Annual Quality Report
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Reporting Period 2019-2020

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
2021

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PREFACE

Note: QQI's provider portal, QHub, is currently under development and will be completed in November 2020. AQR 2021 will be submitted via QHub.

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.

CONTENTS

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 **The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland** for the reporting period **1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020.**

The AQR has been approved by the RCSI Quality Committee and is submitted by Prof. David T. Croke (Director of Quality Enhancement)

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 is the largest medical school in Ireland and awards medical degrees in Ireland, Bahrain and Malaysia. RCSI also provides undergraduate degree programmes in Pharmacy and Physiotherapy in Ireland, undergraduate Nursing degree programmes in Bahrain and masters (taught & by research) and doctoral programmes variously in Ireland, Bahrain, China, Dubai 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 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 received authorization to use the description 'University' and to style itself accordingly, 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 in consultation with Faculties, Schools and Professional Services Units across the university, prior to consideration and approval by RCSI Senior Management, the Quality Committee and Medicine & Health Sciences Board.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Established initially as a surgical Royal College, RCSI is governed by the Council. The governance structure has evolved considerably over time, reflecting the subsequent development of RCSI as a higher education institution, the advent of independent degree awarding powers, changes in best practice in higher education governance and university designation. The current structure is summarised below.
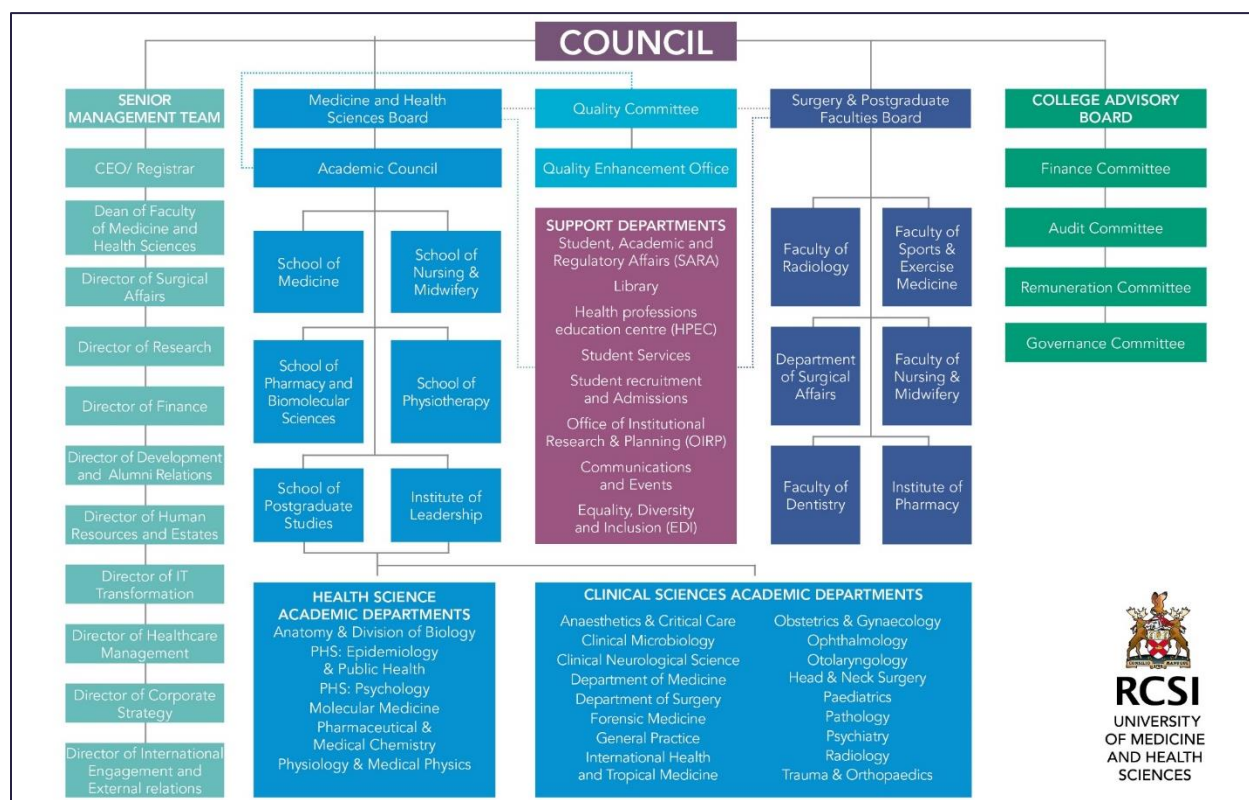
When its independent degree-awarding powers were activated in 2010, RCSI established the Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB) and Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB). MHSB is the governing body for all RCSI educational programmes leading to degree awards in the health sciences, while SPFB is the cognate body governing RCSI postgraduate/professional training and certification in Surgery and related specialties. Both of these Boards operate under authority for specified non-surgical matters delegated to them by Council. Council retained a number of 'Reserved Powers', mostly concerned with financial governance and oversight of the university, and these are exercised through the functions of the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee. In recognition of the growing complexity and breadth of the university's activities beyond Surgery, Council in 2013 established the College Board as an overall advisory body for RCSI. Within this governance structure, the key decision making for quality assurance within the university are the Quality Committee, MHSB and SPFB.

The RCSI Quality Committee (QC) is responsible for the creation of policy and for the implementation of quality processes and quality assurance/quality improvement (QA/QI) activities across academic and administrative areas of all RCSI campuses. The Quality Committee (QC) reports both to MHSB and to SPFB. The QC 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 branch campuses into the overall QA system, and in supporting these campuses in their interactions with local QA/QI structures and processes. Each branch campus has a local Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) which reports to the QC, and the Chair of each QAC is a member of the QC. Local Quality Officers facilitate the work of each QAC and liaise with the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO; Dublin) on an ongoing basis.

The QEO is the executive function of the RCSI Quality Committee (QC) and of its sub-committees, and reports to the Chief Executive Officer (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 all aspects of programme delivery. The QEO had three members of staff from its inception: Director, Associate Director and Quality Reviews Manager. The Director and staff of the QEO were appointed in September-October 2010 by open competition (open external competition in the case of the Director), and dedicated office accommodation was provided in December 2010. A fourth member of staff, in the role of QA/QI Analyst, was appointed in March 2015. In 2017 the Associate Director was appointed as Director of Psychometrics (in the rank of Associate Professor) within the QEO. The Director reports to the Chair of the Quality Committee, the Chief Executive Officer of RCSI.

The RCSI Awards & Qualifications Committee (AQC) has authority and operational responsibility delegated by MHSB to evaluate and consider educational programmes which fall under the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) for approval and accreditation, and to carry out periodic Programmatic Reviews. The AQC policies and procedures for the accreditation of new degree programmes are designed to satisfy the requirements of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and those of the National University of Ireland.

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) a dashboard of key performance indicators of student and staff satisfaction and engagement derived from ongoing survey activity, and (ii) the insights and recommendations arising from internal QA reviews. In addition, the QEO facilitates thematic reviews to inform the strategic planning process. For example, in 2017, the QEO facilitated a thematic review of implementation of the previous Strategic Plan (2013-2017) carried out by a six-member international Review Panel. This review provided a series of recommendations which informed the development of the new RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

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 and their involvement is governed by the relevant policies and procedures; these include:
- Representatives of the public interest on governing boards and advisory committees (including RCSI Council, Medicine & Health Sciences Board, Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board, College Board, Quality Committee, Academic Council, 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 (Irish Medical Council, Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, CORU, etc.)

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 developed 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 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 issued to all research personnel. All of these policies are subject to regular review and updating as required. These documents are disseminated to students and staff via the Moodle virtual learning environment, but they are not published on the public-facing RCSI web-site. The SPGS 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. 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 mapped to the National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015) and to Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes. Both the published RCSI Academic Regulations for Research Degrees 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. The RCSI Awards and Qualifications Committee (AQC) 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. AQC 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 School of Postgraduate Studies was reviewed most recently in 2016.

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 has developed a strategy and operating model for engaging with providers seeking LP status, but the university 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 TN/C 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 (AQC) 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 Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, or by the postgraduate faculties of RCSI. The AQC 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. Accordingly, degree awards of RCSI are awards of the NUI.

From a governance perspective, it should be noted that a number of RCSI postgraduate faculties deliver taught postgraduate programmes (e.g. Masters in Surgery; MCh) in conjunction with the School of Postgraduate Studies. Thus, while these faculties fall under the governance of the Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board, their degree courses fall under the governance of the Medicine & Health Sciences Board via the AQC.

RCSI does not 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 AQC 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 AQC Business Case Review Panel and feedback is given to the proposer. If/when the final Business Case has been approved by AQC, 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 is subject initially to internal review by the AQC Academic Case Review Panel in an iterative process that leads to the application going forward to the Academic Council and thence to Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB). Once approved by MHSB, the programme is subject to external review by two external reviewers, one nominated by RCSI and one by the NUI. Following final modifications made to the programme proposal based upon the reviewers' comments, the proposal goes forward to the MHSB and, ultimately, to the NUI Senate for final approval.

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 National Framework of Qualifications (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 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. 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.

Changes to existing programmes are evaluated by the AQC 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, while minor changes are subject to a less extensive review, with final approval in both cases by Academic Council, MHSB and NUI Senate.

The AQC 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) and which fall under the governance of the Medicine and Health Science Board and, ultimately, the National University of Ireland. 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; or
[c] No Confidence with consequent discontinuation of the degree programme.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

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

Induction takes place on the first day of each new academic year and the formal programme consists of short talks outlining the key facilities and services including Health Services, Library Facilities, Societies & Sports and Student Support & Welfare. Registration is completed in the afternoon and new students are issued with their RCSI student cards, which give access to the library, gym, computer labs and other areas of the RCSI campus. In addition, laptops, log-in details for RCSI online services, including the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and RCSI e-mail account details are also distributed. RCSI offers first year students a formal induction programme - 'Passport for Success' – which is a series of lectures and workshops on various topics including study skills, self-care, support services, etc.

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

Progression is determined by 'Marks and Standards' documents which are created and published for each year of each programme. These documents outline the standards and criteria which must be satisfied in order to progress to the next stage of the programme. These are made available to students via the Moodle virtual learning environment, together with policies on the relevant appeals processes. Monitoring of progression rates for students in the first year of undergraduate programmes is routinely done by the Admissions Office. Progression rates of other years are monitored by the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs office (SARA; registry) and by Cycle/Programme Committees. Graduation rates for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are monitored and reported annually as part of the suite of RCSI internal key performance indicators.

