

17. Student Success

Student Engagement and Partnership

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Introduction

Student success is currently one of the key priorities in the national higher education sector with many higher education institutions developing strategies and initiatives in this area. RCSI offers a range of academic and professional support systems to promote student success, however at times they are not being communicated in a manner that directly links them with student success. To address this, RCSI undertook a Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) project to develop a definition of student success in the unique context of RCSI and build a framework to appropriately address students' needs in this area.

Initiative

A student was recruited to be part of a multidisciplinary project team, which also included academic and professional staff members, with an aim to develop RCSI's definition of student success and benchmark it against the national definition by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Another objective was to review current best practices in the Irish and international Higher Education sector for supporting student success, such as existing student success strategies, action plans, initiatives and support systems.

Student and staff feedback collected through anonymous and voluntary surveys was crucial to developing a better understanding of staff and students' perspectives. Oversight of data collection was provided by the Quality Enhancement Office. Students were asked to explain what student success means to them, describe key enablers and barriers to succeed and how RCSI can better support student success. Staff could comment on how they could contribute to student success as well as identify key enablers and barriers.

Survey data was analysed collaboratively within the team and the student member provided valuable insights into the meaning of the results. While student success can have many flavours, some common themes were identified and an evidence-base was built to guide further action. It was confirmed that support system from peers, family, staff and the institution play a central role in student success. Findings from the survey guided the team to develop a draft definition of student success. A series of consultations have been undertaken with the Senior Management Team, Heads of Schools and heads of selected support departments who provided valuable input and shaped the final definition which is shown below.

What student success at RCSI means

At RCSI, student success is defined as **empowering each student to fulfill their unique purpose** personally, academically, and as future health science professionals.

In our diverse student community, student success is cultivated in an inclusive, collaborative and positive learning and social environment, driving a journey of self-discovery, reflection, as well as **personal and professional growth**.

Student success is further enhanced through **meaningful partnerships and shared responsibilities**, ultimately enabling each individual to prosper and achieve their full potential at RCSI and beyond.



Outcomes

Following the analysis of survey data and further reflection, the team concluded that, to maximise impact, the projects that support student success are to be embedded in the existing structures of the University. As such, student success is now firmly embedded within RCSI's Annual Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) Agreements, formal agreements between RCSI and the SU and PGSU teams.

Inclusion in these Agreements ensures that student success support is formally acknowledged and visible to senior decision-makers and students alike. This integration allows for a better synergy between the existing student support initiatives and student success.

As part of the StEP Agreement, student success has also been included as one of the priority areas for student-staff partnership projects for the academic year 2022-23. This way students and staff can submit proposals for funded projects to foster student success. Students and staff will be afforded the opportunity to work in partnership on these projects during the 2022-23 academic year. To better highlight the importance of student success the student member also worked with the Design department of RCSI to develop a visual identity (logo) for student success. The logo, along with a summary of the project, is now published on the RCSI website. Overall, the student success initiative paved the way to create tools for students and staff to directly impact and support student success.