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PROVOSTINST 1531.84A  
VPAA  
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PROVOST INSTRUCTION 1531.84A

From: Provost, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: ACADEMIC COURSE SECTION SCHEDULING GUIDANCE

Ref: (a) PROVOSTINST 1531.13D Course Enrollment Policy  
(b) PROVOSTINST 5420.20H Curriculum Review Process

Encl: (1) Standard Scheduling Notation  
(2) Standard Section Scheduling Patterns  
(3) Standard Notation for Section Numbering

1. Purpose. To publish guidance for the scheduling of course sections and associated standard notations.
2. Cancellation. ACDEANINST 1531.84. The instruction has been updated to improve the clarity of the rules for scheduling course sections, and the enclosures have been updated to be more descriptive.
3. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to all academic departments.
4. Background. To fulfill the Naval Academy mission, each midshipman must complete their academic program within a 4-year period. The efficient scheduling of academic courses and the efficient use of available classrooms is essential to allow generation of feasible schedules that permit timely completion of the academic program for all midshipmen. The need for midshipmen to obtain viable class section schedules shall therefore take priority over any midshipman or faculty scheduling preferences.
5. Action
  - a. Departmental teaching schedules shall be developed with the needs of the midshipmen foremost. Sections shall be scheduled to maximize scheduling flexibility and room usability with offerings distributed among all academic periods and days. Faculty requests for specific schedules may be considered, but cannot take priority over providing viable schedules for the midshipmen. Departments offering core courses and large enrollment courses shall develop section offerings that can be consistently repeated each semester with minimal changes.

- b. Departments shall use standard notation for scheduling of courses and sections as described in enclosure (1).
- c. Departments shall minimize using non-standard scheduling patterns. See enclosure (2) for a list of standard section scheduling patterns. The standard meeting time patterns help maximize scheduling flexibility; non-standard patterns generally do not. The use of non-standard schedules must be approved in advance by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA).
- d. Departments shall arrange section meeting time patterns of all of their offered courses, including multi-section courses, so that all periods of the week have nearly the same use. For example, periods 1 and 6 should be utilized to the same extent as the other periods of the day, and Fridays should be utilized to the same extent as other days of the week. Departments shall distribute the department's teaching hours as uniformly across all periods of the week as possible.
- e. Departments shall use the fewest number of different periods possible for the schedule of any section. The greater the number of different periods used, the more likely it is that a section's schedule will conflict with others or that a midshipman will be unable to enroll in the section.
- f. Departments shall use as few classrooms as possible in scheduling a course section. It is permissible to schedule a section into two or more different rooms to increase room use efficiency.
- g. Section capacities should be made as large as possible, consistent, of course, with good pedagogy as well as room capacity limits. Standard classrooms should not generally be used for small sections. Recall that sections with fewer than 10 midshipmen must be justified to and approved by the school dean and VPAA per reference (a). Offices, conference rooms, and seminar rooms may be used for small sections. In general, double-scheduling of rooms will not be allowed. Two different rooms may not be scheduled for the use of the same section at the same time. If classroom-style instruction is desired during a laboratory period, it will have to take place in the laboratory or a classroom that is not otherwise scheduled.
- h. Departments shall verify, where possible, that scheduling conflicts for midshipmen have not been created by checking with other departments teaching the same midshipmen. For example, if departments A and B teach majors in the same graduating class in a given semester, they should coordinate their scheduling to avoid offerings that conflict. Elective courses that should be available to upper class majors should be offered at times that are not in conflict. To the extent possible, departments shall ensure that scheduling of courses does not restrict scheduling such that enrollment in the course will force enrollment in other courses to specific sections.
- i. Departments shall use the notation of enclosure (3) for section numbering.

j. A course with a laboratory shall be scheduled so that laboratory time occurs in consecutive periods or departments should reconsider the format or the credits allocated to the course. For example, a 1-2-2 course should not be scheduled as though it were a 3-0-3 course and, conversely, a 3-0-3 course should not be taught with a double period. See enclosure (1) for notes on course credit notations. Courses may be restructured through the normal curriculum change process as described in reference (b).

k. Departments may employ, where it is feasible to do so, faculty offices, departmental meeting rooms, and other spaces within the academic buildings for classroom purposes.

