SPACE ALLOCATION AND UTILIZATION
Principles, Policy and Processes

POLICY PARTICULARS

DATE OF APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:
IPC, Senate, Finance & General Purposes Committee, Council

DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL: June 2014

COMMENCEMENT DATE: June 2014

REVISION HISTORY: Policy finalised April 2014

REVIEW DATE: 5 year intervals

POLICY LEVEL: Administrative management

RESPONSIBILITY: Executive Director: Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

- IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING: ED:IOF and relevant staff in the Infrastructure & Operations Division in consultation with Deans, HoD's & Directors
- REVIEW AND REVISION: ED:IOF, IPC Infrastructure Planning Sub-Committee

REPORTING STRUCTURE: Executive Director: Infrastructure, Operations & Finance; Vice-Chancellor; IPC Infrastructure Sub-Committee; IPC; F&GP; Council

1. PREAMBLE

Space is a central and limited resource of the University which should be allocated in a consistent manner to optimize the productive use of this resource, and to advance the mission and strategic priorities and objectives of the University.

Growth in the numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students, increased research funding, the award of new SARChI chairs and the establishment of research focus areas has placed a significant demand on space. This pressure is expected to grow as the university enrolment increases, particularly at the postgraduate level, and as research continues to expand. Although the institution acknowledges that substantial investment is required to bring its infrastructure to an appropriate level, it is also becoming apparent that it must adopt new guidelines for space allocation and utilisation.

Hereto, space has been allocated in an *ad hoc* manner on a long term basis without periodic review. Such practices lead to an allocation that is inequitable, inflexible, and that does not easily accommodate current and future needs. To meet current and future demand for space, Rhodes University requires a policy that recognizes the university's continuing growth and the limitations in space availability.

This space policy is intended to provide the basis for equitable allocation and efficient utilization of space based on the critical needs of educational and research activities. It is also the goal of this policy to facilitate sharing of space in a synergistic environment. Flexibility of space is important as research projects by definition are of limited duration and educational activities also vary over time, with an increasing emphasis on student-centred learning and experiential learning calling for greater flexibility in teaching and student learning spaces. Innovative teaching, research and learning programs require space to be reconfigurable without major modifications.

Based on this policy, space allocation, review criteria and processes must be clear, fair, transparent and inclusive. A proper balance should be maintained between teaching, learning, research and innovation to cater for expanding and contracting activities.

2. PURPOSE

To promote the effective and optimal utilization of University space, thereby ensuring that staff and students are provided with fit-for-purpose, cost-effective facilities that optimises capital expenditure, maintenance and operating costs.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

To:
- Optimise the use of space to support the University's strategic goals;
- Ensure and secure optimal use of scarce resources by ensuring the most efficient and effective use of all University space;

- Provide Divisions, Faculties and Departments with clear and accessible information regarding their responsibilities relating to space use and occupancy;
- Ensure that the University has current and accurate space and space usage information.

4. PRINCIPLES

Space allocation is driven by the following principles:

- Space is a limited resource of the University and is not owned by divisions, faculties, departments, or current occupants;
- Space will be allocated according to the strategic academic, research and outreach priorities established by the University;
- Academic programs and departments will be given priority in space allocation;
- Space allocation and reallocation procedures should be transparent and affected stakeholders should be consulted; however the ultimate responsibility for allocating space rests with the Vice-Chancellor and those to whom he has delegated this responsibility (the IPC Infrastructure Sub-Committee in the first instance);
- Space requirements will be considered based on current needs and not on historical grounds.
- Faculties, Divisions and Departments are responsible for ensuring that their allocated space is used effectively and efficiently.
- Where possible, research groups will be clustered so as to maximise the use of shared core facilities and make best use of available space.
- Sharing of space will become the norm rather than the exception (e.g., shared meeting space).
- Established space norms[1] will be used for space planning and space allocation. The space norms are subject to periodic review by the IPC Infrastructure Committee to keep them updated in accordance with best practice.
- Changes in room configuration or redesign of areas will strive to achieve the established space norms.
- The achievement of space norms is predicated on the availability of sufficient space.
- Prime space should not be used for storage.

5. UNIVERSITY SPACE POLICY

- Full time academic staff will normally be entitled to an office. Part-time, visiting and emeritus staff may use shared office space if it is available. Post-doctoral researchers and graduate students will have access to shared write-

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[1] RU space norms are still to be established and will take into consideration disciplinary differences in requirements, the DHET space norms and those in use at other research intensive universities, notably the UCT & US space norms which have been appended.

up space. Graduate students may not always have individually allocated desks.

- Following international office space usage norms, support Divisions should strive to move towards open-plan office configurations. Single offices should only be allocated or assigned on an operational needs basis.
- Laboratory, write up and office space will be allocated within departments according to established norms.
- Laboratories and seminar rooms will not be used for long-term storage. Unused or obsolete equipment, materials, and chemicals should be disposed of.
- It is recognised that research activities may increase or decline over time and consequently resources required will similarly vary. Space should be vacated at the conclusion of projects. Space becoming available during the life of the project (e.g. because of short-term secondment of staff to another unit/area) may also be re-assigned.
- On retirement, staff must relinquish allocated space. Retired staff do not have an entitlement to space except where agreed by the Dean in consultation with the relevant DVC and the Executive Director:Infrastructure, Operations & Finance.
- Allocation of space will be contingent on compliance with all health and safety procedures.
- Upon termination of a space assignment, the space must revert to the "unassigned space" inventory administered by the Infrastructure & Operations Division.
- A space that is used infrequently or inappropriately may be reassigned or re-allocated.
- The following factors may be taken into account when considering the allocation of University space:
    i. Current usage of space (i.e. the purpose for which space is used)
    ii. Current utilisation of space (i.e. the frequency with which space is used)
    iii. Demand for space (current and forecast staff and student numbers)

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Responsibilities of the Deans, Directors and Heads of Department:
- Ensure the best use of space within the space allocated to the Faculty, Division or Department ;
- Notify the Infrastructure & Operations Division of any proposed changes to occupancy or usage of existing space, including space being vacated, in order for the Infrastructure & Operations Division to maintain accurate space information.
- Submit requests for new space to the Infrastructure & Operations Division.
- Prioritise and update all space requests submitted to the Infrastructure & Operations Division.
- Provide information to the Infrastructure & Operations Division relating to current space occupancy and usage for audit purposes.

- Shall not permit or effect any structural changes to buildings without written approval from the Infrastructure & Operations Division.

6.2 Responsibilities of the Infrastructure & Operations Division:
- Monitor space use and prepare space usage statistics;
- Provide advice in space planning and management;
- Consult with Faculties, Divisions and Departments on matters relating to space management;
- Provide advice and information on space requests to the IPC Infrastructure Committee;
- Maintain accurate space information. To this end, the Division shall perform regular space allocation and usage audits.
- Provide recommendations on appropriate amounts of different categories of space based on utilisation rates, benchmarks and forecasts.

6.3 Responsibilities of the Executive Director: Infrastructure, Operations & Finance:
- Approve the allocation of space and report such allocations to the IPC Infrastructure Committee;
- Refer decisions on the allocation of space to the IPC Infrastructure Committee when necessary.

6.4 Responsibilities of the IPC Infrastructure Committee:
- Consider and approve referred space requests.

Appendix 1

a. DHET space norms

Appendix 2

A business process and on-line business system is being designed for the application for new/additional space. Once established, the executive summary of this process will comprise appendix 2 of this policy.