



UCD Registry
Clárann UCD

UCD Registration 2021/22

Review Report



RIOG December 2021



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Review of Registration is an annual process in which groups from around the University carry out a self-analysis process under the auspices of the Registration Implementation Oversight Group (RIOG). This group has been in place since the preparations for the 2007 start of year registration season, operating under the sponsorship of the Registrar.

Feedback from the student start of term surveys is also incorporated.

This document brings together the successes, challenges and recommendations identified in the individual strands of the Review of Registration 2021. The specific areas covered by the review are:

- **Curriculum Management**
- **Timetabling**
- **Module Capacity Planning and Management**
- **IT Related Systems and Developments**
- **Registration (online, manual, central)**
- **Supports for Staff/Faculty**
- **Supports for Students**

Section 2 of this document gives a summary of Registration 2021/22 while section 3 provides a more specific commentary on each area.

Section 4 contains a summary of the main recommendations/suggestions that arose from the feedback provided.

Section 5 lists the membership of RIOG.

Section 6 shows infographics of the key findings from the student start of term surveys.

Section 7 gives an overview of key student supports provided by the UCD Student Desk while section 8 gives an overview of UniShare tasks logged by the UCD College Offices.

Section 9 shares some statistics from the weekly Unified Support Model (USM) Service Delivery Continuity Updates.



2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall, Registration 2021 went well despite the continued challenges posed by Covid-19. There was more certainty around decision making this year which allowed for more definite planning. The solutions devised, and lessons learned, during the 2020/21 registration season also aided preparations for different scenarios.

Staff/faculty feedback indicates that collaboration and communication within and between areas remained high even with the move towards hybrid working.

Student feedback, through the Undergraduate Start of Term Survey and the Graduate Taught/Graduate Research Start of Term Survey, indicates an overall satisfaction with the start of term/registration experience (average of 91%). The experience of being on campus was a highlight for many, especially the Stage 2 students who had completed their first year remotely. Responses indicate that more help navigating individual buildings and the campus in general would be beneficial. Section 6 gives an overview of the results and further information is available on the [UCD Start of Term Survey¹](#) web page.

The following sub sections provide a brief commentary on what worked well for 2021/22 and what needs improvement for 2022/23. Sections 3 and 4 provide more information on specific areas.

While not all the feedback received is mentioned in this document, it is being reviewed by the relevant support areas and will be acted on accordingly.

¹ www.ucd.ie/students/services/startoftersurvey/



2.1 WHAT WORKED WELL

Collaboration/Support

- Peer Mentors provided valuable support to students helping them to find their way around campus and meet other students
- The high level of collaboration among and between UCD Registry, Room Allocations and Colleges/Schools allowed for the timetable to be delivered despite continuing challenges
- Schools found that they had fewer queries from students which was attributed to the students being able to find support information easier

Technology and Systems

- The new UCD phone system's softphone application can be downloaded to a laptop or PC allowing office phones to be used while working remotely
- IT Systems remained predominantly stable during the period with any outages resolved swiftly

Communications/Knowledge Sharing

- In-person tours allowed students to get a feel for the campus
- Programme Orientation events were well received by students
- Staff found the information and training provided by UCD Registry valuable
- Unified Support Model (USM) – useful information provided to staff via Remote Working Group and Google Currents

2.2 WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED UPON

Timelines and Decision Making

- Staff have a short amount of time available to complete timetable submission and programme verification before the registration period begins
- Module Coordinators and staff supporting the timetable process find that timetabling submission deadlines clash with other commitments such as grading/grade approval process
- The timing of later round CAO offers means that those students miss out on the main orientation events

Communication/Knowledge Sharing

- The large volume of emails received by students can cause crucial messages to get lost/overlooked in their inboxes
- Clearer fee payment information would be appreciated by students
- More in-person, on campus events would be beneficial, especially for Graduate students



Technology and Systems

- The InfoHub/SISWeb outages during peak times caused issues for staff and students
- Some online orientation events were cancelled due to technical difficulties which meant that students missed out on start of term information
- Students would like more support and guidance around using IT Systems, especially Brightspace and SISWeb. Staff would also like easier access to Brightspace support

2.3 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER ACTIONS

The key issues and recommendations identified in this report, detailed in the sections below, can be addressed at a local level by the relevant support areas and the appropriate action decided by the area(s) responsible. All actions arising will be included in the planning for registration 2022/23.



