



**INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW  
CONFERENCE & EVENTS DEPARTMENT  
APRIL 2018**

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

**Peer Review Group Report**

**Conference and Events Department 2018**

**DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET**

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# **1 CONTEXT FOR REVIEW**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This report presents the findings of a quality review of the Conference and Events Department at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), which was undertaken 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

RCSI is the second oldest third-level academic institution in Ireland. RCSI is both [a] a health sciences Higher Education Institution with Schools of Leadership, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Postgraduate Studies, and [b] a Postgraduate Training Body in Surgery and related specialties. RCSI is one of four Royal Colleges of Surgeons in Great Britain and Ireland (Edinburgh, England, Glasgow and Ireland). The RCSI School of Medicine was established in 1886 and 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/Institutes on the Dublin campus, and of three new international campuses (Penang Medical College, RCSI-Bahrain and RCSI-Dubai). Following an institutional review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), RCSI was granted independent degree awarding powers in 2010. In 2011, RCSI entered into a licensing agreement with Perdana University (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) to establish the PU-RCSI School of Medicine. In 2012, RCSI launched the '3U Partnership' in conjunction with Dublin City University (DCU) and the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUI Maynooth). RCSI is ranked in the top two per cent of institutions worldwide in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (2015-2016) and is in the top 50 in the world for 'International Outlook'.

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.

## **1.2 Methodology for Review**

While initially commenced as a quality review of a range of Departments under the leadership of the Associate Director and Head of Communications and Events, in consultation with the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO), it was subsequently decided that each Department would undertake an independent quality review of its activities and processes. A Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was developed by the staff of the Conference and Events Department and finalised in March 2018. The Peer Review Group (PRG) commends the involvement of all the Conference and Events Department staff in the preparation and writing of the SAR.

It is the view of the PRG that the SAR was a clear, honest, accessible and self-critical report on the structures, functions and activities of the Department. The SAR further succinctly outlines a number of challenges currently faced by the Department and includes a number of suggested recommendations and requests for input from the PRG. The PRG felt that the analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) undertaken by the Conference and Events Department was a fair and realistic one and enhanced this aspect of the SAR in particular. The SAR was accompanied online by an extensive range of appendices of supplementary material, which provided valuable context to the PRG prior to, and during the review visit.

Prior to the review visit, the PRG reviewed the SAR and accompanying support material to create a summary document of preliminary comments. At the initial meeting, the PRG members used these preliminary comments to discuss and develop a number of key questions and themes for further exploration during the review visit meetings with respective key stakeholder groups.

### 1.2.1 Purpose of the Review

The self-assessment exercise is a process by which a Unit reflects on its mission and objectives, and analyses critically the activities it engages in to achieve these objectives. It provides for an evaluation of the Unit's performance of its functions, its services and its administration. In line with the RCSI Strategic Plan 2013-2017 'Growth and Excellence' it provides assurance to the College of the quality of the Units' operations and facilitates a developmental process to effect improvement. The fundamental objectives of the review process are to:

- Monitor the quality of the student experience.
- Identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
- Provide an opportunity for Units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
- Encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
- Inform the College's strategic planning process.
- Provide an external benchmark on practice.
- Provide public information on the College's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The College's implementation of its quality procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

### 1.2.2 The Review Process

The key stages in the internal review process are:

1. Establishment of a Self-assessment Committee.
2. Preparation of a SAR and supporting documentation.
3. Site visit by the PRG that includes external experts both national and international.
4. Preparation of a peer review group report that is made public.
5. Development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for implementation of the review report's recommendations (that is made public).
6. Follow-up to appraise progress against the QIP.

### 1.2.3 Membership of the Peer Review Group

The PRG comprised a panel of four peer assessors. Three members of the PRG were external to the RCSI with one member being internal staff of the RCSI. Details of the names, current roles and affiliations of the PRG are as follows:

**Dr. Catherine Maunsell (Chair)**, Associate Professor, Psychology and Human Development, School of Human Development, Institute of Education, Dublin City University (Former Director of Quality Promotion at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9).

**Professor Zena Moore**, Professor and Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, RCSI.

**Mr. John O'Rourke**, Deputy Chief Operations Officer, Campus Life Services, Plassey Campus Centre, University of Limerick.

**Ms. Jillian Wilson**, Head of Central Events, Commercial Revenue Unit, Trinity College Dublin.

The PRG was also joined by **Mr. Mark Collins**, who acted as Technical Writer / Rapporteur for the review.

