

RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences

2026

Annual Quality Report
RCSI, University of Medicine & Health Sciences
Reporting Period 2024-2025

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
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PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for RCSI, University of Medicine & Health Sciences, for the reporting period **1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 27 February 2026**.

The AQR has been approved by **the RCSI Quality Committee** and is submitted by **Aisling Reast, Head of the Quality Enhancement Office**.

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) was founded by Royal Charter in 1784 to set and uphold professional standards for surgical training and practice in Ireland. Over the centuries, RCSI has evolved into a unique institution that is both a university and a postgraduate training body in medicine and health sciences. This dual role offers significant advantages, enabling RCSI to provide education and training across all career stages. Today, RCSI awards undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Medicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Dentistry, Advanced Therapeutic Technologies, and Physician Associate studies, delivered across campuses in Dublin, Bahrain, Malaysia, and China. In addition, RCSI offers taught and research-based master’s programmes and doctoral degrees in Ireland and internationally. RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. Its independent degree-awarding powers were activated in 2010 under the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003. The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 established RCSI as a Designated Awarding Body, and in 2019, RCSI was granted university status under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019. The Annual Quality Report has been prepared by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) following extensive consultation with Schools, Faculties, and Professional Services Units. It was subsequently reviewed and approved by RCSI Senior Management and the Quality Committee.

RCSI in numbers

Rankings and accolades



Our global healthcare community



Research and innovation



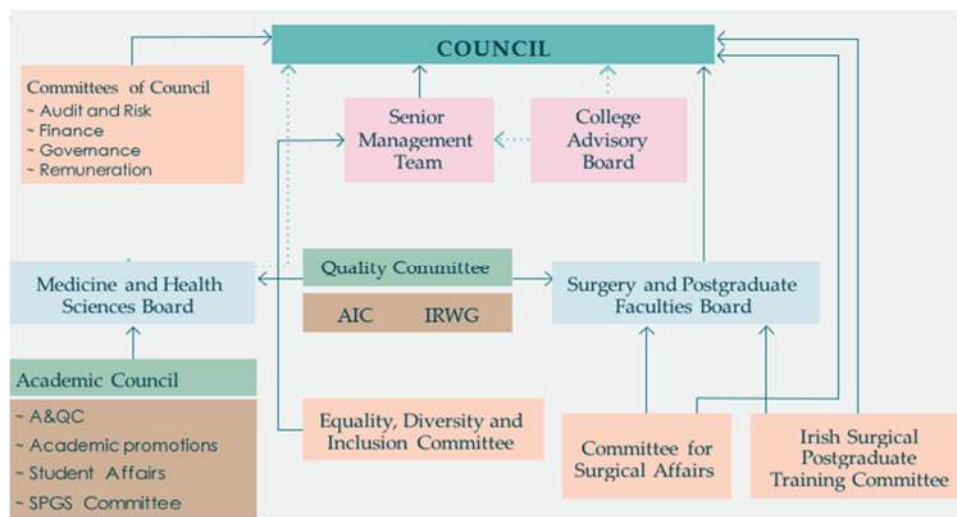
Source: Scival 2020-2024



1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

RCSI is an independent, not-for-profit statutory body and university, under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019. Its governance structure is outlined below.



Under the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003 and earlier statutory provisions, the Council serves as RCSI's primary governing body. The Council's overarching responsibility is to ensure that the College remains true to its Noble Purpose: "Building on our heritage in surgery, we will enhance human health through endeavour, innovation and collaboration in education, research and service." The Council operates through four standing committees: Audit and Risk Committee, Finance Committee, Remuneration Committee and the Governance and Nominations Committee. The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for the management, operation and executive oversight of the institution. In addition, the College Advisory Board (CAB) provides external perspectives and strategic advice to both the Council and SMT; it does not hold decision-making authority.

In 2010, Council devolved power to two Boards to oversee the main educational, training and research activities of RCSI; the Medicine and Health Sciences Board (MHSB) now responsible for university affairs and Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB) for professional training affairs. The Medicine and Health Sciences Board is the governing body for all RCSI educational programmes leading to NFQ awards. It exercises its oversight of these activities through the Academic Council. Academic Council is responsible for the implementation of policy set by the MHSB. It is the senior academic and administrative forum for deliberation on all academic matters. The Awards & Qualifications Committee (A&QC) has authority and operational responsibility, delegated from the MHSB, to evaluate and consider programmes which fall under the NFQ for approval and accreditation. SPFB coordinates the common activities of Surgical Affairs and the Postgraduate Faculties. The Board facilitates knowledge exchange and coordination, as well as contributing to strategy development, across Surgery and the Postgraduate Faculties.

The Quality Committee (QC) is responsible for developing quality policy and overseeing the implementation of quality assurance (QA) and quality improvement (QI) processes across RCSI. QC reports

to both the SPFB and the MHSB. QC has two standing sub-committees: Academic Integrity Committee (AIC), a formal structure enabling RCSI to respond to initiatives from the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and QQI in the area of academic integrity; Institutional Review Working Group (IRWG), responsible for managing institutional reviews conducted by QQI.

In addition, QC plays a key role in integrating QA activities across RCSI's overseas campuses into the overall QA framework and supports these campuses in engaging with local QA/QI structures and processes. RCSI Bahrain operates a local Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC). A report on its activities is presented at each QC meeting, and both the Chair of the QEC and the Head of Quality and Academic Development are members of QC.

The QEO is the executive function of the RCSI Quality Committee and of its sub-committees, and reports to the Vice Chancellor & CEO of RCSI. The role of the QEO is to support the implementation of the RCSI QA/QI strategy by coordinating all relevant activities and by collecting the data needed to allow the QC to quality assure delivery. The QEO has five members of staff: the Head of the QEO, the Director of Psychometrics, the Quality Reviews Manager, the QA/QI Analyst and the Quality Assurance Administrator. The Head of the QEO reports to the Chair of the Quality Committee who is the RCSI Vice Chancellor & CEO. The QC and QEO contribute to institutional strategic planning by routinely providing key data to RCSI governance structures and Senior Management Team, including primarily (i) student and staff satisfaction and engagement data derived from ongoing survey activity, and (ii) the insights and recommendations arising from internal QA reviews.

The RCSI Quality Assurance Framework document presents the University's quality policy, principles and definition of quality, provides a comprehensive description of governance structures relevant to quality assurance and gives an overview of internal and external quality assurance processes.

A wide range of external stakeholders are involved in quality assurance within RCSI; these include:

- External members on governing boards and advisory committees (including MHSB, SPFB, CAB, Quality Committee, etc.).
- External members of Peer Review Groups in Internal Quality Assurance Reviews.
- External members of Programmatic Review Panels.
- External Examiners for educational programmes leading to the award of degrees (appointed jointly by RCSI & NUI).
- External members of accreditation panels visiting RCSI on behalf of the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.
- Public and patient representatives on relevant education and research committees and school external advisory boards.

Students are key stakeholders in quality assurance and at all levels of RCSI internal governance. The Presidents of both Students' Unions are members of the Quality Committee, and Students' Union Officers and Class Representatives are members of internal governance committees up to and including the Medicine & Health Sciences Board. In addition, the views of students are invited through the student feedback processes described in this AQR. RCSI also engages with staff as stakeholders through periodic Staff Surveys, which 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 review

process, this process is facilitated by the QEO in terms of targeted surveys and, occasionally, formal or informal focus groups.

RCSI is committed to carrying out research to the highest standards of professionalism and scientific rigour and, to that end, 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 available to all researchers and research support staff. All policies are subject to regular review and updating as required. These documents are disseminated to students and staff via the Staff Portal and virtual learning environment. The SPGS manages all research programmes leading to higher degree awards. The SPGS Committee is responsible for overall governance and management of the School. The Postgraduate Programme Management Committee has responsibility for policy oversight and engagement with the academic directors of all taught postgraduate programmes in RCSI, and the Academic Review Committee (ARC) reviews all new applications for research degrees and transfers between them. This process ensures efficient and timely registration of new students with quality research proposals. Both committees report to the SPGS Committee.

The RCSI Awards and Qualifications Committee (A&QC) has responsibility, with authority delegated by MHSB, for the validation, revalidation and review of all programmes leading to degree awards of RCSI. As such it maintains oversight of all postgraduate programmes (taught and by research), considering new programme proposals and any changes required to existing programmes. A&QC has oversight of the rolling Programmatic Reviews with operational responsibility for these reviews transferring from Registry to the QEO in this reporting period. The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) also carries out reviews of Schools, Faculties and Professional Services Units within RCSI.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

RCSI is a Designated Awarding Body (DAB) pursuant to the terms of The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The legislation established the category of Linked Provider (LP), which refers to a higher education provider which enters into a formal arrangement with a DAB under which the LP delivers a programme of education & training that satisfies the prerequisites for an award of the DAB. RCSI does not currently have any Linked Providers.

RCSI is involved in a range of instances of transnational and collaborative educational provision across its international branch campuses and international programmes. The Quality Committee has overall responsibility for the governance of quality assurance and enhancement across these programmes and campuses as described in the RCSI Quality Assurance Framework. The Framework provides for Annual Programme Monitoring of transnational, collaborative and franchise programmes and for periodic Quality Assurance Review of overseas branch campuses and international programmes. In addition, all RCSI branch campuses and overseas transnational/collaborative programmes are subject to local quality assurance and professional accreditation processes in the jurisdictions where they operate.

RCSI does not have a formal policy for the development of new collaborative (or transnational) provision arrangements 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) and the NUI policy on 'Quality Assurance for Collaborative and Transnational Provision of Academic Programmes Leading to NUI Qualifications' (2013). When evaluating a potential new collaborative programme with an existing partner, or a new arrangement with a candidate partner institution, the RCSI Corporate Strategy Office is responsible for the initial due diligence and for assessing the viability of the proposed programme in conjunction with the relevant School or Faculty. If a new programme is deemed viable and receives the approval of Senior Management and of the relevant governing boards, a specific project team is established to develop the programme proposal, to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for agreement with the candidate partner institution and to prepare an application to the Awards & Qualifications Committee for programme validation. All such MOUs include specific provision for adherence to RCSI quality assurance policies and procedures including Annual Programme Monitoring and periodic Quality Assurance Review. New transnational programmes proposed by RCSI branch campuses are subject to the programme approval and validation processes administered by the Awards & Qualifications Committee.

Periodic Quality Assurance Review of overseas branch campuses and international programmes is a powerful tool to ensure that instances of transnational/collaborative provision continue to meet the strategic priorities of RCSI and the needs of the partner institutions, and to manage the risks implicit in international education provision. One of the four parallel cycles of Internal Quality Assurance Reviews administered by the Quality Enhancement Office addresses RCSI overseas branch campuses and international programmes and, as described above, participation in these processes is mandated by the relevant MOU. The review process is similar to that for internal reviews at RCSI Dublin, though review panels take a broader view which encompasses strategic aspects of the relationship between the partners, the quality of the international student experience and local conditions impinging on programme delivery.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The RCSI Awards & Qualifications Committee is responsible for the approval and validation of new educational programmes leading to RCSI degree awards aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications, encompassing the quality assurance of their design. It is also responsible for the revalidation of existing programmes to which Minor or Major Changes are proposed. The A&QC policies and procedures for the accreditation of new degree programmes are designed to satisfy the degree-awarding requirements of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and those of the National University of Ireland. This derives from the fact that Schedule 3 (9) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and 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.

RCSI does not currently offer apprenticeships or work-based learning programmes of the type encompassed by the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes (i.e., those governed by The Industrial Training Act 1967). During the reporting period an institutional apprenticeship policy was developed.

For new RCSI programmes leading to degree awards, the process administered by the A&QC involves two stages: [1] establishment of a Business Case and [2] development of an Academic Proposal. Once a Business Case for a new programme has been submitted, it is reviewed internally by the A&QC Business Case Review Panel and feedback is given to the proposer. If/when the final Business Case has been approved by A&QC, a recommendation is made to the RCSI Senior Management Team which, if approved, will permit the proposer to progress to the second stage. The Academic Proposal undergoes an internal review by the A&QC Academic Case Review Panel. When the application is approved by the internal reviewers, it is then subject to external assessment by an academic from outside the jurisdiction with expertise in the subject area. This is an iterative process and when both internal and external assessors approve the application, and any changes made during the process, the application is recommended to the Academic Council for approval by Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB). The programme proposal may also be subject to review by an external assessor, depending on the type of award. All new programmes leading to major awards in the NFQ will be reviewed by at least two External Assessors, but a jointly appointed External Assessor may be sufficient for new programmes leading to minor, special purpose or supplemental awards. Following a similar review process, where applicable, the application is presented for NUI approval to NUI Senate.

The processes involved in developing the Academic Case for a new programme are rigorous and require the proposers to demonstrate a systematic approach to programme design which aligns the programme appropriately to the relevant Level in the NFQ. This involves a comprehensive description of the hierarchical curriculum structure starting from Programme-level outcomes which are mapped clearly to the relevant NFQ level descriptors in terms of the domains of knowledge, skill and competence. A complete set of Module Descriptors is required which demonstrate the mapping of module outcomes to programme-level outcomes and to the portfolio of module-specific assessments. The Academic Case proposal form also requires a detailed description of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credit

assignments, entry requirements, provisions for access, transfer and progression, programme delivery schedules, professional/regulatory considerations and articulation arrangements (where relevant). The duration of the internal and external phases of the review process for new proposals varies depending on factors including the completeness of the submission received from the proposers. The review is iterative and can be extended if additional time is required to clarify aspects of the proposal and/or to permit adequate consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Reaccreditations and changes to existing programmes are evaluated by the A&QC according to the provisions of the NUI “Regulations, Procedures and Guidelines for the Approval of New Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes in the Recognised Colleges (2020)”. Major changes to existing programmes are subject to a process similar to the Academic Proposal review for new programmes, with final approval by Academic Council, MHSB and NUI Senate. Minor changes are subject to a less extensive review.

The A&QC also oversees a rolling cycle of Programme Reviews of all RCSI programmes which lead to qualifications or awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). During the reporting period it was determined that Programmatic Reviews would be aligned with the Internal Quality Reviews overseen by the Quality Enhancement Office and a new Programme Review Process was developed. In line with the proportionate and risk-based approach to programme review adopted by RCSI, a variety of approaches to programme review will now be implemented:

- A full programme review process is completed for programmes that:
 - are not currently accredited by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) or
 - have not been through A&QC for approval of major changes or accreditation within the preceding 3 years.
- An abridged programme review process is completed for programmes that:
 - are currently accredited by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) or
 - have been through A&QC for approval of major changes or accreditation within the preceding 3 years.
- Cognate programme reviews are initiated, at the discretion of the QEO, where a school offers a suite of related programmes within a shared disciplinary area, supported by common governance and quality assurance frameworks.
- Cognate reviews follow either abridged or full processes, dependent on their accreditation status and/or time since A&QC approval.

Programme review includes preparation of programme evaluation report(s) (PERs) followed by a site-visit by a team comprised of peer and external reviewers. Based on the PER(s) and the site-visit the team will produce a report and determine an overall review outcome for the programme(s) under consideration.

The A&QC Academic Proposal Form was updated in 2024/25 to ensure that all information required for a robust review, aligned with QQI statutory requirements, are fully addressed by proposers. Enhanced quality measures were introduced, particularly for translational and collaborative arrangements, to ensure equivalence in quality and the learner experience. Additional questions were also incorporated to reflect QQI developments and CINNTE recommendations, focusing on areas such as the research environment, blended teaching, and the integration of simulation-based learning within programmes.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

RCSI's undergraduate admissions are managed by the undergraduate admissions office. Post graduate admissions are managed by the school of postgraduate studies, the relevant school or the RCSI online admission office. Admission to RCSI is guided by the admission policies published on the [RCSI website](#).

Policies related to admissions include:

- Admissions Policy
- Policy for admitting students under 18 years of age
- Statement of confidentiality & declaration of interest pertaining to admissions
- Data protection policy
- Disability policy
- Fitness to practice information
- Feedback pertaining to admission
- Statement of fraud pertaining to admission
- Disclosure of criminal information
- Statement of infectious diseases and general health procedures
- Admissions complaints and appeals process

The admissions offices have overall responsibility, working through Academic Council, for the admission of students into the University. Undergraduate EU students, with the exception of graduate pharmacy and physiotherapy, apply via the CAO. EU graduate Pharmacy and Physiotherapy apply directly to undergraduate admission office. EU applicants with European qualifications are assessed using the EU Quals document, Entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA/UK Applicants (other than Irish Leaving Certificate). The university is committed to widening access and is part of the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR), and Disability Access Route to Education (DARE).

Non-EU qualifications are assessed using NARIC. Non-EU students from across the globe apply directly to [RCSI](#), with the exception of those based in the USA or Canada in the year of application. North American applicants apply through the USA based admissions office, [Atlantic Bridge](#). This North American based application office has been in place for over 30 years and has served the large volume of applicants from the USA & Canada who benefit from having access to well informed admissions staff, on similar North American time zones, who can speak to prospective applicants about the application process, the academic course that they are interested in applying to and the pathway back to residency and practice in the USA and Canada.

The Admissions Office works very closely with Marketing, Student Recruitment and the Student Services Office. With the latter managing the Student Accommodation Service and coordinating the Orientation and Registration process for new incoming students. The Student Recruitment Office works alongside Marketing to create awareness of RCSI and the academic programmes that are offered. Information for students, parents and school counsellors is available in multiple formats, including websites, prospectuses, in person and online open events and webinars, school visits, school counsellor engagement and educational fairs.

When students receive offers to join the university, they are provided with access to a website designed to onboard students. The RCSEye platform is designed specifically for new incoming students to RCSI,

offering a space to connect, find accommodation, and access essential information on various aspects of their respective programmes, as well as student life and settling in Dublin. Tailored exclusively for RCSI newcomers, the site provides a range of resources such as webinars, chat groups, and other tools to help students engage with university life and build connections even before their arrival.

For new incoming students, document submission is completed in advance to facilitate ease of registration. Undergraduate students receive their IT network login and RCSI email account details prior to induction. Students are also provided with links to useful IT training videos to help with familiarisation with IT systems such as Blackboard Collaborate and Moodle. Ongoing student registration is predominantly completed online.

Induction & Orientation is an important part of the settling in process for new students joining RCSI. This takes place during the first few weeks of the academic year. The Student Services Office, partnering with the Admissions & Student Recruitment Office, oversees the delivery of this service. It commences with registration for all new undergraduate students. It involves a series of presentations introducing students to various facilities and services within the university including CoMPPAS (Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional & Academic Success), IT, Financial Supports, Student Health, Library, Health & Safety, Students Union, Clubs & Societies, Sports Facilities and the Gym. Students are set up with their laptops and are issued with their RCSI student cards, which give access to the RCSI campus. Student Services hosts a range of activities to help students build connections and feel part of the RCSI community. These include Clubs and Society Sign-Up Day, Learning Community Lunches, GEM Mixers, and Freshers Week—all designed to encourage social engagement and integration into university life.

Depending on the programme of study or cohort, RCSI postgraduate research students are provided with an online induction programme within one month of their programme registration. A welcome handbook is also provided (via Moodle), detailing information and supports for living in Ireland and studying at RCSI. An in-person induction day takes place each November, which includes a 'Coating Ceremony'. All MCh, MSc, MD and PhDs registered from the previous January are invited. The DProf cohort have a separate in-person induction day annually at the start of their programme.

RCSI has a strict no transfer policy for undergraduate programmes and does not accept transfer requests from students attending other courses, including other RCSI courses and RCSI international campuses. Transfers, in some circumstances, are permitted between RCSI Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes (e.g. MD to PhD) and these are quality assured through the Academic Review Committee. All other transfer requests are managed using RCSI's policy on Recognition of Prior Learning.

Progression, on all programmes, is determined by Marks and Standards documents. These documents outline the standards and criteria which must be satisfied to progress to the next stage of the programme. These are made available to students via the Moodle virtual learning environment, together with policies on the relevant appeals processes. Progression in PGR programmes at NFQ level 10 is subject to completion of an annual progress review assessed by two content experts. Progression rates and graduate numbers are reported by Registry.

Students' grades are delivered to them directly, and on a confidential basis, electronically (via Student Gateway, Moodle, Kaizen or email) as soon as is practicable following the relevant Examinations Board meeting. At the end of each academic year, students are provided with a cumulative transcript of their

results at their request. These transcripts provide an overall module result for all modules taken by that student to date. An annual transcript is also provided to sponsoring bodies for each of their students which provide an overall module result for all modules taken by that student in the relevant academic year only.

RCSI has a particular commitment to widening participation in its educational programmes (see also Part B Section 2.0) and offers a range of scholarships. Of particular note in this regard are the Aim High Medicine, Kiran Pathak Pharmacy and Traveller and Roma Communities Access Scholarship, which aims to increase the participation of members of the Traveller and Roma communities in the University's undergraduate programmes. These scholarships provide reduced points entry, financial support and opportunities for students who might otherwise be unable to attend third level education. Through support from the HEA Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH 5), RCSI Engage is working collaboratively with UCD Access and Trinity Access Programme on a three-year funded project that aims to increase Traveller and Roma communities' participation in Higher Education with a dedicated Access Officer working across the three HEIs. RCSI participates in HEAR and DARE with 12% of RCSI's CAO places offered on reduced points to eligible DARE/HEAR applicants.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The processes implemented by RCSI for the validation of new programmes and the revalidation of existing programmes leading to awards require a rigorous and systematic approach to programme design as described above (Section 2.1).

The core of any curriculum is the set of programme-level learning outcomes which describe the attributes that students will acquire and demonstrate as they progress through the course. These top-level outcomes are mapped to the relevant NFQ level descriptors in terms of the domains of knowledge, skill and competence. For the majority of RCSI programmes which lead to professional healthcare degree awards, the programme-level learning outcomes are mapped also to the standards specified by the relevant Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB).

Assessment is another core element of any curriculum, providing mechanisms (which are appropriate and fit for purpose) to allow students to demonstrate their attainment of the learning outcomes. The development of RCSI curricula involves the elaboration of a system of assessments which, at each stage of the programme, permits representative and relevant sampling of the students' knowledge, skills and attitudes as required by the learning outcomes. The assessment system must [a] demonstrate mapping of each assessment to the relevant learning outcomes, [b] involve as wide a variety of assessment types as possible to encompass the scope of the curriculum and [c] specify how the relative weightings of content within assessments correspond to the learning outcomes. The key principle is that of Constructive Alignment between learning outcomes, teaching & learning activities and assessment. The tool used to demonstrate this is Assessment Blueprinting, which links assessment type, relative weighting of content within assessments and learning outcomes. Assessment blueprints are developed at module-and programme-level to demonstrate appropriate alignment across the programme.

The curriculum development process also requires that assessment processes be robust, consistent & transparent. The entire assessment process (including purpose, location, timing, format, methodology, etc.) must be defined, applied consistently and made available to all relevant stakeholders. The assessment process must also be underpinned by equally well-defined and applied governance & quality

assurance procedures. For many award-stage assessments in particular, assessment systems are required to incorporate standard setting methods to determine appropriate pass/fail cut-off points ('cut-scores'). In the health sciences, and particularly for high-stakes assessments, international best practice involves the use of standard setting methods that are test-centred or examinee-centred, and that factor the judgement of experts into the process of determining the cut-score. Thus, RCSI programmes typically use test-centred standard setting methods for MCQ-based tests of knowledge (e.g., the Bookmark & Angoff methods) and examinee-centred methods for tests of skills & attitudes (e.g., the Borderline Regression method for Objective Structured Clinical Examinations).

Curriculum design (including assessment) is subject to expert internal and external review during the programme validation process managed by the Awards & Qualifications Committee, and during the process of periodic revalidation and/or programmatic review. In addition, external examiners are appointed who have oversight of curriculum delivery and assessment and who offer an independent perspective on the appropriateness and fairness of examinations.

