

Academic Calendar Implementation Group

MINUTES AND ACTIONS

26 March 2021

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

Apologies: Niamh O'Sullivan, Paul Smith and Lucien Waugh-Daly.

1. Confirmation of the Agenda

The agenda was agreed, as circulated.

2. Minutes and Actions of the Meeting of 5 March 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 5 March 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

- Item 4.1, 4th paragraph, 3rd line: remove the words 'a number of'
- Item 4.1, 4th paragraph, 4th line: remove the words 'for these programmes'.

3. Matters arising

3.1 W. Kelly informed the ACIG that guidance on an approach to Semester 1 assessment has been finalised, in consultation with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and L. Waugh-Daly. The guidance will be communicated to Programme Chairpersons shortly.

3.2 It was noted that work in relation to the timetabling issues for 2022 is ongoing. It was noted that this issue is one that occurs in 2022, and will not occur in the same way again for several years.

3.3 W. Kelly highlighted the importance of the work of the ACIG being communicated to the wider DCU community. It was noted that the academic calendar should remain as a regular item at Teaching and Learning Committees, programme boards, school meetings and other fora.

4. Subgroup updates

4.1 Academic-Related Operations Subgroup

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup (AROS) has had one further meeting since her previous update. An onboarding briefing document was circulated to members for information. G. Barry informed the ACIG that the 2020-21 undergraduate onboarding pilot is currently being reviewed as part of the onboarding project. It was noted that there are some technical issues to be resolved before postgraduate students can be included in the onboarding system, and work in this regard is progressing well.

It was noted that draft onboarding dates for 2021 and 2022 have been considered by the AROS. These dates are dependent on CAO timelines which have yet to be confirmed. It was noted that the 2022 dates are the tightest and allow for no contingency time should issues with the onboarding system arise.

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the AROS has agreed the 2021 1st year registration dates. Any decision on the dates for 2022 has been deferred pending the resolution of related timetabling issues.

G. Barry updated the ACIG on the current focus of the AROS which includes the dates and timelines for examinations and processing of results, and postgraduate research dates.

4.2 Orientation and 1st Year Transitions Subgroup

C. Bohan informed the ACIG that the Orientation and 1st Year Transitions Subgroup has met on three occasions since her last update. The Subgroup is currently exploring existing orientation practices across the University with a view to increasing awareness of them and highlighting good practice. The Subgroup has agreed on an approach that will see an enhanced, centrally delivered online orientation programme, supplemented by a more comprehensive, programme-level orientation programme. The Subgroup is currently compiling a list of the elements to be included in central and locally-delivered orientation.

5. Project Implementation Plan updates

R. Keegan briefed the ACIG on the project implementation plan which was shared with members. The project plan has been structured around a number of key areas or sub-projects. It was noted that some areas are still under development and detail will continue to be fleshed out as various activities progress. It was noted that the project plan includes high-level deliverables for the AROS and that a more detailed project plan for the AROS has also been developed.

The importance of status updates as a means of ensuring two-way communication between Faculties and Units and the ACIG was noted. It was agreed that status updates would remain as a standing item on the agenda. It was noted that calendar revisions need to be internalised by colleagues across the University as we progress towards implementation.

5.1 Status updates

ACIG high-level deliverables

R. Keegan informed the ACIG that the risk register is currently being developed and will be shared with the ACIG in due course.

R. Keegan informed the ACIG that the examination dates in 2022 may need to be revisited. It was noted that examinations will overlap with the Easter period, reducing the timeframe by three days.

Timing of resits

G. Barry briefed the ACIG on progress made in relation to reducing the time required for the resit period. It was noted that the identified solution focuses on the time required to identify alternative modules for those students with deferred or failed elements, where the original module is no longer available. A technical solution has been identified which will automate this process and work is progressing well.

B. Kelly highlighted that this solution will require alternative modules to be identified at the point of a module being removed from the academic structure. The process will not work without this information being provided to Registry at this point.

While this process will not be required until 2022, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to pilot the process in 2021 with a number of programmes.

Graduation

B. Kelly informed the ACIG that decisions regarding graduation are being impacted by the 10-week semester and COVID related uncertainties. He informed the ACIG that Lisa Looney will be convening a group to consider graduation plans for 2021-22.

Commercial/Financial

It was noted that commercial and financial elements within the plan require fleshing out. It was agreed that A. Feighan would meet with P. Mooney and R. Keegan to this end.

Other Updates

It was noted that the 10-week semester is currently being considered in the Faculties and that the assessment guidance would prove useful in this regard.

It was noted that education placements are being looked at in further detail by the IOE now that planning for 2021-22 has commenced. A number of specific issues are being looked at and will be fed back to the ACIG or the AROS as relevant.

It was noted that Semester 2 examinations are being considered by Open Education as the dates may clash with some project deadlines. Registration dates for Springboard may be close to the start of semester and Open Education will keep this under review.

6. Parameters for Detailed Calendar

The circulated *DCU outline and detailed academic calendars, criteria and elements* document was considered by the ACIG. This document sets out the functions, elements, approval mechanisms and publication of the outline and detailed calendars. It was noted that the

detailed calendar will be in a student-friendly format. It was noted that it may be feasible to apply filters to the calendar so that it may be presented differently to different users. The importance of maintaining a single source of truth for the academic calendar was noted. It was noted that further work on the format and look of the detailed calendar will be progressed with ISS in the coming weeks.

7. Any other business

There was no other business.

Action No.	Agreed Actions	Responsible	Deadline
1	A group to be convened to consider the interdependency between registration, timetabling and start of Semester 1 in 2022.	B. Kelly, P. Mooney	ASAP
2	Further statistics on returning students with failed or missing elements to be obtained for the ACIG.	P. Smyth	Next meeting
3	Commercial and financial milestones and deliverables to be further fleshed out in the project implementation plan.	A. Feighan, R. Keegan, P. Mooney	ASAP
4	Further exploration of the format of the detailed calendar to be progressed.	R. Keegan, G. Barry	May/June