Advanced Astra Training for Departmental Schedulers

Course Description:

Participants will use Astra to search for alternate room assignments and meeting patterns for academic sections. This course will review advanced techniques using Astra filters on the Academics tab.

Audience:

This class is appropriate for staff who work with room scheduling in their department and already have a basic understanding of Astra.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Use Astra filters to search campus-wide for available rooms for academic sections
2. Search for available rooms for alternate meeting patterns
3. Search for available meeting patterns for specific rooms

Using Astra Filters

When searching for rooms for academic sections, departments can use Astra to search for alternate rooms, including rooms outside of their scheduling region. To start, click the *Sections* link under the *Academics* tab. Open the section that requires a room assignment. In the Assign Room window, the Filter pane on the left can be used to filter search results for the desired room. The most commonly used filters are:

Show Only Available Rooms: Check this box to only view rooms that are available for every meeting of the course. Unchecking the box will include *Unavailable* rooms and rooms with scheduling *Conflicts* in the search results.

Capacity: While in the Assign Room window, Astra will default the Capacity filter to show the max enrollment of the section. This means any rooms with a lower capacity than the max enrollment will be excluded from the search results. If a number is entered in both Capacity fields, only rooms with a capacity within that range will be included in the search results. Adding or changing the number in the Capacity filter does not update the max enrollment of the section.

Campus: Astra will default to the campus of the section. If no rooms appear in the search results, make sure the campus filter is set to MA or Clear the campus filter.

Building: Use this filter to search for rooms within the selected buildings.

Room: Use this filter to search for specific rooms.

Region: Use this filter to search for rooms within your scheduling region or a different scheduling region. For example: selecting the *OUR Region* filter will only include OUR rooms in the search results.

Room Type: Use this filter to search for specific room types. Some examples of room types include: Classroom, Auditorium, Classroom-Computer, Lab – Chemistry, etc.

To add a filter, click the plus icon next to the category and then check the box next to the desired filters. You can also use the search bar to search for filters. Once all desired filters have been selected, click the Done button at the bottom of the Select Items window.
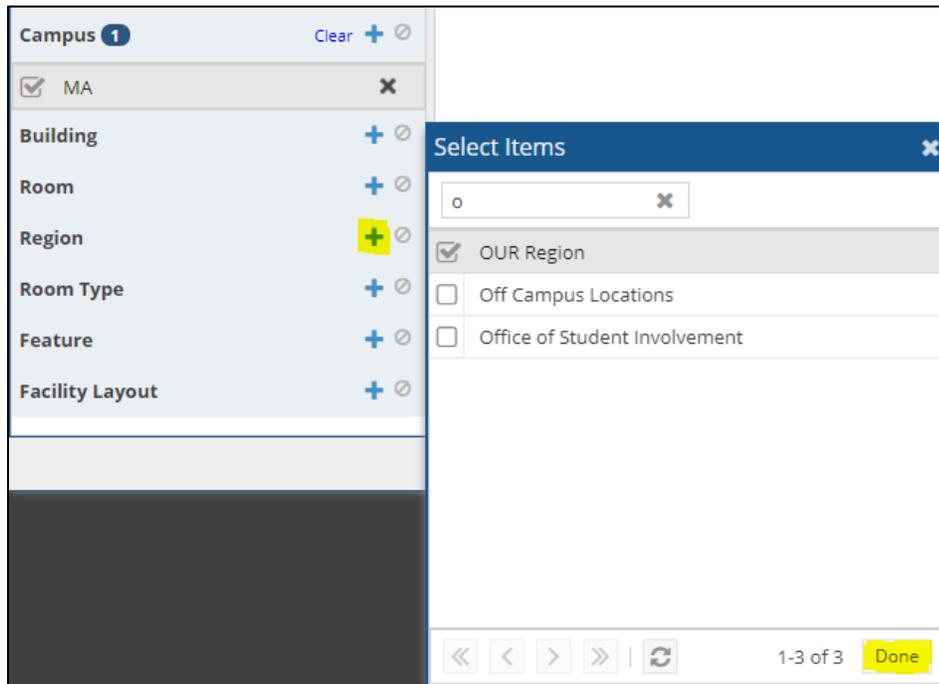
Once all the filters have been added, a number will appear next to the category to show how many filters have been selected. Click on the number to expand the category and view all the selected filters. To update the room search results, click the Search button at the top of the Filter pane.
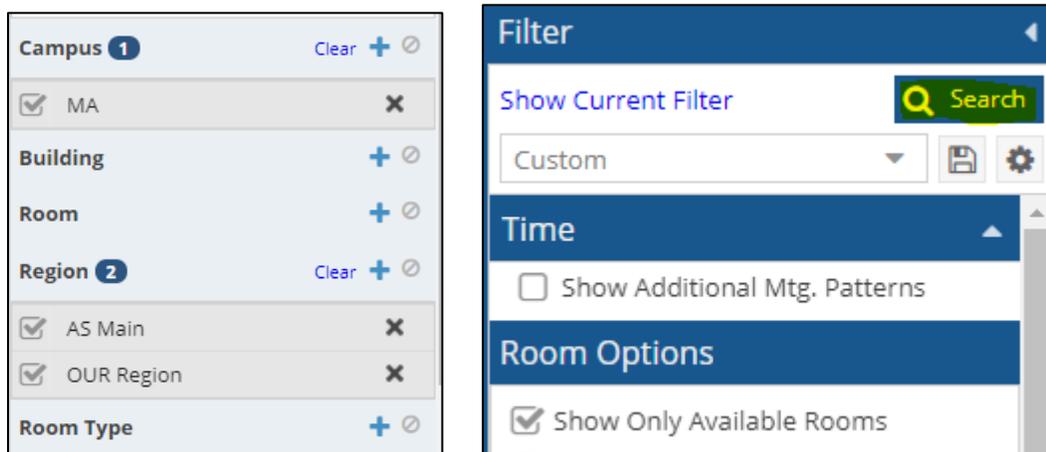
Rooms that meet the criteria of the selected filters will populate on the right side of the Assign Room window. If no rooms come up in the search results, either too many filters have been selected or there are no rooms available. It is recommended to limit filters to three or fewer to maximize search results.