Training and guidance on all aspects of curriculum design are available to RCSI faculty through the Health Professions Education Centre (HPEC) and the Awards & Qualifications Committee.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The quality assurance of teaching, learning & assessment in educational programmes leading to RCSI degree awards is managed on an ongoing basis by academic schools, internal governance committees, examination boards and Registry functions, through the monitoring and analysis of multiple data streams:

- Student feedback surveys (semester or module-based)
- Meetings with student representatives
- In-course examination results (semester- or academic year-based)
- Exit (*i.e.*, final end of programme) examination results
- External examiners' reports
- Accreditation reports issued by the relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
- Annual Programme Monitoring
- Programmatic Review reports

Student feedback surveys run by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) provide an overview of perceptions of the student experience, particularly in relation to teaching, learning & assessment. RCSI's survey approach is to apply a centralised core and options model of evaluation across all undergraduate courses and campuses and most postgraduate courses. The use of 'core' questions allows the direct comparison of student experience between instances of the same programme on different sites, between programmes and over time. The use of 'optional' questions allows for the specific/targeted collection of information, e.g., students' reaction to a new teaching intervention. The vital role played by the QEO ensures that the data is collected, processed and reported in a consistent way that allows for an in-depth analysis and protects the confidentiality of students' views and their anonymity. 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 the content is delivered by discrete semesters, or on a module-by-module basis. Year/Programme Directors use this information in conjunction with academic performance and other data to determine what (if any) changes need to be made for the subsequent year. This information should be communicated back to the students by the

Schools 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 the Moodle virtual learning environment. The quantitative survey response data is made available directly to students via Moodle shortly after the data has been processed. In addition to the curriculum feedback, separate reports are prepared for the heads of professional services functions – for example Course Support, Examinations and Assessments, Registry, IT, Library, CoMPPAS, Estates and Student Services. Additionally, to close the feedback loop, the QEO implements a process to centralise the collection and reporting of quality improvement actions. Annually, schools and professional departments are requested to provide examples of good practice and actions undertaken in response to student feedback to the Quality Enhancement Repository. A thematic analysis of the actions is conducted by the QEO and presented at an annual internal conference. The Repository content is also used to develop a ‘You said, we listened’ campaign for the next academic year. A separate loop closing process is implemented in RCSI Bahrain.

Externally, feedback on student engagement is normally collected independently from first and final year undergraduate students and from postgraduate taught and research students via [StudentSurvey.ie](https://www.student-survey.ie). This nationwide survey aims to measure student engagement in all participating third level institutions and allows individual institutions to benchmark against the rest of the sector. This process is facilitated and reported by the Quality Enhancement Office.

For programmes following the standardised academic session of Sept-Aug, regulations regarding assessment are finalised and approved by MHSB each May, in advance of the following academic session and are made available to students in the form of ‘Marks & Standards’ documents. These documents contain information about the format, quantity and weighting of assessments as well as details about progression and remediation policies and procedures. The results of all assessments are subject to review by a range of stakeholders at all stages of the assessment process. Academic and administrative staff review raw performance data for anomalies before data is processed. RCSI has a system of internal moderation which takes place after all summative assessments and in advance of Examination Board meetings. This process of internal moderation demonstrates that best practice is applied consistently across RCSI in its assessments. For first sitting assessments, a representative sample of the cohort is moderated, and this includes a higher proportion of work that has been first marked as a ‘fail’ or at the ‘borderline’ between marking/grading bands. For supplemental assessments a representative sample of the cohort must include all failing scripts. External examiners are appointed to participate in the assessment review process as well as having an input into progression decisions. Where appropriate, passing standards are determined and maintained using appropriate methods incorporating a range of appropriate stakeholders. Progression decisions are made by Examination Boards, which are composed of a range of appropriate stakeholders including relevant academic staff, external examiners and administrative staff. Examination Boards evaluate assessment data in conjunction with the appropriate regulations and other relevant information (e.g., exceptional circumstances) to make progression decisions. In the event that the Examination Board mandates any changes (e.g., moving a borderline performance up/down into a different category), the decision and supporting reasons are recorded. Students’ marks and grades are delivered directly and on a confidential basis (electronically) as soon as is practicable following the relevant Examinations Board meeting. If a student believes that a decision is the result of a procedural irregularity, or if they possess evidence of relevant exceptional circumstances which was not available to the original decision makers when its decision was reached, RCSI has a well-developed appeals procedure.

External examiners, as independent external peers, play a vital role in the ongoing quality assurance of degree programmes at RCSI. The Medicine & Health Sciences Board approves external examiners and informs the NUI Senate, which approves and appoints them. These examiners report directly to NUI and thence to RCSI. For undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, they have access to examination results and to examples of students' assessed work, and they are involved in aspects of the examinations process and in Examination Board meetings. For research degree programmes, they are involved in the examination of the thesis and, for Level 10 awards (MD & PhD), in the *viva voce* examination of the candidate.

As a health sciences university and postgraduate/professional training body, many RCSI educational and training programmes are subject to accreditation by the relevant Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). These are the Irish Medical Council, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, CORU (The Health & Social Care Professions Regulator), the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland and the Dental Council of Ireland. Each PRSB typically undertakes periodic monitoring and accreditation site-inspections to assess compliance of the relevant degree or professional training programme with their accreditation standards. The reports arising from these site-inspections provide a valuable external perspective on the status of programmes and include useful recommendations for quality enhancement.

Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) is a concise mechanism which gathers data on the operation of educational programmes building on the previous year's achievements, addressing issues raised in external examiner reports & student feedback and presenting plans for the coming academic year. When implemented consistently, APM builds an evidence base documenting programme performance in the interval between initial programme validation and periodic programmatic review. The RCSI Quality Assurance Framework currently provides for Annual Programme Monitoring of transnational, collaborative and franchise programmes.

Programmatic Reviews take place on a rolling cycle which encompasses all RCSI programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. These reviews are carried out as outlined in Section 2.1.

RCSI, through the programmes offered by the Health Professions Education Centre (HPEC), endeavours to ensure that all academic staff are actively engaged in the quality assurance and enhancement of their own teaching and assessment activities. Peer observation of teaching is an integral component to educator development at RCSI. HPEC leads the RCSI's active and collaborative peer observation programme; hundreds of staff have availed of this opportunity since its introduction in 2015. HPEC has also partnered with other HEIs on a pilot of inter-institutional peer observation of teaching.

HPEC offers RCSI staff members access to a formal educational qualification through a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Professions Education. This is a one-year, Level 9, 60-credit course which covers four modules: Introduction to Health Professions Education; Principles of Learning and Teaching; Assessment and Feedback in Health Professions Education and Curriculum Design and Evaluation. Completion of this programme (or equivalent) is normally expected for all academic staff who teach RCSI students. HPEC also offer more informal opportunities for networking and faculty development for RCSI's community of educators. This includes an online platform with an always on library of video-recordings and "how to?" articles, short online courses and a system to book in with HPEC staff for one-to-one consultations on educational practice and research. HPEC hosts live educational sessions in the form of bespoke in-person

and online training workshops, and regular Educational Hub sessions that highlight in-house and visiting speakers. HPEC coordinates and advises on education research strategies which relate to the evaluation of programmes and other curricula development. This includes studies which examine case-based learning, generative artificial intelligence, RCSI graduates' preparedness for practice, and the use of simulated patients to facilitate communication skills learning in undergraduate cohorts.

RCSI espouses the highest standards of professionalism among students, graduates, postgraduate trainees, Members and Fellows. Academic Integrity – showing respect for the work of others and acting with honesty and responsibility in preparing and submitting coursework – is a key component of professionalism. Registry, working with the schools, faculties and the Academic Integrity Committee, maintain a comprehensive suite of documents setting out RCSI policy concerning professionalism, code of conduct, behaviour in examinations, academic integrity, etc. In addition, an RCSI Academic Working Group was established in September 2020 as formal structure to monitor and respond to initiatives launched by National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) around Academic Integrity. The working group has now been afforded Committee status and is a sub-Committee of the Quality Committee, thus giving it reporting lines to both Medicine & Health Sciences Board and Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

RCSI is committed to providing a state-of-the-art educational environment for students and trainees and makes ongoing investment in improving existing facilities and developing 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 the 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 to 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.

The RCSI Dublin city centre campus will shortly include its new facilities at 118 St Stephen's Green. This will join those in the historic and previously established buildings. A particular highlight is 26 York Street, a state-of-the-art facility over 10 floors (six above ground & four below) which provides students, surgical trainees and staff with modern cutting-edge facilities. As well as being the home of the National Surgical & Clinical Training Centre, 26 York Street also includes a 540-seat auditorium, the RCSI SIM Centre for Simulation Education & Research, the RCSI Library, a sports hall and fitness suite, and has been designed to be both energy efficient and environmentally responsible. Hospital campus facilities include the Education and Research Centre (ERC) on the Beaumont Hospital campus and a further ERC at Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown. Dentistry facilities include the Sandyford Dental Education Centre (DEC) and new centres under development, including at Connolly Hospital.

RCSI Library Service provides resources, services and facilities to support the learning, teaching, research and clinical activities of the university (see summary diagram below). Online resources and services to RCSI staff and students are described and accessible via the library website. Focused on health sciences, the working collections are largely online and include an extensive range of biomedical databases, online textbooks, clinical summary point of care tools and electronic journals. Online collections are complemented by print and anatomy model collections onsite. The library discovery platform, PrimoVE, enables students and staff to search across, and retrieve items from online and print collections. Through RCSI membership of the Irish Research eLibrary (IREL) consortium, the nationally funded e-resource licensing consortium, RCSI staff and students have access to additional leading Science Technology and Medicine (STM) and Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) resources. RCSI authors (including student authors) also benefit from open access agreements with publishers facilitated by IREL that typically allow RCSI corresponding authors to publish their articles open access, immediately on publication, without payment. On-site services and facilities at the award-winning library in the city-centre campus include diverse spaces designed to support individual and group learning. Similar facilities at the RCSI Library in Beaumont Hospital are available to hospital-based students and staff. Library health information specialists assist learners in finding, evaluating, using, and managing information as the basis of evidence-based practice and support development of these skills by providing curriculum-integrated training, dedicated customer services teams at on-site and virtual information desks, and through online guides. Postgraduate students and faculty can avail themselves of bespoke research consultations with expert library staff via email, MS Teams, Blackboard Collaborate or conference call. The full suite of library

learning support materials is available for review on Moodle, the RCSI virtual learning environment. Research outputs, and eligible dissertations and theses are available on the [RCSI open access repository](#).

Education	Impactful Research	Engagement	Contribution
Learning Support Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Library skills curriculum teaching Embedded workshops, lectures, classes Assignment related referencing clinics ✓ Student Choice module <i>Pathologies in Time</i> ✓ Extra-curricular teaching Bite Size sessions and recordings ✓ Information point Enquiries, support, advice ✓ Research & consultation service Specialised queries for staff & students Resources to Support Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Electronic resources Databases, clinical summaries, journals, e-books ✓ Library-authored support materials Videos, Library Guides, manuals ✓ Physical collections Books, journals, DVDs Spaces to Support Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Virtual spaces Website Library Guides RCSI Library on Moodle YouTube Channel ✓ Physical places Group study rooms Study pods Amphitheatre Reading lounges Computer rooms 	Research Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ RCSI open access research repository ✓ Bibliometrics support in cooperation with Office of Institutional Research & Planning ✓ Individual author profiling & metrics ✓ Advanced literature searching & systematic review support services ✓ Advisory services on scholarly publishing including copyright and licensing, where to publish, open access publishing ✓ Research data management support, including data management planning, FAIR data, archiving and related issues ✓ Individual / research group / departmental consultations Training to Support Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For Impact: Individual bibliometrics Journal metrics ✓ Increasing Your Visibility: online profiles in ORCID, SCOPUS, etc. ✓ Open Access publishing and RCSI Repository ✓ Using SciVal ✓ Altmetrics ✓ FAIR Data ✓ Data Management Planning ✓ Advanced search techniques for systematic reviews Resources to Support Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Electronic Collections Databases, journals, bibliometric analysis tools, DMPOnline, Endnote ✓ Library-authored support materials 	User Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proactive promotion of library resources, services and facilities via outreach activities in situ and social media ✓ Experiential space Expo Stage & Study Pods in the Library Learning Commons support neutral peer to peer engagement and non-academic activities ✓ Customer service excellence Listening & User Experience Methodologies informs service improvements and developments; Customer Voice feeds into service ✓ Relationships & Collaboration Primary collaborators with Estates, IT, Student Services, CoMPASS, Office of Research & Innovation, Office of Institutional Research & Planning, Health Professionals Education Centre, Communications & Events, Beaumont Hospital, Alumni & Development; Schools SU/Class Reps Public engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Culture Night, Heritage Week, Archives Week, ERASMUS Exchange Week, Library Ireland Week, Public Seminars & exhibitions, Social media & Heritage Blog ✓ Fact checking and source material for RCSI events and VIPs 	Primary Function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Management and business owner of systems & services to enable discovery, curation and preservation of institutional information assets past and present RCSI Internal Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Academic Council ✓ Art Committee ✓ Awards & Qualifications Committee ✓ Student Affairs Committee ✓ FAIR Data Committee ✓ EDI Committee ✓ Teaching & Learning Committee ✓ Climate Health & Sustainability Committee ✓ EDI Fora External Committees & Memberships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CONUL Board & sub-groups ✓ National Open Research Forum & working groups ✓ IRel & Advisory & Negotiations Groups ✓ SCONUL (UK) Board and sub-groups ✓ LIBER (Europe) ✓ AAHSL (North America)

The RCSI SIM Centre for Simulation Education and Research enables RCSI's mission by delivering transformative learning experiences and leading impactful research. Through collaboration, learner-centeredness, and patient focus, it strives to enable excellent, outcomes-based, translational education and research. The centre is accredited by the Network of Accredited Skills Centres in Europe (NASCE). The multi-purpose surgical training suite, the fully functioning mock operating theatre, a mock emergency room and mock labour ward provide authentic settings for immersive team training. Each area is equipped with the audio-visual learning system to provide video assisted 360 feedback and video support after event reflection. A particular strength of RCSI SIM lies with the simulated participant (SP) programme, over 100 individuals who support a wide array of curricula at RCSI, both for training and assessment. In line with international best practice, trained SPs facilitate the delivery of consistent repeated educational experiences, which allow learners reach competence through deliberate and repeated practice. The centre incorporates:

- Ten outpatient consultation rooms where simulated participants (professional actors & lay volunteers who have undertaken specific in-house training) assist in developing students' consultation skills.
- Six hospital ward simulation rooms, which use high-fidelity manikins to develop students' clinical skills, as well as to build their confidence in dealing with emergency situations, such as complications during labour.
- A task training laboratory with a full range of teaching models, manikins, and task trainers (needle biopsy, insertion of IV lines, etc.).
- A large, fully equipped and multi-purpose wet lab accommodating up to 30 students or professional trainees.
- A large Surgical Simulator Suite accommodating 20 trainees, with an array of state-of-the-art augmented reality simulators and a hub for Robotic training courses.

- A mock operating room, designed for inter-professional team training and non-technical skills (human factors) training with a separate control room and viewing/debrief room.
- An innovation lab to develop and support simulated-related projects to create bespoke physical simulation models, including design, material evaluation, prototyping, 3D printing, testing and production, to enable more authentic and accessible learning environments for technical staff, students, faculty, researchers and educators.

The breadth and reach of the RCSI SIM Centre's educational efforts encompass undergraduate, postgraduate, and continuing professional development across the institution. In 2024–2025, the RCSI SIM team supported over 56,000 hours of individual learner simulation training for both undergraduate and postgraduate learners.

RCSI has a longstanding history of supporting students through the provision of modern technology to facilitate learning. All students have access to the full Microsoft suite of services, including OneDrive cloud storage, email, Office 365 applications and Teams online meetings. When students start with RCSI, digital training is provided through drop-in sessions with IT, online videos, and presentations on IT Support services. Undergraduate students are provided with laptops, to ensure that they are digitally equipped both while studying online and when on clinical placements. An extensive range of applications are provided by RCSI to support learning and students including:

System name	Role
CampusTIES	Student admission, registration
Quercus	Student academic records
Kaizen	Academic & welfare supports, real-time feedback, extra-curricular, grades
Turnitin	Academic integrity
In-Place	Placement management
Practique	Assessment and proctoring
Moodle	Learning Management System
Student Life HQ	Hub for students' clubs and societies
Student Pulse	Student feedback surveys
Career Hub	Careers support
Mentor Network	Enables students to engage with mentors
AKARI	Curriculum planning and mapping
Ungerboek	Timetabling
Blackboard Collaborate	Online lectures and tutorials
TurningPoint	Supporting lecture interaction
AdvaNova	Self-service book borrowing/return and library account management
Sentry	Self-service group study room booking
Figshare	Theses & open access research repository
Springshare LibGuides	Online subject library guides
PrimoVE	Searching across library online & print resources

Springshare LibChat	Library online chat
MyRCSI	Student App
Sentry Juno	Library Group Study Room online booking system
OpenAthens	Manages authentication to subscribed e-resources

RCSI's Centre for Mastery Personal, Professional & Academic Success (CoMPPAS) provides a comprehensive pastoral care support framework to all students, while the Student Services Office delivers a range of non-academic services to support student engagement and enhance the student journey. RCSI has a diverse student body, and the specific pastoral care needs of international students substantially represent the mainstream concern of the University and the focus of pastoral and academic support service provision. As such, services have been designed to fully integrate those needs as core to the provision of services.

CoMPPAS is an integrated multi-disciplinary team of professionals and specialists providing a holistic support framework designed to support and empower students to achieve their personal, professional and academic goals. The range of professional services offered include Student Welfare & Wellbeing, Career Readiness, Learning Access & Facilitation (Disability), Academic Performance and Communication & Language. The welfare team is staffed by four CORU registered social workers who function as the student welfare officers. RCSI also engages several independent third-party services: the RCSI Counselling Service which comprises a panel of 23 registered counsellors; the Mercer's Medical Centre GP Service; the RCSI Acute Psychiatric support service provided by external consultant psychiatrists. The CoMPPAS Student Assistance Programme provides 24hr/365-day access to resources out of hours and, where necessary, emergency face to face or telephonic counselling nationally or internationally. Spectrum Health provides a global network of counselling services available 24/7 to both students and staff.

The RCSI careerhub is staffed by seven team members, including the head of service and three career consultants. The career consultants are all qualified to masters level in an appropriate guidance counselling qualification. The career guidance function is delivered through one to one and group guidance appointments, presentations and workshops that are either embedded into the curriculum or extracurricular. This service is available to all undergraduate and full-time postgraduate students up to three years post-graduation. The RCSI careerhub facilitates the RCSI mentor network, connecting students in their clinical years with RCSI alumni. The incoming and outgoing clinical electives programme is delivered through the RCSI careerhub along with the USMLE preparation programme, licensing examination eligibility and North American residency application processing for medical students, along with the annual graduate outcome reporting.

Achieving academic success is an essential part of becoming a self-regulated, lifelong learner. Addressing academic challenges and identifying growth opportunities are critical steps in developing the skills needed to succeed as a healthcare professional. The Career Development Team also supports students in overcoming these challenges and fostering learning strategies for future success.

RCSI's extensive student services combine academic, professional, and personal development support with vibrant cultural and recreational offerings. This ensures students thrive in a dynamic, inclusive, and supportive environment throughout their time at RCSI. The Student Services Office focuses on non-academic aspects of student life to enhance the overall RCSI experience. Key offerings include:

- Accommodation — on-campus provision, and guidance in securing off-campus accommodation.
- Immigration support - navigating visa and immigration requirements.
- Scholarship Support – guidance and funding.
- Financial assistance - unexpected hardship and emergency supports.
- Student life – clubs, societies, Student Union, student events.
- Merchandise and student publications.
- Fitness and recreation – sports hall and gym facilities, with free personal training, fitness programs, group classes, dietary guidance.
- Administrative support – student leadership.

A comprehensive undergraduate point of entry induction and orientation programme is provided for new students during the first six weeks of each semester of their first year at RCSI. An adapted programme is provided to graduate entry students in line with their prior experience of higher education. In addition, at registration, undergraduate students are assigned an Academic Mentor/Personal Tutor. As an international student community, a significant value is placed on intercultural competence and the celebration of RCSI's cultural diversity. This includes specific input on intercultural awareness and communication to all students, as well as completion of an online module in the first weeks on the programme. Cultural Diversity Month takes place annually; this student-led initiative is supported by the Student Services Office. Events include the Cultural Exhibition Fair, International Night and International Food Night where students have a unique opportunity to showcase the culture, food, music, dance, landscape, clothing, history and traditions from their home countries.

The Student Services Office uses a variety of platforms to communicate with students. These include email, weekly newsletters, information screens (updated daily; university-wide), Student Life HQ, RCS-Eye, Student Services Website (used for Gym registration), Moodle, the Student Life Instagram Account, MyRCSI App (a wraparound app signposting all supports and services) and the RCSI website. Student Life HQ is a one-stop digital shop for all clubs, societies and student events. It features a real-time calendar with direct access to virtual events and activities and as a centralised hub to learn about, and sign up to, the 36 Sports Clubs and 55 Societies.

Several Handbooks/Guides are produced by Student Services. The Orientation Guide has been designed to provide students with information, direction, and advice in relation to life as a student at RCSI. It also serves to introduce student life in Dublin. The Clubs & Societies Handbook contains important safety advice and guidelines on how to run each club or society. The Safety Booklet advises students of simple, preventative measures which they can use to help to protect themselves from a distressing situation. The Gym Guide outlines the key services provided in the Gym.

The RCSI learning experience, by virtue of the student profile, requires full integration between students of all cultural backgrounds across all learning activities. As part of the induction programme, the CoMPPAS team run a number of large-scale welcome lunches to assist in student socialisation. Additionally, a comprehensive Peer to Peer mentoring programme makes immediately available 'near peer' support for students new to Dublin and Ireland. RCSI respects all religions and none; a non-denominational serenity room and gender-specific Islamic prayer rooms are available on campus for students of all backgrounds who wish to avail of them. International student integration is encouraged through a range of activities both specially created within RCSI and those available nationally, e.g. [REACH](#) RCSI; Student Ambassador Programme; RCSI International Citizenship Programme. The International Citizenship award is a

longitudinal programme which encourages students to reflect on and develop the skills, values and attitudes that they will need to work effectively in a culturally diverse healthcare environment. The programme leads to an award for those students who show an 'international outlook' through demonstration of personal development and learning from their interactions with others from diverse backgrounds during extracurricular activities.

RCSI is dedicated to enhancing the communication skills all of its international learners including its non-native English-speaking student population. The educational approach taken, due to our diverse student body and their needs, is best achieved through holistic and embedded means with additional learning facilities provided where required. This is achieved through a variety of avenues both inside the curriculum and as a co-curricular or as additional learning provision. Communication skills development for the international student body is provided for through a learning tool in a self-access format in a dedicated communication and language lab space. Ongoing development and management of technology-based, language and communication resources and laboratory learning environments is achieved through guidance from the Lecturer in Communications who guides the use of this space. This is both a physical and virtual space which provides flexible language learning tools and a dedicated learning space for non-native speaking students of RCSI. RCSI CoMPPAS is the service through which learners wishing to access the language self-access learning facilities can be initially identified and directed.

The RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 placed student partnership as a core strategic enabler in striving to transform healthcare education, research and service for the benefit of human health. In striving to achieve this, RCSI appointed a Deputy Dean for Student Engagement in 2018, and a university-wide RCSI Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) Committee was subsequently established. A formal StEP programme was launched in 2020-2021 which includes (i) a definition of student partnership in the context of RCSI, (ii) a bespoke RCSI StEP framework, (iii) formal StEP Agreements, launched annually, between RCSI and the SU and PGSU teams, (iv) annual StEP project funding and (v) annual StEP Student Partnership Champion Awards.

As outlined in RCSI's current strategy, the StEP programme is now at the core of providing a distinctive and transformational educational experience that sets students up for success at RCSI and as future graduates. The programme defines and drives student engagement and partnership across all campus activities and touch points in the student journey, positively contributing to RCSI's institutional management and key decision-making processes, its educational and research programmes, and its local communities and social environment. As external validation of the university-wide culture of student engagement and partnership, RCSI was presented with the highly prestigious and internationally recognised AMEE ASPIRE-To-Excellence Award for Student Engagement in August 2022.

Public and patient involvement (PPI) in education is embedded throughout the RCSI student journey as they learn from expert patients who educate by sharing their stories, enabling understanding of the patient experience and supporting final-year exams. Simulated patients and actors portray the patient experience, assess and provide individualised feedback, enabling student reflection. Patients and the public also help to shape the future of RCSI education by getting involved in case design for interactive learning sessions, shaping curriculum, and through committee membership.

RCSI's international students are fully active in terms of formal student leadership and representative roles within university structures. This is clearly reflected in the diversity of the undergraduate and

postgraduate Students' Union teams and other representative & consultative bodies. One of the key outputs of the StEP programme in 2020-2021 was the development of a formal policy to provide for an open, transparent and inclusive process for the recruitment of student representatives onto its committees, working groups and fora, ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to represent the student voice.

