.
- Ensure that the use of space was prioritised for teaching over commercial uses.
- Prioritise the needs of disabled students in the allocation of teaching space.

The full set of principles are set out in the Terms of Reference in **Appendix 1**.

A planning framework for matching demand for teaching space and supply of teaching space was developed based on these principles. The framework was split into three stages with associated timescales and activities. This was issued as guidance on 'Planning for the Safe Use of Teaching Space' within the RTOSW guidance document and included:

**Stage 1:** Departmental assessment of in-person teaching requirements (7-24 July 2020)

**Stage 2:** Review and confirm in-person teaching, book space and release space for others to use (by 14 August)

**Stage 3:** Submit booking enquiries (by 21 August)

A key aim of the framework was to introduce a common timetable for planning in-person teaching across departments to ensure that all departments were in a position to release their unused space for sharing at the same time.

Despite these principles and policies being in place to encourage and support departments to release their space for others to use, resistance to sharing space is entrenched and continued to be difficult to overcome. The majority of booking requests were allocated space in UAS buildings which, with the exception of Exam Schools, are not normally used for teaching. Very little departmental space was used to accommodate booking requests. In terms of using departmental space, the team relied heavily on the support and cooperation of the Oxford Martin School in making the Old Indian Institute available. A number of bookings were also placed at Manor Road Building where the space is not owned by an individual department but shared between three departments and managed by Estates.

The TSCG guidance is set out in **Appendix 8**.

## 4.5 WORKSTREAM D – PROCESS

Two processes were developed by TSCG to facilitate space-sharing; a process to defray additional costs arising from the use of a department's space by another department (**See 3.6 Finance, below**) and a process for departments to request and book space for teaching that they had been unable to accommodate in their own departmental space.

### 4.5.1 Booking process

Initially, the project team investigated options for introducing a single IT system approach to replace or complement the large number of different booking systems in place across the University. Under this approach, a single booking system would need to allow departments seeking space, as a minimum, to:

- Search for suitable space according to their requirements (room capacity, location, IT/AV)
- Check availability of the space
- Place a booking

The option of using one of the systems already in place, Planon or Outlook, was explored but not taken forward due to difficulties in importing data from other systems, the short space of time available to do this, and the additional work involved for departments themselves in making the data available in a suitable format. Other problems with a self-service online booking system included:

- How to ensure that the multitude of arrangements in place across the University to mitigate Covid transmission risk, e.g staggered start times, were observed during the booking process
- The risk of double booking if departments were able to continue to place bookings in their local booking system
- Difficulties involved in applying the priorities for space allocation set out in the principles for space sharing
- How to ensure that departments placing bookings received all necessary and up-to-date information about rules for safe use of the space

The IT approach was set to one side and a staffed booking enquiry team approach was pursued. This was made possible by the availability and willingness of the Oxford University Events Team to provide staff resource and expertise to support this approach during a time when Covid-19 prevented them from undertaking the normal organisation of events.

The Booking Enquiry Team comprises:

- the OUEV manager who provides management and oversight, 0.75 FTE
- Team members, 1.75 FTE, one of whom returned from furlough to provide support

In addition to dealing with all booking enquiries from departments and cancellations, the Team ensures that all information necessary for the safe use of a space is provided by the space owner and made available to the space user. The team acts as a point of contact for any issues that arise before the room is used. A document setting out the roles and responsibilities (see **Appendix 9**) of the space owner, space user and booking enquiry team was produced to ensure that all parties were clear about what was expected.

