FAQ - Spartan Space Coding for Academic Units

1. **What is the Room Use/Room Type?**

   The coding systems for the use of the space is intended to provide meaningful and comparable data. These codes track specific types of assignable and unassignable categories that allow institutions to map or crosswalk comparable spaces to the same category for analysis. Examples include: labs, classrooms, office, etc. These are usually set when the building is constructed or renovated, i.e. they normally do not change on an annual basis.

2. **What is the purpose of function codes?**

   The function code is a category defining what *types of activities* are happening in a room. The function codes were developed for financial accounting purposes, but are used in space management to link space allocations to financial data or other institutional missions. Using the same function codes as other institutions also assists in analyzing and comparing data across institutions. Functional coding of rooms is also a critical component to determine MSU's overhead or Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rates. As a result, the functional classification of rooms is subject to federal audit.

3. **How many function codes can a room have?**

   Each room can be assigned to up to 5 Function Codes to improve the accuracy of the information. When you split a room into multiple Function Codes, the total must equal 100%.

4. **What are the most common function codes used for academic units?**

   1.0 – Instruction usually offices, classrooms or class labs

   2.28 – Externally Sponsored Research usually in labs or lab support areas or office areas.

   2.29 – Departmentally Sponsored Research usually in labs or lab support areas or office areas.

   4.2 – Departmental Administration usually office areas, departmental conference rooms, departmental kitchen/office service, etc.

   5.0 – Student Services

5. **How should activities related to particular accounts be classified:**
   - Activities related to AgBioResearch (RA accounts) would normally be coded as Research (2.28)
   - Activities related to MSU Extension (RE accounts) would normally be coded as Public Service (3.0)
   - Activities related to faculty start-up should be coded as departmental research (2.29) unless the activities are dedicated to a specific research project in which case sponsored research (2.28) would be appropriate.

- Activities related to General Fund special accounts research centers, i.e. FRIB, DER, Institute for Cyber –enabled Research, Plant Research Lab, etc. would normally be coded as Research (2.1)

6. **How accurate and what types of documentation are necessary to support the functional allocation into the codes?**

   While it would be beneficial to have allocation information available if asked by a federal auditor, the auditor is looking to see if there is a reasonable method for how the space was allocated.

7. **How should I classify a room that is not occupied by people, but rather is setup for a continuously running experiment?**

   Classify the function(s) according to its intended use, i.e. if for classroom experiments: Instruction 1.0, if for externally supported research 2.28, or if departmentally supported research 2.29.

8. **What if only a portion of a room is used for a continuously running experiment, and the other portion is only used occasionally?**

   You should quantify priority activities, then classify each activity according to its function. For example, a lab is setup for a priority experiment and is also used as overflow offices for grad students. In talking with the lab manager, the room priority is 80% for the experiment and 20% for housing the graduate student. If the experiment is 100% research and the graduate students are 100% instruction, the lab should be assigned 80% to 2.28 Organized Research and 20% to 1.0 Instruction.

9. **How should unoccupied space be coded?**

   If unoccupied for more than 90 days, then should be coded as 13.0 Unoccupied Space. If unoccupied for 90 days or less, then it should be coded according to its next assignment. If the room is being reserved for an employee that is not yet hired, there is a notes section where that information can be documented.

10. **How should inactive time be factored when deciding how functional percentages are assigned to a room?**

    Functional assignment should be based on the amount of time a room is used. For example, if a room is not used outside of normal business hours, i.e. nights and weekends, those time blocks should be excluded from the calculation.

11. **How should offices be coded where people are doing administrative work?**

    If an office in an academic department is used for administration the allocation of the room should proportionally reflect 4.2 Departmental Administration based on its use.

12. How should a breakroom or kitchenette be functionally coded?

The function code for the room should be 4.2 Departmental Administration.