3 SUMMARY BY AREA

3.1 CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

Curriculum management timelines generally worked well, and it was felt that there was greater certainty around the approach being used this year.

The Curriculum Management System (CMS) performed well but allowing users to reorder rules on screen would reduce the level of manual intervention required by Curriculum Team and allow more flexibility for College/School users. Changes to address this are currently under discussion.

The flexibility to amend content during the Summer allowed Module Coordinators a chance to refine details closer to the start of term.

Staff identified the need for a report which highlighted module dependencies that could be reviewed by the College Office so that potential issues could be identified ahead of registration. Planned reporting enhancements in InfoHub will address this request.

The use of Wufoo Forms allowed staff to easily request late structure changes and the Curriculum Team could act on them promptly. A suggestion to add further links and information to the form is under review.

Staff felt that the communication channels used by the Curriculum Team were effective and consistent. Regular information was provided via emails, Google Currents, and updates to the Remote Working Group. The guides and checklists provided were also useful.

3.2 TIMETABLING

Overall, timetabling went well due to the clear and timely guidance provided and staff feedback highlighted the support provided by Room Allocations and UCD Registry.

The collaboration between UCD Registry (Systems & Data Services and Curriculum Team), Room Allocations and Colleges/Schools saw the timetable delivered in continued challenging circumstances. The ability to account for different scenarios, such as social distancing versus full capacity in teaching spaces, meant that staff could plan for potential changes.



A redesign of the Excel spreadsheet used for timetabling submissions is suggested to make it easier to use. Alternatively, being able to submit information directly into a shared system with Room Allocations would be beneficial.

The timeline for the timetabling extract submission tends to coincide with other commitments for Module Coordinators, and staff supporting the timetabling process, such as grade entry and the Grade Approvals Process. This causes issues for them in meeting timetabling deadlines.

Programme Verification is considered a vital step although late finalisation of local timetabling had an impact on the timing of it in some Schools. Room Allocations acted quickly on required timetabling changes identified during Programme Verification or Registration.

3.3 MODULE CAPACITY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Capacity Management requests submitted to the Systems and Data Services team were quickly responded to and implemented. Clear guidance was provided in relation to social distancing requirements.

Staff flagged that it is crucial that Schools/Module Coordinators consistently review module capacities from year-to-year to ensure that Core/Option places can accommodate the expected intake for a given academic year.

3.4 IT RELATED SYSTEMS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Staff feedback indicates that, from an end-user perspective, IT systems and services have greatly improved. In particular, recent improvements to UniShare and other InfoHub reports are very welcome and enable greater levels of efficiency.

There were some unscheduled systems outages that caused disruption for staff and students. These were identified and resolved promptly but staff would appreciate more real-time updates when these outages happen.

The introduction of the new soft phones system is beneficial for hybrid working although not everyone is using it. There are some sound quality issues that are being addressed.



Staff valued the opportunity to raise IT issues with the Communications Officer from IT Services – EAG at the Remote Working Group meetings. They also found the information provided on the IT Support Hub useful but would appreciate more access to direct phone support especially during peak times.

A number of Colleges and Schools were unable to email students via Targeted Communications using Programme codes which impacted on their ability to communicate with their students at the start of term. A resolution has been put in place to prevent a reoccurrence.

Staff experienced issues with Banner timing out during use which caused delays during the busy registration period. This issue has been noted and is being investigated. There were also occurrences of the Virtual Private Network (VPN) closing after a relatively short time. Staff also found that the VPN slowed down internet connection and interfered with Zoom calls. Advice on how to mitigate this would be appreciated.

Access to certain InfoHub services expired without warning for some staff and it was unclear to them how to get it restored. UCD Registry are looking at the InfoHub services devolved to them to see how to streamline the access management and support process.

3.5 REGISTRATION

Overall, the registration system worked well this year for all cohorts.

