

Review of Central Education Space: a critical moment

A. INTRODUCTION

This review provides a description and analysis of the current use patterns of centrally managed education space, identifying successes, pressure points and areas of risk and reveals to the University that central education space is at a critical juncture. Appendix A outlines the information sources used.

The purpose of this review is to:

- Highlight areas of elevated risk for the University, particularly in relation to unmet demand.
- Inform the University's estates strategy.
- Inform building works and priorities.
- Inform discussions and decisions about intended growth in teaching and new courses.
- Inform discussions with Schools to:
 - Deploy strategy to increase sharing of education space, at least within the School.
 - Prioritise departmental space during core hours for education purposes.
 - Increase visibility of departmental spaces (which requires full adoption and use of Booker and setting the space as visible to those outside the department).
 - Introduce allocation prioritisation principles for centrally managed space to ensure that those cohorts with no departmental alternatives are not left without teaching space.

B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **The University has reached a point where some central education space venues at certain times are operating at full capacity such that any additional space requests could involve crisis management** e.g., rapid procurement of space from third parties or potentially chaotic timetabling disruption.
2. **There is no remaining capacity in larger departmental lecture theatres to absorb further sessions,** leading to problematic pressure points for larger cohorts and difficult to anticipate pressures for smaller cohorts.
3. **It has not been possible to accommodate all requests for the smaller cohorts** where there are also pressure points at certain times.
4. **Sidgwick Site is under the most pressure.** This pressure would increase if there were any significant works on that site that would require teaching to decant from current venues. But pressures can arise elsewhere easily depending on the exact nature of the demand change in relation to available space.
5. **The standards of central education space vary;** some of extremely inadequate quality. Some do not have the facilities to support University ambitions (e.g., lecture capture). There is no redundancy in the system to accommodate unexpected unavailability.
6. **The University currently has no choice but to hire external space** (at a cost) to supplement the lack of central education space. This is often done reactively and without having planned commitments by third party providers there is always the possibility the space will not be available. Furthermore, such

space is not equipped with the standard AV and lecture capture kit being rolled out across central education space and might not have on-site support.

7. **The pressures on central education space** and the reactive nature of the available responses do not allow for growth in teaching or in cohorts; require cohorts to be scheduled in some sub-standard spaces; require some cohorts to travel beyond what might be reasonable; has led to some Departments to choose venues that are lower than the cohort size; prevent sensible planning, and as such negatively impact the education experience for staff and students.

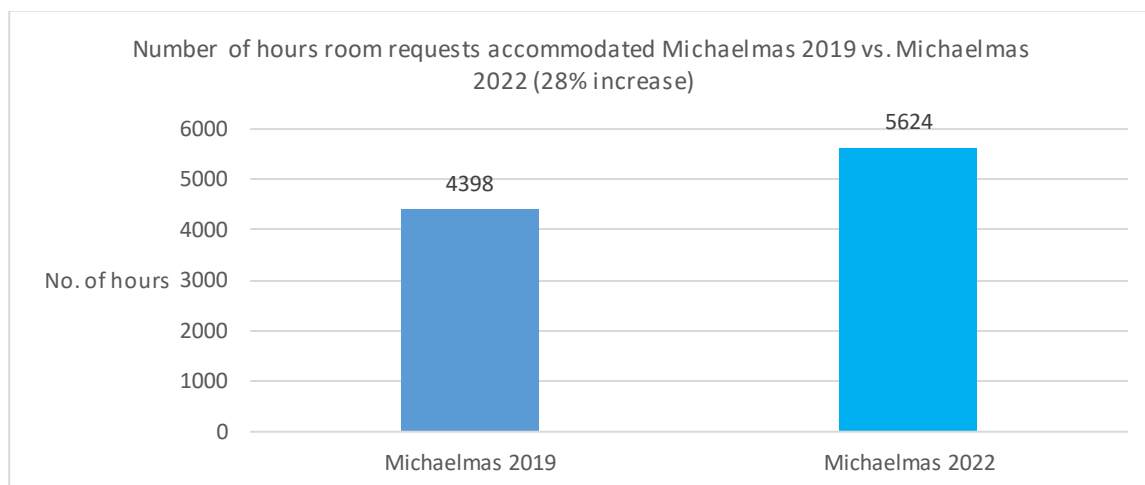
C. BACKGROUND

8. **Central education space comprises a variety of venues across two main teaching sites:** Sidgwick Site and New Museums Site, with a cluster of venues additionally located around Mill Lane (Old Press Site and the University Centre) and one lecture theatre on Downing Site. (Appendix B lists all central education space.)
9. **Some departments and cohorts are facing pressures to find suitable accommodation**, which have arisen because, for example, cohorts exceed the capacity of central space (size and/or number of venues), or have truly little departmental teaching space, and so rely heavily on central education space.
10. **Many departments have sufficient space for planned teaching but even so may find themselves having to request centrally managed space for e.g., an increase in student numbers (which can occur during a term) which means the planned space is no longer suitable.** While there is significant teaching space within the University, it is not necessarily the right space in the right place. Reactive requests for central space are difficult to manage in the short term without the ability to prioritise, or the means to suggest other local departmental space that might be suitable.
11. **Externally hired venues are required to supplement central space**, on both a temporary and medium-term basis. External venues were initially brought in to use to decant teaching from the Sidgwick Site Lecture Block (SSLB) and Mill Lane Lecture Theatres (MLLTs), but have remained in use, due both to an increase in demand for central teaching space, and an ongoing programme of improvement works taking some central venues out of use.
12. **To support the closure of the Mill Lane Lecture Theatres** there was a commitment to secure replacement space. This was done for all but one room, although the replacement space was not in one individual location. A room of equivalent capacity to MLLTs Room 3 was not provided as, with the assistance of timetabling changes, this room was decanted into existing large central and departmental lecture theatres. The decant of this large venue has been a **success** in terms of accommodating cohorts from Room 3 in decent quality replacement space, whilst also improving the efficiency of room use by increasing the room usage rates of the decant venues.
13. **However**, because of this, large central lecture theatres are almost full during the mornings, with a comparable situation in large departmental venues, which means that **no further teaching can be accommodated**. This is discussed further below. The **other negative outcome** is that those who used MLLTs for most of their teaching are now being accommodated in multiple venues on different sites, which are of differing standards. This is of concern to those departments.

D. INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR CENTRALLY MANAGED SPACE

14. **There has been a 28% increase** in the number of requests for centrally managed teaching space since 2019 (as depicted overleaf).

(NB This does not include the West Cambridge Hub (WCH), which in Michaelmas Term 2022 accommodated an additional 1,093 requests for the Foundation Year, Veterinary Medicine, and the Centre for Scientific Computing.)

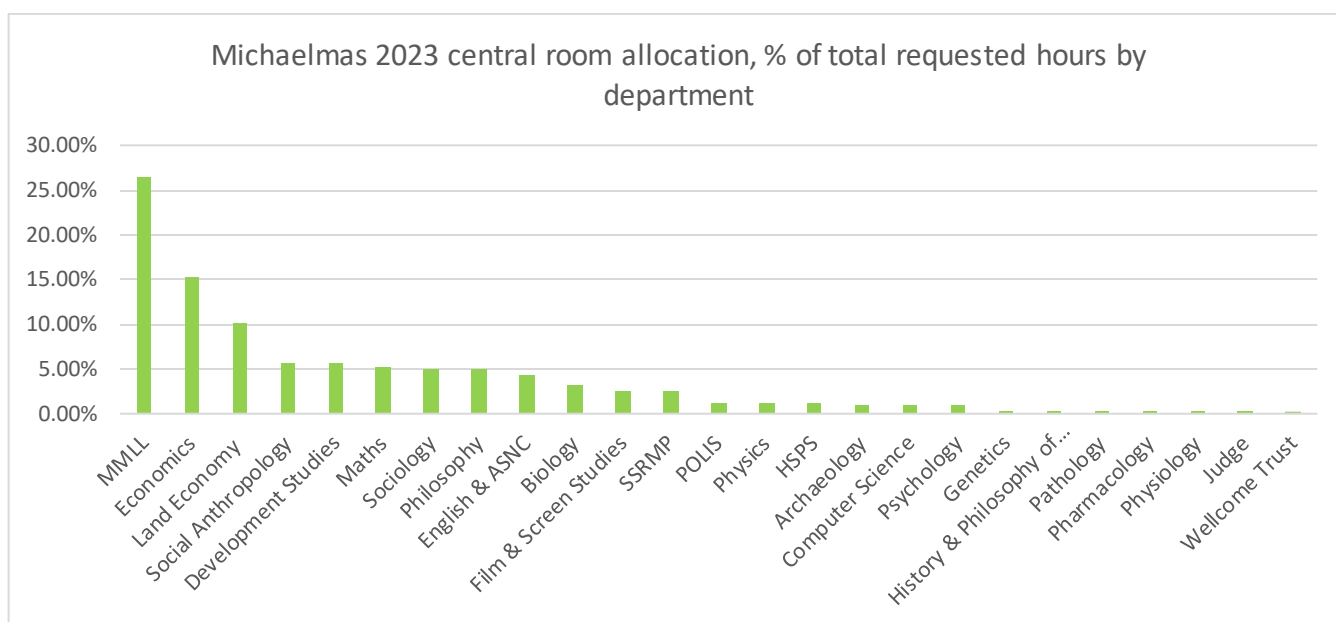


15. The increase may be attributed to:

- a result of decant planning** including accommodating teaching from the Department of Sociology where teaching spaces closed due to building refurbishment.
 - a growth in awareness** of centrally managed space arising from the offer of space during the pandemic to departments whose own teaching rooms were deemed unsuitable, and an increased popularity of central spaces that have been refurbished.
 - a shortage of space within departments** arising from new teaching courses/modules or loss of space. For example, the Department of Pharmacology has lost a lecture theatre, and anecdotally it is understood there is a shortage of space in the Alison Richard Building. There are also new teaching courses that the Education Space Team have been asked to allocate, including the new Foundation Year course, and some new courses, which departments had (at planning stage) indicated would be accommodated outside of central space.
 - growth in student numbers, in cohort sizes, new courses and options, and looking forward planned growth particularly in Postgraduate Taught (PGT).**
16. **Pressure on central space is expected to increase further**, with enquiries received with respect to new cohorts, including Bioinformatics Training and Quantitative Environmental Sciences (Natural Sciences Tripos subjects). The combined pressures on space lead to use of poor venues in terms of access and AV. The University is still reliant on spaces that are problematic e.g., the Hopkinson lecture theatre, the Syndics Room, the Phoenix Rooms, the Blackburn Room, the Carpenter Room, plus decant venues that are not located within the main University sites and vary in specification and support requirements.

E. DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION SPACE REQUESTS ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

17. **The Education Space Team receive varying pattern of requests** from departmental room requestors, which is due to the varying requirements of departments, ranging from types of cohorts, travel times, accessibility etc.
18. **Some departments have large, planned cohorts where centrally managed space is essential**, but do not comprise overall many requests (e.g., Physics).
19. **Some departments have multiple requests for large cohorts** (e.g., Economics) **or multiple requests for smaller cohorts** (MMLL) and some departments are generally **heavy users of central education space, where departmental space is lacking** (e.g., Land Economy). The chart below illustrates the amount of use (number of requested hours) by department.



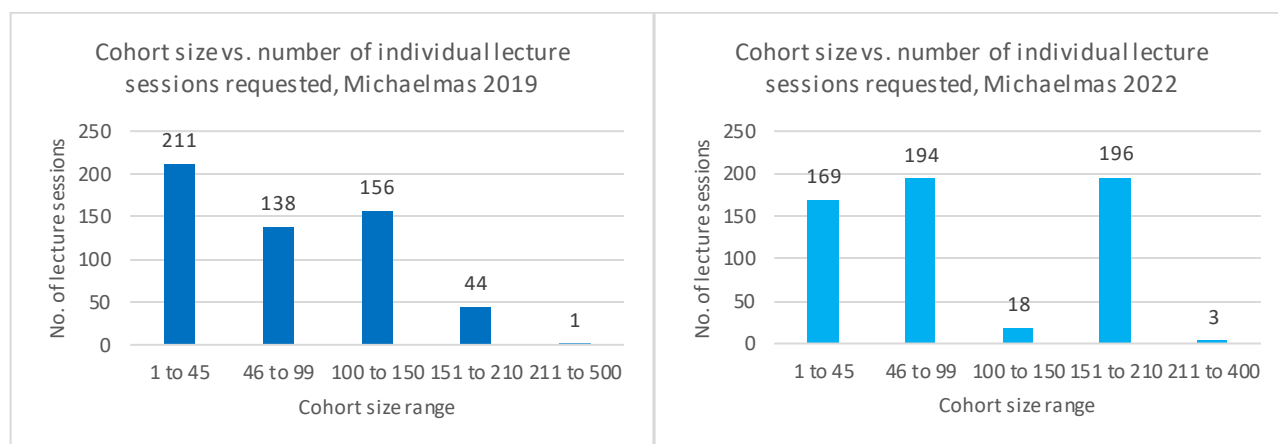
20. MMLL was the **greatest user of centrally managed space** in Michaelmas 2022, approaching one third of all requests, **followed by Economics and Land Economy**.

F. INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENT CASE STUDIES & COHORT PRESSURES

21. **The following case studies attempt to illustrate the pressures on some departments** and include the three greatest users of central education space. These case studies have drawn on the room allocation data and processes and as such, merely reflect the outcome of that process and so the case studies are limited. The users would have additional comments and perspectives.
22. **Together, the three case studies show that there is insufficient space on Sidgwick Site.**

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

23. The Faculty of Economics has a small number of teaching spaces, and no large space to accommodate their larger groups. Teaching needs to be located at Sidgwick Site, as it is not feasible to travel from the city centre to Sidgwick for back-to-back lectures. Additionally, the larger city centre lecture theatres are heavily used for other teaching and so would only accommodate a limited number of cohorts from Sidgwick Site.
24. A comparison of room request data from Michaelmas 2019 to Michaelmas 2022 indicates that the cohort sizes have increased. Consequently, only a reduced number of economics cohorts in the size range 100-150 can remain accommodated into Sidgwick Lecture Block rooms 1, 2, 4 and 5 and Little Hall. For the significantly larger cohorts (in the 151+ size ranges) the only possible Sidgwick venue is Lady Mitchell Hall. This issue is compounded by the reduction in capacity of the Sidgwick Lecture Block rooms, mentioned above, and where previously there was greater flexibility with room capacities for some cohorts that were slightly greater than the stated capacity of the room.



25. In Michaelmas 2022, the number of requests from large Economics cohorts exceeded the availability of Lady Mitchell Hall (the only possible venue at Sidgwick Site) and so some teaching was located on the New Museums Site and Downing Site. However, this gave rise to travel issues and added to pressure on space on those sites.
26. Due to the travel issues that arose during Michaelmas term, in Lent term 2023 the faculty requested that it returns to accommodation within the Sidgwick Lecture Block, which in effect means that the space allocated is lower than the cohort size.
27. **Conclusion:** For Economics, the University estate has not kept pace with student growth.

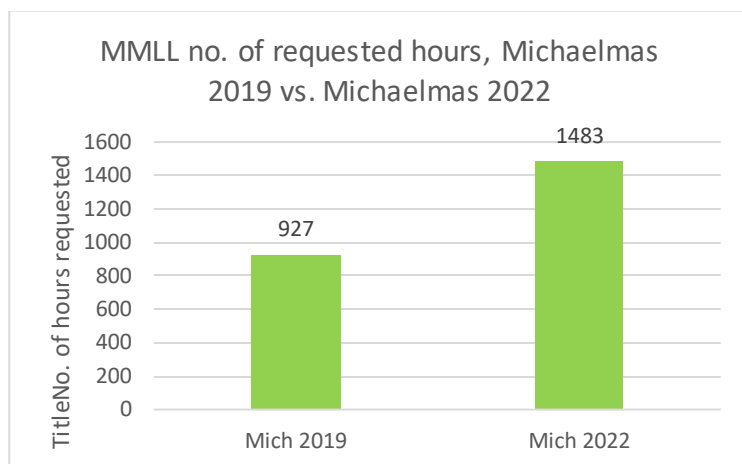
DEPARTMENT OF LAND ECONOMY

28. The Department of Land Economy ranked first in the recent REF rankings and in the recent undergraduate admissions round, applications to Land Economy rose by ~25%¹.
29. However, the department has truly little teaching space, and therefore relies almost entirely on centrally managed lecture theatres.
30. Land Economy teaching comprises 10% of all requested hours of central education space, making the department the third greatest user of centrally managed lecture theatres.
31. Lectures are two hours in duration, both mornings and afternoons. Cohorts are typically 50-100 capacity, requiring accommodation in medium-larger spaces primarily in the city centre.
32. Land Economy was a heavy user of Mill Lane Lecture Theatres. Its teaching is now accommodated in multiple locations, including Sidgwick Lecture Block. However, it is not possible to place all sessions in Sidgwick Lecture Block, as other Sidgwick-based cohorts must be accommodated. Whilst the Education Space Team attempt to allocate teaching into the smallest range of venues as possible, and particularly the University Centre, teaching is spread across various locations, and including decant venues. Some of the decant venues (e.g., College spaces) do not have the University's required AV and lecture capture set-up nor the support to ensure the rooms are configured and supported on the day.
33. In Lent Term 2023, a number of academics wrote to the University's Senior Leadership Team to express their disquiet about the lack of appropriate space to meet their teaching needs.
34. **Conclusion:** The case study of Land Economy demonstrates that the current central education space portfolio is not sufficient, in terms of quantity and quality and location, to accommodate the needs of those departments who depend on central education space to deliver their teaching. This case study highlights the need for high quality, medium sized lecture theatres in the city centre and underlines the importance of fully replacing the lecture theatre provision that was lost with the decommissioning of Mill Lane Lecture Theatres.

¹ Information provided by the Department of Land Economy in an email to the University's SLT.

FACULTY OF MMLL

35. Whilst the Faculty of MMLL has several small seminar and supervision rooms, it is the greatest user of centrally managed teaching space, comprising 26.5% of all requested hours in Michaelmas term.
36. The number of requested hours from MMLL has increased significantly since 2019, with a 60% increase from Michaelmas 2022 to Michaelmas 2019. It is now challenging to accommodate all requests.



