

# Creating the New RCSI Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

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## Introduction

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

## Initiative

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

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

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

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

A substantial amount of very helpful feedback and suggestions was received. Following a complex process of reviewing and collating this feedback, a number of key changes and additions were implemented. These included enhanced inclusivity of postgraduate programmes, a commitment to UDL (universal design for learning), the introduction of a ninth LTA principle on Interprofessional Learning (IPL), content recognising RCSI's role as an educator in advancing the UN SDGs and an acknowledgment that the LTA strategy is a working document that will evolve over time.

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



**Figure 1 - Front page of the 2023-2027 RCSI Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy**

## Outcomes

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

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

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

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