The booking enquiry team approach has a facilitated a process which:

- Is fully integrated with the collection and management of information about supply and demand.
- Makes use of the searchable database to identify space that meets the requirements of an enquiry. The database is regularly updated by the booking team as it receives new and updated information during the course of dealing with enquiries.
- Provides the option for the booking team to have either direct access to local booking systems or to liaise with departments about availability of their space, depending on the preference of the space owning department. This enables the space owner to maintain some control and oversight over what is happening in their space while allowing the Booking Enquiry Team to access information about room availability.
- Allows all booking requests to be reviewed and prioritised in accordance with the space sharing principles.
- Reduces the burden on both space bookers and owners who would otherwise have to undertake multiple searches themselves or respond to multiple enquiries from multiple sources.
- Enables more complex arrangements, such as staggered start times, to be observed.
- Ensures that key information about the safe use of space is passed on to the space user.
- Makes possible provision of a broader service to the customer than would otherwise have been possible including providing a contact and liaison point, escalating and resolving issues, helping with arrangements for site visits and inductions, ensuring all necessary arrangements for use of space, e.g. access to the building, have been covered.
- Enables learning to be captured and improvements made on a day-to-day basis.
- Builds confidence in both space owners and users around arrangements for space sharing.

The Booking Enquiry Team has successfully allocated University space to meet all booking requests received. As of the beginning of October, the following bookings had been confirmed and cancellations of bookings received and actioned:

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Minus cancelled</b>	<b>Live total</b>
Number of booking enquiries received	57	17	40
Number of Departments that have enquired	10	5	5
Number of programmes being taught	19	7	12
Number of teaching sessions in total	379	120	259
Number of hours of teaching in total	912.5	209.5	703

A detailed breakdown of bookings and cancellations as at 7 October 2020 is provided in **Appendix 10**.

Guidance to departments on the booking process and cancellations is set out in **Appendices 11-15**

#### 4.6 WORKSTREAM E - FINANCE

Finance policies have been developed to enable departments to share their space without the worry of this negatively impacting their budgets.

TSCG was also conscious that Departments should be able to request additional space based on teaching need and not on available budget. Given that the group were working in a changing landscape and it was unknown whether there would be further changes once term started, any finance policy needed to be as simple as possible. Therefore, it was decided that there would be no recharging mechanism between Departments. Cross charging for space had also previously been identified as one of the barriers to sharing. Any Department requiring additional space would be able to access this free of charge and any department offering their space for use by others would be able to capture their direct, additional costs to be covered by the University Chest

##### 4.6.1 Finance model for Departments

The finance model decided upon was inspired by the Tinbergen approach. A new source of funds has been set up that host Departments can book their direct costs to. This will be reviewed each month and all eligible costs swept off Departmental books onto the University Chest.

##### 4.6.2 Finance model for central costs

It became apparent that there may be additional costs needed to meet the demand for teaching space. The main categories of these central costs were commercial rent and IT/AV provision in these spaces. It was decided that these should also be captured on the source of funds and a finance paper was submitted through the relevant groups to Silver to approve £200k of spend on commercial spaces, £135k for rent and £65k for IT/AV equipment.

#### 4.6.3 Use of approved funds

Soon after the £200k commercial funding was approved, it became apparent that TSCG could meet the demands for additional teaching space from within University buildings and no commercial spaces would need to be rented. However, the UAS spaces needed to meet this demand did not have adequate IT/AV equipment or support to deliver teaching as the spaces were not designed for this purpose. TSCG used the £65k for IT/AV already approved under the commercial rent paper to equip these spaces and purchase IT support for the buildings that do not have their own in house support (as IT Services did not have capacity to cover these day-to-day).

The Finance Policy is set out in **Appendix 16** and guidance to departments on the use of the Source of Funds code is set out **Appendix 17**.

## 5 BENEFITS

### Supply and demand

- To date, the University has accommodated all departmental requests for space for in-person teaching (excluding SBS lease of the Oxford Playhouse).
- Provided a comprehensive database of information about all University spaces to aid planning in the future.
- Ensured that shared teaching space was equipped and fit for purpose and that space users had the information they needed to use the space safely.

### Policy and process

- Developed an approach to and process for sharing space for in-person teaching that can be rolled out in subsequent terms.
- A full customer service that would not have been possible using a self-service booking system has been provided. This has reduced the burden on departments, avoided frustration, errors etc. and saved time.
- Demonstrated the value of diverse teams working together in a 'One Oxford' approach to use resources effectively and efficiently to achieve a common goal.
- Created confidence in space sharing amongst space owners and those booking space.

