

Feedback Toolkit

A COURSE SCHEDULING RESOURCE

Purpose

This Feedback Toolkit is designed to help institutions gather meaningful, actionable input from faculty and students about course scheduling: how it works today, where it creates barriers, and what changes could better support student progress toward graduation.

The tools included here offer multiple ways to collect insight across contexts (surveys, focus groups, classrooms, and campus events), combining quantitative and qualitative inputs to inform student-centered, data-informed scheduling improvements.

Table of Contents

- Purpose 1**
- Table of Contents..... 1**
- Faculty..... 2**
 - Goals2
 - Survey2
 - Focus Group.....5
- Students 8**
 - Goals8
 - Survey8
 - Focus Group..... 12
 - In-Class Poll..... 15
 - Event Table..... 17

Faculty

GOALS

- **Understand faculty scheduling preferences:** what they value, what constraints shape those preferences, and how flexible those preferences are.
- **Identify potential changes to the schedule** that faculty are likely to support, and those that may face resistance.
- **Surface assumptions faculty hold about student scheduling needs** including where those assumptions align or conflict with actual student behavior and demand.

SURVEY

Our institution is embarking on an effort to examine how course schedules are created today and how they might better support students' progress toward graduation.

We're gathering faculty perspectives to understand how course scheduling practices support both student success and the teaching experience. Your insights will help inform practical, student-centered improvements that also reflect the realities faculty navigate.

This survey should take about 5 minutes.

1. What is your primary role at the institution?*

- Full-time tenured faculty
- Full-time tenure-track faculty
- Full-time non-tenure-track faculty
- Part-time/adjunct faculty
- Other (please specify)

2. Which department or academic area do you primarily teach in?*

(Open response)

3. How satisfied are you with the current course scheduling process for your department/program?*

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Not sure / I don't interact much with the process

4. How flexible are you with offering courses at different times or in different formats (e.g., online, hybrid, in-person)?*

- Very flexible
- Somewhat flexible
- It depends on the course
- Not very flexible
- Not at all flexible

Please explain (open response):

5. Which factors most influence your preferences for when and how courses are scheduled? (Select up to three.)*

- Student needs and demand
- Pedagogical needs (e.g., labs, facilities, instructional approach)
- Other teaching or service responsibilities
- Personal commitments
- Classroom/space availability
- Departmental norms or expectations
- Other (open response)

6. To what extent do you believe the current course schedule meets most students' needs?*

- Very well
- Somewhat well
- Not very well
- Not well at all
- Unsure

7. What do you believe students most need from the course schedule to make timely progress toward their degree? (Select up to three)*

- More sections of high-demand courses
- Fewer conflicts between required courses
- More evening or weekend options
- More online or hybrid options
- More predictable schedules across terms
- Required courses offered in the correct sequence/term
- Other (open response)

8. Please rank the times/days of the week you most prefer to *avoid* teaching. (Rank from 1 = least important to avoid, to 8 = most important to avoid)*

- Early morning (8:00–10:00 AM)
- Late morning (10:00–12:00 PM)
- Early afternoon (12:00–2:00 PM)
- Late afternoon (2:00–4:00 PM)
- Evening (4:00–7:00 PM)
- Monday
- Friday

Other times you'd prefer to avoid (open response):

9. Are there specific scheduling constraints you regularly navigate that the institution should be aware of?

(Open response)

10. Please share any additional questions, concerns, or suggestions you have about course scheduling or how it could better support student learning and your teaching experience.

(Open response)

FOCUS GROUP

1. Opening & Welcome (5 minutes)

Facilitator Script:

- Thank you for joining us today.
- Our institution is embarking on an effort to examine how course schedules are created today and how they might better support students' progress toward graduation.
- We're here to learn from your experiences.
- Faculty see firsthand how scheduling affects student success and the teaching experience, and your perspectives will help us identify practical, student-centered improvements that also reflect the realities you navigate.

Ground Rules:

- There are no right or wrong answers; we're looking for a range of perspectives.
- Speak from your experience and feel free to build on each other's ideas.
- We'll keep this conversation focused, respectful, and on time.
- Comments will be summarized anonymously; no individual will be identified.

Warm-up Prompt (quick):

- Please share your name, department, and one word that describes your experience with course scheduling here.

2. Faculty Scheduling Needs & Constraints (12 minutes)

Goal: Understand what drives preferences and where flexibility/constraints exist.

