



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

REVIEW

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND (RCSI)

APRIL 2014



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A&QC	Awards and Qualifications Committee	NAQQAET	National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training, Bahrain
AC	Academic Council	NARIC	National Academic Recognition and Information Centres
AWG	Assessment Working Group	NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
CAA	Commission for Academic Accreditation, United Arab Emirates	NPIP	National Pharmacy Internship Programme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
COSECSA	College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa	NUI	National University of Ireland
COWG	Curriculum Outcomes Working Group	NUIM	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	PDP	Professional Development Planning
DCU	Dublin City University	PEoT	Peer Evaluation of Teaching
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area	PI	Principal Investigator
EWG	Evaluation Working Group	PMC	Penang Medical College
FP7	Seventh EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development	PRG	Peer Review Group
HEA	Higher Education Authority	PSI	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions	PU	Perdana University
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council	QA/QI	Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement
HPEC	Health Professions Education Centre	QC	Quality Committee
HR	Human Resources	QEO	Quality and Enhancement Office
IHEQN	Irish Higher Education Quality Network	QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
IIP	Irish Institute of Pharmacy	QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
IPE	Inter-Professional Education	RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
IRWG	Institutional Review Working Group	REACH	Recreation Education and Community Health
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report	SAR	Self-Assessment Report
IUA	Irish Universities Association	SLG	Senior Leaders Group
IUQB	Irish Universities Quality Board	SMT	Senior Management Team
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	SPFB	Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board
LLP	Lifelong Learning Program	SSO	Student Services Office
MCI	Medical Council of Ireland	TOR	Terms of Reference
MHSB	Medicine and Health Sciences Board	UAE	United Arab Emirates
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Authority	UCD	University College Dublin
		VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

Foreword

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) came into effect on 5th November 2012 and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established on 6th November 2012 as a new integrated agency replacing FETAC, HETAC, NQAI and incorporating the functions of IUQB.

The 2010 Review by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) in relation to the commencement of its degree-awarding powers, confirmed the degree-awarding powers and recommended, inter alia, that an external review of RCSI by the national quality assurance body (established in the 2012 legislation) should take place no later than two years from the time of the granting of awarding powers to the institution, and should, as part of its remit, establish the level of implementation of the recommendations as set out in the 2010 Review.

In May 2012, it was agreed that the NQAI executive should advance the preparations for the review of RCSI and agree timelines for the review. Following the establishment of QQI in November 2012 and the concomitant dissolution of the NQAI, preparations for the Institutional Review of RCSI were further advanced by QQI.

The Review Team was appointed in May 2013. RCSI completed an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report in August 2013. A planning visit by the Review Team took place at the end of August. The main review visit took place in October 2013. This is the report of the findings of the Review Team in relation to the objectives for the review as set out in the Terms of Reference.

Disclaimer

The QQI Institutional Review process is designed to address only those objectives described in the Terms of Reference (included in Appendix 1).

The Review Team points out that it cannot make any findings regarding:

1. *The financial standing and commercial viability of the Institution reviewed.*
2. *The Institution's compliance with its general statutory obligations.*

or

3. *The general fitness of the Institution's systems and arrangements for the governance and management of financial matters.*
4. *Other matters not covered by the objectives set out in the Terms of Reference.*

The Review Team's report contains no assurances, warranties or representations, express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference. While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Review Team's report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss, damage or consequence (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Review Team's report.

The Review Team

The RCSI review was conducted by the following team of six reviewers selected by QQI in 2013. The Review Team was trained by QQI on 29 August 2013. The Chair and Co-ordinating Reviewer undertook a Planning Visit to RCSI on 30 August. The Main Review Visit was conducted by the full Team between 21 and 25 October 2013. QQI approved the release of the RCSI reports for publication on 11 April 2014.

Professor Simon van Heyningen, Honorary Fellow and Emeritus Professor, University of Edinburgh, Scotland (Chair)

- Vice Principal at the University of Edinburgh, 2003-2009
- Director of Quality Enhancement at the University of Edinburgh 1998-2009
- Vice Provost for Teaching in the Faculty Group of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine from 1998-2002
- QAA Reviewer
- Auditor for the Council for HE in South Africa, Quality Assurance Authority in Bahrain, and European Universities Association
- Direct knowledge and experience of HE quality in 10 countries

Dr Christiane Gaehtgens, Consultant specialising in governance and quality assurance for universities and research institutes, Germany

- Former Secretary General of the German Rectors' Conference
- Former Secretary General of the Research Council for Lower Saxony
- Director of Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) - German Academic Exchange Service, London and Head of the DAAD North America programmes
- Senior official in the German accreditation and quality assurance authority (HKO) responsible for reviews of German universities 2003-2008
- Senior benchmarking expert for the European Centre for Strategic management in Universities, Brussels
- Appointed as international expert to the Croatian Universities Quality Panel (AZVO)
- Direct knowledge and experience of HE quality in six countries and recently participated in/chaired the Institutional Review of Zagreb and Zadar Universities

Professor James J Ward, Professor Emeritus, National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)

- Consultant on the BioInnovate programme at Cairnes School of Business and Economics, NUIG
- Formerly NUIG Registrar and Deputy President for three years and a Professor of Marketing for 30 years in NUIG
- Former Vice President for Physical Resources, including responsibility for Quality Assurance and Quality Management function in NUIG for eight years
- External examiner in 6 national and international universities
- Board member of several regional businesses
- Member of Governing Authority of NUIG for 20 years

Mr. Leon Cremonini, Research Associate at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at University of Twente (UT), The Netherlands, working towards a PhD through publications

- Research at CHEPS concentrates on quality assessment at the institutional and programme level and on accreditation. Designed and conducted modules on the topic at UT and abroad
- Graduated in International Political Science from the University of Bologna, Italy, in 2000
- Post-graduate diploma from Profingest School of Business, in Bologna - focusing on European policies and research
- Worked at the RAND Corporation, first in the Netherlands, then at the headquarters in Santa Monica, California from 2001-2005

Professor Charles F.A. Bryce, Professor Emeritus at Edinburgh Napier University (former Head of School of Life Sciences and Dean of Science)

- Direct knowledge and experience of International Quality Audit and Assessment in higher education
- Involved in formal Quality Audit and Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) reviews in UK and overseas
- Invited by British Council to introduce formal system of Quality Audit and Assessment Reviews (QAAR) for Medical Schools in Bangladesh
- Developed the core curriculum in biochemistry for the medical universities in India (UGC India)
- Chair of the Accreditation of forensic science programmes in the UK and Europe for the Forensic Science Society
- Appointed International Expert for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Awarded a Tempus grant with the University of Pristina, Kosovo, for a project entitled "Kosovo Interdisciplinary Knowledge Triangle Centre – PhD-Based Education, Research and Training for Medical and Natural Sciences" (2009)

Mr Tony Platt, Assistant Director, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK (P/T) and Assistant Registrar, University of Essex, (P/T) UK (Co-ordinating Reviewer)

- Responsible for the development of the new QAA Institutional Review process for Wales
- Secretary/Co-ordinator for QAA UK-based reviews since 1996, two QAA Overseas Audits and reviews in Ireland and in Lithuania
- At the University of Essex, was responsible for the management of administrative service reviews, validations and, until 1999, responsible for the whole of 'Registry' and faculty management functions

Section 1: Introduction and Context

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

- 1.1 The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), established in 1784 and granted a royal charter in 1844, is the second oldest third-level academic institution in Ireland. It is both a health sciences Higher Education Institution with Schools of Leadership, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Postgraduate Studies, and a Postgraduate Training Body in Surgery and related specialties. The College is unique in having this double role. It is one of four Royal Colleges of Surgeons in Great Britain and Ireland. RCSI established a School of Medicine in 1886. RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. In the decade from 1996 to 2006, RCSI underwent significant expansion through the establishment of additional Schools and Institutes on the Dublin campus, and of three international campuses (Penang Medical College, RCSI-Bahrain and RCSI-Dubai) as well as delivery of the RCSI medicine curriculum at Perdana University (PU). In 2011, RCSI entered into a licensing agreement with Perdana University (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) to establish the PU-RCSI School of Medicine.
- 1.2 RCSI is an independent, not-for-profit health sciences institution with charitable status in the Republic of Ireland. The institution operates a primarily self-funding model, with State funding accounting for less than 20% of total income. The model is based on the education of a substantial cohort of international students alongside Irish/EU students.
- 1.3 RCSI currently is the largest medical school in Ireland and awards medical degrees in Ireland, Bahrain and Malaysia. The RCSI School of Medicine is one of six medical schools in Ireland - the others are located in Cork, Dublin (Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin), Galway and Limerick. RCSI provides undergraduate degree programmes in Pharmacy and Physiotherapy in Ireland, undergraduate Nursing degree programmes in Bahrain and Masters (both taught and by research) and doctoral programmes variously in Ireland, Bahrain, Dubai and Malaysia.
- 1.4 Following a Review by the Higher Education Authority and National Qualifications Authority of Ireland of RCSI in relation to the commencement of its degree-awarding powers ('the 2010 Review'), RCSI was granted independent degree-awarding powers in 2010.
- 1.5 In 2012, RCSI launched the '3U Partnership' in conjunction with Dublin City University (DCU) and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM). The 3U Partnership provides a framework that assists in forging new solutions across disciplines including medicine, science, engineering, business, arts, humanities and social sciences and developing a range of joint degree programmes. The strategic alliance aims to address major research questions by working together.
- 1.6 Arising from its dual role, RCSI offers education and training at all career levels (i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate and professional) in medicine, surgery and related disciplines. The focus of this review is RCSI's role as a higher education institution with degree-awarding powers and as a postgraduate training body.

Introduction and Context

1.7 Objectives of this review include:

- the consideration of strategic planning, governance and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement in the context of RCSI's role as an independent degree-awarding institution and the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures;
- the operation of internal quality assurance procedures and reviews that are clear and transparent to all its stakeholders, and which provide for the continuing evaluation of all academic, research and service departments, national and transnational, and their activities, as outlined in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (European Standards and Guidelines [ESG]);
- the evaluation of the extent to which RCSI planning, structure and systems support its responsibilities as an awarding body with qualifications recognised by the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The Terms of Reference for this review, including the objectives and criteria, are available in Appendix 1.

1.8 Senior staff provided evidence that they were confident that, overall, staff were engaged with the processes for strategic planning and the management of change, especially since 2010. Formal discussion and ratification takes place at Academic Council. The Review Team heard that the Senior Leaders Group facilitates more in-depth discussion around issues of strategic importance and helps to overcome compartmentalisation. Open agenda question-and-answer coffee mornings are held on a regular basis and these are well-attended. Heads of Schools confirmed the close interaction between them and evidence was provided to demonstrate interactions in faculty governance and input to strategic planning.

Governance

1.9 Under the terms of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003 and earlier Royal Charters, the sole governing body of RCSI (the Council) consists of 21 elected Fellows of the College. The Council elects a President and Vice-President from among its number, both of whom serve two-year terms of office. Arising from strategic reviews carried out in 2003 and 2005, a process to examine internal governance structures had been underway for several years prior to the 2010 Review. 'Lay representatives' were appointed to Council and its Standing Committees and a Governance Committee of Council was established.

1.10 Council then established two new Boards to oversee the main educational, training and research activities of RCSI – the Medicine and Health Sciences Board (MHSB) and the Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB) – and delegated its overall authority to them, except for a number of reserved matters. In the new structure, MHSB and SPFB are the governing bodies for degree and professional awards respectively. The former 'Faculty Board' has been reconstituted as Academic Council (AC) reporting to MHSB. The Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Postgraduate Studies and the Institute of Leadership report through AC to MHSB. The Postgraduate Faculties (Dentistry, Nursing and Midwifery, Radiology, Sports and Exercise Medicine and the Committee for Surgical Affairs) are brought together under SPFB, although the Review Team learned from

- discussions with Heads of Postgraduate Faculties that the faculties tended to operate as relatively autonomous units (paragraph 1.16).
- 1.11 At the time of this review, in October 2013, the Council had agreed to the establishment of a College Board to “provide oversight and constructive challenge to management for all non-surgical matters in RCSI”. Whilst the Council would remain responsible for overall governance and its members would remain as trustees responsible to Fellows and Members, further non-executive members to sit on the Board would be required to provide expertise in education, research, business, finance and property.
- 1.12 The Review Team agreed that the formation of a College Board was a step in the right direction, although it adds to the complexity of the current arrangements. The Review Team encourages the College to proceed with its proposals to further reform Council, and to develop as simple a structure as possible which avoids duplication and facilitates greater transparency. There should be a much clearer separation between the Surgical College functions and the ‘Medical School’. The RCSI Council itself should retain a trustee function for the medical school whilst continuing to act as “a voice for Irish surgeons”.
- 1.13 The Review Team met the CEO and members of the Council and formed the opinion that, although considerable progress had been made, the governing structure remained over-complicated and not suited to the College’s wide remit. It should be reviewed and revised to ensure clarity of role and purpose. Restructuring of the Council would require an Act of the Oireachtas and the Review Team noted the need to proceed with reasonable caution before bringing fully-developed proposals forward.
- 1.14 The Review Team recommends that RCSI proceeds with its proposals to reform and simplify the structure of its Council and precedes this with a process of briefing politicians, senior civil servants and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) about its intentions and the requirements for change**
- 1.15 The Review Team recommends that clearer separation be established between the governance of RCSI’s Surgical College functions and that of its health professions education activities, whilst retaining RCSI’s trustee function for the whole institution through its Council**
- 1.16 As noted above, the Review Team had observed that the individual postgraduate faculties have more autonomy relative to SPFB. The reasons for this varied between faculties. In discussions with the Heads of the Postgraduate Faculties, it was clear that, as a primarily training body at postgraduate level, the faculties have a strong quality culture deriving in part from their relationships with their professional bodies and their regulatory structures. The faculty board was described as having limited authority, being more of a structure to facilitate communication across what are independent faculties. RCSI’s Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) involvement with the postgraduate faculties is primarily, but not exclusively, concerned with the scheduling of reviews. Whilst there is clearly a good relationship between the faculties and between them and QEO, the Review Team felt that both RCSI overall and the individual faculties might benefit from a closer relationship and the exchange of information on curriculum design and good practice.

Introduction and Context

- 1.17 The Review Team recommends that the role of the Surgical and Postgraduate Faculties Board and the relationship of the postgraduate faculties to the Board be reviewed to facilitate closer integration of processes and procedures in quality assurance, curriculum design and the dissemination of good practice**

Organisational Structure

- 1.18 RCSI's headquarters are in Ireland with a network of international campuses located in the Gulf and Malaysia. The Dublin campus accommodates the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and its component Schools and Institutes. It also accommodates the Postgraduate Faculties. The Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIP), which is under contract to the statutory regulatory body for Pharmacy, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI), is currently being established at RCSI.
- 1.19 A number of hospitals in Ireland are affiliated to RCSI and these provide opportunities for clinical training, as well as subsequent employment possibilities in many cases. Beaumont Hospital Campus and Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown are located in Dublin, together with a total of five paediatric and maternity hospitals, and other hospitals are located within the North Eastern Regional Cluster in Cavan, Drogheda, Dundalk, Monaghan and Mullingar, and in the rest of Ireland in Kilkenny, Waterford and Galway.
- 1.20 RCSI has three international campuses: Bahrain; Dubai; and Penang, Malaysia. At Bahrain (established in 2004), a branch campus of RCSI is now located adjacent to the King Hamad University Hospital. RCSI-Bahrain delivers programmes in medicine, nursing and healthcare management. Whilst RCSI-Bahrain is categorised by the College as non-collaborative transnational provision, it is also licensed as an independent university and designated awarding body in the Kingdom of Bahrain and subject to Bahraini legislation and quality assurance processes. RCSI-Dubai (established in 2005), located in Dubai Healthcare City, offers postgraduate education, training and consultancy in leadership, management and patient safety and quality. RCSI-Dubai is also categorised by RCSI as non-collaborative transnational provision.
- 1.21 The provision at the two locations in Malaysia is categorised as collaborative transnational provision. Penang Medical College (PMC) was established by RCSI and University College Dublin (UCD) in 1996 and students spend their pre-clinical years in either RCSI or UCD in Dublin before returning to Penang to complete their clinical studies. The Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine is based at Perdana University and has been established as part of a much larger project, the Kuala Lumpur Academic Medical Centre.

Management Structure

- 1.22 RCSI is managed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), supported by a seven-person Senior Management Team comprising the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Director of Corporate Strategy, the Director of Finance, the Director of Human Resources, the Managing Director of the Department of Surgical Affairs, the Director of Research and the Acting President of RCSI-Bahrain. The Heads of all schools within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences report to the Dean.

- 1.23 The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) described the management structure for the overseas campuses. The Review Team noted that, in 2010, a Director of Corporate Strategy (paragraph 3.5) was appointed, and established 'RCSI Enterprises' as a unit to support the Senior Management Team in identifying and evaluating potential new international opportunities. RCSI Enterprises acts effectively as the 'gatekeeper' for new overseas ventures. The services provided by RCSI Enterprises include:
- developing appropriate international strategies and business models,
 - identifying suitable markets, potential partners and operational models,
 - evaluating opportunities,
 - negotiation and management of new projects to implementation.
- 1.24 The role of the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) (paragraph 3.7) is described as being "to support the implementation of the RCSI's Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) strategy by co-ordinating all relevant activities and by collecting the data needed to allow the Quality Committee to quality assure all aspects of programme delivery". The QEO is staffed by a Director, Associate Director and an Executive and it reports directly to the CEO as Chair of the Quality Committee, in itself an indication of the priority afforded to quality assurance and improvement in the overall management of RCSI. In addition to quality assurance within RCSI, which includes assistance in the preparation for accreditation visits by professional regulatory authorities, the QEO assists colleagues in the overseas campuses in the preparation for, and response to, site visits by the local professional regulatory and quality assurance authorities.
- 1.25 During meetings with the President, the CEO, members of Council and members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Review Team was provided with clear evidence of the strong leadership, in particular of the CEO as well as members of SMT and officers of the QEO, not only in managing the institution but also in addressing the challenges which face the College including programme management as well as managing the cultural and political challenges across the campus network.
- 1.26 The Institutional Self-Assessment Report submitted to the External Review Panel for the 2010 Review described the significant level of quality assurance/quality improvement (QA/QI) activities ongoing within RCSI and presented plans for the creation of structures to provide central co-ordination and communication functions for these activities. While recognising the existing quality culture within RCSI, the 2010 Panel had emphasised the importance of a formal QA/QI structure and urged RCSI to implement the planned measures.
- 1.27 The 2010 Review Report acknowledged this strong quality culture which already existed within RCSI and the Review Team was able to confirm this and in particular the strong leadership to facilitate the significant steps already made to strengthen the formal quality assurance/quality improvement structures. Staff across the institution paid tribute to the strength of leadership.
- 1.28 The Review Team commends the leadership and foresight of RCSI in promoting and further strengthening the quality culture and processes throughout the College**

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1.29 The 2010 Review Report recommended that RCSI should consider changing the title of CEO/Registrar 'to a title more in keeping with comparable positions in other Irish HEIs'. In the short-term the term 'Registrar' has been removed from the title. The Review Team, in considering the responsibilities of the CEO and the likely development of the governance arrangements, suggests that the title 'Rector' - a term widely used in European universities - would be appropriate.

1.30 The Review Team recommends consideration of the title 'Rector' for the CEO

1.31 The 2010 Review Report made a series of recommendations including the operation and management of RCSI, its education and training programmes, research activities, participation in the Bologna process and the implementation of related national policies. The College's response to those recommendations is considered in detail in Section 3 of this report. Significant developments since publication of the 2010 Review Report include:

- the establishment of the PU-RCSI School of Medicine,
- the '3U Partnership' with Dublin City University and NUI Maynooth,
- the development of the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 after a period of intense consultation,
- the establishment of QEO and its branch office in Bahrain,
- the development of the Quality Assurance Handbook,
- the introduction of the Quality Committee and development of quality policy and QA/QI procedures
- the first QA/QI review of an international campus.

All these developments have taken place against a backdrop of relative austerity as a result of the national economic downturn. RCSI is the only degree-awarding body in Ireland which is not publicly funded and this has been an additional factor.

Commendations

The Review Team commends

- the leadership and foresight of RCSI in promoting and further strengthening the quality culture and processes throughout the College

Recommendations

The Review Team recommends

- that RCSI proceeds with its proposals to reform and simplify the structure of its Council and precedes this with a process of briefing politicians, senior civil servants and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) about its intentions and the requirements for change
- that clearer separation be established between the governance of RCSI's Surgical College functions and that of its health professions education activities, whilst retaining RCSI's trustee function for the whole institution through its Council
- that the role of the Surgical and Postgraduate Faculties Board and the relationship of the postgraduate faculties to the Board be reviewed to facilitate closer integration of processes and procedures in quality assurance, curriculum design and the dissemination of good practice
- consideration of the title 'Rector' for the CEO

Section 2: Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

Development of the Self-Evaluation Report

- 2.1 Following the recommendation of the 2010 Review, that an external review of RCSI by the national quality assurance body should take place no later than two years from the time of the granting of degree-awarding powers to the College, RCSI submitted Annual Institutional Reports to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), and its successor body Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Between January 2012 and January 2013 Terms of Reference for the Review were developed and preparations for the review commenced within RCSI in January 2013 (see Appendix 1 for the Terms of Reference for this review).
- 2.2 In its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), RCSI described the arrangements for establishing an Institutional Review Working Group (IRWG) responsible for the preparation of the report and accompanying documents. It was constituted in March 2011 as a standing sub-committee of the RCSI Quality Committee. It also monitored implementation of the Action Plan developed by RCSI in response to the 2010 Review Report (see Section 3).
- 2.3 The Review Team noted that preparation of the ISER by RCSI was completed in several stages, including an analysis of implementation of the Degree Awarding Status Action Plan, staff surveys, use of 'end-of-semester' student evaluation surveys, the thematic analysis of internal reviews carried out in 2011-2012, and consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The ISER was drafted by members of the IRWG, supported by the QEO, prior to review and 'sign-off' by the Senior Management Team and the implementation of a QEO Communications Strategy for the review.
- 2.4 The IRWG commissioned two staff surveys:
 - i) of staff in academic and administrative support units that were subject to Internal QA/QI Review by the QEO in 2011 and 2012 to gauge attitudes to, and perceptions of, the review process,
 - ii) a survey of all RCSI-Dublin staff, which included questions to gauge broader perceptions of quality issues among staff.