### Costs

- Costs of using commercial space have been avoided. The cost of daily hire of commercial venues identified as suitable for teaching range from £180-£3160 per day.
- The costs of useable space being wasted (left unused) are less than they might otherwise have been in steps had not been taken to bring UAS space into play and if no departmental teaching space had been secured for sharing.
- The costs of implementing a new IT system to manage cross-University bookings have been avoided. The problems associated with this approach meant that costs were not investigated in any detail but the IT representative on TSCG has advised that these would have been considerable. The project team also did not have the time available to successfully design and implement an IT solution. At the same time, effective use has been

made of staff working in an area where the core business had been disrupted by Covid-19 and also provided staff development opportunities.

#### **IT/AV**

- Begun the development of a standardised approach to provision of IT and AV equipment and support.

## **6 DELIVERABLES**

### **6.1 POLICY**

- Terms of Reference and Principles – **[Appendix 1]**
- Finance Policies – **[Appendix 16]**
- Planning timelines for HT21 and TT21 **[Appendix 20]**
- Issue Escalation process **[Appendix 23]**

### **6.2 INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE**

- Guidance on calculating room capacities **[Appendix 4]**
- Worked examples of room layouts under social distancing **[Appendix 5]**
- Teaching Space Needs Survey **[Appendix 6]**
- Teaching Space Needs Survey analysis **[Appendix 7]**
- TSCG Planning Framework and Guidance **[Appendix 8]**
- TSCG Planning Framework and Guidance Infographic **[Appendix 9]**
- TSCG Planning Process flowchart **[Appendix 11]**
- Booking process quick reference guide **[Appendix 12]**
- Booking Enquiry Form and guidance **[Appendix 13]**
- Roles and responsibilities document **[Appendix 14]**
- Space cancellation processes for space owners and space users **[Appendix 15]**
- Finance policy guidance for departments **[Appendix 17]**
- Signposting document providing links to other sources of information, guidance and support related to planning for face to face teaching **[Appendix 18]**
- Timelines for the teaching space planning and booking process in HT21 and TT21 **[Appendix 20]**
- Additional CTL guidance on Canvas, Panopto etc **[Appendix 21]**
- DAS Guidance on Covid 19 and accessibility **[Appendix 22]**

### **6.3 BOOKING PROCESS**

- Booking Enquiry Team (2.5 FTE)
- Issue Resolution Process **[Appendix 23]**

## 6.4 DATA AND INFORMATION

- Commercial space suitable for teaching [**Appendix 3**]
- Space Needs Survey analysis [**Appendix 6**]
- Room Restrictions in TT [**Appendix 19**]
- Searchable space database (database extract V) [**Appendix 24**]
- Analysis of bookings and cancellations [**Appendix 10**]
- Finance data reports
- Estimate of additional IT/AV costs and other costs eligible to be charged against the shared teaching space Source of Funds Code [**Appendix 25**]

## 6.5 IT AND AV PROVISION

- Installation of equipment in UAS spaces and provision of support
- Provision of written instructions for use of equipment and how to access support in UAS spaces used for teaching
- IT Services equipment 'recipe cards' for teaching spaces [ <https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/av-recipe-cards> ]

## 6.6 COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION

TSCG has issued regular communications through the Cascade and AAD News Alert and provided clear guidance to departments both written and in the form of infographics and flow charts. It has received excellent support from colleagues in the AAD Communications Team in doing this.