37. MMLL teaching schedule results in multiple requests for the same session timings, particularly at 11am. For example, for Lent term 2023 11 sessions were requested for 11am on Wednesdays and 14 sessions for 11am on Thursdays – equating to nearly half of all the centrally managed teaching venues. The demand exceeded the education space available at these times.
38. To meet the demand for Lent Term 2023, additional space within other spaces was required, including the Phoenix Rooms, the Pitt Building, the Syndics Room, the Faculty of Divinity, and rooms at the University Centre that do not have disabled access. Some of these come at a financial cost.
39. **Conclusion:** There is not enough central education space to meet the requested hours. If the pattern of teaching remains, then more space is required. There is little potential for timetabling amendments to reduce pressure as the faculty has advised that the timetable is already very constrained.

G. THE PRESSURE POINTS

40. This section illustrates the pressure points on individual venues and particular timings through a series of tables using data from Michaelmas Term 2022.

Table 1: Number of hours activities accommodated in central education space, Michaelmas 2022, weeks 1-8, Mon-Fri, 9am -6pm (40 hours maximum possible per time slot, Booker data).

Location	Room	9-10am	10-11am	11am-12pm	12-1pm	1-2pm	2-3pm	3-4pm	4-5pm	5-6pm
Uni. Centre	Carpenter Room	4	17	13	8	5	17	9	24	13
NMS	Phoenix 2	1	1	9	1	2	4	9	7	3
Uni. Centre	Blackburn Room	8	19	16	30	14	33	22	10	0
Uni. Centre	Meade Room	4	20	15	1	1	13	13	6	7
Uni. Centre	Marshall Room	5	24	22	9	7	17	3	11	2
NMS	Phoenix 1	2	8	6	6	5	11	7	10	6
Sidgwick	Room 12 LB	12	29	24	33	15	23	21	16	4
Sidgwick	Room 11 SSLB	14	33	31	31	24	30	37	21	19
Sidgwick	Room 9 SSLB	25	29	30	17	13	30	32	16	8
Sidgwick	Room 10 SSLB	3	29	29	18	7	22	29	19	17
17 Mill Lane	Syndics Room	1	1	18	17	1	24	26	10	8
Sidgwick	Room 8 SSLB	21	32	30	25	20	33	28	36	12
Sidgwick	Room 7 SSLB	10	37	40	39	37	35	21	21	8
Uni. Centre	Cormack Room	39	39	40	26	2	27	27	22	19
Uni. Centre	Hicks Room	21	21	26	28	2	26	25	23	13
Sidgwick	Room 2 SSLB	19	36	35	38	13	33	29	22	10
Sidgwick	Room 1 SSLB	23	33	35	37	8	23	23	15	0
Sidgwick	Room 4 SSLB	26	29	30	30	12	26	23	14	7
Sidgwick	Room 5 SSLB	9	33	33	30	12	32	25	13	12
NMS	Hopkinson	8	26	32	29	10	11	27	23	4
Sidgwick	Room 3 SSLB	16	34	32	26	6	21	16	18	2
Sidgwick	Room 6 SSLB	16	25	35	30	5	17	23	10	2
Sidgwick	Little Hall	13	30	33	28	19	29	13	16	7
Downing	Biffen	40	32	31	25	18	16	11	7	11
NMS	Lecture Theatre A	25	40	40	33	22	24	10	31	30
NMS	Cockcroft	33	40	40	40	1	18	19	13	32
NMS	Babbage	37	40	40	38	19	24	16	18	3
Sidgwick	Lady Mitchell Hall	40	33	32	28	14	6	8	12	4

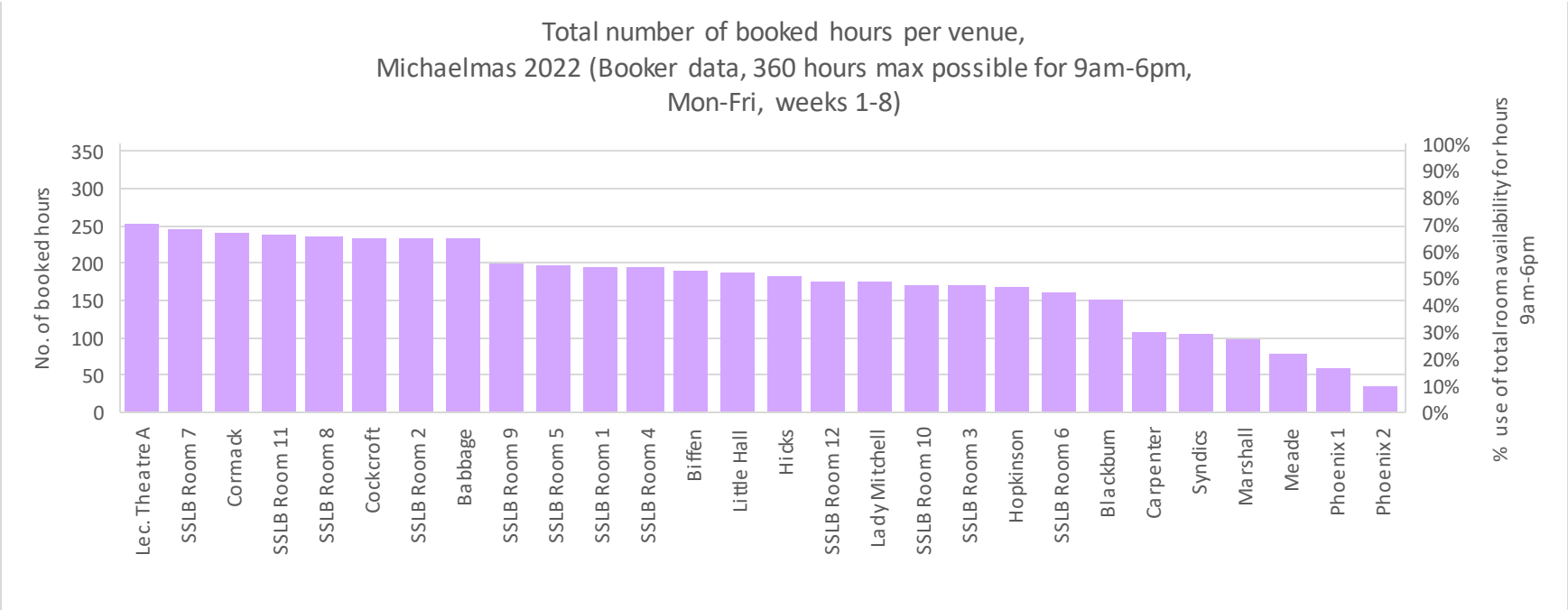
Notes about Table 1

- The table is ordered by venue size, with largest at the bottom going to smallest at the top.
- The first column is shaded blue to depict the venues that are of the poorest quality or were brought into use as decant space following loss of other education space (e.g., Mill Lane Lecture Theatres) and shaded green to highlight those that have been refurbished and shaded light red where no works have occurred but remain critical education space.
- The graduated shading in the heatmap shows rooms with the highest intensity of use shaded in red (31-40 hours per time slot for weeks 1-8 Michaelmas term), the lowest intensity use shaded yellow (0-10 hours per time slot weeks 1-8), with amber (11-20 hours) and orange (21-30 hours per time slot for weeks 1-8 Michaelmas term).