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

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

A range of academic support services is provided to students by CoMPPAS, the Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional & Academic Success. CoMPPAS is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team working to assist students to maximise their potential or enhance their performance, and also to assist students to overcome the challenges they may face during their training and to encourage them to develop sustainable strategies for success as future healthcare professionals. The services provided by CoMPPAS include learning skills, language & communications skills, well-being (including facilitating confidential access to GP & counselling services), life-skills, volunteering, community engagement and career development: http://www.rcsi.ie/comppas
CoMPPAS synergises with the Student Services Office which provides complementary support services to RCSI students.

RCSI has a particular commitment to widening participation in its educational programmes and, to this end, offers a range of scholarships. Of particular note in this regard is the Traveller Community Access Programme (TCAP) Scholarship, which aims to increase the participation of members of the Traveller Community in the University's Undergraduate Medicine, Physiotherapy and Pharmacy programmes. The TCAP Scholarship provides reduced points entry, financial support and opportunities for students from the community who might otherwise be unable to attend third level education due to social disadvantage or financial constraints.

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 Postgraduate Statutory Regulatory Body (PRSB). A good example of this is provided by the process undertaken to establish the programme-level learning outcomes for the RCSI medical degree (MB, BCh, BAO) programme.

The programme-level learning outcomes for the medical degree are set out in the RCSI 'Medical Graduate Profile (MGP)'. The MGP articulates the attributes needed for the distinct roles that are integrated in clinical practice, and thus provides the foundation for the education that students receive. The MGP is based on the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Competency Framework which integrates seven intrinsic roles of the physician (Professional; Communicator; Scholar; Collaborator; Leader; Global Practitioner; Clinically Skilled Doctor). It also complies with the stipulations regarding curriculum standards and design contained in the World Federation of Medical Education Guidelines, the standards adopted by the Irish Medical Council (PRSB). Development of the MGP was informed by a process of consultation with RCSI faculty, researchers, staff, students, alumni, national post graduate training bodies, the Irish Medical Council, other health care professionals and patient groups.

Three levels of learning outcomes are encompassed within the MGP. The highest – Level 1 outcomes or 'Themes' – are mapped to the NFQ Level descriptors for the Level 8 degree award. Nested beneath the Themes are Level 2 and Level 3 outcomes which are higher level outcomes within each theme. The Level 1, 2 & 3 learning outcomes in the MGP inform the structure and content of the individual course modules across the five academic years of the programme. Level 4 outcomes are the overarching module outcomes, while Level 5 outcomes are those for individual learning activities within each module (lectures, practicals, clinical skills & simulation sessions, etc.). Therefore, taken together, the five levels of learning outcome constitute a hierarchical framework which demonstrates how each learning activity contributes to the students' acquisition of the attributes set out in the MGP.

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 are 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 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:

I. Student feedback surveys (semester-based or, exceptionally, more frequent)
II. In-course examination results (semester- or academic year-based)
III. Exit (*i.e.* final end of programme) examination results

IV.   External examiners' reports
V.   Accreditation reports issued by the relevant Postgraduate Regulatory Statutory Bodies
VI.   Annual Programme Monitoring
VII.   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 survey policy is to apply a centralised core and options model of evaluation across all undergraduate courses and campuses. The use of 'core' questions allows the direct comparison of student 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 central 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. Cycle/Programme Directors use this information in conjunction with academic performance data to determine what (if any) changes need to be made for the subsequent year. This information should be communicated back to the students 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 have been processed. In addition to the curriculum feedback, a set of separate reports is prepared for the heads of professional services functions – for example the RCSI Library, Student Academic and Regulatory Affairs, IT Department etc. Externally, feedback on student engagement is collected independently from first and final year undergraduate students and from postgraduate 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. Another external national survey in which RCSI took part during the reporting period was the INDEx survey, led by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The results, which also included benchmarking, were shared with the relevant departments and contributed to the work of the RCSI Digitally Engaged Learning Working Group.

Information regarding assessments is finalised prior to the start of each academic year and these data are made available to students in the form of 'Marks & Standards' documents. These documents contain information about the location, format, quantity and weighting of assessments as well 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 which must include all failing scripts. External examiners are appointed to participate in the assessment creation and 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, RCSI has a well-developed appeals procedure.

External examiners, as independent external peers, play an important role in the ongoing quality assurance of degree programmes at RCSI. The Medicine & Health Sciences Board nominates external examiners to 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, the majority of RCSI educational and training programmes are subject to accreditation by the relevant Postgraduate Regulatory Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). These are the Irish Medical Council, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, CORU [The Health & Social Care Professions Regulator], the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists and the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland. Each PRSB undertakes periodic monitoring and accreditation site-inspections to RCSI to assess compliance of the relevant degree or professional training programme 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 which lead 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 with 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, which was established in 2013. To date, over 100 RCSI educators have taken part in peer observation. HPEC also offers RCSI staff members exclusive 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.

RCSI, as a health sciences University 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. SARA/Registry, working with the Schools and Faculties, maintain a comprehensive suite of documents setting out RCSI policy concerning professionalism, code of conduct, behaviour in examinations, plagiarism, etc.

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 library, a sports hall and fitness suite, and has been designed to be both energy efficient and environmentally responsible. In parallel, RCSI has invested significantly in a new Centre for Simulation Education & Research, based in the new facility, which will work to integrate Simulation Based Experiential Learning (SBEL) methods in all RCSI education and training programmes with the ultimate aim to enhance patient safety, patient care, education and research. Subsequent to the completion in 2017 of 26 York Street, a new state-of-the-art facility over 10 floors on the city-centre campus, RCSI has 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 new 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.

RCSI Library dates from the inception of RCSI as a surgical Royal College in 1784. It was only with the appointment of the first qualified librarian in 1986 that the recognisable modern-day academic library services began on the main St Stephen's Green (Dublin) campus. These were extended to RCSI's main teaching hospital in 1988 when RCSI Library, Beaumont Hospital opened. A purpose-built, state of the art library, opened in the Mercer building in 1991 and served as the main campus library until 2017 when the library team, with the exception of the Heritage Collections team who remain in situ, relocated to the new academic education building at 26 York Street. This new facility spans three floors and provides 500 study spaces. Online library services and resources began around 2005 and were greatly expanded from 2008. Today 85% of interactions with library services are online and the working physical collections on the main campus are less than 300 linear metres. In recent years, and like many other libraries, RCSI Library, has restructured away from a focus on collections, physical spaces and internally facing library functional roles towards a focus on expertise, the provision of expert information services and externally facing specialist roles that enable and align with University core activities and strategies for education, research, reputation, engagement and clinical practice. RCSI Library, including RCSI Library Beaumont Hospital, serves all registered RCSI students including trainees & interns, RCSI academic, research, clinical and professional services staff including honorary and clinical lecturer appointments, alumni, exam candidates and others and those visiting through the reciprocal library access schemes ALCID or SCONUL Access. The service is responsible for providing the resources and services to support current education, research and clinical activities and for the long-term preservation and curation of outputs and records related to those activities (see summary diagram below).

Excellence in 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
✓ **Information point**
Enquiries, support, advice
✓ **Research & consultation service**
Specialised queries for staff & students
 	
Resources to Support Learning
✓ **Physical collections**
Books, journals, DVDs
✓ **Electronic resources**
Databases, clinical summaries, journals, e-books
✓ **Library-authored support materials**
Videos, LibGuides, manuals
 	
Spaces to Support Learning
✓ **Physical places**
Group study rooms
Study pods
Amphitheatre
Reading lounges
Computer rooms
✓ **Virtual spaces**
Website
RCSI Library on Moodle
YouTube Channel
	Research Services
	✓ RCSI open access research publications 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 support 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
			✓ Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committe
			✓ Green Campus Committee
			✓ Research Summer School
			✓ Student Affairs Committee
			✓ Transformative Healthcare Education Project
			  • SPIRAL Committee
			  • Student Engagement Working Group
			  • Learning Communities Group
			  • Assessment Working Group
			
			Institutional Member of
			✓ CONUL & sub-groups
			✓ National Open Research Forum
			✓ IReL
			✓ SCONUL (UK)
			✓ LIBER (Europe)
			✓ AAHSL (North America)

In recent years the healthcare professions have adopted simulation-based training as an effective way to enable students and postgraduate trainees to undertake the deliberate practice of clinical skills in a safe learning environment, and so to achieve the highest standards before they work directly with patients. One of the key ambitions of RCSI in designing the new 26 York Street building was to provide the facilities and supports necessary for state of the art clinical simulation. The Clinical Simulation Suite and the associated Centre for Simulation Education & Research (RCSI SIM) span three floors of the building (12,000 sq. ft.) and incorporate:

- Ten outpatient consultation rooms where simulated patients (professional actors & lay volunteers who have undertaken specific in-house training) assist in developing students' consultation skills
- Eight 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
- 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

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 runs some 380 teaching sessions and courses involving 1,800 students and over 800 postgraduate trainees and paramedics in total.

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. All undergraduate

students are provided with laptops, to ensure that they are digitally equipped both while studying online and when on clinical placements. A large range of applications are provided by RCSI to support learning and students including:

- Moodle: This virtual learning environment provides students with access to their timetable, course material, online lectures, and access to professional services support including Registry, Academic Affairs, library and IT
- Blackboard Collaborate: Online lectures and tutorials are managed on blackboard collaborate
- InTune: This service allows students to interact during lectures, e.g. polls, quizzes
- Library: A huge range of online services are available to students, including a substantial catalogue of journals and databases
- MyRCSI: A student app developed in collaboration with the Students Union that signposts students to all their digital services from one central location
- Examplify: Online exam system introduced in 2020
- CareerHub: A portal supporting career management
- Electives: Enables students apply for clinical electives
- Mentor Network: Enables students to connect to alumni mentors across the world
- Student HQ: A new online hub for students Clubs and Societies to enable them manage their organisations and hold events online

RCSI works constantly to improve and expand digital service provision to students and staff. Projects currently in development include solutions to improve student clinical placement and e-portfolio management.