There were some issues with Graduate Taught student records being set up for 2021/22. A data quality role currently in development in the Student Records Team (Registry) will identify and proactively address concerns around this process.

Feedback indicated that some students felt disadvantaged by the registration start time they received. The allocation of start times is done with fairness in mind and the interlinked nature of programmes means that the current groupings are needed. Any refinement to split out a cohort would disadvantage other cohorts.



Staff noted that the window for registering to Repeat/Resit/Withdrawn modules was later than the rest of online module registration which impacted some students. The window is determined by the timing of the release of Summer resit results.

The centralised Lab/Tutorial fitting process is run well and allows Colleges/Schools to manage registration. However, despite targeted communications, some students were confused by the fact that they could not choose or amend certain modules during this period. UCD Registry will look at how to amplify the key messages around this process.

3.6 SUPPORT FOR STAFF/FACULTY

The support received from all teams in UCD Registry is greatly appreciated by staff in Colleges and Schools. Queries are dealt with promptly and solutions provided.

Staff highlighted the training guides, drop-in Zoom clinics, workshops and information sessions provided by UCD Registry as effective sources of information and support. These have been delivered online due to current circumstances and staff have responded well to that format. Feedback suggests that some element of online activity should be retained even when there is a greater return to the office.

The weekly USM Remote Working Group (RWG) meetings are a useful informal method for sharing information and tips to members although it is understood that email remains the formal University communication channel to Colleges and Schools. UCD Registry provides regular, key updates via RWG and the associated Google Currents channel as well as email.

3.7 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

There was a large, collective effort by support areas across the University to make new and returning students feel welcome.

Orientation was largely a success with 91% of Stage 1 Undergraduate survey respondents attending one or more event. Popular activities included campus tours, Programme Orientation events and free pizza. The efforts of the Peer Mentors to facilitate in-person activities was appreciated although students would like more social events organised, especially during Freshers' Week.



Many Programmes also ran events for Stage 2 Undergraduates. This provided them with a chance to engage with campus-based activities and meet other students having missed out on that experience in 2020/21.

While Undergraduate students welcomed the chance to get to know the Belfield campus, feedback shows that they would like further assistance with finding their way around both the grounds and the main buildings. Graduate Taught and Graduate Research students felt that they would benefit from a more campus-based (Belfield or Blackrock) orientation experience, especially those who have not attended UCD before.

Some students had issues accessing the orientation timetables or were unaware of their existence. This caused students to miss orientation events. Some social events were advertised elsewhere such as Instagram which also caused confusion.

Students who accepted CAO offers in later rounds missed out on many of the orientation events. A clear process is required between Admissions/Student Records and Colleges/Schools to ensure that the details of later round offer students are shared as soon as possible. This is vital to ensure that these students can be offered the additional supports which are essential for them to successfully join their programmes and integrate into their class groups.

Student feedback indicates that they receive a large volume of emails from different areas, especially at the start of term, which causes them to miss crucial information around registration and classes. For some students the amount of information presented, through various channels, can be overwhelming and they find it difficult to find what is most relevant. Students suggest an increased use of checklists and videos to help make the information easier to process.

Students also used the UCD Mobile App to access information and 228,000 screen views were made of its New Student section which is up from 86,000 in 2020.

The Student Desk worked remotely for the first half of 2021 and returned to the office to prepare for the Autumn Trimester and to reopen the phone lines as well as the desk for in-person visits. Between 23 August and 08 October 2021, the Student Desk dealt with 9,815 email queries, 4,197 phone calls and 1,491 visits (see section 7 for more statistics). A chatbot was piloted and will be live in time for the start of the Spring Trimester (January 2022).



4 OVERVIEW OF IDEAS/RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED

This section contains a summary of the key recommendations made by the various individual strand reviews as well as any relevant actions arising.