41. Key points from table 1:

- a. Teaching occurs throughout the day; perhaps dispelling the myth that teaching only occurs in the mornings – while there is slightly more capacity in the afternoon now this is likely to change as there is planned student growth particularly in PGT student numbers.
- b. In the morning, some venues reach nearly 100% usage, including the large lecture theatres (on the New Museums Site, Sidgwick Site, and the only central space on Downing Site) and the smaller rooms in Sidgwick Avenue Lecture Block.
- c. In the afternoon, the smaller venues in Sidgwick Avenue Lecture Block are in high use.
- d. The least popular time to teach is 1-2pm and 5-6pm.
- e. The spaces most under pressure throughout the day are located on Sidgwick Site and the New Museums Site.
- f. Spaces recently refurbished are amongst the most used.
- g. Teaching is scheduled into all central education space even where such spaces have been assessed to be of the lowest standard (because there is no alternative).
- h. The University is reliant on third party space provision brought into use initially as temporary decant for Mill Lane Lecture Theatres.

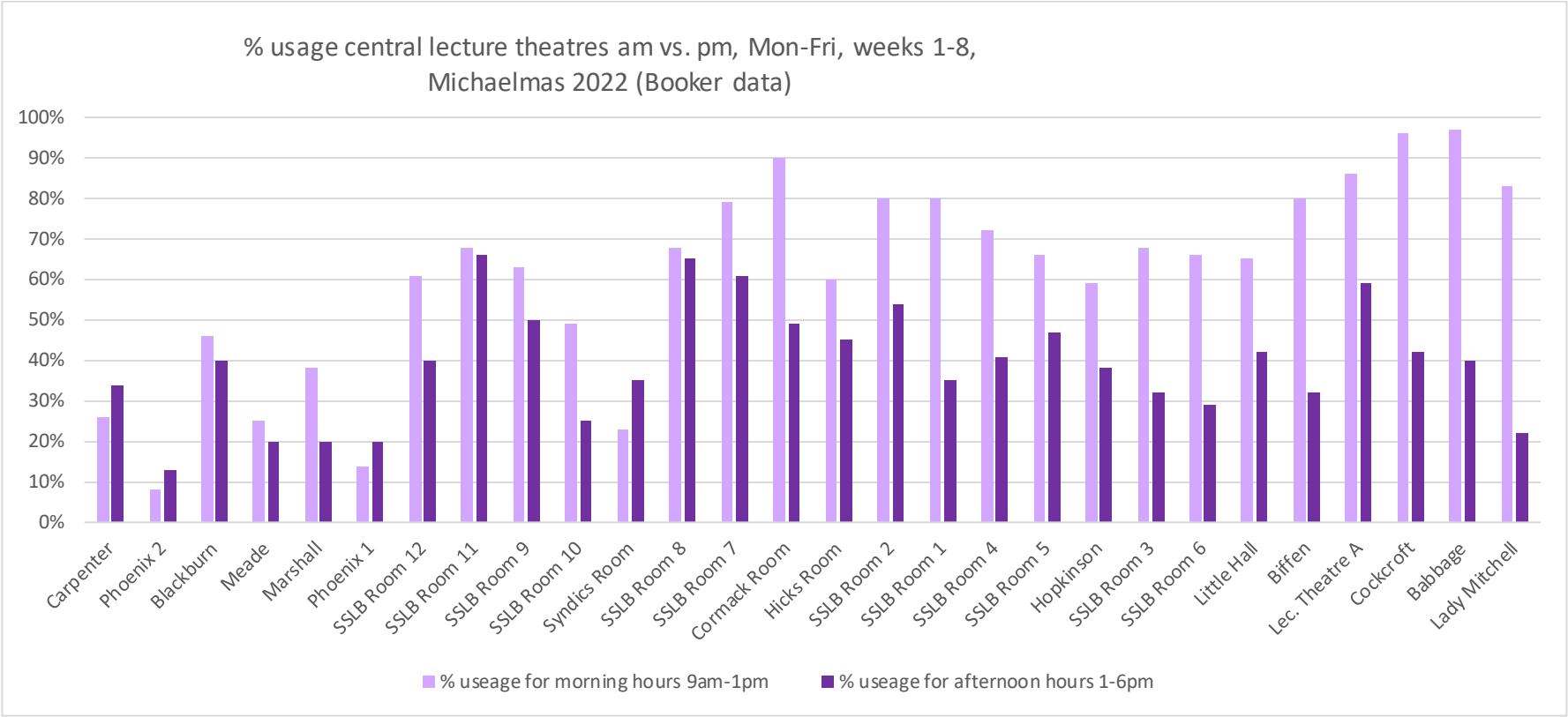
Table 2: The total number of booked hours per venue in Michaelmas Term 2022



42. Key points from Table 2:

- a. Lecture Theatre A (Student Services Centre, New Museums Site) is the most used venue.
- b. The Cormack Room (University Centre, UC) has become one of the most used venues. Since teaching returned after the pandemic, the UC is now an essential venue for teaching although its future is uncertain and this in turn is affecting decisions about its use for teaching and even its viability as a teaching venue.
- c. The Phoenix Rooms transferred from UIS (University Information Services) to central managed space during the pandemic to provide additional teaching space, but the opportunities to use are limited by capacity, and standards. Following an assessment of the costs to improve the space (which extends to a new heating and ventilation system), the Programme Board for Education Space determined that the cost of improving these rooms could not be justified in terms of value delivered and would rather invest capital in other space.