RCSI's Centre for Mastery Personal, Professional & Academic Success (CoMPPAS) provides a comprehensive pastoral care support framework to all students, while the Student Services Department assists with accommodation, immigration & visa issues, bank accounts, Clubs & Societies, etc. RCSI has perhaps Ireland's most diverse student body (> 70% international students) and, as a result, 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 an 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 two 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 17 registered counsellors; the Mercer's Medical Centre GP Service; the RCSI Acute Psychiatric support service provided by two 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 anywhere in Ireland or abroad.

The Student Services Office coordinates all other student support services. Here students have access to information and support in relation to: Accommodation, Financial Assistance, Gym, Immigration & Visa information, Induction & Orientation, Meet & Greet Service, Merchandising, Societies, Sports, Clubs & Teams, Student Awards, Student Events, Student Facilities and Student Life Bursaries.

RCSI provides a comprehensive undergraduate point of entry induction and orientation programme, 'Passport for Success', for all new students during the first 6 weeks of each semester of their first year at RCSI. An adapted 'Passport for Success' programme is provided to graduate entry students in line with their prior experience of higher education.   In addition, at registration, all 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. The month of March each year is dedicated to celebrating our cultural diversity and includes a number of student-led landmark events such as an annual Cultural Diversity Exhibition, International Food Night and International Night, a show that celebrates the rich tapestry of music, dance and traditions that make up the RCSI community. An extensive range of clubs, societies and volunteering opportunities further promote and celebrate the diversity of the college.

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 'Passport for Success' programme, the CoMPPAS team run a number of large scale friendship 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, a comprehensive programme of student club and society activities and events each year is actively supported and promoted by Student Services. Out of respect for certain cultural and religious norms, gender-specific Islamic prayer rooms and an optional female-only gym 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. 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 supporting all non-native speaking students working through English as a second or additional language and this is achieved through a 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. Design and delivery of communication skills development for the international student body and ongoing development and management of technology-based, language and communication resources and laboratory learning environments is achieved through guidance from a dedicated Lecturer in Communications. The University also has a dedicated communication and language self-access learning centre. 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 CoMMPAS is the service through which learners wishing to access the language self-access learning facilities can be initially identified and directed. The University has many holistic proactive programs designed for a very diverse learner cohort such as the extensive orientation provided by the 'Passport for Success' programme.

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 will 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. So far this has resulted in a new partnership agreement and the funding of a 'Navigate to Graduate' student guide. The Postgraduate Students' Union has an international officer to ensure that RCSI is always aware of international scholar's needs.

RCSI places a particular emphasis on the provision of supports to students on Blended Learning programmes offered by the university. At present, these are mainly delivered by the Institute of Leadership and RCSI Dubai. 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. The onboarding process ensures that students can understand the context and requirements of the face-to-face and online components of the programme, can access the virtual learning environment and virtual classrooms and have completed all necessary IT training. 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 including study days, online sessions, workshops, and assignment submission dates 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. Students are given clear and comprehensive instructions on all aspects of each assessment component, including the method of assessment, weighting of each component, assessment rubrics, instructions on submission and information on the required file formats and the number of attempts allowed for each assessment component. Students receive timely feedback on their assessment submissions in order to inform constructive feedback and guidance, and to afford them an opportunity to develop their academic performance.

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 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 mapped to the National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015) and to Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes. Both the published RCSI Academic Regulations for Research Degrees 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] 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. Since 2015, all research students have access to optional modules on topics including: Applied Biomedical Imaging; Anatomical and Molecular Imaging; Medical Sciences; Cell Signalling & Molecular Medicine; Computational Biology; Data Management; Good Clinical Practice; Medical Device Research; Clinical Research Coordination & Management; Economic Evaluation based on Clinical Trials; Health Econometrics using Stata; Glioblastoma: Introduction to Brain Tumour Biology. Students have access to additional modules provided by Clinical Research Development Ireland (CRDI). In some Programmatic PhDs (e.g. SPHeRE), a full suite of programmes is provided to replace the generic set of core modules.

Postgraduate research students also have the option to complete a Professional Certificate in Research Practices (NFQ level 9) while they complete their research degree. The modules that make up this Professional Certificate are designed to complement the research degree. The SPGS also provides two Induction weeks per year (October & April) that provide 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 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 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* that mirrors the final PhD/MD *viva voce* examination. In advance of the mini *viva* the student writes a substantial report on their research project. 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

- 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 have to 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 weekly and 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 is 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 an 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.

RCSI offers a 'PhD-by-Publication' submission route. To be eligible to submit for a PhD-by-Publication, the candidate must be first-author on two papers (already published or accepted) in quality peer-reviewed journals ranked in the first or second quartile in the relevant field, and must also be a co-author on 1-2 further papers (already published or accepted) in similarly ranked quality peer-reviewed journals in the field following original research work completed while registered as a postgraduate student at RCSI. Students submitting for all research degree awards are encouraged to include a list of their presentations, awards, and publications in their thesis. The University is currently evaluating proposals for a 'PhD-by-Prior-Publication' submission route.

The SPGS emphasizes 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. Students also have access to Career Development workshops provided by CRDI (as noted above). 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). Each institution offers specific workshops or online supports that are open to partner institutions. These collaborative workshops address key, generic research supervisor challenges. Internally, there is an annual RCSI Supervisor Support meeting (delivered on three sites: St Stephens Green, Beaumont Hospital & the Rotunda Hospital) that supervisors are encouraged to attend. In relation to ethical oversight of research within the university, the RCSI Research Ethics Committee acts to ensure the highest standards of conduct in research at RCSI and to support staff in pursuing this goal. It does this [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 <u>StudentSurvey.ie</u>, 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 weekly 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 (AQC) 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. AQC 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 new 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 aligns with the <u>European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity</u>, which specifies four fundamental principles that underpin all research integrity and good practice, and with <u>Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes</u> (QQI). These principles are central to the RCSI approach to <u>Research Governance</u>. RCSI has recently established an institutional Academic Integrity Working Group, and the Manager of the SPGS is a member of this group. 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 <u>National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland</u>) and the <u>RCSI Statement on Research Integrity</u>. 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.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Recruiting and developing our academic and professional staff is central to excellence in teaching, postgraduate training and research. RCSI seeks to recruit 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 Group Human Resources function based at RCSI Dublin is responsible for all aspects of recruitment and subsequent human resource management across the university's campus network in Ireland and overseas. The Careers at RCSI web-pages 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); 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 Dean leads the short-listing 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. All members of the interview panel must be invited to participate in the short listing 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, Head of Discipline and External Panel member, 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 senior academic roles RCSI requires a two-stage process - a pre-interview visit and a formal interview. There is a requirement for at least three academic staff to sit on the interview panel for all academic posts, ensuring gender balance and 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. RCSI requests proof of highest academic qualifications from all new & incoming academic staff. The referees must be people that the candidate reported into, relevant to the role and recent. 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 situ. An integration 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 (in terms of fees and protected time) to participate in the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Professions Education offered by the Health Professions Education Centre, which runs in Dublin (on the city centre, Beaumont Hospital and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda campuses) and in Bahrain. HPEC also offers a range of other educational inputs for staff including Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Workshops, Best Evidence in Medical Education (BEME) Workshops and the monthly HPEC 'Fast Facts' educational digest circulated by e-mail. In parallel, RCSI offers a number of subsidised places to staff on a range of other programmes run by the Institute of Leadership and the School of Nursing. Staff may apply also, via their Department or School, for financial support to undertake education-focused courses in other higher education institutions in Ireland or elsewhere. Short courses are arranged by the Human Resources Department and publicised via the Virtual Learning Environment and internal mailing-lists, and staff members can undertake their own on-line training through LinkedIn Learning which is available to staff. RCSI has policies on study/exam leave for staff members.

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 increasingly needed to be competitive at academic promotion rounds. Most staff members are involved also in the annual Professional Development Planning (PDP) process through which they identify their goals 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 also operates a 'Peer-Observation of Teaching' programme through which staff can obtain constructive and informal feedback on their teaching from a selection of their peers; this is administered by HPEC. Within academic departments, staff may receive feedback on their teaching derived from the student feedback survey data which is disseminated by the Quality Enhancement Office.

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 Government of Ireland Academic Mobility Programme, 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 Staff Scheme and appointment as External Examiners on postgraduate programmes.

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.

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 important information stream that contributes to quality assurance processes and to the monitoring of implementation of institutional strategy. Data that feeds into Institutional Metrics is gathered annually by the Insights & Planning Office, covering the following areas: student & staff data, student engagement and satisfaction indices, expenditure on teaching and research, research, regional engagement (e.g. income from regional sources), knowledge transfer, and international focus. These are monitored routinely by the Senior Management Team and shared with the key departments within RCSI.

Profile of student population:
RCSI routinely collects information about the student population for RCSI-Dublin and the overseas branch campuses and programmes i.e. RCSI-Bahrain, RCSI-Dubai, RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus, Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine. Student profile information is collected through Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office.

Student Feedback:
The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) manages the collection, analysis and dissemination of student feedback in RCSI. All undergraduate students and taught postgraduate students in Dublin, Bahrain, Dubai and Malaysia are given an opportunity to give feedback about modules completed in each semester. The data collection tools are based around a 'core & options' model. All surveys contain a series of core items relating to the headings of Modules, Assessments, Skills & Staff. Surveys are developed in collaboration with Cycle Directors and other Faculty staff who have an opportunity to suggest additional survey items if required. The Students' Unions also have an input to the process. The QEO conducts an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative feedback with an aim to inform and enhance the delivery of RCSI programmes. Detailed reports that contain both quantitative and qualitative survey responses are circulated to Programme & Cycle 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.

Student progression rates:
Student progression rates are an important indicator of academic quality. RCSI puts a priority on the analysis of performance of first year students and therefore collects and analyses the relevant student exam performance data. Data collection and analysis lies within the remit of the RCSI Admissions Office. An analysis is undertaken for first sitting and repeat exam performance. Given that RCSI recruits students from multiple countries and academic backgrounds, it is a priority to analyse and compare the performance of different student cohorts and to correlate performance with qualifications at entry. This information is used to assess the suitability of minimum academic entry requirements and to inform decisions on student recruitment. Progression reports are also shared with the relevant Programme & Cycle Directors to inform decision making.

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 processed is managed by the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office.

