Peer Review Group Report
Library Services

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1   INTRODUCTION AND UNIT DETAILS

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The RCSI library services considered for this review are the Mercer Library (located at the St Stephens Green campus) and the RCSI Beaumont Hospital Library located in Beaumont Hospital. The learning resource centre and library services in Bahrain and RCSI Dubai are outside the scope of the review.

Since 1986, with the first appointment of a professional librarian, the library services have continued to develop and evolve. Over the past five years the changes, informed by a strategic planning process, include streamlining of services (discontinuation of inefficient and low value services, weeding of stock), development of e-library services, extension of information literacy services, development of clinical inquiry services, establishment of an institutional repository and services for research support, development of College-wide responsibility for records management and recruitment of a qualified archivist (with funding from sale of non-core antiquarian books).

The RCSI library services are well placed to support the College's strategic plan for 2013-2017. The library services contribute to the supporting themes of the vision. The library staff are engaged in "teaching and learning" through the information literacy work as well as providing resources and study spaces. For "Research", the establishment of the institutional repository and the work on research bibliometrics serve to increase the research impact of the College. The refurbishment of the Mercer and Beaumont libraries help to provide a better study environment for the students, and library staff take great pride in providing a good experience for "students". The library staff have taken on many new roles, and to adapt successfully in the future, a "positive working environment" seems essential, as the strategic plan stresses employee engagement (as a measure of success for organisational capabilities). While the RCSI Libraries in Bahrain and Dubai are separately managed and funded, and are outside the scope of this review, the RCSI Dublin library service does liaise with and advise on these libraries when required, as well as with other library services within Ireland and elsewhere, and should be knowledgeable about the standards of excellence for library services that "internationalisation" might demand, as well as "partnership working" to support the "community focus" process of improving and updating such standards.

The Mercer Library is due to move to the new academic education building, opposite the existing main entrance to the St Stephens Green building in 2016, although plans for where the archives, records, and special collections are to be accommodated are yet to be agreed.

Overview of the unit

Across the two sites there are 26 (16.6 FTE) library staff, some of whom have worked for the RCSI for over ten years. The Chief Librarian has been in post for five years.

Both the Beaumont and Mercer libraries were refurbished (the Mercer upgrade an interim measure prior to the 2016 move in the summer of 2012 to meet the needs of the main users, the undergraduates. The wired desktops, interactive whiteboards, group study rooms, and reduced noise levels are suited to the current learning needs.

The library service is a major IT user. The main systems used are Aleph (a library management system), electronic resources management (hosted by Bowker), institutional repository (hosted by BePress), Sentry (Mercer Library facilities control). EZproxy remote access, and there are procurement plans for CALM (archives management) and an electronic records management system.

The library service is currently organised in functional units. Professional staff (assistant librarians) lead on repository and systems, information services, information resources management, Beaumont hospital library, and special collections, and these staff report to the Deputy Librarian, who reports to the Chief Librarian. The archivist reports to the records manager, who reports to the Chief Librarian. Permanent library assistants generally cover the day shifts, while contracted part-time Librarian assistants provide evening and weekend shifts as well as other duties, with some cross cover between both the Beaumont and Mercer libraries. Both the records manager and archivist are recently created posts (records manager appointed in 2011 on 2 year contract, archivist appointed in 2012 on 3 year contract).

Library service standards may be considered in two ways – internal (in terms of internal library processes such as cataloguing and resource discovery) and outward facing (for institutional accreditation). Compliance with internal library standards for health and academic libraries is an evolving process, particularly for the development of archiving cataloguing standards. The library has been found adequate for the medical, pharmacy, leadership and physiotherapy programmes by the appropriate regulatory bodies and the Degree Awarding Process.

Performance measurement is key to assessment of the library service, and a set of measures for each core function has been (or is being) developed. These measures generally 'take the pulse' of library activities, and help document whether the library is achieving its operational plans. Generally, the library statistics collected comply with the SCONUL statistics collected by academic and national libraries in Ireland and the UK.

