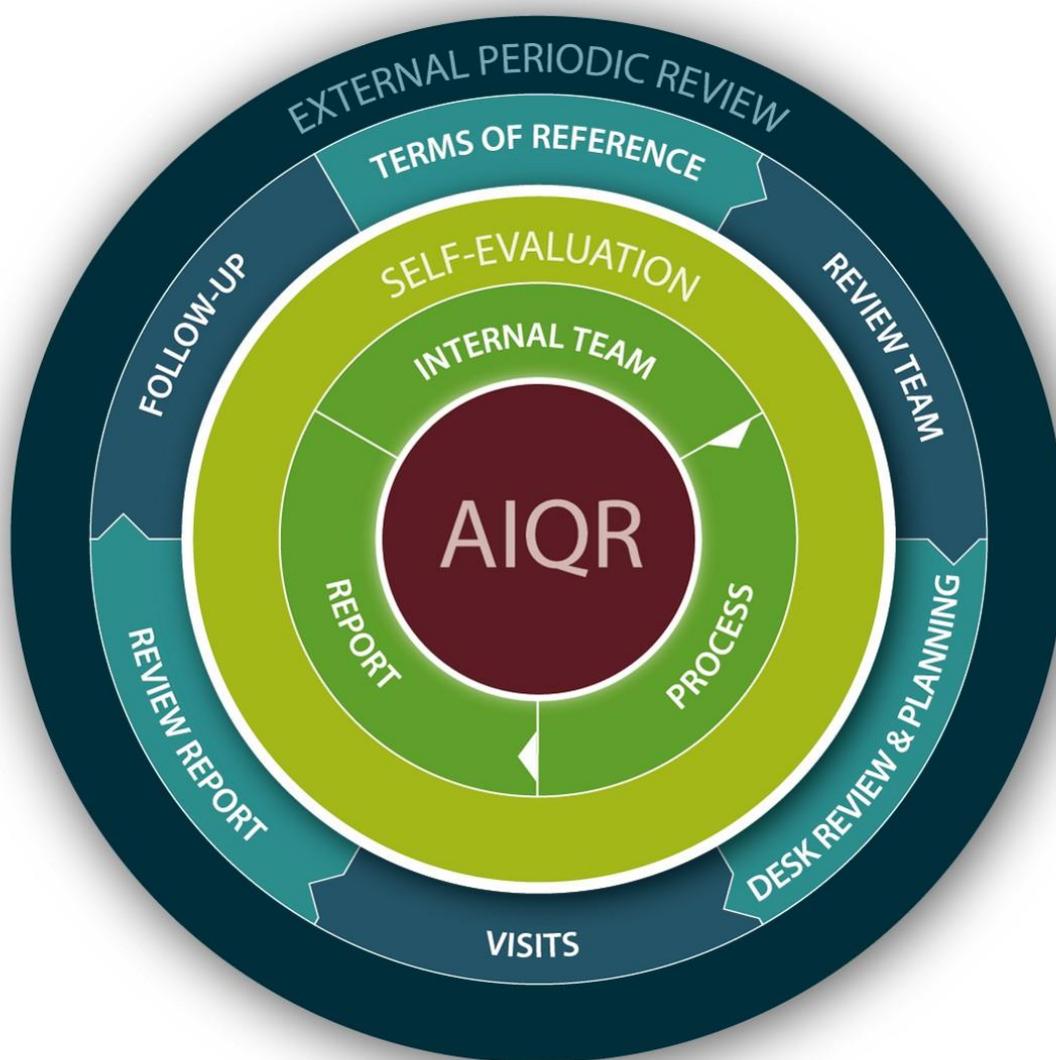


Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016



The Cyclical Review Process

AIQR - PART 1

Please enter a brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

RCSI aims to develop and maintain an all-pervasive culture of quality in which responsibility for the quality of the student experience, and for continuous quality enhancement, is shared by all staff. We are committed to ensuring that we deliver a quality educational experience to our students and, as one of Ireland's leaders in the area of transnational education provision, to ensuring that students based on our overseas campuses receive a learning experience which is equivalent to that of students based in Ireland.

RCSI is committed to robust, transparent processes and procedures for ongoing quality assurance and quality enhancement of academic programmes, Schools and Support Units both in Ireland and overseas.

The RCSI quality policy supports, informs and responds to the College's institutional strategy, identifying as core values of RCSI the quality of the student experience, continuous quality enhancement in all of our activities and the quality of our contribution to our stakeholders and to the communities in which we work across the world.

The RCSI Quality Policy document can be found here:

http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20121112120348_QEO_01102012_DTC_Quality_Polic.pdf

Please enter a brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora.

The RCSI Quality Committee (QC) reports both to the Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB) and the Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB), the governing authorities for the degree-awarding and professional training/licensing activities of RCSI respectively. Minutes of QC meetings, together with associated documents, are submitted to MHSB & SPFB for review and discussion; also, the Director of Quality Enhancement presents to both Boards regularly. The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) acts as the 'executive arm' of the QC and reports to the Chief Executive Officer and to the QC. The QC has one standing sub-committee, the Institutional Review Working Group (IRWG), the work of which is coordinated and supported by the QEO. The QEO plays a similar role in relation to one of the sub-committees of Academic Council, namely the Evaluation Working Group (EWG), which is responsible for the design and implementation of evaluation surveys and for the analysis and dissemination of feedback results within and across RCSI campuses.