Career paths of graduates, Members & Fellows:
RCSI does not currently have a formal policy for tracking students' career paths. As a not-for-profit organisation, RCSI is not required to collect information for the HEA First Destination report. In the absence of this, the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office currently gathers ad-hoc information focusing mostly on Northern American graduates of the School of Medicine and their destinations of employment after graduation (up to two years after graduation). In addition, the relationships with RCSI graduates, Members and Fellows are managed through the RCSI Alumni & Development Office. RCSI currently collects information about Alumni workplaces and their clinical specialities. Recently a survey was conducted in order to build a more complete picture of Alumni, gathering data from nearly 1000 Alumni was gathered focusing mostly on their memories of college years. The results of the survey were used to inform various Alumni & Development Office activities including marketing and fundraising.

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, 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.

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. Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) documentation including internal review guidelines and templates for Academic Units and Service Units, guidelines and report templates for Peer Review Groups and guidelines and templates for Quality Improvement Plans are publically available on the RCSI website.   In addition the RCSI Quality Policy, the Quality Committee Terms of Reference, Quality Enhancement Office Terms of Reference and Calendar of Reviews are publically available on the RCSI website:

Learner Information:
Information on all programmes and awards is publically available on the RCSI website. On the 'Study at RCSI' pages on the RCSI website, learners can find details of all taught programmes available at undergraduate and postgraduate level and of higher degrees by research.   Information is tailored for undergraduate learners or postgraduate learners and then for undergraduate learners by the entry routes available to them. Information includes various entry routes, programme award, NFQ level, programme structure, entry requirements, fees, what you will study, student testimonials and how to apply. In addition, learners can easily find information on Access, Scholarships and Student Opportunities (clinical electives, student exchange, Erasmus & undergraduate research).

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

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

Programmatic Reviews:
All matters related to Programmatic Reviews in RCSI are managed by the Awards and Qualification Committee (A&QC). 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 branch campuses and programmes submit annual programme monitoring forms to the Quality Enhancement Office in respect of the educational programmes that they deliver, and these are assessed by the Medicine & Health Sciences Board.

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.

Internal Quality Assurance Reviews:
The Quality Enhancement Office operates a system of 'rolling' Internal Quality Assurance 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 (QA) Reviews of Schools within the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences;
- Internal QA Reviews of Postgraduate/Professional Faculties;
- Internal QA Reviews of Professional Services Units;
- Internal QA Reviews of overseas Branch Campuses & Programmes.

Additionally, the QEO administers thematic and bespoke reviews as directed by the Quality Committee, MHSB and SPFB. 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.

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. Examination results are monitored by Examination Boards to monitor student performance and to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the examination process. RCSI also collects and analyses institutional metrics on student and staff, student engagement & satisfaction, expenditure on teaching & research, research, regional engagement, knowledge transfer and international focus.

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 Status Sheets which identify, score and evaluate a number of risk factors. The Audit Committee conducts an annual review of the Risk Register and associated Risk Status Sheets, 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.

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	5

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
Date of accreditation or last review	N/A
Date of next review	N/A

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
Date of accreditation or last review	04-06 Mar. 2019 (Dublin); 13-14 Oct. 2014 (Bahrain); 24-25 Jan. 2018 (Perdana); 29-30 Jan. 2019 (RUMC)
Date of next review	2024 (Dublin); 2021 (Bahrain); 2022 (Perdana); 2022 (RUMC)

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

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
Date of accreditation or last review	13-09-2016
Date of next review	2021

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]

Date of accreditation or last review	Rolling five-year accreditation cycles
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: Sept. 2018 • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: Sept. 2018
Date of next review	• Perdana University-RCSI: Q2 of 2021 (date TBC) • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: 2022 (date TBC)

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	2022-2023

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; alignment of programmes to the Bahrain Qualifications Framework
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2023

9. Type of arrangement QA Body	
Name of body:	**Higher Education Commission, Kingdom of Bahrain**
Programme titles and links to publications	Internal QA policies & procedures; all programmes of higher education and professional training; Institutional listing
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	2022

10. Type of arrangement QA Body	
Name of body:	**Commission for Academic Accreditation, United Arab Emirates**
Programme titles and links to publications	Institutional Licensure
Date of accreditation or last review	2012
Date of next review	25 Jan.-01 Feb. 2021

11. 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: Sept. 2018 • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: Oct. 2018
Date of next review	• Perdana University-RCSI: Q2 of 2021 (date TBC) • RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus: Q3-4 of 2021 (date TBC)

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. Franchise programme	
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]
Date of last review	19-10-2015
Date of next review	TBC

2. Collaborative provision	
Collaborative provision	
Name of body (/bodies):	**RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus (Penang, Malaysia)**
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelors Degrees in Medicine, Surgery & Obstetrics [MB, BCh, BAO]
Date of last review	02-05-2014
Date of next review	2021

3. Collaborative provision	
Collaborative provision	
Name of body (/bodies):	**Munster Technological University (formerly Institute of Technology Tralee)**
Programme titles and links to publications	NUI Certificate in Biomedical Sciences
Date of last review	01-04-2012
Date of next review	TBC

4. Dual degree award	
Dual Degree Programme	
Name of body (/bodies):	**Soochow University (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	N/A
Date of next review	TBC

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:	
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	The Transnational Collaboration Agreement between the partner universities was signed on 29 August 2018
Date of next review	TBC
Detail of the agreement	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.

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

2021

Annual Quality Report
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **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 submission were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional 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. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact[2] of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

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

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

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

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

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, 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;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of 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.

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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

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Specific changes to the QA system (policies & procedures)

The Quality Committee, having reviewed the suite of policy and procedural documents underpinning Quality Assurance at RCSI and taking cognizance of national and international best practice, mandated the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) to develop an RCSI Quality Assurance (QA) Framework document. The intent was to create a single reference document that would:

- present RCSI QA policy and place it within the context of Irish and European legislation and guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education and training
- describe the place of quality and QA as strategic priorities for RCSI
- describe the governance and management of QA within the university
- provide a comprehensive account of the measures used to assure and enhance the quality of RCSI educational and training provision

The first edition of the Quality Assurance Framework was approved by the Quality Committee and by Medicine & Health Sciences Board and published in January 2020. The document will be updated annually.

Contextual factors impacting on Quality Assurance during the reporting period

The work-plan set out by the QEO for the reporting period included Internal Quality Assurance Reviews of two Schools within the Faculty of Medicine & Health Science (School of Physiotherapy; Institute of Leadership) and of five Professional Services Units (Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs; Information Technology; RCSI Libraries; Student Services; Human Resources). Three of these reviews (Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs; Information Technology; RCSI Libraries) were completed prior to the advent of COVID-19, with the Libraries Peer Review Group site-visit to the Dublin campus taking place in early March 2020. The ensuing campus shut-down and transition to remote-working in response to the pandemic had a profound impact on reviews. The Quality Committee decided to pause the calendar of Internal Quality Assurance Reviews for a period of six months (April-Sept. 2020), mandating the QEO to work with all Units in-scope of RCSI reviews to discuss/agree new timelines and to amend the calendar of reviews accordingly. In addition, the QEO was asked to develop a protocol for virtual Peer Review Group site-visits against the likelihood that the pandemic-associated public health restrictions may last until the end of 2021, thereby precluding in-person Peer Review Group site-visits.

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	Implementation of a new over-arching RCSI Quality Assurance Framework	The RCSI Quality Assurance Framework document aims to encompass the array of tools necessary to assure and enhance the quality of RCSI educational and training provision, and to demonstrate this quality to internal and external stakeholders. The first edition of the Framework was published in January 2020 and the document will be updated annually.
2	Publication of a document setting out the Quality Assurance Relationship between RCSI and the National University of Ireland (NUI)	A document setting out the scope and nature of the Quality Assurance relationship between RCSI and NUI was drafted by the two institutions and was approved by the RCSI Medicine & Health Sciences Board and by the NUI Senate. This document, entitled 'The Quality Assurance Relationship between the National University of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland', was published during the reporting period as an Appendix to the RCSI Quality Assurance Framework document (see above).
3	Necessary revision to Quality Committee policies & procedures, including internal QA review document templates and guidance documents	A full review and revision of Quality Committee policies & procedures was completed during the reporting period.
4	Process-mapping of the internal Quality Assurance Review process	Process-mapping of the RCSI internal Quality Assurance Review process commenced during the reporting period with the assistance of the RCSI Quality Process Improvement Centre. Completion of this work was delayed somewhat due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
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1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Quality Committee	09 Oct. 2019; 11 Dec. 2019; 19 Feb. 2020; 10 Jun. 2020 (n = 4 meetings)
Awards & Qualifications Committee	30 Sept. 2019; 21 Oct. 2019; 02 Dec. 2019; 13 Jan. 2020; 17 Feb. 2020; 23 Mar. 2020; 20 Apr. 2020; 18 May 2020; 15 Jun. 2020 (n = 9 meetings)

Academic Council	04 Sept. 2019; 10 Oct. 2019; 13 Nov. 2019; 12 Dec. 2019; 15 Jan. 2020; 12 Feb. 2020; 11 Mar. 2020; 07 Apr. 2020; 13 May 2020; 24 Jun. 2020 (n = 10 meetings)
Medicine & Health Sciences Board	19 Sept. 2019; 04 Dec, 2019; 30 Jan. 2020; 26 Mar. 2020; 27 May 2020 (n = 5 meetings)
Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board	29 Oct. 2019; 20 Feb. 2020; 18 Jun. 2020 (n = 3 meetings)

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

An additional post was created within the RCSI Senior Management Team during the reporting period with the appointment of Ms. Abi Kelly as Director of International Engagement and External Relations with responsibility for the Office for Institutional Research & Planning. Her role is to support the University's reputation-raising strategy and to build its brand among key stakeholders. A key ambition for RCSI is to be recognised among the top 200 universities in the world. Prior to joining RCSI, Ms. Kelly spent eight years at Newcastle University (UK) where she was Executive Director of Corporate Affairs managing the external profile of this Russell Group university. She also led communications for the N8 Research Partnership, a collaborative mission group of the eight research-intensive universities in the North of England. Ms. Kelly has spent 28 years working in the public relations industry in the UK, including roles in local and regional government, and as a PR consultant for private-sector clients including Whitbread and Nissan. A graduate in Ecology from the University of York, Ms. Kelly is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and a contributor to the World 100 Reputation Network's academy.