RCSI places a particular emphasis on the provision of support to students registered on online learning programmes at the University. These programmes are delivered by the postgraduate schools with support from the [RCSI Online](#) service. Students have access to high-quality digitally developed programmes through a tailored virtual learning environment, designed to facilitate a seamless and intuitive student journey, ensuring maximum engagement and the establishment of a learning community, regardless of location. The University's online programmes consist of both asynchronous and synchronous content supporting a self-paced and flexible educational experience. Student orientation is crucial to the onboarding process for these programmes, and the orientation programme is designed to prepare students for their learning journey and to ensure a quality and engaged student experience. Technical support is provided to learners to guide them, regardless of their level of technical ability. The onboarding process ensures that students can understand the context and requirements of the programme, can access the virtual learning environment and virtual classrooms and have completed all necessary exercises to ensure a smooth experience. Students are guided through the initial access and use of the software required to engage with the programme. Regular facilitated virtual drop-in sessions are scheduled for both students and adjunct faculty to encourage them to visit the virtual classrooms and to test accessibility and audio settings in advance of teaching sessions, and technical support is provided on an ongoing basis. From the outset, students have access to the programme schedule and are informed in a timely manner of any changes that need to be made. They are also made aware of the key contacts and people available to them during their academic journey including the Programme Director, Module Leaders and Programme Coordinator and of the areas and issues with which these individuals can support.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

The RCSI School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) manages all research programmes leading to higher degree awards. The SPGS Committee is responsible for overall governance and management of the School. The Taught Postgraduate Programme Management Committee has responsibility for policy oversight and engagement with the academic directors of all taught postgraduate programmes in RCSI, and the Academic Review Committee (ARC) reviews all new applications for research degrees and transfer requests between research programmes. These committees ensure efficient and timely registration of new students with quality research proposals and both report to the SPGS Committee.

All policies & procedures in relation to programmes of research leading to postgraduate degree awards of RCSI (at Level 9 & 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications) are aligned to Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes. NFQ Level 10 programmes (MD, PhD, Professional Doctorates) are mapped to the National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015). Academic Regulations for Research Degrees (published on the RCSI Website) and the on-line application process for research degrees emphasise the centrality of deep engagement with a question, problem or hypothesis at the frontiers of knowledge, and advancement of these frontiers under the guidance of expert and committed supervisory teams. In addition, they specify the NFQ Level 9 & 10 Descriptors for higher degrees by research.

RCSI research postgraduate degree programmes [MSc, MCh, MD, PhD & Professional Doctorates] are structured programmes. Thus, while each research group will teach their students the specific research skills required for their bespoke projects, this is underpinned by an array of compulsory core modules. For example, Research Ethics & Integrity, Research Methodology, Writing & Communication Skills, and Biostatistics (including data collection, management and analysis). Doctoral students on centre-driven PhD programmes (e.g. SPHeRE & ICAT) undertake defined, topic specific core modules in Year 1 in parallel with a rigorous thesis definition and fine-tuning exercise during their first year. In some Programmatic PhDs (e.g., SPHeRE), a full suite of programmes is provided to replace the generic set of core modules. The SPGS also provides an in-person induction day that provides research students with information about available supports and resources.

The SPGS implements a rigorous end-to-end process to guide each research student from initial application through to the final examination of their work for award of their degree.

- All student applications for research awards undergo rigorous review. Students are interviewed by the project supervisors and complete a project proposal form that is scrutinised by the Academic Review Committee. Projects that have undergone previous formal peer review (e.g. through competitive grant funding) are checked for candidate eligibility, evidence of statistical support during experimental design, evidence for research ethics application status and to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate resources to support successful completion of the project. Non-peer-reviewed or privately funded proposals are assessed in the same manner but additionally for the quality of the project proposal (general content, expected time required for completion, student support, probability of achieving publication or equivalent standard). In the case of applicants for the RCSI Strategic Academic Recruitment Programme (StAR) MD and PhD programmes, applicants are interviewed also by a panel of academics/clinicians selected by the SPGS.
- Each project has a Supervisory Team made up of at least two supervisors (one of which must have previous supervisory experience to successful completion) who manage the student and the project.

Students are recommended to meet a member of their supervisory team at least once a month. Some programmes (e.g., MD) require specific 'milestone' meetings, which are sessions where all the students at the same stage on a programme present their work to each other and to their supervisors. The students are assessed through public questioning by a panel of experts across a range of specialties and they are given formal feedback.

- Each student undergoes an annual review of their progress, carried out by two academics who are independent of the core supervisory team. The process takes the form of a mini viva. In advance of the mini viva, the student writes a substantial report on progress in their research project and includes highlights of their professional development as a researcher. During the viva, the student presents a brief summary of their work followed by questions from the review panel on various aspects of their project and future plans. Following the mini viva, the reviewers submit a brief report on the project and the progress of the student. Reviewers are asked to come to a unanimous decision regarding the progression of the student to the next academic session, with three available outcomes: 'Progress', 'Do not progress – repeat review in six months' or 'Do not progress – exit'. Both students and supervisors have access to the report. An appeal process is available to students who receive an unfavourable decision from the reviewers. The annual review process was evaluated following student survey feedback and follow-up focus groups in 2021, resulting in changes to the annual report to reflect a greater focus on goals-driven professional development and training.
- In the event of conflict between a research student and their supervisor, students are encouraged to contact the SPGS for help or support, and a formal process can be undertaken as detailed in the internal Conflict Resolution Policy.
- At least six months in advance of submitting their thesis, all students are required to submit a Thesis Completion Plan, outlining their goals and timelines for completing their projects. For StAR MD candidates, the Thesis Completion Plan is presented and defended in an open forum after 18 months of research.
- All students are encouraged to present their work in institution-wide fora to build their academic presentation skills; for example, the annual RCSI Research Day and the annual 'Thesis-in-3 event' where students describe their research in three minutes. In addition to these institutional level events, all students are encouraged to present their work, to their own research groups, monthly. Students are also encouraged to present at national and international conferences, networking events and workshops within their chosen field of research. Funding for these may be provided by RCSI StAR Programmes or individual project grants.
- For the final assessment of a thesis submission, the requirement for the work to be of publishable standard, and to demonstrate an ability to conduct original research and to test a hypothesis, is emphasised in the RCSI Academic Regulations for Research Degrees. Level 10 awards (MD & PhD) are examined in a Viva Voce examination format whereby the student must be able to demonstrate the originality of their research to the examiners. Supervisors are required to nominate examiners who meet specific criteria as outlined in academic regulations.
- For all research degree awards, examiners are provided with a thesis report template which specifically asks examiners to answer the question: 'Is the thesis an original work that makes a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study?' For theses presented through the thesis by publication route (see below), the originality of the work is attested by the peer-review process that the individual publications were subject to.

The SPGS employs several measures to ensure that thesis submissions, irrespective of format, are held to a consistent standard across disciplines. Each January, students in their final year are invited to attend a

thesis completion workshop which explains how they should present their thesis and the examination process; it also outlines where students can find further support for writing their thesis – this includes access to Vitae resources and to LinkedIn Learning. Students are also directed to the RCSI Repository, which holds examples of previously submitted theses. A Thesis Presentation Guidelines document also outlines what the thesis should include and how it should be presented. Additionally, thesis examiners are asked to comment on whether the examined thesis is in line with the standards of theses that are submitted in their home university and in other universities in which they have examined.

The University has introduced PhD-by-Prior-Publication and MD-by-Prior-Publication submission routes which offer the opportunity to complete a level 10 year-long programme to those with a record of publications in biomedical, clinical, surgical and health services research. This route allows scholars who have sufficient research experience at doctoral level, as demonstrated through previously published material, to gain academic recognition for their work over a minimum registration period of one year. Researchers who have published their own original research, which examiners deem has made a significant contribution to knowledge, can obtain a PhD or MD award in recognition of this work when it is presented in the form of a coherent thesis and successfully assessed in a viva voce examination. To be eligible to submit for a PhD-by-Prior-Publication, the candidate must have published a minimum of five original research papers in journals ranked Q1 in their relevant fields in the ten years prior to the date of application for admission and be senior author (first or last author) on all five research papers. To be eligible to submit for an MD-by-Prior-Publication, the candidate must have published a minimum of three original research papers in journals ranked Q1 or Q2 in their relevant fields in the ten years prior to the date of application for admission and be senior author (first or last author) on all three data-based papers.

The SPGS emphasises the broader need for personal and professional development of postgraduate students. All research students have access to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF), as part of the core module Postgraduate Essentials (PC01), which helps to identify their strengths and prioritise their own areas for development. Vitae RDF provides students with tools to identify and leverage opportunities for their own personal and professional development and helps them to consider their career prospects and identify opportunities for career progression. The SPGS offers Internship and ERASMUS+ exchange programmes to enable students to avail of opportunities to travel to institutions overseas for work experience. Research students can contribute to RCSI undergraduate teaching programmes as laboratory demonstrators & tutors. A short on-line course ‘Essential Skills for Laboratory Demonstrators’ is offered to those who wish to participate in these activities. Research students can volunteer to work in the local community through [REACH RCSI](#), the University’s community engagement and access programme, which works with second-level students from disadvantaged backgrounds to provide tutoring in science subjects. Research students can also participate in the Student Engagement and Partnership Programme (StEP), the Student Leadership Development Programme and can compete for a Research Secondment Award to work abroad during their studies. The SPGS is working currently with the RCSI careers team ([RCSI CoMPPAS](#)) to establish a Career Development Programme for Research Students.

Ensuring the quality of the research environment and of the supervision provided to postgraduate research students is a key activity of SPGS. The ARC reviews projects to ensure that there is supervisory capacity for projects, as well as the appropriate laboratory and other resources to ensure successful completion of the project. Supervisor Training is provided to new supervisors once a year, which outlines their responsibilities to the students they supervise and the supports available to supervisors. The RCSI

Moodle Virtual Learning Environment has a dedicated area for resources for Supervisors, including a roadmap to onboard students, the set of relevant forms and policies that supervisors should be familiar with, an online training course and guidelines on how to mentor students. In 2024, the Epigeum on-line course, 'Supervising Doctoral Studies' was made available to all supervisors. Mandatory completion of this course is being phased in. RCSI also participates in the Research Supervisor Support & Development Programme (RSSDP), which is a series of workshops targeted at new, inexperienced research supervisors, and at more experienced staff who would like to refresh their knowledge on aspects of research supervisory practice. In 2020, the successful RSSDP collaboration between UCD, TCD and RCSI was extended to include the Karolinska Institute (Stockholm) and UNSW (Sydney, Australia) and in 2021 to include IUA Universities. Institutions offer specific workshops or online supports that are open to partner institutions. These collaborative workshops address key, generic research supervisor challenges. In relation to ethical oversight of research within the University, research ethics committees act to ensure the highest standards of conduct in research at RCSI. This is achieved [a] by evaluating ethical considerations of all research projects involving human or animal participants, and conducted by or through members of staff, which are not evaluated by other similar committees; and [b] by fulfilling an educational and advisory role regarding ethical aspects of research to promote best practice in research conducted throughout RCSI.

The SPGS avails of student satisfaction & engagement survey data generated by the QEO through regular internal surveys and external surveys such as [StudentSurvey.ie](#). The quantitative and qualitative data from these surveys are communicated to the SPGS team who incorporate this feedback into the annual planning process. The voice of postgraduate research students is heard also through their participation in the Postgraduate Students' Union (PGSU). The PGSU President is a member of the SPGS Committee and informal meetings take place fortnightly between the PGSU President & Vice-President and the SPGS Manager & Head of School.

The RCSI Awards and Qualifications Committee (A&QC) has responsibility, for the validation, revalidation and review of all programmes leading to degree awards of RCSI. As such it maintains oversight of all postgraduate programmes (taught and by research), considering new programme proposals and any changes required to existing programmes. The A&QC also supports rolling Programmatic Reviews which are led by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) and are aligned with the Internal Quality Reviews (IQR). The process and follows the calendar approved by the Quality Committee and published on the Quality section of the RCSI website. RCSI is a member of the European Universities Association (EUA), and staff participate in conferences, thematic groups and events run by EUA Council of Doctoral Education. The SPGS is a member of the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE), and staff members regularly attend UKCGE events and conferences.

RCSI is committed to carrying out research to the highest standards of professionalism and scientific rigour to ensure the accuracy and integrity of research outputs. The University's approach to research conduct and integrity aligns with the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) and with [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#). These principles are central to the RCSI approach to [Research Governance](#). RCSI's institutional Academic Integrity Committee includes the manager of the SPGS as a member. Examiner appointments for research awards are reviewed and signed off by several bodies; firstly, by the SPGS Committee which then makes a recommendation for appointment of the examiner to Academic Council and to Medicine & Health Sciences Board and, ultimately, to the NUI. Students must sign and agree the Postgraduate Code of Research Conduct (which

incorporates the [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)) and the [RCSI Statement on Research Integrity](#). All research students must complete a Research Ethics and Integrity module in their first year to ensure that they have a basic grounding in the concepts of research integrity. Students can also access the [Epigeum](#) Research Integrity training programme online, a self-directed course specifically developed for Irish researchers.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Recruiting and developing RCSI's academic, research and professional staff is central to excellence in teaching, postgraduate training and research. RCSI seeks to recruit, retain and promote outstanding academic staff who enable students and postgraduate trainees to reach their full potential. Academic appointments and promotions are competitive and based on objective criteria (education, research and service contributions). The human resources (HR) function based at RCSI Dublin is responsible for all aspects of recruitment and subsequent human resource management across RCSI's campus network in Ireland and overseas. The [Careers at RCSI](#) webpages offer an overview of RCSI as an international employer, including recruitment policies and FAQs.

Staff recruitment follows a well-defined process (with minor variations depending on the grade of post being filled) which is supported at all stages by HR. For senior academic roles, the process is as follows:

- **Role planning:** Upcoming roles are identified through retirement tracking, annual departmental business planning and workforce planning. These are largely highly specialised roles, where RCSI requires the ability to attract candidates (nationally and internationally) with the academic, research and leadership expertise required. The development of a candidate pool should commence several years in advance. This pipeline/pool development process will be guided by an Academic Search Committee (ASC).
- **Recruitment approach:** The ASC will make decisions on advertising channels (newspapers, journals, websites etc.); sourcing channels (conferences etc.); use of an external search agency and whether support from the in-house International Talent Specialist is needed. The recruitment team will then meet with the most relevant internal stakeholders to identify details of the appropriate channels to advertise and market the posts.
- **Shortlisting:** The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (DVCAA) leads the shortlisting process for Professors and Associate Professors but may delegate this responsibility to the nominated chair, or hiring lead, for Associate Professors or Academic Clinicians below Head of Department level and for other roles. Equally, if the DVCAA cannot sit on a panel, they will nominate a suitable replacement. All members of the interview panel must be invited to participate in the shortlisting process to [a] ensure that fair and transparent decisions are reached, and [b] establish a number of quality candidates. In the absence of all members of the interview panel being available to participate in the shortlisting process, then, at a minimum, the Head of School and Head of Discipline, must be involved in the shortlisting process. The most highly ranked candidates are called for interview and the number called for interview should ideally reflect an applicant to appointment ratio of 5:1 (e.g., average of five candidates per position), for reasons of fairness and equity. Gender balance and diversity of applicants called for interview should also form part of the consideration.
- **Interviews:** For Head of Department, Head of School or Centre Director roles, RCSI generally requires a two-stage process, a pre-interview visit and a formal interview. There is a requirement for the interview panel to be gender balanced and have someone with appropriate external expertise. Some posts may have a minimum requirement for four panel members, with academic members as the majority. Additionally, time will be scheduled at the end of the interviews for the panel to discuss each candidate in detail and provide objective scoring. During this time, the panel should come to a mutual agreement on the outcome of the interviews. All interview notes and scoresheets are collected by the HR Representative on the panel. All staff are required to complete mandatory Equality, Diversity and

Inclusion training which includes a module specifically on unconscious bias. The Learning and Development team also offer a half-day training session for interview panel members.

- **Reference checks & offers:** Two references are required from the agreed candidate before an offer is made. The referees must be people that the candidate reported into, be relevant to the role that is being recruited for and be as current as possible. A recruitment representative will contact the candidate to let them know that their references will be checked. Details of the new employee's qualifications are stored on the Core HR system. The parameters of the offer are agreed between the relevant Senior Management Team (SMT) member, and the Director of HR. Offers are made by the HR Director or a member of the HR team, who also handles any contract negotiations.
- **Onboarding process:** RCSI recognises the importance of ensuring that successful candidates are welcomed into RCSI and given every support and assistance to help them settle into their new role. For senior positions, this process often begins before the successful candidate is formally in post. An induction and on-boarding plan is developed with HR and the Head of Department to guide the process.

RCSI prioritises staff development in line with its overall philosophy of life-long learning. The institution supports staff to participate in the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Professions Education offered by the Health Professions Education Centre. HPEC also offer a range of other educational inputs for staff.

In parallel, a wide range of developmental supports are offered through the Staff Learning and Development function within the HR team. These include:

- The annual Staff Development Scheme which offers subsidised places to staff on a range of Level 8 and 9 programmes run by the Graduate School of Healthcare Management and other schools. Staff can also apply for funding support to pursue doctoral studies in RCSI and academic qualifications in other HEIs.
- Short courses and workshops across a range of topics (approx. 60 in this period), online learning, bespoke team development sessions and 1:1 coaching and mentoring opportunities.
- The Positive Connections mentoring programme which supports early career academics and has continued to expand with 25 mentoring pairs during 2025.
- 14 colleagues were selected to participate in the Aurora Women's Leadership Development programme and worked with institutional mentors throughout the programme bringing the total number of RCSI colleagues who have participated in the programme to over 100.
- A Career Development Programme is offered to support the annual intake of circa 100 clinical educators; this includes mentoring from senior clinicians, CV preparation, interview skills and careers talks.
- The Managing Through People programme provides comprehensive leadership development for front line people managers offering a wide range of learning modalities including expert led sessions, 360 assessment and coaching, emotional intelligence profiling, reflective practice and peer mentoring.

These development opportunities are advertised to all staff through the internal social media platform, WorkVivo, through the HR Hub and via internal mailing lists. On an annual basis, all staff are required to complete online training on General Data Protection Regulations, Cyber Security Awareness, Health and Safety Awareness and an Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, with a compliance rate of 100%, during the reporting period. HR also provides a campus-wide licence for the online training library of LinkedIn Learning providing access to thousands of high-quality video-based training courses.

RCSI continues to monitor policies to support and guide staff. During the reporting period the following policies were updated:

- RCSI Open Disclosure Policy
- RCSI Hybrid Working Policy
- Intellectual Property Policy
- EDI Policy

In July 2025, the HR Buddy Bot (Case Study 5) launched. Resulting from a collaboration between IT and HR, using Microsoft technology, the HR Buddy Bot has improved employee experience by giving instant answers to general HR-related queries.

During the reporting period, RCSI was recognised for the second consecutive year as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work. This was based on an anonymous external survey of staff; RCSI received a rating of excellent across all areas assessed.

Through the Vice Chancellors Awards RCSI recognises colleagues who go above and beyond in their roles, bringing RCSI's values of Respect, Collaboration, Scholarship and Innovation to life. Approximately 200 staff nominated their fellow colleagues and teams across six award categories.

In terms of assuring/enhancing teaching quality, the RCSI Policy and Guidelines for Academic Promotion evaluate applicants 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 shorter). A qualification in education is needed to be competitive at academic promotion rounds. Most staff members are involved also in the annual Professional Development Planning (PDP) process (which compliments the Academic Promotions Process) through which they identify their goals and development needs for the coming 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 provides a wide range of opportunities for staff to teach, learn or conduct research at institutions that provide higher education outside the State, or to obtain relevant work experience outside the State. RCSI participates in national and international initiatives including the International Credit Mobility Programme, Erasmus+, Fulbright and the Eisenhower Fellowship. RCSI runs several specific programmes including the staff Sabbatical Leave Scheme. Academic staff are frequently invited to present at international conferences and funding is made available to facilitate conference participation. Staff are also widely engaged in international committees and organisations (e.g., editorial boards of international journals) in their areas of expertise.

RCSI also provides opportunities for staff of institutions that provide higher education outside the State to teach, learn or conduct research in RCSI. Visiting academics contribute to intellectual activity in RCSI, expand opportunities for networking, build relationships internationally and stimulate further engagement such as joint research work, publications and reciprocal visits. Options for such staff include Educator in Residence, Erasmus+, Fulbright Scholar, Adjunct and Visiting Academic Staff Scheme, Visiting Scientist Scheme and appointments as External Examiners on postgraduate programmes.

RCSI provides a wide range of general development, pastoral care and welfare services to staff including health & wellbeing resources, supports for parents & carers and pension & retirement benefits. All staff and students can avail of services including free counselling and support from an external provider Spectrum Health. The RCSI INSPIRE programme aims to promote health and wellbeing.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Data about programmes and other activities is collected and analysed through a variety of processes to support quality assurance. Information sources include institutional metrics, student population profiles, student feedback, student progression rates, HEA return data, alumni career paths and information related to student support.

Institutional Metrics:

An essential information stream that contributes to quality assurance processes, business planning and to the monitoring of implementation of institutional strategy. Data that feeds into strategy implementation and impact monitoring is gathered annually by the Vice Chancellors Office, including in the following areas: health and societal wellbeing, education and student success, research and innovation and foundations for sustainable impact. These are monitored routinely by the Senior Management Team and shared with senior leaders and governing committees across RCSI. The Insights & Planning Office (IPO), established in 2020, helps to develop RCSI's business intelligence and management information and reporting capability. The IPO provides frequent bibliometric analysis including benchmarking and analysis and insights on the international higher education landscape.

Profile of student population:

RCSI routinely collects information about the student population through Registry.

Student Feedback:

As set out in section 2.4, the QEO manages the collection, analysis and dissemination of student feedback in RCSI. Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students in Dublin and Bahrain are given an opportunity to give feedback about modules completed in each semester while research scholars complete a scholar experience survey. All student surveys contain a series of core items relating to modules, assessments, skills and staff. Surveys are developed in collaboration with Year/Programme Directors and other faculty staff who have an opportunity to suggest additional survey items if required. The Students' Union participates in survey promotion. The QEO conducts an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative feedback to inform and enhance the delivery of RCSI programmes. Detailed reports that contain both quantitative and qualitative survey responses are circulated to Programme & Year Directors who can share the findings with their teaching staff. This gives module coordinators and facilitators an opportunity to identify areas for improvement. To close the feedback loop, quantitative reports (without open-ended comments) are routinely made available to students via the Moodle virtual learning environment, and schools are encouraged to present their quality improvement plans based on this feedback to their students. A separate loop-closing system is implemented in RCSI Bahrain. In 2020-21, RCSI introduced the "Student Pulse Poll", to capture feedback on a more frequent basis in response to the rapid changes in student experience due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This consisted of a short, 4-question survey conducted monthly to track changes in student experience. The frequency has been gradually decreased to one Student Pulse survey at the beginning of the academic year, complemented by a longer end of Semester survey.

Student progression rates:

Progression rates and graduate numbers for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are reported by the RCSI Registry.

Student Engagement Dashboard:

Software designed by the RCSI IT Department has been implemented which reflects student involvement and interaction with their course material in Moodle in real time. The software allows students to compare their engagement in Moodle to the average level of class engagement and provides an early detection alert to staff.

HEA returns:

RCSI is required to collect data for the HEA Annual Statistical Return. The process to extract data and submit to the HEA is managed by Registry. This data is used to inform national policy and strategy in the Higher Education Sector.

Career paths of graduates:

RCSI has an alumni community of over 35,000 graduates in 108 countries worldwide. Engagement with the alumni community is managed by the University's Alumni Relations Team, who coordinate alumni events and communications as well as collecting and managing information about graduates in the Alumni Database (CRM). The CRM includes information such as employment data e.g., workplace, area of practice, and data related to interest and participation in volunteering at RCSI. Linked to the CRM, an Alumni Portal was launched in 2024. Through the portal as well as via various data verification projects, graduates have the ability and opportunity to manage and update their contact details including employment data. The Alumni Relations Team conduct an annual census reporting on various metrics including employment data. For 2025, the Alumni Relations Team reported that they hold at least one employment data record for 27% of RCSI Dublin graduates in the CRM. This has increased from 19% in 2024.