In the example screenshot below, the selected filters include *Capacity:* between 70 and 100, *Campus:* Main Campus, *Region:* AS Main and OUR Region. The *Show Only Available Rooms* checkbox is also checked. On the right, the search results include only available Main Campus Arts & Sciences and OUR rooms with a capacity ranging between 70 and 100. No Arts & Sciences rooms with these criteria were available, so the only rooms that populated in the search results were OUR rooms. The HW 0002 room is the room that is currently assigned to the section.

The columns of information on the right can be customized to show the most relevant information to you. Hover over the column header (the words Room, Configuration, Regions, etc.) and click on the down arrow. In the menu, click on the Columns option. Then check or uncheck the desired columns. When finished, click anywhere in the Room Assignment window to close the Columns menu. **Do not click OK**. The selected columns should now appear in the search results.

In this example, the *Configuration* and *Regions* checkboxes were unchecked, and the *Room Type* box was checked. Below is a screenshot of the updated columns:

Columns can also be sorted by clicking on the column header. For instance, the search results can be sorted by capacity high-to-low or low-to-high:

If a room says *Avail (Request)*, the room is outside of your scheduling region and cannot be selected. To use this room, an email request must be sent to the scheduler over that space so they can assign the room. Email schedule@ua.edu for the contact information of the scheduler for a specific room, if needed. If the room says *Available*, the room is in your scheduling region and can be selected. Click on

the desired *Available* room, then click *OK* in the bottom right to close the Assign Room window and apply the new room to the section. Click *Save* or *Save and Close* to save changes.

Available Rooms for Alternate Meeting Patterns

A department may want to change the meeting pattern of a section in order to secure a room assignment, but first they want to make sure a room is available at the new time before the section is updated. One way to check available rooms for an alternate meeting pattern is to find another course in your scheduling unit with the same meeting pattern, and then use the steps described in the previous section, Using Astra Filters, to search for an available room. See the screenshots below for an example.

In this example, EC 110-005 meets TR 11am—12:15pm for Fall 2021. If the department wished to change the time of this course to MWF 1pm—1:50pm, they can search for a similar course with the same meeting pattern in Astra.