Although the remit of the project was focussed on identifying and matching supply and demand for teaching space, it was clear that the role of TSCG would need to extend to coordinating a range of other issues relating to the use of the space. Close coordination with RTOSW, IT Services, CTL and the Disability Advisory Service has resulted in

- TSCG guidance on planning for the safe use of teaching space being integrated within the RTOSW document and support for risk assessments in specific instances
- Additional specific guidance for cleaning in teaching spaces within RTOSW guidance
- Support for departments considering the use of Perspex screens
- Bid for additional funds for mobile AV/IT kits, room upgrades, IT/AV support hubs, resilience and training.
- IT recipe cards providing clear information to departments about the equipment required in different sized rooms to deliver different types of teaching i.e. lecture capture, livestreaming, interactive online sessions
- Purchase and installation of IT/AV equipment in UAS spaces being used for teaching
- Arrangements for IT support in UAS spaces being used for teaching
- Guidance on prioritising disabled students' needs and ensuring disabled students' needs are taken into account in preparing Covid-secure spaces
- Contribution of TSCG Project Team to CTL webinars
- Additional IT/CTL guidance to departments on preparing for the use of lecture capture and livestreaming, specifically aimed at departments using another departments space



TSCG also worked closely with the Lab Teaching Working party (LTWP) to ensure that work could be coordinated where beneficial, for example using a joint project management resource, conducting a joint teaching space needs survey covering labs and lecture theatres/seminar rooms, and sharing information and learning.

It was also clear that a range of guidance and information from other sources was relevant to departments when considering planning for the use of teaching space and that it could sometimes be difficult to identify what was relevant and how to find it. The Project Team therefore created a signposting document to assist administrators in locating all relevant information (**Appendix 18**)

TSCG has also provided regular reporting and updates on progress to MCG, ESG, RTOSW and Bronze and Silver Groups. This has enabled TSCG to escalate issues and decisions requiring senior consideration and approval and provided ongoing reassurance that TSCG is aware of and dealing with issues as they arise.

## 7 SUSTAIN AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A review of the end to end booking process has been undertaken by the Project Team and Booking Enquiry Team and will be implemented in time to manage booking enquiries for Hilary Term.

Ongoing, continuous improvement will be achieved through:

- Development and implementation of a Process Confirmation Plan to check that elements of the process are being followed correctly and to identify areas of the process that require change
- a 100-day Continuous Improvement Plan will be developed to keep other continuous improvement activities on track. The Plan will include the following activities:
  - The Booking Enquiry Team capturing, recording and reviewing issues as they arise and identifying ways to avoid repeat occurrences
  - Recording reasons for cancellations to identify common and avoidable causes so that action can be taken to reduce the number of cancellations and the waste associated with this
  - Proactively seeking feedback from space owners and space users who have booked space through the Booking Enquiry Team
  - Using the Check and Test Group on Teams to continue to test changes to the process and get informal feedback on guidance and other documents
  - Establishing a formal group of Divisional Representatives to take over from the TSCG group in a check and test capacity
  - Reporting data that demonstrates continuous improvements and benefits

## 8 TESTIMONIALS

The project has been welcomed by departments and feedback from those who have received support in planning for the use of their space or who have been supported by the Booking Enquiry Team has been overwhelmingly positive.

The commitment of those involved to finding and implementing solutions and supporting colleagues to deliver in-person teaching has been crucial to that success. The Space Management team showed continuous dedication to the teaching exercises and RTOSW programme, cancelling and postponing leave to ensure that there was consistent support throughout the process.

The OUEV Team's proactive approach, spotting an opportunity to use their skills and experience to support the University at a time when they were unable to continue with events organisation, not only enabled the effective redeployment of University resources but was a turning point in finding a solution to the booking process.

Excellent teamwork between Focus, Space Management and the OUEV and the support and commitment of the co-chairs and TSCG members has underpinned the project.

Feedback from Governance groups into which TSCG reports has included:

"Many thanks . . . , A tremendous effort to complete this [guidance] in such a short timescale. Very much appreciated." Stephen Conway –

"Firstly thanks for the heroic efforts on this at the end of last week – fantastic." Stephen Conway –

"Just had very positive feedback. . . on the TSCG guidance."

"MCG have seen many very useful and reassuring updates from TSCG and there have not been any concerns in recent meetings apart from ensuring there will be a continuity function which I know is being planned for."

