



Policy on timing of meetings

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the expectations around meeting organisation, to ensure that colleagues with caring responsibilities are able to join department and team-wide events and meetings, and participate in training opportunities.

2. Background

The Department's Athena Swan activity focuses on being a family-friendly employer. As part of this, the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team (SAT) has agreed that meetings should be scheduled in 'core hours'. This should enable all individuals to attend meetings, events and training and not be prevented by having to leave early or start late in order to accommodate caring responsibilities (such as dropping children at school in the mornings or picking them up in the afternoon). We want all individuals in the department to be able to participate in the activities and culture of the department and access training opportunities.

3. Scope

The policy applies to all people (staff and students) within the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. It applies to meetings that have a wide audience as appropriate to the context and to standing meetings in order to ensure that individuals are not excluded from important meetings, events, and training and development opportunities.

Meetings included are:

- Department Open Meetings,
- Governance committees (such as DSC, SAC, GSC, PEDI),
- Athena Swan SAT (and the associated groups that report into SAT: Data Monitoring, EMCR, DPhil, Harassment and Bullying, Wellbeing and Personal Development)
- Training courses run in the department
- Regular team meetings held in individual groups.

Meetings between other groups of individuals such as one-to-ones and ad hoc meetings are excluded and can be held at times to suit the participants.

4. Policy

Meetings within the scope of the policy should be arranged between core hours of **9.30 to 3.30** wherever possible. Other meetings can be scheduled outside of these hours, as long as they are made at times to enable the relevant participants to attend.

Responsibility for ensuring meetings are scheduled within the core hours above lies with the meeting organiser/Chair.

Meetings should also have the **day of the week varied**, so that part-time individuals are able to attend at least some of them and don't miss out on all of them.

Where possible, meetings should not take up full lunch hours (eg not from 12 – 2pm), unless lunch is provided or attendees are welcome to bring their lunch to the meeting.

Meetings should be less than a whole hour where possible, eg starting at 10 past the hour to the hour, or finishing 10 minutes before the hour, so that there is time for short gaps between meetings.

If possible, meetings should be hybrid, to allow people to join where they cannot get to the office.

It is acknowledged that it would be impossible to ensure that all meetings take place in this timeframe, given the high number of meetings that some staff have to attend, the demands on diaries and availability of rooms. Training courses may need to start or finish earlier, depending on their length. Where meetings cannot be held within core hours due to diary constraints, organisers/Chairs should ensure that relevant discussions or decisions are shared with those unable to attend, for example through meeting minutes or alternative consultation.

5. Implementation

The policy will be publicised in the newsletter and be made available on line. The PA network will also be reminded of it. If individuals find that the policy is not being complied with, they are encouraged to raise this with the meeting chair or secretary in the first instance. If problems persist, please reach out to either the Head of HR, the Head of Organisational Development, the EDI and Culture Co-ordinator, or the Associate Head for People & EDI.