

## Academic Calendar Implementation Group

### MINUTES AND ACTIONS

22 January 2021

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

**In attendance:** Valerie Cooke

#### 1. Confirmation of the Agenda

The agenda was agreed, as circulated.

#### 2. Minutes and Actions of the Meeting of 11 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record.

#### 3. Matters arising

**3.1** B. Kelly informed the ACIG that the planned meeting with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and L. Waugh-Daly, to consider an approach to assessment in Semester 1, will be arranged shortly.

**3.2** G. Barry updated the ACIG on the ongoing work relating to the resit period. The Institutional Research and Analysis Officer has provided G. Barry with some statistics on the scale of impact. The Academic Systems Unit and Registry are in the process of exploring the feasibility of an IT solution. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

#### 4. Subgroup updates

##### 4.1 Academic-Related Operations Subgroup

G. Barry advised the ACIG that the second meeting of the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup (AROS) took place on 14 January. The first item considered was the completion of the 2020-21 academic calendar Autumn dates. Following consultation with stakeholders a series of dates were proposed which are largely in-line with previous years. These dates have been approved by the Registrar and will be noted at the next meeting of Academic Council on 3 February.

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the AROS also considered the first substantial item, the timing and management of academic structures. The Subgroup considered the 2021 and 2022 dates which differ due to the different Semester 1 start dates. G. Barry informed the

ACIG that the proposed 2021 dates are in line with previous years. Subgroup members are consulting with their respective work areas on the proposed 2022 dates and feedback will be considered at the next meeting.

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the next substantial item for consideration is the onboarding and registration of incoming first-year students.

## **4.2 Orientation and 1<sup>st</sup> Year Transitions Subgroup**

C. Bohan informed the ACIG that the first meeting of the Orientation and 1<sup>st</sup> Year Transitions Subgroup took place on 19 January. The focus of the first meeting was on getting to know each member's role in relation to orientation and to consider experiences and learnings from this year's orientation programme. The Subgroup will meet again on 19 February.

## **5. Project Implementation Plan updates**

### **5.1 Placements**

P. Mooney informed the ACIG that a number of meetings with placement stakeholders have taken place and others have been arranged for the coming weeks.

#### Education Placements

M. Fitzpatrick informed the ACIG that she has met with the education placement coordinators to discuss the impact of the revised calendar on placements. She informed the ACIG that many of the expected significant challenges relating to education placements have been addressed. Much work has been undertaken by the placement coordinators in revising academic structures to account for the revised calendar. COVID-19 has also brought an element of flexibility in what placements look like and how they can be delivered. M. Fitzpatrick advised the ACIG that no other major issues have been identified outside of uncertainty around the impact of COVID-19 on school placements in 2021-22.

B. White informed the ACIG that colleagues in Science & Health and the Institute of Education have met on several occasions to look at the impact on science education placements. She informed the Group that a pragmatic approach was taken in revising and restructuring the programme so that modules allow for more flexibility in facilitating placements.

It was agreed that high-level deliverables relating to Education Placements should be incorporated into the Project Implementation Plan so that the ACIG is kept apprised of developments.

#### Exchange/Study Abroad

P. Mooney briefed the ACIG on an initial meeting with P. Smyth to consider the impact of the revised calendar on International Office activities. On foot of this, a series of meetings have been arranged with the Faculties to consider exchange, occasional and study abroad students. It was agreed that an update on these meetings would be provided at the next meeting of the ACIG.

P. Smyth informed the ACIG that moving Semester 1 examinations before Christmas may prove positive for international recruitment and study abroad offerings. The ACIG noted

that returning DCU students need particular consideration, in relation to the timing of results and how progression is managed for these cohorts.

#### Other Placements

P. Mooney informed the ACIG that a meeting has been arranged with colleagues involved in nursing placements. A meeting with INTRA will also be scheduled shortly.

### **5.2 Wider impacts and interdependencies**

P. Mooney advised the ACIG of plans to issue an email to units and work areas not directly represented in the current structures for implementation of the revised calendar. P. Mooney and R. Keegan also plan to meet with units particularly impacted by the change with a view to surfacing issues not previously considered or interdependencies not previously identified. It was agreed that this work would be documented and communicated to the ACIG as it progresses.

### **5.3 Communications**

P. Mooney and R. Keegan briefed the ACIG on a meeting with the Director of Communications and the Communications Manager. The purpose of this meeting was to give initial consideration to a communications strategy for the implementation of the revised calendar. This may require a multi-pronged approach, with particular student cohorts requiring a more tailored approach.

It was agreed that Faculty input would be useful, particularly in relation to difficult to reach student groups, the most effective communication channels, particular cohort concerns and suggested mechanisms to address these.

It was agreed that P. Mooney and R. Keegan will prepare a briefing document for consideration at the next meeting of the ACIG.

### **6. Any other business**

M. Ní Sheighin queried the week numbering used in the 2021-22 calendar which suggests term starts in week 3. It was noted that, while assigning week numbers in this way had proven useful when reviewing outline calendars across multiple years, publishing in this format could be confusing. It was agreed that this would be considered and an approach agreed at the next meeting.

Action No.	Agreed Actions	Responsible	Deadline
1	B. Kelly, ADTLs and L. Waugh-Daly to meet to consider an approach to assessment in Semester 1	B. Kelly	ASAP
2	High-level deliverables for education placements to be incorporated into the Project Implementation Plan.	M. Fitzpatrick, R. Keegan	ASAP
3	Exchange/study abroad meetings to be arranged with each Faculty. Update to be provided at the next meeting.	R. Keegan, P. Mooney	At the next meeting

4	Engagements with units/work areas outside of the revised calendar implementation structures to be documented. Update to be provided at the next meeting.	R. Keegan, P. Mooney	At the next meeting
5	Faculty input on difficult to reach student groups, effective communication channels, particular cohort concerns and mechanisms to address these.	ADLTs	Before/at the next meeting
6	Communications briefing document to be prepared and brought to the next meeting.	R. Keegan, P. Mooney	At the next meeting
7	Considering of week numbering system and the most appropriate format for timetabling/student communications.	B. Kelly, G. Barry, R. Keegan, P. Mooney	ASAP