

Academic Calendar Implementation Group

MINUTES AND ACTIONS

20 November 2020

Present: Gillian Barry, Claire Bohan, Richard Bolger, Anthony Feighan, Maeve Fitzpatrick, Rachel Keegan (Secretary), William Kelly (Chair), Anna Logan, Kenneth McDonagh, Jennifer McManis, Pauline Mooney, Máire Ní Sheighlin, Paul Smith, Joseph Stokes, Blánaid White

In attendance: Valerie Cooke

Apologies: Yseult Freaney, Lucien Waugh-Daly

1. Confirmation of the Agenda

The agenda was agreed, as circulated.

2. Minutes and Actions of the Meeting of 30 October 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 30 October 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

It was noted that feedback received from the Faculties relating to item 4 contained observations concerning other matters not included on today's agenda. The Chair noted that much of this feedback had been addressed previously by the Academic Calendar Working Group (ACWG) and/or would be addressed through the ongoing work of the ACIG and its Subgroups.

All other matters arising were covered under today's agenda.

4. Consideration of outline calendar for referral to SMG

4.1 Resits examination period

G. Barry summarised the findings of the operations group she had convened to explore the possibility of reducing the current six-week resit period by one week. The group gave full consideration to the various activities associated with each week during that period. The group concluded that in the context of current processes and existing systems limitations, no obvious means of gaining time could be identified.

The ACIG also considered the concerns expressed in Faculty and Unit feedback regarding the commencement of the resit period in July.

In considering all feedback, it was agreed that the resit period should commence in early August.

It was furthermore agreed that the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup would further consider the reduction of the resit period by one week. It was noted that this will necessarily have implications on existing processes carried out within the period.

4.2 Location of reading week within the revised calendar

The ACIG noted feedback from the Faculties which indicated a preference for the alignment of reading weeks to the school mid-term breaks. Concerns were also noted regarding the possibility of reading week occurring as late as week 9 in Semester 1.

In considering all feedback, it was agreed that that Semester 1 reading week should align with the school mid-term break in those years where it can be aligned to week 7 or 8 of the revised calendar.

It was furthermore agreed that Semester 2 reading week should align with the school mid-term break in those years where it can be aligned to week 6 or 7 of the revised calendar.

4.3 Most appropriate place for time within the revised calendar

The ACIG noted the mixed feedback from Faculties on whether the additional week is best placed before or after Semester 2. Concerns around the time for correction for larger modules were considered, along with IOE-specific concerns regarding school placement visits. It was noted that placing the additional week in January would effectively remove the possibility for additional research time during the summer period.

In considering this matter, the ACIG also noted that there may be some scope in extending the timeframes for the processing and promulgation of Semester 1 results.

It was noted by the ACIG that the student perspective must also be considered in deciding on the most appropriate location for this week within the revised calendar. It was noted that a longer summer period may be more valuable for students looking to work, travel or return to their home country. It was furthermore noted that student feedback received by the ACWG indicated that, for the majority of students, the current extended downtime over the Christmas period was not to their benefit.

In considering all feedback, it was agreed that Semester 2 should commence in week 19 thus creating an extra week within the summer period.

It was also agreed that the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup would consider the feasibility of moving the date for promulgation of results out by one week, thereby extending examination correction and processing timelines.

4.4 G. Barry updated the group on the November meeting of the CAO Operations Group. It was noted that there is still uncertainty surrounding the possible date for round 1 offers and acceptances. It was furthermore noted that the CAO has suggested a round 1 acceptance date that would be a week later than normal.

The ACIG considered this feedback which would have serious implications for the commencement of Semester 1 in early September.

It was agreed that the ACIG would propose a 20 September start in 2021, with a shortened ten-week semester as per the current academic year. It was noted that this would also mitigate some of the potential issues arising from the overlapping of activities associated with the old and new calendars.

- 4.5** It was agreed that the outline calendars would be updated to reflect the decisions of the ACIG and that outline calendars for the coming three academic years would be referred to the next meeting of SMG for consideration. Should the revised calendar be approved by SMG, it will be forwarded for consideration by Academic Council at its December meeting [Action 1 & 2].

5. ACIG Terms of Reference

5.1 Orientation and Transition Subgroup

The Terms of Reference and membership of the Orientation and Transition Subgroup were approved.

5.2 Academic-Related Operations Subgroup

The Terms of Reference and membership of the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup were approved. It was noted that timetabling-related considerations may be best addressed through the existing Timetabling Operations Group and therefore are not listed in the ToRs for this Subgroup.

6. Any other business

- 6.1** C. Bohan informed the group that the INTRA Office has mapped out changes to the start and finish dates for placements in the current year, taking into account the earlier Semester 1 start date in 2021-22. For most programmes, this will reduce placements by 1 week. However, there is a particular impact for Engineering placements which requires further consideration by the Faculty.
- 6.2** R. Keegan provided a brief update to the Group on the rollover of Loop during the summer. The Teaching Enhancement Unit has confirmed that they foresee no major issues with an earlier roll-over assuming they receive sufficient notice.

Action No.	Agreed Actions	Responsible	Deadline
1	Three-year outline calendar and report to be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of SMG	BK, PM, RK	23 November 2020
2	Three-year outline calendar and report to be submitted to Academic Council for consideration (pending SMG approval)	BK, PM, RK	1 December 2020