Annual Quality Report
RCSI, University of Medicine & Health Sciences
Reporting Period 2022-2023

RCSI, University of Medicine and Health Sciences
2024

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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 polices 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 Template[1]

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

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[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*				
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
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*				
9.0 - *Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
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 2022 - 31 August 2023.** The AQR has been approved by the RCSI Quality Committee and is submitted by Aisling Reast, Head of the Quality Enhancement Office.
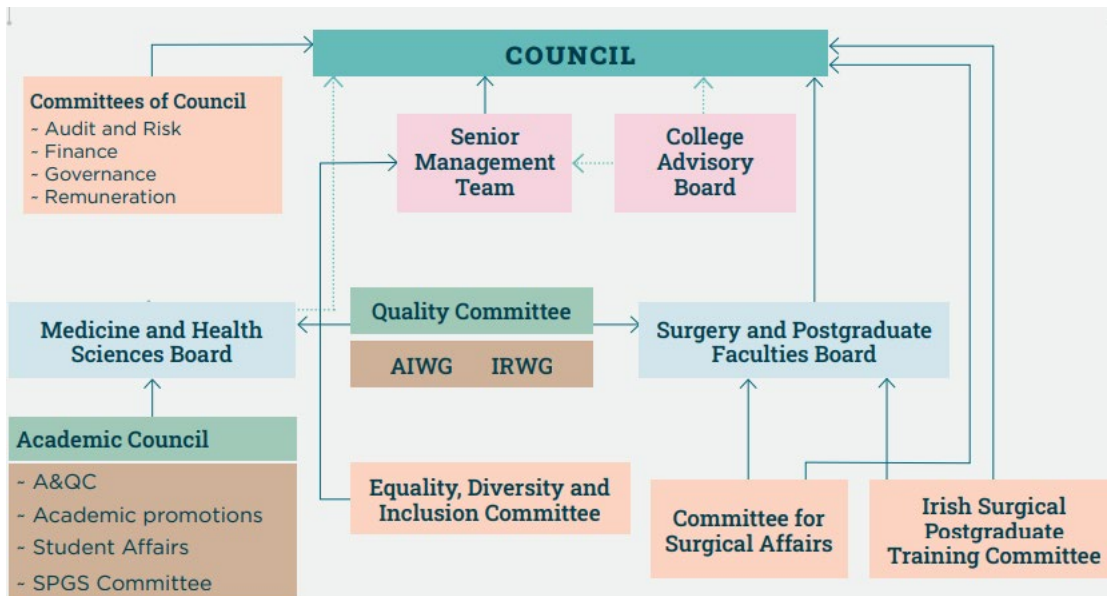
The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) was established by Royal Charter in 1784 to set and support professional standards for surgical training and practice in Ireland. RCSI has evolved considerably in the intervening years and is now both a health sciences university and a postgraduate training body in surgery and related specialties. This dual role brings many advantages to the institution, not least of which is the ability to offer education and training at all career levels (i.e., undergraduate, postgraduate & professional) in medicine, surgery and related disciplines. In fact, it is the only surgical or medical Royal College in these islands to have university status. RCSI has the largest medical school in Ireland and awards undergraduate and postgraduate degrees including those leading to qualifications in Medicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Advanced Therapeutic Technologies and Physician Associates in Dublin; Medicine and Nursing in Bahrain; Medicine in Penang (RUMC-RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus) and Kuala Lumpur (Perdana), and masters (taught & by research) and doctoral programmes variously in Ireland, Bahrain, China and Malaysia. RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. Following an institutional review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, RCSI's independent degree awarding powers were activated by ministerial order in 2010 pursuant to the terms of 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. In 2019 RCSI was granted university status, pursuant to the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019.

The Annual Quality Report was prepared by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) following extensive consultation with Schools, Faculties and Professional Services Units, prior to consideration and approval by RCSI Senior Management and the Quality Committee.

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. The current structure is summarised below.

Under the terms of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003 and earlier statutory enactments, the primary governing body of the RCSI is the Council. The overarching role of the Council is to provide governance to ensure that the College adheres 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." There are 4 standing committees of Council: 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. The College Advisory Board (CAB) provides Council and the Senior Management Team with external perspectives and advice on critical strategic decisions; it does not have 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, rejection 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 the strategy development, across Surgery and the Postgraduate Faculties.

The Quality Committee (QC) is responsible for the creation of policy and for the implementation of quality processes and quality assurance/quality improvement activities across RCSI. The QC reports to both the SPFG and the MHSB and has two standing sub-committees reporting to it, the Academic Integrity Working Group (AIWG) and the Institutional Review Working Group (IRWG). The AIWG is a formal structure to allow RCSI to monitor and respond to initiatives launched by the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and by QQI in

the area of Academic Integrity. The IRWG is responsible for the management of Institutional Reviews conducted by QQI. The QC also plays a significant role in integrating QA activities on overseas campuses into the overall QA system, and in supporting these campuses in their interactions with local QA/QI structures and processes. RCSI Bahrain has a local Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC). A report on its activities is presented at each QC, and the Chair of the QEC and the Director of Quality and Academic Development are members of the 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 including the Head of the QEO, the Director of Psychometrics, the Quality Reviews Manager and the QA/QI Analyst. An additional Operations Administrator was recruited to the QEO team during the reporting period. The Head of the QEO reports to the Chair of the Quality Committee, the 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 RCSI Council, MHSB, SPFB, CAB, Quality Committee, etc.).
• External members of Peer Review Groups in Internal Quality Assurance Reviews.
• External members of Programmatic Review Panels (appointed jointly by RCSI & NUI).
• 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 Regulatory Statutory Bodies.
• Public and patient representatives on relevant education and research committees.

Our 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 below. 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 for Professional Services Units, 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 University's approach to research conduct and integrity aligns with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (which specifies four fundamental principles that underpin all research integrity and good practice), with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, and with Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (QQI). 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 of these

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, which has responsibility for policy oversight and engagement with the academic directors of all taught postgraduate programmes in RCSI, and the Academic Review Committee (ARC), which reviews all new applications for research degrees and ensures efficient and timely registration of new students with quality research proposals, both 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 also undertakes rolling Programmatic Reviews. Within SPGS, the PhD programme was reviewed in 2012 and the MD programme was reviewed in 2018. The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) also carries out reviews of Schools, Faculties and Professional Services Units within RCSI. The Office of Research and Innovation participated in an Internal Quality Review in November 2021.

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 have any Linked Providers currently.

RCSI is involved in a range of instances of transnational, collaborative and franchise-based 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 responsible also for the revalidation of existing programmes to which Minor or Major Changes are proposed by Schools within the University of Medicine & Health Sciences. 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. In 2019, RCSI was authorised to use the title "university" in Ireland, having been authorised to do so overseas since 2015.

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).

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 programme is approved by the internal reviewers, the programme 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 external review by a NUI appointed external assessor, depending on the type of award. All 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 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 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 administers a rolling cycle of Programmatic Reviews of all RCSI programmes which lead to qualifications or awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Programmatic Reviews involve the preparation of a Self-evaluation Report by the relevant programme director, a two-day site-visit facilitated by a three-person panel (one external member nominated by RCSI, one external member nominated by NUI & one internal RCSI panel member), submission of a review report, and presentation of the report to MHSB and to the NUI Senate. The possible outcomes of the Programmatic Review process are:
a) Full Confidence with revalidation for a period of five years.
b) Limited Confidence with quality improvement planning and follow-up.
c) No Confidence with consequent discontinuation of the degree programme.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The RCSI website contains all the relevant information related to student admission for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This includes course curricula and detailed guidance on entry requirements, fees and application processes for Irish/EU and Non-EU students, plus additional guidance for students applying via the school leaver, mature entry and graduate entry routes. The website provides access to various policy documents that underpin aspects of the admissions process including fees, widening participation, scholarships and guidance on the admissions interview and personal statement process. As well as formal information, the website also provides access to details of Open Days and webinars, access to prospectuses and contact information for additional queries.

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 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. The day itself 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 and Sports Facilities. Registration takes place in the afternoon and students are also set up with their ID cards and laptops on this day. Students are issued with their RCSI student cards, which give access to the RCSI campus.

RCSI postgraduates are provided with an induction programme in October and April each year. A welcome handbook is also provided (via Moodle) to new postgraduate research scholars, detailing information and supports for living in Ireland and studying at RCSI.

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 Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Programmes or from other institutions into PGR and PGT programmes. RCSI's policy on Recognition of Prior Learning is available on the website.

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 or email) as soon as is practicable following the relevant Examinations Board meeting. At the end of each academic year, students are sent 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 is the Traveller and Roma Community Access Programme Scholarship, which aims to increase the participation of members of the Traveller and Roma communities in the University's undergraduate programmes. This programme provides reduced points entry, financial support and opportunities for students from these communities who might otherwise be unable to attend third level education due to social disadvantage or financial constraints. RCSI participates in the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR), which supports school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) which supports students applying to RCSI with a disability.

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

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 or, exceptionally, more frequent)
- 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 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 the majority of 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 also protects the confidentiality of students' views. The QEO provides feedback reports for each year of each programme twice a year (at the end of each semester) or once a year (at the end of semester 2), determined by whether or not the content is delivered by discrete semesters, 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 are 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 the RCSI Library, Student Academic and Regulatory Affairs, CoMPPAS, IT Department etc. During this reporting period the QEO undertook a project to plan a process to centralise the collection and reporting of quality improvement actions. Schools and professional departments were requested by the QEO to provide examples of good practice and actions undertaken in response to student feedback. A

thematic analysis of the actions was conducted by the QEO, and the content was used to develop a 'You said, we did campaign' in preparation for the next academic year.

Externally, feedback on student engagement is collected independently from first and final year undergraduate students and from postgraduate taught and research students via StudentSurvey.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.

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 (see below). 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. In the event that a student believes that a decision is the result of a procedural irregularity, or if they 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) and the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland. Each PRSB 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 provides for Annual Programme Monitoring of transnational, collaborative and franchise programmes currently.

Programmatic Reviews take place on a rolling cycle which encompasses all RCSI programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. These reviews, carried out by a three-person panel, provide an in-depth analysis of the curriculum and of teaching, learning and assessment provision in each programme examined. The report produced by the review panel provides affirmation of positive aspects of the programme and offers recommendations for quality improvement. While an infrequent outcome, the panel is empowered to recommend a period of quality improvement planning with follow-up or, in extremis, to recommend discontinuation of the degree programme.

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 also 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. During the reporting period, a short online continuing professional development course was introduced to facilitate cohorts of RCSI educators that required an introduction to, or refresher on, key learning strategies within the RCSI context. This course explores themes such as small group teaching, bedside teaching, simulation-based learning and universal design for learning. A consultancy service offers the opportunity to staff members for one-to-one consultations on educational practice and research, and an Educational Hub hosts in person and online faculty development opportunities in a wide range of areas. HPEC also coordinates and advises on education research strategies which relate to the evaluation of programmes and other curricula development. Examples include studies which examine case-based learning, RCSI graduates' preparedness for practice, and the use of simulated patients to facilitate communication skills learning in undergraduate cohorts.

RCSI, as a university of medicine and health sciences and surgical Royal College, 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 Working Group, 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) in the area of Academic Integrity. The working group 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 invests constantly in improving existing facilities and creating new ones. Improvements and developments in resources and supports are informed by feedback and deliberations conducted at senior management level, school level and programme level via the relevant governance committees on which students have representation. RCSI routinely collects feedback from students on physical infrastructure and resources such as library and IT facilities through end of semester student evaluations. In addition, feedback from staff and specific service users is collected as part of ongoing QA/QI processes. This feedback is utilised by 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 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 received a major enhancement during 2017 through the completion of 26 York Street, a new 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 that will promote the development of the RCSI community at the heart of the city. As well as being the home of the new 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. In 2018, RCSI also completed Phase 2 of the Education and Research Centre (ERC) on the Beaumont Hospital campus. ERC Phase 2 provides an additional 30,000 sq. ft. of space incorporating a new student concourse at ground floor level to link the new facility with the existing building. The structure includes a series of flexible multi-functional tutorial rooms, open-plan faculty offices and meeting spaces on the first floor, with laboratory and research facilities on the second floor.

During the reporting period, RCSI progressed the building of a new €30 million Education and Research Centre at Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown. The three-storey 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 will contain a 200-seat auditorium, 12 tutorial rooms and a lecture theatre. A new Simulation facility will be provided in addition to an 8-bed clinical research facility. The HSE will also be relocating the Connolly Hospital Laboratories to the building, which will provide further opportunities for research and teaching collaborations between RCSI and Connolly Hospital. The project is well underway with the building due to be operational by September 2024.

RCSI also continued a transformational development at 118 St Stephen's Green during this period. The next phase of RCSI's campus development in Dublin city centre is a €95m expansion project. 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 of 118 St Stephen's Green 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 communities, 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. This new facility is due to be completed in June 2025.