[RCSI internal governance structure relevant to quality](#)

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Design and Approval?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval

All matters related to programme design & approval lie within the remit of the RCSI Awards & Qualifications Committee (AQC) which reports to the Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB; the governing body for all degree-awarding activities of RCSI). The Terms of Reference for the A & QC can be found here:

http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20170213025324_AQC-ToR-Membership-January-201.pdf

The AQC has developed and implemented a set of policies, guidelines and document templates for the establishment of new programmes leading to educational awards, including establishment of the business case and the detailed presentation of the programme for academic evaluation. The relevant documents can be accessed here:

http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20170213025532_Business-Case-Form-V1.2_update.pdf

http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20170213025626_Academic-Proposal-Form-V1.2_up.pdf

Following internal review by the AQC, an application goes forward to the Medicine & Health Sciences Board. Once approved by MHSB, the programme is subject to external review by two external reviewers, one nominated by RCSI and one by the National University of Ireland (NUI). Following final modifications made to the programme proposal based upon the reviewers' comments, the proposal goes forward to the NUI Senate for final approval.

[N.B. Schedule 3 (9) of the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012 introduced Section 47A to the Universities Act 1997 which provides that the degrees & qualifications of RCSI shall be degrees & qualifications of the NUI where they are approved by the NUI and while RCSI remains a recognised college of the NUI. Accordingly degrees of RCSI are awards of the NUI, with the sole exception of the degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) *honoris causa* which is awarded once annually and is solely and exclusively a degree of RCSI. In consequence, the procedure for programme design and approval meets the requirements of both RCSI & NUI.]

The Awards & Qualifications Committee also administers a rolling schedule of Programmatic Reviews within RCSI; the Programmatic Review Guidelines are available here:

http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20170213025441_progreviewguidelines-v2_appro.pdf

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Delivery and Assessment?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Delivery and Assessment

RCSI does not have a single over-arching policy document on Programme Delivery & Assessment. Rather, each School and/or Faculty has responsibility for producing its own policies & procedures governing these key areas, including curriculum documents (& databases), course handbooks for students, Marks & Standards documents, assessment strategy documents and examination handbooks (for students). These documents are disseminated to students and staff via the Moodle virtual learning environment, but they are not published on the public-facing RCSI web-site.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Research Quality?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality

RCSI has a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures governing research activity and its quality assurance developed by the Office of Research & Innovation (ORI) and the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS). The policies and procedures developed and implemented by the ORI cover all aspects of research practice including research ethics, the acquisition and management of funding, publication policy, bibliometric indices, etc.; these are contained in the 'Researchers' Handbook', a comprehensive document issued to all research personnel. All of these policies are subject to regular review and updating as required. These documents are disseminated to students and staff via the Moodle virtual learning environment, but they are not published on the public-facing RCSI web-site.

The SPGS has developed and implemented a set of complementary policies and procedures dealing with all aspects of higher degrees by research (MSc, MD & PhD). All of these policies are subject to regular review and updating as required. These documents are published on the public-facing RCSI web-site at:

<http://www.rcsi.ie/ResearchPostgraduatePolicies>

RCSI participated in meetings with the Expert Panel on the Quality Assurance of Research Degree Programmes in Irish Higher Education Institutions commissioned by QQI during 2015 and looks forward to further developments arising from the Expert Panel report.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Student Lifecycle?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle

The Undergraduate admissions process and procedures at RCSI are described by three key documents; 1. RCSI Undergraduate Admissions: An overview and policies, 2. RCSI Undergraduate Admissions: Non EU Procedures and 3. RCSI Undergraduate Admissions: EU Procedures.

In terms of the public availability of this information, the 'Study with us' section of the RCSI website (<http://www.rcsi.ie>) contains all the relevant information related to student admission for all programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate). This includes admission criteria and detailed descriptions of the application process for the various student categories (i.e. EU / Non EU, school leaver / mature entry etc.) and the relevant fee schedules (and scholarship / access opportunities). This section of the website also provides access to the policy documents that underpin the various aspects of the admissions process. As well as formal information, the website also provides access to video testimonials from students, staff and alumni, details of 'Open Days' and contact information for additional queries.

Induction takes place on the first day of each new academic year and the formal programme consists of short talks outlining the key facilities and services including Health Services, Library Facilities, Societies & Sports and Student Support & Welfare. Registration is completed in the afternoon and new students are issued with their RCSI student cards, this gives access to the library, gym, computer labs and other areas of the RCSI campus. In addition, laptops, log-in details for RCSI online services, including the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE - better known as Moodle), and RCSI e-mail account details are also distributed.

RCSI has a strict no transfer policy and does not accept transfer requests from students attending other courses, including other RCSI courses.

Progression is determined by 'Marks and Standards' documents which are created and published for each year of each programme. These documents outline the standards and criteria which must be satisfied in order to progress to the next stage of the programme. These are made available to students via the virtual learning environment. There are also policies on the relevant appeals process. Monitoring of progression rates for students in the first year of undergraduate programmes is routinely done by the Admissions Office. Progression rates of other years are monitored informally by Cycle / Programme Committees. Graduation rate for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes is part of a suite of internal metrics that is reported annually.

