UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SPACE MANAGEMENT

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<u>**INTRODUCTION FROM THE SENIOR VICE-PRINCIPAL**</u>

At the University of Aberdeen, we recognise the important role space plays in our life and work. Our campuses are a focal point for the learning, research and recreational activities of our staff and students and our buildings are an important and recognisable integral part of the City's landscape. Furthermore, our commitment to respecting the environment and local community within which we are based ensures our continuing focus on the sustainability of our use of space.

To enable the achievement of our strategic ambitions outlined in Aberdeen 2040, it is essential that we ensure our current and future activities are appropriately supported and accommodated in as inclusive a manner as possible and that the use of our space is optimised. How we use our estate and the space available to us in the years to come will be critical in ensuring the delivery of our objectives and our plans for strategic growth. Changes in our student population and patterns of learning delivery and research will impact upon the utilisation of our estate – particularly in relation to the shifting balance between traditional teaching spaces and new learning environments.

Therefore, these Guiding Principles of Space Management have been developed to underpin the safe, inclusive, sustainable and efficient occupancy and use of our internal and external spaces. They are intended to provide users with clear guidance on how our space will be allocated, our expectations in relation to how it is used and monitored, and how changes to occupancy and enhancements to our environment will be taken forward.

Any queries, comments or suggestions about space management should be directed to either myself or Gregg Wilkins, Space Manager.

Karl Leydecker
Senior Vice-Principal

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SPACE MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principle 1 – The Fair and Transparent Allocation of Space

1.1   All space belongs to the University and Schools/Professional Services Directorates will be allocated space within which to perform their functions.

1.2   Oversight of space management rests with the Space Management Group.

1.3   It is the responsibility of Heads of School/Directors to allocate space within their area of responsibility in a fair, efficient and transparent manner that will:

- optimise the space available in an inclusive manner;
- support our learning, research and other professional activities;
- support the delivery of our strategic and operational objectives;
- enhance our working and learning environment by:
  o facilitating social interactions between staff and/or students; and
  o welcoming visitors and members of the local community to our campus.

1.4   In allocating space within their area of responsibility, it is the expectation that Heads of School/Professional Services Directors will:

- provide a sufficiently detailed rationale for any proposed alteration, addition or reduction to space allocation for their area;
- ensure that space allocation and usage within their area of responsibility is line with these Guiding Principles and takes account of our commitment to environmental sustainability;
- communicate in an open and transparent manner with members of staff and students to ensure that space allocated is being efficiently, inclusively and appropriate utilised, involving colleagues from Estates & Facilities and other Professional Services for additional support/guidance as required.

Guiding Principle 2 – The Safe, Efficient and Optimal Use of Space

2.1   We will ensure the fair and transparent use of space that supports the delivery of School/Directorate plans, ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors on campus and complies with fire safety and other statutory obligations e.g. licences and those relating to equality.

2.2   To ensure that current and future space needs are met, we will ensure that space allocations serve our best interests, optimise the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of how space is used across the University and ensure that there is effective consultation with regard to all changes in space allocation and/or usage.

2.3   In reviewing our use of space, we will seek to involve as many interested and affected parties as possible during consultation periods – including, wherever possible, members of staff, students and external stakeholders.

2.4   It is our expectation that all users of our space – students, staff and visitors – will respect our campus and buildings, ensuring internal and external spaces are kept clean, litter-free and fittings treated with care.

2.5   Any issues in relation to the maintenance of buildings, furniture, equipment or the external landscape should be highlighted to estates@abdn.ac.uk.

Guiding Principle 3 – The Fair and Transparent Monitoring of Space Usage

3.1   We will seek to ensure the efficient and optimal use of space through:

- o   the maintenance of up-to-date records of the allocation of space across the University;
- o   supporting Heads of School/Professional Services Directors in communicating with staff and students on space allocation/management issues within their area of responsibility;
- o   the application of robust processes to ensure the effective oversight of space management via the Space Management Group.

3.2   The Space Occupancy Record (link to website) records the current occupancy and space usage across the University.   These plans ensure that we have a fair and transparent mechanism through which we can give full consideration to more significant changes to space requirements and their associated impacts e.g. requirement for a new teaching/research space to accommodate academic activities, an increase in staffing in a particular area or to ensure that obligations relating to equality are met.

3.3   We recognise (i) our legal obligations in relation to the reporting of statistical data and (ii) the importance of benchmarking with comparators across the Higher Education sector to continually monitor and improve the effectiveness of our space management and utilisation. Therefore, we will ensure that an accurate and effective process is in place to monitor space usage for reporting to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and through the TRAC data process.

3.4   Through effective monitoring of space usage, we will inform future estate developments and strategic planning processes to support the development of Schools.

3.5   We will encourage Heads of School/Directors of Professional Services to communicate in an open and transparent manner with members of staff and students to ensure that space allocated to their area of responsibility is being efficiently and appropriate utilised, involving colleagues from Estates & Facilities and other Professional Services for additional support/guidance as required.