Area	Action by	Recommendation/Suggestion
Curriculum	Curriculum Team (Registry)/IT Services-EAG	Improve edits to option rules on CMS. Allowing users to reorder rules on screen would reduce the level of manual intervention required by Curriculum Team and allow more flexibility for School/College users. Action: Changes to option rule edits on CMS currently under discussion/in development.
	Curriculum Team (Registry)	Make further changes to Wufoo forms to include useful links, review of field sizes etc. Action: Changes planned for Summer 2022
	Curriculum Team (Registry)/ IT Services-EAG	It would be useful if there was a report which highlighted module dependencies which could be reviewed by the College Office so that potential issues could be identified ahead of registration. Action: Report in development
Supports for Staff	Administrative Services (Registry)	Review management of access to the InfoHub roles/services that are devolved to Registry. Action: In progress
Supports for Students	Administrative Services/ Communications Officer (Registry)/ Orientation Advisory Group	Produce more checklists and videos to help with registration and start of term. Action: To be reviewed as part of the communications plans for Orientation and Registration 2022.



5 REGISTRATION IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT GROUP MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021/22

Kevin Griffin, Director of UCD Registry (Chair)

Jeremy Britton, Interim Director: Administrative Services, UCD Registry

Ruth Harrison, Deputy Director: Administrative Services, UCD Registry

Kate Griffin, Deputy Director: Administrative Services, UCD Registry

Caroline Barrett, Systems and Data Services: Administrative Services, UCD Registry

Lizanne Hutton, Curriculum Team: Administrative Services, UCD Registry

Caroline McTeigue, Support & Training: Administrative Services, UCD Registry

Emma Caron, Communications Officer, UCD Registry

Dr Gillian Pye, Associate Dean (Undergraduate), Arts and Humanities

Annette Forde, Director, College of Science Office

Janet Carton/Emer Cunningham, UCD Graduate Studies

Karen Jackman/Stacy Grouden, UCD School of English, Drama and Film

Helen McCarthy, UCD School of Biology & Environmental Science

Bronwyn O'Callaghan, Business Systems Project Manager, UCD IT Services

Eoin Hanratty, Head of IT Customer Services

Daniel Earls, UCD Commercial, Residential, and Hospitality Services

Aoife Bracken, Education Officer 2021/22, Students' Union

Carla Gummerson, Graduate Officer 2021/22, Students' Union



6 START OF TERM 2021 SURVEYS - KEY RESULTS

www.ucd.ie/students/services/startoftermsurvey/

UNDERGRADUATE START OF TERM SURVEY 2021/2022

RESPONDENTS: 1664

STAGE 1 INCOMING: 942

RETURNING STUDENTS: 722

91%

OF STAGE 1
RESPONDENTS
TOOK PART IN
ORIENTATION

BEST PARTS

GETTING TO KNOW THE CAMPUS
MEETING NEW PEOPLE
PROGRAMME ORIENTATION
SPORTS EXPO

SUGGESTIONS

MORE SOCIAL EVENTS
EXPLAIN THE IT SYSTEMS BETTER
INCREASE SIGNAGE ON CAMPUS
WIDER ADVERTISING OF EVENTS

ONLINE REGISTRATION

WHAT WENT WELL

ACCESSING ONLINE REGISTRATION
CONFIRMING REGISTRATION
NAVIGATING ONLINE REGISTRATION
COMPLETING PERSONAL INFORMATION

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

NUMBER OF MODULE PLACES
REGISTRATION START TIMES
FEE PAYMENT INFORMATION
REGISTRATION COMPLETE MESSAGES

WHAT WENT WELL

ACCESSING ONLINE REGISTRATION
CONFIRMING REGISTRATION
NAVIGATING ONLINE REGISTRATION
COMPLETING PERSONAL INFORMATION

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

NUMBER OF MODULE PLACES
FEE PAYMENT INFORMATION

GETTING INFORMATION

EMAILS FROM
UCD
91%

NEW STUDENTS
WEBSITE
63%

ONLINE GUIDES/
VIDEOS
61%

% of respondents who rated the methods excellent or good

OVERALL SATISFACTION

92%

OF RESPONDENTS RATED
START OF TERM EXPERIENCE
AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD

GRADUATE START OF TERM SURVEY 2021/2022

RESPONDENTS: 779

STAGE 1 INCOMING: 442

RETURNING STUDENTS: 337

43%

OF INCOMING
RESPONDENTS
WERE AWARE OF
GRADSCONNECT

BEST PARTS

MEDIUM (YOUTUBE LIVE)
CONTENT MATERIAL & RELEVANCE
TIME OF EVENT
DURATION OF EVENT

SUGGESTIONS

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
THE IT SYSTEMS
TOUR OF CAMPUSES