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 tools and electronic journals. The library discovery platform, PrimoVE, enables students and staff to search across, and retrieve items from all online and print collections. Through RCSI membership of the Irish

Research eLibrary (IReL) consortium, a 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 and small collections of print books and textbooks. 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 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 ✓ **Library skills curriculum teaching** Embedded workshops, lectures, classes Assignment related referencing clinics ✓ **Extra-curricular teaching** Drop-in workshops EndNote classes Recorded sessions ✓ **Information point** Enquiries, support, advice ✓ **Research & consultation service** Specialised queries for staff & students **Resources to Support Learning** ✓ **Electronic resources** Databases, clinical summaries, journals, e-books ✓ **Library-authored support materials** Videos, LibGuides, manuals ✓ **Physical collections** Books, journals, DVDs **Spaces to Support Learning** ✓ **Virtual spaces** Website RCSI Library on Moodle YouTube Channel ✓ **Physical places** Group study rooms Study pods Amphitheatre Reading lounges Computer rooms	**Research Services** ✓ RCSI open access research repository ✓ Bibliometrics support to Office of Institutional Research & Planning ✓ Individual author profiling & h-index ✓ 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 coordination in collaboration with Data Science Centre, & Office of Innovation & Research ✓ Individual / research group / departmental consultations **Training to Support Research** ✓ **For Impact:** Individual bibliometrics Journal metrics ✓ **Increasing Your Visibility:** covering: online profiles in SCOPUS, Web of Science, & academic networks, e.g. ResearchGate; using ORCID; open access and the RCSI open access repository ✓ Using SciVal ✓ Altmetrics **Resources to Support Research** ✓ **Electronic Collections** Databases, journals, bibliometric analysis tools ✓ **Library-authored support materials**	**User Engagement** ✓ **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 and SU/Class Reps **Public engagement** ✓ 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** ✓ Management and business owner of systems & services to enable discovery, curation and preservation of institutional information assets past and present **RCSI Internal Committees** ✓ Academic Council ✓ Art Committee ✓ Awards & Qualifications Committee ✓ Student Affairs Committee ✓ FAIR Data Committee ✓ EDI Committee **External Committees & Memberships** ✓ CONUL & sub-groups ✓ National Open Research Forum & working groups ✓ IReL ✓ SCONUL (UK) ✓ 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) and spans 12,000 sq. The multi-purpose surgical training suite, the fully functioning mock operating theatre, a mock emergency room and mock labour ward provide authentic setting for immersive team training.   Each area is equipped with the audio-visual learning system (CAE LearningSpace) 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 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, testing and production, to enable more authentic and accessible learning environments for technical staff, students, faculty, researchers and educators.

In addition to providing training for specific groups of student and postgraduate trainees, the SIM facility hosts inter-professional training activities bringing together students from different programmes in a setting that emulates the experience of working in real-life clinical settings as a surgeon, medical doctor, pharmacist, physiotherapist, nurse, midwife or physician associate. On an annual basis RCSI SIM support 850 teaching sessions involving more than 2,000 undergraduate students and 800 postgraduate and continual professional development 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
Primo VE	Searching library online & print resources
Sentry	Self-service group study room booking

Figshare	Theses & open access research repository
Springshare LibGuides	Online subject guides
MyRCSI	Student App

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 College student welfare officers. RCSI also engages a number of 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, a recent addition, provides a global network of counselling services available 24/7 to both students and staff.

The Student Services Office delivers a range of non-academic supports and services which include the following: Accommodation, Financial Assistance, Gym & Fitness, Immigration & Visa Support, Induction & Orientation, Merchandising, Student Publications, Scholarship Supports, Sports Clubs & Societies, Student Events, Student Union, Visiting Students Supports.

RCSI provides a comprehensive undergraduate point of entry induction and orientation programme for all new students during the first 6 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 in March; 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 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. In addition to learning from the experiences of peers, Student Services supports and delivers an extracurricular activity for new students, introducing them to the broad range of Clubs and Societies; there are currently 30 Clubs and 52 societies. 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. RCSI encourages international students to participate and integrate also through a range of activities both specially created within RCSI and those available nationally, e.g. RCSI REACH; RCSI International

Citizenship Programme; Student Ambassador Programme. Most recently RCSI became the first Chapter of the Gold Humanism Honours Society outside of North America, a significant achievement where students have the opportunity to apply to become a member. RCSI's 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 extra-curricular activities.

RCSI is dedicated to enhancing the communication skills all of its international learners including its non-native speaking student population. The educational approach taken, due to our diverse student body & their needs, is best achieved through holistic and embedded means with some 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 where required. Communication skills development for the international student body is now also provided for, through a learning tool in a self-access format, in a dedicated communication and language lab space in our library building. Ongoing development and management of technology-based, language and communication resources and laboratory learning environments is achieved through guidance from our dedicated Lecturer in Communications who guides the use of this space. The University's dedicated communication and language self-access learning centre can be used only by those learners who are referred to it under advice from both the CoMPPAS team working in consultation with the lecturer in Communications. This language learning self-access laboratory is housed at No 26 York Street for any international learners who may have additional language learning needs. 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.

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. Class Representative and Students' Union positions are open to all students, and international students are well represented at this level. In 2018, RCSI appointed a Deputy Dean for Student Engagement to build on the successful initiatives to date. This role was identified in the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-22. Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) is at the core of providing a distinctive and transformational educational experience that sets students up for career success at RCSI. Full engagement includes contributing to the development and evaluation of curricula, and to all aspects of educational, social and institutional decision-making. These StEP initiatives define and drive student engagement across all campus activities and touch points in the student journey, fostering a culture of genuine student engagement pride in RCSI. RCSI launched its first StEP Agreement in 2019-2021, a formal Agreement between RCSI and the SU and PGSU teams. These Agreements have been launched annually since then. They define how students and staff can work together by way of shared goals to shape our policies and practices, including the design and delivery of our education and research programmes, our student support systems, engagement with our wider communities, ultimately enhancing the overall student experience. A list of StEP-funded projects for 2022-2023, in which students and staff worked in partnership on key projects, is provided in the current StEP Agreement 2023-2024, which may be found here.

RCSI places a particular emphasis on the provision of supports to students registered to online learning programmes at the University. These programmes are delivered by a number of postgraduate schools within the University via the RCSI Online platform and 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, no matter 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 persons 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 provide assistance and 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, which has responsibility for policy oversight and engagement with the academic directors of all taught postgraduate programmes in RCSI, and the Academic Review Committee (ARC), which reviews all new applications for research degrees and ensures efficient and timely registration of new students with quality research proposals, 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 frontier of knowledge, and advancement of this frontier under the guidance of expert and committed supervision. 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, Time Management, Project Management, Critical Analysis, Writing & Communication Skills, and Biostatistics (including data collection, management and analysis). Doctoral students on Centre-driven PhD programmes (e.g. SPHeRE & FutureNeuro) 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 annual Induction Day that provides research students with information about available supports and resources, including Nature Masterclasses, Vitae Resources and LinkedIn Learning.

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. Peer reviewed projects 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 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.
- As noted previously, students must complete core modules to ensure they have the appropriate skills to complete their projects; they also have access to optional modules that can provide them with the skills that their particular project may require.
- Each project has a Supervisory Team made up of at least two supervisors who manage the student and the project. Students must 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. Supervisory teams are often interdisciplinary; for example, in the Intercalated MSc in Translational Research the team is made up of a clinical and a scientific supervisor.

- 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 on a monthly basis. 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. Students and supervisors are required to nominate examiners who are experts in the field of study, who are actively publishing in the field and who have previous experience of thesis examination.
- 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 a number of 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 Nature Masterclasses. 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 date-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 have the opportunity to contribute to RCSI undergraduate teaching programmes as laboratory demonstrators & tutors. Research students can volunteer to work in the local community through REACH – the University's community engagement and access programme – which works with second-level students from disadvantaged backgrounds to provide tutoring in science subjects. 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 (including a Research Supervisor Charter), an online training course and guidelines on how to mentor students. 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 offers 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 in order to promote best practice in research conducted throughout RCSI.

In order to monitor the quality of the student experience in research degree programmes, the SPGS avails of student satisfaction & engagement survey data generated by the QEO through regular internal surveys and through participation in external surveys such as StudentSurvey.ie, the national student survey. 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 PGSU is represented also on the university-wide Student Engagement & Partnership (StEP) 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 also undertakes rolling Programmatic Reviews (as described above). Within SPGS, the PhD programme was reviewed in 2012 and the MD programme was reviewed in 2018. The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) also carries out reviews of Schools, Faculties and Professional Services Units within RCSI. The School of Postgraduate Studies was reviewed most recently in 2016. RCSI is a member of the European Universities Association (EUA), and staff participate in conferences and events run by EUA. The SPGS is a member of the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE), and staff members regularly attend UKCGE training 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, which sets four fundamental principles that underpin all research integrity and good practice, 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 Working Group includes the manager of the SPGS as a member. Examiner appointments for research awards are reviewed and signed-off by a number of 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 our 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 our students and postgraduate trainees to reach their full potential. Academic appointments and promotions are based on objective criteria (education, research and societal contributions) and are competitive. The Human Resources 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 a number of 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 roles, RCSI 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 – all 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 will be collected by the HR Representative on the panel.
- **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, and this will be completed by recruitment or another nominee. Details of the new employee's qualifications are stored on the Core HR system. When a new employee commences with RCSI, their education details are input to Core HR by the HR team from details provided in their application and updated as necessary throughout their careers with RCSI. 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. RCSI supports staff to participate in the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Professions Education offered by the Health Professions Education Centre. HPEC also offers a range of other educational inputs for staff including those set out in Section 2.4.

In parallel, through the annual Staff Development Scheme, RCSI offers a number of subsidised places to staff on a range of Level 8 and 9 programmes run by the Graduate School of Healthcare Management and other academic schools. Through this scheme staff, can also apply for funding support to pursue doctoral studies in RCSI and academic qualifications in other HEIs. A wide range of developmental supports are offered through the Staff Learning and Development function within the HR team. These include short courses and workshops, leadership development programmes, bespoke team development sessions and 1:1 coaching and mentoring opportunities. RCSI has focused on enhancing mentoring opportunities for staff through the development of the "Positive Connections" mentoring programme which supports early career academics. PIs are also supported to participate in the Collaborate Inter University Mentoring programme with colleagues to develop their leadership skills and RCSI has launched a Career Development Programme to support the annual intake of circa 100 clinical educators; this includes mentoring from senior clinicians, CV preparation, interview skills and careers talks. These initiatives, coupled with the existing "Managing Through People" programme which provides comprehensive leadership development for front line people managers, continues to enhance RCSIs overall management capability at RCSI. These development opportunities are advertised to all staff through the internal social media platform, Workvivo, and through the staff portal and internal mailing lists. On an annual basis, all staff are required to complete an online training refresh on General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Cyber Security Awareness and an Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, with a compliance rate of 100%, during the reporting period. Optional online courses also include Health and Safety awareness and Handling Disclosures of Unwanted Sexual Incidents. 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 on a range of professional and technical skills. A licence for Nature Masterclasses gives our Researchers access to training on key skills covering the whole research lifecycle.

Policies in a range of areas to support and guide staff continue to be developed. Some highlights from the report period include:
- The development of a Hybrid Leaders Toolkit to support people leaders to support the move to hybrid working including a framework for a team agreement capturing 'When, Where and How we do our best work".
- The launch of a Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave policy along with training on this topic delivered by Women's Aid
- The launch of a Menopause Policy, the provision of specialist menopause training for all staff and specific manager training and the creation of a Menopause Champions group to provide support and guidance to any staff impacted by the menopause transition.
- Broadening the range of supports available to new parents to include online pre-leave modules, maternity and paternity returners workshops and new parents coaching for 12 months after return to work.

To recognise colleagues who go above and beyond in their roles, bringing RCSI's values of Respect, Collaboration, Scholarship and Innovation to life, a series of five new Vice Chancellors Awards were introduced in the reporting period. Over 190 staff nominated their fellow colleagues and teams for awards in the five 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 in this area including the International Credit Mobility Programme, Erasmus+, Fulbright and the Eisenhower Fellowship. RCSI runs a number of specific programmes including the staff Sabbatical Leave Scheme. All academic staff in the course of their work, are frequently invited to present at international conferences. Staff are also widely engaged in international committees and organisations (e.g., editorial boards of international journals) in their areas of expertise. Funding is made available to facilitate participation in international conferences.

RCSI also provides opportunities for staff of institutions that provide higher education outside the State to teach, learn or conduct research in RCSI. RCSI's exclusive focus on healthcare education and research and our relatively small size provides a fertile opportunity for collaboration and engagement. 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. In 2022, RCSI secured the HR Excellence in Research award by the European Commission under the HRS4R (HR Strategy for Researchers) Programme.