### 1.2.4 Terms of Reference for the Peer Review Group

The terms of reference of the PRG are to:

- Evaluate critically the SAR and the supporting documentation.
- Verify how well the aims and objectives of the Unit are being fulfilled, having regard to the available resources, and comment on the appropriateness of the Unit's mission, objectives and strategic plan.
- Comment on how well the Unit fits with the strategic plans for the College as a whole.
- Evaluate the Unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as outlined in the SAR.
- Discuss any perceived strengths and weaknesses not identified in the SAR.
- Assess the suitability of the working environment(s).
- Comment on any recommendations proposed by the Unit in its SAR.
- Make appropriate recommendations for improvement, with due consideration of resource implications.

The PRG undertook a quality review visit to the RCSI Conference and Events Department from 23<sup>rd</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. The formal timetable of the review visit is detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. Across the three days of the review visit, the members of the PRG attended all of the meetings jointly. Communications with both the Department and the QEO were very positive throughout the exercise, and staff members were particularly helpful in providing any additional data/support as requested by the PRG at different stages throughout the process. Again, this was much appreciated by the PRG.

The PRG were of the view that the review visit process was appropriate, involving adequate time for discussions with the range of key stakeholder groups and for the PRG to reflect on the discussions. All of the groups met by the PRG responded enthusiastically, engaged in open and frank discussion and provided useful feedback. This was much appreciated by the PRG and commended to the Conference and Events Department and the QEO.

## 2 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE UNIT

Since its origins some three decades ago, the Conference and Events Department has evolved, through a number of restructuring processes, to its current iteration. With a current total complement of eight staff, the Conference and Events Department consists of two teams: (i) Events; and (ii) Bookings.

The Events Team comprises four full-time equivalent (FTE) staff; the Senior Conference and Events Planner, two Conference and Events Planners and the Conference, Sales and Events Executive. In turn the Bookings Team consists of two FTE staff both Events, Bookings, and Switchboard Coordinators. Both teams are led and managed by the Conference and Events Manager who reports to the Associate Director, Head of Communications and Events.

Their areas of responsibility are outlined as follows:

### Events Team

- Managing, planning, executing and delivering College events to the highest standards of excellence;
- Working with key stakeholders to meet the strategic needs of the College through the delivery of events;
- Providing a comprehensive event management service for internal and external clients in line with the strategic objectives of the College;
- Providing advice to other internal stakeholders/Departments running events; and
- Managing the commercial rental of RCSI as a corporate event venue to generate revenue that can be reinvested in the College and to enhance the College's reputation as a prestigious cultural venue and knowledge-sharing forum.

### Bookings Team

- Managing the Ungerboeck venue management and timetabling system;
- Managing of the central venues within RCSI St Stephen's Green campus to serve the academic, educational and commercial needs of the College;
- Providing the first point of contact for all internal colleagues and Units wishing to book venues within the College;
- Managing the allocation of venues for the educational needs of the College;
- Coordinate logistics for VIP visits;
- Providing advice and expertise to internal colleagues and Units hosting events, courses within the College;
- Providing the key point of contact for all service providers within the College; and

- Operating the College switchboard.

Based on the evidence presented to the PRG and the meetings with key stakeholders, both the Events and Bookings teams within the Conference and Events Department were found to work well with each other and also with the wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this review was the unanimous positive feedback and the universal esteem in which the Conference and Events Department and its staff were held by all of the stakeholders who met the PRG during the course of the review visit. All stakeholder groups noted, without exception, the professionalism of the staff of the Conference and Events Department. Stakeholders expressed their admiration as demonstrated in the following selected quotations describing the Conference and Events Department as:

*“One of the nicest, most flexible teams in the College”*

*“Very good leadership, morale, and a quality brand about the Department”*

*“Extraordinary team of people”*

Albeit not an exhaustive list, some further words and phrases used to describe the Conference and Events Department staff were *“highly professional, diplomatic, flexible, efficient, traditional values upheld, courteous, caring, problem solving, excellent, always listening, and responsive”*. It became very clear to the PRG that the staff of the Conference and Events Department were its key resource.

Under the able leadership of the Associate Director and Head of Communications and Events, the Conference and Events Department, while operationally distinct from the Reach, Graphic Design and Web and Communications Departments within RCSI, takes an integrated approach to the provision of a complementary range of services as strategically appropriate.

Given such legacy and continuing connections, to strengthen the identity of the Conference and Events Department as a distinct entity within RCSI, the PRG recommend that the Department articulate their particular vision, role and responsibilities, avail of strategic opportunities to enhance their visibility, and ensure that their location is clearly mapped/signposted within the RCSI. The PRG’s sense of how to embed and communicate the specific role and responsibilities of the Conference and Events Department to the wider RCSI community are considered more fully in Section 6 of this report.

## **2.1 Commendations**

The PRG were impressed with:

- 2.1.1 How highly the Department and the work they do are regarded across all areas of RCSI.
- 2.1.2 The levels of professionalism and brand alignment demonstrated by the whole Department.
- 2.1.3 The sense of teamwork instilled across the whole Department, a team fully committed to service excellence to its diverse client base at all levels.