#### 6. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned per the records disposition schedules located on the DON Assistant for Administration, Directives and Records Management Division portal page at <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/Records%20Management%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local records custodian or the U.S. Naval Academy Records Manager.

7. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.71A, the VPAA will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of the issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 10 years, unless revised or canceled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5214.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

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#### Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically via the Provost Instructions internet website: <https://www.usna.edu/Academics/Provost/Rules-Regulations/Instructions.php>

Standard Scheduling Notation

1. Background. In order to maintain consistency in schedules, it is essential to adopt standard abbreviations and notations.
2. Course Identifiers. Courses are identified by a five- or six-character identifier. As indicated in the graphic below, the first two characters indicate the division and department. The third character usually indicates the level of the course (where "1"=freshman or 4/c level, "2"=sophomore or 3/c level, "3"=junior or 2/c level and "4"=senior or 1/c level). The fourth and fifth characters are unique numeric course identifiers. While not typical, some course identifiers also have a sixth character, usually to indicate a particular version of the course or a particular enrollment population.

For example, SM221P:

**S** - Represents the School or Division Offering the course

E - ECW

S - Math & Science

H - HumSS (History & English)

F - HumSS (Poli Sci, Econ, & Languages)

N - Pro Dev, LEAD, SeaNav

P - Physical Ed

**M** - Represents the Department or major of the course offering:

Engineering:

A - Aero/Astro

C - Computer

E - Electrical

M - Mechanical

N - Naval Arch/Ocean

R - Nuclear

W - WR&C

Math & Science:

B - Biology

C - Chemistry

D - Data Science

I - Computer Sci

M & A - Math

O - Oceanography

P - Physics

Y - Cyber

Hum & Soc Sci:

E - Econ or English

H - History

P - Political Sci

X - Languages & Cultures -

Arabic (A), Chinese (C),

French (F), German (G),

Japanese (J), Russian (R),

Spanish (S), Culture (L)

**2** - The first numerical digit represents the nominal class year and level of the course:

1 - 4/C (Plebe / Freshman level)

2 - 3/C (Youngster / Sophomore level)

3 - 2/C (2nd Class / Junior level)

4 - 1/C (Firstie / Senior level)

5 - 1/C (Firstie / Senior Level - Trident or Honors level)

The 2nd and 3rd numerical digits are unique numbers to identify the course. When used, the 6th character of the course number represents a variation of a permanent course offering (or to represent different special topics courses). Common variants include:

- P - for Plebes
- H - Honors
- V - Validated
- X - for 4-year internationals

A, B, C, D, etc. are used when multiple variations of a course are offered. Some variants may indicate whether the course counts for Hm/SS credit, or to identify courses that cover specific content for certain majors (Area Studies regions, Data Science, etc.).

3. Course Credits. Generally, a course's format and its associated credits are noted as R-L-C, where R=the number of hours of recitations (lectures) per week, L=the number of laboratory hours per week, and C=the total credits for the course. The total credits is generally the sum of the recitation hours per week plus half of the lab hours per week, or  $C=R+L/2$ . A three-credit, lecture-only course is therefore referred to as "3-0-3," while a three-credit course with two lectures and one two-hour lab per week is referred to as "2-2-3."

4. Buildings. The following are the standard, two-letter building designations.

Alumni Hall	AL	MacDonough Hall	MD
Armel Leftwich Visitor's Center	VC	Mahan Hall	MA
Bancroft Hall	Bw*	Michelson Hall	MI
Carter Hall	CA	Mitscher Hall	MT
Chauvenet Hall	CH	Nimitz Hall	NI
Dahlgren Hall	DA	Perry Center	PC
Halligan Hall	HA	Preble Hall	PR
Halsey Field House	FH	Ricketts Hall	RK
Hendrix Oceanography Lab	HX	Rickover Hall	RI
Hubbard Hall	HU	Robert Crown Sailing Ctr	SC
Larson Hall	LA	Sampson Hall	SA
Leahy Hall	LE	Tennis Center	TC
Lejeune Hall	LJ	Ward Hall	WA
Levy Center	LC	Warner Soccer Center	WR
Luce Hall	LU	Wesley Brown	WB

(w\* = Wing number)

5. Rooms. Normally, three digits are used to designate a room, with a fourth character as a suffix, where necessary. Leading zeroes should be employed vice "G," if G means ground deck. Examples: CH116, LU006 (not LUG6), RI006 (not RI6), WA007 (not WAG7), and RI123b. TBA ("to be announced") and TBD ("to be determined") should be replaced by actual meeting

locations prior to the start of the semester, but may remain only if appropriate, usually for independent research project courses.

