

1. Student Engagement at RCSI

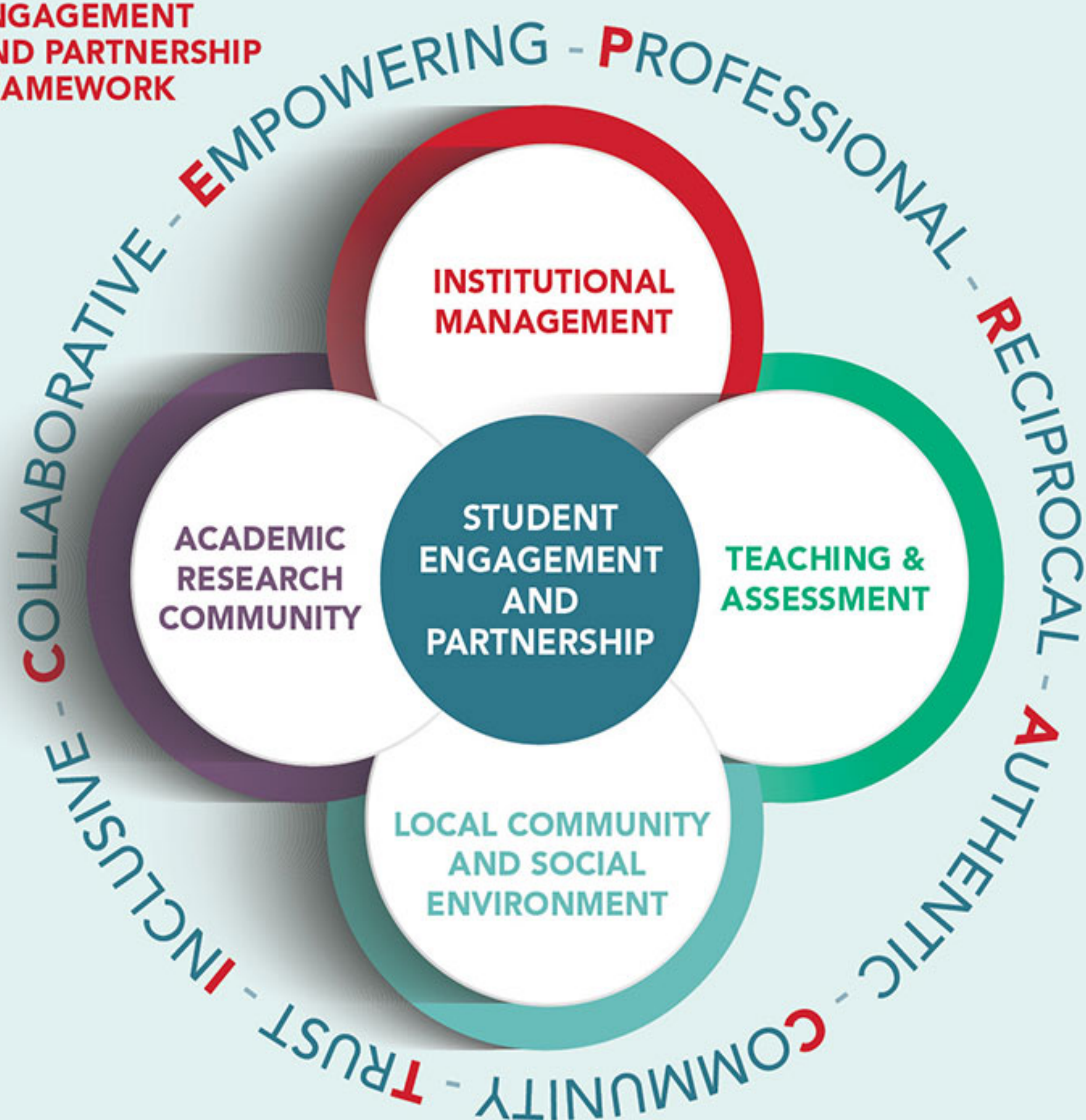
Governance and Management of Quality

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Introduction

As medical educators, RCSI believes that fostering a culture of student engagement and partnership empowers students to develop as enlightened healthcare professionals' with the capacity to influence and transform human health in their professions. Abiding by this belief, the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 incorporated student partnership as a key enabler. A Deputy Dean for Student Engagement was appointed in 2018. This was followed by the establishment of the Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) Committee and ultimately, the launch of a formal RCSI StEP programme in 2020.