RCSI, through the Human Resources Department, 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 service including counselling and support from an external provider Spectrum Health. The RCSI INSPIRE programme aims to promote health and wellbeing. RCSI is a recipient of the Ibec KeepWell mark in recognition of this work. In 2022, at the annual KeepWell awards, RCSI were awarded Best in Class: Mental Health.

A new 'Positive RCSI' survey was undertaken this year, in addition to quarterly pulse surveys. This was developed in partnership with colleagues from the Centre for Positive Health Sciences and was designed to measure positive culture at RCSI.

6.0 Information and Data Management

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

Institutional Metrics are an essential information stream that contribute 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 RCSIs business intelligence and management information and reporting capability. 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 the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs Office.

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, Bahrain, and Malaysia are given an opportunity to give feedback about modules completed in each semester while research scholars complete a scholar experience survey, introduced in 2021-22. All student surveys contain a series of core items relating to the headings of Modules, Assessments, Skills & 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 with an aim to inform and enhance the delivery of RCSI programmes. Detailed reports that contain both quantitative and qualitative survey responses are circulated to 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. In order 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. In 2020-21, the University introduced a new feedback mechanism, 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 Pulse survey at the beginning of the academic year, complemented by a longer end of Semester survey.

Student progression rates:
Student progression rates are an important indicator of academic quality. Progression rates and graduate numbers for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are reported by the RCSI Registry part of Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) office.

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 when students are not engaging.

HEA returns:

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

Career paths of graduates:

Upon graduation, students become part of RCSI's alumni community of over 30,000 in 96 countries worldwide. The relationships with alumni are managed by a dedicated Alumni Team who collect and manage information about graduates in the Alumni Database. The databases include information such as employment data e.g., workplace, area of practice and data related to interest and participation in volunteering at RCSI. On an annual basis the team conducts a 'census' to verify the number of alumni, location of contactable alumni and level of employment data. In addition, the team participates in the annual Alumni Engagement Metrics survey, which is conducted by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. This survey records alumni engagement across events, communications, volunteering, and philanthropy. It allows the team to benchmark engagement levels against a total of 350 institutions in 17 countries (2022).

Learning Resources and student support available:

RCSI aims to support students by offering relevant information through the Student Services Office, CoMPPAS & other offices. A wide range of services is offered including accommodation, access & disability, clubs & societies, financial assistance, gym, immigration & visa support, scholarships, counselling, health information etc. The services delivered by these units are guided by policies, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines and formal documentation. These are designed and developed using a combination of information sources and resources including students, staff, other colleges and universities, best practice guidelines, legislative requirements, the College's legal experts and external stakeholders. A wide range of learning resources are delivered to students via the Moodle virtual learning environment and the RCSI Libraries.

Data Protection: RCSI operates in line with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. RCSI's Privacy Policy is published on the public 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 of higher degrees by research. Information is tailored for either undergraduate or postgraduate learners and includes various entry routes, programme award, NFQ 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. 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, RCSI prospectuses, social media activities (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok), external education and careers portals, and overseas agents' websites. Enhancements to learner information this year included the launch of the new 'RCSI, Your University, Your Journey, Your Future' messaging framework, for prospective undergraduate students, and the introduction of a new 'RCSI Student Life' YouTube channel.

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 and across each of the main social media channels. 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. RCSI MyHealth 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.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

RCSI implements several internal processes for self-evaluation and monitoring, these include Internal Quality Reviews, Programmatic 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:
- Internal Quality Assurance Reviews of Schools within the University of Medicine & Health Sciences;
- Internal QA Reviews of Postgraduate/Professional Faculties;
- Internal QA Reviews of Professional Support Units;
- Internal QA Reviews of overseas Branch 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 by the unit. Peer Review Group Reports and their corresponding Quality Improvement Plans are published by RCSI.

Programmatic Reviews:
All matters related to Programmatic Reviews in RCSI are managed by the Awards and Qualification Committee (A&QC). The A&QC oversees a rolling cycle of Programmatic Reviews of all RCSI programmes which offer qualifications or awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and which fall under the governance of the Medicine and Health Science Board. Programmatic Reviews follow a process consisting of the following steps: preparation of a Self-evaluation Report, submission of a Business Case Report to the Business Case Panel, a two-day site-visit facilitated by a three-person review panel (two external and one internal members), submission of a review report, and presentation of the report to the Medicine & Health Science Board. As noted above, the report produced by the review panel provides affirmation of positive aspects of the programme and offers recommendations for quality improvement. Programmatic Review panels are empowered to recommend a period of with quality improvement planning with follow-up or, in extremis, to recommend discontinuation of a degree programme.

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 launched this academic year, 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 programmatic reviews.

Input from External Examiners:
The RCSI 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:

In order 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 and evaluate a number 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. The following aspects are considered for each risk factor: the consequence of risk occurring, description of existing controls, effectiveness of controls, vulnerabilities/weaknesses that increase the exposure to the risk, and a detailed 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 reviewed at Council annually.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	5
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 recognized 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; Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine; RCSI UCD Malaysia Campus https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/education/career-stage-undergraduate/quality-assurance/medical-school-accreditation/accreditation-reports/medical-school-reports-2020.html Dates of last review: 04-06 Mar. 2019 (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); 27-28 Feb. 2023 (Perdana) 22-23 Feb. 2023 (RUMC) Dates of next review: 2024 (Dublin); 2026 (Bahrain); Not applicable. The final PURCSI class will graduate in 2024 (Perdana); 2028 (RUMC)
Date of accreditation or last review	17/11/2021
Date of next review	

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.thepsi.ie/Libraries/Education/RCSI_Accreditation_Report_2020.sflb.ashx Date of accreditation or last review 02-06 March 2020 Date of next review 2025
Date of accreditation or last review	06/03/2020
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	

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	01/01/1900
Date of next review	

6. Type of arrangement	**PRSB**
Name of body:	Malaysian Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	• Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia); Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus (Penang, Malaysia) – formerly Penang Medical College; Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] Date of accreditation or last review: • Perdana University-RCSI: 8 & 9 Jun. 2022. • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: Sept. 2018 Date of next review: • Perdana University-RCSI: Not applicable. The final PURCSI class will graduate in 2024. • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: 15 – 19 Jan 2024
Date of accreditation or last review	09/06/2022
Date of next review	

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	21/10/2013
Date of next review	09/10/2023

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) Date of accreditation or last review: 2018 Institutional Accreditation, 4-7 Apr. 2021 programmatic review

	(virtual review) of BSc Nursing and MSc Nursing. Date of accreditation and placement and revalidation on the NQF: Mar. 2022; 6-10 Mar. 2022 programmatic review of Bachelor Degree in Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics (MB, BCh, BAO). Date of accreditation: Jul. 2022. Date of next review: 2024 Institutional Review (now in collaboration with HEC); 2027 Programmatic Reviews (tentative)
Date of accreditation or last review	25/07/2022
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	11/04/2018
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	• Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia); Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus (Penang, Malaysia) – formerly Penang Medical College; Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] Date of accreditation or last review: • Perdana University-RCSI: 8 & 9 Jun. 2022. • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: Oct. 2018 Date of next review: • Perdana University-RCSI: Not applicable. The final PURCSI class will graduate in 2024. • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: 15 – 19 Jan. 2024
Date of accreditation or last review	09/06/2022
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	1
Collaborative programmes	2
Franchise programmes	1
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	**Franchise programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	Perdana University - RCSI School of Medicine (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO] The programme is currently in a teach-out phase with one remaining cohort to graduate in 2024.
Date of last review	19/10/2015
Date of next review	

2. 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 next review 2023
Date of last review	02/05/2014
Date of next review	

3. 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. Programme reaccredited by RCSI in May 2023 and NUI for Sept 2023
Date of last review	25/05/2023
Date of next review	

4. 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; Bachelors degree in Pharmacy – Soochow University [Dual Degree programme] Date of last review: 29/08/2018 – Date provided is date of agreement
Date of last review	29/08/2018
Date of next review	

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Soochow University (Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China)
Programme titles and links to publications	PhD Programme Date of last review: 27/09/22 – Date provided is date of agreement
Date of last review	27/09/2022
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

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; Bachelors degree in Pharmacy – Soochow University [Dual Degree programme]
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 where they will complete Years 3 & 4 of the Integrated Masters Degree in Pharmacy (M. Pharm.). 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). In order to prepare potential students for the transition from SU to RCSI, the curriculum incorporates modules in Years 1 & 2 of the SU programme delivered in Soochow by visiting RCSI staff.

Annual Quality Report
RCSI, University of Medicine & Health Sciences
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2022-2023

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENANCEMENT & 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 Cinnte 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 impact[2] 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;
- 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;

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[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

- 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

RCSI's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 came to fruition during this reporting period. With a focus on transformative education, impactful research and societal impact, key achievements over the five-year strategy included:

- Securing University Status; Ireland's first, not-for-profit, independent university.
- Significant circular and pedagogical changes, in addition to enhancements to online learning.
- Establishing a new school of Population Health and graduating the first cohort from the Physician Associate Studies programme.
- Evolving an outstanding educational culture culminating in achieving Sunday Times University of the Year for Student Engagement and the ASPIRE-to Excellence Award for Student Engagement from the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE).
- Establishing key research clusters and growing commercial outputs.
- Remaining ranked in the top 250 globally, and ranking number one in the world for UN SDG3 'Good Health and Wellbeing' in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings 2023.
- Empowering the public with knowledge and expertise through the MyHealth programme and enhancing patient engagement and involvement in research and education.

These achievements were enabled by improvements in digital and campus infrastructure, investments in the skills and leadership of staff, careful financial management and strong partnerships. This was all underpinned by a commitment to quality and EDI as referenced by the recent successful re-application for Institutional Athena Swan Bronze Award accreditation.

The new strategic plan, Innovating for a Healthier Future, 2023-2027, was developed over the course of 12 months and will be 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, the University'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.

Quality Enhancement Office Updates

The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) supports quality assurance and enhancement throughout RCSI. Its activity, throughout the reporting period, was directed by the Annual Work Plan. A new Work Plan was approved at the Quality Committee meeting in February 2023 and continues to be implemented. The Quality Assurance Framework is updated regularly and a further edition of the framework was approved by the Quality Committee in October 2022. The Internal Quality Reviews calendar and Terms of Reference for the Quality Committee are regularly reviewed and approved by the Quality Committee.

RCSI Centre for Positive Health Sciences

The RCSI Centre for Positive Psychology & Health was renamed the RCSI Centre for Positive Health Sciences during the reporting period. The new name reflects the emergence of positive health as a new paradigm and encompasses a range of disciplines such as lifestyle medicine, public health and positive and health psychology. The inclusion of the word "sciences" in the name emphasizes the RCSI's and the Centre's commitment to providing an evidence base for positive health.

Joint Education Institute

RCSI, with Soochow University in China, is in the process of establishing a Joint Education Institute – the International College of Pharmaceutical Innovation. A significant milestone was achieved this year as the new joint college was granted official approval from the Ministry of Education in Beijing in April 2023.

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	CINNTE Objective 1: To review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the institution through consideration of the procedures set out, primarily, in the AIQR…. CINNTE objective 3: To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression….	COMPLETED: Cross-institutional engagement in meaningful self-reflection informed the development of an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report to meet these CINNTE objectives. This process was conducted with the support of the Institutional Review Drafting Group and overseen by the Institutional Review Working Group. Self-reflection was informed by existing data (e.g. surveys, review reports) and bespoke projects (e.g. focus groups, interviews, additional surveys).
2	CINNTE objective 2: To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.	COMPLETED: A programme of cross-institutional communication and awareness building supported the identification of quality enhancement projects to showcase as case studies within the Institutional Review submission. An exhibition of these case studies was held as part of the International Education Forum.
3	CINNTE objective 4: Following the introduction of a statutory international education quality assurance scheme, to determine compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.	COMPLETED: The International Education Mark IEM Group was reconvened and undertook a self-evaluation against the draft Code to support preparations for the IEM introduction.
4	Objective: To develop a central repository for quality enhancements actions to support closing the feedback loop on student surveys and other feedback mechanisms.	COMPLETED: A central database was developed to collect information on quality enhancement initiatives from undergraduate programme and professional departments in response to feedback from student surveys, external examiners, staff or other sources.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Quality Committee	05 Oct 2022; 14 Dec. 2022; 22 Feb. 2023; 19 Apr. 2023 (n = 4 meetings)
Awards & Qualifications Committee	19 Sept. 2022; 24 Oct. 2022; 21 Nov. 2022; 19 Dec 2022; 16 Jan. 2023; 27 Feb. 2023; 20 Mar. 2023; 17 Apr. 2023; 15 May 2023; 19 Jun. 2023 n = 10 (n = 10 meetings)
Academic Council	14 Sept. 2022; 13 Oct. 2022; 9 Nov. 2022; 8 Dec 2022; 18 Jan. 2023; 9 Feb 2023; 8 Mar. 2023; 20 Apr. 2023; 10 May 2023 (n = 9 meetings)
Medicine & Health Sciences Board	29 Sept. 2022; 17 Nov 2022; 2 Mar. 2023; 25 May 2023(n = 4 meetings)
Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board	03 Nov 2022; 23 Feb. 2023; 20 Apr. 2023; 29 June 2023 (n = 4 meetings)