Data Protection: RCSI operates in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. RCSI's Privacy Policy is published on the [website](#) and the following Data Protection Policies are available on the staff portal:

- Data Privacy Statement
- Data Subject Rights Policy
- Data Breach Policy
- Data Processors Policy
- Data Sharing Checklist
- RCSI Data Retention Policy
- Clean Desk Policy
- Privacy By Design Policy

Annual Data Protection Training is a mandatory requirement among RCSI Staff.

Information on freedom of information (FOI) is also published on the [website](#); this includes detailed information on the [FOI process](#) at RCSI.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

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, Faculties and Professional Support Units both in Ireland and overseas. In keeping with this, RCSI publishes Peer Review Group reports and Quality Improvement Plans arising from internal quality reviews. Additional Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) documentation including internal review guidelines and templates for academic and professional support units, guidelines and report templates for peer review groups and guidelines and templates for quality improvement plans are also available on the website. Furthermore, the RCSI Quality Framework and Calendar of Reviews are published online.

Learner information:

The RCSI website is the primary source of information for prospective students on all programmes and awards. On the “Study with us” pages on the RCSI website, learners can find details of programmes available at undergraduate and postgraduate level and on higher degrees by research. Information is tailored for either undergraduate or postgraduate learners and includes various entry routes, programme award, NFAQ level, programme structure, entry requirements, fees, programme content, student testimonials and application processes. Learners can also find information on access, scholarships, open days, and much more.

RCSI always aims to create high-quality marketing material to give prospective students a realistic and immersive sense of the academic and non-academic experience they can expect at the University. The University also has an extensive communications programme in place to keep prospective learners up to date on news and developments regarding the academic and social experiences of current students. Other sources of information for prospective learners include CRM emails, school guidance counsellors, the RCSI prospectuses, social media activities (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube), external education and careers portals, and overseas agents’ websites. In the last year, the content strategy for RCSI’s Student Life sub-brand was reassessed with a view to better supporting prospective students in their decision-making.

Public Information:

RCSI’s institutional communications strategy is aimed at building the university’s reputation for education and research excellence and deepening understanding of its mission, strengths and achievements among key stakeholders. The university actively communicates through its website, across each of the main social media channels, through targeted stakeholder newsletters and through strategic media engagement. Social engagement is a key pillar in the communications strategy and is particularly relevant in RCSI’s efforts to build greater global awareness of its education and research strengths. RCSI participates in several annual community engagement initiatives such as National Heritage Week, Culture Night, and Open House. My Health RCSI is the university’s flagship public engagement initiative. Through it, RCSI academics, researchers and clinicians leverage their expertise to help the public to improve their health and well-being. Building on this impact, the university will open a new public engagement space in 2026. Located at 118 St Stephen’s Green, Humanarium will be a first-of-its-kind space dedicated to health and well-being. Through a rolling programme of exhibitions, events and online activities, this will be a place for everyone to join conversations about living longer, healthier and happier lives.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

RCSI implements several internal processes for self-evaluation and monitoring, these include Internal Quality Reviews, Programme Reviews and Programme Monitoring.

Internal Quality Assurance Reviews:

The Quality Enhancement Office operates a system of rolling Internal Quality Reviews under policies and procedures which are aligned with guidance from Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. These reviews run in four parallel cycles:

- Reviews of Schools within the University of Medicine & Health Sciences.
- Reviews of Postgraduate/Professional Faculties.
- Reviews of Professional Support Units.
- Reviews of overseas Campuses.

In common with similar processes in the Irish higher education sector, these reviews consist of three phases: self-assessment and the production of a self-assessment report by the unit under review, validation of the self-assessment by a peer review group which undertakes a 2–3-day site-visit and produces a peer review group report and, finally, the production and implementation of a quality improvement plan (QIP) by the unit. Peer review group reports and their corresponding QIPs are published by RCSI.

Programme Reviews:

Programme Reviews in RCSI are managed by the Awards and Qualification Committee (A&QC). The A&QC oversees a rolling cycle of 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. Further details are provided in Section 2.1.

Programme Monitoring:

RCSI overseas campuses submit programme monitoring forms to the Quality Enhancement Office in respect of the educational programmes that they deliver. As part of the Quality Enhancement Repository, schools now regularly record improvements made in response to feedback, including from external examiners, faculty, assessment outcomes and accreditation processes. This information, accumulated over several years can be used as evidence in programme reviews.

Input from External Examiners:

The Medicine & Health Science Board nominates External Examiners for all educational programmes leading to degree awards, who are then appointed by the National University of Ireland. These examiners report annually to the NUI (and thence to RCSI) on their evaluation of programme delivery and assessment, student performance, etc.

Use of metrics:

In order to support the self-evaluation and monitoring processes RCSI routinely collects and generates statistical data for monitoring and self-evaluation. RCSI also collects and analyses institutional metrics aligned with our strategic objectives.

RCSI Risk Register:

To mitigate the risk factors which may have an impact on students and/or the institution, RCSI maintains a Risk Register and associated Risk Profiles which identify, score, evaluate and manage a range of risk factors. The Audit and Risk Committee conducts a quarterly review of the Risk Register and associated Risk Profiles, including a review of emerging risks and incidents/near misses. The following aspects are considered for each risk: the description of the risk, consequences of the risk occurring, description of existing controls, effectiveness of controls, vulnerabilities/weaknesses that increase the exposure to the risk, and an action plan to address key areas of weakness or vulnerability. Responsibility for individual risk factors is assigned to owners at Senior Management Team level. The Risk Register is also reviewed annually at Council.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	7
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	4

1. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	National University of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	RCSI degree awarding powers (enacted in 2010) were recognised in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and RCSI was identified as a 'Designated Awarding Body'. 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, degree awards of RCSI are awards of the NUI. Please note the "date of accreditation" does not apply in this context - for further information see http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/QA_Relationship_NUI_RCSI.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/1900
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Medical Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] RCSI Dublin; RCSI Bahrain; RUMC https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/education/career-stage-undergraduate/quality-assurance/medical-school-accreditation/accreditation-reports/ Dates of last review: 11-13 Nov. 2024 accreditation received for five years from 22 July 2025 (Dublin); 23 - 24 Mar. 2021 (Virtual Review) accreditation for

	five years from 17 November 2021 with a confirmatory site-visit on 24-25 Oct. 2022 (Bahrain); 22-23 Feb. 2023 (RUMC) Dates of next review: 2030 (Dublin); Feb. 2026 (Bahrain); 2028 (RUMC)
Date of accreditation or last review	13/11/2024
Date of next review	01/02/2026

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Masters Degree in Pharmacy (M. Pharm) https://www.psi.ie/sites/default/files/document/RCSI_Accreditation_Report_2025.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	06/02/2025
Date of next review	

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Health & Social Care Professionals Council (CORU) Physiotherapists Registration Board
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degree in Physiotherapy Site-visit 23-24 June 2021. Approval granted 28 September 2021 Date of next review 2026
Date of accreditation or last review	28/09/2021
Date of next review	23/03/2026

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	A portfolio of Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, BSc & MSc programmes as listed in the Irish Register of Qualifications [irq.ie] Rolling five-

	year accreditation cycles - as such the date of accreditation is not provided in this context.
Date of accreditation or last review	14/03/2024
Date of next review	15/03/2029

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Malaysian Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	RUMC Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] Date of accreditation or last review: 15 - 19 Jan 2024 Date of next review: Feb. 2026 - Interim monitoring review • Dec 2026 -Accreditation Renewal Visit
Date of accreditation or last review	19/01/2024
Date of next review	01/02/2026

7. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	Quality & Qualifications Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Internal QA policies & procedures; all programmes of higher education and professional training
Date of accreditation or last review	09/10/2023
Date of next review	

8. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	Education & Training Quality Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain
Programme titles and links to publications	Internal QA policies & procedures; all programmes of higher education and professional training; institutional listing and placement and alignment of programmes to the Bahrain Qualifications Framework (NQF) 2024: Institutional Accreditation 6-10 Oct. 2024: Programmatic Review (virtual review) of Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing. Date of accreditation and placement and revalidation on the NQF: Mar. 2022. 6-10 Mar. 2022: Programmatic Review of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor in the Art of Obstetrics (MB BCh BAO). Date of accreditation: Jul. 2022.

Date of accreditation or last review	26/10/2024
Date of next review	

9. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	Higher Education Council, Kingdom of Bahrain
Programme titles and links to publications	Internal QA policies & procedures; licensing of all programmes of higher education and professional training. Institutional Accreditation Visit 8-11th April 2018. Certificate granted 24th Feb 2019. Date of next review: 2024. Now in collaboration with the BQA.
Date of accreditation or last review	06/10/2024
Date of next review	

10. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	Malaysian Qualifications Agency (parallel QA processes with Malaysian Medical Council)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics Date of accreditation or last review: Oct. 2018 Date of next review: Feb. 2026 Interim monitoring review; Dec. 2026 Accreditation renewal visit.
Date of accreditation or last review	19/01/2024
Date of next review	01/02/2026

11. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Dental Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor's Degree in Dental Surgery Accreditation endorsement received April 2024 with further status reports and inspections planned.
Date of accreditation or last review	30/04/2024

Date of next review	
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12. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC)
Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma in Emergency Medical Technology
Date of accreditation or last review	12/09/2023
Date of next review	

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	4
Collaborative programmes	3
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus (Penang, Malaysia)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO]
Date of last review	07/12/2023
Date of next review	

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Munster Technological University
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Biomedical Sciences & Certificate in Biopharmaceutical Sciences.
Date of last review	25/05/2023
Date of next review	

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Soochow University (Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degree in Clinical Pharmacy (International) - RCSI/NUI - not currently running (date of agreement 2018) BSc Pharmacy - Soochow University [Dual Award] BSc in Advanced Therapeutic Technologies - Soochow University [Dual Award] MSc Research [Dual Award]
Date of last review	29/05/2024
Date of next review	

4. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia; Soochow University, China; University of Jordan, Jordan.
Programme titles and links to publications	PhD StAR (all awarded RCSI PhD only).
Date of last review	27/09/2024
Date of next review	

5. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Sorbonne University
Programme titles and links to publications	PhD StAR
Date of last review	27/09/2024
Date of next review	

6. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Pittsburgh
Programme titles and links to publications	PHD StAR
Date of last review	27/09/2024
Date of next review	

7. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Qatar University

Programme titles and links to publications	PhD StAR
Date of last review	27/09/2024
Date of next review	

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an articulation agreement may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Articulation agreements - Total number	1
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1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Soochow University (Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degree in Clinical Pharmacy (International) - RCSI/NUI;
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	29/08/2018
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	The Transnational Collaboration Agreement between the partner universities was signed on 29 August 2018. The articulation agreement provides for students entering the Soochow University (SU) Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy degree programme and, having met the stated requirements by the end of the second year of the programme, transferring to RCSI to complete Years 3 & 4 of their programme. Students successfully completing the four years of study will graduate with the SU BSc in Pharmacy and the RCSI/NUI BSc in Clinical Pharmacy (International). This programme is not currently running.

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2024-2025

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement advices, or to Cinnnte review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact² of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;

² The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Strategic Updates

A new strategic plan, Innovating for a Healthier Future, 2023-2027, was launched in September 2023. It encompasses four core themes: Health and Societal Wellbeing, Education and Student success, Research and Innovation and Foundations for Sustainable Impact. These themes are built upon four foundations: quality, reputation, sustainability and equality, diversity & inclusion. As such, RCSI's work is driven by and built upon an unrelenting focus on quality. RCSI aims to develop and maintain a culture of quality in which responsibility for the quality of the student experience and for continuous enhancement is shared by all staff.

The strategic plan consists of 20 actions. These actions have 542 sub-actions or milestones. While Senior Management Team (SMT) members keep ownership and responsibility for each action, 122 senior leaders (including SMT members) manage the execution of specific milestones. Strategy implementation is on track with 49% of milestones complete.

Quality Enhancement Office Updates

The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) supports quality assurance and enhancement throughout RCSI. Its activity is directed by the Annual Work Plan. A new Work Plan was approved at the Quality Committee meeting in February 2025 and continues to be implemented.

A comprehensive regulatory process review was completed during the reporting period (Case Study 11). This institution-wide analysis of processes aimed to identify duplication, streamline activity, and future-proof quality practices. Key outcomes of the review include:

- Integrated Review Processes: Programmatic and internal quality reviews are now aligned, using shared panels and documentation to reduce duplication and enhance coherence.
- Recognition of quality processes: Recent PSRB accreditations and Awards and Qualifications Committee (A&QC) programme oversight are formally recognised within programme review processes, reducing unnecessary repetition.
- Tailored Review Models: Amended review processes have been introduced for smaller units, while thematic reviews are now available for units with a record of engagement with IQRs.

The Quality Assurance Framework was updated to reflect these changes; this was approved by Quality Committee. The Internal Quality Reviews calendar and Terms of Reference for the Quality Committee are also regularly reviewed and approved by the Quality Committee.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Develop a Data Governance Framework to support continuous review of data quality and integrity across multiple information systems.	RCSI's new strategy "Innovating for a Healthier Future (2023-2027)" outlines a commitment to "enhance business operations" which includes plans to further augment how data can be used for impactful decision making. In line with this strategy, and since the review visit, RCSI established a Data Governance Group to harness cross-institutional data expertise and to enhance the collection, management, and use of data.
2	Repeat the governance survey, first undertaken for CINNTE, on a biennial basis with presentation of the results to Council for consideration.	The next iteration of the governance survey took place in summer 2025.
3	Update family leave policies to include information on how this leave is considered in academic promotions decisions.	To further enhance transparency, and as part of the ambitious Action Plan developed for RCSI's 2023 Athena Swan Bronze award, a commitment was made to further support staff understanding and confidence in the academic promotions process, and to increase clarity on how career breaks are considered in promotional decisions. This has been actioned through the updating of family leave policies, an increase in the information sessions held for academic staff, the ongoing provision of one-to-one and peer support sessions and direct communication with Heads of Schools to share information on the support available. Briefing sessions include those delivered by those previously promoted, to provide peer advice and guidance. Staff are directed to mentors through the positive connections mentoring programme - with specific focus on help with promotions if applicable. Promotions forms have been updated to reflect feedback from applicants; this included extending word counts in parts of the forms. Written feedback continues to be provided to all applicants. One-to-one feedback has also been provided.
4	Enhance the communications plan for academic promotions to further increase process knowledge. This may include enhancement of current tools such as briefing sessions, professional development meetings, peer support etc.	
5	Communicate (supervisor) training overview to postgraduate research students for transparency regarding the	Information on supervisor training is now provided to all new scholars at induction so that they are aware of the training that their supervisors undertake.

	expected responsibilities of supervisors.	
6	Undertake a StEP project to facilitate the development of framework to support students to engage in educational quality and governance, in line with the strategy action "Support student leadership and Partnership", cognisant of existing RCSI leadership initiatives.	A StEP Project was completed which resulted in the development of a draft framework to support students to engage in educational quality and governance. The Framework consists of 8 components which can be used to support multiple learning pathways - dependent on the needs of students. A bespoke six-week RCSI Student Leadership Development Programme takes place annually.
7	Establish an Interprofessional Working Group under the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.	An Interprofessional Learning Leadership Group was established in May 2024, which includes academic representatives from across schools, a patient partner, and four student partners. This group has since developed an IPL Leadership Strategy which includes clinical placement workplace-based IPL. Interprofessional student-led community clinics are being piloted.
8	Revise the existing Interprofessional Learning Strategy to reimagine the leadership and strategic direction of IPL.	
9	Establish a task and finish project team to review graduate tracking and to identify areas for improvement.	A project team was established and undertook an evaluation of graduate tracking. An initial survey was piloted and the project team's report, which identified areas for enhancement, was circulated to key stakeholders. RCSI has engaged with the HEA regarding participation in the 2026 Graduate Outcomes Survey.
10	Undertake an evaluation of stakeholder requirements to enhance (medical placement evaluation) reporting in line with the needs of stakeholders.	A process for annual mapping of survey owners was developed and implemented. Report owners and access levels were identified, recorded and shared. This will be repeated annually. Planning for further evaluations and piloting have commenced.
11	Establish a process for annual mapping of (medical placement) survey report owners to enhance transparency.	
12	Further develop communications to students on the purpose of this (penalty scoring) assessment strategy. This will include detailed information on penalty scoring at induction in relevant programmes, and ongoing periodic engagement to address arising concerns.	Penalty scoring is used in limited contexts in RCSI. Random guessing is not a trait encouraged in health professionals and penalty scoring supports learners to weigh their level of knowledge against the potential consequences of an incorrect decision. In addition to supporting information (slides & videos) that are available to students, they are also given enhanced presentations on progress testing & penalty scoring at induction.

13	Review the information provided to personal tutors to ensure clarity in relation to the tutor role on each of the principal undergraduate programmes.	All new students on the principal undergraduate programmes are assigned an Academic Mentor/Personal Tutor upon registration. A review of tutor information has been piloted in a number of schools with further roll-out planned.
14	Gather information on the current supports available for access students. Engage with appropriate learners and staff to better understand the information needs of access students.	RCSI is committed to widening participation in its educational programmes and was pleased that this was recognised by the Review Team’s commendation on the “range and accessibility of support provided for students across programmes and locations”. Information on the current supports available to students has been gathered and optimum forms of publication are under continued review.
15	Develop a communications plan for major changes in partnerships.	Clear communication of any changes is aligned to RCSI’s culture of delivering on its promises, a culture recognised within the review report. Since the review, an SOP has been developed to support effective communication at the end of strategic partnerships.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Quality Committee	25/09/2024; 09/12/2024; 12/02/2025; 07/05/2025
Awards & Qualifications Committee	16/09/2024; 07/10/2024; 11/11/2024; 16/12/2024; 13/01/2025; 10/02/2025; 10/03/2025; 14/04/2025; 12/05/2025; 16/06/2025
Academic Council	11/09/2024; 03/10/2024; 06/11/2024; 11/12/2024; 29/01/2025; 06/03/2025; 03/04/2025; 07/05/2025
Medicine & Health Sciences Board	19/09/2024; 21/11/2024; 27/02/2025; 26/05/2025
Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board	03/10/2024; 16/01/2025; 17/04/2025; 29/05/2025

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

During the reporting period, the Medicine and Health Sciences Board made several key senior appointments:

- Dr Barbara Clyne, Senior Lecturer and Interim Head, Department of Public Health & Epidemiology
- Dr Sudipto Das, Deputy Dean for AI & Digital Health and Connected Health
- Professor Garry Duffy, Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomy and Regenerative Medicine
- Professor Niall Pender, Professor and Head of the Department of Health Psychology
- Dr Muirne Spooner, Deputy Dean for Interprofessionalism and Community Engaged Learning
- Professor Judith Strawbridge, Director of Education

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Finance Department Internal Quality Review	Rolling internal quality assurance review. September 2024	https://www.rcsi.com/quality-enhancement-office/internal-quality-reviews
School of Medicine Internal Quality Review	Rolling internal quality assurance review. November 2024	https://www.rcsi.com/quality-enhancement-office/internal-quality-reviews
Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery Internal Quality Review	Rolling internal quality assurance review. January 2025	https://www.rcsi.com/quality-enhancement-office/internal-quality-reviews

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes		2	1		4		
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes		2	2				
Desk reviews					4		
Virtual processes							
Average panel size for each process type*		5	5		4		

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

³ QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair*	3	1	2			3				3	
Secretary											
Academic/Discipline Specific	22	8	14		10	1	7	1	3	22	
Student Representative	3	1	2			3				3	
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	3	1	2		1	2				1	2

*Chair has background in QA

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance and Management of Quality

Quality Framework Review

RCSI undertook a regulatory process review project during the reporting period (Case Study 11) which resulted in updates to the RCSI [Quality Framework](#). The revised Framework was approved by Quality Committee in May 2025. Changes to the RCSI quality framework included:

- A more contemporary description of RCSI.
- The adoption of a new definition of quality.
- Amendments to the internal quality review process to ensure that they are proportionate, risk-based, data-informed, and designed to add greater value to the units under review.
- Alignment of the programmatic review process with internal quality reviews.

Quality Library

The Quality Library is a new resource developed by the QEO designed to help colleagues with accreditation processes. Hosted on SharePoint it provides a central hub for institutional resources to support quality and accreditation processes. This includes links to key documents, relevant Moodle pages, university guidelines, and accreditation submissions from across RCSI.

Governance Systems Enhancement Initiative

A quality improvement project to enhance the efficiency of its governance activities, while maintaining full compliance with all statutory and regulatory obligations, was undertaken during the reporting period. RCSI's governance structure reflects its dual role as a University of Medicine and Health Sciences and a Postgraduate Training Body. The project focused on strengthening the systems and infrastructure that support the governance committees that contribute to these two roles. Specifically, it established a single, secure, and centralised SharePoint environment, comprised of a centralised hub and cloned committee sites, to manage committee documentation, membership information, meeting schedules, and templates. This promotes consistency, improves security, and streamlines administration across the institution. Phase 1 of the project, involving 13 governance committees, has been successfully completed, delivering tangible improvements in document management, communication and engagement. Planning for Phase 2 is currently underway and will expand implementation across additional committees. These improvements are delivering a more efficient, transparent, and cohesive approach to governance administration.

RCSI Bahrain Celebrates 20 Years

RCSI Bahrain celebrated its 20th anniversary this academic year. Since opening its doors in 2004, RCSI Medical University of Bahrain has graduated more than 3,200 students from the schools of Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery and Postgraduate Studies and Research, of which over half are working in Bahrain with the remaining alumni working in 39 countries around the world.

BQA Institutional Review

In March 2025, RCSI Bahrain received the highest possible overall judgment of “Compliant with the General Framework Standards” during the Bahrain Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) and Higher Education Council (HEC) joint Institutional review, along with seven commendations. This outcome aligns seamlessly with the RCSI Bahrain Strategic Plan 2023–2027, where Quality Enhancement serves as a foundational principle embedded across all strategic pillars and central to the University's mission.

Programmes of Education and Training

Approved Programmes

The following new programmes, verified by the Awards & Qualifications Committee, were recommended for approval by the Medicine & Health Sciences Board:

1. **MSc in Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy** (NFQ Level 9, 90 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Diploma in Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy (NFQ Level 9, 60 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Certificate in Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy (NFQ Level 9, 30 ECTS)
2. **MSc in Professionalism in Medicine and Health Sciences** (NFQ Level 9, 90 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Diploma in Professionalism in Medicine and Health Sciences (NFQ Level 9, 60 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Certificate in Professionalism in Medicine and Health Sciences (NFQ Level 9, 60 ECTS)
3. **MSc in Applied Positive Psychology, Wellbeing and Health** (NFQ Level 9; 90 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Diploma in Applied Positive Psychology Wellbeing and Health (NFQ Level 9, 60 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Certificate in Applied Positive Psychology Wellbeing and Health (NFQ Level 9, 30 ECTS)
4. **Joint PhD Programme in Precision and Regenerative Medicine (with University of Pittsburgh)** (NFQ Level 10)
5. **MSc in Health Professions Education** (NFQ Level 9, 90 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Diploma in Health Professions Education - Nursing Tutor (NFQ Level 9, 70 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Diploma in Health Professions Education (NFQ Level 9, 60 ECTS)
 - Exit Award: PG Certificate in Health Professions Education (NFQ Level 9, 30 ECTS)
6. **MSc by Research (Dual Award with Soochow University)** (NFQ Level 9)

School of Medicine

The School of Medicine has now completed three years of the new medical curriculum rollout (Year 1, 2 and 3). It is continuing to evaluate the impact of these changes and making appropriate, data driven adjustments as necessary, while also preparing for the implementation of the remaining years (Years 4 – 5). Although it has taken time for students to become familiarised with the new programmatic assessment approach, feedback has proven generally positive. In particular, Case Based Learning has significantly supported student learning, exposing them to clinical cases and patients from week one. Additionally, the Personal Tutor Programme has been identified as supportive to student development and wellbeing. These one-to-one meetings allow students the safe and secure environment to discuss both academic and personal matters with their tutor twice a year; the first in semester one and the second in semester two. Students continue to receive personalised feedback for every assessment activity through the implementation of a suite of technology solutions (Risr Assess & Risr Advance), with the core aim of supporting the student journey.

The School continues to reinforce supports around the legacy curriculum to ensure students are supported across all live curricula. In the 2024-25 Academic year, the Year 5 medicine programme expanded on the previous year pilot component of clinical placement “the Intern Attachment”. This pilot afforded students the opportunity to be attached to an intern for two weeks within the Beaumont and Connolly Hospital sites. Feedback has been very positive, and students noted this provided them with a hands-on approach to intern life, supporting their preparedness for practice after graduation. There are again plans in place for further growth of this attachment to other hospital sites in the RCSI network.