Go to the *Academics* tab. In the Filter pane on the left, select the Term filter and Subject filters from your own department. Select the day of the week icons M, W, and F and then click the Search button at the top. Astra will populate sections within your department that have meeting patterns that include Monday, Wednesday, AND Friday meetings.
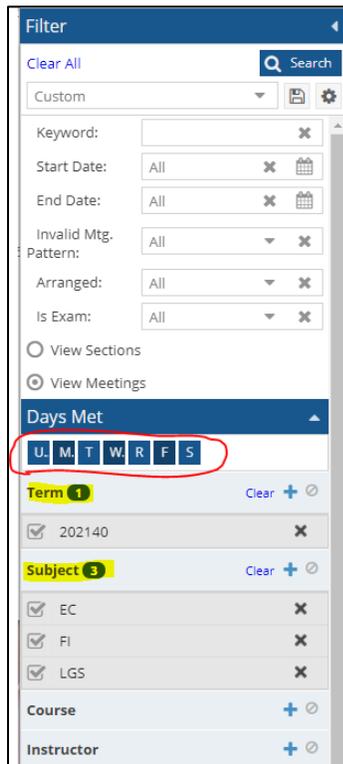
NOTE: The selected day of the week icons are only a slightly darker shade of blue than the unselected icons. Keep this in mind when doing additional searches later as this will affect the sections that are viewable on the Academics tab.

Using these filters, the section list now displays EC, FI, and LGS sections that meet MWF for Fall 2021. If no sections met these criteria, the Section List would appear blank.

Section List

+ Add a Section

	Course/Section	Cross-List	Days Met	Start Date	End Date	Start Time	End Time	Room	Status	Instruct…	Max…	Enr…	Course Offeri..
✖	⊙ EC 308/006 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 115	Scheduled		48	47	40638
✖	⊙ EC 309/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 13	Scheduled	Yeh	54	21	43200
✖	⊙ EC 309/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	BD 13	Scheduled	Yeh	54	46	41527
✖	⊙ EC 309/003 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	BD 13	Scheduled	Yeh	54	54	43947
✖	⊙ FI 301/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	HW 0015	Scheduled	Cleme…	109	109	40643
✖	⊙ FI 301/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	HW 0015	Scheduled	Cleme…	112	112	43288
✖	⊙ FI 301/004 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	01:00 PM	01:50 PM	BD 310	Scheduled	Cleme…	109	109	43477
✖	⊙ FI 410/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 140	Scheduled	Javine	48	48	40652
✖	⊙ FI 410/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	BD 140	Scheduled	Javine	48	48	40653
✖	⊙ FI 410/003 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	BD 140	Scheduled	Javine	48	48	43186
✖	⊙ LGS 200/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 310	Scheduled	Hall	109	57	40664
✖	⊙ LGS 200/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	BD 310	Scheduled	Hall	109	76	40661
✖	⊙ LGS 200/003 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	BD 310	Scheduled	Hall	109	109	40662
✖	⊙ FI 432/001 LEC	9Y	MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	02:00 PM	02:50 PM	BD 310	Scheduled	Cleme…	80	80	40656
✖	⊙ FI 597/004 LEC	9Y	MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	02:00 PM	02:50 PM	BD 310	Scheduled	Cleme…	20	8	41461

To easily find a section that meets at the desired time, 1pm—1:50pm, sort the results by Start Time instead of Course/Section by clicking on the Start Time column header. An arrow will appear in the column header to indicate the results are being sorted in either ascending or descending order by the selected column.

Section List

+ Add a Section

	Course/Section	Cross-List	Days Met	Start Date	End Date	Start Time ^1	End Time	Room	Status	Instruct…	Max…	Enr…	Course Offeri..
✖	⊙ EC 309/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 13	Scheduled	Yeh	54	21	43200
✖	⊙ EC 308/006 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 115	Scheduled		48	47	40638
✖	⊙ FI 410/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 140	Scheduled	Javine	48	48	40652
✖	⊙ LGS 200/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:00 AM	09:50 AM	BD 310	Scheduled	Hall	109	57	40664
✖	⊙ LGS 200/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	BD 310	Scheduled	Hall	109	76	40661
✖	⊙ FI 410/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	BD 140	Scheduled	Javine	48	48	40653
✖	⊙ FI 301/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	HW 0015	Scheduled	Cleme…	109	109	40643
✖	⊙ EC 309/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	BD 13	Scheduled	Yeh	54	46	41527
✖	⊙ EC 309/003 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	BD 13	Scheduled	Yeh	54	54	43947
✖	⊙ LGS 200/003 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	BD 310	Scheduled	Hall	109	109	40662
✖	⊙ FI 410/003 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	BD 140	Scheduled	Javine	48	48	43186
✖	⊙ FI 301/002 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	HW 0015	Scheduled	Cleme…	112	112	43288
✖	⊙ FI 301/004 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	01:00 PM	01:50 PM	BD 310	Scheduled	Cleme…	109	109	43477
✖	⊙ FI 432/001 LEC	9Y	MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	02:00 PM	02:50 PM	BD 310	Scheduled	Cleme…	80	80	40656
✖	⊙ FI 597/004 LEC	9Y	MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	02:00 PM	02:50 PM	BD 310	Scheduled	Cleme…	20	8	41461