## **2.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

2.2.1 Enhancement of the visibility of the Department through:

- 2.2.1.1 Consideration of signage to and outside the Department.
- 2.2.1.2 Development of a Service Promise/Charter which is then made visible in a prominent position proximate to the Department.
- 2.2.1.3 Use opportunities available within the relevant RCSI communication channels, such as Grand Rounds, to clarify and promote the role and responsibilities of the Department.

### 3 PLANNING, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The RCSI is currently undergoing substantial and exciting growth in Ireland and internationally, which includes the opening of the new state-of-the-art educational building, 26 York Street, and with further plans underway for the expansion of the RCSI campus footprint. Furthermore, just prior to the PRG's review visit the RCSI had launched *Transforming Healthcare Education, Research and Service: RCSI Strategic Plan 2018–2022*. The quality review of the Conference and Events Department thus offers a timely opportunity for the staff members to reflect on their Department's remit, their individual roles within it and what measures may be appropriate to enhance the planning, organisation and management of the Department in alignment with the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

During the PRG visit it was clear that the Conference and Events Department holds at the centre of its focus the achievement of the strategic mission of the College. Key stakeholder groups perceived the Department, particularly through its leadership, as playing a key role in enabling the achievement of the objectives as set out under the three strategic pillars of the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022. To further underpin the strategic alignment of the Department, with the recently published RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022, the PRG recommends that the Department develop its own five-year strategic plan aligned with that of the College. Furthermore, given the College's growth and expansion together with its ambitious strategic objectives, the PRG recommend that the Department engage in formal consultation with the RCSI Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Management Team (SMT) for the purpose of supporting the Department in their prioritisation of strategic objectives pertaining to conference and events.

While not intended to distract from the Department's focus on the core mission of the College, the PRG recommend the development of a Conference and Events Department business plan which sets out financial, service, and market KPIs, thus affording the Department to monitor its own performance against strategic objectives.

The PRG notes the Conference and Events Department's record of accomplishment in creating process improvements, through their active seeking of feedback from key stakeholders across all levels. Driven not only by the hard work and dedication of the Department staff and their ability to work effectively both as a team and as individuals, a high priority is placed by the Department on building and maintaining good working relationships and providing assistance and guidance to key internal and external stakeholders when required. In turn, at their meetings with the PRG, these key stakeholder groups spoke to their trust in the Department staff's ability, expert knowledge, flexibility, responsiveness and 'can do' attitude.

The PRG were of the opinion that a number of aspects of the Department's operations would benefit from being further formalised.

Currently, the Department has no formal written risk analysis process; however, it was clear, from the discussions with the PRG, that when planning events Department staff were familiar with known risk factors that may affect the Department's operations, and with risks assessed as they occur, particularly in respect of high-profile, set-piece events. The PRG recommend that such risk analysis process, being largely tacit, would benefit from being articulated more explicitly in line with the needs of the Department.

RCSI have appointed a taskforce to address General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and are engaging with the Department in this regard. As there are a number systems for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and registration in use across Alumni, Events, Bookings and Communications, it would be worthwhile ensuring any communications are addressed in a joined-up way to avoid duplication and that permissions are sought for multiple communications across the relevant RCSI departments. Explicitly including GDPR requirements within processes where data is collected or collated will further embed it. A new or amended RCSI Data Protection Policy, Privacy Statements (web or otherwise) introduced as a result of new GDPR legislation should be visible on the Department's website and should outline what information the Conference and Events Department collects on data subjects and how it is processed. It would also be prudent to ensure that all frontline staff who

collate personal data have the necessary training and information available to them regarding GDPR compliance and the processing of personal data under the new regulation.

It is very apparent that the Conference and Events Department deliver to an exceptionally high standard, as borne out in feedback and evidenced in the SAR. However, a formal mechanism through which customers (external and internal) can share constructive feedback and/or make complaints will help support the Department in their pursuit of continuous improvement. It will also help them track trends and support their communications around improvements sought, by providing qualitative and quantitative evidence from stakeholders of the service.

Finally, the PRG recommend that key terms of engagement with relevant stakeholders be more formally articulated, particularly in the light of the role that suppliers of products/services play in the success of the Department's event management functions.

### **3.1 Commendations**

The PRG are impressed with:

- 3.1.1 The alignment of focus within the Department to the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.
- 3.1.2 The Department's commitment to continuous improvement and openness to feedback.
- 3.1.3 The trust displayed by key stakeholders in the Department's ability and expert knowledge, flexibility, responsiveness and 'can do' attitude.