Student end-of-semester evaluation surveys, focusing on indices of student satisfaction represented the views of current students in all undergraduate programmes in Dublin, Bahrain and Malaysia. Use was also made of the RCSI Student Experience Survey 2013, completed during April-May 2013. This survey enjoyed a 48% response rate and generated a significant quantity of data which was made available to the Review Team.
- 2.5 The QEO conducted meetings with internal and external stakeholders to gather views on issues arising from the 2010 Review Report and its recommendations, to confirm the implementation status of Action Plan actions and to source relevant supporting documents. The stakeholder groups comprised Senior Management, Heads of Faculties, Schools and administrative functions, 'lay' representatives on the RCSI governing bodies and representatives of statutory regulatory bodies and advocacy groups.

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

- 2.6 A communications strategy was developed around the Institutional Review process and has been implemented since February 2013. This comprised formal briefings for the Council, Academic Council, MHSB and SPFB and their preparation for the Review Team site-visit and communication with the staff and student bodies through regular emails at key stages and information on the staff portal, Moodle and the RCSI website. Updates were also provided to staff in ‘town hall’ meetings convened from time to time by the CEO.
- 2.7 The Review Team met members of the Quality Assurance Team and the Quality Committee. The Review Team was impressed with the quality of the ISER and accompanying documentation which had been presented to it. The Review Team formed the opinion that RCSI had developed an efficient and effective process to prepare for the Institutional Review and for engaging staff across the institution in this process.

Section 3: Follow-up to the 2010 Review

General

- 3.1 Following the 2010 Review Report which had recommended that an external review take place no later than two years from the time of the granting of degree-awarding powers to the College (see paragraph 1.4), RCSI developed an Action Plan. It also submitted Annual Institutional Reports to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), and its successor body Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). A copy of the Action Plan, with the current status of the actions, was made available to the Review Team. RCSI also provided an updated commentary on the status of actions categorised as 'In Progress' or 'Continuing'.
- 3.2 The Review Team was aware that, as part of its remit, it should establish the level of implementation of the recommendations and came to the view that considerable progress had been made. The current position is summarised below.

Follow-up Actions on Governance and Management

- 3.3 RCSI reported that new Boards of Medicine and Health Sciences and Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties were established early in 2011 and relevant powers of Council had been delegated to them. Governance training had been scheduled, which subsequently took place.
- 3.4 A Governance Committee (a sub-committee of Council) continues to meet and is developing governance proposals which will form the basis of a Private Bill for enactment by the Houses of the Oireachtas in due course. As part of its on-going work, the Governance Committee is carrying out a review and analysis of governance models in comparable institutions and has also engaged in consultations with other institutions in order to identify suitable governance models. The Bill will provide for changes in the composition of Council, the election of members and its role and remit. Meanwhile, as an interim measure, a College Board was established in October 2013 (paragraph 1.11). The title of RCSI 'CEO/Registrar' has been amended to omit 'Registrar' and the Council is currently considering alternative titles (paragraph 1.29).
- 3.5 A formal Resource Allocation Strategy and a formal policy for a centralised international strategy have been developed. A Director of Corporate Strategy has been appointed with responsibility for strategic financial planning both in Ireland and overseas (in collaboration with the Director of Finance). The Director of Corporate Strategy is supported by a team of business, property and financial experts who are engaged on a consultancy basis. The updated Institutional Strategy (paragraph 4.2) was completed in 2012.
- 3.6 A complete review of RCSI's interactions with its alumni is in progress, led by the newly appointed Associate Director of the Alumni Office. This includes consideration of on-going communication with alumni, involving alumni overseas as local advisors and points of contact for students engaged in electives and (in conjunction with the Development Office) the development of targeted fundraising initiatives. Funds are currently being raised for the development of RCSI library facilities.

- 3.7 The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) was established in 2010 and a Director, Associate Director and Executive, responsible to the CEO of RCSI, were appointed in 2010. An interim central Registry function was created in 2011. Implementation of policies, procedures and operations commenced on a phased basis in 2011. The remit of the office now covers both the Medicine and Health Sciences Board and the Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board (paragraph 1.10).

Follow-up Actions in Education and Training Programmes

- 3.8 Following the establishment of the QEO, a communications plan was established including a substantial presence for the QEO on the staff portal and Moodle for students; both platforms include QEO and Quality Committee (QC) documents, particularly detailed reports on the quantitative data generated by the end-of-semester evaluation surveys and the RCSI website in the public domain, together with podcasts and occasional general information ('town hall') meetings. The outputs from the RCSI programme of Internal QA/QI are published on the QEO pages of the RCSI website.
- 3.9 An online Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement handbook has been established and RCSI is a member of the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN). The QEO manages RCSI's internal review process of schools, non-academic departments and services, which now includes representation from other higher education institutions.

Follow-up Actions on Assessment

- 3.10 The Assessment Working Group (AWG) is currently co-ordinating a project in which all Schools within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are producing Assessment Strategy documents, Marks and Standards documents and Assessment Guides for students using a common set of templates. These documents are being developed for submission to and approval by Academic Council and MHSB within the academic year 2013-2014.
- 3.11 The College reports that the linkage of high-level curriculum learning outcomes to the NFQ level descriptors is continuously reviewed by the Awards and Qualifications Committee, both in the context of programmatic review and the validation of new programmes. The linkage of learning outcomes to programme delivery and assessment are standing items of business for all programme governance committees within RCSI.

Follow-up Actions in Staff Development

- 3.12 The newly-established Health Professions Education Centre (paragraph 5.10) offers workshops for academic staff on a wide range of aspects of curriculum and assessment. Work is underway to formalise these in a structure that will allow staff to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.
- 3.13 In addition to lecturer support measures already in place, an MSc in Leadership in Health Professions Education is being run by the Institute of Leadership and is now in its third year of operation. The Human Resources (HR) Department has developed a staff competence framework and has appointed a Learning and Development Manager to facilitate the roll-out of staff development programmes,

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which will focus on broader aspects of staff learning and development.

- 3.14 A pilot programme on Peer Evaluation of Teaching (PEoT) was run during 2012-2013; this was well-received by staff and is intended to serve as a working model for implementation of PEoT college-wide. A PEoT Committee was established to roll out this programme.
- 3.15 The 2010 Review concluded that RCSI's HR policy on recruitment was fully compliant with Irish and EU legislative provisions around Equality and Diversity, including gender, and includes measures to prohibit gender bias in recruitment and promotions. Through meetings and discussions, the Review Team was satisfied that this continues to be the case.

Follow-up Actions on Student Feedback

- 3.16 RCSI reported that the Evaluation Working Group co-ordinates a sophisticated system for the collection of student evaluation data, semester-by-semester, across all programmes and campuses, and for reporting that data in a timely fashion to students and staff, particularly module co-ordinators and programme directors.

Follow-up Actions in Management Information

- 3.17 The QEO has co-ordinated a programme of work to identify a set of metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs). A set of metrics has been identified and refined and will be discussed by Senior Management, the Senior Leaders Group and the governing boards for discussion and approval later in the academic year 2013-2014. Metrics and KPIs will be used to produce regular 'status reports' and to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan 2013-2017. The Associate Director of QEO is a member of the Institutional Research Officers Group of the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and this is expected to facilitate greater co-ordination with the sector and the sharing of knowledge/expertise.
- 3.18 The Review Team was satisfied that RCSI's policies and procedures in relation to management information are compliant with the requirements of Part 1: ESG.

Follow-up Actions in Research Activities and their Relationship to Programmes of Education and Training Leading to Awards at Masters and Doctoral level

- 3.19 A new Director of Research was appointed in 2012 and the Research Strategy (paragraph 4.25) was revised in parallel with the creation of the overall RCSI Strategy 2013-2017. The Research Strategy complements and supports the RCSI-Bahrain Research Strategy. An MSc in Health Research (Public Health) has been launched at Penang Medical College (PMC). The College expects that this development, occurring in parallel with the opening of a Cochrane Review Centre at PMC, will serve as a useful stimulus to develop research at PMC. A single Research Committee was established to ensure centralised decision-making in the area of research.
- 3.20 As part of efforts to support research-active staff to acquire funding, a Senior Research Project Officer has been appointed specifically to assist staff in the preparation of multi-centre (especially EU) funding proposals. The Principal

Investigator (PI) Forum has been launched as a forum for exchange of ideas among researchers at RCSI and to provide targeted assistance through internal peer-review of funding proposals. A 'seed-funding' programme has been implemented to provide moderate grants to researchers to allow them to collect sufficient preliminary data to support a funding proposal.

- 3.21 The RCSI Research Office has defined a set of KPIs to allow RCSI to measure and report on its research outputs; these are included in the overall 'dashboard' of metrics / KPIs being implemented by the QEO (paragraph 3.17).
- 3.22 The focused support around collaborative international research proposals within RCSI has been instrumental in the award of several large FP7 grants (Seventh EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development) to consortia of researchers involving RCSI staff members, whilst the 3U Partnership (paragraph 4.17) has already resulted in a significant number of collaborations between the three institutions (RCSI, DCU and NUIM).

Increasing Participation in the Bologna Process and the Implementation of Related National Policies

- 3.23 RCSI established a Bologna Committee in early 2011 to promote and develop awareness of the Bologna Process within the College. The College reports that the Awards and Qualifications Committee has placed the key Bologna Action Lines - modularisation, correctly specified learning outcomes, ECTS credits and transferability - at the centre of its standards for programme approval and review. The on-going work to upgrade the 'Quercus' Student Information System includes the automated generation of Diploma Supplements for all students in conformity with the Bologna specifications (paragraph 6.9). Diploma Supplements are issued to students currently on a request basis.
- 3.24 RCSI is a member of the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) and the Director of QEO was a member of the Working Group that produced the 2013 IHEQN 'Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision'. RCSI engages with QQI, and engaged with its predecessors NQAI and HETAC, in the context of their national consultation on the alignment of professional awards with the NFQ.
- 3.25 A RCSI International Officer has been appointed with responsibility for all RCSI international mobility activities including those of the Erasmus Lifelong Learning Program (LLP) and Erasmus Mundus. A stated priority objective is to stimulate outgoing mobility for both students and staff and the main priority of the RCSI International Office is to expand the awareness of the Erasmus Project among the student and staff cohort. The College aims to have at least 20% of its students completing some part of their studies abroad by 2020.
- 3.26 The College stressed that student mobility activities take place in several areas, other than Erasmus. A student exchange programme takes place between RCSI-Dublin and RCSI-Bahrain and many undergraduate students complete elective modules outside Ireland in the UK, Canada, US and around the developing world.
- 3.27 When advice is necessary, RCSI avails of the services of NARIC in comparing overseas and Irish qualifications in the context of undergraduate and postgraduate student admissions.

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- 3.28 The College has also engaged with the relevant statutory accrediting bodies in relation to programmes offered in the overseas campuses. The Medical Council of Ireland (MCI) has determined that its legal remit extends to all medical programmes offered by Irish providers, wherever situated. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, however, has determined that its remit is limited to the Republic of Ireland. The Review Team learned that RCSI has had preliminary discussions with the statutory bodies with a view to developing collaborative approaches, such as hybrid institutional reviews /programmatic reviews/ accreditations both in Ireland and on overseas campuses.
- 3.29 Staff at RCSI made frequent references to being “on a journey”. The Review Team formed the view that RCSI had made considerable and commendable progress on that journey and concluded that RCSI’s response to the recommendations of the 2010 Review had been both appropriate and timely.

Section 4: Quality Assurance and Accountability

Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance

- 4.1 A key recommendation arising from the 2010 Review was to update the Institution's strategic plan. The 'Senior Leaders Group' (SLG) was established including the Senior Management Team (SMT), faculty officers, heads of schools and heads of administrative functions. This group played an important role in supporting SMT in shaping the strategy and has subsequently continued to meet on a quarterly basis and is felt to be a very useful cross-institution discussion forum.
- 4.2 The ISER states that "the RCSI quality policy supports, informs and responds to the College's Institutional Strategy, identifying as core values of RCSI the quality of the student experience, continuous quality enhancement in all our activities and in the quality of our contribution to our stakeholders and to the communities in which we work across the world".
- 4.3 The Review Team had noted the steps taken by RCSI to ensure that it was cognisant of the standards set out in Part 1: ESG (paragraphs 6.9 - 6.12) and was satisfied that RCSI's policies and procedures in relation to quality assurance were consistent with these Guidelines.
- 4.4 In meetings, staff stressed the value of quality assurance and their belief that the successes of RCSI were very much founded on quality, and future financial viability in a very competitive market would be dependent on quality. Since being granted degree-awarding status (2010 Review), the approach has been formalised; quality assurance and quality improvement were regular substantive items on committees; and others spoke of the necessary dynamic tension between making sure, by tracking, that the quality culture is real whilst avoiding undue bureaucracy.
- 4.5 The Quality Committee (QC) is responsible for the creation of policy and for the implementation of quality processes and QA/QI activities across the academic and administrative areas on all campuses, and this committee reports to both the MHSB and the SPFB. The Quality Committee also supports the international campuses of RCSI in their interactions with QA/QI structures and processes, both locally and centrally within RCSI itself. An RCSI-Bahrain Quality Assurance Committee, chaired by the Acting President of RCSI-Bahrain, was established in 2011. Similarly, a Quality Assurance Committee has been established in Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine, chaired by the Foundation Dean.
- 4.6 The Awards and Qualifications Committee (A&QC) was established early in 2012 and has been delegated authority and operational responsibility by the MHSB to evaluate and consider all programmes which fall under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) for approval, accreditation and periodic review. The committee sets standards for programme accreditation, overseas programme accreditation and a rolling cycle of programmatic reviews in accordance with best practice and in collaboration with NUI, the RCSI Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) and other relevant stakeholders.
- 4.7 The ISER describes the role of the QEO as acting as the executive function of the Quality Committee and of its sub-committees. The QEO also co-ordinates and supports the work of the IRWG and of three sub-committees of Academic Council:

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- the Assessment Working Group (AWG),
- the Curriculum Outcomes Working Group (COWG),
- the Evaluation Working Group (EWG).

Officers of the QEO also undertake external consultancy work and participate in external quality assurance activities.

- 4.8 The Team met representatives from the Quality Enhancement Office from Bahrain, which works in conjunction with the Dublin QEO, not only in co-ordinating internal QA/QI initiatives and reviews, but also complying with the statutory requirements and quality assurance processes of the Bahraini authorities. The quality assurance processes for RCSI-Dubai and the Commission for Academic Accreditation of the United Arab Emirates are managed by RCSI-Dublin's Institute of Leadership. The Manager of Programme Accreditation and Development at Penang Medical College (PMC) reports on quality matters to QEO and also co-ordinates PMC participation in Institutional Review and Programme accreditation processes of the Malaysian Qualifications Authority as well as accreditation processes of both the Malaysian and Irish Medical Councils. In Perdana the University's Quality officer provides administrative support.
- 4.9 The Review Team noted the progress which has been made since the establishment of the Dublin QEO. The Team learned from the ISER and from site visit meetings that RCSI's approach to quality, as outlined in its Quality Policy 2011, focuses on the fact that the College's ability to deliver effectively on the mission and vision depends crucially on an all-pervasive culture of quality in which responsibility for the quality of the student experience, and for continuous quality enhancement, is shared by all staff.
- 4.10 The Review Team became aware during site visit meetings of the strong role being played by the Dublin QEO and its officers. The ISER described clearly the Quality Governance Structure, showing the linkages between deliberative and operational structures, between SPFB and MHSB and the Quality Committee, and Academic Council and its sub-committees and from the CEO to QEO respectively.
- 4.11 The Review Team commends the proactive role of the Dublin QEO in driving forward quality initiatives and putting into operation a formal Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement structure**
- 4.12 In addition to RCSI's quality assurance of programmes leading to degree qualifications, its postgraduate faculties are involved in the administration of a range of postgraduate professional examinations in Surgery and related specialities. These examinations determine entry to higher specialist training. All of the professional examinations employ quality assurance procedures concerned with curriculum review, test item development, data analysis including standard setting, and reporting, in particular the use of external examiners and reciprocal arrangements with the other Royal Colleges of Surgeons.
- 4.13 The Review Team observed that the engagement of the postgraduate faculties with QEO was fairly restricted and felt that both the faculties and RCSI itself would benefit from a closer involvement, particularly to facilitate the dissemination of good practice both between faculties and across faculties and schools.

- 4.14 The Review Team recommends that RCSI explore closer co-operation between the QEO and the postgraduate faculties to provide further opportunities for the dissemination of good practice across and between the professional institutions and the College**
- 4.15 The Review Team noted the role of the QEO in institutional research, specifically the routine collection and analysis of institutional data about quality. This included the end-of-semester student evaluation surveys and other student-facing surveys - for example, the 2013 Student Experience Survey, staff surveys and bespoke surveys as required [e.g. the 2013 survey of staff of academic and administrative units subject to Internal QA/QI Review in 2011-2012]. It is also developing, in consultation with RCSI SMT and internal stakeholders, the QEO range of institutional metrics for routine monitoring of RCSI activities and outputs and metrics for the implementation of the RCSI Strategic Plan 2013-2017. It has also conducted analyses of student progression, particularly within the School of Medicine. The Quercus student records management system is currently being upgraded to facilitate this kind of work.

Partners and External Stakeholders

- 4.16 In discussions with external stakeholders, emphasis was placed on the quality of training - hospital patients are the beneficiaries of the service provided by high quality students and subsequently graduates including, for example, graduate entry and placements which can give new energy and impetus in a hospital. The development of quality assurance systems impacted on the hospitals through the work of teaching staff and training staff rather than directly on hospital management although this gave hospital management greater assurance and the opportunity for feedback by them to RCSI.
- 4.17 The Review Team noted the opportunities being presented by the establishment of the 3U Partnership between RCSI, DCU and NUIM to exploit the synergies between the three institutions not only to develop new degree programmes and joint research initiatives but to collaborate in the area of quality assurance and benefit from the dissemination of good practice - for example, in programme evaluation, accreditation and review. Agreement has been reached between the partners that all new programmes will be evaluated for accreditation as joint degrees, and that the responsibility for programmatic review will lie with the 'lead institution' on each programme.

Dissemination of Quality Assurance Information to Students, Staff and the Public

- 4.18 The 2010 Review had emphasised the importance of communicating to staff and students at RCSI (both in Ireland and on all the international campuses) the role and remit of the Director of Quality Enhancement and of the QEO. The QEO avails of a number of mechanisms to communicate with staff, students and the public domain, as described above (paragraph 3.8). The Review Team was satisfied that RCSI's processes for the dissemination of public information were consistent with Part 1: ESG (paragraphs 6.9 – 6.12).

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Teaching and Learning

- 4.19 The team noted the first goal of the RCSI Strategic Plan 2013-2017 is to promote excellence in education, such that RCSI becomes a recognised leader in teaching and learning in the health professions, incorporating best practice and the latest technologies in how it educates its students. The key actions which underpin this strategic goal include:
- the development of a core teaching and learning programme to provide a common foundation in educational theory and practice for all staff,
 - the establishment of formalised mechanisms for enhancing the quality of teaching,
 - the on-going assessment, evaluation and monitoring of the quality of all RCSI programmes incorporating student feedback.
- 4.20 The Review Team met senior staff responsible for teaching and learning and understood that the formulation of the Teaching and Learning Strategy had been driven by the Senior Leaders Group. Meetings of the Senior Leaders Group had been held both at RCSI and in Beaumont Hospital. Experience and practice elsewhere, particularly the United States and Australia, had been taken into account, reflecting the international nature of medical education.
- 4.21 Module Co-ordinators and Programme Directors have responsibility for regular (at least annual) review of learning outcomes, teaching materials and assessment systems. Monitoring and assurance of quality in assessment is managed actively through a variety of measures including standard setting, *post-hoc* review by Module Co-ordinators and Programme Directors of exam performance and matching specific assessment documentation against the specification in the Quality Handbook.
- 4.22 The Review Team learned, through meetings with staff and students from Dublin and overseas campuses, that, as far as possible, the same curriculum was delivered, whether in Dublin or in the overseas campuses with identical assessment and examination arrangements and processes. Within this, where appropriate, some adaptation to the local culture and medical environment could be necessary. While not all students in all campuses felt that this was always the case, other students confirmed this approach, which the Review Team felt could be further explored and developed as a focus for research-led teaching.
- 4.23 The Review Team commends RCSI's comprehensive commitment to teaching and learning**

Research

- 4.24 The Review Team met RCSI Research Directors and academic staff involved in research, including Principal Investigators (PIs) who had secured FP7 grants (European Union's main instruments for supporting collaborative research, development and innovations in science, engineering and technology). The current Research Strategy has been reviewed in response to the challenges of the changing funding landscape and to enhance the quality and competitiveness of RCSI research nationally and internationally. A number of new actions were initiated, including strengthening research links with affiliated teaching hospitals

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to facilitate the sharing of expertise and resources and better mobility across RCSI clinical and academic sites, extending the strategy to include RCSI-Bahrain and the promotion of interdisciplinary research centres, both within RCSI and with national and international partner institutions.