ONLINE REGISTRATION

WHAT WENT WELL

ACCESSING ONLINE REGISTRATION
CONFIRMING REGISTRATION
NAVIGATING ONLINE REGISTRATION
COMPLETING PERSONAL INFORMATION

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

NUMBER OF MODULE PLACES
FEE PAYMENT INFORMATION

WHAT WENT WELL

ACCESSING ONLINE REGISTRATION
CONFIRMING REGISTRATION
NAVIGATING ONLINE REGISTRATION
COMPLETING PERSONAL INFORMATION

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

NUMBER OF MODULE PLACES
FEE PAYMENT INFORMATION

GETTING INFORMATION

EMAILS FROM
UCD
91%

ONLINE GUIDES/
VIDEOS
72%

GRADUATE STUDIES
WEBSITE
66%

% of respondents who rated the methods excellent or good

OVERALL SATISFACTION

91%

OF RESPONDENTS RATED
START OF TERM EXPERIENCE
AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD



7 UCD STUDENT DESK - START OF TRIMESTER 21/22 UNISHARE STATISTICS



STUDENT DESK START OF TRIMESTER 2021/22

Below is the number of UniShare tasks logged and Official Documents processed by the Student Desk team during the period 23 August 2021 to 08 October 2020.



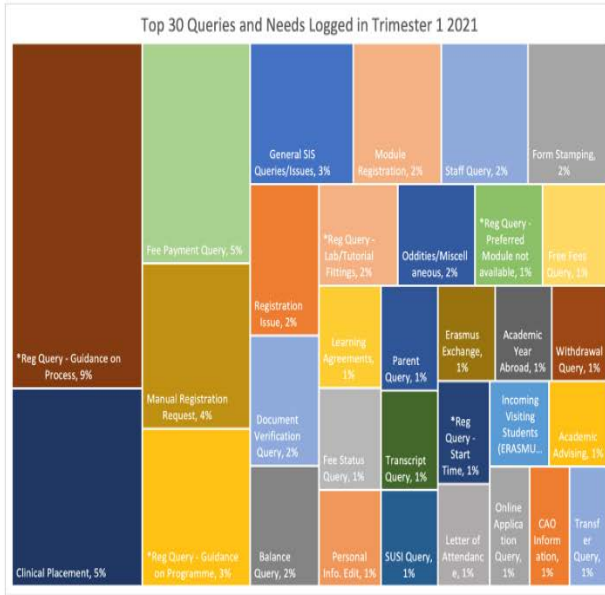


8 UCD COLLEGE OFFICES – START OF TRIMESTER 21/22 UNISHARE STATISTICS

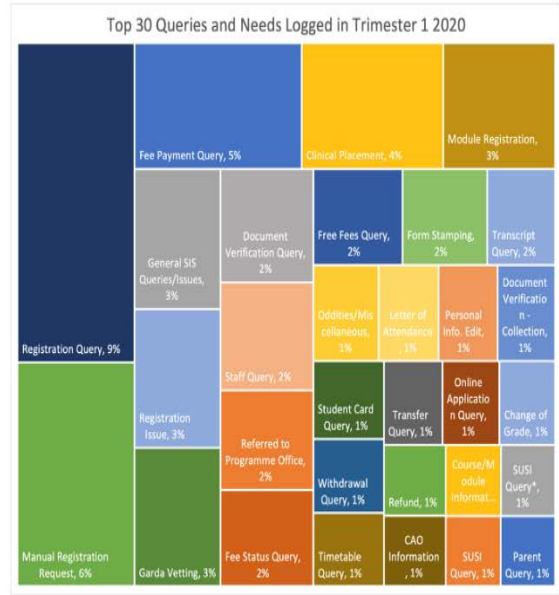


9 USM SERVICE DELIVERY CONTINUITY UPDATES STATISTICS

2021 Date range = 18 August to 8 October
2020 Date range = 27 August to 9 October



Total interactions logged: 36,825



Total interactions logged: 30,744