School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences.

The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences continued to roll out its new BSc in Advanced Therapeutic Technologies, successfully delivering Year 3 of the BSc(ATT) curriculum which was funded by the Higher Education Authority, Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3. Year 3 also saw BSc(ATT) students successfully undertaking their 8-month industry placement within the International Biopharmaceutical sector located in Ireland. The MSc (Technologies & Analytics in Precision Medicine), also supported by the Higher Education Authority, Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3, saw significant growth in student numbers. A suite of micro-credentials, based on the MSc(TAPM) curriculum were also offered to learners, broadening access. The curriculum revision of the MPharm programme continued to be rolled out with Year 3 of the revised programme implemented in 2024/25. In addition, following a site visit in February 2025, by a panel of International experts, the MPharm programme was reaccredited by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) for 5 years.

School of Physiotherapy

A new, innovative, BSc Physiotherapy curriculum was approved by the MHSB in May 2025 and will commence delivery the following autumn. In June, the School hosted its first dedicated session at RCSI's International Education Forum. This included sharing the new curriculum with RCSI academic & professional stakeholders, to support its implementation and to gather valuable stakeholder insights and feedback. To meet healthcare workforce needs, the School has significantly expanded its postgraduate programmes. The MSc in Neurology and Gerontology underwent a review, redesign and name change that provides more flexible study options i.e. PG Cert/Dip/MSc in Rehabilitation. A new MSc in Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy was approved by MHSB in May 2025 and commences in Autumn 2025. The School's micro-credential offering also expanded, with additional tailored online/hybrid offerings.

School of Nursing & Midwifery

The School embarked on several new initiatives over the reporting period. This included a collaboration with the Health Professional Education Centre to create a programme for nurse educators leading to registration with NMBI as Registered Nurse Tutor. A further collaboration was with Future Neuro and the National Clinical Programme for Neurology to create a programme for neurology nurse specialists. Assessment Workshops were held for all assessors and a dedicated introductory meeting for all external examiners, both to further enhance quality in assessment and feedback.

School of Dentistry

The School of Dentistry prepared for the launch of the new five-year, community-based Bachelor of Dental Surgery programme, which will welcome its first cohort of students in September 2025. Following accreditation by the National University of Ireland and endorsement from the Dental Council of Ireland, the School was allocated 20 Irish/EEA places by the Higher Education Authority, marking a significant expansion of national dentistry training capacity and future access to dental services. The programme's strong emphasis on community-based learning and early clinical exposure reflects an international shift toward training models embedded in real-world care settings. During the reporting period, the School continued to grow its academic, clinical and professional services team and completed the refurbishment of the School of Dentistry Headquarters at Reservoir House (Sandyford), ensuring that the Dental Education Centre, simulation suite, laboratory, and student and staff facilities were ready for programme launch. Development of the 42-chair clinical site at Connolly also progressed to support delivery of the community-based clinical curriculum.

School of Population Health

The School of Population Health launched a new MSc in Population Health Leadership in September 2024. The programme aims to equip leaders across a range of disciplines and career paths with the knowledge, skills and vision to deliver on population health goals in these challenging times. The cohort registered on the programme is an increasingly diverse group of learners, drawn from across the globe and representing a variety of professional backgrounds. The MSc is part of a suite of awards, which includes a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Population Health Leadership. The development and delivery of these awards have been supported by the Cameron Scholars programme, an RCSI initiative to catalyse and sustain growth and to consolidate the University's position in the future of population health sciences. The School is also taking active measures to develop several microcredentials for 2026.

School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS)

This year, the School supported its secondment award winners in undertaking their research placements. Scholars traveled to The University of Oxford, Imperial College London, Stanford University and the University of Michigan, among others. The School funded a StEP project focused on building research communities. A research forum was organised for postgraduates to share their work with one other, and a Microsoft Teams postgraduate group was set up to further connect scholars.

Graduate School of Healthcare Management (GSM)

GSM continue to deliver highly engaging and impactful online education across a suite of Masters and Professional Diplomas, working closely with RCSI Online to ensure the online experience is optimised. Academic readiness programmes and student support sessions have been introduced to ensure students are fully supported in their learning journey, especially those returning to education after a long period out of the classroom. GSM have also delivered customised non-accredited programmes for high-profile clients in the Gulf Cooperation Council, including PureHealth Group and the Saudi German Hospital Group, as well as in Ireland, to HSPC and the Irish Defence Forces. GSM faculty member Gloria Kirwan was appointed to the role of UN Representative-Geneva at the International Council on Social Welfare. In research activities, GSM faculty, in conjunction with the Irish College of General Practitioners, hosted a national symposium on GP Retention in the Dublin Convention Centre in September 2024 as well as a symposium in quality improvement and patient safety in March 2024, in collaboration with ISQUA. GSM faculty edited and contributed to a Routledge book on Women in Healthcare Management.

Dual, Joint and Collaborative Programme Approval

In 2024-25 a new Appendix for Dual, Joint and Collaborative Programmes was introduced into the Programme Approval process. This form is used by the A&QC to review applications for the implementation of these programmes between RCSI and national or international institutions or collaborative partners. For transnational programmes, it requires programme proposers to describe how the programme will comply with the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners.

Teaching and Learning

International Education Forum

In June 2025, RCSI hosted its 14th International Education Forum (IEF) under the theme 'Innovating for a Healthier Future'. This three-day event brought together over 190 RCSI Dublin staff and welcomed 20 colleagues from RCSI Bahrain. The programme was structured around four key sub-themes – Interprofessionalism and Community Engaged Learning; Artificial Intelligence; Education Quality and Reputation; and Education Innovation. The programme featured a diverse range of national and international speakers including Professor Susa Benseler (Chief Academic Officer, Children's Health Ireland), Dr Tatiana Erlikh Fox (Department of Internal Medicine, Onze Lieve Vrouwen Gasthuis Hospital, Amsterdam), Professor Hamde Nazar (Professor of Pharmacy Education and Primary Care Research, Newcastle University) and Professor Paul Paes (Professor of Education and Palliative Care and Head of the School of Medicine, Newcastle University). The event also included the annual RCSI Education Innovation Awards facilitated by HPEC. This year's winning initiative 'Debunking the Myths – The Science behind our Sexual Health' has reached over 17,000 students across 26 countries and remains the only programme in Ireland directly connecting teenagers with medical experts (Case Study 2). New to this year's IEF was the inclusion of dedicated sessions for each of the Schools of Medicine, Physiotherapy and Pharmacy & Biomolecular Sciences. These sessions enabled focused discussions tailored to the specific needs of each discipline.

Health Professions Education Centre

During the reporting period, HPEC expanded its taught courses by offering a Masters in Health Professions Education; piloting a new course to support health and social care staff to work collaboratively in the community and expanding the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Professions Education to include a new pathway that allows nurses and midwife tutors to apply for a Registered Nurse/Midwife Tutor qualification with the NMBI. HPEC also contributed to the European University Association's Thematic Peer Group on Student Empowerment and took on leadership of the academic direction of the RCSI International Citizenship Programme. Following a pilot programme HPEC have extended the ICP to Postgraduate Masters and PhD students. HPEC staff members were presented with key international awards such as the Association for the Study of Medical Education Gold Medal (Professor Jan Illing), and Times Higher Education Award for Innovation in Teaching (Dr Jenny Moffett).

Artificial Intelligence in Education

The AI in Education Working Group was established as a subgroup of the Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Committee with the goal of coordinating activities designed to understand the impact of AI on LTA and support the development of guidance and training for its ethical use at RCSI. It comprised 20 members, spanning professional services and academic staff from across the Schools, a representative from the Bahrain campus, and five student representatives from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Academic year 2024-2025 was a busy year for the group, starting with the approval by Academic Council and the MHSB of two documents developed to provide underpinning guidance on the use of generative AI in RCSI: RCSI Ethical Guidance Framework for AI in Learning, Teaching and Assessment and RCSI Guidance on the Use of Generative AI in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

Building on this foundation, the group launched dedicated AI Hubs for staff and students to serve as one-stop shops for training and resources. The student hub showcased a range of student produced resources created with students. These resources also featured as a case study at Advance HE's AI Symposium in February, affording a student collaborator an opportunity to present on behalf of the working group. Other working group activities undertaken in the reporting period included delivery of a range of faculty workshops and webinars and the development of two online courses with digital badges - AI Fundamentals and Generative AI and Assessment. Towards the end of the reporting period, the group also produced a draft strategy for AI in Education, which will integrate with RCSI's broader AI and Digital Health strategy, which is currently under development.

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

The RCSI INSPIRE staff wellbeing programme continued to run employee wellness activities throughout the reporting period, including physiotherapy sessions, mental health awareness training, financial wellbeing talks, nutritional workshops and flu vaccinations. The programme is based on five health pillars: physical, nutritional, mental, occupational and financial health. INSPIRE events were often held in collaboration with university-wide partners including the Sports & Social Club, RCSI Gym, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit and the Student Welfare Team. These departments, along with the Inspire team, are active members of the RCSI Healthy Campus Committee. The RCSI Healthy Campus initiative aims to embed health and wellness into campus life through a holistic and inclusive approach. The initiative involves various projects and activities designed to enhance the health and well-being of the RCSI community, including both students and staff.

Enhancements in Equality Diversity and Inclusion.

RCSI's commitment to embedding a culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was reaffirmed through several key developments during this reporting period. One of the most significant achievements was RCSI receiving the 'Inclusive Champion Award' at the EU Awards for Gender Equality. This prestigious award by the European Commission highlights RCSI's proactive EDI culture and recognises its leadership in advancing gender equality across higher education.

In February, RCSI won the 'Advancing Allyship and Bystander Engagement' Award at the 2025 National Diversity and Inclusion Awards. This recognition reflects the impact of our Bystander Intervention Training Programme and the collaborative efforts of staff and student allies.

RCSI also reaffirmed its commitment to fostering an equitable learning and work environment with the launch of its second Race Equality Action Plan in March 2025. This plan builds on the university's pioneering 2021 initiative, and introduces targeted actions to address systemic barriers, embed race equality across its culture, and promote a more inclusive environment for all.

This period saw continued Athena Swan successes, reflecting impactful equality work across RCSI. The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences received RCSI's first Silver Athena Swan Award, while the Department of Physiology and Medical Physics successfully renewed its Bronze Award.

RCSI was proud to host the first Mutual Learning Event as part of 'HEIs as Places for People: Inclusive Infrastructures to Support Intersectionality in HEIs', a cross-institutional initiative funded by the HEA's EDI Enhancement Fund. Led by Trinity College Dublin, in partnership with RCSI, TU Dublin and University of Galway, the project explores how intersectionality can be embedded into estate planning, policy design and practice. RCSI also participated in another HEA EDI Enhancement Fund project 'Engaging Men in Gender Equality', which involved targeted focus groups with male staff across academia, research and professional services. These collaborations reflect RCSI's ongoing commitment to inclusive dialogue and advancing equity through evidence-based strategies.

The three staff and student EDI fora and five EDI staff networks undertook a variety of projects to further positive culture change in RCSI. As previously outlined, the Race Equality Forum launched their second action plan. The Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment (ESVH) Forum continued to deliver trauma-informed initiatives, consent workshops and promote reporting systems, such as Speak Out. This Forum also ran campaigns with both students and staff for Sexual Health and Wellbeing Week. Supported by the VisABILITY Forum, RCSI was awarded the Autism Friendly HEI Candidate Badge from ASIAm in recognition of its dedication to creating an inclusive environment for autistic students and staff; the University is looking forward to receiving full accreditation in the upcoming academic year. The VisABILITY Forum also held an event on Invisible Disabilities for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. To mark International Women's Day, the School of Population Health in collaboration with the EDI Unit, launched the 'Women's Health Research Network', reinforcing RCSI's commitment to gender equity in health research. The Women's Network hosted events focused on PMSS and Academic Career Journeys, while the Age Friendly Network celebrated Positive Ageing Week. The Intercultural Network held their popular festive food event, and the Parents and Carers' Network promoted an event on 'Discussing Sexual Health & Positive Relationships with Young People', in collaboration with the Debunking the Myths team. Pride celebrations in 2025 included the annual Sports and Social Club Pride BBQ, RCSI's ongoing partnership on LGBT Ireland's annual healthcare conference, and participation in the Dublin Pride Parade.

EDI initiatives in RCSI were highlighted with presentations at the Equitas – EDI in Practice in Higher Education Conference in May 2025. Over 500 students and staff attended events organised by the EDI unit in 2024/2025 and over 160 engaged with voluntary training. Training partners included Ability Focus, the Irish Deaf Society and TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland). All staff were required to complete mandatory Introduction to EDI training; optional Moodle courses on race equality, EDI in higher education, and bystander intervention, were available for self-directed learning throughout the year. Incoming undergraduate students received an Introduction to EDI presentation and Active Consent training.

Supports and resources for learners

Estates

RCSI will shortly open the transformational 'Project Connect' development at 118 St Stephen's Green. The most recent and largest phase of RCSI's campus development in Dublin city centre is a €95m expansion project, providing over 13,500m² of teaching, student, office and research space over 7 floors. Also known as Project Connect, it will enrich the student experience at RCSI and provide vital infrastructure for pioneering health sciences research and innovation, as well as creating a space for local community engagement. A key design element is its physical link to RCSI's presence at 26 York Street, significantly opening up RCSI's education space for the estimated 3,000 students and staff who visit the campus daily. The development will include new concepts such as learning community spaces, small group teaching spaces as well as flexible flat floor teaching spaces. Another key purpose of the project is to enhance RCSI's research and innovation activities, providing up to three floors of state-of-the-art laboratory, write-up and support facilities for existing and new research programmes and initiatives.

In August 2025, RCSI also completed the redevelopment of Reservoir House, Sandyford as the foundation RCSI Dental Education Centre (DEC) to support the commencement of RCSI's new Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) Programme. This €12M investment provides state-of-the-art dental education and simulated learning

environments for the new dentistry students. In addition, in January 2025 RCSI commenced a major €33M development in Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown, which will be the main clinical Dental Education Centre for the School of Dentistry. The superstructure is completed with works on target for completion in mid-2027.

In September 2024, RCSI completed a new €30 million Education and Research Centre at Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown. The three-story building is designed with two distinct interlocking blocks for academic, faculty and administration functions, with a communal atrium area linking the two, providing amenity and support space for students and staff. The building contains a 200-seat auditorium, 12 tutorial rooms and a lecture theatre. A new Simulation facility has been provided in addition to an 8-bed clinical research facility. The HSE are also relocating the Connolly Hospital laboratories to the building, which will provide further opportunities for research and teaching collaborations between RCSI and the hospital. The project was completed on target in September 2024 and feedback to date from students and staff has been extremely positive.

Library

Library Service enhancements during the reporting period included the:

- The RCSI Open Access Repository grew rapidly exceeding 6,000 items, in June 2024, including the Student Medical Journal (SMJ) archive. (Case Study)
- #FairSpaceForAll, the library's seat reservation policy, was relaunched for the 2023/24 academic year in response to student feedback.
- RCSI Library Heritage Collections Disaster Management Plan was developed and included in RCSI's Master Disaster Management Plan and Risk Management schedules.

Online and onsite engagement and activity continued to grow with 1.8 million uses of e-resources, 1.1 million views of RCSI Repository items, 248,000 searches across library collections via Primo VE, 120,000 Library Guide sessions, 118,000 library webpage views, 16,000 group study room bookings, 2,253 attendees at information skills classes, 10,000 views of library training videos, 543 research consultations and 6,000 queries answered.

Student Engagement

As outlined in the RCSI Strategy 2023-2027 'Innovating for a Healthier Future', the RCSI StEP programme is at the core of providing a distinctive and transformational educational experience that sets students up for success at RCSI and as future health science professionals.

Seven StEP Agreements have now been launched, reflecting RCSI's ongoing and unwavering commitment to students as cocreators of their learning experience. Each year, following wide consultation with students and staff, several overarching themes are identified to be prioritised for funding. There are two open calls for funding annually in which both students and staff are invited to apply. In 2024-2025, 32 StEP level 1 and 27 StEP level 2 projects were funded. Level 1 funding provides project costs as well as a bursary to students who work in partnership with staff during the second semester (maximum 30 student contact hours over 10 weeks). Level 2 funding is more substantial where, in addition to project costs, students receive bursaries, working full-time in collaboration with staff on key projects over eight weeks during the summer. A list of StEP-funded projects for 2024-2025, in which students and staff worked in partnership on key projects, is provided in the current StEP Agreement 2025-2026. The programme has demonstrated significant and sustained growth since its formal establishment in 2020-2021. With a marked increase in both StEP project numbers and student and staff partner engagement, the programme continues to flourish as a key enabler in fostering collaboration and innovation across RCSI.

163 staff and 133 student partners, who engaged in StEP-funded projects during the reporting period, received RCSI Student Partnership Champion Awards and Digital Badges. These awards are presented to students and staff who have made outstanding contributions to the overall student experience by working in partnership and sharing their expertise and perspectives on key RCSI projects. RCSI StEP programme outputs in 2024-2025 were also closely aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and eight StEP-funded projects were

closely aligned to RCSI Healthy Campus with a unique focus on fostering an environment that supports physical and mental health, inclusivity, and equality across RCSI.

RCSI is also a participating institution of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) and has representation on the NStEP National Advisory Board. Students and staff also avail of NStEP training programmes annually. During the reporting period, RCSI hosted the NStEP Networking event 'Student Engagement, Well-Being and Belonging', bringing together colleagues and students from participating institutions across Ireland.

The RCSI StEP programme has resulted in presentations at national and international conferences and publications, and independent StEP-related research funding. As a representative example, in 2024-25, the Deputy Dean for Student Engagement, co-facilitated an AMEE ASPIRE Workshop, during AMEE Conference, Barcelona, Spain, August 2025 entitled 'Students as Partners in Co-Creating the Future of Healthcare Education' Alongside an RCSI collaborator and co-PI, they also received independent INHED funding as well as internal research funding which has enabled them to recruit a PhD scholar to conduct research related to student engagement and partnership.

This student partnership philosophy has extended to RCSI Bahrain, who have adopted RCSI's StEP programme since November 2021. Students and staff from RCSI Bahrain have also actively engaged as partners on inter-campus StEP projects.

In 2022, a collaborative student-staff partnership project was undertaken, facilitated through StEP, to develop a framework and strategy to further promote and foster a culture and vision of 'Student Success'. A key output was the establishment of the RCSI definition of Student Success. Guided by this definition, RCSI has since developed a mechanism to identify gaps and to prioritise areas in which to further promote 'Student Success' on an annual basis. A new section, promoting student success, has been incorporated into RCSI StEP Agreements. Student Success is now firmly embedded in the RCSI Strategy 2023-2027 as one of four key pillars. A newly launched annual RCSI Student Success Champion Award has also been established to recognise staff who go above and beyond to contribute to the success of students. The inaugural award was presented to a faculty member in February 2025.

A bespoke six-week RCSI Student Leadership Development Programme takes place annually. It was developed, in partnership with students, and aims to equip students with an understanding of the core concepts of leadership to support them in their leadership roles. It is open to all students and student leaders from the SU, PGSU, Postdoctoral Society, Sports' Council, Society Presidents, Club Captains, Learning Community Leaders, Student Ambassadors and class representatives from all undergraduate Schools are invited to participate each year. Hundreds of student leaders have successfully completed this programme since its establishment with each one receiving RCSI Certificates of Achievement and digital badges.

Learning Communities

Learning communities form an integral component of the educational philosophy for shaping future healthcare professionals at RCSI. Each undergraduate student, entering year one across all schools, is now assigned to an interprofessional Learning Community. The overarching aim here is to foster a vital sense of connection with RCSI and offer a solid foundation for all newcomers adapting to university life in Ireland. Another objective is to cultivate an inclusive, interprofessional and welcoming environment that enables students to build new friendships and collaborative relationships with peers and academic staff. This engagement is achieved through participation in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities throughout their academic journey, enhancing their overall experience in the programme.

Gym

Throughout the reporting period, the gym was visited 71,825 times and held a total of 1,246 classes. The gym team focused on the theme of ‘connection’; a plan to involve as many students as possible from various backgrounds and cultures, creating an environment of inclusion amongst the student cohort. Projects included:

- Staff training in autism in sport and exercise supported by Active Disability Ireland. The gym has since adopted the Physical Activity Passport for persons with Autism. This helps staff members better understand how they can support autistic students and staff.
- Development of group-training focused classes. The gym saw an increase in class attendance, with an extra 444 classes in the year. 128 of these were group training classes with an attendance of 87.8%.
- The Christmas Crew held events over the Christmas period to continue the connection throughout the holiday period for students who remained in Dublin. Gym staff opened the sports hall for students to participate in sports and games, such as badminton, indoor football and basketball.
- Enhanced personal training services, including opening these services to the sports clubs of RCSI, including the Ladies Hockey team, Swim Club, Rowing Club and Ladies Soccer team.
- Brain Boost where the gym collaborated with Student Services to provide energy boosting healthy meals outside of the exam halls to help ease students’ nerves before their exams.

Information and Data Management

Central to the development of the new RCSI Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 ‘Innovating for a Healthier Future’ was the definition of 20 Actions (individual projects) under each of the four strategic themes: (i) Health and societal Wellbeing; (ii) Education and Student success; (iii) Research and Innovation; (iv) Foundations for Sustainable Impact. For each Action, key deliverables, owners and timelines are defined with associated metrics to monitor their implementation. These metrics are gathered, analysed and reported three times a year by the CEO’s Office and reviewed by the Senior Management Team. Other key metrics are monitored and reported annually by the Insights & Planning Office, the Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs Office, the Office of Research & Innovation, the Admissions Office, Faculties, Schools and overseas Campuses.

Digital Transformation

Significant progress was made across a range of digital transformation initiatives during the reporting period. The rollout of the Unibuddy AI Assistant has enhanced student experience by providing instant, accurate responses to queries, improving accessibility and reducing response times. Additional advancements included the launch of the HR Chatbot (Case Study 5) and the automation of transcript generation, both of which have streamlined processes and improved service efficiency. System-level enhancements were also introduced to strengthen cybersecurity, improve oversight of the digital ecosystem, and reinforce governance related to service provider requirements.

Assessment Systems

Enhancements to assessment systems focused on strengthening quality, expanding capability, and supporting programme growth. Key developments included improvements to exam question banks, the implementation of new exam delivery platforms, and expanded reporting and dashboard functionality. Access governance controls were further strengthened, and digital systems were adapted to support new assessment models aligned with programme expansion (e.g. Dentistry, Advanced Therapeutic Technologies) and curriculum development initiatives (e.g. in the Medicine programme).

Research and Public Engagement

Research visibility and engagement were significantly advanced through the launch of the new RCSI Discovery profiles (www.rcsi.com/people), which integrated existing systems and substantially increased engagement with staff research outputs. Public engagement was similarly strengthened with the launch of the Humanarium website (www.humanarium.ie), providing enhanced support for public engagement activities, virtual events and exhibitions, and to educational resources aligned with the gallery’s mission.

Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The collection, analysis and dissemination of student feedback in RCSI is managed by the QEO. The QEO ran and processed 400 surveys during the reporting period. Response rates varied, depending on the nature and audience of the project, with a rate of 21% on the core undergraduate end-of-semester student feedback surveys (Student Pulse, Semester 2), similar to the previous reporting period.

The RCSI student voice survey programme “Student Pulse” consists of three surveys. The first survey in the academic year focuses on first year student experience and gathers feedback on recruitment, on-boarding and induction experience, which leads to enhancements in communication to prospective students. Additional surveys are conducted at the end of each semester to gather feedback on an academic and non-academic student experience.

During this reporting period, the QEO continued to roll out in-class survey collection to increase student engagement with feedback. End of semester Student Pulse surveys are now conducted as timetabled activities or during teaching session. Students are briefed by the QEO or academic staff. The response rates to these surveys are significantly higher compared to surveys distributed via email, without any in-class activities.

The institutional ‘You said, we listened’ campaigns continued during this reporting period, communicating actions undertaken in response to student feedback by schools and professional departments to the student body. Multiple communication channels, including student newsletters, social media (in collaboration with student representatives), Moodle and electronic screens were used to communicate the impact of surveys. Additionally, selected examples of actions were included in the introductions to end of Semester Student Pulse surveys.