- 4.25 Following the appointment of a new Director of Research in 2012, work has begun to develop a new Research Strategy. Challenges facing the development of research capability include the changing funding landscape and the consequent need to develop more collaborative, including international, research. In developing this strategy, efforts were being made to communicate with the broader group of researchers – Principal Investigators – across RCSI. A Principal Investigators Forum had been established as a way of developing a closer, integrated research community and to encourage collaboration.
- 4.26 The Review Team commends the intensified efforts towards strengthening research profile and activity at RCSI, the work undertaken in developing a research strategy and in monitoring research performance**
- 4.27 The Review Team understood the rationale for building on existing research strengths and capacity, and in particular to take into account the opportunity to carry out research which was initiated locally, at any of the campuses – for example, where there was a need to research diseases which might only occur in certain localities. It was, however, important to clarify the focus of research in order to achieve a coherent research strategy which could be shared and embedded in the research community across all the campuses – for example, common research themes with local applications. The work already being carried out to improve research in medical education could provide a particularly useful focus.
- 4.28 The Review Team recommends that further work is done to clarify the focus of research activities, develop a distinctive research profile, seek external expertise and consider carefully the choice of appropriate indicators for modes of research and undertake benchmarking against other institutions**
- 4.29 The Review Team discussed with research staff the level and extent of research being carried out in Bahrain. The funding situation was difficult but efforts were being made to build up research capability amongst staff local to Bahrain, including establishing links with Principal Investigators in Dublin. RCSI recognises the need to ensure that students in Bahrain are exposed to research-active teaching from both Dublin staff and local staff. Staff were being invited to research days in Dublin, and Dublin staff were being encouraged to visit Bahrain, and support was being provided to engage staff with their teaching hospitals and undertaking research there.
- 4.30 The Review Team was encouraged to learn that, alongside these developments, the Research Office, in consultation with the Research Committee and in collaboration with the Library and the QEO, is working on the identification of research performance metrics, data sources and reporting tools as a means of developing the quality assurance of research activity.

Review and Accreditations

- 4.31 As noted above, RCSI is involved with a complex network of review processes, both internal and external. RCSI carries out Internal Unit Quality Reviews,

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- Institutional Reviews and Programmatic Reviews. The various national agencies and professional bodies that engage with RCSI carry out their own reviews and accreditations, both in Ireland and in the international campuses.
- 4.32 The Review Team learned that RCSI is seeking to avoid duplication of effort wherever possible and it is intended that the QEO will conduct Institutional Reviews of RCSI-Bahrain and of Penang Medical College on a seven-year cycle which will take account of the output of local reviews as a significant part of the evidence base for its reviews.
- 4.33 The Review Team learned that a new process for the review and approval of programme proposals has been designed and implemented. This two-phase process involves a thorough examination of the business-case for the programme under consideration followed by a detailed review of curriculum, modes of delivery, assessment, Bologna compliance and NFQ alignment. Proposals have been developed and approved for 'rolling' Programmatic Reviews of all current RCSI educational programmes on a stratified sampling basis, to be implemented from the 2014-2015 academic year onwards.
- 4.34 The QEO co-ordinates internal reviews of Schools and academic units. The review process consists of a self-reflection and analysis leading to the development of a confidential Self-Assessment Report followed by independent, external validation by means of a site-visit by a Peer Review Group (PRG) and the production of a report on the unit under review. Subsequent planning for quality improvement in response to the PRG Report is achieved through the development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Review Team saw evidence of thematic analysis of internal reviews presented to the school boards.
- 4.35 The Quality Assurance e-Handbook also provides guidance on the self-assessment process and document templates for preparation of the Unit's Self-Assessment Report. On approval of the documentation by the Quality Committee at the end of the review process, the Reports and QIPs are published on the RCSI website.
- 4.36 Six internal reviews have taken place or are currently in progress. The Review Team met with members of service, academic and support units that have recently undergone review. In general staff had found the review process useful, with sufficient flexibility in the process to meet local needs. One unit however, whilst confirming the positive outcome of the review process, stressed the issue of review fatigue, due to the number of reviews by various bodies, on average a review every two years. The possibility of an 'a la carte' approach was being considered in an effort to minimise the additional effort required each time. Staff also gave examples of Quality Improvement Plans which had followed reviews.
- 4.37 Reference was also made to measures taken by the two boards to ensure the maintenance of the quality of programmes between reviews through short-life working groups or standing committees of these governing boards. Examples given included the review of regulations, programme documentation, external examiner procedures, an audit of postgraduate and professional clinical training sites and measures to ensure equivalence in programme delivery across sites. Currently Junior Cycle staff are reviewing learning objectives, with feedback from students, and an audit of feedback practices in assessment which may potentially have large impact especially in regard to formative assessment is currently taking place.

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- 4.38 The Review Team was satisfied that RCSI's policies and procedures in relation to the approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards was compliant with the requirements of Part 1: ESG.
- 4.39 The Review Team noted the recommendation of the 2010 Review that RCSI should co-ordinate discussions with professional regulatory bodies regarding their responsibilities in respect of programmes and awards made overseas by an Irish HEI and any conditions which might not apply in Ireland. Following these discussions the Irish Medical Council has determined that its remit extends wherever an Irish HEI offers a medical degree, whereas the Nursing and Midwifery Board had determined that its remit is confined to the Republic of Ireland.
- 4.40 In considering the timetable of reviews as scheduled over the next 15 years, the Review Team noted the long intervals between reviews in some areas (9 years); it understood that this was due in part to the need to accommodate the large number of reviews by professional and statutory bodies. Nevertheless, as a degree-awarding body, it was important that the College was able to assure itself of the quality and standards of its programmes on a regular basis through its own review processes. The Review Team urges the College to continue the dialogue with the professional bodies to achieve greater synergy and compatibility between the review processes to reduce the burden on academic units whilst maintaining a regular programme of review which would satisfy the requirements both of RCSI and the relevant professional bodies.
- 4.41 The Review Team recommends that RCSI continues to consult professional bodies in order to establish a regular and timely review structure which meets the requirements of both RCSI and the professional bodies**

Progress and Assessment of Students

- 4.42 Oversight of assessment policy and practice is conducted through the Assessment Working Group. This group regularly reviews and develops the RCSI Assessment Strategy documentation, ensuring that assessment is linked to learning objectives and promoting and facilitating best practice. In meetings with staff, the pivotal role of external examiners was emphasised in assuring standards.
- 4.43 The same modular programme delivered in Ireland is also delivered in the overseas campuses, but with topics and clinical work related to the local environment. Examinations take place at the same time regardless of location. The same external examiners are used for a programme regardless of where it is delivered. Staff described the work of the Assessment Working Group - for example, on internal moderation across all the campuses.
- 4.44 Final examinations are conducted on hospital sites where consultants would be actively involved - for example, with setting scenarios and assessing students on their performance. The Review Team learned that hospital staff were given clear guidance for their role in assessment, although where staff were not employees of RCSI, the College had to rely on staff goodwill in implementing this guidance. Nevertheless, a standardised competence framework was provided for them to assess against, together with a standardised assessment appraisal system and on-line training for clinical staff.

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- 4.45 The Review Team was satisfied that RCSI had taken the appropriate measures to ensure that its policies and procedures in relation to the assessment of students were compliant with the requirements of Part 1: ESG (paragraphs 6.9 – 6.12).

Feedback

- 4.46 Staff described an in-year progress monitoring which takes place after the first semester examinations. The examination results are distributed and tutors are then asked to meet those students who have failed or have low marks. Meetings are followed by second and third group meetings in the following semesters, staff consider this to be a valuable safety net. In addition, a study skills team works with students on a one-to-one basis to ascertain the range of skills best suited to individual students.

4.47 The Review Team commends the in-year progress monitoring scheme

Staff Evaluation Surveys

- 4.48 RCSI has operated a formal, standardised and centralised collection of student feedback on modules and lecturers. End-of-semester evaluation surveys are now conducted routinely by the QEO in collaboration with the Evaluation Working Group (EWG) and include all in undergraduate programmes in Dublin, Bahrain and Malaysia. Feedback on core items such as modules, assessments, skills and staff allow direct comparison of the student experience horizontally, vertically, geographically and over time both within and between programmes. They are supplemented by additional items that are added at the request of staff members who require data on specific issues. Overall, feedback from students on the quality of teaching was very positive.
- 4.49 The Review Team was satisfied that, through the system described above and its policies for staff development (paragraph 5.7), RCSI's policies and procedures in relation to the quality assurance of its teaching staff was compliant with the requirements of Part 1: ESG.
- 4.50 Heads of Schools confirmed that they received unfiltered feedback from evaluations and that they schedule appointments with individual staff members where a number of unsatisfactory comments have been received. Where comments are substantial, a quality improvement plan is put in place with appropriate professional development inputs from the HR department.

Student Representation

- 4.51 Student representatives are elected for classes, year groups and programmes and are provided with guidance both by the College and the Student Unions. Both staff and students spoke of a good relationship between the student bodies, student representatives and the College. Whilst experience can vary, students reported that generally matters which they brought to the College's attention were dealt with within a reasonable timescale and that the College was receptive to feedback from them. Student representatives felt that they had some influence on strategic planning and had recently highlighted feedback as a theme; this has led to the Feed Forward initiative (paragraph 5.14).

4.52 Officers of the undergraduate and postgraduate students' union do not hold sabbatical positions and so are under some pressure to carry out their duties whilst continuing with their studies. Whilst representatives of the two unions are not members of the Council, they do have representation on the MHSB and SPFB and most other committees, however student representation has not been provided on the newly-formed College Board.

4.53 The Review Team recommends that provision should be made for student representation on the College Board

Student Support

4.54 The Review Team heard that RCSI has a long-standing tradition of caring for its students, perhaps arising in part from the international nature of its student population and the inter-cultural mix. This tradition was evident from discussions with both staff and students. The College employs professional counsellors to provide support for students suffering from a range of issues including eating disorders, anxiety, grief and stress. A head counsellor will meet the student first and allocate to an appropriate counsellor. The service is well-publicised and some students will self-refer. Bereavement, in particular, can be very traumatic for students who then have to go out into the clinical setting fairly soon afterwards.

4.55 The Review Team commends RCSI's long-standing approach and commitment to student welfare

4.56 There was evidence from Irish and overseas campuses that students value the personal tutoring system. Students are randomly assigned a personal tutor, giving each tutor a gender and nationality mix. In the first semester group meetings of tutees are arranged, followed by an individual meeting. Tutors will typically have between eight and twelve tutees and students keep the same personal tutor throughout the programme.

4.57 The Review Team was satisfied that RCSI's policies and procedures in relation to learning resources and support were compliant with the requirements of Part 1: ESG.

4.58 The Review Team also met a number of postgraduate taught students, some of whom expressed concern about the lack of College-administered accommodation. RCSI is able to offer College accommodation to new undergraduates but not postgraduates, and the students argued that some overseas students, new to Ireland, found it difficult to find suitable accommodation, some feeling unwelcome when they approached landlords or finding the rents in the central area of Dublin City too expensive. The Review Team understood that, in the current economic situation, the demand for rental properties had increased dramatically and this had resulted in a significant increase in the price of rentals particularly in the central area. Students were reluctant to travel further afield into unfamiliar areas even though the transport links to and from the College were very good, particularly using the Luas tram system. However, the availability of transport does not address the matter that some overseas students perceive that they are not welcome in certain areas of Dublin. The Review Team acknowledged the work already carried out in assisting postgraduate students to find accommodation. It also acknowledged that it was unrealistic for RCSI to directly fund additional accommodation but felt that more effort should be made to find alternative

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solutions, perhaps a creative approach working with the private sector and that more support should be provided, especially to new overseas postgraduates in finding suitable accommodation.

- 4.59 The Review Team recommends that RCSI explores further the feasibility of providing additional College accommodation particularly for new overseas students and that further efforts be put into providing support to students seeking accommodation**

The Student Learning Experience

- 4.60 Although the Review Team had noted the relatively high response rate (48%) to the 2013 Student Experience survey, RCSI considers that a key challenge is to maintain good response rates through the avoidance of 'survey fatigue' among students, as well as maintaining standards of consistency and anonymity. This is being achieved through requiring any requests for surveys by individuals, internal or external, to be routed through the Evaluation Working Group.
- 4.61 From its discussions with students and staff, the Review Team was very impressed with many of the arrangements to support the student learning experience both in Dublin and in the overseas campuses and this was evidenced in the student evaluations and in discussions with students. The Review Team was also impressed with the arrangements made to set up the programmes in Bahrain, the joint programme in Dubai and Sharjah as well as comments made by students about their experience in Dubai and Perdana.
- 4.62 The Review Team had some serious concerns about the consistency of academic management of students across campuses and in particular the arrangements for monitoring and taking action on student concerns in Bahrain. The results of evaluations made available to the Review Team provided clear evidence which confirmed the assertions from students including lack of feedback, some lectures which had been replaced in Dublin still being given in Bahrain and some staff not turning up to give their lectures. Whilst these may have been relatively isolated instances, it wasn't clear to the Review Team that these issues had been completely addressed.
- 4.63 The Review Team recommends that RCSI should ensure that student feedback is properly and consistently addressed across the campuses, particularly at the Bahrain campus**

Clinical Placements

- 4.64 Clinical Placements are inevitably an integral part of the medical programmes and these are provided across the range of hospitals. The Review Team became aware, through the study of documentation and discussions with students, of some variability in the quality of clinical placements provided. Whilst some students spoke highly of the interest shown by some clinicians who went out of their way to support the students who had been assigned to them and in many cases helped the students feel that they were useful members of the clinical team, other students commented that some clinicians appeared unwilling to devote time to the students who, in these cases, felt that they were in the way. At the same time, hospital staff who met with the Review Team spoke highly of the quality of the students they received on placements.

- 4.65 Staff acknowledged these variations and commented on the difficulties which could arise if a large number of students were assigned to one clinician. Whereas some clinicians were directly employed by RCSI, others were not, and inevitably there were variations in the level of training both provided and accepted by clinicians. The Review Team noted that RCSI itself acknowledged the issue and had now appointed a Clinical Relationships Manager with a remit to develop and maintain relationships with RCSI-affiliated clinical sites, including teaching hospitals across Ireland, clinics and general practice settings. The focus will be on meeting the requirements of RCSI's educational programmes. It would be important to build on existing experience and goodwill and to put in place a system to achieve and monitor consistency in the quality of student experience overall in clinical placements.
- 4.66 The Review Team recommends that RCSI should build on its existing arrangements to work towards achieving consistency of quality of experience in clinical placements**

Internships

- 4.67 Similarly, internships are an essential part of the medical programmes in some jurisdictions and students' expectation is that an internship will be available to them on completion of the programme. Some of the students who met the Review Team asserted that there was unease amongst the student body about the availability of internships and that this was on their minds and confirmed by the fact that a small number of students had not taken up internships immediately after completing the programme, although the majority had in fact done so subsequently. Evidence provided by RCSI also confirmed this and staff acknowledged that "one (failing to obtain an internship) was one too many".
- 4.68 Failure to provide internships could lead to reputational damage. With the planned increase in student numbers, it would be important to match the increase with a sufficient number of internships.
- 4.69 Staff also pointed out that, whilst considerable effort was put into the allocation of internships, the matter was to some extent out of their hands and so they could not guarantee the availability of places, although in practice the lack of a place was an extreme rarity. In the opinion of the Review Team, action should be taken to increase student confidence about securing internships by taking all possible steps to ensure that sufficient internships were available in any one year.
- 4.70 Further consideration should also be given to the level of training which was provided. The postgraduate faculties which administer training schemes have established policies and procedures to assure the quality of training places with the hospital system and of the trainee experience in-post, and this experience could be useful when applied to the system of internships.
- 4.71 Whilst the Review Team recognised that the issue of internship placement is a problem faced by all medical schools, both in the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland, and that, as highlighted by RCSI, in Ireland the Health Service Executive (HSE) is ultimately responsible for the overall management of internship placement, the Review Team recommends that action should be taken to increase student confidence about securing internships by ensuring that, as far as humanly possible, an internship place is provided for every student**

Quality Assurance and Accountability

Postgraduate Studies

- 4.72 The policies and procedures for the management of higher degrees by research, including postgraduate supervision, monitoring of student progress, conflict resolution, nomination of examiners and the conduct of thesis examinations established by the School of Postgraduate Studies were noted by the Review Team and students who met the Review Team expressed satisfaction with these arrangements.
- 4.73 The Review Team learned, through discussions with PhD students, that they have regular meetings. All PhD students have a primary supervisor based at the same campus location; some PhD students have up to three supervisors one or more of whom may be at another institution. In addition to informal support, students are set regular milestones and make a presentation to their supervisory panel/ research team frequently; in laboratory-based projects these presentations are held frequently, i.e. every 3 or 4 weeks, and in qualitative projects the presentations are held every six months. The panel will check progress and offer support, in addition to formal peer learning sessions, considerable informal support is offered. Where PhD students of all years share the same office space in any one research group this also provides informal support. PhD students in structured PhD programmes produce research reports on each of three laboratory rotations or research placements, followed by annual progress reports. All PhD students are required to complete a written report on the progress of their thesis work each year; this report is reviewed by a panel of expert reviewers in a mini viva process which mirrors the actual PhD viva. The student receives feedback from the reviewer panel and further supports are offered as required.
- 4.74 The Review Team also met a number of post-doctoral research fellows who in some cases expressed their concerns about the level of support they received from the Principal Investigators (PIs) to whom they were assigned. Whilst some PIs were extremely supportive, others did not appear to acknowledge the role of the post-doctoral students as members of the research team or be conscious of the need to offer this support.
- 4.75 The Review Team recommends that RCSI should consider mechanisms to improve the quality of support of post-doctoral research fellows and achieve consistency of support throughout the College**

Commendations

The Review Team commends

- **the proactive role of the Dublin QEO in driving forward quality initiatives and putting into operation a formal Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement structure**
- **RCSI's comprehensive commitment to teaching and learning**
- **the intensified efforts towards strengthening research profile and activity at RCSI, the work undertaken in developing a research strategy and in monitoring research performance**
- **the in-year progress monitoring scheme**
- **RCSI's long-standing approach and commitment to student welfare**

Recommendations

The Review Team recommends

- that RCSI explore closer co-operation between the QEO and the postgraduate faculties to provide further opportunities for the dissemination of good practice across and between the professional institutions and the College
- that further work is done to clarify the focus of research activities, develop a distinctive research profile, seek external expertise and consider carefully the choice of appropriate indicators for modes of research and undertake benchmarking against other institutions
- RCSI continues to consult professional bodies in order to establish a regular and timely review structure which meets the requirements of both RCSI and the professional bodies
- that provision should be made for student representation on the College Board
- RCSI explores further the feasibility of providing additional College accommodation particularly for new overseas students and that further efforts be put into providing support to students seeking accommodation
- RCSI should ensure that student feedback is properly and consistently addressed across the campuses, particularly at the Bahrain campus
- RCSI should build on its existing arrangements to work towards achieving consistency of quality of experience in clinical placements
- whilst the Review Team recognised that the issue of internship placement is a problem faced by all medical schools, both in the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland, and that, as highlighted by RCSI, in Ireland the Health Service Executive (HSE) is ultimately responsible for the overall management of internship placement, the Review Team recommends that action should be taken to increase student confidence about securing internships by ensuring that, as far as humanly possible, an internship place is provided for every student
- RCSI should consider mechanisms to improve the quality of support of post-doctoral research fellows and achieve consistency of support throughout the College

Section 5: Quality Enhancement

Commitment to Enhancement

- 5.1 The Review Team is satisfied that RCSI is committed to quality enhancement across its operations as both a higher education institution and a postgraduate training body operating in Ireland and transnationally. The strength of this commitment is evidenced by the degree to which RCSI has delivered on the recommendations of the 2010 Institutional Review and by the central emphasis placed upon quality in the RCSI Strategic Plan 2013-2017.
- 5.2 This approach to quality enhancement comprises a commitment to quality in all aspects of RCSI operations based on a coherent quality policy, a strategic direction with measurable outputs, using institutional data to inform strategy and operational decision-making, continuing professional development of academic and administrative staff and enhancing feedback to students and student involvement in governance.
- 5.3 The Review Team noted a variety of enhancement themes related to the five strategic goals in the current strategic plan. As noted earlier, the strategic plan will be delivered through the implementation of 26 individual projects, for each of which key milestones and deliverables, together with key performance indicators, have been identified. The Review Team learned that the QEO will support the Senior Management Team in monitoring the implementation of these projects.
- 5.4 A variety of initiatives led by the QEO, either proposed or already under way, is listed in the ISER. The QEO is continuing its programme of annual review as well as the commencement of programmatic reviews and the development of procedures for the review of RCSI postgraduate faculties. An Institutional Review of PMC is scheduled during 2013-2014 and procedures are being developed for the first Institutional Review of RCSI-Bahrain. Guidelines for programmatic review have been drawn up and these draw on good practice in quality assurance and review processes in the European Higher Education Area and are benchmarked against current national guidelines in Ireland, Bahrain and the UAE.
- 5.5 There is considerable and sufficient alignment between RCSI's programmatic review procedures and those in Bahrain (NAQQAET) and the United Arab Emirates (CAA) to enable the programmatic reviews of those bodies to meet the requirements of RCSI's approval and it is expected that similar arrangements will apply in Malaysia (MQA).
- 5.6 The Review Team discussed a range of enhancement initiatives with the staff concerned and highlighted a number of areas for comment (below).

Staff Development

- 5.7 Staff Development initiatives include teaching awards, first introduced in 2009, to recognise excellence in teaching - the recipients are chosen by RCSI students by means of on-line anonymous voting through the Moodle VLE. The Dean's Awards were established in 2008 as a way of acknowledging the diverse and essential contributions of all staff members. The Awards are made in two categories –

academic staff and support staff. All staff (excluding Heads of Departments, Heads of Schools and Faculty Officers) are eligible for nomination, and the decisions are made by a Selection Committee chaired by the Dean. QEO staff deliver both an annual three-day Educational Skills Workshop, and regular workshop on aspects of curriculum structure and assessment. A Staff Competence Framework is being developed for implementation from 2013-2014 onwards.

- 5.8 RCSI re-opened academic promotions during the 2012-2013 academic year following a 'freeze' on academic promotions in response to the economic downturn. The Human Resources (HR) Department developed a suite of new promotions policies and procedures during 2011 benchmarked against comparable HEIs in Ireland and abroad and based upon a criterion-referenced evaluation system for each promotional step.
- 5.9 RCSI has appointed a Learning and Development Specialist within the Human Relations (HR) Department whose role will be to develop, in accordance with the HR strategy, a comprehensive and robust learning and development capability within the HR team. Following a Performance Development Review system introduced in 2006, which applied only to administrative staff, the HR Department developed a new Professional Development Planning (PDP) system in response to consistent themes in staff surveys requesting more feedback on performance and greater opportunities for development. This was launched in 2012-2013 for all administrative staff, and on a trial basis for academic and research staff in certain departments, before being rolled out across RCSI. The implementation of the new HR Information System will permit the accurate longitudinal recording, reporting and monitoring of gender ratios.

