

## Academic Calendar Implementation Group

### MINUTES AND ACTIONS

5 March 2021

**Present:** Gillian Barry, 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, Niamh O'Sullivan, Paul Smith and Joseph Stokes.

**Apologies:** Claire Bohan and Lucien Waugh-Daly.

**In attendance:** Valerie Cooke

#### 1. Confirmation of the Agenda

The agenda was agreed, as circulated.

#### 2. Minutes and Actions of the Meeting of 22 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

#### 3. Matters arising

- 3.1** B. Kelly informed the ACIG that he has met with the Teaching Enhancement Unit to consider an approach to assessment for Semester 1 of 2021-22.

The planned meeting with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and L. Waugh-Daly will be arranged shortly. It was noted that guidance on the volume as well as the timing of assessment would be useful.

- 3.2** It was noted that engagements with units and work areas not typically associated with the academic calendar are ongoing.

- 3.3** It was noted that work concerning the week numbering system for 2021-22 is ongoing and would be considered by the Timetabling Group. It was noted that week numbers are not included on the published outline calendars.

#### 4. Subgroup updates

##### 4.1 Academic-Related Operations Subgroup

G. Barry updated the ACIG on recent progress made by the Academic-Related Operations Subgroup (AROS). The AROS has completed their work on the Autumn dates for 2020-21, the November 2021 PAB date and academic structure dates for 2021-22 and 2022-23. The

AROS has also agreed on a project plan which has been fed into the overall ACIG Project Implementation Plan.

G. Barry informed the ACIG that the AROS is currently considering onboarding and registration dates for 2021-22 and 2022-23. The onboarding process is currently being considered as a separate project, led by Registry. This work involves a review of the undergraduate onboarding pilot in 2020-21 and consideration of the feasibility of including postgraduate students in the onboarding process for 2021-22. It was noted that there are technical issues relating to duplicate ID numbers that must be resolved before postgraduate students can be included.

G. Barry briefed the ACIG on the draft registration dates currently under consideration. She informed the ACIG that she has consulted with C. Bohan as proposed dates will see orientation and registration running in the same week in 2022.

G. Barry briefed the ACIG on a key issue relating to the interdependency between registration, timetabling and the start of Semester 1 in 2022. The approved Semester 1 start date will significantly impact the timetabling activities for programmes, in particular, the BEd, PMEP, BECE and BAJH. Timetabling can only be completed after registration is finished. The 2022-23 dates will see registration closing on Friday, 3 September and Semester 1 commencing on Monday, 5 September. It was noted that this issue will also impact on timetabling in subsequent academic years.

It was agreed that these issues require further exploration. It was noted that 2022-23 presents a particular challenge given the limited timeframe in which any substantive changes might be achieved. It was agreed that a group be convened to explore the issues and to consider possible solutions.

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

There was no update as C. Bohan was unable to attend the meeting.

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

#### **5.1 Placements**

R. Keegan presented to the ACIG on recent engagements with various placement stakeholders. These initial scoping meetings involved an exploration of the impact of the revised calendar on the various placement types.

##### Education Placements

It was noted that expected significant challenges relating to education placements have been largely addressed through the restructuring of the academic structures. No other significant issues are anticipated. It was agreed that a status report from all relevant Faculties should be provided to the ACIG in May.

##### INTRA Placements

It was noted that no major issues have been identified for INTRA placements. It was noted that the INTRA Office will continue to work with the relevant schools and programme

coordinators in preparation for 2021-22. It was agreed that a status report from all relevant Faculties should be provided to the ACIG in May.

#### Nursing Placements

It was noted that Nursing placements have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. While issues are largely outside of the remit of the ACIG, it was noted that the revised calendar and associated activities will need to provide flexibility to ensure students are meeting the requirements of their programmes.

#### Exchange/Study Abroad/Occasional Placements

It was noted that the revised calendar will cause greater misalignment with specific regions, in particular Germany and Japan. It was noted that students returning from Spain and France may also be impacted by the earlier Semester 1 start date. It was agreed that the progression of returning students requires further exploration.

A number of other issues relating to mobilities were noted including:

- Delays due to transcripts being posted in hardcopy to the US and Canada.
- Small numbers of students going to Austria in Semester 1, who may not have their examinations until late January.
- The ALTS programme where students will now go abroad in year 4 and who may not have their returning transcripts in time for the PABs.

It was noted that student learning agreements will be online from 2021-22 and these may be used to encourage students to maintain contact while they are abroad.

It was agreed that year abroad/exchange issues, as they relate to the technical aspects of progression, will be considered by the AROS in the first instance.

It was agreed that there should be a consistent university-wide approach to dealing with failed year abroad/semester abroad elements.

It was agreed that more statistics would be useful to determine how many students return with missing or failed elements. P. Smyth confirmed that the International Office should be able to produce some further statistics for the ACIG.

## **5.2 Communications**

R. Keegan presented a proposed communications approach to the ACIG. The multi-layered and embedded approach will see the use of centralised and local communications, the targeting of specific cohorts who may require more tailored communications and the use of formal and informal communication channels.

The importance of the ACIG members as the key conduits between the ACIG and their respective work areas was noted. It was agreed that the revised calendar should remain as a regular item at T&L Committees, Programme Boards, Faculty Management Boards and staff-student liaison meetings.

It was noted that the Office of Student Life has been consulted on how the ACIG might best engage with students on the revised calendar.

The importance of identifying cohorts who may be hard to reach and who may need tailored communication was noted.

### 5.3 Other updates

B. Kelly informed the ACIG of feedback received from Student Support and Development concerning the timelines for completing needs assessments before the Semester 1 examinations. G. Barry confirmed that Registry will engage with SS&D on these dates.

B. Kelly informed the ACIG of feedback received from the Disability Office concerning the hiring of PAs in advance of Semester 1. The timeline for this activity is significantly reduced in 2022. The Disability Office will look at how this is managed in other institutions.

### 6. Any other business

There was no other business.

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	A group to be convened to consider the interdependency between registration, timetabling and start of Semester 1 in 2022.	B. Kelly, P. Mooney	ASAP
3	Further statistics on returning students with failed or missing elements to be obtained for the ACIG	P. Smyth	Next meeting