"Very impressed by the work of the group and thank you for all your hard work"

**Appendix 26** provides a selection of the feedback received from across the University.

## 9 LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Resourcing** – having a properly resourced project team and dedicated project management resource to undertake work on behalf of the TSCG was crucial in ensuring the success of the project. The ability to provide an experienced and knowledgeable booking enquiry team resource to deal with space requests was key to ensuring that the principles and policies that the University had agreed should govern the use of teaching space were fully implemented.
2. **Effective resource management** -The LTWP and TSCG had some cross over activities, e.g. Space data collection/reporting information, once a project manager was brought into cover both groups, a joining up of these tasks ensured that resources were used appropriately, information was effectively shared and common challenges overcome.
3. **Governance and Oversight** - A more formal link to ESG for both groups would have been helpful to ensure that there was no repetition of activity and the assurance process could have been an activity in the data collection exercise.
4. **Coordination with colleges** – although the TSCG was co-chaired between the University and Colleges a direct reporting link into the appropriate committee within conference structures and links with Domestic Bursars may have enabled a more coordinated approach.
5. **Communications** - It would have been useful to understand the links required to Academic Administration Team and the process for communications. Once this was established a more effective process and overview by a communications lead ensured a more efficient and effective delivery of communications. The cascade did not reach all parties and further communications will need to be defined.

6. **Policy and principles** -Although the agreed principles for sharing space included giving priority to teaching over any commercial/income generating use of space there are a number of non-teaching activities competing for use of space, including research, internal education-related events, rehearsals etc. Clear priorities covering the range of activities seeking space are needed to ensure that the use of space reflects these.
7. **Attitudes to space sharing** – although principles and policy were put in place to tackle known obstacles to sharing, the level of compliance with these was variable across departments and there was a continuing reluctance to make space available either within the timescales set out or at all. The majority of teaching requests were accommodated in UAS spaces, most of which are not normally used for teaching, within the Oxford Martin School where there was significant support for sharing space and at Manor Road Building where space is already shared and not owned by an individual department.
8. **Resource capacity planning** - Key services and people were in demand for all critical activities across the working groups and the Safety Office and Estates Service Space Management team were put under extreme deadlines and expectations. It was a credit to the teams that they did their utmost to respond but, it was noted, it is unlikely that that work rate would be sustainable for longer periods at current resource levels and capacity.
9. **Use of commercial space is not always straightforward and sufficient time is required to plan and arrange for its use.** For example, the Playhouse required planning permission for change of use, even though its use for teaching is temporary.
10. **Clear scope of the project and reporting is critical to project delivery** - The project scope: (see Appendix 1) moved during the project along with the expectation of what was required. In the Terms of Reference “The overall role of the TSCG was to support departments and divisions in identifying their teaching space requirements and to facilitate the efficient and effective use of space available across the University to meet these needs.” Essentially, this meant assessing supply v demand then developing a mechanism to allow departments to book space outside their department. The role moved to ensuring that the end to end process would work effectively and ensuring the component parts linked together. This would mean that the space user did not just book the room but that the team managed the considerations around what would make that space usable and deliver effective teaching. This therefore meant ensuring that there was clear IT/AV definition and ensuring installation for non-departmental spaces, IT/AV support check to ensure once users were in the space they would be able to use it effectively, checking that there are effective departmental processes for cancellation, links to RTOSW to ensure key issues were covered and mitigated, Perspex screen pilot for teaching, ventilation, definition of finance process for the source of funds management, negotiation with space owners to facilitate use of the spaces and the terms. The project would not have been successful if TSCG had not expanded its scope and taken on these activities.
11. **Assumptions** – There was an assumption in the scope that “To oversee the development of processes and implementation of a simple booking system for shared teaching spaces, building on the work of the Focus Shared Teaching Space project (this work would also be supported by the Focus Programme in association with IT Services)” The assumption that it needed to be an IT system could have cost the University considerable amounts and resources and would not have achieved the high level of customer service and identification of challenges that the Oxford Event Booking Team were able to provide.