RCSI Health Professions Education Centre

- 5.10 The RCSI Health Professions Education Centre (HPEC) (paragraph 3.12) was established earlier this year, following the appointment of a Professor of Health Professions Education who is its Director. The Review Team met the Director who confirmed that its focus will be professionalisation of teaching, learning and assessment and affirmed the value of medical and health professions education as a key performance indicator, reflecting in part the recommendations of the 2010 Review regarding staff development and enhanced teaching and learning. A scoping exercise had been carried out which had revealed that many staff were leading on or participating in a number of innovative initiatives and activities, the Centre will be an opportunity to highlight and champion these and disseminate good and innovative practice, providing easy access for internal consultancy.
- 5.11 The Centre will be involved in the launch of Peer Enhancement of Teaching (PEoT) through Observation (paragraph 3.14). Following the setting-up of a Steering Group in early 2013, PEoT is being developed across taught programmes. The Group has carried out an extensive review of best practice in the area and has investigated similar initiatives in other Irish and UK institutions. The formal report and recommendations of the Group were due to be forwarded to MHSB for consideration in autumn 2013.
- 5.12 Together with a possible focussing of research activity on medical education and on research initiated locally, the appointment of the Learning and Development

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specialist within HR (above) and the work of HPEC, the Review Team saw the potential for significant synergy in developing future quality enhancement projects, particularly research-informed teaching bringing together research across all the campuses.

- 5.13 The Review Team recommends that RCSI develops quality enhancement projects in research-informed teaching, drawing on research being conducted across all the campuses**

Enhancing Feedback to Students

- 5.14 A request for enhanced feedback to students following assessment is a common theme in end-of-semester surveys, as is the issue of greater communication to students of what will be expected of them in their assessments, known as 'feed-forward'. In order to address these needs, the Academic Council established a Feedback/Feed-Forward Working Group (including staff and student representatives) in early 2013 which is examining the issues, focusing initially on the School of Medicine with a view to implementation of the recommendations across all Schools over time. The Group has undertaken a review to identify international best practice, to assess the current level of Feedback/Feed-Forward activity in the six-year 'core' medicine curriculum and to facilitate a gap analysis. A Feedback/Feed-Forward strategy was being developed for submission to Academic Council in autumn 2013.

- 5.15 The Review Team commends RCSI on the development of a Feed-Forward strategy**

Inter-Professional Education Initiatives

- 5.16 Because RCSI-Dublin has access to a number of healthcare professions on a single campus, this provides an opportunity for Inter-Professional Education (IPE) where students can learn with, from and about each other. This has been introduced early in the programme by including IPE activities in Professional Skills modules in Foundation Year (Medical and Physiotherapy students) and first-year Pharmacy. These research-informed activities comprise small group projects, case-based interactions and an in-class ethics debate. Pharmacy students undertaking the National Pharmacy Internship Programme (NPIP), and final year medical students, undertake an e-Learning Inter-Professional Prescribing Science module.

Enhanced Clinical Skills Training through Simulation

- 5.17 The Review Team welcomed the introduction of the simulation programme which is being proposed and will be an important aspect of training and education and aims to integrate a clinical skills curriculum longitudinally in medicine from Junior Cycle to Intern Year. The development of the new Academic Education Building in York Street will deliver a dedicated state-of-the-art Centre for Skills Simulation over two floors. The Surgical Skills Simulation floor will include a situation simulation lab for surgical training, a flexible wet lab for surgical skills training, a procedural simulation area for surgical training, as well as support and administration areas.

Support for Student Career Development

- 5.18 During meetings with the Review Team, a number of staff stressed RCSI's commitment to prepare students for successful careers after graduation and its recognition that students are likely to follow a diversity of careers in varied and changing international markets. The Review Team learned of a variety of measures being taken in the schools, including in Medicine a wide range of research and clinical elective opportunities, both in Ireland and overseas, as well as support for students preparing for the United States Medical Licensing Examinations and applying for Residency Programmes in the US and Canada. In Pharmacy, RCSI operates the Irish National Pharmacy Intern Programme (NPIP), which manages early-stage career development for Pharmacy graduates, for the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Physiotherapy provides a wide range of clinical placements for students. Generally, guidance is provided in preparation for interviews.
- 5.19 The School of Postgraduate Studies co-ordinates a series of career-development seminars for students registered for both taught and research-based higher degrees. A Student Career Development Manager has been appointed to assist students in developing individual career plans and will put in place mechanisms and resources to provide career management and support as part of all RCSI education programmes. Staff stressed that the quality of students' performance in their future careers was desirable not only for the students themselves but for RCSI's reputation internationally.
- 5.20 The international network of alumni (paragraph 3.6) is seen as a major resource for RCSI. The RCSI Strategic Plan 2013-2017 includes the implementation of a Structured Alumni Development Programme to build a sustainable relationship with alumni, members and fellows. This programme will encompass the promotion of philanthropic activity in support of specific projects, as recommended in the 2010 Review. The Review Team heard of examples of both support for new students and promotion of RCSI being offered by alumni, for example in pairing students on an elective module with an alumnus locally.

Postgraduate Training and Education

- 5.21 Reference was made in the ISER to developments in Postgraduate Training and Education, including the implementation of a new pathway for postgraduate training in surgery which will reduce the mean training time in Surgery to 8 years, from the current mean of approximately 12 years, and incorporates two major assessments of candidates at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. An independent governance review of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery and of the School of Nursing is currently being undertaken and the most likely outcome will be the transfer of all taught postgraduate programmes to the School in parallel with a repositioning of the Faculty as a provider of Continuing Professional Development programmes nationally.

Community Engagement

- 5.22 Reference was made in the ISER to a range of community engagement initiatives with a series of pathways and scholarships to widen the participation rates of

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those who might otherwise be or feel excluded from courses with high entry requirements. These included a Traveller Community Access Programme, Adult Education and Programmes for Schools including Outreach Programmes for teaching Science, Technology and Mathematics in schools and the RCSI Mini Med School Open Lecture Series. Each year a Primary Science Teachers Summer Course is held, particularly for those working in schools facing significant challenges relating to social disadvantage.

- 5.23 The Community Outreach and Access programme which promotes 'Recreation Education And Community Health' (REACH) is provided to encourage and to facilitate third-level participation and to enhance life chances for those traditionally under-represented at third-level, particularly those from Dublin's South Inner City, with free one-to-one academic support available to individuals who would be otherwise unable to access such support.
- 5.24 In Bahrain, the Community Engagement Office co-ordinates a wide range of projects in conjunction with a number of voluntary bodies within the Kingdom of Bahrain. These include the bi-annual blood donation drive, a Paediatric Mobile Diabetes Unit and mass public training for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.
- 5.25 Reference is also made to other overseas initiatives. RCSI considers that it has a duty to assist in the development of surgery and surgical training in the developing world and it has concluded a memorandum of understanding with the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA) and Irish Aid (a governmental aid agency). Under the 'RCSI / COSECSA Collaborative Programme' a customized eLearning platform ('School for Surgeons') has been established and, to-date, laboratories and training programmers are provided. RCSI also provides assistance to COSECSA in running their Membership and Fellowship examinations.

Support Services

- 5.26 A number of initiatives are currently being undertaken in the area of support services. It is intended that the new Academic Education Building on York Street. (paragraph 5.17) will provide "unique, modern, inspiring and ambitious medical sciences and surgical training facilities" and will be the catalyst to enhance the student amenities within the entire RCSI city centre campus.
- 5.27 The Review Team learned of a review of processes by the Admissions Office which will focus on the development and optimisation of admissions procedures for non-EU students. A new Resource Allocation Strategy is being developed by the Finance department working with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. It was used for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 budgets and will be updated for the 2013-2014 budget.
- 5.28 A strategic plan has been developed by the Communications department to optimise activities in the areas of communication and marketing and conferences and events. Other developments include a new IT overall technical infrastructure, enhancement of the Wi-Fi network and working towards the integration of key systems including HR, Payroll, Finance and Quercus to provide accurate and up-to-date information to both staff and students.
- 5.29 Among the quality enhancement initiatives planned by the Library are staff development to facilitate the transition from a transaction-based work flow to a

skill/knowledge-based work flow and an enhanced Library service delivery through investment in Information Technology.

- 5.30 Arising from the internal review process, the Student Services Office (SSO) is implementing a Quality Improvement Plan which includes the recruitment of three new members of staff to increase capacity and to expand service provision to the Students' Union, to mature students and to postgraduate students; the development of a Student Charter; and the redevelopment of SSO space to create a more 'customer friendly' environment.

Commendations

The Review Team commends

- **RCSI on the development of a Feed-Forward strategy**

Recommendations

The Review Team recommends

- **RCSI develops quality enhancement projects in research-informed teaching, drawing on research being conducted across all the campuses**

Section 6: Review Objectives

Institutional Strategic Planning, Governance and Ownership of Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- 6.1 The Review Team considered the appropriateness of institutional strategic planning, governance and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement in the context of RCSI's role as an independent degree-awarding institution and in light of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. It was satisfied that RCSI's processes and procedures are appropriate and that the operation of internal quality assurance procedures and reviews is clear and transparent to the relevant stakeholders and that RCSI has processes for the continuing evaluation of all academic, research and service departments, national and transnational, and their activities, as outlined in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area [ESG] (*Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions*).
- 6.2 The Review Team was confident that RCSI is cognisant of the standards set out in Part 1: ESG and is committed to aligning its policies, procedures and activities with them. RCSI also has taken cognisance of national guidance documents and policies in developing internal policies and procedures, specifically those published by NQAI, IUQB and IHEQN. RCSI provided details of its mapping of the NFQ, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the equivalent frameworks relevant to RCSI educational programmes in Ireland and overseas.

Engagement with National, European and International Good Practice

- 6.3 The Review Team found evidence that RCSI was gathering information on national, European, and international good practice particularly through the work of the QEO and the involvement of its staff in national and international quality assurance bodies, teaching and research conferences, seminars and workshops.

Compliance with the Irish National Framework of Qualifications

- 6.4 RCSI provided a comprehensive summary of its processes to ensure compliance with the National Framework of Qualifications and demonstrated the alignment of all RCSI educational awards with this Framework. The alignment of all awards made through the NUI had been communicated to QQI/NQAI previously. The accreditation process for all new awards developed by the Awards and Qualifications Committee includes alignment as a mandatory requirement and confirmation of correct alignment will be also a requirement in the rolling Programmatic Reviews of existing programmes from 2014-2018 onwards.
- 6.5 Although transfer between programmes is relatively unusual in medical education generally, RCSI has developed and published comprehensive policies and processes for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners in accordance with national policy. In the documentation for new programme proposals and for Programmatic Review presented to the Awards and Qualifications Committee, applicants are required to provide this information and to ensure that this

information is included in all promotional materials for their programmes.

- 6.6 RCSI acknowledged however that further work is needed to make the level of information required by national policy available to potential new learners across the whole portfolio of RCSI programmes. The Review Team encouraged RCSI to proceed with a number of initiatives planned for implementation during 2013-2014, including: the development of an explicit policy on Recognition of Prior Learning, the identification of Transfer and Progression routes for learners, including specific provisions for new learners accessing RCSI programmes through non-standard routes and a review of the provision of information to potential learners on Access, Transfer and Progression through the RCSI website and other publication routes.
- 6.7 RCSI, through its postgraduate faculties, offers programmes leading to awards at Membership and Fellowship level. Following the recommendation of the 2010 Review that RCSI should explore the possibility of having its professional awards recognised through the NFQ, the College has participated, through its membership of IHEQN, in a consultation process on a draft 'Professional Award Alignment Policy and Criteria' published by HETAC (now QQI). Once this policy is ready for implementation, the SPFB will begin to plan for the submission of the various RCSI professional awards to the alignment process.

Frameworks in Overseas Campuses

- 6.8 RCSI programmes delivered overseas are aligned with the relevant qualifications frameworks in accordance with local requirements and procedures. These include:
- the Kingdom of Bahrain National Framework of Qualifications,
 - the United Arab Emirates Qualifications Framework (for Dubai and Sharjah), and
 - the Malaysian Qualifications Framework.

RCSI has mapped against these frameworks, which have in any case been influenced substantially by European and Australasian models. RCSI demonstrated that this has generally been a straightforward process with the exception of equating the student workload in the different campuses given the different approaches to defining credits and specifying credit allocations in different jurisdictions. The Review Team was made aware of the close co-ordination between campuses in the preparation of programme specification documents to address this issue.

Compliance with ESG and the Requirements of the Bologna Process

- 6.9 RCSI established a Bologna Committee in April 2011 with a wide representation of Schools and Faculties co-ordinate the development and implementation of the Bologna Framework across RCSI education and research activities, and to raise awareness of the Bologna process and its implications for RCSI as a higher education institution. Staff information sessions with external speakers have been arranged and some staff have been supported to attend external sessions on Bologna-related topics. RCSI has developed a Bologna Process page on the Moodle VLE containing relevant information.

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- 6.10 All taught programmes are structured as modular programmes denominated in ECTS credits, with the partial exception of the Medicine degree programme which is modularised up to the final two clinical years which are discipline-based. The Review Team acknowledged that this is common to medical programmes generally across Europe. Specification of new programmes, in terms of modular structure and credit allocation, is a pre-requisite in establishing an academic case for approval by the Awards and Qualifications Committee.
- 6.11 The Review Team is satisfied that RCSI has carefully reviewed its quality and standards and quality enhancement arrangements against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area (European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), Part 1) and that it has appropriate procedures in place.
- 6.12 Diploma Supplements currently are issued to students on request only. The Review Team understood that following further development of the Quercus student information system, diploma supplements will be generated automatically for all students. A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Committee is being established to develop an institutional policy for RPL.

Quality Assurance Arrangements in Collaborative and Transnational Provision

- 6.13 Reference has already been made to RCSI's collaborative and transnational provision. The 2010 Review Report had recommended that RCSI should define more clearly its strategy for provision overseas and should keep overseas programmes under review, using its discretion and seeking external advice, over and above the standard procedures, when it felt that this would be helpful. The College appointed a Director of Corporate Strategy (paragraph 3.5) and set up 'RCSI Enterprises' which is effectively a due diligence unit for identifying and evaluating new international opportunities. In discussions with staff it was clear that RCSI adopts a cautious approach, taking into account suitability of markets in terms of language, accreditation and political factors; and it recognises that there is a limit on the number of institutions overseas that can be managed effectively; as noted elsewhere, RCSI has a programmed of review for its international campuses.
- 6.14 In the view of the Review Team, the quality assurance arrangements in the overseas campuses were integrated and co-ordinated with those on the Dublin campus, having regard to local structures and processes. As described in Section 4, those in Bahrain were managed as part of the QEO whilst having regard to the requirements of the local regulatory and quality assurance bodies. Appropriate quality management arrangements, including the reporting relationships between the Quality Committee, QEO and the specific quality functions in each of the overseas campuses had been set up for Dubai, Penang and Perdana.

National Collaborations

- 6.15 RCSI also has national collaborations with Institute of Technology Sligo, Institute of Technology Tralee, National University of Ireland, DCU and NUI Maynooth. The Review Team met staff from institutions with which RCSI collaborates in Ireland. Each of the collaborations, which have come about in different ways, is seen as

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- complementary to RCSI's activities. These include a joint programme offered by IT Sligo with NUI and a CPD programme, a programme at IT Tralee to support the transition of international students to studies in Ireland and academic programmes and a strategic base in the areas of palliative care and bereavement.
- 6.16 The 3U Partnership between RCSI, Dublin City University and NUI Maynooth arose out of a research collaboration in the health sciences area. A broader partnership has been developed with the institutions looking to collaborate for growing student numbers for each of the institutions involved, and together to become more competitive in research collaboration and to benefit from dissemination of good practice in teaching methods. The collaboration has evolved organically, pre-dates reconfiguration proposals, and is seen as complimentary for each of the institutions; DCU did not have access to hospitals and clinical opportunities; likewise NUI Maynooth offers biotechnology, sports science and nursing studies but does not have a medical school.
- 6.17 The Review Team was aware of RCSI's proposals for expansion of transnational provision in particular and cautioned against the possible resulting tension between quality assurance and expansion. Care must be taken to ensure that sufficient resources were provided to maintain facilities and opportunities (such as, for example, the availability of internships) and facilitate monitoring and feedback proportionate to any increase in student numbers.
- 6.18 The Review Team recommends that steps are taken to ensure that, as student numbers increase, resources are developed on a scale sufficient to maintain the level of facilities and opportunities as well as the capacity to maintain appropriate monitoring and feedback arrangements**
- 6.19 The Review Team was satisfied that RCSI was acting in accordance with the IHEQN guidelines for the approval, monitoring and review of collaborative and transnational provision and it was impressed by the strength of the collaborative arrangements with these institutions and the demonstration of a clear understanding of the quality assurance arrangements for the programmes involved.

Relationship with the National University of Ireland

- 6.20 The Review Team considered RCSI's relationship with the National University of Ireland (NUI). It discussed the relationship with senior management from both NUI and the College. The Team learned that, following the granting of RCSI independent degree-awarding powers in 2010, a new section had been inserted into the Universities Act 1997 (Section 47A). The new section in the 1997 Act provides '... that degrees and qualifications of RCSI...shall be degrees and qualifications of the NUI...where they are approved by the NUI and where RCSI is a Recognised College of the NUI'. This legislation was subsequently enabled under the provisions of Schedule 3 (9) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The current relationship between RCSI and NUI reflects this legislative provision. The Team noted that RCSI asserts that having the award of degrees approved by NUI affords reputational and historic advantages for the College, particularly in overseas markets.
- 6.21 Staff from both institutions stressed the added value of the relationship as well as acting as a 'double-lock' mechanism through reporting to both institutions.

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NUI approve external examiners nominated by RCSI, and appoint NUI assessors alongside RCSI assessors on programme approval panels, but in all other respects, responsibility for standards and quality lies solely with RCSI. The Review Team therefore concluded that it was sufficient and appropriate to evaluate quality assurance arrangements for awards made by RCSI and NUI in the context of RCSI's own arrangements (as discussed in Section 4).

6.22 At the same time, it was not altogether clear to the Review Team that the specific relationship between RCSI and NUI in respect of the award of degrees would necessarily be widely understood and that this would benefit from further clarification particularly in public documentation.

6.23 The Review Team recommends that the relationship between NUI and RCSI in respect of the award of degrees should be made clearer in documentation and public information

Risk Management

6.24 RCSI had previously developed a Risk Register. Early in 2013, RCSI engaged the services of Moody's Risk Management to facilitate the development of a new Risk Register. This new register aligns the 36 risk scenarios to the RCSI Strategic Plan 2013-2017 and assigns a member, or members, of SMT as owner(s) for each scenario. One-page documents are being developed currently for each of the 36 scenarios detailing mitigation strategies.

6.25 RCSI delivers a large portfolio of education and training programmes with quite a limited staff complement and against the background of continuing economic uncertainty worldwide. The Strategic Plan 2013-2017 describes the measures that RCSI will implement to sustain and expand current operations including strategic investment in new staff and facilities, increased student numbers at home and overseas and diversification of offerings. While the Review Team would wish to commend this approach and the identification of risks in the Risk Register, it would encourage RCSI as a matter of urgency to determine the action to be taken in areas identified as high risk, in particular the recruitment and retention of staff, and risks related to unstable political situations in overseas provision. RCSI's strategic planning should place a priority on addressing these risks.

6.26 The Review Team recommends that RCSI should as a matter of urgency, determine actions to be taken in areas identified as being of high risk

Conclusion

6.27 Subject to its recommendations in respect of governance (paragraphs 1.14 -1.15), overall the Review Team was impressed by the appropriateness of RCSI's institutional strategic planning, governance and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement, by the measures RCSI has taken to map its programmes against the ESG and NFQ and the way in which its planning, structure and systems support its responsibilities as an awarding body with qualifications recognised by the NFQ.

