COLLEGE COLLABORATION FUND – DESIGNING SECTOR LEADING REPORTS

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide an exemplar for FE providers to monitor their teaching space utilisation. This can inform strategic and operational decision making. From a strategic perspective, utilisation reporting can support decisions relating to capacity to grow and in which curriculum areas, or decisions around changes of use. Operational considerations might include allocating spaces to specific teams or planning estate maintenance schedules.

Background

A small group of colleges have collaborated to produce this short guide for FE providers, which recommends reporting approach, data preparation and design considerations, as an exemplar for the sector. Advice from governmental agencies is somewhat dated on this subject but remains substantially relevant to the current environment. The context for agency publications in this area has been capital funding for estates development and therefore focuses primarily on the optimisation of all available spaces. Effective estates planning and development are of course critical to the success of colleges but are strategic in character, this guide focuses only on the operational consideration of teaching space utilisation.

Definitions used in this guide

Daytime Guided Learning Hours

Guided Learning Hours are teaching contact hours that are delivered on site and recorded on the timetabling system. For the purposes of measuring the utilisation of teaching spaces, these should be calculated from the 8-hour daily period within which most teaching occurs. For most General Further Education colleges this will be 9:00am to 5:00pm from Monday to Friday during term time, which is typically 36 weeks. Some colleges may have more or fewer teaching weeks in a year, and some adult focussed may find their peak hours of occupation to be later in the day. The LSC guide (2007) suggests 2:00pm to 10:00pm as possibly more appropriate for such colleges. The agency does not specify this, but its examples suggest that the “Daytime” period should be a single, continuous block each weekday, with one start-time and one end-time.

Teaching Space Capacity

The capacity of a teaching space is the number of students it can accommodate. In the case of a classroom, it may be described as the number of desks, in a computer room the number of PCs, in a carpentry workshop the number of work benches.

Daytime Teaching Space Availability

This is the total daytime student hours available in teaching spaces in an academic year. So, for example, a college with 100 teaching spaces arranged thus:

Room type	Number of rooms	Daytime hrs/week	Term weeks	Capacity	Availability
Classrooms (large)	35	40	36	30	1,512,000
Classrooms (small)	40	40	36	20	1,152,000
Computer rooms	10	40	36	18	259,200
Workshops	15	40	36	16	345,600
Totals	**100**				**3,268,800**

Accommodation Frequency

The accommodation frequency for a teaching space or group of teaching spaces is the proportion of timetabled hours to available hours, expressed as a percentage. Using an 8-hour day, 5-day week and 36-week academic year, there are typically 1,440 hours annually available. If a teaching space is timetabled for 1,152 of these, the accommodation frequency for that space would be 80%. Accommodation frequency therefore does not consider room capacity or occupancy.

Accommodation Occupancy

The Accommodation Occupancy is also expressed as a percent and represents the proportion of the seats that are occupied when rooms are in use. So, for example, if a classroom has a capacity of 30 and there are 15 students on the register of the group timetabled into it, the occupancy for that session would be 50%. Where this is measured over a period of time or across a number of rooms, averages should be used. It is recommended however that the number of active students on the register is used as the headcount, rather than the average number attending.

Teaching Space Utilisation

The teaching space utilisation is simply the product of the frequency and occupation rates. Using the examples above, a classroom timetabled with a frequency of 80% and occupancy of 50% would have a utilisation rate of 40%. In a reporting context, it might be easier to calculate the total number of Student Daytime Guided Learning Hours (that is the timetabled hours multiplied by the number of students on the register) and divide that by the Daytime Teaching Space Availability.

Room Type and Utilisation Category

These are room use definitions forming a hierarchy such that several room types may belong to the same utilisation category. For example, the room types “Classroom”, “IT Suite” and “Engineering Workshop” could all belong to the “Teaching Space” utilisation category.

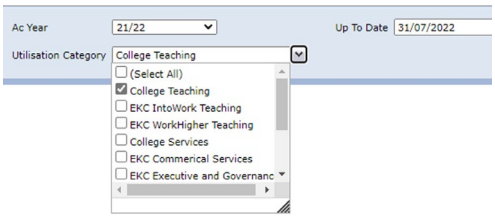
Report Exemplar

Recommended format

There is no specific format recommended but a simple SSRS expandable report does lend itself quite well to the purpose. This is currently in use at EKC Group.

Selection criteria

As a minimum, it is recommended that a time period and a set of room types can be selected, as shown in this example. More criteria could be made available though, depending on the detail available in the accommodation database. Here, the utilisation category “College Teaching” happens to include classrooms, PC rooms and specialist workshops. These could be included as separate or additional selection criteria though, as could campus, site or room ownership, for example.



Report Layout

The template below is merely for exemplar purposes and shows an expandable list of rooms along with their type, frequency, capacity and utilisation. The smallest element of the report is each room’s timetabled data for a specific calendar date, aggregated in the first instance to the room across the selected period, and then up to the room type, site, campus, owning organisation or college.

College / Campus / Site / Owning Organisation				Available GLH	Scheduled GLH	Frequency	Availability	Scheduled Student hrs	Utilisation
Ashford College (Elwick Road)				55,328	28,687	51.8%	1,061,424	423,917	39.9%
Ashford College (Wotton Road)				7,280	3,356	46.1%	116,480	50,657	43.5%
Broadstairs College				113,568	49,318	43.4%	1,869,504	686,776	36.7%
Room	Description	Type	Capacity						
A102	Classroom	Classroom	16	1,456	980	67.3%	23,296	12,990	55.8%
A104	Games Development Room	IT	16	1,456	955	65.6%	23,296	11,035	47.4%
A106	IT Classroom	IT	16	1,456	995	68.3%	23,296	15,770	67.7%
		06/09/2021		8	2.750000	34.4%	128	74.250000	58.0%
		07/09/2021		8	2.750000	34.4%	128	74.250000	58.0%

This is the format (slightly adapted) in use currently at EKC Group. Broadstairs College has been expanded to list its rooms and the room A106 has been expanded to list its daily data (showing first two days only). This format cold be improved by the use of colour (e.g. Red / Amber / Green) to draw attention to detail in the utilisation column against numerical thresholds. Additionally, it could aggregate by room type to enable managers to see more clearly whether under-utilisation might be a particular problem in for example, classrooms but not in IT suites. Clearly some compromises have been made to make this report usable, like the date appearing in the “Type” column when a room is expanded. The report is however reasonably intuitive and easy to interpret, particularly once drilled down to the lowest level where the basic calculations are clearly laid out.