13. Should all space be allocated according to the salary appointment?

No, not all space needs to functionally correspond to the way a person is paid, however offices generally should. Labs and other room types should be allocated according to their actual use. A lab for example might be allocated 90% to 2.28 Research even though only 20% of the faculty member's salary is paid from a research account(s).

14. How should offices be coded?

Faculty/academic staff office coding should normally be split according to their salary appointment between teaching, research and administration. Office coding for other staff should be based on the job description, e.g. 4.2 Departmental Administration.

15. How should a room used by graduate students be coded?

Classify the space according to how the graduate students are financially supported. For example, those paid/supported to perform instruction (GA account) as: Instruction 1.0, those paid/supported to perform research (RC or RA accounts) as: Research 2.28, those paid/supported to perform departmental research (GA account) as 2.29 Departmental Research.

16. How does the classification of a graduate student as a TA or RA impact how the space should be coded?

Normally, Teaching Assistants (TA) are hired to assist with instruction and accordingly should be classified as 1.0 Instruction. Research Assistants (RA) are hired usually on sponsored projects (RC or RA) to assist with research activities, and therefore should be classified as 2.28 Research. Since graduate students often serve dual roles of teaching, and research, their space should be coded according its primary use, i.e. research (lab) and/or instruction, or as blend of the functions depending on the department or program. For example, if a student is appointed as a TA every other semester, it would be appropriate to code as 75% 2.28 Research and 25% 1.0 Instruction.

17. How do I associate a Principal Investigator's (PI) graduate assistant office(s) with the PI?

A PI should be allocated 1% of any office(s) occupied by their graduate students. To eliminate the requirement to record each student's name, there is a code, FPSM777777 GRAD ASSIST EMPLOYEE, which can be used. The PI's primary office should list the PI as 100%. This allows us to use the gross square footage of all the offices in the metrics report, it also clarifies that the PI does not have more than one dedicated office.

18. How do you assign occupancy to a shared graduate student office?

As noted above, 1% of each faculty member(s) should be allocated to the office. The remainder of the office should be allocated to the graduate students (using the code above) to total 100%.

19. Do I need to list graduate assistants in a research lab?

It is not necessary to put student or graduate student employees in research lab space as an occupant, only the PI(s) need to be listed in this space.

20. How do I code the lab research support spaces?

Where lab support space is shared by/or across a department or unit, the support space does not need to be assigned to a specific PI(s). Where lab support space is assigned to a research group, the support space should be assigned to the specific PI's.

Functionally, the space should be classified in the same manner as the labs it supports. Support space that supports multiple labs should be allocated according to the average use. For example, if the labs supported by the shared room are classified as 95% 2.28 Research, 5% 1.0 Instruction, it would be appropriate to classify the shared room in the same manner.

21. How do you code a research lab that also includes a student desk?

Since a room can have only one room use type, the space should be coded according to its primary use, i.e. research lab.

22. How should I code training activities in a research lab?

If a research lab has training activities, for example undergraduate research experiences, and those activities are more than de minimus, i.e. 5%, it is best to code the room with multiple codes. For example, 90% 2.28 Research and 10% 1.0 Instruction. Normally, instruction of research (499, 899, or 999 credits or other specific training on research techniques) should be coded according to how the lab is supported. It is also appropriate to allocate a portion, for example 5% as 1.0 Instruction.

23. How do you code a room that is used for equipment?

Classify according to how the equipment is intended to be used. For example, if the room houses equipment for both instructional and research, allocate the room 50% to Instruction (1.0) and 50% to Research (2.28 if supported by a sponsored project or general fund research account, or 2.29 if not).

24. How important is it to update the location of movable scientific equipment?

Movable equipment is by definition movable, however it is important to properly record in the Capital Asset Management (CAM) system when a piece of equipment has found a location. Federal auditors will use equipment room location from the CAM system as a cross reference to verify that the space information is up to date and accurate. This location information is also used to determine how much insurance coverage is required in case of damage.