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

During the reporting period, the Medicine and Health Sciences Board reappointed or appointed a number of key senior appointments:

- Renewals/reappointments:
    - Professor Fergal O'Brien, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation
    - Professor Tracy Robson, Head of the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences
    - Professor Suzanne McDonough, Head of the School of Physiotherapy
- Appointments:
    - Professor Juan Carlos Puyana, Chair of Institute of Global Surgery
    - Professor Deborah Stanistreet, Head of the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology
    - Professor Albert Leung, Strategic Advisor to CEO/Vice Chancellor
    - Mr Mark White, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery
    - Dr Kathryn Strachan, Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery (Bahrain)

New Heads of professional services departments were:

- Mr Ronan Baxter, Director of Estate and Support Services

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
Student Services Office	November 2022 Rolling internal quality assurance review	https://www.rcsi.com/quality-enhancement-office/internal-quality-reviews

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[3] 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	5	0	1		3	1	
of those:							
On-site processes	1		1				
Desk reviews	4				3	1	
Virtual processes		0					
Average panel size for each process type*			5		4	4	

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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[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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	1	1				1				1	
Secretary	1	1				1					1
Academic/Discipline Specific	17	7	10		7	11	6			17	
Student Representative	1	1				1				1	
QA											
Teaching & Learning	2		2		2	1			1	2	
External Industry /Third Mission											

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance and Management of Quality

Preparations for the CINNTE Institutional Review re-emphasised the importance of quality to RCSI staff, students and external stakeholders. Comprehensive and evidence-based self-reflection identified areas for enhancement and examples of excellence in quality improvement. A Quality Forum event was held as part of the RCSI International Education Forum; this provided staff with updates on new regulatory requirements, and opportunities to workshop enhancements to quality activity. An exhibition of quality enhancement case studies was held to highlight exemplars of quality enhancement practice across a range of academic and professional departments.

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:
- Professional Doctorate (Nursing/Pharmacy/Physiotherapy/Positive Health) (Major award; NFQ Level 10)
    - Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Research Practices (Minor Award; 30 ECTS; NFQ Level 9)
- MSc in Nursing Medical Nursing and MSc Primary Community and Continuing Care (PCCC) (Major award; 90 ECTS; NFQ Level 9)
    - Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing (Medical Nursing) or PCCC; (Minor Award; 30 ECTS)
- Professional Diploma in Global Health Systems (Special Purpose award; 30 ECTS; NFQ Level 9)

School of Medicine
In September 2022, the School of Medicine commenced the roll out of Year 1 of the new medical curriculum. The key elements of the new curriculum include: a new teaching and learning strategy, including Case Based Learning (CBL); a new programme of assessment, including Progress Testing and a Grade Point Average (GPA) metric; a new Learning Community structure and a revised Personal Tutor Programme. The new programme of assessment which leverages assessment as and for learning, incorporates student personalised feedback across all years as a core principle. As part of the new curriculum enhancements, students can now understand their performance in relation to the learning objectives and, where required, course correct during the academic year. The new Learning Communities and Personal Tutor programme, provide an additional layer of support for students on their RCSI journey.

School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences.
The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences rolled out the first year of its new Advanced Therapeutic Technologies programme. This programme has been funded by the Higher Education Authority, Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3, which aims to provide skills-focused programmes designed to meet priority needs. It has been designed to support graduates to become leaders in healthcare innovation and technology. The reflective and evidence-based approach to curriculum design was achieved in collaboration with a strong consortium of national and multinational biopharma companies who provided their expertise to support the development of the curriculum which addresses critical skill gaps and maximises future biopharma related opportunities.

School of Physiotherapy
Programme enhancements at the School of Physiotherapy included the launch and further development of the online Musculoskeletal Toolkit, streamlining of paediatric teaching, and the inauguration of a new module "Physical Activity and Health Behaviour Change in Clinical Population". This module aims to enhance students' understanding of health behaviour change psychology, primarily focusing on promoting physical activity among individuals with long-term conditions. Other enhancements included the establishment of an External Advisory Panel to inform and guide the School's strategic decision-making and the commencement of the National Health and Social Care Professions Quality Framework for Sustainable Practice Education implementation. A PhD scholarship programme was initiated to strategically incorporate simulation as part of the School's practice

education programme. The School continues to actively involve patients and the public in teaching and learning activities with new contributors including people living with long-term conditions and disability. A new role, Quality and Operations Manager, was created in the school, to support operational management, and quality assurance of programmes.

School of Population Health

A suite of postgraduate programmes in population health leadership is being developed by the School of Population Health. These are the first qualifications to be developed by this new School and are expected to commence in autumn 2024. As part of the development process, the School undertook extensive engagement with a broad range of stakeholders. The development and delivery of the programmes has 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.

Physician Associate Studies

This year marked the launch of the hybrid/remote pilot programme for the Physician Associate Studies programme. This approach to workforce development is consistent with many educational approaches to "train students where they live". The popularity of the programme has grown; for the next academic year, 16 of the 30 students will enrol in the hybrid option.

Centre for Positive Health Sciences

This year saw the first cohort of Professional Doctorate in Positive Health candidates commence their studies at the Centre. Their chosen topics aim to introduce positive health interventions across a number of sectors including health and academia.

Teaching and Learning

In June 2023, the 12th RCSI International Education Forum (IEF) on the theme 'Looking Back, Looking Forward' was held in person for the first time since 2019, with colleagues from Bahrain and Malaysia joining those in Dublin. This event also marked the return to an in-person event to mark the RCSI Education Innovation Awards.

Launch of the Virtual Classroom

In 2023, the RCSI Online team, alongside GSM, installed RCSI's first virtual classroom in Sandyford, Dublin. This immersive virtual environment supports both faculty and students to act and react as though in the same physical classroom. This technology, emulating a more traditional classroom, allows eye movements, and verbal and non-verbal cues to be visible and responded to. In this way, students can engage in deeper way with interpersonal tasks and collaboration, supporting more dynamic activities aligned with the constructivist teaching approach that is so important at postgraduate level.

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

RCSI INSPIRE

The RCSI INSPIRE staff wellbeing programme continued to run employee wellness activities throughout the reporting period, including mindfulness sessions, mental health awareness training, and social coffee mornings. The events were often held in collaboration with university-wide partners including the Sports & Social Club, RCSI Gym and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit. The programme is based on four health pillars: physical, nutritional, mental and occupational health. RCSI INSPIRE also oversee the maintenance of RCSI's Ibec KeepWell Mark workplace accreditation which demonstrates RCSI's commitment to employee health, wellbeing and safety. In 2022, at the annual KeepWell awards, RCSI were awarded Best in Class: Mental Health. In addition, during the reporting period, RCSI was included in the Business & Finance/Ibec top 100 companies in Ireland who are Leading the Way in Workplace Wellbeing.

Enhancements in Equality Diversity and Inclusion.
RCSI is committed to embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion where all students and staff can reach their full potential. The most significant achievement during this period was achieved in August 2023 when RCSI successfully renewed its Bronze award under Athena Swan's new intersectional charter. The application was described as an exemplar of good practice and was commended by the panel for its coherence and clarity in evidencing the Institution's progress since the last action plan. New areas of focus include the introduction of a principles-based workload model, a continued focus on progression and promotion opportunities for women and a focus on data. Continued collaboration with colleagues across RCSI empowers teams to effect positive cultural change.

During this reporting period, the three student and staff forums and five staff networks undertook a variety of projects to progress this mission. The RCSI Race Equality Forum continued to implement their Race Equality Action Plan and held an event to mark the one-year anniversary of the Action Plan. The event highlighted progress made over the past year in areas including curriculum development and data analysis. The VisABILITY Forum marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December with an online event in which a current student and a recent graduate discussed their learning experience in RCSI. Information on how RCSI supports students with disabilities, both seen and unseen, was also shared with attendees. The Ending Sexual Violence, Supporting Survivors and Promoting Consent (ESP) Forum continued to progress work in key areas like consent, bystander intervention and reporting. At the beginning of the academic year, the EDI Unit ran a week-long sexual health campaign online with the student Health and Wellbeing Society to mark World Sexual Health Day. To mark International Women's Day, the EDI Unit together with the Women's Network hosted a hybrid event on "Embracing Equity and Access in Healthcare Leadership". This was followed by an in-person networking lunch, the first such gathering since the recent pandemic. A collaboration between the student Pride Society and staff Pride Network to show solidarity with our transgender and non-binary colleagues and students marked Pride 2023, when a new pronoun badge and rainbow lanyard campaign was launched. Pride month was celebrated at RCSI's now annual Pride Staff BBQ hosted in collaboration with RCSI's Sports and Social Club. The third edition of RCSI's Positive Ageing Booklet was launched in September by the Age Friendly Network while the Multicultural Network hosted a festive food event showcasing the culinary talents of our colleagues from around the world.

RCSI continued to deliver a suite of EDI training for students and staff covering various equality matters. Almost 300 students and staff attended training on topics including race equality, autism awareness, disability awareness, gender identity, and handling disclosures of domestic violence or sexual violence, thanks to support from partners including Advancing EDI, AsIAm, Disability Federation Ireland, TENI, Women's Aid and DRCC. All staff were required to complete a mandatory Unconscious Bias Training on Moodle, and optional Moodle courses on race equality and EDI in higher education were available for self-directed learning throughout the year.

Supports and resources for learners

Library
Library services returned to regular in-person service hours while also retaining the virtual information desk introduced during COVID, which is now the most popular way to contact the service, as well as an online consultation service through MS Teams, for in-depth help and queries. The Library hosted 62 pop-up events at the Expo Stage, in the Library Learning Commons, the majority of which were student society/student union led. Other Library Service enhancements included: integration of LibKey discovery with Primo VE to enhance ease of access to full text content for users; a refresh of the library group study room online booking system; and the roll-out of visitor kiosks to support alumni & external visitor onsite access to library collections.

In addition, and for the first time The SMJ (Student Medical Journal) began to be published on the RCSI Open Access Repository, with an open Creative Commons (CC) licence. The Repository will act as an archive, providing article level searching and all back issues of the SMJ. For students this means that their publications are open access, easily discoverable and they can include a link to them on their CV.

Digital Heritage Collections developments included enhanced access to the collections and the launch of a new publicly accessible website showcasing RCSI's extensive heritage collections and the newly digitised materials from the Sir Charles A. Cameron archive, funded by the Heritage Council of Ireland. RCSI archives and heritage collections also supported RCSI Research Summer School and elective module choice activities.

Student Engagement
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. This is realised through the RCSI StEP programme which was formally launched in 2020-2021. Included in this are formal StEP Agreements between RCSI and the Student Union (SU) and Postgraduate Student Union (PGSU) teams. The fourth RCSI StEP Agreement was launched during the reporting period, reflecting RCSI's ongoing and unwavering commitment to students as co-creators of their learning experience.

Students and staff can apply for StEP funding to work collaboratively on key projects designed to enhance the overall student experience. There are two open calls for StEP funding annually. In 2022-2023, 16 level 1 and 7 level 2 StEP-funded projects were funded. Level 1 funding provides a bursary to students who work in partnership with staff during semester time (maximum 30 student contact hours over 10 weeks). Level 2 funding is more substantial where students receive bursaries and work full-time in collaboration with staff on key projects over eight weeks during the summer. A list of StEP-funded projects for 2022-2023, in which students and staff worked in partnership on key projects, is provided in the current StEP Agreement 2023-2024, which may be found here. As a testament to the impact and success of these projects, of the 11 innovations short-listed for the RCSI Education Innovation Award 2022 (one award annually), 3 resulted from StEP-funded student partnership initiatives.

54 staff and 50 students received Student Partnership Champion Awards during the reporting period. 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 have also resulted in presentations at national and international conferences and publications, and independent StEP-related research funding. As representative examples, the Deputy Dean for Student Engagement, together with another RCSI staff member and student, co-delivered a symposium with a student and staff from Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok Thailand, at the international Association for Medical Education (AMEE) Conference in August 2023 entitled 'East Meets West: Experiences of Two AMEE ASPIRE Awardees for Excellence in Student Engagement'. The Deputy Dean for Student Engagement also reported the outputs from an Irish Network of Healthcare Educators (INHED)-funded study on 'Embedding a universal culture of student partnership across RCSI - a study to identify key enablers from a staff and student perspective', at the INHED Conference held in QUB in March 2023. During the reporting period, additional students and staff received national INHED funding to progress the outputs of StEP project initiatives.

RCSI is also a participating institution of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP), and the Deputy Dean for Student Engagement is an active member on the NStEP National Advisory Board. Students and staff availed of NStEP training programmes during the reporting period.