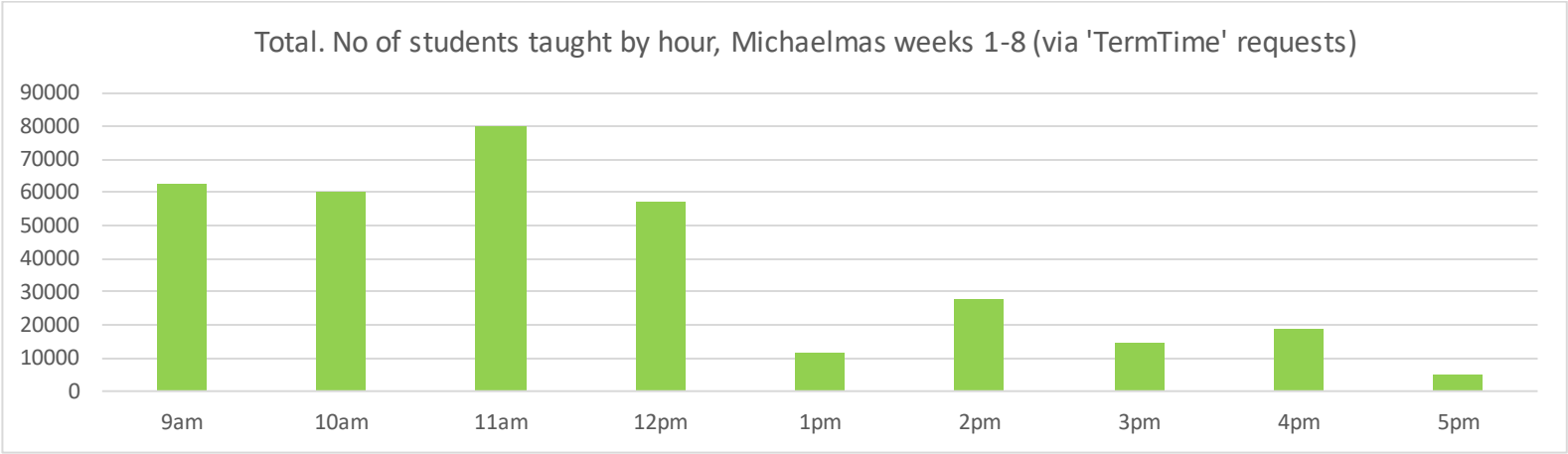
Table 3: Compares the use of central lecture theatres morning and afternoon in Michaelmas Term 2022



43. Key points from table 3:

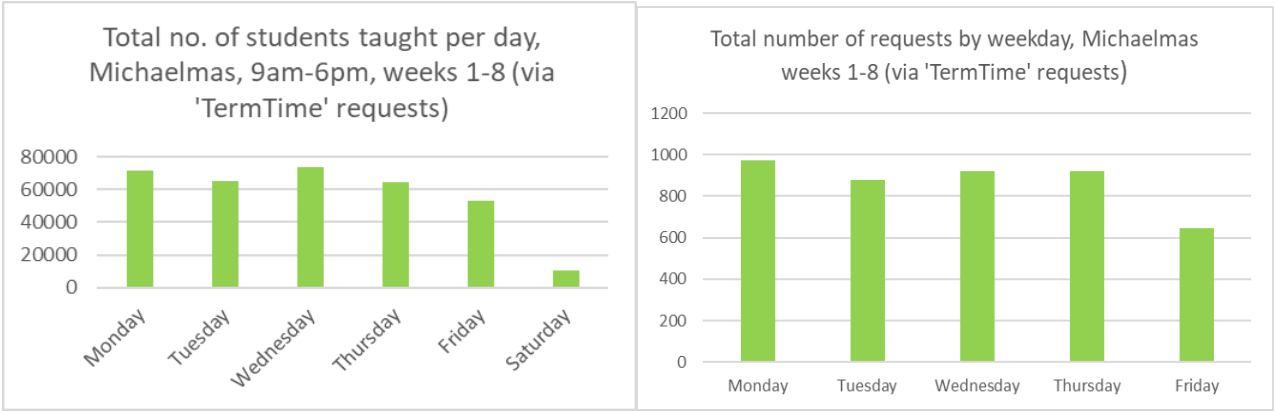
- a. The Cockcroft and Babbage Lecture Theatres (on New Museums Site) and the Cormack Room (in the University Centre) have 90% usage during the morning hours (9am to 1pm).
- b. The Biffen Lecture Theatre, the only central education space on the Downing Site, achieves 80% capacity in the morning as do rooms in Sidgwick Avenue Lecture Block, Lady Mitchell Hall (also on Sidgwick Site) and Lecture Theatre A (in the Student Services Centre, New Museums Site).
- c. Four of the rooms in Sidgwick Avenue Lecture Block and Lecture Theatre A are used 50% or more in the afternoon hours (2 – 6pm).
- d. It is anticipated that as postgraduate taught numbers continue to increase, such teaching will take place in the afternoons and so will rapidly increase utilisation rates for the afternoon hours.

Table 4: Total number of students taught by the hour in Michaelmas Term 2022



44. Key points from table 4: The largest number of students taught occurs at 11am.

Table 6: Total number of students taught per day in Michaelmas Term 2022 Table 7: Total number of requests received for Michaelmas Term 2022



45. Key points from tables 6 and 7:
- a. Fewer sessions are requested on Fridays and fewer students are taught on Fridays.
 - b. There continues to be teaching on Saturday morning.