RCSI has a policy on Recognition of Prior Learning and its applicability to individual programmes and methods of assessment are included in individual course material.

Students' marks and grades are delivered to them directly and on a confidential basis electronically (via Moodle or email) as soon as is practicable following the relevant Examinations Board meeting. At the end of each academic year, students are sent a Transcript of results. These transcripts provide a full breakdown of all major summative and professional examinations taken by that student that year.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching Staff?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching Staff

In the recruitment of staff for roles that include teaching, job descriptions may require qualifications and /or experience in teaching. Such criteria are defined on a case by case basis.

In terms of staff development, RCSI supports staff (in terms of free fees and time-off) to attend the Higher Diploma in Health Professions Education which runs in Dublin separately on the Stephens Green and Beaumont campuses and also in Bahrain. RCSI also has a policy of offering up to 10 subsidised places to staff on a range of other programmes run by the Institute of Leadership and the School of Nursing. Short courses are arranged by the HR Staff Development Manager and publicised via the VLE and email and staff members can undertake their own on-line training via a range of courses via the Lynda.com website which is available to staff. RCSI also has policies on study / exam leave.

In terms of reinforcing teaching quality, the RCSI Policy and Guidelines for Academic Promotion rates applicants on under the category of Education as well as Research and Service. The Education contribution covers all aspects of the candidate's activities relating to teaching, learning and assessment over the previous five year period (or the period since the candidate was last promoted, whichever is the shorter period). Most staff are also involved in the yearly Professional Development Planning (PDP) process through which staff identify their goals for the year. Academic staff must outline their 'Educational' goals separately from their Research and Service goals. These goals are reviewed mid-year and then re-evaluated in conjunction with their line manager at the end of the year

RCSI operates a pilot 'Peer-Observation of Teaching' (POT) programme through which staff can get constructive and informal feedback on their teaching from a selection of their peers. Informally, Staff may receive feedback on their teaching from the student feedback which is collected and reported by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching and Learning?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching and Learning

The primary method of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is via the student feedback surveys run by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO). The RCSI policy is to apply a centralised core and options model of evaluation across all undergraduate courses and campuses. The use of 'core' questions allows the direct comparison of student experiences between instances of the same programme on different sites and between programmes. The use of 'optional' questions allows for the specific / targeted collection of information e.g. the students reaction to a new teaching intervention. The centralised nature of the collection and processing ensures that the data is collected, processed and reported in a consistent way.

The QEO provides feedback reports for each year of each programme twice a year (at the end of each semester) or once a year (at the end of semester 2) determined by whether or not the content is delivered by discrete semesters. Cycle / Programme Directors use this information in conjunction with academic performance data to determine what (if any) changes need to be made for the subsequent year. This information should be communicated back to the students at the start of the next academic year in the form of a Quality Improvement Plan either verbally (during one of the first lectures of the year) or via Moodle. The quantitative responses (i.e. charts only) are made directly available to students via moodle shortly after the data have been processed.

Externally, feedback on student 'Engagement' is collected independently from first and final year undergraduate students via the 'Irish Survey of Student Engagement' ISSE. This nationwide survey aims to measure student engagement in all participating third level institutions and allows individual institutions to benchmark themselves against the rest of the sector. This process is facilitated and reported by the Quality Enhancement Office.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Resources and Support?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Resources and Support

Resources and support for learners can be categorised into three broad areas namely physical resources; academic advisory, career services and pastoral care; student support services.

Physical Resources

RCSI is committed to providing a state of the art educational environment for students and trainees and invests constantly in improving existing facilities and creating new ones. Improvements and developments in resources and supports are informed by feedback and deliberations conducted at senior management level, school level and programme level via the relevant governance committees on which students have representation. RCSI routinely collects feedback from students on physical infrastructure and resources such as library and IT facilities through end of semester student evaluations. In addition feedback from staff and specific service users is collected as part of ongoing QA/QI processes. This feedback is utilised by appropriate governance committees to inform decisions on the allocation of resources, taking into consideration the needs of the diverse student population. Schools and service departments are also subject internal quality review, the output of which is a quality improvement plan (QIP) based on recommendations of the review panel informed by the evidence gathered from students, staff and other stakeholders. QIPs are published on the RCSI website. Information pertaining to student resources and associated policies is available to students and staff through several platforms including the RCSI website, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle and representation on all relevant governance committees:

<http://www.rcsi.ie/studentervices>; <http://www.rcsi.ie/study>; <http://www.rcsi.ie/quality>

Academic Advisory, Career Services and Student Welfare

RCSI provides comprehensive advisory and support services for students. The range of supports include (but are not limited to) academic advisory services, student welfare (psychological and psychiatric services), disability and access, English language and communications, career guidance, academic support, Erasmus, clinical electives, student research, mentoring programme, and personal development (through the 'Passport for Success' programme).

Currently, academic advisory support and career guidance is centralised in Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs (SARA) whilst services such as student welfare, English language and communications, academic support and disability and access are dispersed at other locations in the College. Plans are currently underway to co-locate all services in one area creating a central hub that is easily accessible to all students. It is expected that the new centre will be open in September 2016. RCSI continues to invest in qualified administrative support with several new appointments made or planned for the new centre. The process of appointing a student-focused manager and administrator is currently in progress. In addition, the role of the Vice Dean for Student Support and Development will evolve to become an Academic Director of Student Support and Development (0.5 FTE). Again input from students in the planning of services and supports is facilitated through routine end of semester surveys, service user surveys and representation on governance committees and working groups (as required).

