

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY



CLASSROOM DESIGN GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been compiled by the committee to apply to classroom renovations as well as new construction.

1. Classroom design must start from the awareness of the needs of the faculty who are most likely to use the space, but must allow for changes in programming in the future.

The existence of the equipment is not sufficient; it must be placed appropriately for the convenient use of the instructor, as well as have uniform, obvious controls (see #7). Placement of equipment should take into account classroom activities most likely to be scheduled in the room; but minimum standards should not be violated for cost considerations based on current scheduling, since that scheduling may well change.

2. Rooms should provide for flexible furniture setups to facilitate a number of different learning activities – lecture, discussion groups, student presentations, etc. At best furniture should all be moveable and extra chairs stackable. At minimum room setups should be reconfigurable without construction.

3. Audio-visual considerations – lighting, sightlines both for faculty and for students, orientation of the room, window treatments, quality of video and sound, and acoustics – **must be a part of every classroom design and installation.** The screen and black/whiteboard should be easily viewable from all seats. Equipment and design proposals must take these considerations into account; they are not secondary.

4. The design of any classroom installation should facilitate technology upgrades without requiring construction. It is assumed that any or all technology components in the room will need to be replaced before the furniture will be replaced; this should be able to be done without any changes to furniture and, if at all possible, without changes to floors, walls, or ceilings.

5. Lighting control is an aspect of the audio-visual installation and should be part of any room redesign.

- Particularly in large and midsize classrooms, ideally lights should have ZONES (so that they can be dimmed in the front where the projector is but not over the students) as well as LEVELS (so that they can be dimmed without being shut off.)
- All windows and doors should be considered as part of the lighting control assessment. Window treatments should be planned at the design stage if necessary.

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY



CLASSROOM DESIGN GUIDELINES

6. Every room should have a fixed data/video projector that can accommodate a laptop or VCR or DVD CHANGE: Added “in addition to its installed computer”. CHANGE: Removed “whether that additional equipment is fixed in the room or portable” However, a computer and the most inexpensive projector are not sufficient classroom equipment; all classrooms require a quality projector and sound systems for media use. They're not used only with computers.

7. Controls should be uniform and obvious. A Hofstra faculty member trained in the use of one space should not need further training in additional spaces until they adopt some new aspect of the technology available, and controls should get as close to one-button as possible. This is also to facilitate curriculum planning. Faculty should not have to re-create a course because they are assigned to a new classroom with different capabilities. Also, faculty should not need new adapters or cables to use an assigned room.

8. Projection screens must not block the view of the only whiteboard the room. Room design should facilitate the simultaneous use of whiteboards and video/data projection.

9. Rooms should be as isolated as possible – sound should not carry to or from other rooms if it can be prevented with proper audio-visual installation, and wireless controls should be infrared or set to specific radio channels for that room only so that they do not bleed into connecting rooms.

10. Rooms should have sufficiently redundant systems that a reasonably prepared faculty member can rely on that redundancy. (E.g.: a CD-R with a presentation on it does not happen to work in that computer; the faculty has a backup copy of the presentation on the network; the computer must be able to access the network in order to reach the backup copy.)

11. Help should be available immediately via a clearly indicated hotline phone number, and it should be immediately obvious how to ask for it. While Hofstra has a goal of 100% up-time for all systems in the room, it is recognized that there will be failures and support systems must be available to provide help.

12. Maintenance and support should be facilitated and costs should be minimized by:

- Installing recommended University models (facilitates maintenance, replacement of bulbs, repair, and ease of use).
- Installing remotely controllable systems wherever possible (facilitates maintenance and support by a centralized staff).
- Considering maintenance and support when designing rack mounts, location of furniture, extra inputs or outputs, etc. Support staff must be able to reach equipment to clean, repair, or replace it; changing room setups should not require dismantling furniture, rewiring controls, or similar work.

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY



CLASSROOM DESIGN GUIDELINES

13. Security is an ever-present concern. CHANGE: Removed “Every room with equipment that could pose a theft or vandalism risk should have swipe access at the entrance.” CHANGE: Added “While not every room will have its access controlled via cardswipe, every installation should be as secure as possible and the equipment as locked down as possible given the needs of maintenance and use.” However, security arrangements should not hamper faculty in the use of the equipment.

14. Computers, projectors, and other AV equipment will need to be replaced on a regular basis. The committee suggests the following guidelines.

Computers every 2 years

Projectors every 4 years

CHANGE: Delete “Analog”, Add “Other audio-visual” components every 8 years

CHANGE: Added “This committee realizes these goals may not be met for every installation and looks forward to a University-wide maintenance plan.”

15. Old technology should be retired, not left in the room to confuse faculty or take up valuable space.

16. The physical layout of the room and the equipment should also be arranged for the convenience of the instructor and the students. The podium or lectern, where installed, should be in a position where students can best hear and see the instructor and vice versa. The podium or lectern should allow for the instructor's movement unimpeded by wires, should accommodate differently-abled instructors, and should accommodate speakers of different heights addressing the room at different volumes.

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