### **3.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- 3.2.1 Development of a five-year strategic plan which details how the Department is aligned with the RCSI Strategic Plan.
- 3.2.2 Development of a business plan which sets out financial, service, and market KPIs while not distracting from the core mission of RCSI.
- 3.2.3 To support the Department's prioritisation of activities, in consultation with the RCSI's CEO and SMT, through defining a rationale, structure and protocol around how conferences and events are selected for inclusion in the College calendar.
- 3.2.4 Further formalise the following:
  - 3.2.4.1 A risk register specific to the needs of the Department and high-profile, set-piece events.
  - 3.2.4.2 The Department's GDPR readiness aligned with RCSI policy and industry best practice.
  - 3.2.4.3 A customer feedback/complaints procedure.
  - 3.2.4.4 Key terms of engagement with relevant stakeholders.

#### **4 FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES**

The PRG commends the Unit on having developed thorough processes associated with activities in the Department evidenced by examples provided in the SAR and the common thread of positive feedback from each stakeholder group. The PRG recommends further development of business processes specifically around the customer/stakeholder journey which should set out to capture the extensive tacit knowledge existing in the Department. This recommendation is evidenced by the common reference to specialist and expert knowledge surrounding conference and event protocol and processes at RCSI held by key members of the team. Capturing important tacit knowledge as part of the Department's key business processes will enhance the ability to transfer expertise to other team members and ensure robust business processes are aligned with the culture and strategic aims of RCSI into the future.

The PRG commends the wide scope and breadth of activity which is delivered at such a high standard by the Conference and Events Department. This is evidenced by the very honest description of the scope of the Department in the SAR and the unanimous positive feedback and high appreciation by all stakeholders at RCSI. The PRG recommends the creation of a visible functional roadmap which outlines Department areas of responsibility and processes to aid clarity for key user groups and stakeholders. This is evidenced by consistent feedback from stakeholders seeking further clarity as to the particular role and function responsibilities of individual staff members within the Department along with further clarity in respect of Events and Room Booking processes.

The PRG commends the Conference and Events Department's unstinting attention to detail in process execution and completeness in light of recent challenges presented by IT software and increased growth and demand on operations. This is evidenced by the challenges presented in the SAR and feedback from user groups and stakeholders around resourcing and process challenges. The PRG recommends a review of key processes aligned to Lean methodology in an effort to explore opportunities, streamlining, efficacy and efficiency. Such a review and any subsequent implementation should endeavour to preserve the collegiate culture and ethos at RCSI. This is evidenced by feedback from both the Conference and Events Department and key user groups surrounding process duality and the need to simplify tasks and procedures to bring about increased effectiveness and efficiency without undermining the 'face-to-face' culture at RCSI.

The PRG commends the Conference and Events Team for taking ownership of the recently procured and implemented IT software system and its associated challenges. The PRG recommends that the Conference and Events Team harness the lessons learned to date and build on the system's capabilities and seek ways to maximise integration capacity with other RCSI systems and processes in an effort to strengthen its agility and meet the future needs of the Department and RCSI.

The PRG recommend the evaluation in the context of 'fit for purpose' of the function of the RCSI main switchboard service and management. Relocation to a more suitable department should be considered. This is evidenced by the Department's recommendation in the SAR and the common feedback thread from the Conference and Events Team, user groups and stakeholders in meetings held.

## **4.1 Commendations**

The PRG were impressed with:

- 4.1.1 The development of robust and thorough business processes for each area of activity.
- 4.1.2 The wide scope and breadth of activity of the Department which is delivered at such a high standard.
- 4.1.3 The Department's unstinting attention to detail in process execution and service delivery in light of the challenges associated with growth and demand.
- 4.1.4 The common thread of extremely positive feedback received from all user groups, stakeholders and service providers.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- 4.2.1 Developing further business processes around the customer journey which will capture tacit knowledge existing in the Department.
- 4.2.2 Create a visible functional roadmap outlining processes and procedures.
- 4.2.3 Review of processes aligned to Lean methodology to explore opportunities for automation, streamlining, efficacy, and efficiency.
- 4.2.4 Maximising systems integration with current RCSI systems and procedures.
- 4.2.5 Consider the relocation of the switchboard from the Department.

## 5 MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

The Department benefits from decisive and directional leadership from both the Associate Director, Head of Communications and Events and from the Conference and Events Manager, which in turn has fostered a collaborative and unified team approach to the booking, planning and delivery of events.

As referenced previously, there has been significant growth in spaces available, and in the demand for spaces for academic and event activity. The Department has addressed these challenges by focusing on dynamically seeking positive outcomes. However, they have not afforded themselves ring-fenced time to reflect on how to build in resilience in the management structure, through *inter alia* succession planning, or on how to innovate the processes to ensure resources, approaches and time spent are optimised.

It is important they focus on, not only required tasks and functionality in the Department, but also opportunities for automation, streamlining, and systems integration, as referenced in Section 4 Functions, Activities and Processes.