Student Support Services

Student support services are coordinated through the Student Services Office. Here students have access to information and support for the following services:

Accommodation, Financial Assistance, Gym, Immigration and Visa information, Induction & Orientation, Meet & Greet Service, Merchandising, Societies, Sports, Clubs & Teams, Student Awards, Student Events, Student Facilities, Student Life Bursaries.

Comprehensive information and related policies on all supports and services are available to students on Moodle whilst the RCSI website hosts information under the 'Study with Us' pages and 'Student Life' pages. In addition, students are informed of supports and services during their orientation and through ongoing workshops and seminars throughout their studies:

<http://www.rcsi.ie/studentervices>; <http://www.rcsi.ie/study>

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

RCSI operates a number of processes for collecting, analysing and using information about programmes and other activities for quality assurance purposes. Quality Assurance processes are informed by a number of information sources which include: institutional metrics, student population profile, student feedback, student progression rates, HEA returns, alumni career paths and information related to student support.

Institutional Metrics are an important information stream that contributes to quality assurance processes. A set of 61 institutional Key Performance Indicators or Metrics for RCSI was developed in 2013, based largely upon the U-Multirank system. Data that feeds into Institutional Metrics is gathered annually for each academic year by the Quality Enhancement Office in conjunction with the RCSI Head of Institutional Research & Planning. Institutional Metrics cover the following areas: students & staff, student engagement and satisfaction, expenditure on teaching and research, research, regional engagement (e.g. income from regional sources), knowledge transfer, and international focus. A detailed report comparing the Institutional Metrics with the previous academic year is produced in order to track progress and detect changes in the KPIs. The report is presented annually to the Senior Management Team and shared with the key departments within RCSI.

Profile of student population. RCSI routinely collects information about the student population for RCSI-Dublin and the overseas provisions i.e. RCSI-Bahrain, RCSI-Dubai, Penang Medical College, PU-RCSI. Student profile information is collected through Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office.

Student Feedback:

The collection, analysis and dissemination of student feedback in RCSI is managed by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO). All undergraduate students from the School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy and School of Physiotherapy and postgraduate students from the School of Nursing are given an opportunity to give feedback about modules completed in each semester. The data collection tools are based around a 'core & options' model. All surveys contain a series of core items relating to the headings of Modules, Assessments, Skills & Staff. Surveys are developed in collaboration with Cycle Directors and other Faculty staff who have an opportunity to suggest additional survey items if required. The Student Union also has an input in the process.

The QEO conducts an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative feedback with an aim to inform and enhance the delivery of RCSI programmes. Detailed reports that contain both quantitative and qualitative survey responses are circulated to Cycle Directors who can share the findings with other teaching staff. This gives module coordinators and facilitators an opportunity to identify areas for improvement. In order to close the feedback loop quantitative reports (without open ended comments) are made available to students.

Student progression rates:

Student progression rates are an important indicator of academic quality. RCSI puts a priority on the analysis of performance of first year students and therefore collects and analyses student exam performance for Foundation Year and Junior Cycle of the medical programme i.e. the first year exam performance. Data collection and analysis lies within the remit of the RCSI Admissions Office. An analysis is undertaken for the first seating and repeat exam performance. Given that RCSI recruits students from multiple countries and academic backgrounds, it is RCSI's priority to analyse and compare the performance of different student cohort groups by entry exam (A level, IB, IMCP, etc.) and nationality. This information is then used to assess the suitability of minimum academic entry requirements and to inform decisions on student recruitment. Progression reports are also shared with the relevant Cycle Directors to inform decision making.

HEA returns:

Under the current legislation RCSI is required to collect data for the HEA Annual Statistical Return. This processed is managed in RCSI by the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office.

Career paths of graduates:

RCSI do not currently have a formal policy for tracking students' career paths nor does it publishes it on the website. As a not-for-profit organisation RCSI is not required to collect information for the First Destination report. In the absence of this, Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office currently gathers ad-hoc information focusing mostly on Northern American graduates of the School of Medicine and their destinations of employment after graduation (up to two years after graduation).

In addition to that the relationships with RCSI graduates are managed through the RCSI Alumni Office. Career path information gathering is a relatively new process started a year ago. RCSI currently collects information about Alumni's workplace and their speciality. Recently a survey was conducted in order to build a fuller picture of Alumni, data from nearly 1000 Alumni was gathered focusing mostly on their memories of college years. The results of the survey are used to further inform various Alumni Office activities including marketing and fundraising. Apart from career paths information, personal information and contact details are collected to support the ongoing contacts with Alumni.

Learning Resources and student support available:

RCSI's mission is to support students by offering relevant information through the Student Services Office. A wide range of services is offered including accommodation, access & disability, clubs & societies, counselling, health information to name a few.

The services delivered by the unit are guided by policies, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines and formal documentation. These are designed and developed using a combination of information sources and resources including students, staff, other colleges and universities, best practice guidelines, legislative requirements, the college's legal experts and external stakeholders.

RCSI offers a number of learning resources that help deliver their mission, two major ones being the library and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle. RCSI Library services are guided by a number of policies are published on the RCSI website <http://www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp>?