The student partnership philosophy has extended to RCSI-Bahrain, who have adopted RCSI's StEP programme since November 2021.

As external evidence of university-wide student engagement and partnership, RCSI was presented with the highly prestigious and internationally recognised AMEE ASPIRE-To-Excellence Award for Student Engagement during the AMEE conference in Lyon, France in August 2022. RCSI was also awarded the Sunday Times University

of the Year for Student Engagement 2022. The Deputy Dean for Student Engagement is RCSI's representative on the international AMEE ASPIRE Academy.

Developing a vision and understanding of 'Student Success' has been identified as a fundamental priority for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ireland. This pursuit has been spearheaded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. In 2022, RCSI committed to developing a deeper understanding of 'Student Success' in the context of RCSI. A collaborative student-staff partnership project was undertaken, to develop a framework and strategy to further promote and foster a culture and vision of 'Student Success' across our campus. This project was informed by the guiding framework provided by the National Forum in addition to in-house university-wide student and staff feedback surveys. A key output from this feedback was the establishment of the RCSI definition of 'Student Success':

At RCSI, student success is defined as empowering each student to fulfil their unique purpose personally, academically, and as future health science professionals. In our diverse student community, student success is cultivated in an inclusive, collaborative, and positive learning and social environment, driving a journey of self-discovery, reflection, and personal and professional growth. Student success is further enhanced through meaningful partnerships and shared responsibilities, ultimately enabling each individual to prosper and achieve their full potential at RCSI and beyond. 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. This is facilitated through the RCSI StEP programme. More specifically, a new section promoting 'Student Success' has now been incorporated into annual RCSI StEP Agreements.

CoMPPAS
The CoMPPAS team undertook a number of initiatives this year, placing an emphasis on Transitions and Mental Health Awareness while developing meaningful partnerships with students. The Career Development Team delivered their "Design Your Life" (DYL) programme through the undergraduate Medicine student choice module. Simultaneously they delivered impactful content as partners to the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences and the School of Physiotherapy.

For World Mental Health Day 2023, the Student Welfare Office collaborated with RCSI Inspire to bring an ensemble of stories from staff for their "Voices of Resilience" project. These involved staff members sharing their personal experience of overcoming adversity and life's challenges and culminated in a successful "Tea and Talk" gathering event at the Expo Stage. The Student Welfare Team also collaborated with the Psychiatry Department for a project to deliver "Self-Care among Healthcare Professionals" lectures to all new undergrad students at RCSI in 2023/24. The Welfare team is also addressing the transition to clinical settings in collaboration with the School of Medicine. The team continued to pursue staff development opportunities such as Mental Health First Aid training for student facing staff.

RCSI Student Leadership Development Programme
A bespoke 6-week Student Leadership Development Programme again took place during February and March of 2023. It was developed, in partnership with students, under the formal Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) programme. The over-arching programme aims to equip students with an understanding of the core concepts of leadership to support them in their leadership roles. The programme was divided into four key themes: (i) Developing Influential Leadership Skills; (ii) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; (iii) Self-Care and Resilience as Leaders and (iv) Data Protection. Student leaders from the SU, PGSU, Postdoctoral society, Sports' Council, Society Presidents, Club Captains, Learning Community Leaders and class representatives from all undergraduate Schools were invited to participate. 77 student leaders successfully completed this programme during the reporting period and received RCSI Certificates of Achievement and digital badges.

Information Technology Changes to Support Curricular Change

A number of Information Technology systems were introduced to support introduction of the new Medicine curriculum. Kaizen, the new RCSI Student Dashboard and Assessment solution, was introduced in September 2022. This system provides a solution for providing students and academics with "real-time" assessment information and through multi format platform delivery (computer and mobile accessibility) both students and staff are now able to access Kaizen from any device. Kaizen acts as the core facilitator in calculating student's GPA results integrating with RCSI's new and existing platforms. Practique is the new RCSI Examination System providing a solution for delivering written, CAP and OSCE type examinations online and in person. Over the past 12 months Practique has been rolled out and all undergraduate exams are now run through this platform, in person and on laptops. OSCE, CAP and clinical exams have now transitioned to Practique with examiners using iPads to grade the students.

Learning Communities

Learning communities form an integral component of the educational philosophy for shaping future healthcare professionals at RCSI. Each undergraduate medical student is assigned to a Learning Community, fostering a vital sense of connection with RCSI and offering a solid foundation for newcomers adapting to university life in Ireland. The objective is to cultivate an inclusive and welcoming environment, enabling students to build new friendships with peers and collaborate with both colleagues 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 program.

Accommodation

Securing suitable accommodation emerged as a paramount concern for prospective RCSI students this reporting period, particularly in light of the widely acknowledged housing shortage in Dublin. Recognising this challenge, RCSI took proactive measures, investing in resources to establish an accommodation database. The institution also engaged in collaborative efforts with the student body to address this issue effectively. Student Services introduced a tailored Accommodation service. This initiative has yielded remarkable success, as every incoming student successfully received an accommodation offer, reflecting the commitment of RCSI to ensuring a smooth and supportive transition for all new members of the student community.

Club and Society Achievements

Responding to valuable student input that emphasised the need for a centralised hub for club and society activities, Student Services introduced the Student Life HQ. This digital platform serves as a comprehensive one-stop-shop for all aspects of RCSI student life. It offers features such as the ability to easily join clubs and societies, register for events, access a real-time college-wide student event calendar, and stay informed with news and updates. The Student Life HQ has undergone continuous development, evolving each year to meet the evolving needs and requests of students. The most recent enhancement includes a digital brochure showcasing a range of RCSI merchandise items, providing students with a convenient way to explore and acquire items of interest. This reflects the ongoing commitment to enhancing the student experience at RCSI through innovative and student-focused initiatives.

Board of Irish Colleges (BICS) Awards

In 2023, at the BICS (Board of Irish Colleges) Awards, RCSI had an impressive 6 victories: Best Publicity Campaign – RCSI Paediatric Society's Teddy Bear Hospital; Best Individuals – Students from RCSI Surgical Society, RCSI Neuroscience Society and RCSI Wilderness Medicine Society; Best Poster – RCSI Pride Society's Drag Race; Best Intervarsity – RCSI Emergency Society's National SimWars Competition; Best Society (Civic/Charity) – RCSI Paediatric Society; Best Society (Departmental) – RCSI Emergency Society.

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 quarterly by the CEO's Office. 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.

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 over 339 surveys during the reporting period. Response rates varied, depending on the nature and audience of the project, with a rate of 25% on the core undergraduate end-of-semester student feedback surveys (Semester 2), similar to 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.

During this reporting period, the QEO undertook an evaluation of activities implemented to increase student engagement in survey data collection, to address the ongoing issue of low student participation. The review considered the following: incentives for participation, survey-related events, in-class surveys, multi-channel communication, collaboration with the Students' Union and closing the feedback loop. A reflection paper was submitted to the Quality Committee in September 2023 and concluded that promoting survey participation is a multifaceted approach and requires synergy and coordination of multiple activities; active collaboration and engagement from staff in Schools and professional service departments are also required.

Some year groups in RCSI Dublin and Bahrain had their end of semester Student Pulse surveys conducted as timetabled activities or during teaching session as a trial. Students were briefed by the QEO Office or academic staff and given an opportunity to complete a survey in class. The response rates to these surveys were significantly higher compared to surveys distributed only via email, without any in-class activities. The QEO will explore how this approach could be implemented in more year groups, being mindful of the resources required.

In addition to the regular survey schedule, students also had an opportunity to partake in focus groups undertaken to inform the Institutional Self-evaluation Report (ISER) as part of the CINNTE review process.

Student Pulse results were regularly presented to the Senior Management Team and reports were distributed to Schools and professional departments. The QEO successfully implemented a Quality Enhancement Repository to further support closing the feedback loop on surveys. Undergraduate programme leads and professional departments that receive survey reports 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.

The regular end of Semester data collection tools were continued as in previous years. The end of Semester surveys were developed in collaboration with programme directors, faculty and the Students' Union. The QEO conducts an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative feedback with the aim to inform and enhance the delivery of RCSI programmes. Reports, documenting these analyses, are circulated to programme directors. In addition, in order to close the feedback loop, quantitative reports (without open ended comments) are routinely made available to students via Moodle.

RCSI also continued its participation in StudentSurvey.ie. A longitudinal analysis of the results between 2019 and 2022 was conducted and used as part of the CINNTE self-evaluation. In addition, a bite-size analysis approach was adopted this year, for example a comparison of student experience between the students of the new medical curriculum vs. the previous curriculum, or an analysis of the optional Academic Integrity module. Both analyses were presented to the relevant stakeholders.

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 the quarterly Staff Pulse survey. Significant data collection activities were undertaken to inform the evaluation and reflection aspect of the CINNTE review, bespoke surveys of RCSI's governance committees were conducted (including external stakeholders). Like 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, established in 2015, 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 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 projected to reach 875,000 (& 1.1 million for maternity services) in 2021. The Group provides a wide range of emergency, diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation services, supported by a workforce of over 8,000 staff.

Dublin City Council & Dublin Fire Brigade

RCSI entered into a partnership agreement with Dublin City Council and Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB) in 2002 for the development and provision of Pre-Hospital Emergency Care education and training in accordance with the standards and procedures set down by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council. 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. A partnership board meets quarterly and oversees the development and implementation of the training programmes. Over 20 years of partnership was celebrated at the beginning of this year. By year end, approximately 650 personnel will have successfully graduated from the programme since its inception, with a further 68 undertaking their field & clinical internships.

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.

National College of Art & Design

RCSI and the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2019 to collaborate on the design and commercialisation of healthcare innovations, building on a collaboration first established in 2016. The agreement establishes a framework for joint projects with industry partners in the fields of medical device design, surgical trainer design, procedure task analysis, prototyping, and innovation in healthcare practices and processes. Realistic surgical simulators are crucial to help surgical trainees reach competence more rapidly. The collaboration provides access to NCAD's design expertise for RCSI medical device

innovations, opportunities for NCAD students (particularly those engaged in the MSc in Medical Device Design) to analyse the technical steps involved in completing a surgical procedure thus informing the design of new, more realistic surgical simulators and opportunities for RCSI surgical trainees to learn surgical skills on more accurate surgical simulators.

Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
RCSI was proud to be ranked as the number one university in the world for 'UNSDG3 Good Health and Well-being' and Top 100 for 'UNSDG17 Partnerships for the Goals' in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023.

A new Sustainability and Climate Health Committee was established to oversee and embed sustainability and create further awareness of the UNSDGs at the core of all RCSI activities, including sustainable healthcare, education for the goals, green campus and green labs. RCSI is committed to achieving net carbon zero by 2050, and an interim target of a 50% reduction in our carbon emissions by 2030, a target well on the way to being met.

RCSI was recognised for its commitment to sustainability with the 2022 Best Green Campus Award at the annual Education Awards. The Education Awards recognise, encourage and celebrate excellence in the third level education sector on the island of Ireland. RCSI also won the Green Healthcare Award and the Sustainable Energy Achievement Award at the 2022 Green Awards. The Green Awards recognise the extraordinary contribution and commitment that companies make towards growing a greener future in Irish business. At the time of writing, RCSI is the only Irish University to have embarked on an Energy Performance Contract, which has secured significant energy reductions across the campus. In 2023, RCSI commenced the ISO 50001 Energy Management process, with a target to achieve the international standard in 2024. Carbon literacy training for staff has also been rolled out and further sustainability and energy awareness programmes are currently being developed.

RCSI applied to join Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Ireland; this all-island network of universities and institutions focusses on high quality education and research for the SDGs. Established in 2022 by University College Cork and Queens University Belfast the network encompasses partners across the island of Ireland with the hope to encourage collaborative approaches to sustainable research solutions and education.

RCSI was ranked as the top-performing medical school in Ireland in the Planetary Health Report Card 2023. Part of a global initiative led by the Planetary Health Alliance (PHA), an international consortium of organisations committed to addressing global environmental change and its health impacts, the report card assesses the extent to which higher education institutions across the globe are promoting and supporting planetary health.

RCSI Art Strategy Launch
In the wake of the establishment of the RCSI Art Committee, tasked with the meticulous care, development, interpretation, and engagement of RCSI's extensive Art Collection, the Art Strategy was launched in the reporting period. Its purpose is to deliver the Committee's vision that art can enrich the learning environment and enhance the culture and connectivity of our community of healthcare professionals. A dynamic and ambitious programme is underway, weaving together various threads aimed at cultivating a more profound connection between the RCSI community and the Art Collection. Central to this effort is the facilitation of access to the collection, ensuring it becomes a vibrant focal point accessible to all. Simultaneously, there's a strategic imperative to broaden the audience base, fostering a collective appreciation for the diverse array of artistic expressions housed within the institution. Furthermore, the Art Strategy seeks to propel RCSI beyond conventional boundaries by evolving the institution's own understanding of art. This evolution isn't merely a journey of appreciation but a deliberate exploration of the intersection between art and the healthcare profession - a fusion that promises to unlock new dimensions of insight and inspiration for stakeholders.