Recommendations

The Review Team recommends

- **that steps are taken to ensure that, as student numbers increase, resources are developed on a scale sufficient to maintain the level of facilities and opportunities as well as the capacity to maintain appropriate monitoring and feedback arrangements**
- **the relationship between NUI and RCSI in respect of the award of degrees should be made clearer in documentation and public information**
- **that RCSI should as a matter of urgency, determine actions to be taken in areas identified as being of high risk**

Conclusions

Section 7: Conclusions

Based on the Review Team's evaluation of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, supporting documentation and meetings conducted during the Main Review Visit, the Team found sufficient evidence to confirm:

Category	Key Reviewer findings
Institutional strategic planning, governance and ownership of QA and enhancement	The Review Team found that the institutional strategic planning, governance and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement is consistent with RCSI's role as an independent degree-awarding institution and consistent with the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012
Consistency with ESG and other national and European guidelines and standards	The Review Team found the Institution's quality assurance arrangements for national, transnational and collaborative provision to be consistent with Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and national, European and international guidelines and standards, particularly in accordance with the Bologna process
Awarding body in the NFQ	RCSI planning, structure and systems support its responsibilities as an awarding body with qualifications recognised by the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The Team found sufficient evidence to commend the following examples of good practice for further promotion internally, nationally and internationally:

7.1	the leadership and foresight of RCSI in promoting and further strengthening the quality culture and processes throughout the College
7.2	the proactive role of the Dublin QEO in driving forward quality initiatives and putting into operation a formal Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement structure
7.3	RCSI's comprehensive commitment to teaching and learning
7.4	the intensified efforts towards strengthening research profile and activity at RCSI, the work undertaken in developing a research strategy and in monitoring research performance
7.5	the in-year progress monitoring scheme
7.6	the long-standing approach and commitment to student welfare
7.7	the development of a Feed-Forward strategy

The Team found sufficient evidence to recommend the following activities to the Institution for attention and development:

7.8.	RCSI should proceed with its proposals to reform and simplify the structure of its Council and precedes this with a process of briefing politicians, senior civil servants and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) about its intentions and the requirements for change
7.9	a clearer separation should be established between the governance of RCSI's Surgical College functions and that of its health professions education activities, whilst retaining RCSI's trustee function for the whole institution through its Council
7.10	the role of the Surgical and Postgraduate Faculties Board and the relationship of the postgraduate faculties to the Board should be reviewed to facilitate closer integration of processes and procedures in quality assurance, curriculum design and the dissemination of good practice
7.11	the consideration of the title 'Rector' for the CEO
7.12	the exploration of closer co-operation between the QEO and the postgraduate faculties to provide further opportunities for the dissemination of good practice across and between the professional institutions and the College

Conclusions

7.13	RCSI should carry out further work to clarify the focus of research activities, develop a distinctive research profile, seek external expertise and consider carefully the choice of appropriate indicators for modes of research and undertake benchmarking against other institutions
7.14	RCSI should continue to consult professional bodies in order to establish a regular and timely review structure which meets the requirements of both RCSI and the professional bodies
7.15	provision should be made for student representation on the College Board
7.16	RCSI should explore further the feasibility of providing additional College accommodation particularly for new overseas students and that further efforts be put into providing support to students seeking accommodation
7.17	RCSI must ensure that student feedback is properly and consistently addressed across the campuses, particularly at the Bahrain campus
7.18	RCSI should build on its existing arrangements to work towards achieving consistency of quality of experience in clinical placements
7.19	whilst the Review Team recognised that the issue of internship placement is a problem faced by all medical schools, both in the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland, and that, as highlighted by RCSI, in Ireland the Health Service Executive (HSE) is ultimately responsible for the overall management of internship placement, the Review Team recommends that action should be taken to increase student confidence about securing internships by ensuring that, as far as humanly possible, an internship place is provided for every student
7.20	RCSI should consider mechanisms to improve the quality of support of post-doctoral research fellows and achieve consistency of support throughout the College
7.21	RCSI should develop quality enhancement projects in research-informed teaching, drawing on research being conducted across all the campuses
7.22	steps should be taken to ensure that, as student numbers increase, resources are developed on a scale sufficient to maintain the level of facilities and opportunities as well as the capacity to maintain appropriate monitoring and feedback arrangements
7.23	the relationship between NUI and RCSI in respect of the award of degrees should be made clearer in documentation and public information
7.24	as a matter of urgency, RCSI should determine actions to be taken in areas identified as being of high risk

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for RCSI Review 2013

Section 1 Background and Context for the Review

1.1 Context and Legislative Underpinning

In October 2013 the Quality Assurance and Qualifications Authority of Ireland (QQI) will undertake a review of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). RCSI is a not-for-profit, independent academic institution with charitable status. It is both an independent degree-awarding institution and a surgical Royal College. RCSI is confirmed a designated awarding body in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012.

In 2010, a review by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQA) of the RCSI in relation to the commencement of its degree-awarding powers, confirmed the degree-awarding powers and recommended, inter alia, that an external review of the RCSI by the national quality assurance body (to be established in the 2012 legislation) should take place no later than two years from the time of the granting of awarding powers to the institution, and should as part of its remit, establish the level of implementation of the recommendations as set out in the (2010) review. The Authorities of both the HEA and NQA supported this recommendation as did the Minister for Education and Skills in a letter approving the activation of the bye-laws (October 2010). Since then, in May 2012, the NQA agreed that the NQA executive should advance the preparations for the review with the RCSI and agree timelines for it. These preparations were further advanced by QQI, following the establishment of QQI in November 2012 and the concomitant dissolution of the NQA.

The Legislation and Ministerial directions ensure that the RCSI, similar to all higher education institutions, is subject to review and oversight by the relevant national external quality assurance body, QQI.

Statutory instruments that underpin the RCSI and the basis for review in higher education include the following:

- the Universities Act 1997
- the Education and Training Act 1999
- the RCSI (Charters Amendment) Act 2003 which refers to the 1999 Act
- the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (Education and Training) 2012
- the approval by the Minister, in October 2010, of the activation of the bye-laws on RCSI's degree-awarding powers, including the designation (by the Minister) of NQA as the external QA body to the Institution and that it should engage with it in the implementation of the recommendations of the review.

Review, in this context, refers to the formal review of the effectiveness of the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures established and implemented by the RCSI. This is an ad hoc review in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out in this document.

The review process aims to:

- operate an external review process consistent with Part 2: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
- support the availability of consistent, robust, and timely information on the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement processes operating within Irish universities

- provide accountability to external stakeholders in relation to the overall quality of the system and thereby instil confidence in the robustness of the IRIU process
- be open, transparent and evidence based
- reinforce institutional diversity and autonomy by remaining flexible and adaptable
- be consistent and operate in a collaborative spirit – reinforcing an institution's continuous quality assurance processes rather than operating an externally imposed 'once-off' process
- communicate the review process clearly and in a manner easily understood by a wide range of external stakeholders, including students and employers
- support the sector in its commitment to quality enhancement through its developmental approach
- identify, encourage and report good practice and innovation that is evidenced
- seek to minimise burden in the institution as far as possible
- provide an efficient and cost effective process

1.2 Royal College of Surgeons as a Degree-Awarding Body

The RCSI was established under charter and is a recognised college of the National University of Ireland. For over two hundred years the RCSI has played a major role in medical education and training in Ireland.

Founded in 1784 to train surgeons, a medical school was later established in 1886. Today RCSI has Schools of Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Nursing. In addition to undergraduate education, RCSI delivers postgraduate training and education through its Faculties of Radiology, Dentistry, Sports and Exercise Medicine, Nursing, the School of Postgraduate Studies and the Institute of Leadership in Healthcare Management. The RCSI also has a Research Institute which brings together basic and clinical researchers from various collaborating institutions to share advanced facilities with the aim of integrating basic and clinical research, so that advances in medical science are translated as quickly as possible into patient treatments.

In 2003, the Oireachtas passed a Private Act (the RCSI (Charters Amendment) Act, 2003) amending the charters of the RCSI, to enable it to award degrees in the disciplines of Surgery, Medicine, Nursing, Radiology, Pharmacy, Anaesthesiology, Physiotherapy, Dentistry and such other further disciplines, as may be provided for by bye-laws made by the Council of the College. In accordance with this Act, the RCSI submitted bye-laws for the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, seeking to have its degree-awarding powers commenced. As it has been the practice to date that degree-awarding powers are granted or delegated to institutions only on foot of an external review, in January 2010 the then Minister for Education and Skills requested that the HEA and the NQAI undertake such a review of the RCSI, and subsequently provide advice to the Minister on the granting of the approval requested.

1.3 Most Recent Review of RCSI

The Terms of Reference for the review were agreed with the Department of Education and Skills in March 2010 with a focus on four main criteria: the operation and management of the RCSI; education and training programmes offered by the RCSI; research activities and their relationship to programmes of education and training leading to awards at master's and doctoral level; and participation in the Bologna Process and implementation of related

national policies. In the light of the objective of the review, it was understood that the balance of emphasis would be placed on the first and second criteria. However, careful consideration would also be given to the development of the Institution's research activities, to its awarding of higher degrees and to its current levels of engagement with regard to the Bologna Process and related national developments.

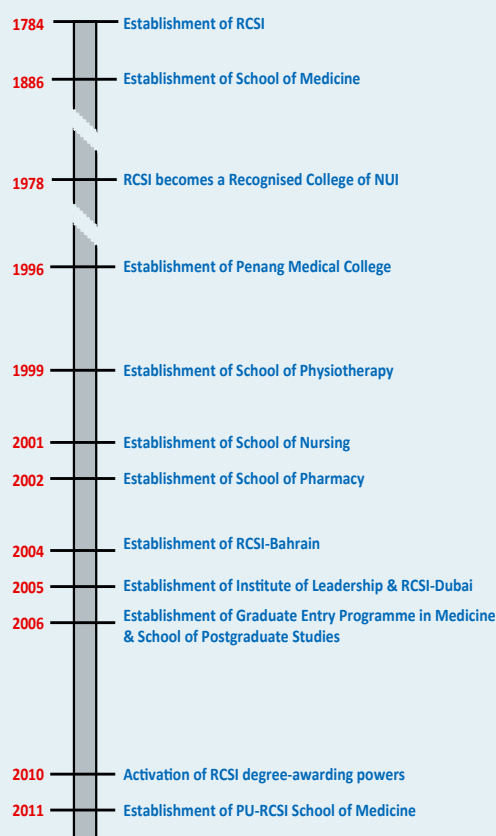
In 2010, the HEA and the NQAI invited seven highly experienced individuals, based nationally and internationally, to form an External Review Panel to conduct the review of the RCSI on their behalf. Collectively, the Panel members contributed their expertise from the medical, quality assurance, operations and management, regulatory and student perspectives. In addition to the Institution's Self-Assessment Report and related documentation, the Review Panel was provided with submissions received as a result of a public consultation undertaken by the HEA and the NQAI. The Review Panel conducted its site visit of the RCSI from 19-21 May 2010 inclusive, and met a wide range of internal and external stakeholders over this time.

The External Review Panel examined the RCSI against the criteria determined by HEA and NQAI and agreed with the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The overall findings of the panel were that:

- The Review Panel considered that the RCSI's application to the Minister for Education and Skills for approval of bye-laws to enact its awarding powers should be granted.
- The Review Panel made a number of commendations and recommendations to the RCSI against the criteria established by the HEA and the NQAI. These were set out in the final report (recommendations are listed in the Appendices to the Terms of Reference in TOR Appendix A). The Panel noted that the national quality assurance body to be established in 2012 (now QQI) would carry out reviews of all institutions under its remit, including the RCSI. Among its functions, this body would externally review the effectiveness of internal quality assurance policies, procedures and structures. The Panel recommended that an external review of the RCSI by the national quality assurance body should take place no later than two years from the time of the granting of awarding powers to the Institution, and should, as part of its remit, establish the level of implementation of the recommendations as set out in their report.

Section 2 Institution Profile (prepared by RCSI)

2.1 Overview and Background



The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) is the second oldest third-level academic institution in Ireland. RCSI is both a health sciences Higher Education Institution with Schools of Leadership, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, and a Postgraduate Training Body in Surgery and related specialties. RCSI is headquartered in Dublin and has international campuses in Bahrain, Dubai and Malaysia.

RCSI was established in 1784 and provided the only training in surgery in Ireland until 1851 (see time-line above). In its early years, it trained over 1,000 surgeons for the Napoleonic Wars across Europe. RCSI is one of four Royal Colleges of Surgeons in Great Britain and Ireland (Edinburgh, England, Glasgow and Ireland). It espouses standards of excellence as its guiding principle. It was established as a non-sectarian institution in fraught historical times and, in 1885, it became the first institution in Ireland to admit female medical students. The RCSI School of Medicine was established in 1886 and RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. RCSI is currently the largest medical school in Ireland and awards medical degrees in Ireland, Bahrain and Malaysia. The RCSI School of Medicine is one of six medical schools in Ireland, the others being located in Cork, Dublin (Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin), Galway and Limerick.

Following an external review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland in 2010, RCSI was granted independent

degree-awarding powers. RCSI also provides undergraduate degree programmes in Pharmacy and Physiotherapy in Ireland, undergraduate Nursing degree programmes in Bahrain and Masters (taught and by research) and doctoral programmes in Ireland, Bahrain, Dubai and Malaysia. In 2012 RCSI launched the ‘3U Partnership’ in conjunction with Dublin City University and the National University of Ireland Maynooth. 3U is a new force in Irish higher education, representing a deep and sustainable partnership between three institutions which enhances their ability to deliver richer educational opportunities for their students and to address major research questions.

2.2 The dual role of RCSI as a higher education institution and a postgraduate training body

A unique aspect of RCSI is its dual role both as a higher education institution and as a postgraduate training body. In fact, it is the only surgical Royal College in these islands to have independent degree-awarding powers. 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 and professional) in surgery and related disciplines. The full extent of this provision is seen on the RCSI-Dublin campus where a wide range of educational and professional training programmes are offered, as summarised in Table 1 (below).

Table 1: Involvement of RCSI Faculties and Schools on the Dublin campus in the provision of programmes of higher education and professional training

RCSI Faculty [Dublin campus]	Component Schools/Institutes	Educational programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate)	Professional training, accreditation and awards
Dentistry			+
Medicine and Health Sciences	Leadership	+	
	Medicine	+	
	Nursing and Midwifery	+	
	Pharmacy	+	+ §
	Physiotherapy	+	
	Postgraduate Studies	+	
Nursing and Midwifery			+
Radiology			+
Sports and Exercise Medicine			+
Surgery [Department of Surgical Affairs]		+	+

§ The Irish Institute of Pharmacy is being constituted at the time of writing.

2.3 RCSI and its national and international network of campuses

RCSI is headquartered in the historic College building on St. Stephens Green in Dublin centre, which is surrounded by a number of other buildings accommodating teaching, research and the Mercer Library. Purpose-built academic centres are located on the campuses of major RCSI clinical sites in Dublin (including Beaumont Hospital, Connolly Hospital, The Children’s University Hospital, Our Lady’s Hospital for Sick Children and the Rotunda Hospital) and in its regional clinical sites (including Drogheda and Waterford).

Beaumont and Connolly Hospitals, the two major acute hospitals in the RCSI network, are now in the process of coming together with RCSI to form the RCSI Academic Health Centre; this will deliver greater co-ordination of advanced clinical services, professional education and training in the greater Dublin area.

While very much an Irish institution, RCSI has been a leader in transnational provision of higher education and training since the mid-1970s. In the intervening years, RCSI has established a network of international campuses located in the Persian Gulf and Malaysia

- **RCSI-Bahrain** – a campus was established in Bahrain in 2004 in temporary facilities, moving in 2008 to a purpose-built campus adjacent to the King Hamad University Hospital. RCSI-Bahrain delivers programmes in medicine, nursing, healthcare management and healthcare ethics and law; the first cohort of students graduated in medicine in 2010. RCSI-Bahrain is a designated awarding body in the Kingdom of Bahrain also.
- **RCSI-Dubai** – established in 2005 and located in Dubai Healthcare City, RCSI-Dubai offers postgraduate education, training and consultancy in leadership, management and patient safety and quality run by the RCSI Institute of Leadership.
- **Penang Medical College (PMC)** – PMC was established by RCSI and University College Dublin (UCD) in 1996 for its first intake of students. Students spend their pre-clinical years in either RCSI or UCD in Dublin before returning to Penang to complete their clinical studies.
- **Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine** – based at Perdana University (PU; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), a new university established as part of a much larger project, the Kuala Lumpur Academic Medical Centre. PU has licensed the RCSI medicine curriculum for delivery by a faculty consisting of seconded RCSI academic staff and local hires. The first cohort of students will graduate in 2016.

Educational programmes in Leadership and Management, Medicine and Nursing are offered across this campus network as summarised in Table 2 (below).

Table 2: Involvement of RCSI international campuses in the provision of programmes of higher education (undergraduate and postgraduate) in the health professions

International campus	Leadership and management	Medicine	Nursing
RCSI-Bahrain	+	+	+
RCSI-Dubai	+		
Penang Medical College (Malaysia)		+	

The postgraduate faculties of RCSI are involved in offering short skills-based training courses and professional examinations in a range of disciplines at these locations also.

2.4 Educational awards and programme information

RCSI provides a broad portfolio of educational programmes in the health professions at undergraduate and postgraduate level, both within Ireland and overseas. Among these are examples of local provision (in Ireland), collaborative provision within Ireland, transnational non-collaborative provision and linked provision as summarised below:

Table 3: A summary of higher education programmes categorised by mode of provision and NFQ level

Provision mode	Number of programmes	NFQ level(s)
Local provision [RCSI-Dublin]	59	6 - 10
Non-collaborative transnational provision		
RCSI-Bahrain	8	7 - 9
RCSI-Dubai	4	9
Collaborative provision		
3U Partnership	1	9
Other (Ireland and overseas)	9	8 - 10
Linked provision (Ireland)	1	9
Overall	82	6 - 10

Detailed listings of RCSI programmes under these four heading are provided in Tables 11 – 14 (see TOR Appendix E below).

2.5 Degree-awarding provisions for educational awards

RCSI has been a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) since 1978 and NUI degrees have been awarded to its graduands since that time. In October 2010, the Minister for Education and Skills commenced the RCSI independent degree-awarding powers provided for in the RCSI (Charters Amendment) Act, 2003. This degree-awarding power enhances the status of RCSI in the overseas markets from which it attracts many of its students. Equally, the visibility and stature of NUI degrees is also of considerable reputational and historic advantage in some of these markets. In recognition of these considerations, Schedule 3 (9) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 inserted a new section into the Universities Act 1997 (Section 47A) which provides:

- that degrees and qualifications of RCSI...shall be degrees and qualifications of the NUI...where
 - they are approved by the NUI
 - RCSI is a Recognised College of the NUI
- that, should RCSI cease to be a Recognised College of the NUI, degrees and qualifications issued prior to the cessation of the relationship with NUI will remain degrees and qualifications of the NUI.

Arising from these provisions, RCSI will continue to award all of its degrees through the NUI with the sole exception of the degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) *honoris causa*, which is awarded once annually under the Institution's own degree-awarding powers.

2.6 Accreditation of educational awards in the health professions in Ireland and overseas

Since it operates primarily in health professions education, the educational awards of RCSI are subject to a high level of scrutiny by the statutory professional accrediting bodies in Ireland and overseas. Details of these accreditation processes are set out in Table 4 (below).

Table 4: Accreditation of RCSI educational awards in the health professions in Ireland and overseas

Discipline	Ireland		Bahrain		Malaysia	
	Accreditation body	Cycle length; last review	Accreditation body	Cycle length; last review	Accreditation body	Cycle length; last review
Medicine	Irish Medical Council	5 years; 2011			Malaysian Medical Council and Irish Medical Council	Variable; 2013
Nursing	Irish Nursing Board (An Bórd Altranais)	5 years; 2012	Irish Nursing Board (An Bórd Altranais)	5 years; 2012	N/A	-
Pharmacy	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland	5 years; 2012	N/A	-	N/A	-
Physiotherapy	Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists	5 years; 2008	N/A	-	N/A	-

In addition, the overseas campuses of RCSI are subject to regular quality reviews by the local State agencies responsible for quality assurance in higher education as summarised in Table 5 (below).

Table 5: Institutional and Programmatic Reviews on RCSI overseas campuses

Location	Agency	Review type	Cycle (years)
Kingdom of Bahrain	Higher Education Review Unit	Institutional Review	5
	Quality Assurance Agency for Education and Training	Programmatic Review	5
United Arab Emirates (Dubai, Sharjah)	Commission for Academic Accreditation	Institutional and Programmatic Review	5
Malaysia	Malaysian Qualifications Agency	Institutional and Programmatic Review	5

2.7 Postgraduate training and professional awards

The postgraduate faculties of RCSI deliver programmes of education and training in fulfilment of requirements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and in preparation for professional examinations and professional practice in the relevant specialties

- **Dentistry** – the Faculty of Dentistry is the professional and academic body for dentistry in Ireland. It is responsible for the delivery of training programme and for administering the examinations leading to a number of professional qualifications: the Diploma in Primary Care Dentistry, the Membership and Fellowship in General Dental Surgery and the Membership and Fellowship of the Faculty of Dentistry of RCSI.
- **Nursing and Midwifery** – the professional and academic body for nursing and midwifery in Ireland. The Faculty offers programmes of postgraduate education and training leading ultimately to the Fellowship of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery of RCSI.

- **Pharmacy** – RCSI has been contracted by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland to facilitate the establishment of the Irish Institute of Pharmacy. The Institute, which will commence operation during 2013, will be responsible for overseeing the establishment and operation of a new CPD system, and for driving the development of pharmacy practice to ensure that it meets the emerging needs of patients and the wider healthcare system.
- **Radiology** – the Faculty of Radiologists is the professional and academic body for radiology in Ireland. The Faculty is recognised by the Department of Health and Children as the appropriate body to give professional advice on radiology matters through the Irish Medical Council and is responsible for the accreditation of hospitals for radiology and radiation oncology teaching. The Faculty also administers the examinations for the Fellowship of the Faculty of Radiologists in Clinical Radiology of RCSI.
- **Sports and Exercise Medicine** – the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine is the professional and academic body for sports and exercise medicine in Ireland, and it is a joint Faculty of RCSI and of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. It is recognised by the Minister for Health and Children and the Medical Council as the competent body in the State for the purpose of granting evidence of satisfactory completion of specialist training in Sports and Exercise Medicine.
- **Surgery** – the professional and academic body for surgery in Ireland. The Department of Surgical Affairs is accredited by the Irish Medical Council to deliver postgraduate surgical training in Ireland, for accrediting Training Posts in Irish hospitals, for certifying trainees who have satisfactorily completed its Basic Surgical Training and Higher Surgical Training programmes, and for assessing the training and competence of non-EU surgeons who wish to work in Ireland on behalf of the Irish Medical Council (IMC). The Department is the designated body on behalf of the Irish Medical Council to administer the Professional Competence Scheme for both Surgery and Emergency Medicine. In addition, the Department administers within Ireland the Intercollegiate Membership and Fellowship professional examinations of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland.

2.8 Accreditation of professional awards and postgraduate training in Ireland and overseas

The postgraduate Faculties of RCSI, in common with all other Postgraduate Training Bodies in Ireland, have long been recognised as the professional and academic bodies for their cognate disciplines by the Irish Medical Council (IMC). The Medical Practitioners Act (2007) empowered the IMC to conduct periodic reviews of the Postgraduate Training Bodies and the first cycle of these reviews commenced in 2011. The RCSI Department of Surgical Affairs was the first RCSI Faculty to be reviewed; this review, which took place in 2012, resulted in the unconditional reaccreditation of the Faculty. The other postgraduate Faculties will be subjected to similar reviews in the next three year period. In addition, because the professional examinations leading to the Intercollegiate Membership and Fellowship in Surgery are run by the four Royal Colleges operating as a consortium, they are subject also to regular review and accreditation by the General Medical Council (UK).