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Self-evaluation and Monitoring?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Self-evaluation and Monitoring

RCSI implements a number of internal processes for self-evaluation and monitoring, these include Programmatic Reviews, Internal Quality Reviews and Programme Monitoring.

Programmatic Reviews:

All matters related to Programmatic Reviews in RCSI are managed by the Awards and Qualification Committee (A&QC). A&QC oversee a rolling cycle of Programmatic Reviews of all RCSI programmes which offer qualifications or awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and which fall under the governance of the Medicine and Health Science Board. The first cycle of programmatic reviews commenced in 2014 and to date two programmatic reviews were conducted in RCSI for the following programmes MSc in Healthcare Ethics and Law and MSc in Healthcare Management. Going forward, as agreed with the National University of Ireland, RCSI is planning on conducting a Programmatic Review of one programme a year. The next Programmatic Review of an MD Programme managed by the School of Postgraduate studies will take place in autumn 2016. All Programmatic Reviews follow the same process that consists of the following steps: preparation of Self-evaluation report, submission of Business Case Report to the Business Case Panel in RCSI, a 2 day site visit facilitated by a 2 external panel members and one member of INQC, submission of a review report, presentation of the report to the Dean and Medicine and Health Science Board.

The outcomes of each Programmatic Review are as follows:

A written report for the Academic Unit and Medicine and Health Science Board

Programme revalidation for a period of five years where indicated

An improvement plan and follow-up visit, when required, prepared by the academic unit based on the outcomes of the Programmatic Review

Programme dis-continuation when required

Internal Quality Reviews:

Apart from Programmatic Reviews RCSI operates a system of 'rolling' internal quality reviews which commenced in January 2011. The review process is managed and supported by the Quality Enhancement Office. Academic units (at the level of School or Faculty) and non-academic units (administrative support functions) are subject to review on a six-year cycle. In all cases the internal review process is initiated by the preparation of a Self Assessment Report (SAR) by the unit under review. Then a site-visit of 2-3 days duration by a Peer Review Group (PRG) comprising three external and one internal member is conducted followed by the submission of a formal report by the PRG, which is then published on the RCSI website. The last step in the process is the development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in response to the report. The QIPs are then presented and agreed with the CEO and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

A list of previous Internal Quality Reports is available here: <http://www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972>)

Programme Monitoring:

Programme Monitoring processes are overseen by The RCSI Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Executive Committee (TLC) which is a sub-committee of Academic Council. The TLC focuses solely on the curriculum and associated teaching activities within the School of Medicine, while other schools in RCSI have their own Committees. The TLC is responsible for the development of an annual monitoring process for curricular content updates. Individual cycle committees undertake a regular process of reviewing and updating programme modules. This includes the updating of lecture learning outcomes, revising the style of existing learning outcomes and evaluating the order of existing lectures.

In order to support the self-evaluation and monitoring processes RCSI routinely collects and generates statistical data for monitoring and self-evaluation. Examination results are closely monitored by examination boards to monitor student performance and ensure accuracy and integrity of the examination process. RCSI also collects and analyse institutional metrics on student and staff, student engagement & satisfaction, expenditure on teaching & research, research, regional engagement, knowledge transfer and international focus. (More information about Institutional Metrics is provided in the Information Management section).

In order to mitigate the risk factors which may have an impact on students and/or the institution RCSI developed a Risk Register and associated Risk Status Sheets which identify, score and evaluate a number of risk factors. A thorough review of the Risk Register and associated Risk Status Sheets including a review of emerging risks is performed once a year by an Audit Committee. The following aspects are considered for each risk factor: the consequence of risk occurring, description of existing controls, effectiveness of controls, vulnerabilities/weaknesses that increase the exposure to the risk, a detailed action plan to address key areas of weakness or vulnerability. Individual risk factors are assigned to Owner at the Senior Management Team level.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Stakeholder Engagement?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Stakeholder Engagement

In terms of students as stakeholders, the primary method of engagement in terms of quality assurance is via the student feedback process (as described above). The institution often also engages the staff as stakeholders in the form of periodic Staff Surveys. These are administered and processed by the QEO in the same way as the student surveys. Where input from other external stakeholders is required (for example as part of the internal reviews of academic and service units), this process is facilitated by the QEO in terms of targeted surveys and occasionally formal or informal focus groups.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Engagement with other Bodies?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Engagement with other Bodies

RCSI engages with a large number of external bodies in relation to its educational and professional activities. There is no over-arching policy to govern these interactions and these are facilitated on a case by case basis.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Provision and use of Public Information?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Provision and use of Public Information

Publication of Quality Assurance documents:

RCSI is committed to robust, transparent processes and procedures for ongoing quality assurance and quality enhancement of academic programmes, Schools and Support Units both in Ireland and overseas. In keeping with this, RCSI publishes all peer review group reports and quality improvement plans (QIPs) arising from internal quality reviews of Schools and Support Units and reviews of our overseas campuses as well as Institutional Reviews. PRG Reports and QIPs for completed reviews since 2011 are publically available here <http://www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972>. However, RCSI does not publish self-assessment reports or output reports and QIPs of programme reviews.