A number of key academic appointments were made during the reporting period also:

Prof. Mark Shrime was appointed to the O'Brien Chair of Global Surgery. He will lead the Institute of Global Surgery in its work to address the provision of surgical care in low and middle-income countries. Prof. Shrime joined RCSI from Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, where he was Director of the Center for Global Surgery Evaluation. Prof. Shrime's work focuses on surgical delivery in low and middle-income countries, where he has a specific interest in the intersection of health and impoverishment. He is the author of a number of seminal papers on the global burden of surgical disease, the financial burden facing surgical patients and the number of people who cannot access safe surgery worldwide. He is a co-author of the groundbreaking Lancet Commission Report, 'Global Surgery 2030', which highlighted the deficit in the equity of surgical and anaesthesia care globally.

Prof. Jan Illing was appointed Professor of Health Professions Education and Director of the Health Professions Education Centre. Professor Illing has worked in the field of Health Professions Education for over 20 years. Her research in health professions education has addressed medical transitions, assessment and regulation, CPD, learning in the community, professionalism, clinical supervision and workplace bullying. She has acted as an advisor to the GMC's Assessment Advisory Board, Health Education England's Quality Committee and the UK Department of Health's Revalidation Support Group. She is also currently a member of the International Editorial Board for the journal *Medical Education*. Her recent research for the UK Department of Health involved the development of an evidenced-based model explaining how health professions education can transfer to

practice to benefit patients.   Professor Illing was previously Professor of Medical Education Research at Newcastle University. She was Director of the Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing at Durham University and Director of Research for the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health at Durham University.

Prof. Lisa Mustone-Alexander was appointed Director of the Physician Associate (PA) Programme within the RCSI School of Medicine. RCSI's Physician Associate Programme was launched in 2015, and its graduates have played a critical role during the COVID-19 crisis working across surgical and medical services, with a number staffing some of the hospital testing facilities. In addition to leading the development and delivery of the RCSI PA programme, Prof. Alexander will play an important role in advocating for the recognition of Physician Associates in the Irish healthcare system and in promoting the value of the role to healthcare professionals. Prof. Alexander joined RCSI from the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences (Washington, DC), where she served two terms as of the Physician Associate Programme. She is a member of the International Academy of PA Educators and provides consultation and expertise to faculty from PA programmes around the world. A national leader in the US, she has served as President of both the Physician Assistant Education Association and the Physician Assistant Foundation.

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 Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA)	July 2020 Rolling internal quality assurance review	https://www.rcsi.com/quality-enhancement-office/internal-quality-reviews
Information Technology Department	July 2020 Rolling internal quality assurance review	https://www.rcsi.com/quality-enhancement-office/internal-quality-reviews
Library	August 2020 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	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
of those:							
On-site processes	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
Desk reviews	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virtual processes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average panel size for each process type*		5	5	N/A	3	3	-

* 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	3 ≠	1	2			2	1			2	1
Secretary	3	3				3					3
Academic/Discipline Specific	7	5	2			4	4			5	2
Student Representative	3	2	1			3				3	
QA	(3) ≠										
Teaching & Learning	2	1	1		2					2	
External Industry /Third Mission	1		1		1					1	

≠ **NB:** All three PRG chairs hold QA roles in higher education in Ireland

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance & Management of Quality

The RCSI Quality Committee and Quality Enhancement Office are committed to substantive student involvement in Quality Assurance processes, and maintain a close working relationship with the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students' Unions in terms of their involvement in governance of QA and survey administration. One area of concern was the ongoing difficulty in recruitment of student members from among the RCSI student body to join Peer Review Groups (PRGs) for internal QA reviews, based upon the fact that Students' Union Officer posts are only of one year in duration and are not sabbatical in nature. During the reporting period, the QEO implemented a decision of the Quality Committee to include student/learner representatives in all PRGs and now recruits students external to RCSI with previous experience of QA review processes in higher education for these roles.

Programmes of Education & Training

Creation of the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the School of Pharmacy merged with the Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics (formerly part of the School of Medicine) to become the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences. The merger has created a critical mass of teaching and research, allowing it to further evolve into a vibrant centre for the education of tomorrow's leaders. The school has developed a new five year strategic plan, focused on growth and complementing the wider RCSI Strategy. The school is committed to becoming one of the leading centres for pharmacy and health sciences education.

Enhanced Experiential Learning in Physiotherapy

The school of Physiotherapy is committed to becoming a centre of excellence for the use of simulation training for physiotherapy education in Ireland, and has launched a number of initiatives in collaboration with the Department of Simulation. Dr Orlagh O'Shea has been awarded Irish Research Council New Foundations funding to develop a framework to adapt existing models of 'Simulation-based learning for Clinical Education of Physiotherapists in the Ireland'. Immersive simulated placements expose students to clinical scenarios across core areas of physiotherapy (neurology, musculoskeletal, respiratory and care of the elderly). The school will be testing the effects of this innovative mode of experiential clinical learning on students' readiness for clinical placement in October 2020. This adds to the school's current use of simulation to provide a valuable student learning experience in respiratory practice and communication skills training.

Development of Online Postgraduate Programmes by the RCSI Institute of Leadership

Dedicated exclusively to cultivating and strengthening the leadership and management abilities of those working within the healthcare sector, the Institute of Leadership provides a range of flexible postgraduate diplomas, masters degrees and short or bespoke professional development programmes across our three international campuses. The Institute has developed an online Professional Diploma in Clinical Leadership which is offered in Dublin and in Dubai (in collaboration with Dubai Healthcare City Authority). This Professional Diploma was nominated for the Best Online Learning Experience at The Education Awards 2020.

Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

An Taisce Green Campus programme – Green Flag Award

In December 2019 RCSI received the Green Flag award of An Taisce's Green Campus programme on behalf of the Foundation for Environmental Education. The internationally recognised accreditation was announced following a rigorous assessment process. The Green Campus Programme is an international environmental education and award scheme that promotes long-term, whole institution action for the environment that

empowers both students and staff to create a more balanced campus community and to reduce environmental impacts and associated costs. The award is the result of many years of hard work undertaken by RCSI's Green Campus Committee to promote best practice in sustainability across a number of key areas including energy, waste, biodiversity and education initiatives.

<u>Age-Friendly University Network</u>
In December 2019, RCSI endorsed the 10 principles of the Age-Friendly University Initiative and joined the international network of higher education institutions led by Dublin City University (DCU) dedicated to addressing the needs of older people and focusing on the challenges and opportunities presented by a rapidly ageing population. Launched in 2012, the Ten Principles of an Age-Friendly University (AFU) were developed by DCU as a framework to identify the distinctive contributions institutions of higher education can make in responding to the interests and the needs of an aging population. In becoming an age-friendly university, RCSI officially endorses the 10 principles that provide guidance for evaluating programmes, policies and identifying opportunities for serving people of all ages.

<u>IBEC KeepWell Mark</u>
In January 2020, RCSI was awarded the prestigious Ibec KeepWell Mark, a workplace accreditation which demonstrates the university's commitment to employee health, wellbeing and safety. In signing up to the award, RCSI is making a pledge of commitment to providing the highest standard workplace wellbeing. The accreditation process includes benchmarking and an assessment against recognised standards in workplace health, safety and wellbeing with a personalised report being prepared with recommendations for corporate wellbeing strategy and a certificate of accreditation which is valid for two years. In 2016, RCSI launched the RCSI INSPIRE programme which aims to promote the benefits of health and wellbeing to staff of the university. RCSI INSPIRE is based on four health pillars: physical, nutritional, mental and occupational health. The programme runs employee wellness activities throughout the year from mindfulness sessions to mental health awareness coffee mornings and healthy recipes tips. The events are run in collaboration with University-wide initiative including the Sports & Social Club, RCSI Gym and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment
During the reporting period, RCSI implemented a new Digitally Engaged Learning (DEL) strategy which aims to leverage ongoing advances in information technology to enhance the university's offerings in online and blended learning, in particular by increasing the use of technologically mediated student interactions through Moodle (VLE), videos, quizzes, discussion platforms and other technologically enhanced activities. The RCSI Institute of Leadership (IOL) is among the pioneers of this strategy, aiming to implement the DEL approach to enhance Blended Learning and Online delivery across their suite of postgraduate programmes in Ireland and overseas. An example of this is the <u>Professional Diploma in Clinical Leadership</u> (PDiCL) developed in an on-line delivery format by IOL in conjunction with the Information Technology Department and the in-house Digitally Engaged Learning Hub. What differentiates the PDiCL course from previous blended courses delivered within RCSI is the move to fully online delivery. As well as videos, online activities and collaborative projects, weekly webinars are used to bring the class together to discuss key topics with the academic staff. The programme has proven very popular with participants who, being clinicians, value the flexibility afforded by online delivery. Developing and delivering the PDiCL programme has also enabled a body of expertise to be built up in both the design and the delivery of online courses, creating new windows of opportunity for RCSI. A key success factor is the extent to which IOL has provided the level of student support that individuals need if they are going to be successful in this mode of study, and the experience accrued in the support of online students. Work is currently underway within the IOL on the development of online content for further blended learning programmes. In parallel, staff members have been appointed as DEL 'Super Users' within Schools and programme teams across the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences in order to introduce similar initiatives.

Information & Data Management (inc. StudentSurvey.ie)

Central to the development of the current RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 'Transforming Healthcare Education, Research and Service' was the definition of groups of individual projects under each of the three main strategic pillars: (i) Delivering a transformative learning experience; (ii) Leading impactful research; (iii) Supporting healthcare and society. For each project, key deliverables and timelines were 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 (registry), the Office of Research & Innovation, the Admissions Office, individual Faculties, Schools and overseas Branch Campuses.