2.9 RCSI Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan

The RCSI Senior Management Team carried out an extensive consultation exercise during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2012 with over 200 staff, students and professional teaching

partners to define the RCSI Mission, Vision and Values which underpin the College's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 entitled 'Excellence and Growth':

- **Mission** – To educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health
- **Vision** – To be recognised internationally as a leading centre for professional education, research and innovation in healthcare
- **Core values** – Respect, Collegiality, Scholarship and Innovation

The Strategic Plan 2013-2017 addresses five priority themes:

- Excellence in education
- Leadership in international medical education
- Enhanced organisational capabilities
- Impactful research and innovation in health sciences and education
- Strong strategic partnerships

One of the key enablers in progressing these priorities is the College's involvement in the 3U Partnership which combines the educational, research and internationalisation expertise and experience of RCSI, Dublin City University and NUI Maynooth.

2.10 RCSI governance and management structures

RCSI is both an independent degree-awarding institution and a surgical Royal College. Two high-level governance boards were established in early 2011 to govern these domains of activity in parallel:

- The Medicine and Health Sciences Board (MHSB) is the governing body responsible for all degree-awarding educational activities of RCSI
- The Surgical and Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB) is the governing body responsible for the postgraduate training, competence assurance and professional examination activities of RCSI

The governance structure of RCSI is summarised in Figure 1. MHSB and SPFB report to the College Council, the sole governing body of RCSI under the terms of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003 and earlier Charters. However the Council has delegated its overall authority to the MHSB and SPFB in all save for a small number of reserved matters. The RCSI Senior Management Team reports, through the Chief Executive Officer, to Council.

2.11 Approach to Quality

Delivering on the Mission and Vision of RCSI depends crucially on an all-pervasive culture of quality in which responsibility for the quality of the student experience, and for continuous quality enhancement, is shared by all staff. The RCSI Quality Policy is a statement of the principles that inform this quality culture:

- *RCSI is committed to ensuring to deliver a quality educational experience to students, that supports staff to realise their full potential within the organisation and that provides an excellent standard of service to our stakeholders.*
- *As one of Ireland's leaders in the area of transnational education provision, RCSI is committed to ensuring that students based on our overseas campuses receive a learning experience which is equivalent to that of students based at RCSI-Dublin.*
- *The maintenance and enhancement of quality is the responsibility of every member of RCSI staff.*

- *RCSI is committed to robust, transparent processes and procedures for ongoing quality assurance and quality enhancement of academic programmes, Schools and Support Units both in Ireland and overseas.*
- *Institutional research, the gathering of quantitative and qualitative data to support evidence-based quality assurance and quality improvement processes, is central to RCSI operations. In this regard, particular value is placed upon the views of students, staff and external peers. The views of students and staff are sought through regular surveys. External views derive from the involvement of external examiners in all programmes and the inclusion of external members in all review panels.*
- *RCSI is committed to working constructively with other Irish higher education institutions, and with statutory regulatory bodies in Ireland and overseas, to maintain and enhance the reputation of Ireland as an education provider.*
- *The RCSI quality policy supports, informs and responds to the College's institutional strategy, identifying as core values of RCSI the quality of the student experience, continuous quality enhancement in all of our activities and the quality of our contribution to our stakeholders and to the communities in which we work across the world.*
- *The RCSI quality policy is guided by the overarching Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area¹ and by the relevant national legislation in Ireland and in the other jurisdictions within which we operate.*

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 QC membership comprises seven members currently: the Chief Executive Officer of RCSI [Chair], a representative of MHSB, a representative of SPFB, the RCSI Students' Union President, the Chair of the RCSI-Bahrain Quality Assurance Committee, the Chair of the Perdana University Quality Assurance Committee and an external member.

The RCSI Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) is the executive function of the Quality Committee and of its sub-committees. The role of the QEO is to support the implementation of the RCSI quality policy by co-ordinating all relevant activities, primarily a rolling programme of internal QA/QI reviews of Schools and Academic Support Units and of Institutional Reviews of RCSI international campuses, and by collecting the data needed to allow the Quality Committee to assure the quality of RCSI operations.

2.12 Staff profile

RCSI staff are concentrated mainly on the Dublin and Bahrain campuses with much smaller numbers of staff deployed in Dubai and Malaysia. An overall impression of the staff profile at RCSI-Dublin and RCSI-Bahrain is given in Tables 6 and 7 (below). [N.B. These figures are for full-time staff and do not include the significant numbers of associated part-time clinical teaching staff on both campuses.]

¹ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ENQA, 3rd edition, 2009

Table 6: Staff profile for the RCSI-Dublin campus

Job category	Total no.	Male (%)	Female (%)	Nationality		
				Irish	EU	Other
Academic	287	163 (57%)	124 (43%)	243	26	18
Research	294	103 (35%)	191 (65%)	198	72	24
Administration	243	48 (20%)	195 (80%)	215	25	3
Technical support	62	34 (55%)	28 (45%)	58	3	1
Total	886	348 (39%)	538 (61%)	714	126	46

Table 7: Staff profile for the RCSI-Bahrain campus

Job category	Total no.
Academic	38
Administration	43
Technical support	22
Total	103

Learner cohort profile

An overview of the current RCSI learner profile across its main campuses is given in Tables 8 and 9 (below). N.B. These figures do not include participants in professional training programmes offered by RCSI.

Table 8: Learner profile for RCSI - overview

Campus	Undergraduate	Postgraduate (taught)	Postgraduate (research)	Total
RCSI-Dublin	2308	1113	151	3572
RCSI-Bahrain	1113	35	-	1148
Penang Medical College	366	-	-	366
PU-RCSI	136	-	-	136
Total	3923	1148	151	5222

Table 9: Undergraduate learner profile for RCSI

Campus	Medicine	Nursing	Pharmacy	Physiotherapy	Total
RCSI-Dublin	1811	191	207	99	2308
RCSI-Bahrain	650	463	-	-	1113
Penang Medical College	366	-	-	-	366
PU-RCSI	136	-	-	-	136
Total	2963	654	207	99	3923

2.13 RCSI funding model

RCSI is an independent, not-for-profit health sciences institution with charitable status in the Republic of Ireland. The institution operates a primarily self-funding model, with state funding accounting for a very small proportion of income. The financial model is based on the education of a substantial cohort of international students alongside Irish/EU students.

2.14 RCSI relationship with other agencies in Ireland

As an institution involved in the provision of education and training in the health professions in Ireland and overseas, RCSI has extensive contact with a range of agencies in the public sector. The major agencies are listed in Table 10 (below).

Table 10: RCSI relationships with other agencies in Ireland

Sector	Agency
QA/QI and related matters	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Statutory accrediting bodies	An Bórd Altranais (Irish Nursing Board) Irish Medical Council Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
Government Departments	Department of Education and Skills Department of Foreign Affairs Department of Health and Children Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Employment
Irish Health Service	Health Service Executive
State enterprise agencies	Enterprise Ireland Forfás
Research Funding Agencies	Health Research Board Science Foundation Ireland Various research charities

Section 3 Objectives and Criteria

3.1 Review Objectives and Criteria

Objective 1 To support institutional strategic planning, governance and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement in the context of RCSI's role as an independent degree-awarding institution and in light of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. The main aim of this objective is to consider the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in the context of planning, governance and strategy, taking into consideration the dual roles of the RCSI as a designated awarding body and a surgical Royal College.

The review will also evaluate the extent to which the RCSI has implemented the strategically linked recommendations made by the review panel in 2010. Particular attention will be given to the recommendations made by the panel on governance. The key recommendations of the panel are highlighted in TOR Appendix A.

<i>Criteria</i>	<p>Key considerations in the context of this objective include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the vision for the institution and its relationship to quality assurance systems - the engagement of the governing body in strategic planning and quality assurance management - the role of quality management in institutional strategic planning, management and operations management - the quality assured procedures for underpinning strategic and operations management decisions using external and internal information
<i>Objective 2</i>	<p>To support the institution in meeting its responsibility for the operation of internal quality assurance procedures and reviews that are clear and transparent to all their stakeholders, and which provide for the continuing evaluation of all academic, research and service departments, national and transnational, and their activities, as outlined in Part 1: ESG. To provide evidence that RCSI continues to engage with national, European and international guidelines and standards (guidelines listed below), particularly in accordance with the Bologna process.</p> <p>A further key element of this objective is to support the institution in meeting its responsibility for quality assurance arrangements in collaborative and transnational provision.</p>
<i>Criteria</i>	<p>In line with practice in the Irish higher education sector generally, and Ireland's commitment to the Bologna Process, the criteria used here are the standards from Part 1 of the European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions. These criteria should be considered in conjunction with the accompanying guidelines as set out in Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (3rd ed. 2009), pp. 16-19 (see TOR Appendix B for a summary). These guidelines provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards.</p> <p>The review will also evaluate the extent to which the RCSI has implemented the strategically linked recommendations made by the review team in 2010. Particular attention will be given to the recommendations made by the team on quality assurance and enhancement.</p>
<i>Objective 3</i>	<p>To evaluate the extent to which RCSI planning, structure and systems support its responsibilities as an awarding body with qualifications recognised by the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), including an evaluation of the quality assurance arrangements for awards made by RCSI and NUI in the context of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012</p>
<i>Criteria</i>	<p>The criteria for this are intended to assist the examination of RCSI's role, acting as an awarding body and as a recognised college of the NUI, in implementing QQI (NFQ) policies and procedures for access, transfer and progression. The criteria derive from Policies, Actions and Procedures for</p>

Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners, National Framework of Qualifications, 2003. (See TOR Appendix C)

3.2 Basis for review criteria

To meet the review objectives, the review criteria will be informed by Institutional Review practice within the Irish higher education system, and by the standards and guidelines for quality assurance agreed by the Ministers of the Bologna signatory states. The primary basis for the review is the IRIU review process [ref. Institutional Review of Universities (IRIU) Handbook (2009)]. This will be augmented by criteria and guidelines derived from the following:

- Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB):
 - Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education (2009);
 - National Guidelines of Good Practice for the Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes (2012)
- Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC):
 - Policy on Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training (2007);
 - Supplementary Guidelines for Institutional Review (2008);
 - Supplementary Guidelines for the Review of Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Procedures (2008)
 - Policy for Collaborative programmes, Transnational programmes and Joint Awards (Revised 2012)
- Irish Higher Education Quality Network:
 - Principles of Good Practice in Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement for Higher Education and Training (2005);
 - Principles for Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Procedures in Irish Higher Education and Training (2007);
 - Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions (2009);
 - Draft Guidelines for Transnational and Collaborative Provision; Consultation Document 2012 (v. 8/10/12)
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA): Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – 3rd Edition (2009)
- UNESCO/OECD: Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education (2005)

Section 4 Review Process

4.1 Process and timeline for the review

The primary basis for the review process is the existing QQI (formerly IRIU) approach. Given the unique status of the RCSI in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, as a designated awarding body that is not a previously established university, the IRIU process will be augmented and elaborated, where necessary and appropriate, by the QQI (formerly HETAC) review process.

In line with best national and international practice, the review process will consist of the following elements:

- agreement of terms of reference for the review between the QQI executive and RCSI
- an institutional self-evaluation review process resulting in an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (referred to as ISER henceforth) to be prepared by the RCSI addressing the agreed objectives, criteria and terms of reference. It is recognised that, given time constraints, RCSI has already commenced preparations for a review of effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements based upon the seven elements of the European Standards and Guidelines
- following consultation on any potential conflict of interest, an expert Review Team will be appointed comprising national and international representation to conduct the review process
- completion of an ISER by RCSI
- a review of the RCSI ISER by the expert team and consideration by the team of any other information they might consider relevant
- a planning and site visit to RCSI by the expert team
- preparation of a review report by the expert team for submission to QQI, which will include findings and recommendations in relation to the objectives as set out in this terms of reference
- preparation of an institutional response, including a plan with timeframe for implementation of changes, if appropriate
- consideration of the review report by QQI together with the institutional response and the plan for implementation of changes, if appropriate
- publication by QQI of the review report and RCSI response
- a published follow-up report by RCSI

Timeline	Action or milestone in the process	Actor/s
9-10 months before team visit	Agreed timeframe for Institutional Review process	QQI and RCSI
Approx. 6-9 months before team visit	Terms of Reference established, following consultation with RCSI and published on the QQI website	QQI
Approx. 6-9 months before team visit	Confirmation of appointment of Review Team members and confirmation of any declarations of conflict of interest	QQI
3 to 6 months before team visit	Completion of the ISER	RCSI
12 August 2013	Submission of the ISER and other supporting documentation to QQI for distribution to the Review Team	RCSI
Approx. 8 weeks before site visit	Training of Review Team members for institutional review	QQI
Approx. 7 weeks before site visit	Feedback by Review Team members on initial impressions of the ISER	Review Team
Approx. 7 weeks before site visit	Pre-visit planning visit between Review Team representatives, QQI and the RCSI	Review Team/ QQI/RCSI
21-25 October 2013	Site visit to RCSI by Review Team (4-5 days approximately) Preliminary (oral) feedback on findings by the Review Team	Review Team/ QQI/RCSI
20 January 2014	Draft report on findings of the Review Team sent by QQI to RCSI for factual accuracy	QQI
3 Weeks following receipt of draft report	RCSI response to QQI with any factual corrections required	RCSI
2-4 Weeks following receipt of factual accuracy response	Final report on findings of team sent by QQI to RCSI	QQI
6-8 weeks following receipt of report	Response by RCSI to QQI including plan with timeframe for implementation of changes, if appropriate	RCSI
Next available QQI Board meeting	Consideration of report and RCSI response by QQI board Publication of report and response on website once adopted	QQI/RCSI
12 months after adoption	Follow-up report by RCSI to QQI	RCSI

4.2 Role of QQI in Review

In accordance with the functions set out in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, sections 35 and 84, QQI will:

1. Publish terms of reference for the review of RCSI
2. Contact, confirm and appoint Review Team members
3. Facilitate the review process
4. Provide RCSI with advice on process and criteria
5. Support the review activities of the team and advise the team on criteria and QQI policy
6. Act as a point of contact between the team and RCSI
7. Organise visits in co-operation with the team and the RCSI

8. Provide training to the team
9. Edit reports for approval and publication
10. Approve the findings set out in the review report and the response of the Institution
11. If required, issue directions to RCSI and agree a schedule for their implementation
12. Publish the review report and the response of the institution

4.3 Review Costs

Parameters around costs will be agreed at the outset of the review process. In particular, the relative responsibilities of RCSI and QQI in bearing review costs need to be agreed early on. QQI are currently developing a policy on fees for reviews. QQI will ensure that RCSI is briefed on the emerging policy and cost implications throughout the process.

TOR Appendix A- List of recommendations from the 2010 Review of RCSI in relation to the commencement of its degree-awarding powers

Extracts from the External Review Panel Report, July 2010

Review Criterion 1: The Operation and Management of the RCSI

The Panel wishes to make the following recommendations to the College:

- The RCSI requires a governance model that, in structure and process, encourages and facilitates positive and proactive institutional development, along with relationship-building strategies focused on stakeholders (including staff and students), on markets and on sustained revenue generation. Governance structures currently in place at the RCSI may not be appropriate for the challenges the College will face in assuming the role of a degree-awarding institution, or to succeed in a potential period of financial instability. The current opaque role of the Council makes it less evident that the corporate governance structures are clear, transparent and consistently applied both in relation to specific functions and to the particular responsibilities attached to them.
The Panel strongly supports the RCSI governance committee in its endeavours to amend the governance structures, including amending the role and membership of the Council. An in-depth review by the College of the membership and role of the Council is essential. The changes arising from such a review could strengthen the RCSI's ability as a degree-awarding institution, to demonstrate accountability to the wider public. The Panel recommends therefore that the RCSI should engage in public consultation as part of the process of amending its governance structures. An amended governance model will emphasise the centrality and importance of the attitudes, values and expectations of RCSI's extensive body of internal and external stakeholders and has a symbolic importance, even if many or all of the functions of the Council are delegated to boards. Such a structure will promote a more consensual understanding of the policies of the College and will promote a spirit of collaboration with stakeholders. The Panel considers that such an improved governance structure can contribute to strengthening the high-level governance of the RCSI; to reinforcing transparency and public accountability; and to clarifying the governance of the degree-awarding function of the College.
- The RCSI should ensure that its corporate governance policies and procedures are informed by best national and international practice.
- The RCSI should consider changing the designation of CEO to a title more in keeping with comparable positions in other Irish higher education institutions.
- Although staff generally expressed satisfaction with current resource allocation strategies, the panel recommends that more formal and robust processes on resource allocation should be put in place. The development of policies in this area will support the allocation of resources in an effective and equitable manner. Such an approach should significantly contribute to continuous quality improvement within the College.
- The RCSI faces challenges and opportunities surrounding its business model with regard to sustaining its long-term viability. In this context, the strategy of the College with regard to its involvement in education, research and healthcare service provision abroad, was not wholly evident to the review panel during its review. As research has grown in importance in the College, additional costs have been incurred, and there is a need to generate increasing revenue from tuition from international students;

contracts for management of international clinical institutions; management of local (Irish) endowment; and philanthropic fund-raising. While it is recognised that the international campuses may require a period of investment before seeing a financial return, sustaining this enterprise comes at a substantial opportunity cost. The Panel recommends that the RCSI continues to keep its graduate programmes abroad under review and where appropriate engage external advice to objectively evaluate the return on investment on this business model. Plans to enhance efforts in philanthropy are to be encouraged and more focus here may have a greater return and result in less diversion for the faculty and staff than operating education programmes abroad.

- Assuming all of the functions of an awarding body will require resources and planning. Accordingly, the RCSI should set out a plan and structure for dealing with the additional administrative responsibilities that will ensue once this activity is assumed by the College. In addition, the RCSI should engage with relevant national bodies and institutions to fully understand its additional duties as an awarding body and to put in place systems and processes in order to fulfil these responsibilities.

Review Criterion 2: Education and Training Programmes

The Panel wishes to make the following recommendations to the College:

- As a provider and awarding body the RCSI is expected to develop and operate robust and cohesive internal quality assurance/quality improvement policies, procedures and structures. The effectiveness of these internal policies, procedures and structures will be subject to external review by the national quality assurance body expected to be established in 2011. The Panel considers it essential that the College should give careful consideration to the recommendations below as a means of commencing its preparation for fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard.
- Whilst acknowledging the evident existence of quality within the College, a comprehensive quality culture is not evident across all levels and areas of the College's operations. The core elements of a quality assurance/quality improvement system for the College have only recently been agreed and accordingly have not yet been implemented. The Panel considers it essential that the College should progress the establishment of a Quality Assurance Office within the timeframe it has indicated in its Self-Assessment Report, and develop systematic processes of quality assurance within the College and across its sites, as a matter of priority. This is particularly important in the context of the College as an awarding body and will contribute to ensuring that the College is not only reactive to the needs and requests of learners, staff and external bodies, but that it is also developing its own assurances of quality which supports individual initiative on quality matters. Systematic quality assurance will lead to a greater level of internal cohesion and a capacity to self-evaluate. It will support the institution as it continues to grow and respond to opportunities and will reinforce existing activities.
- The role of the Director of Quality Assurance is crucial to the College's development as it makes the transition to becoming an awarding body and as it prepares to be externally reviewed under the revised national quality assurance arrangements. It is equally important that the College communicates to all staff a clear and well understood remit for the Director of Quality Assurance and his/her office. This should reflect a developed understanding of how this office will interact with the Quality Committee and clarify which aspects of quality assurance are managed centrally and which are managed departmentally; both in Ireland and abroad. The Panel would like

to emphasise that the College will need to consider in this context how it can maintain the advantages of decentralised ownership of quality assurance whilst maximising the benefits to be accrued from more mainstreamed, centralised and strategic quality assurance/quality improvement management.

- The role of the Director of Quality and of the importance and impact of the introduction of systematic quality assurance processes, appropriate to the College's role as an awarding body, must be supported and understood at the most senior levels of the organisation. Quality assurance should inform the organisation's thinking about its governance model and should contribute to its strategic planning.
- Notwithstanding the number of policies and procedures that have been developed incrementally the College must, through the Quality Assurance Office, develop its quality assurance/quality improvement handbook as a matter of priority and in collaboration with staff on all of its sites. The College should consider externally available examples of quality handbooks and should seek to communicate with colleagues in higher education and training to discuss their experiences in this regard. The College should be cognisant of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* and the *UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* in devising its quality assurance/quality improvement handbook. Equally, it will be important to refer to the guidelines and operating principles produced by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland; the quality assurance guidelines and procedures produced by the Irish Universities Quality Board and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council; and the documentation produced by the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN), including the *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions*. Further, in its capacity as a body responsible for its own awards, the College should consider seeking membership of the IHEQN as a means of regularly communicating with other awarding and quality assurance bodies in the State.
- As a national awarding body, the College has a responsibility to ensure that its policies and procedures regarding programme development, approval, delivery and assessment are particularly strong; with an emphasis on ensuring that programmes developed are demonstrably linked to the learning outcomes of the award-types and levels of the National Framework of Qualifications; are taught in a manner that is consistent with the achievement of these learning outcomes; and are assessed in a manner that ensures that learners can demonstrate their attainment of these outcomes.
- With regard to the internal review procedures of schools and non-academic departments and services, which the College shall be establishing as part of its quality assurance/quality improvement procedures, the Panel recommends that the College considers inviting representatives from other higher education institutions to participate in these review groups. This would enable a very useful exchange, whereby the College has the benefit of perspectives from disciplines in which it does not engage, and the external party has the opportunity to learn about the quality systems which the College is developing.
- The College should consider how it can communicate in more detail with its international partners (i.e., Bahrain, Penang and Dubai) regarding the implications of the College becoming an awarding body and the impact this will have on learners, staff and quality assurance/quality improvement processes and structures.

- As detailed above, the range of supports for lecturers within the College has evidently developed over the last number of years. However, there appears to be an absence in the current provision of support on more fundamental issues, such as effective delivery of material, the design of appropriate assessment, and the relationship between these elements and programme/module learning outcomes. As the College moves to the status of having its own awarding powers, the building of capacity within the College on these issues will be crucial in order to ensure that appropriate standards are set and maintained. The Panel recommends that consistent and transparent arrangements are put in place for the training and support of teaching staff.
- Whilst the Panel is fully supportive of the rebalancing of promotion opportunities in line with the College's focus on education and training as well as research, the College should consider how to make more transparent its criteria for establishing effective teaching and learning.
- Whilst it is evident that equality of opportunity for students and staff is promoted and achieved, the RCSI should undertake to ensure that gender equality is evident across all the activities of College.
- Action taken in response to issues raised in student feedback questionnaires should be documented so that the operational impact of student feedback mechanisms is recorded and clear.
- Under the ESG, there is a requirement that institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities. The Panel recommends that RCSI ensures that key indicators are systematically applied across all of its programmes and activities in order to fulfil this requirement.
- RCSI should ensure that it regularly publishes up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about all the programmes and awards offered by the College.