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement (QA/QI) documentation including internal review guidelines and templates for Academic Units and Service Units, guidelines and report templates for Peer Review Groups and guidelines and templates for Quality Improvement Plans are publically available on the RCSI website. In addition the RCSI Quality Policy, the Quality Committee Terms of Reference, Quality Enhancement Office Terms of Reference and Calendar of Reviews are publically available on the RCSI website. <http://rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=970>; <http://rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972>

Learner Information:

Information on all programmes and awards are publically available on the RCSI website. On the 'Study with Us' pages on the RCSI website, learners can find details of all taught programmes available at undergraduate and postgraduate level and of higher degrees by research. Information is tailored for undergraduate learners or postgraduate learners and then for undergraduate learners by the entry routes available to them. Information includes: various entry routes, programme award, NQF level, programme structure, entry requirements, fees, what you will study, student testimonials and how to apply. In addition, learners can easily find information on Access, Scholarships, Student Opportunities (clinical electives, student exchange, Erasmus and undergraduate research). However, there is some variation in the detail of the information available across programmes, this is mainly concerned with the lack of information on learning outcomes and of assessment procedures. Currently there is little or no information relating to graduate employment, however this is not unusual given the nature of the healthcare programmes offered. <http://www.rcsi.ie/study>; <http://www.rcsi.ie/undergraduate>; <http://www.rcsi.ie/postgraduate>

RCSI also publishes relevant undergraduate admissions policies and statements

§ [Am I an EU or Non EU Student \(for application and fees assessment\)](#) (pdf); [Applicants with a disability](#) (pdf); [Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#) (pdf); [Data Protection Policy](#) (pdf); [Fees Policy](#) (pdf); [Policy and Procedure for Admitting Students under 18 years of age](#) (pdf); [Statement on Confidentiality and Declaration of Interest pertaining to admission](#) (pdf); [Statement on Feedback pertaining to admission](#) (pdf); [Statement on Fraud pertaining to admission](#) (pdf); [Statement on Garda \(Police\) Vetting](#) (pdf); [Statement on Infectious Diseases and General Health](#) (pdf); [Undergraduate Admissions Policy](#) (pdf); [Undergraduate Schools Transfer Policy](#)

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Linked Providers?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Linked Providers (DABs only)	The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) was, until recently, the only Linked Provider of RCSI delivering programmes leading to the Professional Certificate in Children & Loss, the Postgraduate Diploma in Bereavement Studies and the MSc in Bereavement Studies. During the reporting period a new arrangement was agreed with the IHF whereby these educational programmes are now deemed to be RCSI programmes in association with the IHF. As a result, IHF is no longer deemed to be a Linked Provider of RCSI.
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision	RCSI does not have a formal policy for Collaborative (or Transnational) Provision currently. However, RCSI activities in this area are informed by and conform to the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (2013) – the RCSI Director of Quality Enhancement was a member of the IHEQN working party which produced these guidelines.
PRSBs	6
Awarding Bodies	1
QA Bodies	2
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	Awarding Body
Name of the Body	National University of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	In 2012, RCSI's degree awarding powers (enacted in 2010) were recognised in the new Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act of 2012. RCSI's is defined as a "Designated Awarding Body". The Universities Act 1997 was amended by this act to acknowledge that degrees of RCSI are degrees of the National University of Ireland.
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Medical Council of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Programme Title: Bachelor in Medicine, Bachelor in Surgery and Bachelor in Obstetrics
Date of last review or accreditation	09-11-2011

Next review year	2017
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	QA Body
Name of the Body	National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance for Education and Training (QQA) Bahrain
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	RCSI Bahrain Programme Titles: Bachelor in Medicine, Bachelor in Surgery and Bachelor in Obstetrics BSc (Hons) Nursing BSc (Hons) Nursing - Bridging Programme MSc Nursing Programme
Date of last review or accreditation	29-02-2016
Next review year	2018
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Malaysian Medical Council (MMC)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Penang Medical College Programme Title: Bachelor in Medicine, Bachelor in Surgery and Bachelor in Obstetrics
Date of last review or accreditation	30-09-2013
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	QA Body
Name of the Body	Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA)
Date of last review or accreditation	04-04-2015

Next review year	2018
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	1
Collaborative programmes	4
Franchise programmes	1
Linked providers (DABs only)	0
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Franchise programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Perdana University, Malaysia
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	MB, BCh, BAO degree(s) in Medicine
Date of last review	19-10-2015
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Penang Medical College
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	MB, BCh, BAO degree(s) in Medicine http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20141218120106_RCSI_UCD_PMC_Final_Report_July.pdf
Date of last review	06-05-2014
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Third Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Institute of Technology Tralee
Date of last review	30-04-2012
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fourth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	College of Medicine, University of Malawi
Date of last review	30-09-2013

Section: Collaborative Provision	Fifth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Dublin City University and National University of Ireland Maynooth (3U Partnership)
Date of last review	30-04-2013
Section: Collaborative Provision	Sixth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Dublin Firebrigade Fire and Ambulance Vehicles
Date of last review	30-09-2013
Articulation Agreements	0
Section: Internal Review Schedule	First Set of Records
Year	2016
Areas/Units	School of Medicine; Admissions Office; Estates & Support Services
Number	3
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Second Set of Records
Year	2015
Areas/Units	Institutional Review of the Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (Malaysia); Quality Enhancement Office; Office of Research & Innovation
Number	3
Link(s) to Publication(s)	www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Third Set of Records
Year	2014
Areas/Units	Joint RCSI-UCD Institutional Review of Penang Medical College (Malaysia); Institutional Review of the Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (Malaysia); School of Pharmacy; Human Resources Department
Number	4
Link(s) to Publication(s)	www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Fourth Set of Records