The collection, analysis and dissemination of student feedback in RCSI are managed by the QEO. All students in undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research degree programmes at RCSI-Dublin and its overseas branch campuses are given an opportunity to give their confidential feedback each semester. The data collection tools are based around a 'core & options' model; all surveys contain a series of core items relating to the headings of Modules, Assessments, Skills & Staff. Surveys are developed in collaboration with 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 and, in order to close the feedback loop, quantitative reports (without open ended comments) are routinely made available to students via Moodle. QEO runs staff surveys including the annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion survey. The QEO also manages feedback processes for professional trainees under the auspices of the National Surgical Training Programme, APPEL and the Irish Institute of Pharmacy. As noted previously, feedback on student engagement is collected independently from first and final year undergraduate students and from postgraduate research students via StudentSurvey.ie. The raw institutional survey data returned to RCSI from this national survey is used by the QEO to produce an internal benchmarking report which places RCSI within the context of comparator institutions and programme types, and which identifies common themes emerging from the national survey and from RCSI internal student surveys. The QEO ran and processed over 300 surveys during the reporting period, with response rates ranging from 47% (end-of-semester student feedback surveys) to approximately 30% for other surveys.

The Quality Committee and QEO continue to emphasise the importance of 'closing the feedback loop' with students following surveys, so that students can be assured that their opinions are valued and responded to. A number of units implement 'you said, we did' campaigns to publicise their responses to student feedback, in parallel with regular feedback sessions to classes and to class representatives. The QEO has published a 'Closing the Feedback Loop' best practice guide to all Schools and Professional Support Units in receipt of end-of-semester survey reports; this document uses a series of case-studies to illustrate approaches taken by RCSI Schools/Departments and other institutions to document and publicise institutional responses to the views of students.

Supports & Resources for Learners

The RCSI Library was announced as the winner of the 2019 Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) Library Design Award in the small library category. These awards have been running since 1973 and are awarded every three years. They aim to encourage good practice in library planning and to celebrate outstanding examples of cutting-edge design. The selection criteria for the awards concentrate on how design facilitates strategic alignment, service innovation, and transformation. The library, designed by Henry J Lyons, provides students and educators with modern spaces and expert services to support RCSI's mission to transform healthcare education. Spanning three floors, the library is integrated into the state-of-the-art clinical and education building at 26 York Street. It is student-centric with a learning commons, multiple collaborative and study environments that reflect the diverse needs of students, supports peer-to-peer and self-directed learning and provides easy access to the expertise of the library team and the full range of library services.

Other Parties involved in Education & 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 2003 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 (PHECC). Through this agreement, a Diploma in Emergency Medical Technology (NFQ Level 7) is undertaken over two academic years by all DFB personnel as part of their employment as firefighter/paramedics for the provision of fire & rescue services in the Dublin Metropolitan Area. A partnership board meets quarterly and oversees the development and implementation of the training programmes. During the reporting period, a new class of 53 participants commenced the Diploma programme while the previous year's cohort undertook their postgraduate internship.

Irish Hospice Foundation

RCSI has provided postgraduate education programmes in Bereavement and Loss in partnership with the Irish Hospice Foundation since 2004. The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) is a national charity that addresses dying, death and bereavement in Ireland. Its vision is an Ireland where people facing end of life or bereavement, and those who care for them, are provided with the care and support that they need. Founded by Mary Redmond in 1986, IHF began with the aim to extend availability of hospice services across the country, promote awareness of the hospice approach and develop research and education. In its early years, IHF was instrumental in raising funds for Our Lady's Hospice Dublin and in fundraising for the establishment of a second Dublin Hospice, which became St Francis Hospice in Raheny. Since then, IHF has grown to develop programmes in education, research and bereavement services. IHF works to bring hospice principles into acute hospitals and residential care settings, and to extend palliative care to non-malignant conditions. RCSI offers three programmes in collaboration with IHF, one Professional Certificate and two Masters degree programmes. These are governed through a Programme Board including RCSI and IHF stakeholders, and academic programme management is through the RCSI Institute of Leadership and the School of Postgraduate Studies. The Professional Certificate in Children & Loss (NFQ Level 9 Special Purpose Award) aims to equip professionals who work with children and adolescents with the skills necessary to understand and support them when grieving. The original MSc in Bereavement Studies programme was revised and revalidated in 2016-2017 to offer two parallel streams: the MSc in Loss & Bereavement and the MSc in Loss & Bereavement (Counselling). These programmes aim to impact on health, social and community systems and ultimately to enhance quality of life. They are rooted in contemporary scientific research on loss and bereavement, and are designed against a policy and professional regulation backdrop.

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 commercialization 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

RCSI launched 'RCSI Engage, a Strategy to Support Health and Education in our Local and National Communities, 2019-2023' during the reporting period. The vision of RCSI Engage is to enhance human health and education by building reciprocal partnerships between RCSI staff and students and our local and national communities. RCSI Engage builds upon existing initiatives including REACH RCSI, RCSI MyHealth and the RCSI Transition Year Mini-Medical School (MiniMed) programme. The strategy aims [1] to inspire and support learners at local and national level, and [2] to support and promote improved lifelong health and wellbeing (again at local and national level). In the educational domain, local initiatives include Educational Support, Career Exploration & Mentoring and STEMM programmes. National initiatives comprise 'Raising Aspiration Programmes' (pre-entry) including Transition Year Programmes, STEMM Programmes and College Experience Initiatives, and 'Widening Participation Programmes' (entry routes) including Hear & Dare Entry Routes, RCSI Access Scholarships, Academic Excellence Scholarships and the Uversity Higher Education Scholarship Scheme. In the domain of health, RCSI aims to harness its resources to promote improved lifelong health and wellbeing. Locally, this will focus on developing a Local Healthy Community Plan in consultation with key local community and internal partners to identify local health challenges, review current initiatives and adopt an inclusive, whole-community approach to developing a framework to promote health and wellbeing. Nationally, RCSI aims to provide trusted and accessible health and wellbeing information through initiatives such as the RCSI MyHealth Hub, the RCSI MyHealth Lecture Series and the RCSI MyHealth Expert Directory.

Integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals

RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences has a singular focus on the improvement of human health worldwide, through undergraduate and postgraduate training, medical research, industry partnerships and community outreach. As a result, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) resonate with the university's mission and vision. RCSI has made good progress towards realizing the UNSDGs as demonstrated in 'RCSI's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals', published during the previous reporting period. In April 2020, the publication of the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings 2020 placed RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences first in the world for 'Good Health and Well-Being' (UNSDG #3). Based upon data submitted for six of the seventeen UNSDGs, RCSI was placed in the overall rank of 101-200 out of more than 800 participating universities worldwide. In relation to UNSDG #8, 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', RCSI ranked 62nd out of 479 universities, representing the university's positive employment practices and its commitment to student experiential learning and work placements (including clinical and research electives) globally.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

RCSI, as a health sciences University and surgical Royal College, espouses the highest standards of professionalism among academic staff, 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.

The Registry Division of the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs Department (SARA), working with the Schools and Faculties, maintains a comprehensive suite of documents setting out RCSI policy concerning professionalism, code of conduct, behaviour in examinations, academic misconduct, research misconduct and plagiarism. These documents are reviewed annually, and amended as required. Students registering on undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes are required to sign the Student Agreement, indicating their agreement to adhere to all relevant policies and regulations. SARA is responsible for administering investigative processes into suspected instances of academic misconduct and, where appropriate, the ensuing disciplinary processes in conjunction with the relevant School or Faculty. SARA also acts as the repository for data on instances of academic misconduct and related disciplinary processes.

Students on undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes must complete a mandatory interactive course module on the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment; this provides essential information on the necessity to respect the work of others and on how to act with honesty and responsibility in preparing and submitting coursework, in particular an understanding of plagiarism and of how to avoid it. The module includes a comprehensive introduction to Turnitin, the similarity detection software used by RCSI to screen all coursework submitted by students.

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 each year as they renew their 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.

RCSI has been a member of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) established in late 2019 as an advisory group and as a community of practice to promote academic integrity within Irish higher education and to address academic misconduct. NAIN currently includes 74 members representing 30 HEIs (Universities, Institutes of Technology & Private Colleges), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) and QQI. Among the ongoing projects within the network are:
- Developing National Principles and a Lexicon for Academic Integrity
- Establishing the nature & incidence of academic misconduct occurring in Irish HEIs
- Developing Academic Integrity Guidelines for Irish HEIs [the current draft Interim Guidelines document accompanies this paper]
- Creating student-facing resources to facilitate the promotion of Academic Integrity
- Disseminating best practice guidance on the detection of Contract Cheating

Ms. Fiona Mitchell (SARA) and Prof. David Croke (QEO) represent RCSI in the Network. Prof. Croke is a member of the Steering Group of NAIN and Convenor of one of the Working Groups established by the Network.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives 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	Establishment of an Academic Integrity Working Group as a sub-committee of the RCSI Quality Committee	The Academic Integrity Working Group (AIWG) will be established as a formal structure to monitor and respond to initiatives launched by the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in the area of Academic Integrity. The AIWG will be a sub-committee of the Quality Committee, thus giving it reporting lines to both Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB) and Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB). The work of the group will include annual review of all policies & procedures relevant to Academic Integrity to ensure that they take cognizance of national policy & guidance, and of developments in the prevention and detection of academic misconduct.
2	Internal Quality Assurance Review of the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO)	The QEO will undergo its second Internal Quality Assurance Review (the first took place in 2015). The QEO falls within scope of the Cycle of Reviews of Professional Services Units within RCSI; this is essential to allow QEO to benefit from the review process and to allow the staff to experience both sides of the process. In order to ensure the probity of the process, the administration and facilitation of the review process will be managed by a separate administrative function within RCSI which will undertake the role normally played by the QEO in reviews.
3	Development of a web portal to communicate to students and staff how RCSI 'closes the feedback loop' in response to student feedback	The RCSI Student Engagement & Partnership (StEP) Agreement identifies closing the feedback loop as one of the priority areas of focus for student engagement. In October 2020 the RCSI Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) launched the RCSI Student Pulse Poll, a mechanism for gathering feedback on students' learning experience. This poll is repeated every month and generates a large amount of quantitative & qualitative data related to areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with student experience. The qualitative data, comprising students' free-text comments, is a particularly rich source of information. The QEO will work with the Students' Union

		to develop & administer a web-based platform to inform students and staff about issues of concern raised in the Poll and the University's responses and actions taken based on student feedback.
4	Planning and preparation for the CINNTE Institutional Review of RCSI (2022-2023)	RCSI will continue to plan & prepare for the CINNTE Institutional Review in 2022-2023. During the renewal period, this will involve finalising and publishing the strategy & time-line for self-evaluation, reconvening the Institutional Review Working Group (also a sub-committee of the Quality Committee) to manage the process and launching the internal communications strategy to promote awareness of and participation in the review process to all staff and students.