H. THE CURRENT OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR CENTRALLY MANAGED SPACE

46. **Anticipating and planning for demand is challenging**, as education space requests are dynamic, changing term by term and year by year, according to changes within courses and the availability of suitable space within departments for the numbers of students. It is therefore not easy to predict with any precision exactly what the picture will be looking ahead, however there are recurring pressure points and specific needs that can be identified. It is necessary to adopt a **risk-based approach** and consider effective ways to **create flexibility for space allocation** – for example by **prioritising space requests** where requesters have no alternative and being able to discuss potential alternatives available in other Departments within the area that fits within timetabling requirements.
47. **Many central education spaces have increased in usage in recent years**. This can be considered a **success**, both in terms of the level of demand (suggesting many users are content with central space) and achieving higher levels of room usage/efficiency. A knock-on impact of decant arrangements and demand for central space, is that many departmental lecture theatres also have increased usage/efficiency, where new cohorts have been accommodated in departmental venues.
48. **There are pressure points for certain venues and at certain times** for a few reasons including: a general trend for larger cohorts to be taught in the mornings, particular morning slots that are oversubscribed (11am) and multiple simultaneous sessions for small group teaching.
49. **Some departments and cohorts are facing pressures to find suitable accommodation**, which have arisen because, for example, cohorts exceed the capacity of central space (size and/or number of venues), or have truly little teaching space, and so rely heavily on central education space.
50. **All the large lecture theatres are at or approaching completely full capacity during morning hours**, therefore it is no longer possible to accept requests for any large new cohorts during morning hours, which presents a **risk** to delivering teaching, where new courses and modules are planned, and where there are unlikely to be alternatives locally (e.g., in Colleges); existing cohorts expand beyond room capacity; there are changes in timings and sizes of existing cohorts during morning hours, or if a venue falls out of use perhaps due to unplanned circumstances (e.g., fire, flood).
51. **In addition to the increase in demand for space there has been downward pressure on capacity of central space**, where review of spaces for fire safety has led to a decrease in capacity of rooms in the Sidgwick Lecture Block (SLB). A knock-on impact of this, is that some cohorts that previously relied on the larger SLB rooms no longer comfortably fit in these rooms, in particular many Economics cohorts. This creates significant demand on Lady Mitchell Hall (the only large lecture theatre on Sidgwick Site) and has required these cohorts to be accommodated in city centre venues, which have limited availability and present travel difficulties, or the cohort sizes are restricted to allow them to be accommodated in the SLB rooms.
52. **The clash between early examinations (weeks 1-4) and teaching in Easter term is an additional and important pressure point**. Demand on central venues for teaching has increased, whilst in-person examinations have also increased significantly in Easter term 2023. This presents pressure to accommodate both teaching and exams in central venues during term time teaching weeks. For Easter 2023, additional hire venues and alternative University spaces are being explored. As PBES, Estates and UIS are aware, the desire for more digital assessment will bring additional pressures on space, its Wi-Fi reliability and power supply.

53. **Sessions that start off the hour, long duration sessions and multiple session request at the same time add to the pressure points and scheduling difficulties.** The Central Education Space Policy (communicated in the [Key Issues Bulletin](#), 21 October 2022 and available on the Estates Division [Room Bookings webpage](#)) was introduced to mitigate these issues. However, with the ongoing and increasing competing pressures on central space, the University is lacking a protocol to ensure that those without alternative space are prioritised over those where alternative/departmental space is available. This might require that departments 'self-declare' the availability (or not) of departmental teaching space, and for some requests to be prioritised where there are no alternative departmental spaces for the teaching planned. This will avoid the situation (at least in the short term) where teaching is forced to go online or even be cancelled due to lack of teaching space.
54. **Not all departmental spaces are visible on Booker**, which is problematic when trying to review which venues might be available to then engage with the department about possible use. With more use of Booker, and more visibility of available teaching spaces, more local sharing of space will be possible, and this will also help to relieve some pressure on centrally managed spaces.
55. **Not all education spaces are of the same standard.** Whilst the University has a technical standard and performance specification, the report to PRC (Planning & Resources Committee) (PRC 2136, Audit Report of Education Spaces, October 2019) showed that all central spaces were below the identified standard to varying degrees. Subsequently, PRC funded a programme of works that led to a successful refurbishment of the Sidgwick Lecture Block and Cockcroft Lecture Theatre, which has improved the quality of a substantial proportion of central space. Together with the refurbished Titan Teaching Rooms due to re-open in Easter Term 2023, these improved spaces will comprise approximately half of the pool of central education rooms.
56. **There is an ongoing reliance of externally hired venues** that vary in standard, might not provide the University's standard lecture capture facilities, are spread across a variety of locations, present an ongoing cost, are difficult to manage and can present uncertainties.

I. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

DEMAND ON SPACE

57. **Requests** for central education space have risen by 28% since 2019 and is likely to continue to increase as student numbers rise.
58. **Education space is used through the day**, however peak hours are during the morning, the busiest time being 11am. Certain times have low usage, particularly 1pm and 5pm.
59. **Pressure on space** during peak morning hours for Lent term 2023 required additional space to be sought at short notice in departments and other University buildings that offer multiple use spaces. This is time consuming, complicated and presents risk (if such space is not available).
60. **The largest central lecture theatres** are almost fully subscribed during each weekday morning; therefore, it will be almost impossible to accommodate large new lecture series during morning hours.
61. **Morning hours** overall are remarkably busy; therefore, it is highly unlikely any further teaching can be accommodated during morning hours (including smaller cohorts).
62. **Room capacities** in the Sidgwick Lecture Block have decreased, with less flexibility for accommodating larger cohorts.

63. There are **new courses/cohorts** for which a need for centrally managed space has been registered, but which cannot be accommodated (Bioinformatics, Quantitative Environmental Sciences).

QUALITY OF SPACE

64. **Approximately half of centrally managed spaces have been refurbished** within the past 18 months.
65. **Education spaces that have been improved have amongst the highest intensity of use** (e.g., Biffen, Sidgwick Lecture Block, Cockcroft Lecture Theatre, Lecture Theatre A).
66. **The standard of central spaces varies** however, and some central spaces do not meet the standard set out in the University's technical performance and standard specification.
67. **The lack of sufficient high quality central space requires use of very inadequate space**, including the Hopkinson Lecture Theatre and Phoenix Room 2.
68. **The five rooms in the University Centre have become important education space**, however these spaces would benefit from improvement, and two of the smaller spaces are not wheelchair accessible.

KEY COHORTS

69. **Central education space is critical to deliver teaching** and is of particular importance for Economics, Land Economy, MMLL, plus certain large cohorts across various departments that depend on centrally managed space.
70. **Central education space is also critical for examinations** and since priority is given to examinations over teaching, the availability of space reduces when examinations take place (predominantly Lent and Easter Terms). This is anticipated to become increasingly problematic, as teaching activity requests have increased year-on-year, whilst exams requests have also increased within the last year. Additionally, three venues that will become key central education spaces (Titans 1, 2 & 3) are assigned to exams during Easter term, adding further to the shortage of teaching space throughout this term. It may not be a sustainable situation or possible to cater fully for both.