Year	2013
Areas/Units	Institutional Review of the Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (Malaysia); RCSI Libraries
Number	2
Link(s) to Publication(s)	www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Fifth Set of Records
Year	2012
Areas/Units	Institutional Review of the Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (Malaysia); School of Physiotherapy; Institute of Leadership; Student Services Office
Number	4
Link(s) to Publication(s)	www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Sixth Set of Records
Year	2011
Areas/Units	School of Postgraduate Studies; Examinations Office
Number	2
Link(s) to Publication(s)	www.rcsi.ie/index.jsp?p=968&n=972

**PART 2 - Section 1:
Institution-led QA - Annual**

A piece in relation to the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems to support strategic objectives in the reporting period.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

As of the current reporting period, three of the four parallel cycles of internal Quality Assurance (QA) reviews managed by the RCSI Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) are well advanced:

Internal QA Reviews of Schools within the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences – 75 % complete

Internal QA Reviews of Administrative & Support Units – 60 % complete

Institutional Reviews of RCSI overseas campuses/programmes – 75 % complete

The fourth cycle, that of Internal QA Reviews of RCSI Postgraduate Faculties, is due to commence in 2017.

Following the review of RCSI QA policies and procedures undertaken in the last reporting period, Quality Committee business has become a standing item on the agenda of all governance committees within RCSI, not just those involved directly in the administration of degree-awarding activities. Specifically, Quality Committee business is now a standing agenda item for the Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board (the governing body for postgraduate professional training & certification in surgery & related specialties), and for College Board (the new over-arching governing body for RCSI).

Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

The Internal QA Review of the RCSI School of Medicine which took place during the current reporting period was moved from 2015 into 2016 to allow for significant curriculum changes to 'bed down' prior to review.

The following amendments have been made to AIQR Part 1:

[1] Overarching Institution-level Approach & Policy for QA – a link has been added to allow access to the Institutional Quality Policy document

[2] Programme design & approval – links have been added to allow access to all relevant Awards & Qualifications Committee documents [Terms of Reference; Business Case Proposal Form; Academic Case Proposal Form; Programmatic Review Guidelines]

[3] Research Quality – a link has been added to allow access to the policies and procedures dealing with all aspects of higher degrees by research published by the School of Postgraduate Studies

[4] Internal Reviews 2016 – a link has been added to allow access to the relevant review reports

The schedule of QA governance meetings for the period should be inserted here.

The RCSI Quality Committee met on four occasions during the reporting period: 8th October 2015; 16th December 2015; 2nd March 2016 & 4th May 2016.

PART 2 - Section 2: Institution-led QA - Annual

Reviews in the Reporting Period

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

School of Medicine [Main Review Visit April 2016]
http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20170213124323_RCSI%20_SoM_PRG_Final_Report_28S.pdf
Publication of Quality Improvement Plan pending

Links to published internal reviews

Second Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Office of Research & Innovation [Main Review Visit November 2015]
http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20161115115425_PRG%20Report%20-%20ORI-Final-Version.pdf
http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20161115115648_ORI_Quality_Improvement_Plan_%20.pdf

Links to published internal reviews

Third Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Admissions Office [Main Review Visit May-June 2016]
http://www.rcsi.ie/files/about-us/20170213123021_PRG%20Report-%20RCSI%20Admissions%20Of.pdf
Publication of Quality Improvement Plan pending

Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval

11

Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.	1
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Service Unit Review.	2
Composition of Panels: % Internal	20
Composition of Panels: % National	13
Composition of Panels: % UK	60
Composition of Panels: % EU	0
Composition of Panels: % Student	7
Composition of Panels: % Other	0
Chair Profile: % Internal	0
Chair Profile: % Similar institution	66.6
Chair Profile: % Different institution	0
Chair Profile: % International	33.3
PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview	Other Implementation Factors
This institution can use this section to set out the ways in which data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.	<p>The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) continued to expand the number and range of surveys conducted to gauge the engagement of students (both undergraduate & postgraduate), postgraduate trainees in Surgery & related specialities and staff across the RCSI campus network. The QEO was responsible for the design, administration, analysis & reporting of 300+ surveys during the reporting period. The dissemination of detailed reports based on these surveys provides a crucial evidence-base for decision making across a wide range of RCSI educational and professional training activities.</p> <p>The QEO continued to be responsible for the collection and reporting of a set of Institutional Metrics or 'Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)' mandated by the Senior Management Team for monitoring and evaluating RCSI operations.</p> <p>During the reporting period, RCSI initiated a 'Data Warehouse' project which involves the implementation of a 'business intelligence' solution to automate the reporting of Metrics / KPIs; the Director of Quality Enhancement is the 'business sponsor' for implementation of this project.</p>

The institution may choose to highlight in this section information relating to factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period. These may be factors relating to national developments or initiatives, such as clusters/alliances/mergers, other external factors or intra-institutional factors.

Nothing to report

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.

Nothing to report

PART 3

Effectiveness and Impact

A commentary about the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures in the reporting period may be inserted here.