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 the local community engagement and access programme connecting RCSI with the local community, facilitating access to 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 School Engagement
In 2022–2023, over 500 local primary school children from RCSI's linked DEIS schools participated in health education activities supported by RCSI staff and student volunteers. The Paediatric Society School Visits Volunteer Programme aims to familiarise children with healthcare professionals and overcome any apprehension about visiting the doctor or hospital. The REACH RCSI Pulse Check Challenge saw weekly visits to the RCSI Sports Hall by local primary schools to participate in this physical health education project. Student volunteers taught the participants the skill of finding, measuring, and recording their pulse rates before and after a range of physical activities.

REACH RCSI Junior Researcher Programme
Funded by the SFI Discover Programme and culminating during Science Week 2022, the Junior Researcher Programme involved 80 first-year students from linked post-primary schools, supported by volunteer mentors from across the RCSI research community. The budding researchers worked in teams and took part in a series of workshops, presentations, and interactive lab sessions both in school and at RCSI, to experience what it's like to study and work in science and research and understand the real impact it has on society. The programme aims to work in partnership with participating schools to support students in developing scientific literacy, preparing for Junior Certificate Classroom Based Assessment (CBA), and building interest in STEMM subjects in advance of the senior cycle, by providing insight into STEMM careers through positive dialogue with scientific role models. Each team chose their own research question, and supported by RCSI research mentors and their teachers, the teams investigated these and presented their findings at a Science Week Mini Symposium.

UNSDGs in the community
A key goal of ESD to 2030, Ireland's National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, is to further incorporate sustainable development into Irish curricula and across educational settings. A new project introduced this year brought together young future leaders from RCSI and transition year students from linked post-primary schools to explore the UNSDGs in the shared community of Dublin City Centre.

HEA Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH)
RCSI is a proud member of a six-college consortium with University College Dublin (UCD), Institute of Art and Design (IADT), Marino Institute of Education (MIE), National College of Art and Design (NCAD), and Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in this HEA-funded initiative to collaboratively promote and advance equality of access to higher education for under-represented groups. Collaborative initiatives include the annual Dublin Learning City Festival, 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. This year's festival took place in April 2023, featured an array of RCSI learning opportunities focused on health and wellbeing, and culminated in a historic tour of RCSI. The Community Mentoring (CM) programme is a unique inter-institutional and community-based mentoring programme that sees RCSI access students 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

The Creative Arts Summer School took place in June 2023 and saw each member HEI host 60 participants from underrepresented groups for a day of creativity. The theme of the RCSI day was "Medicine makes life possible; art makes it worthwhile". Participants took part in two creative workshops: the first, facilitated by RCSI SIM team members, titled "Making an eye from scratch," and a Life Drawing Workshop led by RCSI Women on Wall's artist Will Nathans, in which participants learned fundamental skills to create their own compositional drawings of the RCSI Head Porter.

RCSI Engage Awards

RCSI Engage established the Engaged Research awards at RCSI Research Day 2022. Two engaged research projects and teams have been recognised to date: In 2022, "Growing up in a Pandemic: how participatory approaches to studying the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people's health and wellbeing in Ireland In partnership with SWAN Youth Service, Ballybough Youth Service, and the Dublin NEIC Co-operative and in 2023: The Smokeless Village Project: Applying sanitation and community-based participatory approaches to household and ambient pollution with community partners: Nsungwi village community, Chiradzulu district, Malawi Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi University of Nottingham, UK Renew'N'Able, Malawi.

Transition Year MiniMed, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy Programmes

Over 200 transition year students were welcomed to RCSI's Stephen's Green campus for the RCSI Transition Year MiniMed Programme. Following on from the success of the online programme during the pandemic, more than 3,600 students from all over Ireland were also provided the opportunity to gain insight into a career in healthcare by logging on to the online programmes. Throughout the week, students participated in interactive lectures and activities from a broad range of specialities, viewed a real-life Caesarean section, lung transplant and a laparoscopic surgery. MiniPharm and MiniPhysio, events also took place in Dublin and an additional MiniMed programme was held in University Hospital Waterford.

RCSI MyHealth Lecture Series

The RCSI MyHealth lecture series continued as pre-recorded, virtual events for 2022/23. This series addressed mental health, positive ageing, obesity stigma, menopause, sexual health, and vaping. The transition to virtual delivery of the RCSI MyHealth series has led to greater reach and impact of these important discussions, both nationally and internationally. The 2022/2023 series has had more than 10,000 views on YouTube. This year also saw the launch of the RCSI MyHealth podcast, giving the public a convenient way to engage with the series. By the end of the 2022/2023 series there had been more than 2,000 downloads of the podcast.

RCSI MyHealth Expert Directory

The RCSI MyHealth 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. Across 2022/23, and led by the Communications team, the pillar reputation campaigns (RCSI Discover for research, RCSI Educate for education and RCSI Engage for societal impact) continued to build momentum and progress was made on diversifying the mix of channels used for the campaigns. 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 papers on breast cancer, epilepsy, tissue engineering and the impact of lockdowns on babies born during the pandemic. The university's website was redeveloped between 2018 and 2020 to ensure that our 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.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

A number of research activity enhancements were implemented during the reporting period. Researchers at RCSI published a total of 1,663 PubMed indexed articles in 2022. The total external funding awarded to RCSI for the calendar year 2022 was €34.6 million.

FutureNeuro Centre refunded and Research & Development Achievement Award

The RCSI led Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) research centre for chronic and rare neurological diseases, FutureNeuro, was funded for another 5 years (€12.3M in funding). FutureNeuro were also the winner of the Research & Development Achievement at the 2022 Pharma Industry Awards recognising the centre's original and innovative R&D programs with industry.

Royal Irish Academy

Prof James O'Donnell, School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences and Professor Chris Lynch, Dean of the RCSI Faculty of Dentistry were elected as a Members 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 their extensive contribution to research.

Innovation and Commercialisation

Annual growth in RCSI's knowledge transfer performance continued with RCSI exceeding targets independently set by Knowledge Transfer Ireland for spin-out formation, licensing and industry collaboration. Industry engagement, as measured by number of agreements, exceeded targets by 40% and industry funding grew to €4m.

SFI Professorship Funding

The Head of the School of Population Health, Professor Ed Gregg, was awarded €4.3 million from SFI through its prestigious Research Professorship Programme, to establish a new research centre at RCSI, Converge: Centre for Chronic Disease and Population Health Research. The Centre will transform the way that population-level data and research platforms are deployed in Ireland to make key decisions for the prevention and reduction of the burden of chronic diseases.

RCSI Summer School

Over 170 undergraduate students from across schools participated in the RCSI Research Summer School (RSS) programme in 2023. The RSS 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.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

As a health sciences university and surgical Royal College, RCSI acknowledges the important contribution of academic integrity to upholding the highest standards of professionalism among its academic staff, students, graduates, postgraduate trainees, Members and Fellows.

The RCSI Academic Integrity Working Group (AIWG), whose membership is representative of academic and professional departments across its campuses, together with both undergraduate and postgraduate student representation, continues to promote knowledge and understanding of academic integrity at RCSI.

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. To support students in fulfilling this commitment to academic integrity, an online student academic integrity resource developed by the AIWG was introduced in September 2022. Academic Council made it mandatory for all students, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, to complete this resource.

The emergence of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in early 2023 significantly altered the academic integrity landscape for all higher education institutions. The Head of QEO and the Convenor of the AIWG provided updates to governance committees including the RCSI Council and Academic Council over the course of the reporting period on the development of Generative AI and the potential impact on academic integrity. Professor Phillip Dawson of Deakin University addressed a very widely attended session titled "Academic Integrity in the Emergent Environment of Artificial Intelligence" at the RCSI International Education Forum in June 2023.

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 AIWG represented RCSI at NAIN throughout the reporting period. These RCSI representatives regularly attended NAIN Academic Integrity events including a number its masterclasses hosted by international experts. The RCSI NAIN representatives also attended QQI's 10th anniversary conference "Strengthening Strategic Partnership to Effect System Change" in October 2022 where RCSI displayed a poster on "Positioning Academic Integrity at the Centre of Quality Enhancement in RCSI". The Head of the QEO is a member of the NAIN Steering Committee and co-chaired the group which developed the NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation & Case Management.

In relation to the maintenance of the highest standards of professionalism in research and associated postgraduate degree programmes, RCSI research governance principles align with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Postgraduate research students must sign and agree the Postgraduate Code of Conduct on registration and must acknowledge 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. Postgraduate research students funded through National funding agencies (e.g., Irish Research Council, Science Foundation Ireland, Health Research Board) must also complete additional research integrity training (Epigeum, UK).

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
1.	Respond to the CINNTE visit report	The QEO will coordinate the review the draft report for factual accuracy and the preparation of an institutional response.
2.	Follow-up to CINNTE process	The QEO will oversee the creation of an institutional action plan in preparation for the submission of a follow-up report.
3.	Application for International Education Mark	The QEO will coordinate RCSI's application for the International Education Mark.

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 & UCD Malaysia Campus	December 2023	May 2014
Finance Department	May 2024	N/A
Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery	June 2024	N/A

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

Title: Creating the new RCSI Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Theme: Development and use of Learner Assessment

Keywords: Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Governance

Introduction

Over the previous two institutional strategies ('Growth and Excellence' – RCSI Strategy 2013-2017 and 'Transforming Healthcare Education, Research and Service' – RCSI Strategy 2018-2022), RCSI has sought to address the learning, teaching and assessment needs of students by taking a variety of progressive steps to introduce a transformed approach to learning, teaching and assessment. In March 2023, a project was commenced to consolidate this distinctive approach and to summarise it in a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy document.

Initiative

The planned strategy was first introduced at RCSI's internal International Education Forum (IEF) in 2022. After completing an extensive review of documentation accumulated over the last two strategic cycles relating to RCSI's transformational ambitions, a first draft of the LTA strategy was then completed in May 2023. At the 2023 IEF, staff feedback was invited from academic and professional services staff on the draft strategy document. Feedback was also sought from the RCSI Senior Management Team.

In parallel, and as part of RCSI's commitment to sustain and further develop the transformed approach summarised in the LTA Strategy, an LTA Committee was convened, and terms of reference were drawn up. All programmes were represented on the Committee by Heads of Schools and appointed Directors of Curriculum for each school. The student voice was incorporated through the inclusion of four student representatives.

This strategic committee will act as custodians of the LTA Strategy and will oversee, evaluate and consider the implementation of the LTA Strategy across both existing and future programme offerings. The Committee will have responsibility to review, advise and make policy recommendations for the successful design, implementation, evaluation and continuous quality enhancement of curricula, including their assessment and mechanisms of ensuring effective alignment and consistency in their application of RCSI's common LTA principles.

The LTA Committee held its inaugural meeting on June 26th where terms of reference were agreed, and a governance structure template was provided for school and programme representatives to consider how their existing structures will implement the LTA strategy. All committee members were invited to share feedback on the draft strategy to ensure that a final version would be complete and ready for launch by September 2023.

A substantial amount of very helpful feedback and suggestions was received. Following a complex process of reviewing and collating this feedback, a number of key changes and additions were implemented. These included enhanced inclusivity of postgraduate programmes, a commitment to UDL (universal design for learning), the introduction of a ninth LTA principle on Interprofessional Learning

(IPL), content recognising RCSI's role as an educator in advancing the UN SDGs and an acknowledgment that the LTA strategy is a working document that will evolve over time.

Some feedback outlined that some learning models and approaches were particularly medicine focused. Given that the learning models were useful universal frameworks supporting the overall ambitions of the strategy, this challenge was addressed by acknowledging that while a certain approach was foundational in the medicine programme, as part of the new curriculum project, consideration would be given to applicability to other programmes in the future.

Outcome

The final version of the LTA strategy was completed in August to be launched at the Academic Council and Medicine and Health Sciences Board meetings in September, for delivery and amplification across schools and programmes over the next 5 years. The Strategy will be integral to future institutional strategic plans and closely aligned with RCSI's new institutional strategic plan, Innovating for a Healthier Future.

The LTA Strategy provides a unifying interprofessional approach to teaching, learning and assessment and will help sustain key initiatives introduced to transform curricula over the last strategic cycles. The strategy aims to encompass an educational philosophy that works broadly for all programmes and that supports all that is done by individual schools. Ultimately, the principle overarching aim of the LTA Strategy is to develop distinctive, professional graduates with the capacity to succeed, lead and thrive in a variety of settings across the globe while enhancing RCSI education reputation externally.