Building in 'reflection' opportunities will better 'future-proof' the Department's strategic focus, business planning and customer service excellence, through the following channels:

- i) Meeting architecture – with a focus on innovating approaches and solutions as well as tactical information sharing.
- ii) Training opportunities – identifying time periods that will work collectively and individually for the Department.
- iii) Individual development plans – to motivate and encourage the engagement of the individuals in the Department with the overall RCSI Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 and their role within the Department's business plan.
- iv) Benchmarking projects – to calibrate standards and expectations within the wider market and ensure alignment and adherence with best practice and innovations.

### 5.1 Commendations

The PRG were impressed with:

- 5.1.1 How well the Department took on the challenges of No. 26 York Street within their existing resources.
- 5.1.2 The Department's flexibility and dynamic, solutions-focused approach.
- 5.1.3 The levels of proactivity and stakeholder engagement demonstrated by the Department.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- 5.2.1 Consider workflow analysis and aligned resource planning to ensure the continued excellence in service delivery and promotion of the RCSI brand.
- 5.2.2 Conduct an annual training needs analysis, in conjunction with, and in consideration of the RCSI's existing HR training opportunities and systemically build in opportunities for training and development.
- 5.2.3 Plan for regular benchmarking opportunities against other market leading organisations.
- 5.2.4 Articulate and measure individual KPIs, in line with the RCSI Professional Development Plan (PDP), to ensure and drive alignment with the Department's strategic goals and the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.
- 5.2.5 Define the purpose, profile, attendance and structure to meetings undertaken by the Department.

## 6 SERVICE USERS AND FEEDBACK

As stated earlier in the report, during the PRG interviews there was consistency in the feedback from all service users and stakeholders regarding the Conferences and Events Department.

The Department engages with a wide range of services, users and stakeholders, both internal and external, for example, the SMT, the President and Council, Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA), Estates, Development and Alumni Relations, Schools within RCSI, the professional services/support units, students, international campuses of RCSI, all internal departments, conference delegates, prospective students, families of RCSI students, and members of the general public. Given the diversity of the service user and stakeholder engagement, it is understandable that the type and level of engagement will vary, depending on the context of the situation. The Department shows significant flexibility in its dealings with service users and stakeholders as evidenced by the feedback received during the PRG interviews, for example: *"the team find a solution for everything"*, *"they make it all seamless"* and *"they never say no"*.

The level of commitment to meeting the needs of all service users and stakeholders presents some challenges. For example, in the PRG interviews, stakeholders expressed the sense that the role of the Department will mean different things to different people. Some held the expectation that the Conference and Events Department would take full responsibility from the point of booking a venue, right through the full journey to the execution of the event, while others felt it was a shared responsibility. In a similar vein, some stakeholders see the Team as acting as a resource to answer all queries (even if these are actually queries related to other service providers' responsibility e.g. catering, media services etc.) while others felt that the additional relevant service providers share the responsibility for problem solving. The lack of clear understanding of the role and function of the Department by many stakeholders points to a need for clarity of communication in this regard by the Department.

Given the extent of the activities of the Department and the involvement of many service users and stakeholders the issue of feedback becomes crucial. The Conference and Events Department monitor and assess user satisfaction post-event through anonymous surveys following annual events. For internal stakeholders, feedback is provided on a more informal basis. However, there is consistency in the comments received during the PRG interviews that stakeholders wish that the informal feedback process change to a more formal process. The PRG thus recommends establishing a formal centralised and accessible feedback mechanism which will capture both positive and negative feedback into the future. A formal feedback mechanism may serve to inform process improvements and new innovations while fostering an ethos of continual improvement and development for excellence. As noted, this is evidenced by a common thread of feedback where stakeholders highlighted the absence of a formal or systematic method in which to submit constructive feedback and ideas to contribute to the Department's development.

### 6.1 Commendations

The PRG were impressed with:

- 6.1.1 The high level of positive feedback about the Department received consistently from all service users and stakeholders met by the PRG.
- 6.1.2 The dynamic of the Conferences and Events Team who show a collective vision where the 'customer' is central to all activities.



## **6.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- 6.2.1 The development of a clearer profile of the role and responsibilities of the Conference and Events Department and its staff aligned with revisiting the staff portal to ensure such clarity of role is evidenced in the content within.
- 6.2.2 The establishment of a formal feedback process with service users and stakeholders.
- 6.2.3 Formalising the communication's structure to ensure a more effective internal stakeholder communication and to provide a framework to encourage innovative feedback.