12. **Cancellations** - It has become apparent that some bookings were requested as backup options for departments not yet sure if they could accommodate the teaching themselves. These bookings were subsequently cancelled, and teaching accommodated within the department or a college. In other cases, teachers have taken a decision not to use the space booked for them and to use a college space instead or courses to switch to online teaching due to safety concerns or to avoid hybrid delivery. This booking behaviour creates a risk of space being unavailable to a department with a confirmed need and potentially of incurring costs of using commercial space unnecessarily. The project team will review and refine its cancellation process to better understand what is driving behaviour to book and cancel and to put in place measures to prevent it.
13. **Relative priorities of teaching, research and other uses of space** – the agreed principles for space use during MT20, only refer to the priority of teaching use over use of space for commercial, income generating purposes. However, while collecting data about available space and when seeking space for booking enquiries, it was apparent that teaching space was often unavailable as it was being used for research activities for non-teaching but education related purposes. Enquiries were also received about accommodating student rehearsals and extra-curricular activities. Clear priorities for all activities requiring space that could be used for teaching should be considered and agreed.
14. **Established sharing arrangements revoked** - Some bilateral agreements were revoked by some departments e.g. space no longer available in departments for tutorials. Although the agreed principles enabled departments to maintain established space-sharing arrangements outside of the TSCG process the principles did not cover unilateral termination of established arrangements. Further discussions and reviews of this will need to be undertaken to determine whether some further principles need to be established to avoid detriment to one or more parties.
15. **Stakeholder Engagement** – GLAM were not included in the project group to start with and this resulted in extra effort and lack of clarity around the use of their spaces. It would have also been useful to have a disability advisor to reassure that this was a key priority as defined in the principles and advise where required. There was an unseen requirement to reassure the Disability Advisory Service that students receiving teaching in spaces outside of their own department would have their needs catered for. It would also have been helpful to have a member of FM on the Group to avoid misunderstandings about the use of UAS space and sharing of other departmental space managed by FM. The latter was mitigated by the project team attending the FM forum and updating them on the work of the project.
16. **Crossover with assurance exercises being run by ESG and CTL** resulted in duplication and greater coordination of future activities could avoid this
17. **If it can change it will!** - Changing government guidance and environment, A Level Result issues, SAGE reports, meant the team had to continually adjust, redefine to manage and mitigate accordingly. On this basis contingency management plans and “what if” scenarios are required to be in place.
18. **Devolved structure means increased costs** - Departments continued to work in a devolved way, which in turn has meant the potential for increased costs, lack of opportunity cost saving and duplication of effort.
19. **Everyday things still happen in a crisis** – Ensure that people who are new to buildings still have fire and emergency information, first aid and building introduction for facilities and

amenities. TSCG reinforced that building hosts need to make space bookers aware of these items.

20. **Restrictions on space in use and differences throughout the year on space availability and capacity** – As the academic year unfolds there will be a need for a critical calendar, this will help identify when spaces may not be available e.g. the Exam Schools & Ewert House in Trinity Term, potential use for examinations (**See appendix 19**). This will impact on potential space capacity. In addition, Undergraduate Assessments and Admissions in weeks 9 & 10 of Michaelmas Term have an expectation of using some spaces. Other spaces have restrictions on how they are used, such as the China Centre, which can only be used for studies relating to China, research buildings may be restricted to use for research use for a period of up to 10 years from opening, and some spaces such as the Sports Halls, which had been defined as a potential space, become unavailable due to other over-riding circumstances.
21. **IT equipment and skills deficit** – it became clear that equipment in many teaching spaces was not fit for purpose for the new online/hybrid/remote teaching model and that lecturers may also have an equipment and a skills deficit to operate in this environment. Other non-teaching spaces have had to be fully equipped in order to ensure that usable space could be available for teaching and support external provided to cover these areas. Regular review of teaching and delivery methods is necessary to ensure that facilities in teaching spaces remain fit for purpose and responsibility for coordinating this should be identified.
22. **Study and Library space** - The project understands that there is a paper going to MCG regarding potential need for library and study space and this maybe become an additional requirement for space management.
23. **Lack of MSD/MPLS requests for teaching space** – Better understanding of why some departments have had less need to make use of the shared teaching space arrangements. Was this due to having some element of shared space and central management, for example at the Medical Sciences Training Centre (MSTC) or decisions to do more teaching on-line and focus in-person teaching on lab teaching session? Could TSCG have provided support to assist MSD in resolving teaching space issues on the JR site?
24. **Obstacles to space sharing** – The project was a further demonstration of the findings of the Focus Teaching Space Utilisation (TSU) Project around obstacles to space sharing and an opportunity to test some different approaches on a University-wide scale. Although it was possible, in an emergency situation, to put in place some policies and ‘rules’ for the use of space to overcome these, resistance was still in evidence. While a number of departments did make their space available, it is notable that the majority of booking requests were accommodated in UAS owned/managed space or in already ‘shared’ teaching space i.e., not owned by an individual department. A Focus TSU project report to BESC in early 2021 will incorporate these findings.
25. **Obstacles to space sharing** - some of the behaviours around space sharing identified in the Focus TSU project were in evidence in departments’ use of the space booking process, in particular a tendency to book space ‘just-in-case’. This suggests that departments do not have the data and information that they need in order to plan in a timely manner and to have confidence that the decisions they make and plans that they put in place until a very late stage.