The strategy is expected to bring great benefits. It serves as a template or a guiding framework that will help streamline programme development and delivery and will help to simplify new programme development. In addition, the formation of an LTA Committee provides an opportunity for enhanced collaboration by creating an opportunity for schools and departments to learn from and benefit from each other. It allows for efficiency and reduced duplication of work by utilising existing knowledge and experience from other programmes. An unforeseen benefit of the committee is that it serves as a safety net for any unforeseen challenges that may need to be considered when considering making programmatic changes prior to engaging with the A&QC (Awards & Qualifications Committee) by allowing others on the committee to share experiences of how a similar change worked within their respective programmes. Importantly the LTA strategy clarifies that while the LTA Committee makes recommendations and has oversight of proposed changes, formal proposals for changes and improvements must go through the A&QC's approvals process.

An enhancement identified following the launch of the LTA Strategy is the monitoring of programme alignment with the LTA strategy in a transparent manner. This will be achieved through the use of a shared LTA strategy tracker for programmes to show where they are already aligned and to indicate plans in place for future alignment with the strategy. The interprofessional nature of using a shared document to monitor alignment will create an opportunity for schools and departments to enlighten, educate and benefit from each other. RCSI's annual IEF conference will provide a platform for staff to reflect on and review the strategy to agree updates and track progress. In essence, the introduction of the LTA Strategy will serve as a binding force encouraging cross-institutional collaboration with members of faculty, professional staff and students, to support as well as inform and direct RCSI's learning teaching and assessment work.

CASE STUDY 2

Title: RCSIsmj (Student medical Journal) Move to Open Access

Keywords: Open Access Research, Student Engagement

Introduction

The RCSIsmj (Student Medical Journal) has been published annually since 2008, with the 16th edition published in April 2023. The journal provides a superb platform for RCSI's undergraduate students to highlight and publish their research at an early stage in their careers. It enhances understanding of how research can be translated from the bench to the patients' bedside, which in turn leads to better clinical care and best practice patient care. RCSI is supportive of Open Access – a publishing model for scholarly communication that makes research information readily available at no cost. This year the RCSIsmj moved to open access publication.

Initiative

The Journal began in 2008 with the Founding Editor, then a medical student, supported by the Head of the RCSI Department of General Practice & Family Medicine. It has since grown to include an ethics challenge, case reports, reviews, articles and narrative pieces. An important feature of the RCSIsmj is succession planning by students, providing an RCSIsmj institutional memory which has worked extremely well for the last 16 years. The launch of the new journal in March/April each year is eagerly anticipated by both staff and students and includes a reflective narrative piece and a very lively and enjoyable ethics debate.

A new initiative for the RCSIsmj was introduced this year. Following discussions (with the RCSI Library Team, the Deputy Vice Chancellor's Office and the RCSIsmj Editor-in-Chief and Senior Editor, and the publishing company), a CC BY-NC licence was added to the Journal. This licence grants public permission to share and adapt the articles in the RCSIsmj, so long as attribution is given to the creator**,** and they are not used for commercial purposes. Following the addition of this licence, the Library Team uploaded all the RCSIsmj journal articles individually from 2008 to-date to the RCSI Repository – an open access repository for all RCSI publications, including undergraduate research **https://repository.rcsi.com/Undergraduate_Research**. The individual articles from the RCSIsmj were allocated handles (unique identifiers) linked to authors which in turn will allow these to be added to CVs etc. The RCSI Repository ranks very highly in Google search results, so this will increase the visibility of RCSI's student authors, individual articles and the RCSIsmj itself. Student authors have been encouraged to add their handles to their email signature for further visibility of their articles.

Outcome

The success of the RCSIsmj is a result of the skill, enthusiasm, and dedication of the student Executive Committee and the student Peer Reviewers Group. Over the years, the journal has had considerable support and encouragement from RCSI academic staff together with administrative support for the Deputy Vice Chancellor's Office – a true student and staff collaboration. The contribution of the Journal to RCSI's overall research profile and reputation has been invaluable. It is one of three publications (the other two being the University Annual Report and the RCSI Strategy) regularly presented with pride to many visiting guests. A particular highlight of this year's edition was written by the Senior Editor; the narrative medicine piece by medical student Stephen Clare, 'Doing things by halves' was subsequently published by the Irish Times. The addition of the RCSIsmj to the RCSI Repository together with the handles (unique identifiers) that students can use in their CVs, email signatures etc. has greatly enhanced this publication.

CASE STUDY 3

Title: RCSI White Coat Ceremony Review

Keywords: Professionalism, Student Engagement

Introduction

The White Coat Ceremony was first introduced to the RCSI School of Medicine during the 1990s following a Student Union request for an informal occasion to acknowledge the introduction of students into the anatomy room. Since the early 2000s, with the introduction of new schools such as the School of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, the ceremony evolved to provide a unique opportunity to support interprofessional socialisation and to promote principles of humanism and professionalism at the beginning of the student journey for all undergraduate programmes, later including postgraduate programmes such as the MSc in Physician Associate Studies.

With RCSI continuing to grow and diversify its programme offerings, and following feedback received from programme representatives to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (DVCAA)'s Office, a decision was taken to review the appropriateness of the White Coat Ceremony's current declaration and procedures, to ensure that the event is inclusive and representative of all programmes that take part.

Initiative

In March 2023, a short life White Coat Ceremony Review Working Group was assembled and convened by the DVCAA's office. The group was provided with all relevant documentation, terms of reference, and an action plan and associated timeline. Among the goals of this group was to review and consider the appropriateness of the White Coat Ceremony's current declaration, and to retain a universal declaration that was inclusive and suitable to all appropriate programmes. A further goal was to review the procedures of the event, including the types of speeches and speakers, to ensure representation across all programmes. Membership of the Working Group included five student representatives, from the undergraduate programmes as well as the MSc in Physician Associate Studies and the Student's Union. Other members of the group were cross-institutional representatives including members of faculty, such as programme directors and year leads, and importantly the RCSI Chair of Medical Professionalism.

The Group updated and amended the White Coat Ceremony declaration to ensure the ceremony is equally meaningful for all students and to preserve the important philosophy that all students are signing up to common professionalism principles by having a ceremony that works for all. They agreed on a series of recommendations regarding the procedures of future White Coat Ceremonies. Among the recommendations were the retention of a universal declaration to ensure interprofessionalism and inclusivity, to aim to have more student representative speakers from older cohorts representing each programme present, and to shorten speeches made by academic staff to allow time for additional student speakers. Subject to programme start dates and capacity, a further recommendation was to have the ceremony event within 2-3 weeks of term beginning for each cohort.

Outcome

Following completion of its review, the Group completed a report documenting the amendments made to the White Coat Ceremony declaration and their recommendations for the procedures of the ceremony. The report was shared with Heads of School where it was received positively noting the collaborative process undertaken by the Group. It was then circulated to Academic Council.

Planning for the 2023 RCSI White Coat Ceremony includes a host of changes based on the report of the Working Group. This includes the reciting of the updated wording of the White Coat Ceremony

declaration. More student speakers representing each programme will be included in the ceremony. Academic speakers will be supported to shorten speeches and simplify the language used to make speeches more accessible for students for whom English is a second language. Due to capacity issues the Working Group's recommendation to have the ceremony within 2-3 weeks of term beginning, will not be possible, but it will take place shortly outside the timeframe. Noting the importance of supporting interprofessional socialisation across programmes, the first ceremony will include students from Foundation Year, Advanced Therapeutic Technologies and Physician Associate Studies; the second ceremony will include students from Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, Graduate Entry Medicine and Direct Entry Medicine.

A further implication, identified as part of the work completed by the Working Group, was that changes made to the White Coat Ceremony declaration needed to be replicated in the undergraduate and postgraduate declarations used at RCSI conferring ceremonies. These changes have been made and will be included in future conferring ceremonies.

CASE STUDY 4

Title: RCSI Strategy Development - Consultation and Engagement

Keywords: Strategy, Engagement

Introduction

In 2022 RCSI completed its 5-year strategy, *Transforming Healthcare Education, Research and Service*. The new strategy, *Innovating for a Healthier Future*, was designed and prepared for launch in 2023. A key aim of the strategy development process was to create high levels of awareness and buy-in to the new strategy, while garnering input and insights from key stakeholders, through extensive internal and external consultation and engagement.

Initiative

As RCSI prepared to develop its new strategy, considerations included: changes in the external environment, such as the fundamental re-organisation of the Irish Health service, with Sláintecare and the new regional health areas; the aftershocks of the Covid Pandemic; challenges in engaging students; creating a vibrant campus experience; creating a positive culture in a hybrid work environment; and responding to the demand to graduate more healthcare professionals and trainees. In addition, wide external and internal engagement was required.

External engagement took place with government departments of health and education, regulators, funding bodies, politicians from all parties, key healthcare and education partners and the general public. As patient insights hold great significance in guiding RCSI towards continuous improvement and ensuring patients remain at the centre of what we do, RCSI engaged with patient partners and members of patient organisations to garner their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions regarding the future of RCSI.

Key internal engagement took place with student representatives and Student Union members at undergraduate and postgraduate level through focus groups, as well as utilising online surveys to garner feedback and suggestions on their key priorities for development. Staff feedback was acquired in person and through online surveys. The existing Senior Leaders Group (SLG) forum, comprising leaders from education, research and professional services, was used for cross-institutional workshops on key priorities for the next 5 years. The Governing Committees of RCSI then both contributed to the

development of the Strategy and approved the final plan. This included multiple meetings with the Academic Council, Medicine and Health Sciences Board, College Advisory Board and the Council.

Finally, in tandem with the CINNTE review process, a key focus for the strategy development team was to collaborate with the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) and the Institutional Review Working Group so that the strategy and CINNTE processes would inform and support the other. To achieve this, dedicated time was protected with the Senior Management Team to align the findings from both processes. Both teams worked together in a synergistic approach and the QEO implemented both staff and student surveys for the strategic development process.

Outcome

The contributions of key and varying stakeholders to shaping RCSI's strategy was invaluable, and RCSI appreciates their time and dedication to improving RCSI and creating a path for the future. Every engagement, observation and viewpoint contributed to the creation of the strategic direction for the Institution. The general feedback included the following:

1. RCSI is a high performing organisation that delivers on its promises.
2. Link mission to leadership on broader societal challenges.
3. Consider how/where we can work collaboratively to achieve goals.
4. Be ambitious for the future – be unique.
5. Focus on student success, enriching student experience, and patient engagement and involvement.
6. Implementation
   - Deliver what we already have underway.
   - Ensure our commitment to quality and developing organisational capacity.

This feedback was incorporated into the structure, actions and implementation approach of the new strategy. A new theme on health and societal wellbeing was created, integrating the university and postgraduate training body within RCSI for greater impact. A dedicated strategic action was established to focus on enriching student life. Strategic actions are no longer team specific but rather cross-institutional initiatives, compelling collaboration and an emphasis on outcomes rather than inputs. Indeed, the title itself came from one of RCSI's Council members during the strategy consultation.

The new strategic plan, Innovating for a Healthier Future, 2023-2027, 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, with sustainability being added as a new foundation following consultation. As such, the University's work is driven by and built upon an unrelenting focus on quality. There is no doubt that the tandem institutional process for strategy development and the institutional review bolstered both outcomes. 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, which can be seen throughout the strategic plan.

In a recent staff survey administered through the QEO, with an aim to better understand staff views on the new RCSI Strategy Innovating for a Healthier Future 2023-2027:
- RCSI staff demonstrate a strong awareness of the new RCSI strategy, 89% of staff are aware of it.
- 56% of RCSI staff members had already read the new strategy.
- 59% of staff stated that the strategy objectives were clear to them.
- Academic staff declared the greatest understanding of their contribution to strategic goals (74% agreed), while 41% of all staff were unsure of having sufficient resources.

RCSI credits engagement and involvement with staff, at every stage of strategy design and implementation, with their awareness of and commitment to the future plans for RCSI.

CASE STUDY 5

Title: Co-Creation of a Digital Educational Escape Room

Keywords: UDL, Student Partnership

Introduction

Research indicates that health professionals meet a wide range of uncertainties in their day-to-day work but receive little to no undergraduate training around how to manage these (Moffett et al., 2021). In an effort to facilitate learning around uncertainty, members of the RCSI HPEC (Health Professions Education Centre) team engaged in a design-based research project that aimed to address this training gap.

Initiative

The overall aim of the project was to develop an educational intervention that would facilitate medical students' learning around uncertainty management. Ultimately, this led to the development of a digital educational escape room which could introduce medical students to the uncertainties that they may experience in transitioning from classroom- to workplace-based learning environments. Escape rooms are a game-based learning strategy that use puzzle-solving activities to help game-players to achieve learning goals. To develop this escape room, a staff-student design group was established, and funding was secured from two main sources: RIME (a medical education research grant supported by INHED/the Medical Council of Ireland) and the RCSI StEP (Student Engagement and Partnership) initiative. The core team consisted of ten medical students and an education expert from HPEC, and – across a nine-week period – the expertise of a further 26 medical students, researchers, education professionals, design experts, illustrators, a medical uncertainty researcher, and an audio-visual professional was sought. Using an online design-thinking process, the team developed, tested and iterated several prototype escape rooms.