## **7 SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **The PRG commends the following:**

- 2.1.1 How highly the Department and the work they do are regarded across all areas of RCSI.
- 2.1.2 The levels of professionalism and brand alignment demonstrated by the whole Department.
- 2.1.3 The sense of teamwork instilled across the whole Department, a team fully committed to service excellence to its diverse client base at all levels.
- 3.1.1 The alignment of focus within the Department to the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.
- 3.1.2 The Department's commitment to continuous improvement and openness to feedback.
- 3.1.3 The trust displayed by key stakeholders in the Department's ability and expert knowledge, flexibility, responsiveness and 'can do' attitude.
- 4.1.1 The development of robust and thorough business processes for each area of activity.
- 4.1.2 The wide scope and breadth of activity of the Department which is delivered at such a high standard.
- 4.1.3 The Department's unstinting attention to detail in process execution and service delivery in light of the challenges associated with growth and demand.
- 4.1.4 The common thread of extremely positive feedback received from all user groups, stakeholders and service providers.
- 5.1.1 How well the Department took on the challenges of No. 26 York Street within their existing resources.
- 5.1.2 The Department's flexibility and dynamic, solutions-focused approach.
- 5.1.3 The levels of proactivity and stakeholder engagement demonstrated by the Department.
- 6.1.1 The high level of positive feedback about the Department received consistently from all service users and stakeholders met by the PRG.
- 6.1.2 The dynamic of the Conferences and Events Team who show a collective vision where the 'customer' is central to all activities.

**The PRG recommends the following:**

- 2.2.1 Enhancement of the visibility of the Department through:
  - 2.2.1.1 Consideration of signage to and outside the Department.
  - 2.2.1.2 Development of a Service Promise/Charter which is then made visible in a prominent position proximate to the Department.
  - 2.2.1.3 Use opportunities available within the relevant RCSI communication channels, such as Grand Rounds, to clarify and promote the role and responsibilities of the Department.
- 3.2.1 Development of a five-year strategic plan which details how the Department is aligned with the RCSI Strategic Plan.
- 3.2.2 Development of a business plan which sets out financial, service, and market KPIs while not distracting from the core mission of RCSI.
- 3.2.3 To support the Department's prioritisation of activities, in consultation with the RCSI's CEO and SMT, through defining a rationale, structure and protocol around how conferences and events are selected for inclusion in the College calendar.
- 3.2.4 Further formalise the following:
  - 3.2.4.1 A risk register specific to the needs of the Department and high-profile, set-piece events.
  - 3.2.4.2 The Department's GDPR readiness aligned with RCSI policy and industry best practice.
  - 3.2.4.3 A customer feedback/complaints procedure.
  - 3.2.4.4 Key terms of engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- 4.2.1 Developing further business processes around the customer journey which will capture tacit knowledge existing in the Department.
- 4.2.2 Create a visible functional roadmap outlining processes and procedures.
- 4.2.3 Review of processes aligned to Lean methodology to explore opportunities for automation, streamlining, efficacy, and efficiency.
- 4.2.4 Maximising systems integration with current RCSI systems and procedures.
- 4.2.5 Consider the relocation of the switchboard from the Department.
- 5.2.1 Consider workflow analysis and aligned resource planning to ensure the continued excellence in service delivery and promotion of the RCSI brand.

- 5.2.2 Conduct an annual training needs analysis, in conjunction with, and in consideration of the RCSI's existing HR training opportunities and systemically build in opportunities for training and development.
- 5.2.3 Plan for regular benchmarking opportunities against other market leading organisations.
- 5.2.4 Articulate and measure individual KPIs, in line with the RCSI Professional Development Plan (PDP), to ensure and drive alignment with the Department's strategic goals and the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.
- 5.2.5 Define the purpose, profile, attendance and structure to meetings undertaken by the Department.
- 6.2.1 The development of a clearer profile of the role and responsibilities of the Conference and Events Department and its staff aligned with revisiting the staff portal to ensure such clarity of role is evidenced in the content within.
- 6.2.2 The establishment of a formal feedback process with service users and stakeholders.
- 6.2.3 Formalising the communication's structure to ensure a more effective internal stakeholder communication and to provide a framework to encourage innovative feedback.

## 8 APPENDIX 1: SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

Conference and Events Department Internal Quality Review April 2018

Site Visit Schedule 23 – 26 April 2018.

