

SEN15D009

Title: *Semester dates and the shape of the academic year*
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Issue

To determine the shape of the academic year with the New Academic Model.

Recommendations

Recipients are invited to consider the following recommendations from the Learning and Teaching Committee:

- 1) That the Autumn semester be of 12 weeks duration, including induction activities.
- 2) That the Spring semester be of 14 weeks duration immediately followed by the 4 week assessment period
- 3) That Congregation be scheduled for the third week in July.
- 4) For 2015/16 – introduce a Week 13 immediately prior to the interim 5 week assessment period which can be used for a range of activities, for example: transition, employability, course and module consolidation, revision and examination preparation activities.
- 5) For 2016/17 - introduce the pattern 12 - 14 - 4 and in order to create a useable teaching period after the Easter break in 2017 move this break from the previously agreed four weeks commencing 10th April to the four weeks commencing 27th March in order to give 10 weeks before and 4 weeks after the Easter break.
- 6) For 2017/18 – introduce the 12-14- 4 pattern leaving the Easter break as previously approved so giving 9 weeks before and 5 weeks after the Easter break.
- 7) For 2018/19 through to 2021/22, dates which have not been previously considered, to be as set out in Table 1 below.
- 8) That further consideration be given on the use of the two additional weeks in the Spring semester noting that the original proposal had been as follows:
 - a) Spring Week 7 being used for transition, employability and course and module consolidation activities with Advisees having meetings with their Advisers to review progress.
 - b) Spring Week 14 being used for a similar set of activities plus revision and examination preparation activities.
- 9) That further consideration be given to the use of the four week assessment period on courses which have no examinations in any given year of study.

Table 1 - UEA Semester Dates 2015-16 – 2021/22							
Academic year	Semester 1		Semester 2			Assessment period	
	Dates	Duration (weeks)	Dates	Duration (weeks, with split around Easter)	Easter	Dates	Duration (weeks)
2015/16	21 Sep - 11 Dec	12	11 Jan – 6 May	13 (9-4)	14 Mar – 8 Apr	9 May – 10 Jun	5
2016/17	26 Sep – 16 Dec	12	16 Jan – 19 May	14 (10-4)	27 Mar – 21 April	22 May – 16 Jun	4
2017/18	25 Sep – 15 Dec	12	15 Jan – 18 May	14 (9 -5)	19 Mar – 13 Apr	21 May – 15 Jun	4
2018/19	24 Sep – 14 Dec	12	14 Jan – 17 May	14 (11 – 3)	1 Apr – 26 Apr	20 May – 14 Jun	4
2019/20	23 Sep – 13 Dec	12	13 Jan – 15 May	14 (10 – 4)	23 Mar – 17 Apr	18 May – 12 Jun	4
2020/21	28 Sep – 18 Dec	12	18 Jan – 21 May	14 (10 -4)	29 Mar – 23 Apr	24 May – 18 Jun	4
2021/22	27 Sep – 17 Dec	12	17 Jan – 20 May	14 (10 – 4)	28 Mar – 22 Apr	23 May – 17 Jun	4

Resource Implications

There are no major resource implications as the academic year conforms to a 30 week period which has been the case at UEA for over the last 10 years and the recommendations concern how the 30 weeks are used. The debate initiated by the consultation exercise highlighted resource allocation issues in relation to the balance of activities undertaken by academic staff and in particular the balance between research and teaching.

Risk Implications

The risks of change have been mitigated by a wide consultation exercise which has already highlighted the risks of moving to a 13 week Autumn semester and consequently have contributed to the current proposals. TPPG, Faculty LTQCs and the Employability Executive contributed to the discussion at LTC on 24th June at which these recommendations were developed.

The risks of not setting the University's standard semester dates in a timely manner would have consequences if our partner colleges set their dates such that pathway course dates did not dovetail with our own start dates.

Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity issues in setting the dates as the basic pattern of the academic year is familiar with all staff and students. The determination of the semester dates will enable all staff and students and applicants to have good notice of the academic year and be able to plan accordingly.

Timing of Decisions

The semester dates need to be confirmed at this meeting of Senate in order that they can be disseminated to staff, students and partner colleges. The Learning and Teaching Committee will be undertaking further discussion and considering how to make best use of the two weeks released from the assessment period in 2016/17 and thereafter.

Further Information

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Background

The Learning and Teaching Committee have consulted and discussed semester dates in detail. The detail of the debate can be found in two recent Learning and Teaching Committee papers.

The key paper giving rise to these recommendation was discussed by the Learning and Teaching Committee in June 2015, LTC14 D220 Semester Dates and the Shape of the Academic year.

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/9294209/ltc14d220dividerg.pdf/d1277c0a-c041-4757-af42-6ca46dfc512f>

The June discussion had been were informed by an earlier paper: Semester Dates, LTC14 D189, which had been widely consulted upon. A link to the paper is given below.

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/8985662/ltc14d189dividerf.pdf/fbe8576a-5905-4838-b851-5e971210d276>

It should be noted that the dates for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 had previously been reported to LTC in October 2013, see links below. The current recommendations seek to formalise the incorporation of the two weeks released from the assessment period into Semester 2 to create a 12-14-4 pattern and also to move the Easter break in 2016/17.

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/7728212/ltc13d023.pdf/23f4a2f7-943a-4615-bec2-a636348dea19>

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/7728212/ltc13d023appendix1.pdf/c4d2fdb4-1eb8-4b58-a18b-b0349c9703a0>