Click on the section with the desired alternate meeting pattern and open the Assign Room window to search for available rooms. Follow the instructions described in the previous section of this document, Using Astra Filters, to see which rooms are available across campus. Once an appropriate room has been found, then EC 110-005's meeting pattern can be updated in CLSS or a new section can be created, if necessary. If the room is within your scheduling region, you can assign it in Astra once the new meeting pattern has updated. If the room is outside of your scheduling region (as indicated by the status *Avail*

(Request)), please contact the department that controls the room via email to request it. Make sure not to assign the room to the open section in Astra (FI 301-004 in this example) or save this section as this will change any existing room assignment and make the room unavailable for the section you are attempting to update.

Available Meeting Patterns for Specific Rooms

A department may require the use of a specific room, such as a large lecture hall that can accommodate the enrollment of a large section. If such rooms are unavailable for a section, the department may wish to find a new meeting pattern for the section when such a room is available.

For example, EC 110-005 has high enrollment and requires a large room to accommodate 400 students. The only room on campus with a capacity of 400 is Russell Hall 159 (cap 408). During the class's scheduled meeting time, RH 159 is not available. The department would like to find a time that RH 159 is available and change the meeting pattern in order to secure this room. You can use the Academics tab to see when RH 159 is not scheduled.

First, under the Academics tab, select the Term, Building, and Room filters and click the Search button:

The Section List will populate with all sections that are scheduled in RH 159 for the Fall 2021 term. Sort this list by Start Time by clicking on the Start Time column header.

	Course/Section	Cross-List	Days Met	Start Date	End Date	Start Time ^1	End Time	Room	Status	Instruct...	Max...	Enr...	Course Offeri...
✖	⊙ CJ 100/001 LEC		TR	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	09:30 AM	10:45 AM	RH 159	Scheduled	Klutz	107	107	40042
✖	⊙ NHM 101/001 LEC		MWF	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	RH 159	Scheduled	Greene	275	202	40459
✖	⊙ CJ 100/002 LEC		TR	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	12:15 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Klutz	136	136	43106
✖	⊙ MUS 121/006 LEC		M	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	RH 159	Scheduled	Morre...	60	60	45168
✖	⊙ MUS 121/007 LEC		W	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	11:00 AM	11:50 AM	RH 159	Scheduled		76	76	45169
✖	⊙ MUS 121/004 LEC		T	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	12:30 PM	01:20 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	McGuire	93	93	40278
✖	⊙ MUS 121/005 LEC		R	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	12:30 PM	01:20 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	McGuire	45	45	40279
✖	⊙ MUS 121/001 LEC		M	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	01:00 PM	01:50 PM	RH 159	Scheduled		84	84	40275
✖	⊙ MUS 121/002 LEC		W	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	01:00 PM	01:50 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Whimple	48	48	40276
✖	⊙ MUS 121/003 LEC		W	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	02:00 PM	02:50 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Woosley	275	275	40277
✖	⊙ PY 101/010 LEC		TR	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	02:00 PM	03:15 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Kois	51	51	40492
✖	⊙ JCM 100/001 LEC		M	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	03:00 PM	05:50 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Vesey	100	30	46796
✖	⊙ FI 302/001 LAB		TR	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	03:30 PM	04:45 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Whaley	400	400	49897
✖	⊙ COM 123/001 LEC		W	08/18/2021	12/03/2021	05:00 PM	05:50 PM	RH 159	Scheduled	Brooks	408	295	40038

If this list shows what times RH 159 is scheduled, then any meeting patterns not reflected in this list might be available. Based off these search results, the following meeting patterns may be available:

TR 8am—9:15am and TR 5pm and later. Or MWF 8am—9:50am and MWF 12pm—12:50pm.

If one of these available meeting patterns will work for the course, then use the tips in the previous section, Available Rooms for Alternate Meeting Patterns, to ensure no events are scheduled in the room for the desired meeting pattern. If no classes are scheduled in the room but the room is reserved for any events, the room will appear in the Assign Room window as either *Conflicts* or *Unavailable*.

Once an appropriate room has been found, then EC 110-005's meeting pattern can be updated in CLSS or a new section can be created, if necessary. If the room is within your scheduling region, you can assign it in Astra once the new meeting pattern has updated. If the room is outside of your scheduling region (as designated by the status *Avail (Request)*), please contact the department that controls the room via email to request it.