Student Pulse results were regularly presented to the Senior Management Team and reports were distributed to Schools and professional departments. The QEO successfully continued using a Quality Enhancement Repository to further support closing the feedback loop on surveys. Undergraduate programme leads, some postgraduate programme leads and professional departments were requested to provide examples of actions implemented in response to student feedback. The QEO also collected evidence of good practice identified in student feedback, and examples of other quality enhancement actions in response to feedback from faculty, external examiners and other stakeholders. A thematic analysis of the content was undertaken and presented to staff at the RCSI International Education Forum and the content from the previous year was used in the ‘You said, we listened’ campaign. Roll out across postgraduate programmes continues.

The regular end of Semester data collection tools were continued as in previous years. These are developed in collaboration with programme directors, faculty and the Students’ Union. The QEO conducts an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative feedback to inform and enhance the delivery of RCSI programmes. Reports, documenting these analyses, are circulated to programme directors. Quantitative reports (without open ended comments) are routinely made available to students via Moodle. In Bahrain infographics summarising the institution’s response to student feedback are developed and published.

The newly developed student-experience metrics for postgraduate programmes were implemented and the updated survey instrument for postgraduate programmes was rolled out.

In addition to student surveys, the QEO runs staff surveys, including the annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion survey and supports the Human Resources Department with design and analysis of staff surveys, as required. During 2024-25, RCSI took part in an external ‘Great Place to Work’ survey, and so paused other internal staff surveys. Several bespoke staff and stakeholder surveys were conducted to gather evidence for internal quality reviews and to capture feedback from governance committees. As in previous years, the QEO also managed feedback processes for the National Surgical Training Programme, APPEL and the Irish Institute of Pharmacy.

Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

RCSI Hospitals Group

RCSI is the Academic Partner of the RCSI Hospitals Group, which comprises Beaumont Hospital, Connolly Hospital, Cavan and Monaghan Hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Louth County Hospital and the Rotunda Hospital. RCSI students undertake their education and clinical training placements across the hospitals of the Group in addition to a range of associated GP practices, private hospitals (e.g. Mater Private, Bons Secours) and other clinical facilities. The RCSI Hospitals Group serves populations across North Dublin, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan in an area that stretches from Dublin City Centre, north to the border with Northern Ireland, and west to the border with County Donegal. This area comprises urban, rural and commuter belt areas with a total catchment population of 875,000. The Group provides a wide range of emergency, diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation services supported by a workforce of 11,200 WTE staff.

Dublin City Council & Dublin Fire Brigade

RCSI and Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB), through Dublin City Council, have engaged in a partnership since 2002 for the development and provision of education and training in accordance with the standards and procedures set down by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). Through this agreement, a Diploma in Emergency Medical Technology (NFQ Level 7) is undertaken over two academic years by all DFB personnel as part of their employment as firefighter/paramedics for the provision of fire & rescue services in the Dublin Metropolitan Area. This successful partnership has an active partnership board which provides oversight of the programme and considers options for future development of the programme as well as the implementation of any clinical or legislative changes to the programme. Since its inception, 23 student cohorts have or are currently undertaking the paramedic programme, 19 of whom have already been conferred and 4 others in the process of undergraduate or postgraduate internships. By the end of 2025 classes 20 & 21 will have successfully completed all aspects and will be due to graduate in Spring 2026.

Irish Hospice Foundation

RCSI has provided postgraduate education programmes in bereavement and loss in partnership with the Irish Hospice Foundation, since 2004. RCSI offers three programmes in collaboration with IHF, one Professional Certificate and two Masters programmes. Programme Examination Boards are facilitated by RCSI and held twice per year.

Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

RCSI continues to demonstrate global leadership in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings 2025, RCSI was ranked number one in the world for SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being for the third time, following previous top rankings in 2020 and 2023. RCSI also ranked in the global top 50 for SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals, achieving a joint 44th position.

The Graduate School of Healthcare Management (GSM) launched a new online CPD course, Sustainable Healthcare, designed by RCSI experts to equip healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge to embed sustainability into patient care and organisational decision-making. The course is offered free of charge to all participants and is being translated into Spanish to broaden access across the Latin American market. Further strengthening its commitment to responsible leadership education, RCSI also became a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), reinforcing the integration of sustainability values into teaching, research and practice within GSM.

RCSI has embedded climate action across all areas of university activity through the launch of its Climate Action Roadmap, which sets out a clear pathway toward net carbon zero by 2050. Aligned with the University's 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, the roadmap integrates sustainability into teaching, research, engagement and campus operations, with priorities including major energy-efficiency upgrades, expanded renewable energy projects, improved waste management, reductions in single-use materials, and enhanced climate education and

awareness. In line with national public-sector targets, RCSI has committed to a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.

RCSI's leadership in environmental sustainability has also been recognised through multiple external accreditations and awards. The University achieved its second successive Green Flag under the Green Campus Programme, reflecting a sustained, whole-campus approach to environmental action and engagement among staff and students. In addition, RCSI became the first university in Ireland to have all research and teaching laboratories certified under the My Green Lab Certification programme, the global gold standard for laboratory sustainability.

RCSI was also ranked as the top-performing medical school in Ireland in the Planetary Health Report Card 2025 for the third consecutive year. Part of a global, student-led initiative supported by the Planetary Health Alliance, the report card assesses institutions across five indicators, including curriculum, research, community engagement, student initiatives and campus sustainability. RCSI achieved an overall grade of A-, the highest awarded in Ireland, underscoring its continued leadership in planetary health and sustainable healthcare education.

RCSI Art Committee

The RCSI Art Committee continues to deliver a dynamic and ambitious art programme that effectively integrates multiple strands of activity to strengthen the relationship between RCSI, the arts, and the wider community. In 2025, Ally Nolan was awarded the RCSI Art Award for her piece *The Men/Na Fir*. Nolan's work, which combines traditional craft with contemporary textile technology, offers a meaningful exploration of cultural identity, community, and place. The Award's accompanying supports, including the RCSI Silver Medal, a €5,000 bursary, and a €10,000 commission for a new artwork, provide tangible opportunities for artistic development and contribute to the ongoing growth of the RCSI Art Collection. The Art Committee continues to play a vital role in the curation and commissioning of new works, ensuring that the art collection reflects the inclusivity, diversity, and innovation that characterise the RCSI community. In 2024, the Committee hosted 'Intersections: Surgeons, Medicine and Art' as part of RCSI Culture Night. This public event successfully highlighted the interplay between the arts and health sciences, drawing over 250 visitors to engage directly with RCSI's art collections. The evening's guided tours showcased both historical and contemporary works, reinforcing the university's commitment to public engagement and lifelong learning.

RCSI Engage and REACH RCSI Programme

The RCSI Engage vision is to enhance human health and education by building reciprocal partnerships between RCSI staff and students and local and national communities. The REACH (Recreation Education And Community Health) RCSI Programme is its community engagement and pre-entry access programme connecting RCSI with communities, promoting health and facilitating access to further and higher education for groups traditionally underrepresented and promoting health. Community partnerships and involvement of RCSI students and staff through volunteering, community engaged learning and staff/student partnerships are central to the reciprocal nature of the programme. Highlights during the reporting period included:

Primary and Post Primary School Engagement

In 2024-2025, REACH RCSI engagement with primary and post primary schools took place both on campus and in communities. It saw RCSI staff and student volunteers visit classrooms and community centres, engaging in health and educational activities co-designed to facilitate access and widen participation in further and higher education with a particular focus on STEMM. REACH RCSI Grinds Club takes place after school on campus and sees RCSI student volunteers provide free one-to-one academic support in broad range of subjects to post primary Leaving Certificate students from Dublin's south inner city. Leaving Certificate group Chemistry group tutorials offer additional academic support to link DEIS school students. During Science Week 2024, RCSI's Chemistry team facilitated interactive STEMM workshops for REACH RCSI DEIS post-primary students who conducted Junior Certificate acids/bases experiment, and were then challenged to synthesise aspirin, part of

RCSI's undergraduate curriculum, providing an authentic STEM experience. The REACH RCSI and Paediatric Society School Visits Volunteer Programme aims to familiarise children in early start, junior and senior infant classes with healthcare professionals and overcome any apprehension about visiting the doctor or hospital. The 11th annual Teddy Bear Hospital welcomed 600 children and raised over €5,000 for Make-A-Wish Ireland, engaging 300 student volunteers across 15 interactive learning stations. Another health education project saw RCSI student volunteers promote health in REACH RCSI link primary schools with senior primary students taking part in Health Education workshops on the topics of Sleep, Sun Safety and Physical Activity.

REACH RCSI Primary Teacher CPD

The 12th annual summer CPD Programme for primary school teachers took place in July 2025, a Department of Education approved workshop-based programme that uses the theme of the human senses to support primary school teachers in developing an interest and enthusiasm for teaching science with direct relevance to the primary science curriculum framework. Over 375 primary teachers have now participated in this five-day programme. 100% of participating teachers reported increased confidence, being more likely to conduct STEM activities in the classroom and would recommend the course to a colleague.

Community Engagement

RCSI Engage seed funding supported two health and wellbeing initiatives: Dr Una O'Neill, Mercers Medical Centre, leads the patient choir "Mercer's Melodies" choir took part in the 2025 Novartis Ireland Patient Choir Contest. PhD Student Zoe McCormack leads the weekly "Autistic Art Club" which provides a safe, inclusive space at RCSI for neurodivergent people to express themselves. The 10th annual Ballroom of Romance took place at RCSI in July 2025, and saw 350 older people from Dublin's inner city and communities all across the Dublin Southeast area. This event is a longstanding partnership event between RCSI Engage and Dublin City Council. Entertainment opened with the Ukrainian Soul Choir followed by the fantastic Ronan Collins & Stories.

Student Summer Volunteer

RCSI Engage international community partnership continues to thrive with The Olive Branch for Children ("TOBFC") Tanzania. TOBFC is an NGO which aims to support remote communities assess their primary needs and establishes programmes that target the most vulnerable. RCSI student volunteers spent summer 2025 volunteering in a range of roles e.g. supporting physiotherapy awareness and service provider development, supporting education around HPV vaccine awareness and menstrual hygiene.

Public Engagement

RCSI Engage sponsored Pint of Science Dublin 2025, a global science communication festival that aims to bring science to everyone.

HEA Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH)

RCSI is a proud member of a six-college consortium with University College Dublin, Institute of Art and Design, Marino Institute of Education, National College of Art and Design, and Trinity College Dublin in this HEA-funded initiative to collaboratively promote and advance equality of access to higher education for under-represented groups. Collaborative initiatives include the Dublin Learning City Festival (DLC), which aims to ensure that education and learning are accessible and free for all individuals, regardless of age or cultural background, in traditional and non-traditional settings. Dublin Learning City Festival 2025 featured an array of RCSI learning opportunities focused on health and wellbeing, and culminated in a historic tour of RCSI. The Community Mentoring programme is a unique inter-institutional and community-based mentoring programme that sees access students from each HEI train together and mentor prospective students across Dublin City and HEA-funded 1916 Bursaries, which support students from target groups underrepresented in higher education throughout their programme.

Creative Arts Summer School

2025 saw RCSI host 60 participants from priority groups for a day of creativity with interactive workshops facilitated by RCSI SIM team and a Life Drawing Workshop led by renowned artist Robert Jackson.

The RCSI Engage, Engaged Research Awards

This programme at Research Day underlines RCSI's commitment to building stronger connections between researchers, community stakeholders, and industry partners to create meaningful societal impact. Eunice Phillip won the 2025 Engaged Research Award for the project entitled "Community Perspectives on Health Needs and Assets in Sláintecare Healthy Community Programme (SHCP) areas in Dublin." The study, led by Prof Debbi Stanistreet, formed a component of RCSI's academic partnership with Dublin City Council (DCC) and Sláintecare Healthy Communities. The final report was launched by Dublin's Lord Mayor, during Dublin City's Inclusion and Integration Week. April 2025 saw the launch of a second impactful study around a novel drinking water intervention, 'Uisce Cliste: Healthy Hydration for Dublin,' led by Dr. Grace O'Malley in partnership with Dublin City Council. The project was developed to ensure greater access to free, high-quality drinking water in public spaces, vital to public health and a crucial step toward addressing health inequalities and supporting well-being.

Transition Year Mini Health Sciences Programme

RCSI welcomed over 250 Transition Year (TY) students from across Ireland to take part in the annual RCSI MiniHealthSciences Programme. The event offered post primary school students a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in various healthcare professions. A further 3,100 students took part in the programme online, attending lectures, interactive workshops and live-streamed surgeries. The programme featured a diverse range of sessions, including insights into a patient's journey, an introduction to forensic pathology, sports medicine, an overview of plastic and reconstructive surgery and medical technology. Students also received valuable guidance on looking after their own mental and physical health. For the first time, the 2025 TY programme included dentistry, giving participants a preview of RCSI's new School of Dentistry. The RCSI MiniPharm and MiniPhysio online programmes gave students the chance to explore careers in pharmacy, physiotherapy and the pharmaceutical industry. The annual Waterford RCSI TY MiniMed programme at the RCSI Education Facility, University Hospital Waterford and South East Technological University (SETU) welcomed more than 120 students from schools in the Region.

RCSI MyHealth Lecture Series

This year, RCSI's successful MyHealth series secured a new corporate partner and unveiled a new brand identity. Building on its impact to date, the series has been repositioned to allow for greater flexibility in delivery. It is now positioned as a free programme of community events, expert talks and on-demand content, sharing trusted health information for all. Guided by the MyHealth RCSI mantra, 'making health human,' RCSI is committed to embedding Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in all public engagement activities. Each episode features the voices of patients and family advocates sharing real-life experiences, ensuring that conversations are authentic and meaningful. RCSI also prioritises collaboration with external charities and support organisations aligned with its topics. The series continues to perform strongly, with excellent registration figures for the series; the dedicated CRM database now includes more than 10,500 engaged contacts, who receive regular updates on MyHealth news and events.

RCSI Expert Directory

The RCSI Expert Directory is a resource for journalists that brings together details of RCSI experts, across a range of healthcare issues and concerns, in an online listing. In support of the UN Sustainable Development Goal to promote good health and wellbeing, these academics, clinicians and researchers are willing to engage with the media in their area of expertise so they can empower people with information that leads them to better health.

Strategic Communications

RCSI's institutional communications strategy continues to underpin the university's strategic goals, by enhancing and protecting its reputation and by deepening stakeholder relationships. National and international media remained a strategic imperative. Positive coverage in Ireland remained consistently high and the volume of

international coverage increased. Communicating research is a critical element of RCSI's communications strategy. National and international media coverage was achieved for research on pain medication, child allergy research, lung health, tobacco costs, and 3D-printed implants. The university's website was redeveloped between 2018 and 2020 to ensure that stakeholders could readily find the information they need and to better showcase the expertise across the university. The site now has over 5.5 million unique page views a year. Stakeholder engagement remained a priority, with regular newsletters shared with key communities including clinician, alumni, and fellow and members.

Alumni Awards

Established in 2019, RCSI's Alumni Awards are an annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of its graduates. Every year nominations for the awards are sought from the global community of 35,000+ alumni. Faculty and staff review the submissions which number 100+ annually. Finally, seven individuals are selected as awardees. Whether undergraduate or postgraduate alumni, these individuals are chosen in recognition of the leadership and contribution they have made to healthcare across all stages of their careers and the inspiration they provide to students and staff at RCSI. The 2025 Awardees were celebrated at a special Ceremony and Gala Dinner in the historic College Hall. In addition to this fantastic evening, the awardees' likeness was captured as part of a stunning wall mural by the artist Maser, which features in the main lobby of RCSI, thereby creating a visual connection between alumni and current students.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

Several research activity enhancements were implemented during the reporting period. Researchers at RCSI published a total of 1652 PubMed indexed articles in 2024. It was another exceptional year for external funding with €44.8M in new grants awarded including European Research Council (ERC) Starting & Proof of Concept grants, a Marie Curie Actions (MSCA) COFUND, six MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, three Research Ireland Pathway awards, two Frontiers of the Future project awards and two HRB Emerging Clinician Scientist awards. Through collaborative and interdisciplinary research projects, the university is advancing solutions to address pressing global health and environmental challenges.

Examples of notable funding awards in the past year include:

- PRISM (Precision Oncology Research Initiative for Metastatic Breast Cancer) a Research Ireland Strategic Partnership Programme worth €5M being led by Prof Leonie Young;
- Prof Imran Sulaiman is leading the: €1.3M project "Active lower airways dysbiosis with smoke exposure leads to physiological impairment consistent with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease" with their HRB Emerging Clinician Scientist Award;
- Prof Jonathan Hourihane leads the "FLORAL study: Examining relationship of health outcomes and gut microbiome in children born during and after the COVID-19 pandemic". This project is funded by an SFI-Frontiers for the Future Award of €1.2M;
- "Supporting climate-resilient health facilities in Malawi through sustainable access to water using solar disinfection of harvested rainwater: the SURGWater Project" led by Prof Kevin McGuigan was awarded €1.1M from the SFI Future Innovator Prize - SDG Challenge.

Clinical Research Centre

With the support of the Office of Research and Innovation and Sponsorship Office, the Clinical Research Centre (CRC) has implemented significant process improvements and developed an ever-closer relationship with Beaumont Hospital to help drive clinical research activity. This has led to many benefits including reducing study start-up timelines, introducing an electronic Quality Management System and almost tripling the number of participants recruited to studies in 2024 to 906 (up from 325 in 2023). In the same year, 62 open studies led by 22 PIs in 33 disease areas were supported. The Organisation of European Cancer Institutes (OECI) accredited Beaumont RCSI Cancer Centre continued to go from strength to strength with the start of the €4.9M Irish Cancer Society funded Lung Check program; this aims to transform lung cancer care and research, bring state-of-the-art cancer care to the community and to enhance access to Irish Cancer Society support services.

Royal Irish Academy

Prof Annette Byrne, Professor of Molecular Physiology was elected as a Member of the Royal Irish Academy (MRIA), Ireland's foremost body of experts in the sciences and humanities. Election to the Academy is the highest academic accolade in this country and is testament to Prof. Byrne's extensive contribution to research.

Innovation and Commercialisation

In 2024, the growth in RCSI's knowledge transfer performance continued with RCSI again exceeding the ever-increasing ambitious targets independently set by Knowledge Transfer Ireland. This success is a testament to RCSI's world-class research expertise. 2025 saw the commencement of the two Research Ireland Funded ARC Programmes for Therapeutics and for HealthTech to help translate academic research to commercial success and to develop the entrepreneurial skills of academics and postdoctoral researchers. RCSI has now approved the formation of a total of six new spin-out companies since 2021 and is proudly in the position of being ranked third for spin out company formation in Ireland in KTI's Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey (normalised against research expenditure). In terms of industry engagement, the value of collaborative agreements signed was the highest ever recorded in RCSI at €7.9M and RCSI is proudly in the position of being ranked first in Ireland for the number of agreements signed (normalised against research expenditure) demonstrating the quality of our applied research portfolio and industry support team.

RCSI Summer School

The RCSI Research Summer School (RSS) programme provides participating students with the opportunity to undertake an eight-week supervised project in their chosen area of interest, or they can participate in a structured taught programme that covers core research skills. Students also get the opportunity to develop a potentially commercially viable solution to a modern healthcare problem in the annual Student Innovation Challenge. In 2025, over 235 undergraduate students from across schools participated in the RSS Programme. At the end of the Research Summer School Programme, over 120 undergraduate students took part in the annual Student Innovation Challenge.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

RCSI acknowledges the important contribution of academic integrity to upholding the highest standards of professionalism among its learners and staff. The RCSI Academic Integrity Working Group, as originally established by the Quality Committee, became the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) in December 2023. Whereas a working group of the Quality Committee is normally established for a specific purpose, and has an expected finite duration, it was acknowledged that upholding the highest standards of academic integrity is work that is ongoing and, as such, warranted a change of status. The membership of the AIC continues to be representative of academic and professional departments across RCSI campuses, together with both undergraduate and postgraduate student representation. The AIC continues to promote knowledge and understanding of academic integrity and the importance of upholding the highest standards of it across the university.

Students registering on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are required to sign the University's Student Agreement, indicating their agreement to adhere to all relevant policies and regulations; this includes the Academic Integrity Policy. Section 5 of the Academic Integrity policy addresses suspected incidences of academic misconduct and specifies three levels of response to be applied according to the extent of the breach. During 2024/25, the AIC led the development of guidance to support RCSI staff to investigate a suspected case of academic misconduct together with an accompanying process map of the steps to be followed. The guide applies to the investigation of suspected academic misconduct in any assessment that is completed outside of an examination setting. Following its approval by both Academic Council and Medicines Health Sciences Board, the process was introduced for the academic year 2025/25.

In May 2025, the AIC Convenor gave a presentation entitled "Building Awareness of Academic Integrity Across the University – the RCSI Journey" at the Ireland Symposium 2025 held at Maynooth University.

To continue to support students in fulfilling their commitment to academic integrity, the university provides an online student academic integrity resource. This resource enables students to distinguish between behaviours that uphold academic integrity and those which breach it and result in academic misconduct. In advance of the start of the academic year 2025/26, the AIC updated the resource to support students in their authorised use of artificial intelligence (AI) when completing reflections as part of their course work. All university students must complete this online academic integrity resource on at least one occasion.

Within the university, the opportunities and challenges for all aspects of educational delivery and assessment posed by AI continue to be considered. To this end, the Artificial Intelligence in Education Working Group, established as a working group of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee, published the RCSI guidance on the ethical use of AI in learning, teaching and assessment. This guide provides for the ethical application of AI in the processes of learning, teaching, and assessment at RCSI. It outlines the potential benefits of AI for both students and educators, encompassing areas such as content creation, feedback provision, personalisation, accessibility, and career readiness. It also highlights the risks and ethical dilemmas associated with AI, including issues of reliability, data security, transparency, bias, unequal access, environmental impact, questionable development practices, and its effects on academic integrity and critical thinking. In 2025, RCSI appointed its first Vice-Dean for AI and Digital Health. Shortly after his appointment, the Vice-Dean established the RCSI AI policy development working group to develop the university's first AI policy. Furthermore, at the annual RCSI International Education Forum in June 2025, a key session explored the opportunities and challenges that AI present in education and how its potential can be harnessed in a manner than supports student learning and development while upholding academic integrity.

RCSI is a member of QQI's National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). The Head of Registry Services, the Head of the Quality Enhancement Office and the Convenor of AIC continue to represent RCSI at NAIN and contribute to its various initiatives. The Head of the QEO stepped down from membership of the NAIN Steering Committee in June 2025 and was replaced by the AIC Convenor.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators
1.	To be awarded the International Education Mark by demonstrating RCSI's sustained commitment to excellence in educational provision for international students across all campuses and online.	Oversee the finalisation of RCSI's application for the International Education Mark, manage all follow-up actions arising from the process, communicate outcome to stakeholders.
2	To continue to implement the outcomes of the successful CINNTE institutional review.	Progress the CINNTE Implementation plan and monitor progress in line with RCSI's strategic objectives.
3	To actively engage with national and international quality assurance and higher education bodies in order to shape policy, remain informed of emerging sectoral developments, and embed recognised best practice within RCSI's quality and academic frameworks.	Actively participate in consultations, working groups, and policy development initiatives led by QQI, EUA, and other relevant bodies. Analyse emerging sectoral trends, regulatory changes, and best practice guidance, translating these into insights for RCSI. Share key learnings with internal stakeholders to strengthen institutional awareness and preparedness.
4	To continuously refine and enhance RCSI's quality assurance processes, drawing on insights from regular review, so that quality systems are transparent, proportionate, and add greater value to stakeholders.	Continue implementing the enhancements identified through the regulatory process review. Support schools and departments in adopting revised procedures, templates, and workflows, providing training and guidance as needed. Identify further enhancements, as required.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
RCSI Bahrain	25-28 Jan 2026	2017
School of Nursing and Midwifery	18 – 21 May 2025	2018

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Link to Quality Reviews Schedule [RCSI Internal QA/QI & Institutional Reviews Schedule](#)

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1: Investigating Game-based Learning as a Tool for Delivering Pharmacy Education in China

Authors: Aisling B. Heeran*, Ashley Ajie*, Yifei Qu, Brian P. Kirby, Caoimhe Clerkin. *Authors contributed equally to this work

Keywords: Game-based learning, international education, teaching innovation

Introduction: RCSI has a Joint Education Institute with Soochow University in China. The International College in Pharmaceutical Innovation (ICPI) is a collaboration between the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, RCSI and the College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Soochow University. Patient-centred care labs (PCCLs) are central to pharmacy education; however, they are resource intensive, requiring a mock dispensary, dispensing software, reliable internet connection and a low student: staff ratio. This initiative aimed to deliver core PCCL learning outcomes through a creative, inclusive teaching approach, adapted to the systemic and resource constraints of the ICPI.