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
School of Physiotherapy	April 2021	2012
Human Resources Department	June 2021	2014

3.2.2   Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
2021-2022 Reporting Period		
Quality Enhancement Office	Sept. 2021	2015
Office of Research & Innovation	Nov. 2021	2015
Irish Institute of Pharmacy	Jan. 2022	N/A
School of Pharmacy & Biomolecular Sciences	Mar. 2022	2014
Institute of Leadership	May 2022	2012
2022-2023 Reporting Period		
Faculty of Dentistry	Jun. 2022	N/A
RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus	Sept. 2022	2014
Student Services	Nov. 2022	2012
School of Medicine	Jan. 2023	2016
Admissions Department	Mar. 2023	2016
Estates Department	May 2023	2016

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

4.1 IQA Response to Emergency Situations | the COVID-19 Pandemic

[i] Introduction

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) University of Medicine & Health Sciences began to monitor the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in late December 2019, alerted to the situation initially through its Department of International Health & Tropical Medicine headed by Prof. Sam McConkey. Planning for mitigation measures for Semester 2 of the 2019-2020 academic year commenced in January and accelerated in February-March 2020. The outbreak of COVID-19 in Bahrain and the measures implemented by the Kingdom of Bahrain in late February led to the closure of RCSI Bahrain and a transition to off-site working by students and staff. In response to the rapidly evolving public health guidance in Ireland, RCSI Dublin closed its campuses and transitioned to off-site working by staff and students on 12 March 2020. In parallel, restrictions introduced by national governments led to the closure of RCSI overseas campuses and programmes in the United Arab Emirates (RCSI Dubai) and Malaysia (Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine & RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus).

[ii] Approach to the design & implementation of mitigation measures for teaching & assessment

The Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences and its component Schools are responsible for all RCSI educational programmes leading to awards aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications. The COVID-19 mitigation measures implemented by the University for teaching & assessment in these programmes (both in Ireland and overseas) are in accordance with the guidance issued by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the relevant Postgraduate Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PRSBs) and cognate bodies in other jurisdictions:

- The over-arching principles guiding the development of alternative arrangements for teaching & assessment in the University are [a] the maintenance of the integrity, quality and standard of RCSI programmes, and [b] ensuring that no student or trainee is disadvantaged due to the prevailing circumstances and the University's mitigation measures (the 'no detriment' principle)
- The RCSI Quality Assurance Framework encompasses the structures and processes necessary to assure the quality of educational and training provision under the current exceptional circumstances, and to demonstrate this quality to our internal and external stakeholders
- Alternative teaching and assessment arrangements were developed and implemented following extensive consultation with students, academic & clinical staff and the relevant PRSBs
- The Schools worked closely with Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) to ensure that the design of alternative assessments has followed a Learning Outcomes-based approach with due regard to principles of proportionality and academic integrity
- Priority was given to 'Award-stage Assessments' over 'Assessments for In-programme Progression', with the intent of allowing all Final Year student cohorts to graduate on schedule
- Revised and supplementary Marks & Standards documents setting out the alternative arrangements were developed in consultation with programme External Examiners, and were approved by Academic Council and by Medicine & Health Sciences Board
- Regular (in some cases daily) communications were sent to students and staff by Programme Directors, Heads of Schools, the Dean / Chief Academic Officer, the Chief Executive Officer and the President of the University; these include postings in the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment and e-mail communications
- Academic and pastoral support for students continued to be provided by the Student Services Office, by the Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional & Academic Success (CoMPPAS) and by the network of Personal Tutors, with a particular focus on remote delivery of services in the prevailing circumstances. To facilitate this, a Census Survey of students on undergraduate taught, postgraduate taught & postgraduate research degree programmes was undertaken to re-confirm their contact details and to ensure that they were secure in their place of residence, which for many involved international travel, during the COVID-related 'lock-down' period. This survey attained a 100% response-rate.

- The Health Professions Education Centre (HPEC) plays a central role in disseminating best practice guidance and resources provided by national and international bodies. In parallel, HPEC worked with the Information Technology Department and the Staff Training & Development function (HR Department), in advance of the campus closure, to provide staff training sessions on the use of on-line delivery tools for teaching including Moodle, Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams, etc. This training continued following the transition to fully remote working. **End-of-Semester surveys were amended also to account for the changes in teaching & assessment, and to capture student feedback on these changes and the university's response to the pandemic.**

[ii-a] Alternative arrangements for teaching & learning
In preparation for the anticipated shift to off-site teaching and learning, extensive planning was undertaken through February and into March 2020 and the necessary measures were implemented:

- The University rolled out additional IT resources to facilitate the on-line delivery of teaching, including Blackboard Collaborate and Microsoft Teams. Considerable efforts were devoted to ensuring that all staff had access to the necessary training. Scheduled lectures were delivered 'live' via Blackboard Collaborate, or as pre-recorded Powerpoint presentations with voice-over via the Moodle VLE. Additional learning resources, virtual meeting rooms, small group tutorials and facilitated drop-in sessions with staff were made available on Moodle & Blackboard Collaborate also
- The provision of alternative arrangements for experiential learning in RCSI healthcare degree programmes was more complex. Some instances, e.g. hospital-based clinical rotations for more junior students, were deferred until later in the year given the difficulty in accessing hospital sites for routine training. Other instances, e.g. work-placed placements in community pharmacy, continued for the most part. It is noteworthy that RCSI Final Year Pharmacy students continued their placements in community pharmacies across Ireland, and made a significant contribution to front-line healthcare delivery. In fact, they were acknowledged as core members of the Pharmacy Team by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (the Pharmacy PRSB), and this position was endorsed by the Department of Health
- In the past decade the University has invested significantly in simulation-based training across the health professions at undergraduate and postgraduate level, most recently in the development of state-of-the art clinical simulation facilities at No. 26 York Street. Despite the 'lock-down', some on-site simulation training continued. For example, a training course on conducting emergency laparoscopic ('keyhole') surgical procedures while wearing personal respirators and full PPE equipment took place at No. 26 York Street in early April 2020.

The transition to off-site teaching and learning, coupled with the speed at which it necessarily occurred, was a significant shock to students no less than to staff. A key component of the work of academic and professional services staff was (and continues to be) the care of our students in terms of their personal wellbeing, their ongoing engagement with coursework and their preparedness for end-of-semester assessments.

[ii-b] Alternative arrangements for assessment
Alternative assessment methods were developed and adopted across the University's educational programmes taking into account the following principles:

- Adherence to a Learning Outcomes-based approach, ensuring that all expected learning outcomes are assessed by valid / reliable methods which are appropriate to the module content
- Proportionality in according priority to 'Award-stage Assessments' over 'Assessments for In-programme Progression', and either advancing or delaying some components of assessment as appropriate
- Ensuring that no student is disadvantaged by the alternative assessment arrangements put in place or by the circumstances prevailing at the time of assessment
- Ensuring confidence by appropriate consultation with, and dissemination of information to, all stakeholders (students, staff, external examiners, PRSBs, etc.)
- Providing all necessary supports to students undertaking alternative assessments, and to academic and professional support staff involved in their design, delivery and administration

- Ensuring the integrity of alternative assessments by ensuring due process for their approval by Academic Council and by Medicine & Health Sciences Board, by reaffirming the centrality of academic integrity in RCSI educational programmes and by implementing all necessary measures to discourage academic misconduct by students

As noted above, alternative arrangements for teaching and assessment were designed by the Schools following extensive consultation with academic & clinical staff, students, external examiners and PRSBs. Alternative assessment instruments were blueprinted to the relevant curricula to ensure that learning outcomes were assessed comprehensively. The alternative arrangements were described in detail in revised or supplementary Marks & Standards documents approved by the key governance bodies within the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences.

Alternative assessment methods were chosen based on their suitability to the module content being assessed, their psychometric properties and their feasibility given available resources and the prevailing circumstances. For example, many tests of knowledge (such as short-notes question papers) were replaced by on-line Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) examinations. Laboratory practical and case-based workshops were converted into online activities. Experiential learning (in clinical practice or research settings) was assessed through reflective ePortfolio entries, submitted project reports and preceptor evaluations. Difficulties arose in the assessment of clinical competencies by methods requiring large-scale examination settings and face-to-face interaction between students, patients and examiners, such as Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). Where possible, particularly for more junior students in the Medicine, Physician Associate, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy degree programmes, these assessments were rescheduled. Despite the current limitations, some clinical skills assessments were feasible through remote-working; for example, OSCEs focusing on consultation skills (history-taking) were delivered successfully for students in the MSc in Physician Associate Studies programme. In contrast, for more senior students in Pharmacy, the workplace-based assessment of clinical skills continued as usual through continuous evaluation by the preceptors in the community pharmacies where they were based.

Priority is being given to Award-stage Assessments to allow Final Year students to graduate on schedule and, where appropriate (& feasible), specific assessments have been brought forward or postponed. For example:
- The major clinical assessment for students in the Medical Degree programme (the 'Long Cases') are crucial terminal assessments for qualification. These were brought forward by some four weeks and were completed within the RCSI Hospitals Group in the first weeks of March. The decision to do this was made on the basis of extensive consultation with the Final Medical Year students, the vast majority of whom supported the decision
- The School of Postgraduate Studies implemented new supplementary regulations for the conduct of on-line *viva voce* examinations using Microsoft Teams for candidates submitting PhD or MD dissertations (NFQ Level 10). A number of such examinations were conducted successfully since mid-March 2019
- Clinical skills assessments for progression in Years 2 & 3 of the five-year Integrated Masters Degree in Pharmacy programme were cancelled. The OSCE format used for these assessments is impractical to implement under the circumstances, and sufficient assessment data will be amassed on these students in the later years of the programme to permit a valid determination of their attainment of learning outcomes and readiness for clinical practice to be made

Student support (both academic and pastoral) continues to be delivered primarily through on-line interactions, in particular support for students experiencing anxiety and/or difficulties in dealing with off-site teaching, learning and assessment. To permit additional time for preparation, the dates of assessments for in-programme progression were delayed by approximately three weeks across all programmes. In addition to providing the customary supplemental examinations for students who were unsuccessful at first-sitting, provision was made for holding 'super-supplemental' examinations to facilitate students experiencing significant difficulties.