### Evening prior to site visit: Monday 23 April 2018

Dur. mins	Time	Meeting Theme	Attendees	Venue
15	17.00 – 17.15	Welcome Director of Quality and Quality Reviews Manager	PRG QEO	President's Meeting Room
90	17.30 – 19.00	Private planning meeting for members of the Peer Review Group	PRG	President's Meeting Room
	19.15 – 21.00	Dinner	PRG QEO	

**Day 1: Tuesday 24 April 2018**

<b>Dur.</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting Theme</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Venue</b>
	0845	Review of preparatory work	PRG	President's Meeting Room
40	09.15 – 09.55	Meeting with Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events and Conference & Events Manager		President's Meeting Room
40	10.00 – 10.40	Meeting with Conference & Events Team		President's Meeting Room
30	10.45 – 11.15	Tea / coffee. Private meeting time for PRG	PRG	President's Meeting Room
45	11.15 – 12.00	M1: Meeting with Senior Representatives from Key Stakeholder Groups	See list of attendees	President's Meeting Room
40	12.05 – 12.45	M2: Tour of Unit Facilities, led by, Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events and Conference & Events Manager		
65	12.50 -13.55	Lunch & private meeting time for PRG	PRG	President's Meeting Room
45	14.00– 14.45	M3: Meeting with members of Senior Management Team with a focus on strategic planning and development	See list of attendees	President's Meeting Room
45	14.55 – 15.40	M4: Meeting with Heads of Professional Support Functions with responsibility for providing key supports and services to Conference & Events Department	See list of attendees	President's Meeting Room
25	15.45 – 16.10	Tea/coffee Private meeting time for PRG	PRG	President's Meeting Room
45	16.15 – 17.00	M5: Meeting with Affiliated and Postgraduate Training Faculties regarding the supports and services provided by Conference & Events Department	See list of attendees	President's Meeting Room
50	17.10 – 18.00	Review of afternoon's meetings.	PRG	President's Meeting Room
	19.00 – 21.00	PRG Dinner if required	PRG	Hotel

**Day 2: Wednesday 25 April 2018**

<b>Dur. mins</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting Theme</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Venue</b>
25	08.45	Private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
45	09.15 – 10.00	M6: Meetings with key stakeholders regarding bookings & internal venue management	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
45	10.10 – 10.55	M7: Meeting with key stakeholders providing professional services and supports to Conference & Events Department	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
25	11.00 – 11.25	Tea / coffee. Private meeting time for PRG.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
40	11.30 – 12.15	M8: Meeting with representatives from the key stakeholder groups for the Conference & Events Department	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
40	12.30 – 13.10	M9: Meeting with representatives from the key stakeholder groups regarding conferrings and the supports and services provided by Conference & Events Department.	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
60	13.10 – 14.00	Lunch & private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
45	14.10 – 14.55	M10: Academic & Student Experience	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
30	15.00 - 15.30	Time allocation for follow-up meeting with staff/stakeholders on points for clarification, if required		Robert Smith Room
90	15.30 – 17.00	Private meeting time for PRG members to finalise draft commendations and recommendations	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	18.00	PRG Dinner and a chance to discuss key issues (if required)	PRG	Hotel

**Day 3: Thursday 26 April 2018**

	<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting Theme</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Venue</b>
195	08.45 – 12.00	Private meeting time for PRG – discussion and finalisation of Commendations and Recommendations for all sections.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	10.30	Tea / coffee.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	08.45 – 12.00	Private meeting time for PRG – discussion and finalisation of Commendations and Recommendations for all sections.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
20	12.00 – 12.20	Private meeting with QEO	PRG; QEO	Robert Smith Room
15	12.25 – 12.40	Meeting with Head of Unit & QEO	PRG; QEO	Robert Smith Room
20	12.40 – 13.00	Exit presentation to all Conference & Events Staff	PRG; QEO; All Unit Staff	Robert Smith Room
	13.00 – 14.00	Lunch and Private meeting with QEO	PRG; QEO	Robert Smith Room
	14.00	Review ends		





# Quality Improvement Plan

## [Conference & Events Department]

### DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Name of Unit	Conference & Events Department					
Project Title	Quality Improvement Plan					
Document Title	Quality Improvement Plan Draft					
This Document Comprises	DCS	TOC	Text	List of Tables	List of Figures	No. of Appendices

Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date



[Conference & Events]



Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
1. Develop a five – year strategic plan	PRGR 3.2.1 3.2.4.4 5.2.1 SAR 2.4	Develop a strategic plan in line with the RCSI Strategic plan 2018 – 2022 Consider workflow analysis and aligned resource planning to ensure the continued excellence in service delivery and promotion of the RCSI brand.	Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events Conference & Events Manager Full team	TBC as part of strategic planning	Q2 2019	Develop strategic plan in line with RCSI Strategic plan for 2018 – 2022.	In progress
2. Relocation of switchboard	PRGR 4.2.5 SAR 2.4, 2.3, 3.3	Review the options for suitable relocation of the switchboard to an alternative location, department or solution	Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events Conference & Events Manager	This will enable better use of resources within the bookings team	Q2 2019	Compile supporting documentation for presenting to SMT Present alternative suggestion to stakeholders it would impact for the move (i.e. if another department take on this role)	In progress

