

Reimagining the open-door policy.

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ENHANCING FOR IMPACT

RGU'S ANNUAL LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

Reimagining the open-door policy

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The impact of Microsoft bookings

The utilisation of Microsoft office bookings perfectly captures creative application of technology to positively impact the learning experience of students by being more easily accessible.

Simultaneously, it can remove administrative burden from staff and in doing so, free up time to spend with students.



Session learning objectives

1. Participants will understand the impact of being accessible to students
2. Participants will hear the experience of different perspectives in using this technology
3. Participants will be challenged to consider how this technology could help them to work smarter



Background

The ability to contact staff when needed is considered in the National Student Survey data (Discover Uni 2022).

Bell (2021) asserts that students value the availability of academic staff for both academic and pastoral support.

The experience of multiple emails between staff and students to identify a mutually agreeable time to meet will be familiar, particularly as students typically juggle commitments beyond their studies and do not have open access to staff diaries.

What does Microsoft bookings offer?

- The Microsoft (2022) Bookings application presents an opportunity to reimagine the open-door policy for the contemporary learner, in a way that increases access and is responsive. It is an opportunity to embrace working “smarter not harder”.
- The bookings application allows others to identify a free space in your diary, book an appointment, create a Microsoft teams link and send reminders. This presentation will share how the technology works, innovation in embedding the link as well as sharing the staff and student experience. The open door provided by bookings has wider application for service colleagues too. This is an exciting enhancement with potential to positively impact the experience of staff, students and external colleagues.

What does it look like?




Jill Will's meeting room

☒ SELECT A SERVICE


1 hour meeting (for those external to RGU)



Free · 1 hour 


Dissertation supervision



Free · 1 hour 


Academic support



Free · 30 minutes 

Personal tutor 1:1




Free · 30 minutes 

Select a service to see available dates and times

Select date & time


Booking for 1 hour meeting (for those external to RGU)

 SELECT STAFF (OPTIONAL)

Jill Will (snmp)



03 October with Jill Will (snmp)

 DATE

 TIME

< > October 2022

16:00

| Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

 All times are in (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London

Add your details



ADD YOUR DETAILS

Name

Notes (optional)

Email



PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What would you like to discuss?

☐

Any details entered will be saved and stored securely.

Book

Bookings features

- ✓ Freely accessible
- ✓ Fully supported by RGU
- ✓ Completely integrated- availability is always up to date
- ✓ High quality user experience (works well on phones, tablets and computer screens)
- ✓ Person can see when you have appointments available
- ✓ Automatically creates a teams link which appears in your calendar and in that of the meeting attendee (as well as an initial email)
- ✓ Sends reminders to the attendee
- ✓ Set up once and use continually (instead of doodle polls every time you need to schedule meetings)

Who has used it?

Typically, those who do not have access to my diary

57 people so far have used my booking page:

- Personal tutor students
- Students engaged in pre-registration and post-graduate modules
- Students undertaking their MSc dissertation
- Colleagues from Further Education
- Staff from the institution where I am external examiner
- People enquiring about projects and resources
- Connections who work in other organisations

Some colleagues from SNMP, DELTA, SAAS as well as external partners have also adopted its use including the integration of the link to their email signature.

What did people say about using bookings?

“I found the system really easy to use and convenient not having to go through my business support and your business support for a date. I did initially wonder if I had permission to use it or if it was only for students, but decided to proceed until apprehended 😊” (external partner, care service)

“That booking system was brilliant Jill! I’ll definitely be getting onto this 😊” (external partner, education)

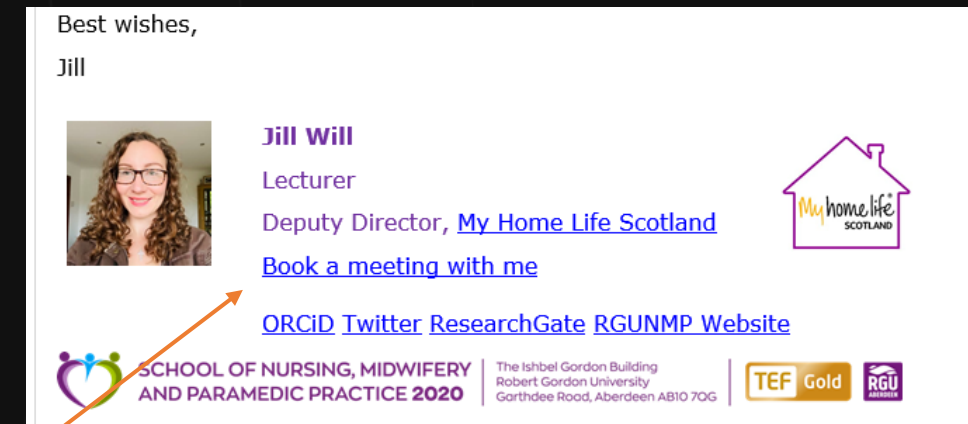
“Thanks for this. Great idea!” (student)

“You even get a reminder! How ace is that?!” (colleague)

“It’s very simple to use and nice to know the link is always there when needed. Thanks for setting that up for the class 😊 Speak soon.” (student)

Top tips & practical suggestions

- Decide on a scheduling policy (availability and minimum notice for bookings).
- Use a photo of yourself for your logo, it feels more personal.
- Ask a trusted colleague to do a trial run of your system before sharing it more widely.
- Including the link in your email signature has made such a big difference in how easy it is to find.



What enhancements have been made?

People with the link can booking in but with no prior conversation. I have since added a criteria to the booking inviting the person to share what they would like to discuss.

The teams default worked well whilst working remotely. In the meantime I have included the following statement “A Microsoft teams meeting will be automatically generated. If you would prefer to meet face to face please let me know in the notes section of the booking.”

What challenges are emerging?

The need to keep your calendar up to date and block focus time or time for projects as well as time for lunch.

Finding a way to include a statement “If no suitable appointment are available in the timescale you hoped for please contact me directly by email”.

Expectations around availability of staff, although my own experience has been that both students and external colleagues do respect my time and don't abuse the system.

A system in itself cannot make us approachable, that comes through developing a trusting relationship.

Possibilities to be explored

Could module teams create a collective booking space for academic support, particularly for those undertaking second or third opportunities of assessments? This might be particularly helpful during holiday periods.

Could this be a solution for other teams and services at RGU for student bookings? Could this extend to candidate self-selection of interview slots?

Are there other places where students and external colleagues go to get contact information? If so would it be appropriate for this link to be included there too?



Concluding thoughts

- Bookings can make staff more readily accessible.
- The use of bookings has the potential to free up staff time from administrative duties associated with scheduling meetings.
- It saves time and effort on both parts.
- Bookings can allow us to embrace an open-door approach.

References

BELL. K., 2021. Increasing undergraduate student satisfaction in Higher Education: the importance of relational pedagogy. Journal of further and higher education. [online]. Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1985980> [Accessed on 13.03.2022].

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MIRCOSOFT., 2022. Microsoft teams video training, create and manage bookings. [Online] Redmond: Microsoft. Available from: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/what-is-bookings-42d4e852-8e99-4d8f-9b70-d7fc93973cb5> [Accessed on 13.03.2022]

Links if you would like to try bookings out

[Initial Panopto sharing my learning \(27 mins\)](#)

[NESCol wakelet page](#)

[Microsoft bookings instructions section](#)

If you do give it a go I would love to hear how you get on, please pop me an email: j.will@rgu.ac.uk



Curiosities and
comments are
welcome