Guiding Principle 4 – The Fair and Transparent Communication and Implementation of Changes to Space Usage

4.1   By establishing clear communication channels between the Space Manager and other relevant colleagues in Professional Services Directorates with Heads of School/Professional Services Directors and designated points of contact in every School and Directorate, we will ensure that the consideration, communication and implementation of changes to space occupancy and usage is undertaken (i) in a fair and transparent manner and (ii) with due regard to the impact of the change(s) on the delivery of other operational services.

4.2   By implementing a fair, transparent and responsive Space Change Procedure, we will ensure that requests for (i) additional space, (ii) changes to existing space usage and (iii) requests to vacate space are considered in a timely manner.

4.3   It is important that changes to space occupancy and usage are underpinned by a fair and transparent communication process. We encourage Heads of School/Directors of Professional Services to establish local processes that empower School/Directorate representatives to engage in a proactive and effective two-way flow of communication with their local constituency.

SPACE CHANGE PROCEDURE

Local Space Management Contacts

We recognise the importance of clear and transparent communication on space allocation and management issues. Any issues regarding local space allocation matters should be addressed to the nominated individual within each School/Directorate in the first instance.

Individuals undertaking the role of local space management contact will liaise with the Space Manager and the Head of School/Director as appropriate to support the ongoing provision of safe, effective and efficient space management activities within their area of responsibility.

Space Notification Form

To support the delivery of *Guiding Principle 3 (The Fair and Transparent Monitoring of Space Usage),* a Space Notification Form should be completed for all changes to space usage that do not require any remedial work to be carried out e.g. where the number of people using the offices remains the same but the names of occupants are changing. This will enable the Space Occupancy Record to be kept up-to-date.

Space Change Form

To support the delivery of *Guiding Principle 4 (The Fair and Transparent Communication and Implementation of Changes to Space Usage),* a Space Change Form should be completed for all more significant changes in space usage, for example:

- requests to re-model a space e.g. with new partitions or doorways;
- requests for new rooms to accommodate e.g. a growth in staff or student numbers;
- requests to relinquish space that is no longer required;
- requests to increase/decrease the number of occupants in a room.

Applications will be considered in the first instance by a Space Management Panel, comprising:

- Senior Vice-Principal (or her/his nominated alternate)
- University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer
- Space Manager
- Representative from IT Services
- Representative from Estates & Facilities
- 2 x Deans

Approval will not be unreasonably withheld, but where an application is rejected, appropriate feedback will be provided.

Where proposals can be routinely approved, the Panel will communicate that to the applicant via email, normally within 3 working days of the request having been received by the Space Manager. Where the Panel considers that a proposal requires further scrutiny, for example where the proposal is more complex, extensive or impacts on other functions (including centrally timetabled space), further clarification will be sought and consultation carried out prior to the Panel reaching a decision. Such consultation will normally include, as a minimum, colleagues from IT Services and Central Timetabling.

Proposals which are of a significant scale, have a significant impact on other functions and/or throw up wider strategic questions will be referred to the full Space Management Group for consideration.

A limited number of requests may be beyond the scope of these procedures and may require special or additional authorisation or be pursued through parallel processes. In such circumstances, the proposal will be considered by the full Space Management Group and where necessary, referred to the Estates Committee and/or the Senior Management Team. Examples of proposals which may be considered in this way include :

- Proposals involving a strategic change in the activity undertaken by the School or Directorate e.g. introducing a new discipline or major expansion of function;
- Proposals where considerable capital expenditure may be required.

A list of all Space Change Forms received, and their outcomes, will be presented quarterly to the Space Management Group.

IMPLEMENTATION – MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

We recognise that in view of the diversity of our activities, estate and accommodation requirements, a 'one size fits all' approach to space allocation and usage across the University is not appropriate. Therefore, to support the implementation of these Guiding Principles, the following matters are highlighted for consideration and action as appropriate at a local level within Schools/Professional Services Directorates:

- Whether any member of staff needs more than one workspace;
- The location, size and types of space(s) and facilities required by members of staff to fulfil their responsibilities;
- How allocation of space can foster collaborative, interdisciplinary working;
- How any adjustments for staff/students can be accommodated to take account of disability support requirements, flexible working practices etc.;
- How honorary, emeritus and visiting staff can be allocated space;
- The size and appropriate occupancy level of space(s), including offices, laboratories, research and teaching areas;
- The provision and availability of multi-use spaces, including spaces for social interaction (staff/staff, staff/student, student/student), confidential and/or flexible meeting space etc.;
- The safe, efficient and appropriate storage of belongings (personal and work-related) in offices and other accommodation;
- The communication channels available to and utilised by School/Directorate representatives on Space Management Sub-Groups to facilitate a two-way flow of information on discussions of space matters.

We encourage Heads of School/Directors of Professional Services to seek advice, guidance and support in considering these matters from the Space Manager in the first instance.