Initiative: This initiative introduced a game-based learning activity into teaching in the context of pharmacy education in China and analysed student perception of the activity. We created a low-cost, high-impact learning experience through an educational escape room. The escape room was designed to overcome challenges that prevented delivery of traditional PCCLs, including large classroom sizes, asynchronous delivery of connected modules and resource constraints such as internet and software access issues. Cultural differences in pedagogical practices exist between the Chinese and Irish education systems, with the former favouring didactic style teaching and the latter promoting more interactive learning, focusing on engagement, interaction and critical thinking. As a result, many Chinese students tend to rely on familiar rote learning strategies, and may face interpersonal challenges that can limit active participation, collaborative learning, and the confident application of theoretical knowledge in practice. This initiative promoted improved communication, team-work and critical thinking skills by requiring students to work in groups of five to solve problems based on real-world patient scenarios. All activities used in the escape room were mapped to the learning outcomes of the module.

The escape room was a hands-on, accessible activity that used printed clues placed in envelopes inside locked boxes (Figure 1). Each envelope contained a question with multiple answer options, each linked to a number. When participants identified the correct answers, they generated a four-digit code in a specific sequence, which unlocked the next box and revealed the following clue. The clues (see Figure 2 for example) were set up such that the next clue was more difficult to solve than the previous, as tasks became more demanding conceptually or required more time to complete. To overcome challenges around internet connectivity, each group had access to a hardcopy of the British National Formulary, as well as access to Medicines Complete through the RCSI library.

Outcome: While all 80 first-year pharmacy students participated in the escape room as it was a mandatory activity in the curriculum, participation in the post-activity survey was voluntary following informed consent and ethical approval. Of the 80 students in the class, 48% (n=38) completed the post-activity survey. The escape room activity was well received by students with

97% of respondents rating the activity as 4 or higher on a 5-point Likert scale, giving the activity a mean score of 4.78/5. There were high levels of engagement and motivation reported among the students, with 100% of respondents reporting that the activity was engaging and held their interest and that they felt motivated to participate in the activity. One student remarked that 'It made me more engaged instead of being absent-minded'.

Among the components of the activity identified as enjoyable by the students were the competition aspects, working towards rewards and milestones and teamwork. Ninety percent of students surveyed enjoyed working as part of a team. Another theme that emerged as enjoyable was the 'process of solving problems', indicating a shift in students' mindset towards the application of skills and knowledge. All students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that the activity helped them to understand the course material better. Students indicated a strong preference for game-based learning activities when compared to traditional assignments, with 100% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that this activity was more enjoyable than the typical teaching formats they had become accustomed to. While 95% of students indicated that the difficulty level of the game was appropriate for their learning, many expressed that increasing the difficulty of the game would make the activity more effective or enjoyable in the future. As observed during the activity, the limited options for the lock combination encouraged students to guess the code rather than solve the problem. In future iterations of the game, the number of combinations possible will increase such that any combination from 0-9 is possible.

Ultimately, the escape room demonstrated that game-based learning was received positively by Chinese pharmacy students, with students reporting increased understanding of course material and high levels of engagement and enjoyment. Students specifically requested more game-based learning activities in future modules. This study establishes foundational evidence supporting the use of game-based learning in the context of Chinese pharmacy education by demonstrating positive perceptions by students, paving the way for divergence from traditional didactic lectures towards novel pedagogies that align with the needs of modern learners.



Figure 1: Materials required for setting up the educational escape room

Figure 2: Example of clue in educational escape room

Match the drugs to their indication

Drug	Indication
(A) Metenamic acid	Dysmenorrhoea (4)
(B) Metronidazole	Hypertension (2)
(C) Amlodipine	Acute attack of ulcerative colitis (9)
(D) Mesalazine	Anaerobic infections (1)

Authors: Dr Zara Molphy & Professor Fergal Malone

Keywords: Community engagement, sexual health, teenagers, education intervention

Introduction: Teenagers are in the midst of a sexual health misinformation crisis. Many learn about sexual health from TV, social media, and generative AI, which can be unreliable and perpetuate myths and inaccuracies. The rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation among teenagers presents a unique challenge for caregivers, educators, and healthcare providers. Viral trends, celebrity-endorsed products, societal stigma, and the normalisation of harmful behaviours are steering adolescents away from evidence-based healthcare. With this in mind, RCSI Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology developed Debunking the Myths, a nationwide sexual health education programme consisting of interactive two-hour workshops, online tools, and media campaigns to provide reliable sexual health information while stimulating open discussion and curiosity.

Initiative: Debunking workshops offer teenagers an invaluable opportunity to interact and engage with subject matter experts (consultants, NCHDs, nurses) in a non-biased and non-judgmental way. By providing teens with the most up-to-date and relevant scientific information and the relevant skills to interrogate their information sources, we can positively impact their sexual health and attitudes.

Cocreation is a core element of Debunking. We include our target audiences in every step of the process, meaning participants are involved in the design, development, production, delivery, and evaluation phases of the project. Our commitment to continuous improvement is evident in our rigorous use of student and teacher focus groups, conducted separately to gain distinct, invaluable insights. These groups are pivotal for the ongoing assessment and comprehensive final evaluation of the programme, ensuring its sustained effectiveness and relevance. We also gather robust data from online surveys (pre- and post-workshops) and critical insights from frequently asked questions and real-time assessment data collected during live events via interactive tools.

Dr Eoghan de Barra, Department of International Health and Tropical Medicine and Dr Caroline Kelleher, Department of Health Psychology, School of Population Health have supported us with curriculum design for sessions on sexually transmitted infections and gender and sexuality sessions. They have both contributed to multiple workshops and have also featured in social media and traditional media campaigns for Debunking.

We engaged with the RCSI Parent's Network to conduct a survey to help shape the design of an online parent's session. As a result, we successfully delivered an online session "Talking the Talk: Teenagers and Relationships, Sexuality & Informed Choices" attended by RCSI staff members.

Prof Maeve Eogan, HSE National Lead of the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) provides staff support (consultants, nurses and forensic examiners) to deliver a talk at each and every Debunking workshop. In 2024, 17% of attendance at SATU appointments was in the 14-18 age cohort. Prof Eogan recognises the impact and reach of the Debunking programme to ensure young people receive clear, comprehensive information about preventing sexual violence and accessing SATU services—whether for themselves, a friend, or a family member.

The HSE Sexual Health Programme have attended several in-person and online workshops since the project's inception. As a result of engagement, the Debunking team were invited to submit a proposal for consideration by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) reaffirming the importance of a collaborative approach in shaping effective support for schools implementing the new Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum.

Despite our best efforts to maintain active correspondence with teachers, last-minute cancellations do occasionally occur. These may stem from various factors, including school organisational challenges and the workshop being offered free of charge, which may cause it to be a lower priority than something a school needs to "buy into". To mitigate this, we have devised a proactive correspondence plan with teachers.

From an operational perspective, this education outreach programme has been funded by Research Ireland for the past four years. The PI is actively engaging with representatives from the HSE Sexual Health Programme and the Department of Health to secure long-term support and future proof the initiative.

Outcome: Debunking stands out for its multidisciplinary expertise, innovative delivery, and measurable impact on young people's lives. The programme has reached 17,708 students in 26 counties (DEIS, non-DEIS and YouthReach). It's a pioneering effort in addressing critical health literacy gaps, deserving recognition for transformative contribution to Irish education and public health. Our Unique Selling Point – We offer dynamic adaptability to evolving medical guidance, government policies, and educational curricula while staying attuned to shifts in pop culture. This ensures our programme output continuously develops, remaining timely, compliant, and culturally resonant.

Debunking received funding from the Research Ireland Discover Programme in 2022 (€274,348) and in 2024 (€287,980). In May 2025, the programme was awarded Best Education Outreach Award at The Education Awards 2025. In June 2025, Debunking was awarded Best Education Innovation at the RCSI Education Awards, and the programme has since been nominated for Public Health Initiative of the Year at the Irish Healthcare Awards held in November 2025. The PI was also invited to deliver an oral presentation and a workshop at the Health Promotion Research Centre Annual Symposium "From Awareness to Action: Advancing Sexual Health Promotion", further demonstrating the project teams recognized as the 'go-to' group for reliable sexual health information for young people.

Through regular critical program reflection and meaningful engagement with stakeholders, we design and deliver targeted national media campaigns that are both impactful and responsive to emerging needs. We have demonstrated a significant track record with national media outlets and have published 28 newspaper articles and 11 national radio interviews. The most recent being a campaign aligned with World Sexual Health Day themes of 'Sexual Justice' and 'Access to Information'. Through a variety of impactful campaigns, we have established ourselves the "go-to" and "authority" for reliable sexual health information in Ireland.

As part of our evaluation, we assessed whether the effectiveness of the workshops is influenced by the mode of delivery, whether in person or online. Results indicated that there is no statistically

significant difference between the two delivery methods. Going forward, we will focus on digital transformation and deliver more online sessions substantially lowering the cost-to-reach ratio associated with each workshop.

CASE STUDY 3: Co-designing an educational resource for interprofessional learning - Mary and her healthcare team

Authors: Prof Criona Walshe, Tanya Clarke, Roisin Ormond, Dr Komal Hamid, Dr Joanne O'Brien, Dr David Moore, Prof Fiona Kent.

Keywords: Public and patient involvement, Interprofessional learning, Codesign, Partnerships

Introduction: Achieving best outcomes for patients requires the collaborative working of multiple healthcare professionals. However, the integration of meaningful interprofessional learning (IPL) into curricula to achieve this remains inconsistent. "Teamcare" is an Erasmus-funded project that seeks to improve interprofessional working within community health teams. Multiple education resources have been created for a suite of micro-credentials underway in Ireland, Italy, Greece and Poland. We describe the codesign of a widely adaptable educational video resource with the Beaumont iPainCentre team and Mary, a real patient who attended the service.

Initiative: In pursuit of patient-centred care, educational content needs to focus on development with, and not for, patients [1]. Furthermore, there is increasing recognition in education literature of the value of embedding authentic lived experiences of patients into educational activities and resources [2]. The goal of this initiative was to codesign and cocreate an educational video resource that illustrates optimum interprofessional teamwork and patient-centred care, with a real patient and her healthcare team. This work adopts a codesign process aligned to the approach described by Brand et al. [1], with emphasis on inclusive, respectful, participative, iterative and outcomes-focused collaboration.

In the video, through a series of interactions, we see Mary, a patient who lives with chronic pain, referred to the iPainCentre, a community-based pain team, by her GP. We see Mary meet members of the team, as her journey through the service is mapped. The team looking after Mary includes a combination of her real healthcare team, and actors, and include general practitioner, clinic administrator, advanced nurse practitioner, pharmacist, pain specialist, physiotherapist, psychologist, social worker, dietitian and occupational therapist. During every interaction, Mary remains at the centre of the process as a partner, rather than recipient, of her healthcare. Importantly, the codesign process affords all contributors equal voices, thereby flattening traditional hierarchies.

To commence the process, an initial meeting was held with the iPainCentre team and the goal of the project outlined. The early identification of Mary, as the potential patient partner, and Mary's agreement and enthusiasm for the project were key to the project's success. The initial concept was proposed and dates for filming were identified based on availability. The script was developed collaboratively over several meetings with the iPainCentre team, and Mary. Reflective conversations at these meetings highlighted examples of effective teamwork and these included respectful collaborative teamwork, the importance of excellent communication skills (such as closed loop communication), and showcasing the team workshop (the first offered appointment of

the iPainCentre service). At this workshop Mary meets other patients living with chronic pain; together they undertake an exercise to learn about the biopsychosocial framework. Mary contributed her own experience of this workshop, and how for her it was so important to realise she was not alone.

Each healthcare professional scripted their own dialogue, describing their roles and responsibilities in brief narrative sections. Mary ensured that the narrative within every interaction between herself and each healthcare professional authentically reflected her own lived experience.

Interprofessional learning is a pillar of the RCSI Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2023-2027. A recent update of the interprofessional learning strategy also identified curricular gaps in the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other professions. The project was supported by the RCSI Health Professions Education Centre, clinical colleagues in Beaumont Hospital and was endorsed by Chronic Pain Ireland (a patient advocacy group). The focus of the project on patient-centred care demonstrates how a cocreation process can simultaneously achieve communication, clinical and patient learning outcomes.

Outcome: The iPainCentre Teamcare video is a 45minute video that follows Mary in her home at the beginning of her journey, attending her GP who refers her to the iPainCentre, through to her attendance at the workshop, meeting all the team members, and culminating in the Team Meeting where Mary is invited to input into her own care plan. We propose a number of benefits that are becoming apparent from this work.

The codesign of the script with a real patient, combined with Mary's portrayal of herself in the video, lends authenticity to the content, and exemplifies the ideal model of partnership between a patient and her healthcare team. A key strength of the resource is how Mary is at the centre of every healthcare interaction ensuring that the patient voice is present, and empowered. The project also highlights the importance of patients as active educators, enabling the patient to shape how and what healthcare professionals learn. Going forward, we hope that this video may serve as a template and inspire the clinical teams who view it, to use a codesign framework to develop educational tools with their own patient partners.

The video is already in use in IPL education and has been used to deliver educational sessions as part of the TeamCare project both in Irish, and wider European contexts. Verbal feedback from the Irish session included the observations of authenticity, and patient-centredness. The video will also be used across the undergraduate programmes to address the learning outcomes of the roles of others, interprofessional communication and best practice in teamwork. The video is versatile and has been used successfully as a patient education tool, for delivery of a patient information session at a patient conference and is under development for use by the iPainCentre team for their future patient population. Chronic pain Ireland have approved the final video and importantly are cited as a resource to Mary within the content.

The codesign process strengthened the iPainCentre team's commitment to their espoused and lived values of kindness, trust, quality and empowerment. Furthermore, modelling these values in the interactions that were filmed both with each other and with Mary, provides a replicable model to other interprofessional clinical teams who view the resource. In addition, the workshop in the

video which provides a worked example of an exercise to help patients understand the biopsychosocial model may inspire other teams in their development of patient education tools and resources.

CASE STUDY 4: Planetary Health Module - Developing Environmentally Conscious Graduates

Authors: Dr Aisling O'Leary

Keywords: Sustainability, Future-focused curriculum, Teaching innovation

Introduction: Planetary health recognises that human wellbeing is inseparable from the sustainability of the planet and that environmental degradation due to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution is threatening global health. Healthcare delivery and medicines use contributes to significant environmental impacts. It is therefore essential to educate and train the health workforce on preparing for, and responding to, this triple planetary crisis. Pharmacy students must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to practice environmentally conscious care delivery.

Initiative: In recognition of the need to embed issues pertaining to the triple planetary health crisis in pharmacy education, an elective module focused on planetary health and sustainability for pharmacy students was developed for Year 2 students. This module aimed to develop the eco-literate student to empower them to advocate for planetary health as individuals and collectively as future healthcare practitioners. Curriculum material drew from existing published planetary health educational frameworks including the Planetary Health Education Framework, the AMEE Consensus Statement on Planetary Health Education for Sustainable Healthcare and published pharmacy curricula. The Climate Health in Medical Education curriculum co-developed by RCSI was also consulted. The module was developed around key themes including:

- Sources of environmental insults to planetary health and the need for interconnectedness with nature.
- Linking planetary and human health wellbeing to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The human health impacts of climate change, plastic use and pollution.
- Mitigation and adaptation strategies at an individual level.
- How healthcare delivery contributes to climate change, pollution and waste and associated mitigation strategies to overcome these.
- How medicines use climate change, pollution and waste and associated mitigation strategies to overcome these.
- The tools of Sustainable Quality Improvement (SusQI).
- Sustainable pharmacy practice.

Cognitive learning outcomes were complemented with adaptive learning outcomes to enhance critical thinking and movement building skills and instill values, as mandated in the planetary health education frameworks. The pedagogical approach was multi-modal including some didactic teaching, but with a considerable focus on active-learning strategies i.e. problem-based, case-based, simulation and role play, and reflective practice. Situated-learning focused on nature-focussed field trips.

To reflect the actual and potential sustainable healthcare practices, contributions were obtained from across the institution, specifically from a trainee surgeon and a practising community pharmacist undertaking research to stimulate discussions around practical aspects of sustainable healthcare delivery on the ground. In addition, the success of the college's progression towards My Green Lab accreditation was also highlighted as an example of best practice. The broader perspectives of contributors to and mitigation strategies for planetary health, out with healthcare specifically, were provided by faculty with special interests in agriculture and the fashion industry.

The key challenge in delivering the module was shifting from the traditional translational science pedagogical approach prevalent in teaching and learning in healthcare, focused on fact-based education and knowledge, and acquisition of skills and assessment modalities emphasising knowledge recall or demonstration of technical skills. As we know, knowledge alone will not prompt the critical behavioural changes required to instill respect for the environment and planet, and drive individuals to change their behaviours either personally or professionally. Therefore, based on experience gained over three iterations of the module, the clear need to adopt values-based pedagogy has become much more apparent, resulting in shifts in the approaches to the various modular themes i.e. less didactic teaching, more in-class discussion opportunities and overall, less strict 'timetabling'. Some may frame this as a translational humanities approach to teaching fostering critical thinking, commitment to human rights and fairness, the capacity to adapt and to engrain values-driven action.

Outcome: The development process for the module has been presented international at the AMEE conference in 2024 as a short online presentation and at the Sustainable Pharmacy Education meeting in April 2025, where two students from the module participated enthusiastically.

Informal feedback was obtained from students and gleaned from extracts from submitted reflective portfolios. The overarching theme across the feedback was that content was 'eye-opening'. It clearly highlighted that there was little baseline awareness of the impact of healthcare and medicines use on planetary health degradation. Students were grateful for the opportunity to have gained the insight now, to allow them to take responsibility in their future practice and as individuals. During the module the recurring adage of 'every action counts and does make a difference' was emphasised at all contact sessions, and in feedback this was said to have been encouraging and allowed them to bring these key messages to others around them. On a practical level, they recognised the shared responsibility involved to bring about changes including public and political engagement. Based on feedback, quality enhancement is undertaken to modular content, delivery and 'assessment'.

Apart from acting on student feedback, learning from teaching has also been critical in fostering quality enhancements in the module, and this was somewhat surprising. Primarily, the recognition of the need to stress the positive over the negative at all times was apparent early in the first iteration, specifically the need to highlight the many ways we, as individuals, healthcare providers and pharmacists, can and do make a difference, despite the bleak planetary health outlook. This has resulted in considerable reduction in providing extensive fact-based negative content on

planetary and human health impacts, turning swiftly to examples of solutions and methodologies to facilitate their implementation using active-learning methods.

The learnings from teaching in this module have influenced teaching and assessment across other modules. Sustainable healthcare and environmentally conscious pharmacy practice is included across clinical teaching focusing on the four principles of sustainable healthcare i.e. prevention, self-care, lean pathways and low-carbon alternatives. Interaction with faculty on areas pertinent to their teaching is also occurring.

As a consequence of this teaching and the need to instill values of social equity and awareness among students, an unexpected development has been to co-create assessments with students focused on community engagement or communication with the public, with submissions requiring a significant creative element. Examples of the outputs are shown in the images included in this case study.

CASE STUDY 5: HR Buddy Bot

Authors: Barry Holmes, Tanya Boon, Jordan Hennessy and Niall Berwick

Keywords: Staff Support, Artificial Intelligence, Process Enhancement

Introduction: RCSI employs over 1,400 staff across multiple sites and the HR Operations team receive in excess of 100 queries each week, with many of these queries being repetitive or similar in nature. In late 2023, a new HR Hub was launched as a one stop shop for HR information. Policies and procedures are now more accessible to staff than ever before, with the HR Hub containing over 300 pdf/word documents and over 250 SharePoint pages. Despite the rollout of the HR Hub, the volume of queries to the HR inboxes had not reduced as often the answers are deep inside large documents, and so the HR team undertook a project to improve their email response timelines and reduce the manual aspect of common HR queries. The goal was to provide staff with more concise, bullet point explanations of the policies and procedures, online in a quick and efficient manner, improving the overall employee experience. With the rapid growth of AI in all sectors, it was agreed that it would be an essential tool in this process.

Initiative: The HR Operations Team commenced planning with developing the brief and requirements of the AI Bot to be placed in the SharePoint HR Hub site. This included collaboration with the IT Department and the endorsement from senior leaders, both critical to launching the project successfully.

The goal was to rapidly provide staff with more concise information. This would ensure that staff accessed information more quickly and would also reduce the volume of queries coming to HR inboxes. Key stakeholders in this project were HR and IT alongside a third-party vendor, Spanish Point.

Important steps in designing the bot were to ensure that the Bot could be embedded within the existing SharePoint site, to avoid the need for staff to “sign-in” to another platform and to develop a user-friendly interface that is easily accessible to all employees online while ensuring the tone

and conversational style of the bot were correct. The need to develop rules to steer certain conversations away from AI responses for sensitive topics required an additional technical aspect from both teams, but was seen as a necessary development. An unexpected challenge was the Single Sign-On (SSO) component, which was integral in the design brief for an easily accessible Bot. Midway through the project, Microsoft changed their requirements for accessing the Bot and their “out of the box” solution was not suitable for RCSI’s purpose. The additional optimal solution provided by Microsoft at the time was not available to be fully rolled out to users of the platform and was costly. The RCSI IT Team were integral to the conversations with Microsoft and, with their support, they agreed on a third-party component, with Microsoft, that could be amended and utilised.

Outcome: The Bot has received good feedback to date, with staff complimenting its ability to pull only the necessary information from the Hub that relates to their questions. Many have also commented positively on the user-friendly tone and nature of the Bot.

One key enhancement, identified early on in the project, was the requirement to update information already provided on the HR Hub. As the Bot was pulling from the text provided on each SharePoint page, images and links were found to be a pain-point to the Bot in pulling this information. The outcome of this was to not only update the key topics within the Bot but also to update/change images on the HR Hub pages, to ensure text is provided alongside images, so that the Bot can pull the correct information into the responses where needed. This process has evolved into a continuous improvement cycle. Questions raised through the Bot have highlighted areas where content is missing or not optimised, and the HR team has been actively plugging these gaps and continually enhancing the site in ways that were not possible before.

Ongoing reviews of the HR Hub content and monitoring of incoming questions to the Bot (anonymised for HR viewers) will continue to be a core responsibility of the Operations Team. This process is not just about maintaining accuracy, rather it is a key driver of quality and continuous improvement. By analysing real questions from employees, valuable insights into what people actually want are gained, rather than relying on assumptions. This feedback loop allows the team to identify gaps, optimise content, and enhance the overall experience for visitors.

CASE STUDY 6: A New Career Development Programme for the RCSI Research Summer School

Authors: Niamh Mullen, Fiona Houlihan

Keywords: Career development, Interprofessional learning, Student support

Introduction: In 2025, over 235 undergraduate students from across schools participated in the RCSI Research Summer School. This summer school aims to immerse students in a world-class research experience. Students participate in activities that are designed to develop core skills in scientific writing, presentation, data management, statistics, ethics and research involving patients. To further enhance this programme, it was considered that a career development series would be an important addition and would further benefit participants’ professional development.

Initiative: The RCSI Research Summer School invited the RCSI Careerhub team to create a career development series to be delivered during the Research Summer School “Taught Skills” programme. The Careerhub team explored frameworks, timings and formats that would best suit this student population.

The PACE programme (Professional, Action, Career, Empowerment) was developed using the “Design Your Life” framework. The PACE acronym emphasises taking proactive steps (Professional Action), focusing on career growth (Career), and ultimately empowering students to shape their futures (Empowerment) using design thinking principles. There were six learning outcomes:

1. Apply professional practices taking a proactive, self-directed approach
2. Implement design thinking for career planning
3. Develop and communicate a personal brand
4. Build and use career tools
5. Expand career awareness and industry insight
6. Empower self-directed career management

The deputy director of RCSI Research Summer School was involved in the exploratory phase of this initiative. The programme was based on RCSI’s award-winning student choice module “Design Your Life”. However, the student population was different and included a broader student cohort across the schools of medicine, pharmacy and biomolecular sciences, and physiotherapy. This presented an opportunity to refine the programme to be a more inclusive offering and one that would offer opportunity for student collaboration. The goal was to offer students further opportunities to work in partnership, thus reflecting an interprofessional approach to knowledge sharing and an increased sense of belonging.

