

Academic Calendar Implementation Group

MINUTES AND ACTIONS

28 May 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, Máire Ní Sheighlin, Niamh O’Sullivan, Paul Smith, Joseph Stokes and Lucien Waugh-Daly.

Apologies: Pauline Mooney

1. Confirmation of the Agenda

The agenda was agreed, as circulated.

2. Minutes and Actions of the Meeting of 23 April 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 23 April 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising

3.1 It was noted that statistics on returning students from abroad have been provided by P. Smith.

3.2 It was noted that work on the format and look of the detailed calendar is ongoing. R. Keegan briefed the ACIG on an initial meeting with ISS to explore options. It is expected that work on a new look calendar may take some time. In the interim, the 2021-22 detailed calendar will be published in its current format.

3.3 It was noted that work on the development of FAQs is ongoing.

4. Subgroup updates

4.1 Academic-Related Operations Subgroup

G. Barry updated the ACIG on progress made in relation to the detailed calendar:

A working group met on 21 May to consider the progression and registration of continuing students. Draft dates have been mapped and will be brought to the next meeting of the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup (AROS) for consideration. This is the last piece of significant work to be considered by the AROS. It is anticipated that the calendar will be ready for approval in late June, with a planned publication date of early July.

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the progression and registration of students returning from abroad was also considered by the working group. It was noted that there will be an increase in the number of students with late results, due to the earlier Semester 1 start date from 2022 onwards. This will increase the number of manual progressions to be processed. It was agreed that there needs to be a formalised approach for students who are provisionally progressed but subsequently need to repeat, and that programme regulations may need to be revisited. It was noted that any solution will require a cross-university approach. It was agreed that this item should be further explored over the coming weeks.

The examination and processing of results dates have been mapped and agreed.

Semester 2 registration dates have been mapped and agreed. G. Barry informed the ACIG that Semester 2 registration must take place in the first week of January, to meet the early Semester 2 start. It was noted that the closing date for applications will need to be set for two weeks prior to the Christmas closure period. This time will be required for application assessments, follow-ups on outstanding documentation, offers being made and the issuing of log on information.

G. Barry also updated the ACIG on progress made in the planned subject programme. The first round of testing is now complete and work is continuing with the developer.

4.2 Orientation and 1st Year Transitions Subgroup

C. Bohan updated the ACIG on the two recent meetings of the Orientation and 1st Year Transitions Subgroup. The Subgroup continues to explore good practice from across the University. C. Bohan informed the ACIG that a presentation on the peer-assisted study sessions in the School of Psychology was particularly well received by the Subgroup. There was some discussion on the possibility of rolling this out across other programmes.

C. Bohan advised the ACIG that the focus of the Subgroup will shortly shift to working on the development of the orientation programme for September 2021.

5. Exam timetable dates, Semester 2, 2021-22

G. Barry briefed the ACIG on the loss of three exam timetabling days in 2022, caused by the overlap with the Easter weekend. Registry colleagues have considered this issue and have assessed the submitted curriculum information for 2021-22. Based on this review, it is expected that two additional days may be required.

The ACIG considered two options proposed by Registry, which would see the additional days being added to the start or end of the examination period. Adding two days to the start of the period will result in a loss of study days for students. It was agreed this is not a feasible solution. Adding the days to the end of the examination period was considered by the ACIG and it was agreed that this is a more favourable option.

It was noted that this change may result in a reduced exam marking period. G. Barry informed the ACIG that Registry will schedule larger modules towards the start of the examination period and the additional days will only be used where necessary. It was noted that the shift by some disciplines away from terminal exams may impact the number of examination days required in future years.

It was noted that the reduced exam marking period will have implications for IOE programmes in particular, which are already scheduled in the second week of the exam period. It was agreed that Registry will look at scheduling larger IOE modules as late as possible in the PAB period. It was noted, however, that there are other requests for the last PAB date from programmes with Semester 2 teaching placements.

It was agreed that the amendment to the outline calendar will be brought to Academic Council for consideration.

6. Project Implementation Plan

6.1 Status updates

6.1.1 It was noted that the Chair has convened a working group, to consider the registration and timetabling issue for Semester 1, 2022. An initial meeting has taken place in recent days and a second meeting has been scheduled for 2 June.

6.1.2 It was noted that work relating to commercial and financial planning for 2021-22 continues to be actively managed through Finance. The revised calendar dates have been communicated to relevant stakeholders most recently on 30 April 2021.

It was noted that the early arrival of international students in 2022 should be discussed with Campus Residences. It was agreed that P. Smyth will contact Campus Residences directly to discuss this matter.

It was noted that the earlier Semester 1 start will create a misalignment between scholarship start dates and the start of the financial year. It was agreed that this will be added to the project plan. It was agreed that this matter will be considered by the Graduate Studies Office in the first instance.

6.1.3 It was noted that external examiners should be alerted to the change in the academic calendar. It was agreed that this will be added to the project plan.

6.1.4 R. Keegan briefed the ACIG on recent meetings with units and work areas not typically associated with the academic calendar. Two meetings have taken place since the last meeting of the ACIG:

Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU): No major issues have been identified by the TEU. It was confirmed that the planned Loop rollover dates for 2021-22 will be 29 and 30 June, directly after PABs. The interdependency between Loop and Coursebuilder was noted. It is expected that the earlier rollover of Loop will result in more manual interventions being required once teaching allocations are complete and new contracts have been issued by HR.

Research Support (RIS): While no major issues were identified, it was noted that much of the activity of RIS is dictated by external factors. In recent years, call dates have been largely unpredictable. Where possible, RIS will take the academic calendar into consideration when scheduling reporting deadlines. It was noted that the SIF January reporting period will overlap with the exam making and processing period. RIS will endeavour to communicate reporting requirements to relevant colleagues well in advance of this period.

- 6.1.5 R. Keegan flagged to members the need for Faculties to consider any possible implications of the revised calendar on arrangements with partners. It was noted that a formal letter would be issued shortly to those partners where a report on such arrangements is required for reports to Academic Council.

7. Any other business

The schedule of meetings will be circulated at the next meeting of the ACIG. It was agreed that the planned meeting in August will be moved to early September.

R. Keegan reminded colleagues that a number of status reports are expected at the next meeting of the ACIG. Follow up emails will be sent out in the coming days.

Action No.	Agreed Actions	Responsible	Deadline
1	Work on the format and look of the detailed calendar to be progressed	R. Keegan, G. Barry	October 2021
2	FAQs to be developed	R. Keegan	End June 2021
3	Formalised approach for students returning from abroad with late results to be explored.	B. Kelly, R. Keegan, P. Mooney	End September 2021
4	Amendment to 2021-22 academic calendar to be brought to AC for consideration	R. Keegan, B. Kelly	14 June 2021
5	Discussion to take place with Campus Residences concerning earlier arrival of international students	P. Smyth	End July 2021
6	Misalignment between scholarship start dates and financial year to be considered.	J. Stokes/ GSO/Finance	End July 2021
7	Faculties to consider the implication of the calendar on existing partnerships and to communicate changes to them.	ADTLs	End July 2021