This process resulted in an escape room experience that is fun, engaging and can respond to the learning preferences of diverse cohorts of students, supporting the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The activity, which can be used in small group or large group settings, allows learners to engage with experiences of uncertainty in a psychologically safe environment and supports group reflection and meaning making around this domain. Overall, the design-based research project facilitated the advance of existing knowledge, theory and practice, around how novel learning environments such as escape rooms work.

Outcome

The resulting digital educational escape room was piloted with students at RCSI and results from these early evaluations have been fed into a final iteration of this learning environment. This version will be rolled out with approximately 360 Year 2 students in 2024. The results from the pilot test, which were published in Perspectives on Medical Education, indicate that the majority of the students (82%) felt that the escape room had helped them to understand and deal with situations that are uncertain. Furthermore, the data yielded important information for researchers and education practitioners about how online pedagogies such as Community of Inquiry can underpin learning design in these novel settings. The project also highlighted evidence that medical students enjoy and gain transferable skills

from engaging in creative processes, i.e. building and playing digital educational escape rooms. These findings were published recently in Learning Environments Research. In addition, the project has resulted in a number of practitioner "how to" papers, knowledge exchange articles, and several international conference posters, presentations and workshops. Finally, the project will also contribute to a PhD project which represents a collaboration between researchers based at RCSI and Utrecht University. The project was recently recognised with respect to its contribution to the field of UDL through the 2023 John Kelly Award.

CASE STUDY 6

Title: Closed Captions for Collaborate Recordings

Keywords: UDL, Inclusion

Introduction

RCSI uses Class Collaborate (formerly Blackboard Collaborate) for live online lectures and lecture recordings. Students had enquired about the availability of closed captions for Collaborate recordings. Closed captions are an international standard when it comes to video accessibility and support the implementation of Universal Design for Learning principles. A project to explore, and ultimately introduce, closed captions was commenced.

Initiative

In the 2022-23 academic year, over 5,000 hours of lecture recordings were delivered through Class Collaborate. Although undergraduate students are primarily returning to campus, Collaborate is expected to still be widely used to record face-to-face lectures and delay-release the recordings to students for further study and review.

Students had inquired into the availability of closed captions for RCSI's recorded lectures. The IT Department engaged with academic staff, in addition to the teams from CoMPPAS (the Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional and Academic Success) and Student Services to further understand the needs in this area. It became apparent that students with a variety of needs could benefit from closed captions. This included some international students, hard of hearing students, some with sensory processing disorder and some neurodivergent students.

In line with Universal Design for Learning principles (What's good for the few, is good for the many), a business case for enabling this feature on Class Collaborate recordings was developed and reviewed by IT management and procurement. It was considered that the increased accessibility and inclusion presented by the feature justified the potential costs arising. Closed captions are now available for all recordings in the English language, for sessions delivered through the Collaborate external tool.

Outcome

In the first academic year that RCSI enabled this feature, 9,000 minutes of recordings were captioned. This means that RCSI students have benefited from 150 hours of accessible recordings, potentially making their educational journey easier and more efficient. Closed captions can not only support students who are hard of hearing or have learning differences, but they can also improve comprehension, help compensate for poor audio quality or background noise in a recording and allow the video to be used with the sound off (for example, in the library or in shared study spaces).

There is still room to caption more recordings. Closed captions are not an automated feature of Collaborate. Therefore, lecturers or administrators must manually turn it on for each recording, once the recording becomes available. Although feedback has been positive, it is possible that not all staff are currently aware of this feature and its potential positive impact on learners. Further promotion of the closed caption feature is planned, and it is hoped that this will increase its usage.

In line with the Universal Design for Learning approach, this case demonstrates that simple changes can make a difference for individual students and that a proactive approach to accessibility and inclusion should be adopted. This has the potential to support many students who may otherwise require individual reasonable accommodations.

CASE STUDY 7

Title: Open Resources Guide: Helping all to Access and Practice Evidence-Based Healthcare

Keywords: Literature Search, Information Resources

Introduction

RCSI Library provides a rich range of electronic resources for current staff and students. However, licences prevent their provision to fellows, members, clinical partners, and alumni. There are some quality free resources these groups can use instead for research or clinical topics. RCSI Library receives occasional queries from these groups requesting advice or guidance around researching health topics. It was felt that a site could be created to provide help to these groups, with finding information for evidence-based practice or research, as well as being of similar use to the wider public.

Initiative

Prompted by queries from recent graduates, fellows and members and others associated with RCSI who are not current staff or students, RCSI Library decided to create a specific online guide of resources and guidance that would be available to all. The goal was to have a standalone guide that could help anyone with a health-related research or clinical topic to find quality resources, and search them effectively.

Using the online Libguides system, and checking the content of guides aimed at RCSI users to find existing content that would be accessible and applicable to the new group, this was then supplemented by additional content identified by specialists within the Library team. A decision was made to include resources purchased for public access within Ireland, though they may not be accessible to those elsewhere in the world. This was to ensure the benefit for some of the main enquirers who have tended to be in Ireland.

Sections were created reflecting the different types of material available, drawing partly from the Finding Information Guide, a core site used in teaching and supporting RCSI library users. As well as listings of resources and descriptions, a page on literature searching technique was created, and an existing video guide on using PubMed included.

Outcome

The Guide was launched on 31 August 2023. It is early days, but has provided a useful site for recent graduates, and fellows and members to find and use free resources. It enables enquiries from those ineligible for an RCSI username to be directed to a single site that will be of use to them. The intention is to build the guide further, in particular training videos and features on good techniques in information retrieval. It will fit into a wider revision of the Libguides content to ensure more accessible guidance, and

options for self-directed learning. Ultimately it is expected that this will provide a really valuable RCSI resource for those looking for quality health information across Ireland.

CASE STUDY 8

Title: Heritage Collections Research Summer School

Keywords: Undergrad Research, Heritage, Humanities

Introduction

RCSI Library is continuously seeking to increase awareness of and engagement with RCSI's Heritage Collections with new and diverse audiences. One way the Library/Heritage Collections team has been exploring this, is by connecting with the RCSI undergraduate student population through the Research Summer School (RSS). The RSS is an annual programme offered to RCSI undergraduate students that introduces the student to a research environment in a respective field, usually biomedical or clinical in nature. The Heritage Collections team saw the RSS programme as an opportunity for the undergrad students to engage with RCSI's historical collections via a Humanities based research project.

Initiative

The goal was to offer RCSI undergraduate students an opportunity to work on a Humanities based research project primarily using RCSI's rich and historical Heritage Collections. There were two projects offered in 2022/23:

1.   To research and explore the significance, symbolism and story of a series of portrait paintings of important figures from RCSI's history and history of Irish surgery and medicine.
2.   To bring historical perspective to contemporary understanding of gender equality in RCSI by shedding light on the growing numbers and increasing influence of women within the student and staff populations of RCSI during the period 1960-2000.

Two undergraduate students successfully applied through the RSS platform - one Year 2 Medicine, the other a Year 2 Graduate Entry Medicine student. Under the supervision of the Heritage Collections team-Archivist and Heritage Research and Outreach officer, both students researched, analysed and investigated their respective research topic using RCSI's Heritage Collections as well as other libraries collections namely the National Gallery of Ireland and Royal Hibernian Academy.

The outputs for both projects included:
1.   Short Paper (max 1500 words) summarising research findings and data.
2.   Presentation (15-20 mins) to interested staff and students to communicate research findings
3.   Poster with an opportunity to display in ICHAMS and RCSI Research Day

The enhancement received support from senior leaders mainly the Director of Library services. It was also supported by the RCSI Art Committee as part of their own Art Strategy goal of 'revealing and interpreting the legacy of the existing Art Collection'. The Head of RCSI's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office supported the gender-based project and used the findings of the research work to inform and support the work carried out by the EDI team.

The main challenge was trying to tap into and understand the students' capabilities. It was considered that the type of collections used, the subject matter and skills needed for the project might be quite different to their own regular studies so it was important to gauge the level at which the project should

be pitched. This was overcome by engaging with the student during the application process, explaining the project fully to them and talking them through what was expected from them. Each student's strengths and interests were discussed and identified with the PIs. It wasn't until this was done that the student decided they were still interested and able to commit. Also, setting out regular meetings, milestones and check-ins with the PIs from the outset was a crucial part of the project as it supported and enabled the student to reach their full potential.

Outcome

The impact of this enhancement is twofold. Firstly, it gives the Library/Heritage collections the opportunity to engage with an audience that would not have been particularly exposed to RCSI's Heritage Collections before or might not have too much awareness of what the collections hold. In turn, the outputs from the project can be used by the Library in meaningful and strategic ways. Previous RSS projects have formed the basis of important RCSI Library publications, events and research work. This year's RSS students presented their work to the RCSI Library, the RCSI Art Committee and the EDI office as well as submitted a poster with an opportunity to display at RCSI Research Day and ICHAMS 2024. Secondly, it enriches the students overall RCSI experience by giving them an opportunity to work with archival/historical material, an area that is not necessarily covered in their current healthcare-based curriculum. RCSI's history and heritage is an integral part of RCSI's identity and for an undergraduate student to be able to directly work with, research and engage with, is an invaluable experience for them and one that will stand to them in their future.

2022/23 was the fourth year for Library/Heritage Collections to participate in the RSS initiative. Each year lessons and learnings have been taken in order to improve and finesse the project both for the students and the PI's involved. Based on the level of interest and high rates of applications from students, Heritage Collections intends to continue to participate in the RSS on annual basis.

CASE STUDY 9

Title: A Quality Forum at RCSI

Keywords: Quality Enhancement, Institutional Engagement

Introduction

RCSI's Quality Framework sets out that the enhancement of quality is the responsibility of every member of RCSI staff. Quality enhancement activities take place across the institution through both formal and informal engagement mechanisms. However, opportunities for interdepartmental and transnational learning are limited. During the 2021 Internal Quality Review of the Quality Enhancement Office, a recommendation was made to consider the creation of a regular forum for RCSI and its international campuses to share experiences, best practice, and to encourage shared cooperative approaches to quality enhancement. A medium to progress this recommendation was required.

Initiative

A proposal to hold a Quality Forum was discussed and agreed at RCSI's Quality Committee. It was considered that holding the Forum as part of RCSI's annual International Education Forum (IEF) was the optimal timing.

The Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (DVCAA) organise the highly regarded IEF. This event is held at the end of the academic year and is attended by academic and professional services staff from both Dublin and across RCSI's international campuses. It is a forum where best practice and

innovation are shared and discussed. As such both the tone of the event and the presence of international colleagues in Dublin provided excellent synergy. June 2023 saw the return of the IEF to in-person attendance following the pandemic; this was also four months prior to the CINNTE Review of RCSI. The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) contacted the Office of the DVCAA to explore the possibility of holding a Quality Forum as part of this event. The DVCAA was extremely supportive of this initiative and so the QEO and DVCAA team worked collaboratively to include the Quality Forum at the 2023 IEF.

Discussions took place with RCSI colleagues nationally and internationally to create an agenda. It was agreed that the Quality Forum provided an opportunity for both the dissemination of quality developments and the exploration of enhancements to quality activity at RCSI; as such a mix of lectures and workshops was planned. A programme was developed and advertised internally. All academic and professional services staff were welcome to attend, and the event was also highlighted to key quality colleagues.

As the CINNTE Institutional Review was also taking place in 2023, it was further considered that the Quality Forum provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the Quality Case Studies developed for the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and the Annual Quality Reports submitted in 2023. A Case Study poster exhibition was therefore planned to coincide with the IEF.

Outcome

This first Quality Forum took place in June 2023; attendance exceeded expectations and so a move to a bigger venue within the university was required. The programme was engaging and focused on educational quality. It included the attendance of colleagues from QQI, providing very informative presentations on Academic Integrity, the new Statutory Guidelines for Blended and Online Learning and the International Education Mark.

A member of RCSI Bahrain's Quality Office led a workshop on closing the loop on Quality Reviews and the QEO's Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Analyst ran a workshop on Tackling Survey Fatigue. These interactive workshops provided an opportunity to seek feedback from a diverse group of colleagues and provided a rich source of ideas on approaches to further enhance engagement in quality activities. Ideas were captured by the QEO team and have since resulted in changes in survey activities and planned changes to quality reviews. For example, a suggestion was made to have a 'preview' of the survey content in a survey invitation, which will be implemented the coming academic year.

With the support of the DVCAA's office, the Case Study Exhibition began at the commencement of the International Education Forum and continued for several weeks after. Posters were displayed and rotated throughout the campus providing staff and students with the opportunity to learn about, and be inspired by, these enhancement activities. At the CINNTE Review preparation meetings, staff reported widespread awareness of the Case Studies, and interest in providing cases for the 2024 Annual Quality Report considerably grew.

It is hoped that this event will be continued, providing further opportunities to staff from Dublin and International sites to collaborate and learn from each other's experiences of quality enhancement activity.