The principle of Academic Integrity is emphasized in the University's policy documents concerning professionalism, student conduct and examinations. Due consideration was given to the prevention and

detection of academic misconduct in the design of alternative assessments. For example, on-line MCQ examinations were delivered on the ExamSoft and Speedwell web platforms with provision for randomization of question presentation between candidates and for on-line proctoring of all high-stakes degree-contributing assessments. In all assessments, students signed a revised Academic Integrity statement at the start of the examination, reminding them of the Code of Conduct commitment that they sign at the start of each academic year, and of the recently enacted Irish legislation in relation to examination fraud. The University continued to use Turnitin as its primary similarity-detection tool in those programmes (mostly taught postgraduate programmes) where submitted assignments make up part of the portfolio of assessments. These alternative examination arrangements enabled Final Year graduations in Summer 2020 as intended, on May 13th (medicine degrees) and June 18th (postgraduate degrees).

[iii] Mitigation measures for professional training & certification
RCSI is both a health-sciences University and a Surgical Royal College (Postgraduate Training Body). The Postgraduate Faculties of RCSI are responsible for programmes of postgraduate professional training and certification in Surgery and related clinical disciplines. The primary focus of the Faculties in the pandemic is to ensure continuity of training for all professional trainees working with Consultant Trainers in their hospital-based rotations, including the transition of trainees from Basic to Higher Training Schemes and the admission of new candidates to training. The Faculties continued to provide a wide range of resources to their trainees, including pre-recorded lectures and on-line tutorials via Panopto, Zoom, MS Teams, etc. Most Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offerings are suspended. The Faculties have cancelled all Professional Examinations (at Membership & Fellowship levels) in Ireland and overseas until Q3 of 2020 at the earliest.

4.2 Additional Case Studies

4.2.1 Establishment of the RCSI Centre for Positive Psychology & Health

RCSI established the Centre for Positive Psychology & Health in 2019 in response to the increasing prevalence of diseases associated with lifestyle, and the growing evidence for the role of psychological factors in optimizing health and wellbeing. The Centre's mission is *'to educate, nurture and research for the benefit of positive health and well-being'*, and its principal goal is to undertake and deploy evidence-based research (with associated training and education) to contribute to the flourishing of individuals and organisations. The work of the Centre draws on the emerging disciplines of positive psychology, positive organizational scholarship and lifestyle medicine. Led by Prof. Ciaran O'Boyle, the Centre has an academic staff complement of three and one administrative support staff. The remit of the Centre encompasses education, research, public engagement and corporate consultancy.

The first academic programme offered by the Centre, the Postgraduate Diploma in Positive Health, was validated by RCSI & NUI during 2019-2020 and will recruit its first intake of students in the 2020-2021 academic year. This course (30 ECTS; NFQ Level 9) is designed for healthcare professionals and other professional groups (including teachers, lawyers and managers) who need to develop an understanding of positive health and wellbeing. The Centre's academic staff are active in research in a number of areas including: the impact of chronic disease on the person (including psychological & social functioning, immune system and epigenetic change); promoting resilience and growth mindsets in students; promoting resilience to occupational stress & addressing the phenomenon of 'burnout'; and the therapeutic value of studio-based art practice in reducing feelings of alienation & disconnection and in supporting a 'sense of self'. Under its public engagement remit, the Centre provides evidence-based resources to enhance understanding of the critical role that behaviour plays in optimising health. Following the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, the Centre has published a range of resources for dealing with the stress imposed by the pandemic. In addition, the staff have contributed to the ongoing RCSI MyHealth Lecture Series and to publications and reports in the print, online and broadcast media.

4.2.2 Promotion of student representation on University committees and working groups

The concept of 'transformative learning' is central to the design of modern curricula in healthcare education. This is essentially a focus on nurturing and developing the leadership attributes of students to produce graduates who function as 'enlightened change agents in society'. In practice, this entails promoting and nurturing a culture of student engagement and partnership which enables students to further develop their collaborative and leadership skills. The RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 places student partnership as a core strategic enabler in striving to transform healthcare education, research and service for the benefit of human health. Led by Professor Celine Marmion (Deputy Dean for Student Engagement), the strategic initiatives implemented to-date have included the establishment of a new Institution-wide Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) Committee, the commissioning of research to identify best practices of student engagement in other national and international institutions, and participation in the *i-graduate* international student barometer survey to benchmark the decision-making, expectations, perceptions and intentions of our students from application to graduation against those of students in other universities. The first RCSI Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) agreement, developed in collaboration with the Undergraduate & Postgraduate Student's Unions, was approved and launched in September 2019.

The 2019/2020 Student Engagement and Partnership Agreement outlines a number of partnership projects focused on Engagement in Institutional Management, Engagement in Teaching and Assessment, Engagement in the Academic Research Community, and Engagement in Local Community and Social Environments. One of the priority initiatives under the heading of 'Engagement in Institutional Management' was to review the Terms of Reference for RCSI committees and working groups [a] to shed light on current practice and [b] to identify mechanisms to ensure appropriate student representation on college committees thereby promote partnership across the university as a whole. A working group, led by Tim Vaughan-Ogunlusi [Education Officer, Undergraduate Students' Union], was formed by the StEP Committee to pursue this initiative. The group gathered information through review of committee documents, e-mail questionnaires and one-on-one interviews with staff and students during the 2019-2020 academic year. The report of the working group, presented to Academic Council in June 2020, identified a total of 59 committees (38 undergraduate & 21 postgraduate) and presented details of student representation and of the mechanisms by which student representatives are recruited. A number of key issues were identified including consistency and transparency of mechanisms to recruit student representatives for committees, and the retention of 'institutional memory' year on year in the context of rotation of student representatives. The report made a series of recommendations to ensure that the student voice is more effectively heard:
  i.   Developing a centralized portal that publicizes active committees and announces open committee positions for students
  ii. Publishing clear role descriptions for student committee members
  iii. Creating a pool of student applicants interested in participating in university committees
  iv. Implementing merit-based review as part of the selection process for applicants
The StEP Committee will develop plans to implement these recommendations during the 2020-2021 academic year.

In parallel with this work on student representation on committees, the StEP Committee launched the RCSI Student Partnership Champion Award to recognise students who have made outstanding contributions to the overall student experience by collaborating with staff and sharing their expertise and perspectives on key RCSI committees and projects.

4.2.3 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: addressing the gender imbalance in surgical training

RCSI has identified Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) as one of the three foundational elements of the university's Strategic Plan 2018-2022, together with Quality and Reputation. Given that the work of RCSI is driven by an unrelenting focus on quality and reputation, and that our relationships are based firmly upon equality, diversity & inclusion, these elements are also the measure of success in implementing the Strategic Plan. The RCSI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2018-2022 sets out a road map for EDI and serves as a proactive and collaborative framework for advancing the EDI agenda at RCSI. It recognizes that EDI must

be embedded across all functions of the university so that each individual can make the most of their lives and talents. The Strategy is determined by the RCSI community of students and staff, and is derived from a comprehensive needs assessment which took place in 2017/18 to identify key equality, diversity and inclusion issues. It identifies structures and initiatives needed to support EDI, identifies areas of inequality and prioritises areas for action, so that all members of the RCSI community have an equal opportunity to flourish. The initiatives undertaken by RCSI in the area of EDI were recognized in 2018 by an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award. In the 2019-2020 period, further recognition has come through an Athena SWAN Departmental Bronze Award to the Department of Anatomy & Regenerative Medicine, and through recognition as an 'age-friendly university' and membership of the Age-Friendly University Global Network.

Being both a university and a postgraduate training body in surgery and related specialties, RCSI offers education and training at all career levels (i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate & professional) in medicine, surgery and related disciplines. RCSI has long implemented transparent selection processes for the admission of junior doctors into surgical training. Yet, while more than 50% of medical graduates are female, they represent only one third of surgical trainees and the proportion of consultant surgeon posts in Ireland held by women remains low. For surgeons in practice, RCSI aims to provide a lifelong professional 'home' for our Fellows & Members, irrespective of gender, through the provision of meaningful professional and collegiate support. RCSI convened a Gender Diversity Short Life Working Group to investigate the underlying causes of this gender imbalance and to provide a robust evidence base for the establishment of gender diversity initiatives for the profession of surgery. Their report, 'Progress: Promoting Gender Equality in Surgery', was published in 2017 and made a series of recommendations for initiatives in four domains: (i) Informing and encouraging female medical students considering a career in surgery; (ii) Building a culture that supports female surgical trainees; (iii) Considering the needs of trainees who are parents and (iv) Ensuring that RCSI's professional development programmes for practising surgeons support and enable a diverse profession.

One of the key recommendations of the report was that RCSI would develop a specific offering for female surgeons within the first five years following completion of all phases of surgical training; that is, achieving the status of Fellow of the College (FRCSI) and holding a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST). During 2019-2020, RCSI launched the Progress Women in Surgery Fellowship, jointly funded with Johnson & Johnson. This includes a substantial bursary awarded by RCSI to promote female participation in surgical training at an international centre of excellence outside Ireland for a period of one year. In addition to promoting career development for female surgeons, it is intended that this Fellowship will contribute to the advancement of surgical science and practice in Ireland through the return of the Fellows to surgical practice in Ireland.

Glossary

Acronym	Definition
AC	Academic Council
AQC	Awards & Qualifications Committee
CAA	Commission for Academic Accreditation (United Arab Emirates)
FMHS	Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IHEQN	Irish Higher Education Quality Network
IMC	Irish Medical Council
IRWG	Institutional Review Working Group
IUQB	Irish Universities Quality Board
MHSB	Medicine & Health Sciences Board
MMC	Malaysian Medical Council (Statutory Accreditation Body)
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications (Ireland)
NMBI	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (Statutory Accreditation Body)
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NUI	National University of Ireland
PGSU	Postgraduate Students' Union
RUMC	RCSI – UCD Malaysia Campus (Penang, Malaysia)
PSI	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Statutory Accreditation Body)
PU	Perdana University (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
QC	Quality Committee
QEO	Quality Enhancement Office
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QQI	Quality & Qualifications Ireland
SARA	Student Academic & Regulatory Affairs (Registry)
SLG	Senior Leaders Group
SMT	RCSI Senior Management Team
SPFB	Surgery & Postgraduate Faculties Board
SU	Students' Union
UCD	University College Dublin