

Academic Calendar Implementation Group

MINUTES AND ACTIONS

25 June 2021

Present: Gillian Barry, Claire Bohan, Anthony Feighan, Maeve Fitzpatrick, Yseult Freeney, Rachel Keegan (Secretary), William Kelly (Chair), Kate Goodman, Anna Logan, Kenneth McDonagh, Jennifer McManis, Pauline Mooney, Máire Ní Sheighlin, Niamh O'Sullivan, Paul Smith and Joseph Stokes.

Apologies: Richard Bolger and Paul Smith.

The Chair welcomed Kate Goodman to the meeting, as the new Students' Union Vice-President for Academic Life.

1. Confirmation of the Agenda

The agenda was agreed, as circulated.

2. Minutes and Actions of the Meeting of 28 May 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 28 May 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 It was noted that work on the format and look of the detailed calendar is ongoing.
- 3.2 It was noted that work on the development of FAQs is ongoing.
- 3.3 It was noted that the issue of delayed results for returning exchange students is one that currently exists, but which may become a more significant issue with the revised calendar. It was agreed that there is benefit in adopting a consistent approach for managing returning students with failed and missing elements. It was agreed that, as a starting point, the approach currently in use in each Faculty to deal with such students would be documented, along with Registry's process for managing these students' records. It was also agreed that it would be useful to capture the numbers of students impacted each year. Once this information has been collated, a group will be convened to agree on a consistent approach going forward.
- 3.4 It was noted that planned discussions with Campus Residences, concerning the early arrival of international students, is ongoing.
- 3.5 It was noted that the misalignment between the financial and academic year is currently being considered by Finance. This will be taken into consideration as Finance liaises with individual work areas on budget planning for 2021-22.

- 3.6 It was noted that the communication of the revised calendar to partner institutions will be managed at the Faculty level. It was noted that partners who are required to report to Academic Council will be contacted by the OVPAA shortly.

4. Subgroup updates

4.1 Academic-Related Operations Subgroup

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the AROS has finalised the detailed calendar for 2021-22, and this will be passed to the Registrar for approval shortly. At the most recent AROS meeting, first-year registration dates were revisited in light of the later CAO publication dates and the later Semester 1 start for incoming students.

G. Barry advised the ACIG that online registration for 2021 will close on 20 September. This will necessitate postgraduate application deadlines being set for 3 September, in order to allow sufficient time for offers, acceptances, onboarding and registration. It was noted that a hard cut off will have implications for a number of programmes, including high demand programmes with waiting lists. It was agreed that this matter would be kept under review as we approach the proposed cut-off date, to see what implications the deadline will have on programmes.

4.2 Orientation and 1st Year Transitions Subgroup

C. Bohan informed the ACIG that the Subgroup has concluded work on setting out basic principles for what should be offered as part of centrally delivered and programme-led orientation programmes. In 2021-22 focus will be on the development of a comprehensive toolkit for staff tasked with developing and delivering programme level orientation.

5. Status update reports

A number of status update reports were circulated to the ACIG in advance of the meeting. The following points were noted:

The Disability and Learning Support Service has highlighted an issue resulting from the later Semester 1 start for first-year students in 2021. The new timelines will cause issues with getting students registered for examination accommodations in advance of the publication of the Semester 1 exam timetable. Registry and the Disability and Learning Support Service have scheduled a meeting to discuss this matter. It was agreed that the exam timetable publication date will be removed from the detailed calendar pending the outcome of this meeting. It was noted that any necessary change to this date will likely require a derogation from the Examination Regulations.

It was noted that the exam marking period following Semester 1 is still of concern for some staff but that the agreed extended timeline for marking will be helpful, particularly for those with large marking loads. It was noted that the new calendar creates more working days for marking, however, the occurrence of Christmas in the middle of this period is creating the perception of less time. It was also noted that the move to fewer examinations may lessen the load over this period.

It was noted that there are issues with the timing of embedded Gaeltacht placements for some programmes. Possible solutions to this are currently being considered by the Institute of Education.

The interdependency between registration and timetabling in 2022 was noted. It was noted that the later start for incoming first-year students in 2021 will create similar timetabling issues. The planning of orientation activities is also complicated by this later start date. It was noted that there will be significant resource challenges in September 2021 for Registry and Faculty Administration.

It was noted that some students in the School of Health and Human Performance are short on their required clinical and practical hours, and it is proving difficult to fit these into the shortened Semester 1. Planning is underway to bring these cohorts back two weeks prior to the start of Semester 1, in order to make up the missing hours. Students have indicated agreement with this proposed plan.

It was noted there are some concerns around workload for Faculty Administration staff in August, resulting from the overlap between resits and timetabling activities.

It was noted that the Faculty of Science and Health is looking at how Transition Year placements and Leaving Certificate experiments will be scheduled in the new calendar. This will be managed locally.

It was noted that the timing of resit examinations is a significant challenge. It was noted that this issue necessitates alternative modules to be identified as part of the curriculum submission process as well as a technical solution. Testing of the related ITS development will conclude shortly and it is hoped that the solution will be piloted on a number of programmes in 2021-22.

It was noted that the earlier Semester 1 start will increase the number of manual registrations required as CAO round 2 and subsequent rounds will now fall outside of the online registration window.

6. Registration and timetabling interdependency update

It was noted that a working group has met on two occasions to consider the timetabling issue for 2022. It was noted that the recent publication of later CAO dates has created a similar issue for Semester 1 in 2021. No easy solution could be identified by the group and further work is needed to consider how to limit timetable disruptions in both years. Work is ongoing and the ACIG will be updated as matters progress.

It was noted that the later start date for incoming first-year students will mean the change of module choice period will have to remain open for 2 weeks. This will further impact timetabling. Orientation in the 1st week of Semester 1 will also significantly complicate timetabling activities. It was noted that all available space on campus will need to be made available for orientation activities to avoid disruption to week 1 teaching for continuing students.

7. Project Implementation Plan

It was noted that the DCU Outline and Detailed Calendars, Criteria and Elements document was approved by Academic Council on 14 June 2021.

It was noted that the revised examination period for Semester 2, 2022 was approved by Academic Council on 14 June 2021.

It was noted that a working group convened by the Registrar to consider graduation has concluded its work, and a report has been submitted to the Registrar. It is expected that graduations will take place in February and March of 2022.

8. Risk register

It was noted that the risk register is currently under development and will be shared with members once populated. This will remain as a recurring item on the agenda going forward.

9. Schedule of meetings 2021-22

The schedule of meetings for 2021-22 was agreed.

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

Action No.	Agreed Actions	Responsible	Deadline
1	Work on the format and look of the detailed calendar to be progressed.	R. Keegan, G. Barry	End October 2021
2	Work on the development of FAQs to be progressed.	R. Keegan	End August 2021
3	Faculty approaches to handling failed/missing elements for returning exchange students to be documented. Registry processes for these students to be documented. The number of students impacted each year to be documented.	ADTLs, G. Barry, R. Keegan	End September 2021
4	Group to be convened to agree on a consistent approach to dealing with students with failed or missing elements.	B. Kelly, R. Keegan, P. Mooney	End November 2021
5	Communication with Campus Residences on the early arrival of international students.	P. Smith	End August 2021
6	Revised calendar to be communicated to partner institutions where impacted.	All	End August 2021
7	The 3 September cut off date for PG applications to be revisited in August.	G. Barry ADTLs	End August 2021