RCSI STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK



Initiative

Since 2020, key steps undertaken to promote and embed a universal culture of student engagement and partnership have included:

- The development of an RCSI definition of student partnership.
- The establishment of an RCSI StEP framework.
- The launch of annual RCSI StEP Agreements; formal agreements between RCSI and the SU and PGSU.
- Financial support, approved by the RCSI SMT, to support the annual StEP funding programme.
- Two annual StEP-project funding calls to promote collaboration and partnerships between staff (both academic and professional) and students (undergraduate and postgraduate).
- Cross-institutional buy-in from students and staff with students and staff partnering on 51 StEP projects funded since 2020 (21 related to teaching and assessment; 11 related to institutional management; 12 related to the academic research community; 7 related to the local community and social environment).
- Annual StEP Funding Programme Induction and Closing Ceremonies in which students and staff present the rationale, outputs and impacts of their StEP-funded projects as well as receiving RCSI Student Partnership Champion Award Certificates and digital badges.
- The launch of the RCSI Student Partnership Champion Award to recognise and value the expert contributions from staff and students who collaborate on projects, driving real and positive changes across RCSI. Since 2020, 131 students and 78 staff have received these awards.

Outcome

Representative StEP programme outputs have included the development of:

A bespoke RCSI Student Leadership Development Programme empowering students in leadership roles with 228 student leaders benefiting to date.

A university-wide policy to openly recruit students onto committees facilitating an inclusive approach to student representation on all RCSI's key decision-making bodies.

Multiple teaching and learning resources including a digitally enhanced learning resource "The Art of Auscultation." The staff and student members who co-developed this resource won the 2021 RCSI Education Innovation Award; of the 9 innovations short-listed in 2021, 6 resulted from StEP-initiatives.

An understanding of what "Student Success" means in the context of RCSI following student and staff feedback. This is in line with a priority set by The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning for HEIs in Ireland.

RCSI StEP programme outputs have also resulted in presentations at national and international seminars, publications, and independent StEP-related research funding. For example, the Deputy Dean for Student Engagement delivered an invited oral presentation during the 4th QQI Blended Learning Seminar Series (May 2021) and co-presented a lightning talk with a medical student during the QQI 10th anniversary conference. Students and staff have also received national Irish Network of Healthcare Educators (INHED) funding to progress the outputs of StEP project initiatives.

An INHED-funded research study to evaluate the impact of RCSI StEP programme has provided strong quantitative and qualitative evidence from students (n=21) and staff (n=26) who completed StEP projects in 2020-2021 that the programme is serving as an important vehicle to promote and embed a universal culture of student engagement and partnership across RCSI. For example, feedback suggests that "from an institutional perspective, this programme has created a codified mechanism for RCSI to build and maintain beneficial partnership programs ... In addition, the projects undergone in the programme have done wonders to benefit the institution through internal quality improvement initiatives to funded research projects that have added to the literature." Feedback also provides evidence that the StEP programme facilitates "better awareness of the issues that matter to students. It also makes a difference when student ideas are implemented both to the institution and to the wider student body creating a better sense of belonging and a culture of change and improvement in the institution." The plan is to publish the findings from this study in 2023.

As external validation of university-wide student engagement and partnership, the School of Medicine in RCSI was presented with the highly prestigious and internationally recognised ASPIRE-To-Excellence Award for Student Engagement 2022. These international awards recognise excellence in medical education. RCSI was also awarded the Sunday Times University of the Year for Student Engagement 2022



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