An iterative mindset was adopted in designing the PACE programme, putting the programme designers in the students’ shoes, meeting the students where they are at and using the Careerhub team’s professional expertise and knowledge to empower the students to succeed. This included reading and reevaluating content and student activities. Collaboration with the RCSI Alumni team was essential to secure speakers and the RCSI HR team provided their expertise on recruitment, including a perspective on considering applications. School Coordinators also contributed to content and delivery.

The Careerhub platform was used to create a specific group so that students could receive targeted communications from the Careerhub team throughout the programme. Pework, and pre and post surveys were all integrated to the student group within the platform. Specific resources, that aligned with the PACE programme outcomes, were identified and made available on the platform. This was the first time that the Careerhub team had adopted an integrated platform approach for a programme, from inception through to completion.

Outcome: The programme was delivered over a four-week period that comprised of in-person and self-directed content. This blended learning model provided flexibility and autonomy for students. Collaboration and interprofessional learning were fostered through interdisciplinary engagement with students from the Medicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, and Advanced Therapeutic Technologies programmes.

Platform integration through the RCSI Careerhub, enhanced the user experience, and streamlined communication, resource sharing, and survey data collection. The iterative design mindset, allowed for multiple programme refinements demonstrating responsiveness and innovation.

Programme evaluation post-completion revealed that 100% of respondents either had a CV or were in the process of creating one, 75% had developed a career goal with the remaining 25% saying they were more informed on how to create a goal, and 100% felt more confident about networking and exploring opportunities.

Students said that they enjoyed *“learning about post graduate research opportunities, I didn’t realise there were so many”*; *“seeing examples of people putting what we spoke about into action for e.g., how to have a good LinkedIn profile and then having profiles that are good examples”* and *“all the elements of the program, particularly the networking aspect”*.

CASE STUDY 7: SAFE Sport: Standardising Safety and Emergency Preparedness Across RCSI Sports and Societies

Authors: Emily O’Brien, Claire Nugent and Hollie Heffernan.

Keywords: Student wellbeing, Student support, Emergency preparedness

Introduction: The SAFE Sport programme was introduced by RCSI Student Services as an enhanced, formalised evolution of existing safety training for student-led sports and societies. Recognising the need for greater consistency, accountability, and alignment with institutional and national standards, the initiative was designed to upgrade informal safety practices into a structured, certified framework. SAFE Sport reflects RCSI’s strategic commitment to wellbeing, leadership development, and excellence in cocurricular engagement, ensuring every student activity is underpinned by robust safety preparedness.

Initiative: The SAFE Sport programme was designed and launched by RCSI Student Services following extensive consultation with students, RCSI departments, and external partners. The primary goal was to establish a sustainable and standardised safety training framework for all sports and societies, ensuring compliance, confidence, and competence among student leaders and members.

The initiative evolved through structured collaboration. Student feedback gathered through the Student Engagement Partnership (StEP) programme played a central role in shaping the content, tone, and delivery format of the training. Key internal stakeholders, including the Sports Coordinator, Society Coordinator, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Office, Health & Safety, Porters, and Marketing, contributed to the development and integration of the training model, ensuring relevance and alignment with institutional policy. Externally, RCSI partnered with the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) to deliver certified, high-quality first responder training that meets national standards.

The resulting framework comprised three interlinked tiers:

1. **In-Person Engagement:** Mandatory training sessions for all Captains and Chairpersons provided enhanced operational and safety briefings. Attendance was formally tracked to ensure compliance, and sessions focused on emergency decision-making, communication, and institutional protocols.
2. **Online Learning via Moodle:** Six online modules were developed to provide consistent, accessible training for all committee members. Topics included Concussion, Online Safety & Data Protection, Health & Safety, EDI, Safeguarding, and an overview of the Club & Society Handbook. Each module integrated RCSI-specific policy and concluded with a short quiz to assess understanding.
3. **SAFE In-Person Training:** Targeted towards high-risk sports and other key student groups, this component (delivered in partnership with the IRFU) provided certified, practical pitch-side responder training. Participants learned skills including Basic Life Support, concussion management, spinal injury response, and emergency action planning.

Challenges included aligning training schedules with busy student timetables and ensuring consistent participation across a diverse range of clubs and societies. These were addressed by embedding mandatory attendance requirements, offering flexible online components, and providing certification incentives such as digital badges.

Outcome: The SAFE Sport initiative has significantly enhanced the quality, safety, and professionalism of student sporting and co-curricular activity at RCSI. To date, the programme has achieved 100% attendance at the Captain and Chairperson sessions, with over 100 students completing certified SAFE training. By next year, at least 200 qualified first responders will be active across RCSI's sports and societies, ensuring that every event or fixture has trained safety personnel on site.

The initiative has fostered a stronger culture of accountability and preparedness. Through the introduction of a formalised tracking system on the Student Life HQ platform, Student Services can monitor training completion, identify certification gaps, and verify that qualified responders are present at every activity. The platform also supports compliance reporting, future planning, and recognition through automatically issued digital badges.

Evaluation and feedback have been highly positive. Post-training surveys revealed a substantial increase in students' confidence to respond to emergencies, alongside improved understanding of institutional safety protocols. Participants highlighted the practical value of the certified training and the reassurance it brings to both team members and spectators.

The SAFE Sport programme has also contributed to leadership development and employability by providing students with recognised qualifications and evidence of applied safety competence. The certification's portability enhances graduates' professional profiles, particularly for those entering health, sport, or community-focused careers.

The programme's sustainable design ensures ongoing quality enhancement. Certifications remain valid for two years, with renewal built into the annual training calendar. Future phases will include developing bespoke in-house training materials using RCSI expertise and expanding blended delivery to maximise accessibility.

Through its structured, collaborative, and data-informed approach, SAFE Sport has embedded safety as a shared institutional value, contributing tangibly to RCSI's mission to support student wellbeing, leadership, and excellence within and beyond the classroom.

The formalisation of the SAFE Sport programme has delivered measurable benefits across the RCSI community, enhancing not only student safety and confidence but also operational efficiency, institutional compliance, and the overall student experience. Key benefits include:

- Students have experienced significant gains in both personal and professional development. Completion of certified modules and in-person training provide students with credentials that enhance employability, particularly in health, sport, and leadership-related fields.
- Students now receive consistent, accredited safety training that empowers them to recognise, prevent, and manage incidents effectively during sporting and society events.
- The structured training has strengthened students' leadership skills, fostering responsibility and confidence in emergency situations.
- The blended training model ensures equitable access for all students, regardless of sporting level or background.
- Students from diverse clubs and societies now share a unified understanding of safety standards, promoting collaboration, peer support, and collective accountability across the RCSI student community.
- The introduction of the tracking system has simplified monitoring and compliance management, allowing staff to track certifications, identify training needs, and plan future sessions efficiently.
- Consistent safety coverage at events and activities has reduced the likelihood of incidents and enhanced the University's risk management framework.
- The initiative strengthened cooperation between Student Services, Health & Safety, EDI, and other internal departments, fostering a shared culture of care and accountability.
- Staff feedback indicates greater confidence in student preparedness, resulting in reduced administrative burden during event approvals and incident management processes.
- The initiative supports RCSI's strategic pillars of wellbeing, inclusion, and excellence in student engagement, directly contributing to the University's educational and civic mission.
- By embedding a certified, accredited safety framework within cocurricular activities, RCSI demonstrates sectoral leadership in student safety and emergency preparedness.
- The formalised approach provides clear evidence of compliance with health and safety regulations, institutional policy, and sectoral best practice.
- Collaboration with external bodies, such as the IRFU, and the integration of national standards strengthen RCSI's external relationships.

CASE STUDY 8: The RCSI Library and Artificial Intelligence: Responding Effectively

Author: Patrick Keegan & Anna Leary

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Generative AI, Library Innovation

Introduction: As interest in Artificial intelligence (AI) and Generative AI tools surged across higher education, the RCSI Library recognised the need for a proactive and informed response.

The library was quick to explore AI platforms, applications, their uses, limitations, and ethical considerations. This early engagement enabled RCSI to research how other libraries globally were responding to AI, and to help shape our own strategy. A key focus was positioning the Library as a central partner in supporting education and training around AI. The library participated in an institutional working group tasked with developing AI policy and training. It also contributed to training initiatives and communities of practice. This involvement has helped establish the Library as a credible and informed voice, fostering collaboration with academic and professional colleagues across disciplines.

Initiative: A dedicated online guide was created to curate authoritative resources, ethical guidelines, and practical advice for using artificial intelligence/AI in teaching, learning, and research. This guide is continuously updated to reflect evolving best practices and institutional policy. Topics covered include AI in healthcare, impact on academic integrity, how to acknowledge its use in academic work, and effective prompting.

A critical component of the Library's AI response was ensuring that the team engaged with emerging AI technologies to build confidence and expertise. This included team engagement, trialling and assessment of AI-powered research features and tools, e.g. Scopus AI, Science Direct AI, Web of Science AI Research Assistant, and standalone platforms like Keenious, Scite, and Perplexity. The team is comfortable assessing their potential to enhance literature searching, citation analysis, and research discovery. This hands-on approach has allowed staff to understand both the capabilities and limitations of these tools, ensuring informed recommendations to users.

The library actively monitored ongoing vendor developments, with particular attention to the increasing integration of AI capabilities within major library systems. This included close observation of enhancements in Alma's Metadata Content Creator, Primo VE's Research Assistant, and Ebook Central's Research Assistant tools. Each of these developments signalled significant shifts in the workflows supporting metadata generation, resource discovery, and patron interaction with e-resources. By engaging with these updates at an early stage, the library positioned itself to assess both opportunities and risks associated with emerging AI-driven functionalities. The proactive review process allowed the team to anticipate potential impacts on cataloguing standards, user interface design, and data ethics. Moreover, early awareness supported informed decision-making about system configuration, staff training, and long-term strategic planning. Through this monitoring effort, the library strengthened its ability to adapt to evolving technologies while maintaining a focus on accessibility, accuracy, and the responsible use of AI in library operations.

Several training videos and workshops were produced to introduce lecturers and student groups to AI tools, their pedagogical applications, and associated risks. These sessions emphasised critical evaluation, academic integrity, and responsible use.

The initiatives were supported by senior library management and aligned with institutional priorities through participation in a cross-institutional AI working group. The library also led a subgroup focused on AI ethics, ensuring that ethical considerations informed all outputs. Collaboration extended across academic and professional services, reinforcing the library's role as a trusted partner in shaping RCSI's AI strategy. The Health Professions Education Centre was a great source of collaboration, particularly on producing training workshops for educators.

Recognising the need for internal readiness, the library organised training sessions for its own team to explore how AI could streamline workflows, improve efficiency, and enhance service delivery. Engagement was collaborative, with team members sharing insights and experiences through internal discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions. This approach fosters a culture of experimentation and adaptability, ensuring that the library remains agile to AI-related technological shifts specifically.

A key challenge was the rapid pace of AI developments, which required agile responses and continuous learning. A commitment to remain curious about emerging GenAI tools and AI trends is a must. This is addressed through ongoing environmental scanning, engagement with professional networks, and iterative updates to resources and training materials.

Outcome: The Library's AI initiative has had a significant impact on AI literacy at RCSI. By providing clear guidance and practical training, it helped to improve digital literacy across the institution and support informed, ethical adoption of AI tools. This work positioned the library as a trusted partner in navigating emerging technologies, while also funnelling new users toward library resources and services.

For students, the initiative reinforced academic integrity and ethical use of AI, equipping them with critical skills for responsible engagement. For library staff, internal training enhanced workflow efficiency and deepened understanding of AI applications, fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability.

Feedback on the AI & GenAI Library Guide has been universally positive, and the guide has become one of the most visited resources among RCSI's extensive suite of library guides. Training workshops, particularly those focused on effective prompting, have gained traction with lecturer groups, indicating strong demand for practical, hands-on support sessions for learning, teaching, and assessment. Internal acknowledgment from academic staff and library users further validates the initiative's relevance and impact.

The initiative has received internal recognition from lecturers and professional colleagues, reinforcing the library's evolving role in supporting institutional priorities. Moving forward, the library will continue to update training resources, including the AI library guide, to reflect emerging best practices. Further training opportunities will be developed, ensuring sustained engagement and quality enhancement.

CASE STUDY 9: Engaging simulated participants to develop medical students' empathy and professional identity through sequential simulation

Authors: Dr Claire Mulhall, Prof. Nuha Birido, Mr Eric Clarke, Trudi Nelson, Dr Sahar Riaz, and Prof. Claire Condon

Keywords: Curriculum development, simulated participants, sequential simulation

Introduction: Breaking bad news and discussing death with terminally ill patients is a highly stressful and challenging task for doctors. Physicians often feel unprepared and anxious when faced with these difficult conversations as they can lack proper training in communication skills

and fear evoking negative reactions from patients or their families. Practicing these challenging conversations in a safe, simulated environment while at university is therefore hugely important.

Initiative: During the third year of the Medicine programme, students transition from classroom-based learning to direct patient care. Often with no prior experience of death, they are regularly exposed to critically ill and dying patients and their relatives during their clinical attachments. Consequently, this period of training can be a challenging time for many students and presents an appropriate opportunity to introduce simulated participant (SP) sessions relating to breaking bad news and end-of-life care. SP sessions traditionally focus on single interactions, while real patient care is continuous. Sequential Simulation (SqS) replicates the care continuum by highlighting key moments in the patient's journey via a series of linked scenarios representing different stages of a care pathway. Rather than re-enacting the entire patient journey, SqS can be used to engage SPs in pivotal conversations, prompting learners to reflect on their role as patient advocates.

In preparation for the 2024/2025 academic year, a new communication skills curriculum was codesigned for third-year medical students and subsequently piloted during that academic year. This included SqS learning experiences involving SPs focusing on a) disclosing a new diagnosis to a patient in an empathic manner and b) demonstrating the communication skills required for compassionate end-of-life care. The curriculum combined theoretical instruction, video demonstrations and SP sessions. Each SP session consisted of a pre-brief, an SP encounter and a facilitated debrief. Before each SP session, flipped classroom activities provided an instructional scaffold to support student learning. Relevant previously covered curricular content was signposted including the Calgary Cambridge consultation model, patient-centred clinical history taking, active listening and the SPIKES protocol - a structured, evidence-based framework designed to help healthcare professionals deliver bad news to patients and their families with empathy, clarity, and professionalism. A concise summary of key content was discussed during the pre-brief before each SP encounter.

Outlined in Figure 3, by way of an example, is one SqS learning experience focussing on 'Val', a patient with breast cancer. Students participated in four SP encounters over four consecutive weeks in real time that together represented a three-year simulated time (ST) period in Val's patient journey. The codesign team - comprising educationalists, SP educators, clinicians, surgeons, simulation technicians, SPs, patients living with and beyond breast cancer and medical students - developed, piloted, and iterated the SP case components for the scenarios.

All participating SPs completed RCSI's SP training programme, which included modules on advanced communication skills. SPs were trained to role-play each scenario and provide feedback. For Session 3, the post-operative encounter, SPs wore a specially developed task-training model (Figure 2) mimicking scarring from a single-sided mastectomy. This whole-task, hybrid simulation approach bridged theory and real-world practice, allowing learners to develop essential clinical and interpersonal skills in a controlled, yet realistic environment. Multiple iterations of the task trainer were developed to trial different wound presentations in terms of scarring and suturing, skin pigmentation, sizing, comfort for the SP while wearing, and ease of donning and doffing.

Outcome: A total of 320 third-year medical students participated in the pilot of the new communication skills curriculum, 201 (63%) of whom completed an end-of-module evaluation and written reflection. Results indicate that the majority of students (95%) felt this was an informative

way to learn patient-centred communication skills with 86% reporting that meeting the same patient case at different stages helped increase their empathy for the patient. Qualitative analysis of students' written reflections supports this finding, with many describing how the SqS learning experiences involving SPs deepened their emotional understanding and strengthened their ability to engage empathetically with patients by reminding them "that a patient is a human, not a chart". Moreover, these experiences help cultivate professional identity by strengthening students' sense of connection to the values and purpose of the medical profession, captured in reflections describing the experience as "a great reminder on our primary motive and role as physicians to care and advocate for our patients... definitely makes me feel like I've taken a leap closer to becoming a doctor." This innovative approach equips undergraduate medical students for real-world clinical encounters, transforming professional performance through the power of human interaction in a safe, simulated environment. Learnings from the pilot have been integrated and the new communication skills curriculum is now a key component of RCSI's third-year Medicine programme curriculum. It has received dual recognition at the 2025 RCSI Education Innovation Awards, having been shortlisted and later highly commended among the selected projects.

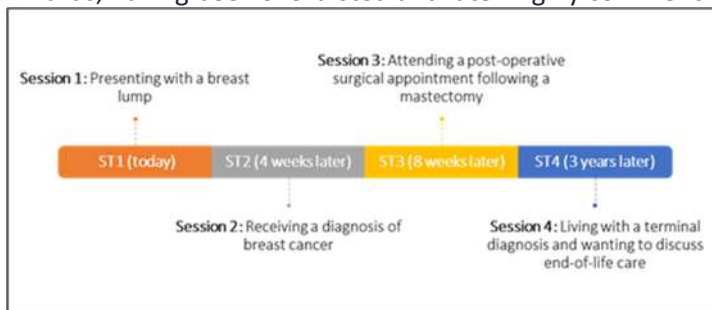


Figure 3: Val's patient journey with breast cancer sequentially simulated through four SP encounters (Session 1 to 4) taking place over four consecutive weeks in real time that together represented a three-year simulated time (ST1 to 4) period



Figure 4: The simulated post-operative surgical appointment following a mastectomy (left) and an early iteration of the single-sided mastectomy task training model developed and worn by SPs during this session (right).

CASE STUDY 10: Student Partnership Creating the Chagas Hub Ireland

Authors: Dr Eoghan de Barra, Julia Victoria Segatello Martins

Keywords: Student partnership, Global health, Community Engagement

Introduction: Chagas disease, a potentially life-threatening parasitic illness, remains a hidden health issue across Europe, despite its significant burden in Latin America. With growing Latin American migration to Ireland, early detection and awareness of this neglected disease are more critical than ever to improve migrant health outcomes. In response to this emerging public health challenge, a new student-led initiative "Chagas Hub Ireland" was established through the support of RCSI's Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) programme.

Initiative: Inspired by the UK Chagas Hub, medical student Julia Victoria Segatello Martins worked in partnership with Dr Eoghan de Barra, Senior Lecturer in International and Tropical Medicine at RCSI, and Dr Natalie Elkheir, founder of the UK Chagas Hub and member of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine to develop Chagas Hub Ireland. This represents a significant step towards addressing Chagas disease within Ireland's healthcare landscape.

The initiative reflects a student-led, scalable approach to global health challenges. The team set out to establish Chagas Hub Ireland to promote awareness of Chagas disease, offer community screening and advocate for changes to blood donations with use of testing. With support from StEP, the team secured ethical approval from RCSI, developed strategic partnerships with grassroots organisations, such as the Brazil Ireland Association (BRIA) and Amor Simples de Doar, and assembled a group of committed volunteers. The first community screening event was held at RCSI in May 2025 and represented a huge collaboration of the Chagas hub team and RCSI estates and sponsor office. It was the first time that such a community event was held in the College. Recognising that the Brazilian community represents the largest Latin American population in Ireland, and drawing on her own identity as a Brazilian in Dublin, Julia ensured the project was grounded in trust, cultural understanding, and community empowerment. Following extensive outreach, over 150 individuals expressed interest in participating. Despite initial capacity for 50 participants, the inaugural screening event in RCSI (May 2025) exceeded expectations, welcoming 55 individuals, all united by a shared goal: to access preventive care and advocate for their right to donate blood, a right restricted to Latin Americans in Ireland due to lack of available Chagas disease screening. The event was supported by over 20 dedicated volunteers and marked the culmination of 18 months of preparation, supported by two StEP grants, collaboration with the Brazilian Embassy, and partnerships with key community leaders. Importantly, the screening event not only provided immediate health benefits but also gathered vital data to inform the potential scaling of the project across Ireland.

Outcome: Beyond the learnings and experience gained by running the first community event, useful data was gathered on knowledge and understanding of Chagas and blood donation. The project also demonstrated the feasibility of the community engaged screening event. The Chagas hub team has expanded to include further students who bring with them cultural and linguistic links to other South American communities. They are working on web material and community engagement. In terms of testing, the team is now collaborating with HIV Ireland, who have experience and infrastructure in community screening events, to plan for events in 2026. HIV Ireland have a mobile testing unit and offer HIV and STI point of care testing. The Chagas hub may be able to use their testing infrastructure, while HIV Ireland can gain from this project's community links. A collaborative grant application is now planned to seek funding. The Chagas hub has also met with members of the Irish Blood Transfusion Board and will continue to engage with them on the possibility of screening potential donors from South America, thus increasing the supply of blood to all patients in Ireland.

CASE STUDY 11: Regulatory Process Review Project

Authors: Aisling Reast, Anne Weadick, Nichola McLarnon, Judith Gilroy

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Process Streamlining

Introduction: RCSI operates within a highly regulated environment. Regulatory processes include those relating to academic governance (professional body accreditations, internal quality reviews etc.), corporate governance (e.g. audit) or other legislative or university requirements (e.g. Athena Swan). Processes typically arise due to statutory or funding requirements and are continually growing. A recent glut of processes had resulted in some areas of the institution experiencing regulatory fatigue. The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) undertook to examine these processes to identify possible opportunities to reduce the regulatory burden. A three-phase project plan was developed:

- Understand the experience of RCSI units
- Identify opportunities for streamlining/efficiency
- Develop proposals to implement changes for relevant governance committees.

Initiative: Initial exploration included both quantitative and qualitative data gathering. A Microsoft form was developed to gather quantitative data on the processes required of schools, faculties, professional services departments and overseas campuses. Existing data sources were used to gather qualitative data on experience; these were a survey completed as part of the internal quality review (IQR) of the QEO and focus groups completed as part of CINTE preparations. Finally, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to examine the processes and volume of reviews at other Irish universities.

The findings in this phase included that there had been an increase in external regulatory requirements, and that some of this may have been due to post-covid catch-up. The review also found that activity is not uniform but that particular areas of RCSI experienced the most significant burden including schools and international sites. Benchmarking confirmed that RCSI was aligned with reviews at other universities. However, it did identify some misalignment in the professional service departments reviewed. Qualitative findings included that accreditation and IQR processes were very valuable but very time consuming. There was therefore clearly an opportunity to consider how RCSI's internal statutory processes (i.e. IQR and Programmatic Review) are managed.

In re-imagining RCSI's approach the goal was to develop the Quality Framework so that it was:

- Fit-for-purpose, systematic, assured quality.
- Standardised but flexible, recognising other processes and avoiding duplication.
- Proportionate, risk-based, and data-informed.

Outcome: The RCSI Quality Framework and supporting quality documents and templates were updated in several areas:

- Internal quality reviews are now combined with programmatic review processes, using the same review panel to generate two separate reports.
- Thematic reviews were introduced for departments that have been through previous successful reviews. This recognises the maturity of quality within these departments and has the potential for greater added value to the school or department under review.
- External processes (e.g. accreditations, international regulator reviews) and internal processes (e.g. recent approval of major changes or reaccreditation by the Awards and Qualifications Committee) are now recognised within internal quality reviews and programme reviews.

- Joint programmatic reviews are now undertaken for groups of cognate programmes to reduce duplication.
- Pre-populated generic text (e.g. institutional information) is now included in template documentation.

The RCSI Quality Review Calendar was reviewed to distribute activity, to include new schools and units, to remove professional support departments not reviewed at other HEIs and to account for streamlined processes. The QEO then commenced the development of new templates and guidelines in the areas of programme, thematic and abridged reviews, as well as amendments to the documentation for internal quality reviews.

This work was undertaken in collaboration with RCSI Registry and RCSI Bahrain to ensure that the changes and processes implemented met relevant requirements, including those of the Bahrain Qualifications Authority.

Quality Committee approved the updated Quality Framework and Calendar, and the Awards and Qualifications Committee approved the new programme review processes. The National University of Ireland and the RCSI Medicine and Health Sciences Board were advised of, and expressed confidence in, the new approach to programme review.