The Panel makes the following additional recommendations to the RCSI, the HEA, the NQAI and the Department of Education and Skills (for consideration in consultation with the Department of Health and Children, the Medical Council and the Health Services Executive where relevant):

- The Panel recommends that discussions be co-ordinated with the national parties responsible for the professional regulation of awards in Ireland, regarding the extent to which these responsibilities apply to the professional regulation of awards of an Irish awarding body abroad.
- The Panel further recommends that the conditions, if any, regarding an Irish awarding body making awards abroad which it does not award in its home country, should be clarified.

Review Criterion 3: Research Activities and their relationship to programmes of education and training leading to awards at master's and doctoral level

The Panel wishes to make the following recommendations to the College:

- The Panel concurs with the RCSI that the College's research activities are key to the reputation and standing of the College both nationally and internationally. The Panel advises the College to put in place additional metrics and benchmarks against which to assess the research capabilities and outputs of the RCSI against best practice nationally and internationally.

- The Panel understands that research activity should contribute to Ireland's overall national objectives for higher education and research, in particular those set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) and other key policy documents that have been adopted by Government, such as the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (SSTI), the National Skills Strategy, the Report of the Enterprise Strategy Group, Building Ireland's Smart Economy (2008) and the Report of the Innovation Taskforce (2010). The overarching principle is to contribute to the creation of a strong, world-class higher education and research system which address the needs of Irish society and economy and our role in the development of the European Research Area. In this context the Panel recommends that the research activity at the RCSI should be concentrated in areas of specific expertise through sustained investment and the institutional strategic plan should be at the cornerstone of its research strategy. It is recommended that the RCSI should concentrate on its existing strengths and on specifically identified areas of new and emerging potential areas of interest. Furthermore, as Ireland is a small country, the RCSI should seek to continue its research activity in a manner which promotes effective strategic collaboration between itself, other higher education institutions and other relevant partners.
- Given the expansion of the College over recent years, the Panel recommends that the RCSI puts in place a comprehensive research strategy across all campuses and faculties. This institutional strategy should include plans to extend research activities and research-led teaching to its international campuses. Structural integration across the College's various research institutes should also form part of the strategy.
- In light of the changing national funding environment and potentially diminishing funds, it is important that RCSI considers as part of its research strategy how research will be funded over the coming years. The Panel strongly supports the RCSI in its resolve to attain 15-20% of its research funding from philanthropic sources.
- The RCSI's plans to strengthen and develop strategic partnerships in the research field are supported by the Panel. It is recommended that the College should seek to broaden its activity in international collaboration. This will serve to augment the College's expertise in international collaboration; give the College an opportunity to extend its reputation internationally; and also assist in identifying additional non-national funding sources.
- The Panel recommends that the strategy put in place for the RCSI Research Institute should be closely aligned with the strategy for research activity throughout the RCSI. This will help to ensure that this important initiative, and one that is unique to RCSI, is better integrated with the rest of the research agenda within the College. It will also ensure that research expertise across all areas is shared and available throughout the College, and that the Research Institute has the same level of scrutiny and transparency in terms of funding as the other RCSI research programmes.

Further, the panel recommends that research activities under the Medical and Health Sciences Board and the Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board be co-ordinated. The remit of the Quality Office which the RCSI is about to put in place should extend to both Boards.

Review Criterion 4: Participation in the Bologna Process and implementation of related national policies

The Panel wishes to make the following recommendations to the College:

- The average level of knowledge across the College of the purpose and processes underpinning the Bologna Process is relatively low, as is understanding of its relationship with national developments such as the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The Panel considers that the College, including at its most senior levels, should inform itself in more detail regarding the Bologna Process and its objectives and carefully consider how it tangibly applies to national policy developments and in turn to the activities of the College. This knowledge will greatly benefit the College as it goes about formalising its quality assurance/quality improvement handbook and associated structures, as described on pages 19 and 20 [of the full report²]. The Panel further recommends that the Institution should use this increased knowledge and expertise to position itself within these developments more centrally and to connect with other institutions and government bodies in this regard.
- As an awarding body, the College is in a position to influence the future shape and function of the NFQ and to engage more proactively than at present with other State organisations in Ireland offering education and training awards included in the NFQ. The Panel recommends that the College takes this opportunity and that it explores the possibility of having its professional (including surgery and postgraduate professional awards) as well as its academic qualifications recognised through the NFQ. It further emphasises the importance in this regard of its recommendation on page 21 [of the full 2010 report] regarding further staff development in the areas of writing learning outcomes at a programme and module level that articulate clearly with NFQ levels and award-types, and designing suitable teaching, learning and assessment models.
- It is evident that the College supports some student and staff mobility but not necessarily under the umbrella of the Erasmus or Erasmus Mundus programmes. While such lack of engagement is not particular to the RCSI, indeed it is a difficulty shared by medical educators across Europe, the RCSI could do more to stimulate participation in this particular initiative. The Panel therefore recommends that the College should consider developing and promoting the Erasmus exchange programmes from the point of view of the value that can be achieved for the learner in participating in and experiencing such initiatives.
- It is recommended that the College utilise the Irish NARIC services, situated within the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, for direct comparison advice with Irish qualifications.

TOR Appendix B- Part 1: European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Higher Education Institutions

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance

Standard:

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

Guidelines:

Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.

The policy statement is expected to include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the institution;
- the institution's strategy for quality and standards;
- the organisation of the quality assurance system;
- the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality;
- the involvement of students in quality assurance;
- the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

The realisation of the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes; that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes; and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication. All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

Standard:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

Guidelines:

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be

established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

1.3 Assessment of students

Standard:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

Guidelines:

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;

- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff

Standard:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

Guidelines:

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

1.5 Learning resources and student support

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

Guidelines:

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

1.6 Information systems

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

Guidelines:

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates;
- employability of graduates;
- students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the student population;
- learning resources available and their costs;
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

1.7 Public information**Standard:**

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

Guidelines:

In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ENQA, 3rd edition, 2009, pp. 16-19

TOR Appendix C- Extracts from NQAI policy - Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners

Summary

The formal determinations of the Authority in relation to access, transfer and progression are contained in the following main sections of this paper. This summary is included for ease of use, and is not part of the formal determinations.

Vision

The Authority has adopted a composite vision for the promotion and facilitation of access, transfer and progression as follows:

The learner should be able to enter and successfully participate in a programme, or series of programmes leading to an award, or series of awards, in pursuit of their learning objectives. The National Framework of Qualifications and associated programme provision should be structured to facilitate learner entry and to promote transfer and progression, so that learners are encouraged to participate in the learning process to enable them to realise their ambitions to the full extent of their abilities.

Operational principles

Policies, actions and procedures for access, transfer and progression have been developed in accordance with seven operational principles, summarised as follows:

- programmes leading to awards in the National Framework of Qualifications should accommodate a variety of access and entry arrangements
- the issues of access, transfer and progression should be addressed for all learners
- policies should be designed in the context of national policy in relation to equality, with particular regard to the relevant provisions of the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Employment Equality Act 1998
- all awards should have some associated opportunities for transfer and progression.
- awards at the same level in the Framework should be valued equally
- a learner's continued participation in learning may require opportunities for either transfer or progression at any transition-point
- the Framework concept implies that a learner achieving an award is, in principle, eligible to progress to a programme leading to another award at the next level up where there is such an award in the same or a related field of learning, and may be eligible to progress to a higher level than that.

Objectives

In line with the learner-centred vision adopted, the Authority has identified a number of objectives, focused on meeting the needs of learners in the achievement of appropriate recognition for their learning:

- to develop an integrated National Framework of Qualifications
- to identify and realise a network of clearly signposted transfer and progression routes through the National Framework of Qualifications, and to ensure that learners are facilitated to avail of these routes

- to ensure that learners can avail of entry arrangements to all programmes leading to awards in the National Framework of Qualifications that are fair, transparent, and compliant with equality legislation
- to ensure that accurate and reliable information is available to all learners, through a range of approaches and formats that is accessible to a diversity of learners, to enable them to plan their learning on the basis of a clear understanding of the awards available and the associated entry arrangements and transfer and progression routes.

Meeting objectives

The Authority will achieve its objectives in relation to access, transfer and progression by taking a number of actions as follows:

- the development of a National Framework of Qualifications
- the facilitation of change
- the development of policies to supplement the Framework development policies already established and published. These policies will relate to:
 - credit (and recognition of prior learning)
 - transfer and progression routes
 - entry arrangements
 - information provision
- the definition of sets of actions and procedures for the implementation of the policies adopted. Actions and procedures will be defined for:
 - the Authority
 - the awards Councils
 - providers of further and higher education and training.

Framework development

The primary action to be undertaken by the Authority is the development and implementation of a National Framework of Qualifications. The Framework will make it clear how awards relate to one another. This will make it possible for the learner to identify

- how, and at what point, they can enter a learning programme that will lead to an award,
- what possibilities there are for transfer to another programme, and what recognition for transfer they will get for the knowledge, skill and competence they have already acquired,
- what possibilities there are for progression to higher level learning opportunities from their awards.

The facilitation of change

The Authority recognises that changes in systems and structures, and in attitudes, are required to address many of the issues involved in achieving the objectives of enhanced arrangements for access, transfer and progression. An anticipated outcome of the work of the Authority, in general, is a more diverse learner community, with diverse needs, throughout further and higher education and training. It is a policy of the Authority that

changes should be brought about to meet these learners' needs. These changes will impact on many organisations, groups and individuals at all levels in education and training.

The Authority will take a lead role in co-ordinating the cultural changes needed at structural, organisational and individual levels to support the development of the Framework generally and, more particularly, the achievement of the objectives for access, transfer and progression. This role will involve:

- contributing to policy-making at national level
- participation in national and sectoral co-ordinating and development groups
- the establishment, where appropriate, of consortia of relevant stakeholders to enable the development of consensus for change
- participation in debate and discourse on issues relevant to qualifications and to access, transfer and progression, including the organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops as appropriate.

Policies, actions and procedures for access, transfer and progression

The Authority has defined specific policies, actions and procedures through which it will meet its objectives in relation to access, transfer and progression. They are set out under four themes:

- credit
- transfer and progression routes
- entry arrangements
- information provision.

Under each of these headings, the respective roles of key stakeholders – the Authority, the awards Councils and providers – are specified.

Credit

The key policy on credit is the development and implementation of a national approach to credit. This approach will complement the National Framework of Qualifications. It will meet the needs of learners in a lifelong learning context, facilitating credit accumulation, credit transfer and processes for the recognition of prior learning.

It will also accord with on-going developments in Europe in relation to credit systems. Principles and objectives for a national approach to credit are defined. Procedures are set out for providers in relation to the specification of arrangements for the recognition of prior learning.

Transfer and progression routes

Under the heading of transfer and progression routes, it is set out as a policy approach that learners achieving awards should have eligibility to transfer or progress.

Further policies are that all awards should have some associated possibilities for transfer or progression, and that support needs of learners to enable transfer or progression should be met. Procedures are set out for providers in relation to:

- identification of transfer and progression routes

- specification of requirements for transfer and progression
- the need to support learners to enable transfer and progression routes to operate.

Entry Arrangements

Policy approaches are designed to extend accessibility and to focus the concept of access on the achievement of an award (rather than on entry to a programme), through the definition of factors necessary as a basis for successful participation. A further policy concerns the particular issue of entry arrangements to higher education and training by adult learners. Procedures are set out for providers in relation to:

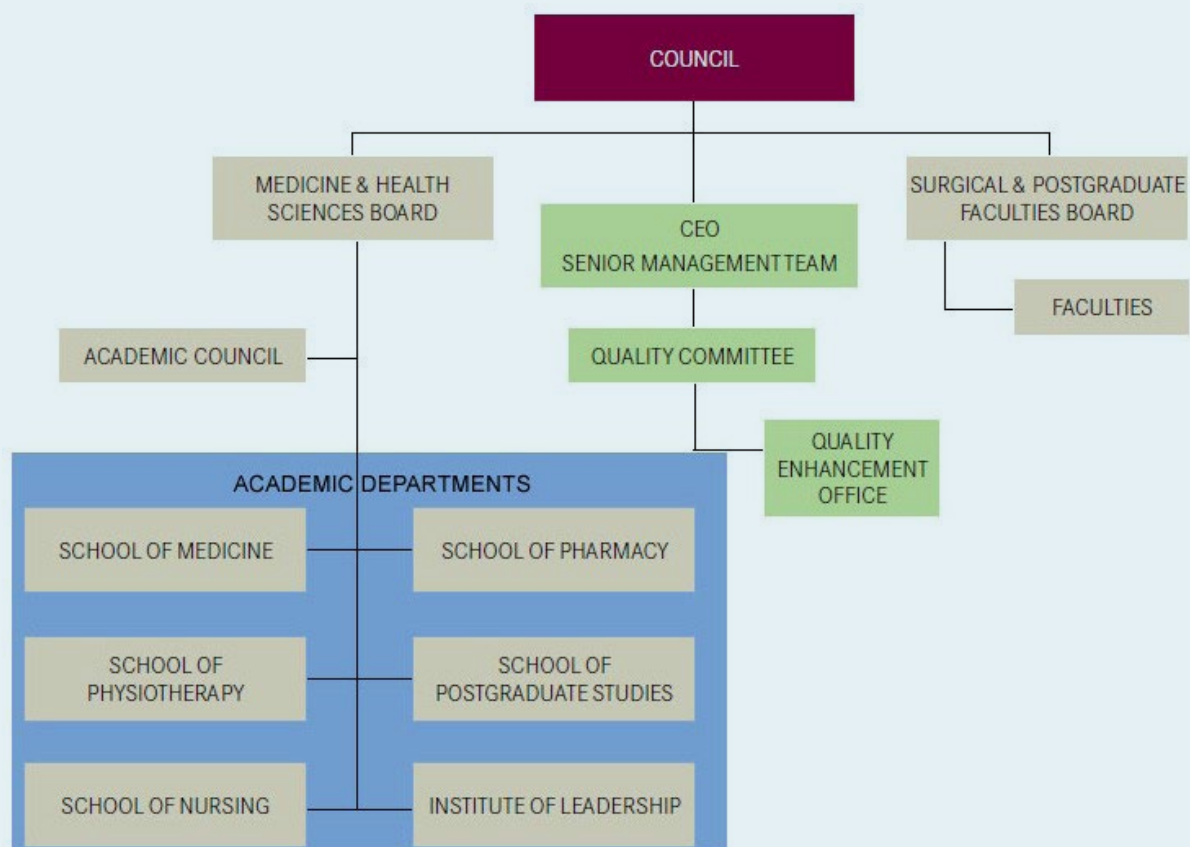
- clear, fair and consistent arrangements for entry
- appeals processes
- statements of the knowledge, skill and competence needed as a basis for successful participation
- clarity about awards demonstrating eligibility for entry.

Information provision

Policies on information provision are designed to ensure that all relevant institutions and organisations contribute to the provision of high-quality, comprehensive and accessible information for learners. Procedures define a set of information protocols to be observed by all providers of education or training programmes.

TOR Appendix D- RCSI Governance Structure

Figure 1: RCSI Governance structure



TOR Appendix E- RCSI Educational Awards

Table 11: RCSI Educational Awards – local provision

Provision local to Ireland			
Programme title	NFQ level	Start	End
Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing Theory [NURS-001-DIP-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing [18 sub-specialty variants]	9	2007 and 2009	N/A
MSc in Nursing [NURS-001-MSC-DUB]	9	2000	N/A
NUI Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing) [NURS-018-CER-DUB]	8	-	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing Leadership Theory [NURS-020-DIP-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
MSc in Nursing (Advanced Leadership) [NURS-020-MSC-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
MSc in Nursing (Advanced Practice) [4 sub-specialty variants]	9	2009 and 2012	N/A
MSc in Nursing (Childrens' Perioperative Nursing) [NURS-001-MSC-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing (Clinical Research) [NURS-023-CER-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing Care of the Elderly [NURS-026-CER-DUB]	9	2012	N/A
Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing (Advanced Practice) [4 sub-specialty variants]	9	2009, 2011 and 2012	N/A
BSc in Nursing [NURS-030-BSC-DUB]	8	1998	N/A
BSc in Nursing (Management) [NURS-031-BSC-DUB]	8	1999	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Healthcare Management [RIOL-001-DIP-DUB]	9	2006	N/A
MSc in Healthcare Management [RIOL-001-MSC-DUB]	9	2006	N/A
Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership and Management Development [RIOL-004-CER-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership and Management Development [RIOL-004-DIP-DUB]	9	2007	N/A
MSc in Leadership and Management Development [RIOL-004-MSC-DUB]	9	2007	N/A
Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership in Health Professions Education [RIOL-005-CER-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership in Health Professions Education [RIOL-005-DIP-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
MSc in Leadership in Health Professions Education [RIOL-005-MSC-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
NUI Diploma in Leadership and Organisation Development [RIOL-006-DIP-DUB]	6	2010	N/A
BSc in Medical Sciences [SMED-001-BSC-DUB]	8	2010	N/A
NUI Diploma in Medical Sciences [SMED-001-DIP-DUB]	7	2010	N/A
MB, BCH, BAO degree(s) in Medicine [SMED-001-MBB-DUB]	8	1978	N/A
Diploma in Tropical Medicine [SMED / legacy award] N.B. This programme has been redeveloped and submitted for accreditation as the MSc in Tropical Medicine with an 'exit award' of Diploma in Tropical Medicine	-	-	N/A

Provision local to Ireland			
Programme title	NFQ level	Start	End
BSc in Pharmacy [PHAR-001-BSC-DUB]	8	2000	N/A
MPharm [PHAR-003-MPH-DUB]	9	2010	N/A
BSc in Physiotherapy [PHYS-001-BSC-DUB]	8	1999	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Neurology and Gerontology [PHYS-002-DIP-DUB]	9	2008	N/A
MSc in Neurology and Gerontology [PHYS-002-MSC-DUB]	9	2008	N/A
DSc (honoris causa) [SPGS-001-DSC-DUB]	10	2011	N/A
MSc (by research) [SPGS-002-MSC-DUB]	9	1978	N/A
MD (by research) [SPGS-004-MD-DUB]	10	1978	N/A
PhD (by research) [SPGS-005-PHD-DUB]	10	1978	N/A
MCh (by research) [SPGS-006-MCH-DUB]	9	1978	N/A
MCh (by taught modules) [SPGS-007-MCH-DUB]	9	2009	N/A
MSc in Human Factors and Patient Safety [SPGS-008-MSC-DUB]	9	2012	N/A
MSc in Healthcare Ethics and Law [SPGS-009-MSC-DUB]	9	2005	N/A

Table 12: RCSI Educational Awards – non-collaborative transnational provision

Non-collaborative Transnational Provision					
Programme title	Location of provision	Type / description of arrangement	NFQ level	Start	End
MSc in Nursing NURS-001-MSC-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain (an international campus of RCSI) http://www.rcsi-mub.com/	This programme is delivered entirely in Bahrain by the academic staff of the RCSI-Bahrain School of Nursing	9	2011	N/A
BSc in Nursing NURS-034-BSC-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This programme is delivered entirely in Bahrain by the academic staff of the RCSI-Bahrain School of Nursing	8	2009	N/A
MSc in Healthcare Management RIOL-001-MSC-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This programme is delivered entirely in Bahrain by the academic staff of the RCSI Institute of Leadership	9	2006	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Healthcare Management RIOL-001-DIP-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This is an exit award of the MSc in Healthcare Management [RCSI-001-MSC-BAH]	9	2006	N/A

Non-collaborative Transnational Provision					
Programme title	Location of provision	Type / description of arrangement	NFQ level	Start	End
MSc in Quality and Safety in Healthcare Management RIOL-002-MSC-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This programme is delivered entirely in Bahrain by the academic staff of the RCSI Institute of Leadership	9	2006	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Quality and Safety in Healthcare Management RIOL-002-DIP-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This is an exit award of the MSc in Quality and Safety in Healthcare Management [RCSI-002-MSC-BAH]	9	2006	N/A
MB, BCh, BAO degree(s) in Medicine SMED-001-MBB-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This programme is delivered entirely in Bahrain by the academic staff of the RCSI-Bahrain School of Medicine	8	2009	N/A
MSc in Healthcare Ethics and Law SPGS-009-MSC-BAH	RCSI-Bahrain	This programme is delivered entirely in Bahrain by a combination of academic staff from RCSI-Dublin and RCSI-Bahrain	9	2009	N/A
MSc in Healthcare Management RIOL-001-MSC-UAE	RCSI-Dubai, UAE (an International Campus of RCSI) http://www.rcsi.ie/dubai	This programme is delivered entirely in Dubai by the academic staff of the RCSI Institute of Leadership, some of whom are based in Dubai	9	2006	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma in Healthcare Management RIOL-001-DIP-UAE	RCSI-Dubai, UAE	This is an exit award of the MSc in Healthcare Management [RCSI-001-MSC-UAE]	9	2006	N/A
MSc in Quality and Safety in Healthcare Management RIOL-002-MSC-UAE	RCSI-Dubai, UAE	This programme is delivered entirely in Dubai by the academic staff of the RCSI Institute of Leadership, some of whom are based in Dubai	9	2006	N/A

Non-collaborative Transnational Provision					
Programme title	Location of provision	Type / description of arrangement	NFQ level	Start	End
Postgraduate Diploma in Quality and Safety in Healthcare Management RIOL-002-DIP-UAE	RCSI-Dubai, UAE	This is an exit award of the MSc in Quality and Safety in Healthcare Management [RCSI-002-MSc-UAE]	9	2006	N/A