6. Days. Following are the letter notations for each day of the week.

Monday	M
Tuesday	T
Wednesday	W
Thursday	R
Friday	F
Saturday	S

7. Periods. Following is the class period schedule for a normal academic day.

<u>Period</u>	<u>Duration</u>
1	0745-0835
2	0845-0935
3	0945-1035
4	1045-1135
5	1340-1430
6	1440-1530
7	1240-1330
8	0745-0900
9	0945-1100
10	1340-1455

8. Section schedules. A schedule pattern has the form DP where D is a string of letters designating days of the week and P is a string of digits designating periods of the day.

*Examples:*

<u>Schedule pattern</u>	<u>Meets on</u>
MWF3	Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during 3rd period
WF12	Wednesday and Friday during 1st and 2nd periods
TR9	Tuesday and Thursday during 9th period
MW2,R12	Monday and Wednesday 2nd period, Thursday 1st and 2nd period

9. Designating meetings in more than one room. When a section meets in more than one classroom during a week, the classrooms are separated by commas and the meeting times are also separated by commas in a corresponding manner.

*Examples:*

<u>Times</u>	<u>Rooms</u>	<u>... means that the section meets</u>
MWF2,R12	MI118, MI034	MWF2 in room MI118 and R12 in M034
T9,R9	CH122, CH110	T9 in room CH122 and R9 in CH110
M6,T56,R56	MI110, MI103, MI020	M6 in room MI110, T56 in MI103, R56 in MI020

10. Additional technical notes

a. Commas must be used as separators, exclusively. No other character, such as the slash(/) or space should be used as a separator. Example: "MI225/22" is incorrect and should be "MI225,MI022."

b. In a string representing a scheduling time pattern, no digit should be followed by a letter. A comma must be used to separate them. Example: "MWFIT12" should be "MWF1,T12."

c. There must be the same number of commas used for the room data as for the meeting time string in the schedule for a section.

Standard Section Scheduling Patterns

The scheduling pattern guidance in this enclosure applies to courses offered during fall and spring semesters. These standard patterns mesh well with each other; non-standard patterns generally do not. The use of non-standard schedules must be approved in advance by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA).

For summer school courses, please consult the VPAA for course-specific guidance.

Courses with Lectures only - Standard Scheduling Patterns

<b>Course Credits</b>	<b>Standard Section Schedules</b>
1-0-1	Mx Tx Wx Rx Fx
2-0-2	MWx MFx WFx TRx
3-0-3*	MWFx* TRz*
4-0-4	MTWFx ( <i>when x is odd</i> ) MWRFx ( <i>when x is even</i> ) TRx(x+1) ( <i>when x is odd</i> )

*Notation: x = period 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6  
and z = period 8, 9, or 10.*

*\* Three-credit, 3-0-3 courses are some of the most common courses. Note that there are six ways to schedule a MWFx section (MWF1, MWF2, ..., or MWF6), while there are only three ways to schedule a TRz section (TR8, TR9, or TR10). Therefore, departments should limit the number of TRz sections to about one-third of their 3-0-3 course offerings. Departments should also ensure course sections are reasonably distributed among all of their offerings (e.g., core courses should not be offered exclusively as MWFx and elective courses should not be offered exclusively as TRz).*

Courses with Lectures and Laboratories - Standard Scheduling Patterns

Credits for courses with laboratories are usually 1-2-2, 2-2-3, or 3-2-4 and are simply the sum of 1-0-1, 2-0-2, or 3-0-3 lecture/recitation schedules with a 0-2-1 component added, usually in a separate space.

Since laboratories are normally conducted in rooms separate from the classrooms, the scheduling of laboratory courses may not fit a standard pattern, but the following scheduling patterns should be followed whenever possible.