## 10 NEXT STEPS

1. Propose amendments to the principles agreed for sharing space and in particular clarify priorities for space allocation that take into account the range of activities competing for space.
2. Use lessons Learnt from the LTWP when the laboratories had reopened. - This has been requested for midway through Hilary term 2020
3. Agree reporting protocol for financial spend for IT/AV and costs related to the sharing of space
4. Use data from the counting sensors at the Manor Road and St Cross buildings to check whether bookings made were used and to monitor the impact of space sharing on space utilisation in the buildings.
5. Launch online surveys to get feedback from space owners and users who have used the booking process during MT20.
6. Seek feedback from departments about how their space was used during MT20, to better understand extent of unused or underused space.
7. Set up formally the ongoing business as usual structure for Teaching Space Management, governance and reporting.
8. Produce a case study of space sharing at Oxford Martin School to identify what worked well and lessons learned and promote to build confidence in space-sharing.
9. Produce case study on use of IT/AV for hybrid teaching by Engineering Science at Ewert House Exam Hall
10. Further review of the benefits and potential next steps.
11. Ongoing updates to RTOSW guidance.
12. Process Review and feedback results and outcomes.
13. Finalise a process confirmation plan and 100 day continuous improvement plan.
14. Support the pilot that is underway to consider the use of screens as an additional mitigation measure in teaching settings. Screens might be considered at the front of the teaching space, separating the teacher from students, potentially as an alternative mitigation to masks.
15. Define space sharing data to be collected e.g. room bookings, room cancellations and reason codes and the reports to be provided for different audiences.
16. Investigate what may be required to support use and management of library reading and study space.
17. Issue guidance and timelines for booking space for in-person teaching in Hilary and Trinity terms.
18. Include data and learning from the TSCG project in the Focus TSU project to BESC in January 2021.
19. Follow up funding bid detailed in section 6.6.

## 11 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure projects are properly resourced with a project team and project management resource and consider resourcing and capacity of central teams being called upon to support a number of projects in addition to their business as usual work.

- For projects involving a significant communications element, discussion should take place with appropriate communications colleagues about this should be managed at the start of the project.
- After projects have ended consider additional resourcing required for teams expected to take on the work as BAU.
- Identify appropriate lines of reporting for projects involving colleges to ensure that the people whose support is needed to progress the project are involved and that information is appropriately shared.
- Ensure that there is rigorous scoping of projects at the start to avoid 'scope -creep' as the project progresses and to avoid issues being picked up at a late stage.
- Consider at an early stage how the University will accommodate summer schools and UNIQ programmes in 2021 if COVID restrictions remain in place.
- That the learning from the project is applied to arrangements for space-sharing under normal, business conditions.