

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Class Schedule Creation and Time Zone Management

This SOP details the process of **class schedule creation and time zone management**, covering steps for designing accurate and efficient class timetables, integrating diverse time zones for remote or international students, coordinating with instructors and administrative staff, utilizing scheduling software tools, handling time zone conversions to prevent conflicts, and ensuring clear communication of class timings to all participants. The goal is to optimize class scheduling accuracy while accommodating global time differences to enhance student and faculty experience.

1. Purpose

To provide clear guidelines for creating class schedules that efficiently manage multiple time zones and ensure seamless coordination and communication among all stakeholders.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all administrative staff, instructors, and scheduling coordinators involved in class scheduling for remote, hybrid, or international programs.

3. Responsibilities

- **Administrative Staff:** Gather student and instructor time zones, initiate scheduling process.
- **Scheduling Coordinator:** Develop timetables, oversee time zone integration, verify accuracy.
- **Instructors:** Confirm availability and provide feedback on scheduling proposals.
- **IT Support:** Provide access to and assistance with scheduling tools and software.

4. Procedure

1. **Collect Availability Data**
 - Gather time zone and general availability from students and instructors using a standardized form or survey.
2. **Select Scheduling Tools**
 - Utilize scheduling software with robust time zone support (e.g., Google Calendar, Doodle, When2meet, or internal platforms).
3. **Draft Timetables**
 - Create initial class schedules in the institution's default time zone.
 - Convert and verify times across all relevant participant time zones using the scheduling tool.
4. **Review and Adjust for Conflicts**
 - Cross-check for overlap, conflicts, or unreasonable hours for any participant.
 - Consult stakeholders for alternative times if needed.
5. **Finalize and Approve Schedule**
 - Obtain approval from all instructors and administrative leads.
6. **Communicate Class Times**
 - Send final schedules to all participants, displaying class times in local and/or multiple time zones as appropriate.
 - Publish schedules on student and instructor portals in an easily accessible format.
7. **Monitoring and Updates**
 - Regularly review schedules, especially around daylight savings or changes in participant availability.
 - Notify all participants promptly of any changes, providing updated schedules in relevant time zones.

5. Guidelines for Time Zone Management

- Always communicate class times with reference to both the institution's default time zone and each participant's local time when possible.
- Utilize scheduling software that automatically adjusts for daylight savings and local changes.
- For international groups, prioritize time slots that minimize extreme hours for any region whenever feasible.
- Clearly document standard time and note any exceptions on official timetables.

6. Tools & Resources

- Google Calendar

- Outlook Calendar
- Doodle / When2meet
- World Time Buddy / Time Zone Converter
- Institution's LMS or scheduling platform

7. Communication

- Send all schedule notifications via official communication channels (email, portal announcements, etc.).
- Include explicit mention of relevant time zones in all communications.
- Provide support resources for resolving time zone-related questions or issues.

8. Record Keeping

- Maintain archives of all finalized class schedules and time zone communications for at least one academic year.
- Document feedback and issues to improve future scheduling cycles.