<b>Credits</b>	<b>Schedules</b>			
<b>1-2-2</b>	M1,T12	W1,T12	F1,T12	
	M2,R12	W2,R12	F2,R12	
	M3,T34	W3,T34	F3,T34	
	M4,R34	W4,R34	F4,R34	
	M5,T56	W5,T56	F5,T56	
	M6,R56	W6,R56	F6,R56	
<b>2-2-3</b>	MW1,T12	MF1,T12	WF1,T12	TR <sub>xy</sub> *
	MW2,R12	MF2,R12	WF2,R12	MW <sub>xy</sub> *
	MW3,T34	MF3,T34	WF3,T34	MF <sub>xy</sub> *
	MW4,R34	MF4,R34	WF4,R34	WF <sub>xy</sub> *
	MW5,T56	MF5,T56	WF5,T56	
	MW6,R56	MF6,R56	WF6,R56	
*where <i>x</i> is odd and $y=x+1$ , but the <i>MW</i> , <i>MF</i> , <i>WF</i> versions are generally not preferred				
Note: Courses with a 2-2-3 credit distribution shall not be exclusively scheduled as MW <sub>x</sub> ,T/R(x+1). These courses must have lectures distributed over the MF and WF times to avoid compressing midshipmen schedules.				
<b>3-2-4</b>	MWF1,T12	MW8,F12*	MF8,W12*	
	MWF2,R12	MW9,F34*	MF9,W34*	
	MWF3,T34	MW10,F56*	MF10,W56*	
	MWF4,R34	(*MW <sub>x</sub> ,F <sub>xy</sub> times should be limited)		
	MWF5,T56			
	MWF6,R56			

Standard Notation for Section Numbering

1. Section numbering guidance. Each offered course section should normally have a 4-digit numeric designator, e.g., "1001" or "0101".
2. Regular Semester Section Numbering for Lecture-Only Courses. Typically, the first digit of a section number is the period during which the lecture is scheduled. For 8th, 9th or 10th period classes, the first two digits of the section number should be "12," "34," or "56," respectively. The last digit is "1" for a single section course; additional sections offered at the same time(s) are then numbered sequentially "2," "3" and so forth.

Examples:

<b>Meeting Times</b>	<b>Section Number</b>	<b>... means that the section meets</b>
MWF3	3001	3 <sup>rd</sup> period
MWF3	3002	3 <sup>rd</sup> period, and there is another section of the same course also scheduled during 3 <sup>rd</sup> period (section 3001)
MTWFS	5001	5 <sup>th</sup> period
MWRF6	6001	6 <sup>th</sup> period
TR8	1201	8 <sup>th</sup> period
TR9	3401	9 <sup>th</sup> period
TR10	5601	10 <sup>th</sup> period
TR10	5602	10 <sup>th</sup> period, and there is another section of the same course also scheduled during 10 <sup>th</sup> period (section 5601)

3. Regular Semester Section Numbering for Lecture and Lab Courses. Typically, the first digit of a section number is the period during which the lecture is scheduled (for 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> period, use 1, 3, or 5, respectively). The second digit indicates the period during which the lab is scheduled to begin (e.g., if the lab is 12, use 1). The third digit indicates the day of the week of the lab meets (M=1, T=2, W=3, R=4, F=5). The last digit is "1" for a single section course; additional sections offered at the same time(s) are then numbered sequentially "2," "3," and so forth.

Examples:

<b>Meeting Times</b>	<b>Section Number</b>	<b>... means that the section meets</b>
MWF5,T56	5521	5 <sup>th</sup> period, with a lab that begins 5 <sup>th</sup> period on Tuesdays
MW6,R56	6541	6 <sup>th</sup> period, with a lab that begins 5 <sup>th</sup> period on Thursdays
MW6,R56	6542	Same as above, but is the second section with that particular scheduling pattern (i.e., there is a 6541 section)

4. Summer School Section Numbering. Summer school courses should similarly have a 4- digit section designator. For summer school courses, the first two digits indicate the block number ("01" for first block, "02" for second block, or "03" for third block), and the last two digits are "01" for the first section, "02" for the second section of the same course during the same block, and so forth.

Examples:

<b>Section Number</b>	<b>... means that the section meets</b>
0201	During summer school block 2
0202	During summer school block 2, and there is another section scheduled during that block as well (section 0201)
0301	During summer school block 3

5. By Arrangement Meeting Time Sections. Sections whose meeting times are "By Arrangement" should be numbered with the pattern 99xy, where xy is typically "01" for the first section, "02" for the second section, and so forth.