Sectioning 101

Basic Guidelines

Sizing

- We strive to maintain consistent average section sizes across Gen Ed courses.
- Our target section size is an average of fifteen students per section. Some sections may end up having slightly more than fifteen students, while others may have slightly less. Please note that it is the teaching staff’s responsibility to balance enrollments across sections.
- We discourage sections with an average of only nine or fewer students per section.

Start Times & Length

- Given the short confirmation periods, it is our recommendation that no required sections be held until at least the third week of the term (the week beginning February 11, 2019). Be sure to discuss these confirmation dates with your faculty member, as it may affect the early weeks of planning for your course.
- Section start times must accord with the new class schedule that took effect this fall.
  - 9:00am, 10:30am, 12:00pm, 1:30pm, 3:00pm, 4:30pm, or 6:00pm. Sections can be scheduled for the full 75-minute time block, (e.g. 9:00-10:15am) but are generally only expected to meet for one hour.

Determining Section Times with Teaching Staff

- Work with your teaching staff to determine when sections will be offered.
- Plan to schedule 10% - 20% MORE than the number of sections you were allocated to give you the greatest amount of flexibility. Once you begin the sectioning process, you can eliminate sections.
- Offer sections on different days and at different times, to accommodate the greatest number of students.
  Note: If a student indicates during the sectioning process that no offered time works for them, the student may need to drop your class or drop the conflicting class.

Section Rooms

Roombook

- Once you have settled times with your teaching staff, you can begin to request section rooms via the Roombook System on the Registrar’s Website (http://roombook.harvard.edu).
- If you have not already done so, please begin requesting rooms as soon as possible. Rooms are provided on a first come, first served basis.
- RoomBook provides a real-time view of all potentially available rooms. However, only one room request may be placed at a time. If you have a large number of section rooms to request, please plan accordingly.
- Do not request time periods longer than 75-minute time blocks, even if you hope to remain in the room for back-to-back sections. Requests should be individually submitted for each section to best provide the Classrooms Office with flexibility.

Confirmation Periods & Recommended First Meeting Time

- The Classrooms Office will approve requests on a week-by-week basis, starting the second week of term, so that early sections may begin. Requests may be confirmed with as little as one day notice. The Classrooms Office will approve requests for the remainder of the semester by mid-February.
**Sectioning Tool**
Section assignments should be assigned and distributed via the Sectioning Tool found on My.Harvard (http://my.harvard.edu). Sectioning may not begin until after the close of Course Registration (February 2, 2019 at 12:01am). Utilize the Canvas course website to update students on the opening/closing period for sections and send email reminders where necessary.

**Accessing the Sectioning Tool**
- Log in to My. Harvard, click on the “Teaching/Advising” portal, and scroll down to your current course, listed under “My Courses.” Click on “Sectioning” for the relevant course.
  - Email sectioning@fas.harvard.edu if you have issues accessing the tool.

**Sectioning Tool Tips**
- **Do not edit the placeholder discussion section in your course (labeled “DIS” or “LAB” in most cases).** Deleting or editing this placeholder section will prevent students from enrolling in your course. Students will be moved out of this placeholder section into their permanent assignments as part of the sectioning process.
- **Be sure to learn how to use the Sectioning Tool before the Course Registration Deadline.** Step-by-step instructions and video tutorials are available via the Registrar’s Website. Links to these resources can be found below.
- The Registrar’s Office does not offer in-person training sessions or weekend/after-hours support for the Sectioning Tool. The Registrar’s Office will be holding walk-in labs in the Small or Large Conference Room on this floor on Jan. 24th (3:00pm-5:00pm), Jan. 30th (10:30am-12:30pm), and Feb. 4th (1:00pm-3:00pm). These labs are only intended to troubleshoot issues or answer specific questions. Walk-in lab participants are expected to have already reviewed online training resources for initial information.

**Notifying Students of Assignments**
- The Sectioning Tool does **not** automatically notify students of their section placement. Plan to email students through the Canvas site once assignments have been finalized.
- The decision to allow changes to section assignments is ultimately up to the professor and teaching staff. Some courses allow for a “re-sectioning period:” allowing students to request changes in the week after assignments are posted. Students requesting permission to change sections may be restricted to the least crowded options.
- Alternatively, Head TFs may choose to allow a student to switch sections only if that student arranges to trade places with a student from the other section. In larger courses, some Head TFs have maintained a forum on the course website to track student requests.

**Resources**
- My.Harvard
  http://my.harvard.edu
- RoomBook
  http://roombook.fas.harvard.edu
- FAS Registrar’s Office Sectioning Overview, Workflows, Tips
  https://registrar.fas.harvard.edu/sections
- FAS Registrar Sectioning Video Library
  https://registrar.fas.harvard.edu/sectioning-video-library
- HUIT Knowledge Base (for FAQs related to class roster and sectioning in my.harvard)
  https://harvard.service-now.com
  Navigate as follows: Browse Knowledge > Teaching & Learning > My.Harvard > Instructors/Advisors > My Courses
- Support for Teaching in Gen Ed
  https://generaleducation.fas.harvard.edu/teaching-gen-ed