The implementation of RCSI QA policies & procedures now extends across the full breadth of the institution's educational and professional training activities. During the current reporting period, planning & preparation have been under way to commence the fourth parallel cycle of internal reviews focused on the postgraduate/professional Faculties of RCSI (Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Radiology, Dentistry, Sports & Exercise Medicine, Nursing & Midwifery). In addition, RCSI-Bahrain (the largest of the RCSI branch campuses overseas) continues to roll out its first cycle of internal reviews of School and Academic/Support Units.

Some rescheduling of reviews for the next reporting period has been necessitated by external factors impacting on two Units – the School of Nursing & Midwifery and Information Technology (Admin./Support Unit) – these schedule changes have been mandated by RCSI Senior Management.

An evaluation of the impact of QA policies and procedures through their implementation in the reporting period should be inserted here.

The current reporting period provided significant evidence of the impact of RCSI QA policies & procedures. The Perdana University-RCSI (PU-RCSI) School of Medicine, established in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) in 2011, was subject to four sequential annual QA Reviews by the QEO in the period 2012-2016. This was provided for in the formal agreement between RCSI and Perdana University, reflecting the status of Perdana University as a new start-up in the Malaysian Higher Education sector. The Irish Medical Council & Malaysian Medical Council (the relevant statutory accreditation bodies) conducted site-visits to the PU-RCSI campus in Q1 of 2016 with a view to awarding full accreditation to the medical degree programme prior to the graduation of the first cohort of students in June 2016. In the exit briefing given by the Irish Medical Council, the site-visit team made it clear that the reports arising from the RCSI Internal QA Review process had given them substantial evidence of the degree of RCSI oversight of the evolution of the PU-RCSI programme, and of the equivalence of the student experience between RCSI in Dublin and PU-RCSI. This provides an example of how effective Internal QA Review processes can synergise with and enable statutory (professional) accreditation processes.

This section should highlight an analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures, primarily through a thematic analysis of key recommendations, commendations and conditions for the reporting period.

Nothing to report.

PART 4

Quality Enhancement

A description of improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period, identifying the reasons for the improvements (for example an evaluation of effectiveness and impact from the previous period or objectives set out in strategic compacts).

Penang Medical College (PMC) is a medical school owned jointly by RCSI and UCD in Malaysia. In 2013-2014, RCSI & UCD jointly conducted an Institutional Review of PMC – the first such review of transnational / collaborative provision by two Irish Designated Awarding Bodies. A Quality Improvement Plan was prepared by PMC in 2014 in response to the report of the Review Panel. During the reporting period, RCSI & UCD worked with PMC to identify a set of documents that would elaborate the steps taken by PMC to implement their QIP. These documents will support a formal review of QIP implementation scheduled for the next reporting period and, in addition, will inform monitoring of QIP implementation in future reviews of RCSI overseas branch campuses.

An analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated by the institution. This could also include reference to any national or international quality assurance developments in which the institution is engaged. The institution is encouraged to highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

The QEO instituted a new work-stream during the reporting period to quality assure experiential learning as a key component of almost all RCSI undergraduate, postgraduate and professional education and training programmes in the health professions. Commencing with the Department of Surgical Affairs (responsible for postgraduate training & certification in surgery in Ireland) and more recently the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (responsible for continuing professional developments of Pharmacists in Ireland), this involves periodic surveys of trainees and trainers before and after each training rotation or course. Analysis and reporting of the survey data provides a key evidence base in evaluating the trainee experience and other aspects of the process. The programme will be expanded in the next reporting period to encompass experiential learning by undergraduate Pharmacy students of RCSI, UCC & TCD in their new 5-year M.Pharm. degree programmes in conjunction with APPEL, the Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning, which is a partnership between the three Schools of Pharmacy in Ireland. Future plans for this work-stream include the development of frameworks for the quality assurance of postgraduate training sites (Department of Surgical Affairs) and, ultimately, the expansion of the work-stream to encompass all postgraduate training schemes and experiential learning in all RCSI undergraduate programmes.

PART 5

Objectives for the Coming Year

A piece in relation to strategic objectives in the coming period and plans for quality assurance and enhancement.

The RCSI Quality Committee has mandated the QEO to investigate mechanisms to incorporate benchmarking as an element of RCSI Internal QA Review processes, such that Units commencing their Self Assessment process would engage with a comparable Unit in another Irish HEI as a comparator to facilitate benchmarking. The QEO plans to engage with a number of DABs to scope useful ways in which to do this.

Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number

In the period 01 Sept. 2016 – 31 Aug. 2017:

One review of an Administrative/Support Unit – that of RCSI Estates & Support Services – will take place (MRV 01-04 Nov. 2016)

A review will take place of implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan developed by Penang Medical College (PMC) in response to the Review Panel report arising from the Joint RCSI-UCD Institutional Review of PMC in 2013-2014

Planning & preparation will take place for reviews due to take place in Q3-Q4 of 2017 and Q1-Q2 of 2018

- o Institutional Review of RCSI Bahrain
- o Department of Surgical Affairs (Academic Unit)
- o Alumni/Fellows Relations Office (Administrative/Support Unit)
- o Communications Department (Administrative/Support Unit)
- o Health Professions Education Centre (Administrative/Support Unit)

Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.

Nothing to report.

PART 6

Preparation for Periodic Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

N/A

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review cycle.

N/A

Developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review.

N/A