Primary Questions:

- When you think about the courses you teach, what factors most shape your preferences for when and how those courses are scheduled?
- What kinds of scheduling constraints do you regularly navigate that people may not see or fully understand?
- In which situations do you feel most able — or least able — to be flexible with course days/times or formats?

Optional Probes:

- Pedagogical needs (labs, modality, equipment)
- Conflicts with service/research responsibilities
- Departmental norms or inherited patterns

3. Understanding Student Scheduling Needs (12 minutes)

Goal: Surface faculty observations and assumptions about student needs.

Primary Questions:

- From your perspective, what do students most need from the course schedule to stay on track toward graduation?
- What scheduling challenges do you see students encounter most often in your classes or advising conversations?
- Based on what you've observed, where do you think the current schedule works well for students, and where does it fall short?

Optional Probes:

- Differences across student groups (working adults, first-gen, commuters)
- Enrollment patterns that surprise or concern you

4. Anticipating Support & Pushback (12 minutes)

Goal: Identify what changes faculty may support or resist — and why.

Primary Questions:

- Which changes to the course schedule and scheduling process are you most likely to be supportive of? Your colleagues?
- What types of changes do you think would be most challenging or likely to raise concerns?
- What would make potential changes feel more feasible, manageable, or predictable for faculty?

Optional Probes:

- Transparency, communication, and rationale
- Departmental autonomy vs. consistency
- Predictability across terms

5. Closing Reflections (5 minutes)

Prompt:

- If you could change one thing about our course schedule (for students or for faculty) what would it be?

Facilitator Wrap-up:

- Thank participants, remind them that their comments will be anonymized, and share next steps or how insights will be used.

Students

GOALS

- **Understand how students make scheduling decisions:** what they prioritize, what constraints shape their choices, and how they plan their course loads each term.
- **Identify barriers students encounter when trying to enroll in the courses they need:** including conflicts, full sections, modality limitations, and unpredictable offerings.
- **Identify what students need from the course schedule to stay on track:** the timing, formats, and patterns that best support their progress.

SURVEY

We want to better understand what students need from the course schedule and what challenges you face when trying to build a workable schedule each term. Your feedback will help the institution improve how courses are offered so students can make steady progress toward graduation while balancing real-life commitments.

This survey should take about 5 minutes.

1. What is your current enrollment status?*

- Full-time undergraduate
- Part-time undergraduate
- Full-time graduate
- Part-time graduate
- Other (please specify)

2. What year are you in your program?*

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Fifth year or beyond

- Graduate student
- Other (please specify)

3. Students manage a lot alongside their coursework. Which of the following responsibilities are part of your weekly life? (Select all that apply)*

- Paid work (part time)
- Paid work (full time)
- Parenting or caregiving for children
- Caregiving for adults (e.g., parents, family members)
- Athletics or extracurricular commitments
- Commuting/transportation constraints
- Other major responsibilities (please specify)
- None of the above

4. When you build your class schedule, what matters most to you? (Select up to three.)*

- Preferred time of day (morning, afternoon, evening)
- Preferred modality (in-person, online, hybrid)
- Minimizing long breaks between classes
- Classes scheduled on specific days of the week
- Keeping classes close together (back-to-back)
- Keeping classes spread out (not back-to-back)
- Taking classes with preferred instructors
- Class location (main campus vs. satellite sites)
- Balancing course difficulty across the week/term
- Other (please specify)

5. How easy or difficult is it for you to build a workable schedule each term?*

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult

Please explain (open response):

6. What scheduling challenges do you most often encounter? (Select up to three.)*

- Required classes offered at conflicting times
- Required classes not offered in the term I need them
- Sections fill before I can register
- Limited evening or weekend options
- Limited online or hybrid options
- Classes scheduled too early or too late in the day
- Too many long breaks between classes
- Not enough course options in my major
- Other (open response)
- None of the above

7. How have scheduling issues (conflicts, unavailable sections, or limited options) forced you to change your academic plans? (Select all that apply)*

- I had to take fewer credits in a term than planned
- I had to delay a required course
- I had to switch sections or instructors I didn't prefer
- I had to change the order I took courses
- I had to take a course at a time that didn't work well for me

- I had to switch majors or consider switching majors
- I had to consider stopping out or did stop out temporarily
- None of the above

8. To what extent does the current course schedule support your ability to stay on track toward your degree?*

- Very well
- Somewhat well
- Not very well
- Not well at all
- Unsure

9. Please rank the times/days of the week you most prefer to *avoid* taking classes. (Rank from 1 = most important to avoid, to 8 = least important to avoid)*

- Early morning (8:00–10:00 AM)
- Late morning (10:00–12:00 PM)
- Early afternoon (12:00–2:00 PM)
- Late afternoon (2:00–4:00 PM)
- Evening (4:00–7:00 PM)
- Monday
- Friday

Other times you'd prefer to avoid (open response):

10. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your scheduling experience or what would help you succeed?