Table 13: RCSI Educational Awards –collaborative provision

Collaborative Provision							
Programme Title	Location of provision	Partner Institution(s)	Awarded by RCSI (I) or Joint (J)	Type / description of arrangement	NFQ level	Start	End
MSc in Engineering in Healthcare Technologies	Dublin	RCSI, Dublin City University and NUI-Maynooth	J	This is the first academic programme to be offered by the 3U Partnership http://3upartnership.ie/	9	2013	N/A
MSc in Organisational Change and Leadership Development RIOL-007-MSc-DUB	Dublin	Dublin City University	J	This is a joint programme with dual accreditation (NUI/DCU). The programme is delivered by staff from both institutions for senior staff in Beaumont Hospital	9	2011	N/A
Professional Certificate in Children and Loss RIOL-008-CER-DUB	Dublin	The Irish Hospice Foundation	I	This programme is delivered by staff of the Irish Hospice Foundation and of RCSI	9	2012	N/A
Post-graduate Diploma in Bereavement Studies RIOL-003-DIP-DUB	Dublin	The Irish Hospice Foundation	I	This programme is delivered by staff of the Irish Hospice Foundation and of RCSI	9	2006	N/A
MSc in Bereavement Studies RIOL-003-MSc-DUB	Dublin	The Irish Hospice Foundation	I	This programme is delivered by staff of the Irish Hospice Foundation and of RCSI	9	2011	N/A

Collaborative Provision							
Programme Title	Location of provision	Partner Institution(s)	Awarded by RCSI (I) or Joint (J)	Type / description of arrangement	NFQ level	Start	End
MSc in Industrial Pharmaceutical Sciences PHAR-002- MSC-DUB	Sligo and Dublin	Institute of Technology Sligo	I	The course is delivered jointly by RCSI and IT Sligo by distance learning, with block attendance. The modular structure and credit system facilitate candidates studying for the degree while working	9	2003	N/A
Certificate in Biomedical Sciences SMED-002- CER-DUB	Tralee	Institute of Technology Tralee	I	This programme is delivered by staff of IT Tralee and of RCSI. On successful completion of the programme, students are admitted to the medical degree programme at RCSI	6	2012	N/A
MB, BCh, BAO degree(s) in Medicine SMED-001- MBB-PMC	Dublin and Penang, Malaysia	Penang Medical College (PMC), Malaysia	I	A 'twinning programme'; PMC students spend the first 2.5 years of the 5 year medical degree programme at RCSI-Dublin before returning to PMC to complete their clinical training	8	1997	N/A
MB, BCh, BAO degree(s) in Medicine SMED-001- MBB-PER	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Perdana University (PU), Malaysia	I	The PU-RCSI School of Medicine has licensed the RCSI medicine curriculum for delivery in Kuala Lumpur by a faculty consisting of seconded RCSI academic staff and local hires	8	2012	N/A
PhD (Co-tutelle) SPGS-003- PHD-DUB	Ireland and France	University of Montpellier I, France	J	PhD candidates are supervised in their research jointly by academic staff of RCSI and of the University of Montpellier I	10	2009	N/A

Table 14: RCSI Educational Awards – Linked Providers

Linked Providers				
Programme Title	Linked Provider	NFQ level	Start	End
MSc in Anaesthesia SPGS	The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland http://www.anaesthesia.ie/	9	2002	2013

Appendix 2: Main Review Visit Timetable

Monday 21 October 2013

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
09:00–09.30	Review Team and Institutional Co-ordinator	Team arrival on campus. Welcome, familiarisation of the Team with the campus and rooms. Presentation of day's schedule by Institutional Co-ordinator with names and titles of participants.
09:30–10.00	CEO	Private discussion with the CEO.
10.00–10.15	Private Review Team meeting	
10.15–11.00	Governing Authority <i>Members of:</i> <i>RCSI Council</i> <i>Medical and Health Sciences Board (MHSB)</i> <i>Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board (SPFB)</i> <i>External members of RCSI Council, MHSB and SPFB</i>	Discussion of the mechanisms employed by the Governing Authority for monitoring quality assurance and enhancement within the institution and how it ensures the effectiveness of the procedures used.
11.00–11.30	Private Review Team meeting	
11.30–12.30	Institution Senior Management Team	To discuss institutional mission, goals, strategic aims, direction and recent and proposed developments in quality management and its link to strategic planning. To discuss risk management and change management.
12.30–13.30	Private Review Team meeting and lunch	
13.30–14.30	Heads of Schools <i>School of Pharmacy</i> <i>School of Physiotherapy</i> <i>School of Postgraduate Studies</i> <i>School of Medicine</i> <i>Institute of Leadership</i> <i>School of Nursing</i>	Discussions on strategic management and quality assurance structures, including the roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and management between centres, faculties and schools/departments.
14.30–15.00	Private Review Team meeting	
15.00–15.45	Awards and Qualifications Session <i>Representatives from RCSI and NUI</i>	Discussion about the arrangements for the award of degrees.
15.45–16.15	Private Review Team meeting	

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
16.15–17.15	Quality Assurance Team, Quality Committee Representatives and HR	Discussion on management of quality assurance structures, including the experience of implementing quality assurance throughout the institution; staffing issues, national frameworks and constraints alongside policies and procedures for staff promotion, diversity recruitment and appraisal.
17.15–17.30	Private Review Team meeting	
19.00	Tour and Dinner	Review Team and RCSI Senior Management Team. Discussion of the key issues to be explored during the visit over dinner with representatives from the Senior Management Team.

Tuesday 22 October 2013

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
09:00–09.30	Review Team and Institutional Co-ordinator	Team arrival on campus Presentation of day's schedule by Institutional Co-ordinator with names and titles of participants.
09:30–10.30	External stakeholder representatives: <i>Medical Council of Ireland</i> <i>Irish Society for Chartered Physiotherapists</i> <i>Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland</i> <i>Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland</i> <i>HSE Medical Education and Training Division</i> <i>Connolly Hospital</i> <i>Beaumont Hospital</i> <i>Alumni</i>	Discussion on the engagement of external stakeholders and alumni.
10.30–11.30	Private Review Team meeting	
11.30–12.00	All students representative officers <i>Students' Union</i> <i>Postgraduate Students' Union</i> Class Representatives from Medicine, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy International student representative, RCSI Bahrain	Session on student engagement in the institution, particularly the role of students in quality assurance, strategic planning and decision making processes.
12.00–12.15	Private Review Team meeting	

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
12.15–13.00	Staff from service, academic and support units that recently underwent internal reviews <i>RCSI Library</i> <i>Student Services</i> <i>SARA/Examinations</i> <i>School Postgraduate Studies</i> <i>School of Physiotherapy</i> <i>Institute of Leadership</i>	To discuss the review process, outcomes and impacts of reviews.
13.00–14.00	Private Review Team meeting	
14.00–15.00	Student session with lunch This is a group of undergraduate students who do not act as student representatives consisting of students drawn from a wide selection of modes, national and international: <i>Medicine</i> <i>Pharmacy</i> <i>Physiotherapy</i>	Session on undergraduate student engagement in the institution, particularly the student learning experience.
15.00–15.45	Private Review Team meeting	
15.45–16.30	Student session This is a group of postgraduate students who do not act as student representatives consisting of students drawn from a wide selection of modes, national and international: Postgraduate student representatives from Physiotherapy, Leadership, Pharmacy and Nursing programmes.	Session on postgraduate student engagement in the institution, particularly the student learning experience.
16.30–17.30	Private Review Team meeting	

Wednesday 23 October 2013

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
09:00–09.30	Review Team and Institutional Co-ordinator	Team arrival on campus Presentation of day's schedule by Institutional Co-ordinator with names and titles of participants.
09:30–10.30	Student Experience Session <i>Representatives from:</i> <i>Student Affairs</i> <i>Student Services Office</i> <i>Chaplaincy Service</i> <i>Student Welfare</i> <i>Personal Tutor and Vice Dean</i> <i>Feedback/Feedforward working group</i> <i>Personal Tutor and Module Co-ordinator</i> <i>Associate Vice-Dean and Personal Tutor</i>	Meetings with Directors of a range of student support services and academic staff to discuss involvement in academic and non-academic quality assurance and enhancement processes – including student feedback mechanisms.
10.30–11.00	Private Review Team meeting	
11.00–11.30	RCSI President	
11.30–11.45	Private Review Team meeting	
11.45–12.30	Research Directors and academic staff: research	To discuss the development of research in the institution, research centres, recent centre reviews and support for research active staff and the PG research experience. To discuss staff experiences of research management and supervision within the institution, the relationship between teaching, research and innovation, and the effectiveness of quality management processes for ensuring the quality of the Post Graduate and Post Doc experience.
12.30–13.30	Private Review Team meeting and lunch	
13.30–14.15	Postgraduate and Post Doc Researchers	Discussions with a range of Post grad students and Post-Doc researchers including those that engaged with recent internal reviews, management and feedback processes on the consistency and quality of their experiences within the institution.
14.15–15.00	Private Review Team meeting	

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
15.00–15.45	Academic and developmental staff in the area of NFQ implementation, learning outcomes and assessment. <i>Representatives from:</i> Awards and Qualifications Committee Institute of Leadership Health Professions Education Centre Quality Office, Bahrain Quality Enhancement Office Programme Director	To discuss NFQ implementation in the institution, the implementation and review of learning outcomes and the quality management of assessment.
15.45–16.15	Private Review Team meeting	
16.15–17.15	Senior staff with responsibility for Teaching and Learning <i>Representatives from:</i> Health Professions Education Centre Cycle Director Vice-Dean Postgraduate Surgical Training Programme Director Lecturer Language Support Academic Affairs	To discuss the development of teaching and learning in the institution, reviews and support for teaching and learning.
17.15–18.30	Private Review Team meeting to discuss preliminary findings	

Thursday 24 October 2013

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
08.30–08.45	Review Team and Institutional Co-ordinator	Team arrival on campus. Presentation of day's schedule by Institutional Co-ordinator with names and titles of participants.
08.45–09.15	Student representatives from programmes offered abroad <i>Video Conference link with student representatives from:</i> Perdana University: RCSI Bahrain: RCSI Dubai: Penang Medical College:	Session on student engagement, particularly the student learning experience.
09.15–09.30	Private Review Team meeting	
09.30–10.15	Directors and senior academic staff from overseas collaborative partners <i>Video Conference/ conference call with representatives from:</i> University of Sharjah Perdana University	To discuss arrangements by the institution for ensuring engagement with the quality of provision for staff and students for programmes delivered with collaborative partners.

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
10.15–10.30	Private Review Team meeting	
10.30–11.15	Penang RCSI/UCD Collaborative Programme <i>Penang Medical College (VC link)</i> <i>University College Dublin (UCD)</i> <i>RCSI</i>	To discuss arrangements by the institution for ensuring engagement with the quality of provision for staff and students for programmes delivered with collaborative partners.
11.15–11.45	Private Review Team meeting	
11.45–12.30	Directors and senior academic staff from overseas branch campuses and QA officers from branch campuses <i>Representatives from:</i> <i>RCSI-Bahrain</i> <i>Perdana University (VC link)</i> <i>Institute of Leadership, RCSI-Bahrain (VC link)</i> <i>RCSI-Dubai (VC link)</i>	To discuss arrangements by the institution for ensuring engagement with the quality of provision for staff and students in branch campuses. Session on management of quality assurance structures, including the experience of implementing quality assurance in the branch campus.
12.30–14.30	Private Review Team meeting and lunch	
14.30–15.15	Directors and senior academic staff from national collaborative partners <i>Representatives from:</i> <i>3U Partnership</i> <i>DCU</i> <i>NUIM</i> <i>IT Tralee</i> <i>IT Sligo</i> <i>Irish Hospice Foundation</i>	To discuss arrangements by the institution for ensuring engagement with the quality of provision for staff and students for programmes offered with collaborative partners.
15.15–15.30	Private Review Team meeting	
15.30–16.30	Heads of Postgraduate Faculties <i>Faculty of Dentistry</i> <i>Faculty of Radiologists</i> <i>Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine</i> <i>Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery</i> <i>Surgical Affairs</i>	Discussions on strategic management and quality assurance structures, including the roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and management between centres, faculties and schools/departments.

Friday 25 October 2013

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
09:00–09.30	Review Team and Institutional Co-ordinator	Team arrival on campus Presentation of day's schedule by Institutional Co-ordinator with names and titles of participants.
09:30–10.15	Open session	Possibility to pick up on key themes/ strengths/weaknesses identified in the ISER Possibility to re-meet with specific individuals or groups to finalise discussions.
10.15–10.45	Meeting CEO	Private discussion with the CEO.
10.45–11.15	Private Review Team meeting	
11.15–12.00	Review Team (Parallel meeting)	Preparation for Exit Presentation/Oral Report.
11.15–12.00	QQI Review and Enhancement Manager and Institutional Co-ordinator (Parallel meeting)	Parallel meeting to enable the institution to give feedback to QQI on the conduct of the review team and feedback on their experience of the process.
12.00–12.45	Review Team and QQI Review and Enhancement Manager	Meeting to enable the Chairperson and the Team to rehearse the PowerPoint presentation and confirm the key findings and the experiences of the Team with the Review and Enhancement Manager.
12.45–13.15	Review Team, Review and Enhancement Manager RCSI Senior Management Team RCSI QEO staff	Oral Report - Chairperson gives an oral presentation of the key findings and recommendations of the review team and confirm actions and timescales associated with the finalising and publication of the reports and any follow-up actions (confidential).
13.15–14.30	Review Team Review and Enhancement Manager RCSI Senior Management Team RCSI QEO staff	Informal lunch with the institution before departure.

Appendix 3: Overview of the Institutional Review Process

Introduction

The 2010 review by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) of RCSI in relation to the commencement of its degree-awarding powers, confirmed the degree-awarding powers and recommended, *inter alia*, that an external review of RCSI by the national quality assurance body (established in the 2012 legislation) should take place no later than two years from the time of the granting of awarding powers to the institution, and should, as part of its remit, establish the level of implementation of the recommendations as set out in the 2010 Review. In May 2012, it was agreed that the NQAI executive should advance the preparations for the review with RCSI and agree timelines for the review. Following the establishment of QQI in November 2012 and the concomitant dissolution of the NQAI, preparations for the Institutional Review of RCSI were further advanced by QQI.

The Review Method

The primary basis for this review process is the Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU) approach (now the responsibility of QQI). Given the unique status of RCSI in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, as a designated awarding body that is not a previously established university, the IRIU process is augmented and elaborated, where necessary and appropriate, by the HETAC review process (now undertaken by QQI).

This RCSI Institutional Review process is based on the internationally accepted and recognised principles of:

- i) an institutional self-evaluation report
- ii) an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers
- iii) the publication of review reports, including findings and recommendations, and
- iv) a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

The objectives of the Institutional Review of RCSI are set out in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1).

The Review Team

QQI appointed an independent Review Team to conduct the Institutional Review of RCSI. Review Team members were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to appointment. The institution was also asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to the appointment of the members of the Review Team. The Institutional Review of RCSI is conducted by a six-person team operating under the leadership of the Review Chairperson and consists of carefully selected and trained/briefed reviewers who have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their tasks, including:

- i) a Chairperson
- ii) an international reviewer
- iii) an Irish reviewer

- iv) a student representative
- v) a representative of external stakeholders
- vi) a Co-ordinating Reviewer

Reviewer Training and Deployment

The Review Team received institutionally-specific training in advance of deployment, including briefings about the sector. The focus of the training session was to ensure that all reviewers:

- understand the social, cultural, economic and legal environment that the institution is operating within
- understand relevant statutory requirements placed on Irish institutions in relation to quality, as outlined in the ESG
- understand the aims and objectives of the review process as well as the key elements of the method
- understand their own roles and tasks and the importance of Team coherence and delivering a robust, evidence-based report in a timely manner

Reporting

Two review reports are produced: a brief non-technical summary report and a full review report for specialist audiences. Both reports are prepared by the Co-ordinating Reviewer and are signed off by the Chair following consultation with all review team members. The institution is given two to three weeks in which to comment on factual accuracy and, if they so wish, to provide a 1-2 page institutional response that will be published as an appendix to the review report. The Institutional Review process is completed when the Review Team reports are formally signed off by the QQI Board once satisfied that the review process was completed in accordance with published criteria. Review reports are published thereafter on the QQI website.

Follow-up

One year after the Main Review Visit, the institution will be asked to produce a follow-up report (incorporating the institutional action plan), normally submitted alongside the Annual Institutional Report (AIR) and discussed as part of the Annual Dialogue (AD) meeting with QQI. Within the report, the institution should provide a commentary on how the review findings and recommendations have been discussed and disseminated throughout the institution's committee structure and academic units, and comment on how effectively the institution is addressing the review outcomes. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the institution since the review reports' publication. The institution has flexibility in the length and style of the follow-up report but should address each of the key findings and recommendations presented by the Review Team. The follow-up report will be published by QQI.

If the Review Team identifies in its review report what it considers to be significant causes of concern, particularly in relation to the institution's fulfilment of relevant statutory requirements, QQI will consult with the institution to agree an immediate action plan to address the issue(s), including the timeframe in which the issue(s) will be addressed. The institution will report to QQI every six months on progress against the action plan for the duration of the plan. Where QQI considers that progress in implementing the action plan is inadequate, QQI may, in consultation with the institution, intervene to secure a revision or acceleration of the plan, or to arrange a further review visit, ideally involving most or all of the original Review Team. This process is not expected to be utilised and would only be used in exceptional circumstances where significant failures to meet statutory requirements are found by the Review Team.

Appendix 4: Institution Response to the Report

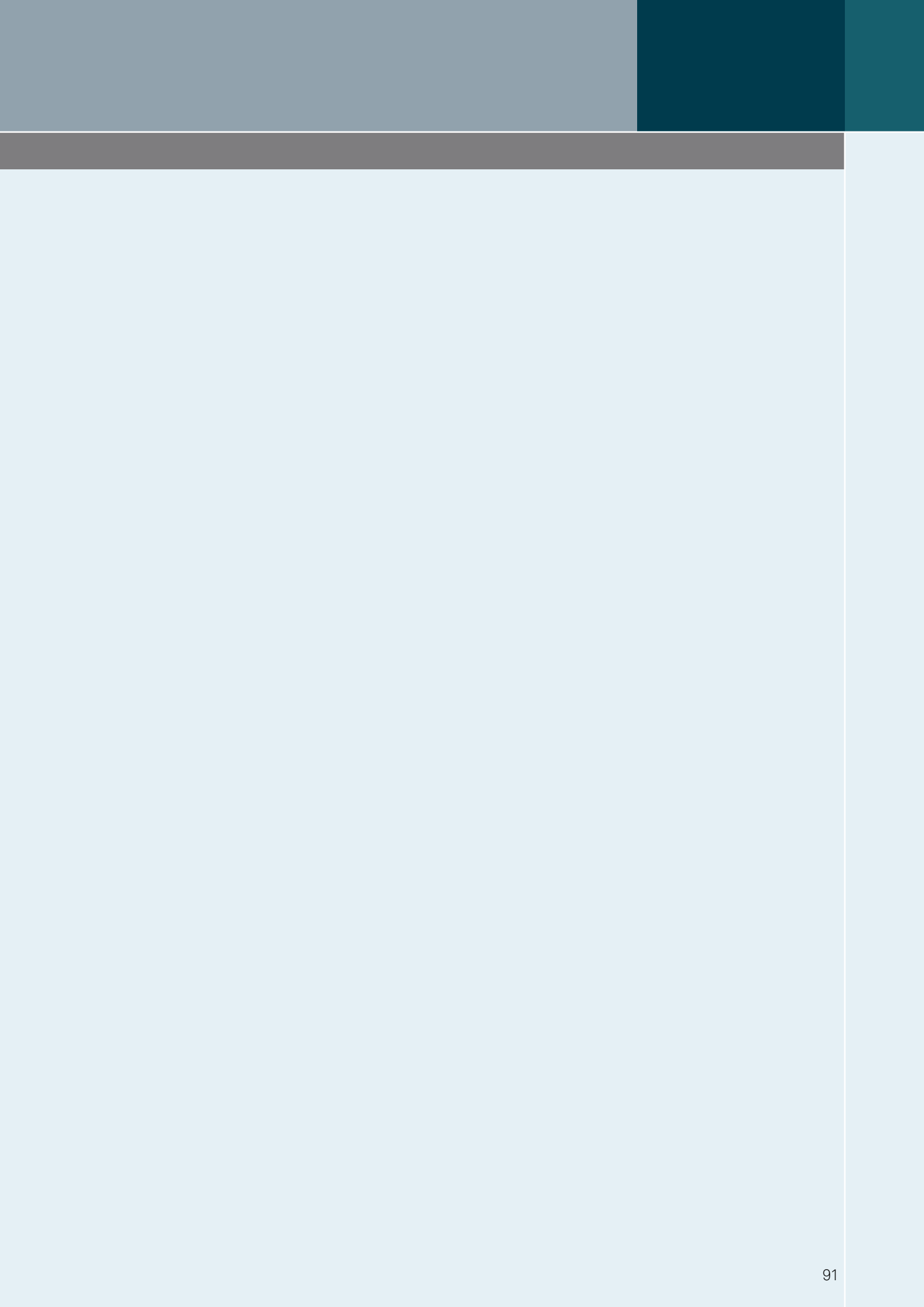


The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) welcomes the Report of the Institutional Review Team commissioned by Quality and Qualifications Ireland. In particular, we welcome the Team's commendation of the initiatives that have been implemented to promote and strengthen quality assurance and quality enhancement processes within the institution since the inception of our independent degree-awarding powers in 2010.

RCSI has undergone significant expansion of its activities both in Ireland and overseas in recent decades. We regard the Team's conclusions in respect of our compliance with our obligations under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the National Framework of Qualifications as validation of our efforts to ensure that we deliver excellence in education and training.

The entire RCSI community is encouraged by the commendations and recommendations made by the Team. Their recognition of our long-standing commitment to student welfare, and to teaching and learning, embolden us to continue to prioritise these aspects of our educational provision. We look forward to addressing the Review Team's recommendations as we review and develop our structures, policies and procedures in the coming years.

RCSI wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the rigour with which the Review Team undertook its role, and the support received from Quality and Qualifications Ireland throughout the Institutional Review process.





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