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Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
3. Enhancement of the visibility of the Department	PRGR 2.2.1, 6.2.1	<p>The unit will participate in January 2019 Grand Rounds</p> <p>The unit will consider signage to and outside the Department in line with RCSI signage policy in consultation with Estates.</p> <p>The unit will consider the Development of a Service Promise/Charter Review and update the staff portal to update the profile of the role and responsibilities of the Conference and Events Department and its staff.</p>	Conference & Events Manager and department	As the C&E department is a reactive department, there is little down time available for needs other than business as usual therefore for all of these objectives they will be developed throughout the timeframe amid all department Events and business as usual	Q1 2019	<p>Presentation from Grand Rounds will be uploaded to the staff portal post event.</p> <p>The unit will review the signage policy together with Estates</p> <p>The unit will develop a Charter that can be available on the staff portal it will not sit in public spaces as this is not in line with RCSI policy re signage.</p> <p>Update and review the staff portal</p>	In progress
4. Development of a business plan	PRGR 3.2.2 3.2.3	The unit will develop a business plan based on the department's strategic plan which will sets out financial,	Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events Conference & Events	None	Q4 2019	The business plan will set out financials, market KPIs	Not started

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Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
		service, and market KPIs while not distracting from the core mission of RCSI.	Manager Full team				
5. Carry out consultation process to prioritise Departments Activities for inclusion in College Calendar	PRGR 3.2.3	The unit will consult with RCSI CEO and SMT through defining a rationale, structure and protocol around how conferences and events are selected for the inclusion in the College calendar	Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events Conference & Events Manager Full team	As above	Q3 2019	Once completed documentation will outline the process for selection. This will feed into the Strategic review and also the plans for reputation enhancement currently in progress by the Events team as part of the IREG committee for reputation	In progress
6. Training Needs	PRGR 5.2.2	Conduct an annual training needs analysis	Associate Director, Head of Communications & Events Conference & Events Manager Full team	None  Depending on needs identified it may be necessary to shut the office for periods to assist in training the full team together.	Q2 2019	This will take place as part of PDP and will include Personal development as well as team development. A formal plan will take place to review annually with the aim for training to take place at quieter	Ongoing. This is currently carried out as part of the PDP process and frequently reviewed by the Conference & Events Manager. 2 x team members

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Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
						periods of the year	have started an Event Management course in Sept 2018. Additional needs will be reviewed ongoing.
7. Business processes	PRGR 3.2.4.1 3.2.4.2 3.2.4.3 4.2.2 6.2.2	Creation of roadmap Creation of risk register specific to department needs Update and assess GDPR readiness aligned with RCSI and best practice policy Formalise formal feedback process for service users and stakeholders Formalise customer feedback/complaints procedure	Conference & Events Manager Full team	As above	Q4 2019	Documentation to support creation and changes will be updated on the internal drives and if applicable added to the staff calendar.	In progress
8. Meetings &	PRGR 5.2.5	Meetings: define purpose, profile,	Conference & Events Manager	None	Q4 2018	Documentation will be added to the V drive	Not started

[Conference & Events]



Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
Communications structure	6.2.3	attendance and structure to meetings undertaken by the Department Formalise the communications structure to ensure a more effective internal stakeholder communication and to provide a framework to encourage innovative feedback	Full team			outlining process.	
9. External Benchmarking	PRGR 5.2.3	Plan for regular benchmarking against other leading organisations for Conference & Events Business processes. Plan for regular benchmarking against other leading organisations for Conference & Events	Associate Director/Head of Communications. Conference & Events Manager Conference, Sales, Events Executive	None	On Going Bi annually for external benchmarking	On an ongoing basis, the department are active in reviewing activities that could be done more efficiently or look at introducing new initiatives, such as online voting etc. Benchmarking relating to venue hire and looking at rates took place in July 2018. Next will take place	Ongoing. Currently reviewing app systems available via the Events software.

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Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

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		venue hire.				circa 2020 pending market changes, company and country financial situation	
10. Process review for Bookings	4.2.3	Review process aligned to lean methodology to explore opportunities for automation, streamlining, and efficacy	Conference & Events Manager Bookings team	As above, will be carried out throughout business as usual particularly for the bookings team, this will prove extremely difficult as business as usual is always at high capacity. Temporary assistance may be required if the review is to take place during peak times. This will try to be avoided with the timeframe provided	Q4 2019 / Q2 2020	A review commenced with the Quality Improvement process centre, however their personnel has changed and thus this process has stopped. It may not be feasible for this to take place and it will be explored further	Ongoing
11. System Integration	4.2.4	Maximise system integration with current RCSI systems	Conference & Events Manager	As above, will be carried out throughout business	Q2 2019	Continue to assess the ability for other departments to use	



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Quality Improvement Plan [9<sup>th</sup> October 2018]

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				as usual		Ungerboeck Review event solutions with IT to see if it will be possible to enable additional users to have access to the Events air system Keep up to date with IT to ensure there are no additional systems in RCSI that will benefit the department	