J. WHAT IS NEEDED MOVING FORWARDS?

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

71. **Liaise with Faculty of MMLL** to understand timetabling and the increase in requests since 2019.
72. **Meet with Faculty of Economics** to understand large cohort pressures and explore possibility for timetabling some large cohort teaching in the afternoons.
73. **Liaise with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences** to understand how further departmental space might be shared, including exploring possibilities within the Institute of Criminology (where unlike the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Divinity, it has not been possible to book departmental space due to the timeframe that the rooms are scheduled with departmental activities). For example, could Criminology accommodate some POLIS teaching, where there are known pressures on the Alison Richards building, or small group Economics sessions which can be long in duration.

74. **Liaise with School of Arts and Humanities** to understand how further departmental space might be shared, including exploring whether there is a possibility for some MMLL teaching to be accommodated within the Faculty of Music.
75. **Amend Education Space Policy** to help manage demand for centrally managed space. There could be several ways to help **create more flexibility in the system** and **ensure that those with no alternatives (very large cohorts or where there is no departmental space available) are able to secure space first**. Other measures could include: stating expectations about the use of departmental space (for example departmental teaching space should be considered ahead of centrally managed space, and only requested where there is no obvious alternative); not accepting requests where sessions have also been scheduled into departmental venues e.g., duplicate bookings; consider disincentives such as charging for no shows or limiting the number of requests that can be made for a single time slot; that departmental teaching space should prioritise teaching rather than other departmental functions, and any other factors that will encourage better use of space, including centrally managed space.
76. **Explore the need for an additional large lecture theatre** to comfortably accommodate large Economics cohorts, since all the large central lecture theatres are operating at full capacity throughout the mornings. This would also provide some flexibility in the system for new and enlarged cohorts and reduce risk from venue closures. A possible alternative is for a proportion of large cohort teaching to take place in the afternoon, although this may not fully resolve the pressures.
77. **Explore the need for more small-medium seminar space**, or whether modifying departmental timetables will be sufficient, particularly in the light of increasing numbers. This would be aimed at reducing pressure during peak hours, where there has not been enough available central education space when required. As part of this enquiry, establish whether duplicate bookings within departmental space occur.

MEDIUM-LONG TERM

78. **The University should consider what are the overall demands for teaching space – and in what campus** - with or without timetable changes, in the light of proposed student numbers and considering the importance of place in teaching. It should then be clear whether poor/problematic teaching spaces that are currently relied upon need to be replaced or refurbished (Hopkinson, Phoenix 1 & 2, Syndics, Carpenter, Blackburn), or if there are requirements for new teaching spaces in particular areas (and conversely where spaces can be decommissioned or repurposed).
79. This long-term plan should also enable the University to consider whether in the medium term there will be a need for **externally hired venues**. There will be more clarity on this once the refurbished Titan Rooms are opened, however it is likely that the Pembroke lecture theatre will be needed on an ongoing basis (if this space proved successful), and almost certain that the McCrum will be needed on a semi-permanent basis, unless replaced with an alternative.
80. A medium-long term plan should be identified for the **University Centre**, particularly the Hicks and Cormack rooms and investment to refurbish the kitchen area. The Hicks and Cormack rooms are essential for accommodating medium sized cohorts, in particular Land Economy where there is no departmental teaching space, plus computer-based teaching, displaced by the closure of the Titan Rooms as a UIS computer facility (where the Hicks Room provides flat floor space and desks with power supply). The refurbishment of the kitchen area provides substantial additional lecture theatre space, which helps meet the gap left by the

decommissioning of the Mill Lane Lecture Block, but the investment case needs to be established compared with other options (e.g., long term rental of third-party space, additional space built on Sidgwick etc).

81. **A resolution should be identified for the loss of teaching space in Easter term arising from accommodating exams.** Additional hire venues may need to be identified for Easter term each year.

Prepared by Georgina Wong, Catherine Fage and Edna Murphy, January 2023

Appendix A: Information about the data

- The data represents a snapshot of a given term and should not be considered to illustrate a static scenario, where demand can vary term by term and year by year.
- The data in this report is sourced from Booker room calendars, for the timeframes 9am-6pm, Monday-Friday, and the date range 6 October – 30 November (weeks 1-8 in Michaelmas Term 2022).
- Data is also sourced from 'TermTime,' the scheduling system used to receive and allocate requests for centrally managed space.
- The West Cambridge Hub venues are not included in this analysis.
- Where an activity request has been received, that the Education Space Team has arranged to be placed into a departmental teaching venue, these activities have been included.

Appendix B: All central education space

Room name	Room capacity	Site	UoC or external venue	Lecture Capture	Wheelchair accessible (yes/no)	Notes
Biffen Lecture Theatre	170	Downing	UoC	Manual lecture capture	Yes	
Carpenter Room	17	Mill Lane	UoC	No	No	
Blackburn Room	20	Mill Lane	UoC	No	No	
Meade Room	20	Mill Lane	UoC	Yes	Yes	
Marshall Room	20	Mill Lane	UoC	No	Yes	Restricted availability
Syndics Room	40	Mill Lane	UoC	No	No	
Cormack Room	70	Mill Lane	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Hicks Room	80	Mill Lane	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Pembroke	130	Mill Lane	External	TBC	TBC	
Phoenix 2	19	NMS	UoC	Yes	Yes	
Phoenix 1	25	NMS	UoC	Yes	Yes	
Titan 1	80	NMS	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Titan 2	75	NMS	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Titan 3	70	NMS	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Hopkinson LT	115	NMS	UoC	No	No	
McCrum	150	NMS	External	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Lecture Theatre A	212	NMS	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Cockcroft Lecture Theatre	293	NMS	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Babbage LT	440	NMS	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 12 - Lecture Block	25	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 11 - Lecture Block	25	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 9 - Lecture Block	30	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 10 - Lecture Block	30	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 8 - Lecture Block	45	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 7 - Lecture Block	45	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 2 - Lecture Block	92	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 1 - Lecture Block	92	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 4 - Lecture Block	92	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 5 - Lecture Block	92	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 3 - Lecture Block	144	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Room 6 - Lecture Block	144	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Little Hall	144	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	
Lady Mitchell Hall	447	Sidgwick	UoC	Scheduled lecture capture	Yes	