(Open response)

FOCUS GROUP

1. Opening & Welcome (5 minutes)

Facilitator Script:

- Thanks for joining us today.
- We're working to better understand what students need from the course schedule and what challenges you face when trying to register for the courses you need, at times that work for you.
- Your experiences will help the institution improve how courses are offered so that students can make steady progress toward graduation while balancing real-life responsibilities.
- Everything you share today will be summarized anonymously. We're looking for honest feedback. There are no right or wrong answers. Feel free to speak from your own experience.

Ground Rules:

- Speak from your experience
- Everyone's perspective is valid
- Keep comments respectful
- No one will be quoted by name
- We'll stay focused and on time

Warm-Up Prompt (quick, round-robin):

- Tell us your name, your major, and one word or phrase that describes what it's like for you to build your class schedule each term.

2. How Students Make Scheduling Decisions (12 minutes)

Goal: Understand student decision-making, preferences, and tradeoffs.

Primary Questions:

- When you start planning your schedule for a new term, what are the first things you look for or think about?
- What makes a class time or section "work" or "not work" for you?

- How do your other responsibilities (work, family, athletics, commuting, etc.) shape the schedule you try to build?

Optional Probes:

- How far in advance students plan
- Weekday patterns they prefer (e.g., M/W vs. T/Th vs. single-day classes)
- How they weigh modality choices (online, hybrid, in-person)
- How they decide on back-to-back vs. spaced-out schedules

3. Barriers to Enrolling in Needed Courses (12 minutes)

Goal: Surface the obstacles students encounter, beyond what survey checkboxes can capture.

Primary Questions:

- Think about a time when you had trouble getting the schedule you wanted. What happened?
- What are the biggest obstacles you face when trying to enroll in the courses you need rather than the courses that just “fit”?
- Can you share a time when a scheduling issue forced you to change your plans for a class you needed? What did you end up doing instead?

Optional Probes:

- Delaying courses
- Taking fewer credits
- Taking classes at less-than-ideal times
- Switching instructors or sections
- Changing major or considering stop-out

4. What Students Need From the Schedule (12 minutes)

Goal: Identify changes that would meaningfully improve students' ability to progress.

Primary Questions:

- If you could design your ideal weekly class schedule, what would it look like? (Optional: Print out a week calendar for students to draw in their ideal schedule)
- What kinds of scheduling changes (times, days, formats, number of sections) would make the biggest difference in helping you stay on track?
- What would make registration and schedule-building feel easier, clearer, or more predictable?

Optional Probes:

- Predictability term-to-term
- More evening/weekend/online options
- More sections of high-demand classes
- Reducing gaps or conflicts
- Wish list items ("magic wand" prompt)

5. Closing Reflections (5 minutes)

Prompt:

- If you could change just one thing about the course schedule to make your life easier (or to help you stay on track toward graduation) what would it be?

Facilitator Wrap-Up:

- Thank participants for sharing their time and insights. Reiterate confidentiality. Explain how their feedback will contribute to improving the course scheduling process and student progress.

IN-CLASS POLL

Purpose

These quick questions help us understand how well the course schedule works for students and what gets in the way when you register for classes. Your answers are anonymous and will help improve the scheduling process.

How to Run It

If in person:

- Ask students to "Raise your hand if..."
- Count approximate percentages (e.g., "looks like about half the room").

If using polling tech:

- Create a Yes/No poll for each question.
- Display results to students if you wish.

Time Required

3–5 minutes total.

Raise-your-hand Questions

- Raise your hand if trying to build your class schedule each term causes you stress or anxiety.
- Ask these one at a time:
 - Raise your hand if your work schedule affects which classes you can take.
 - Raise your hand if family or caregiving responsibilities affect which classes you can take.
 - Raise your hand if athletics or extracurriculars affect which classes you can take.
 - Raise your hand if commuting or transportation affects which classes you can take.
- Raise your hand if you've ever wanted to take a class but couldn't because all the sections filled before you could register.

- Raise your hand if you've ever taken fewer credits in a term than you planned because the schedule didn't work for you.
- Raise your hand if you've ever had to delay a required class because it wasn't offered at a time you could take it.

Polling/Clicker Questions

- Does trying to build your class schedule each term cause you stress or anxiety?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes / It depends
- Which responsibilities affect the class times you can take? (multi select)
 - Work
 - Family/caregiving
 - Athletics/extracurriculars
 - Commuting/transportation
 - None of the above
- Have you ever tried to take a class you needed but couldn't because the sections were full?
 - Yes
 - No
- Have you ever taken fewer credits in a term than you planned because of scheduling issues?
 - Yes
 - No
- Have you ever delayed a required class because none of the offered times worked for you?
 - Yes
 - No

Closing Script

Thank you. This helps us understand what's working and where students run into problems when trying to build a schedule.

Your responses will be shared anonymously as part of efforts to improve how the institution designs the course schedule.

EVENT TABLE

Purpose

To quickly gather student preferences about weekly class schedules, surface real-world constraints students navigate, and collect qualitative insights that go beyond what can be captured in surveys.

Students review five sample weekly schedule layouts, choose the one that best fits their life, drop a token in the matching jar, and (optionally) spin a prize wheel.

Materials Needed

- 5 printed 11" x 8.5" schedule posters
 - [Download print-ready PDFs here](#)
 - [Customize posters in Canva here](#)
- 5 jars or boxes (labeled Schedule A, B, C, D, E)
- Tokens (beans, beads, poker chips, etc.)
- Small dot stickers
- Prize wheel or bowl of small prizes
- Pens + sticky notes or a simple note-taking sheet
- Clipboards for facilitators
- Small dot stickers (optional)
- 5 sign holders to display the printed schedule posters (optional)
- Table signage explaining activity (optional)

The 5 Schedules

- Schedule A — Compact Mornings
 - Classes concentrated in the morning (8:00–12:00)

- Monday–Friday
- Afternoons/evenings completely open
- Schedule B — Compact Afternoons
 - Classes concentrated in the afternoon (12:30–4:30)
 - Monday–Friday
 - Mornings and evenings free
- Schedule C — Spread Out
 - Classes spread across all five days
 - Balanced mix of morning/afternoon times
 - No long back-to-back blocks
- Schedule D — 3 Days
 - Long blocks on three days per week
 - Two days per week with no classes
- Schedule E - Evenings & Weekends
 - Classes only after 6pm and on Saturdays

Facilitation Script

- We're gathering quick feedback on which types of weekly course schedules work best for students.
- Take a look at these five sample weekly schedules.
- Pick the one that best matches the schedule you would prefer — based on your work, family, commute, study habits, whatever.
- Then drop a token into the jar for your choice.
- Optional: Put a dot sticker on any course sessions you would prefer to be online.
- After that, you can spin the prize wheel!

Optional Follow-Up Prompts

- What made you choose that schedule?
- Is there something about your life or routine that makes this schedule easier?
- Which schedule would be the hardest for you, and why?

Notetaking Instructions

- To capture insights beyond the token counts, facilitators should jot down short notes during or immediately after each conversation.
- Use quick, structured tags like:
 - Work (student works 15+, 20+, 30+ hrs/week)
 - Family (childcare, caregiving)
 - Commute (long commute, parking constraints, bus schedule)
 - Preference (mornings, afternoons, online, back-to-back, spread-out)
 - Barrier (full courses, conflicts, limited sections, late registration)
 - Progress Impact (delayed requirements, fewer credits, semester off)
- Note-Taking Examples:
 - "Picked Block Schedule due to work 4–10 pm daily. Mornings only."
 - "Online-heavy bc parent of 2. Needs evenings open."
 - "Spread-out schedule better for ADHD/energy management."
 - "Back-to-back avoided. Heavy burnout + long commute."
 - "Delayed bio requirement 1 semester (only offered at 8am)."
- Facilitators should also snap a quick photo of the filled jars and the posters with dot stickers (optional) at the end of the event for documentation.

End of Event Summary

At the close of the event, facilitators should record:

- Token count for each schedule (A–E)
- Top 3 reasons students chose their preferred schedule
- Top 3 barriers or constraints repeatedly mentioned

- Any notable quotes (de-identified)
- Any surprises
- Any patterns across groups (working students, commuters, caregivers)