The library operating budget as centrally allocated is currently around €333,000, and this covers department running costs and the purchase of print and electronic information resources. There is an approximate split of 75%/25% between the pay and non-pay components of the budget. For 2011, the library spend on print and electronic information resources from their centrally allocated budget was €243,867 (35% of the total institutional; information resources expenditure), the contribution from schools being €39,296 (6%), from the research institute €114,442 (17%) and via IReL €290,523 (42%). The SAR noted that the total spend on these resources has broadly been maintained since 2009 despite the reduction in the subvention from IRel of circa 20%. This has been achieved by increased contributions from schools and the research institute. IReL funds are allocated by the HEA and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and IReL participants may contribute local funds towards the costs of specific licences. RCSI contributes to IReL and benefits from additional expenditure supported externally by state agencies, as part of the IReL collaborative.

The library service users are very diverse, very numerous, and there are variable different degrees of entitlement to services. Customer surveys are used to inform needs assessment, and there are various feedback routes (formal, informal) for users to inform the library service. Through participation by library staff, the library service is (to some extent) represented on several RCSI forums and working groups, but these are mostly the School of Medicine. With reference to the governance structure on p.7 of the strategic plan, library staff representation is weighted towards the School of Medicine, with much less input to, and

feedback from, Surgery and the Faculties.   The Chief, Deputy, Assistant librarians participate in many academic, information professional and health-related external committees and networks. Such participation informs the best practice models for RCSI library services.

2   CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

The College has set out its new vision for the future in the RCSI Strategic Plan for 2013-2017. Internationalisation is a strong theme of this plan, but some aspects can only be touched on in this review as the review focuses on the library services based in Ireland itself. However, globalisation affects the library services in many ways. Many research agencies are encouraging or enforcing open access compliance by researchers to ensure that the results of publicly funded research are made available to the public. For example, the US National Institutes of Health, the Wellcome Trust, and Science Foundation Ireland all support open access, and such policies are also a component of the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. Publishing is changing rapidly and the future is a little unclear. The rise of the Asian research community has been rapid, open access publishing is developing internationally in ways that were not predicted, and "a complex network of relationships and interdependencies exists among researchers, librarians, publishers, and academic administrators."[1]

There will be a purpose-built library in the new academic building, and the physical library will be in the heart of the College. However, the virtual library is as important, and for many users will provide library services more directly than the learning spaces in a physical library building.

The RCSI strategic plan poses some challenges – and the library service needs to position itself optimally in order to contribute effectively to the themes of excellence in education, leadership in international medical education, and impactful research and innovation in health sciences and education. A review[2] of evolving academic library specialties draws attention to trends that are already evident in RCSI library services – the development of the information literacy specialist, the systems librarian, the repository manager, electronic resources librarian, and the clinical librarian. "*On the one hand, it is true that newly created roles offer many new opportunities and the potential for organizational impact. There are pragmatic benefits to breaking out of silos to work closely with users so that there is direct knowledge of user need. On the other hand, the fluidity of the context implies a high level of risk and uncertainty.*" The advantage the RCSI library service may have is that experimentation on a small scale is possible, to develop roles in research support, or research data management, for example.

Within Ireland, the Health Services Executive (HSE) is currently reconfiguring health service provision in the Republic of Ireland. Beaumont Hospital will become the hub hospital for both teaching and academic provision for the North Eastern Region. This will greatly enhance the access of medical students to clinical teaching facilities. Regarding undergraduate teaching in medicine there is no plan within the next 5 years to expand the undergraduate numbers or alter the current curriculum. Plans for other undergraduate programmes or the postgraduate programmes seem more fluid in the RCSI strategic plan.

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[1] Reinsfelder TL. Open Access Publishing Practices in a Complex Environment: Conditions, Barriers, and Bases of Power. Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication 1(1):eP1029. http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1029

[2] Cox, A.M., Corrall, S. Evolving academic library specialties. Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 64(8):1526-42. DOI: 10.1002/asi.22847

2.1   MEMBERSHIP OF THE REVIEW GROUP

The members were:

- Professor Michael A. Walsh (internal)

- Mr. Padraig Barry (internal)

- Dr John B. Howard, University Librarian, UCD (external)

- Dr Christine Urquhart, Aberystwyth University (external, review group chair)

2.2   TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW GROUP

The terms of reference for the PRG were to:

- Clarify and verify details in the SAR
- 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
- 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

3   STAFF AND FACILITIES

The library staff appear to work together well, as a cohesive and experienced team, with library assistants, for example, talking about the need to cover for other staff as an expectation of library staff responsibilities. The SAR describes how many of the professional staff have taken on and developed new roles over the past five or so years. This then had an impact on the library assistants who took over some of the work previously done by professional staff. Assistant librarians have already trained all library assistants to take on some service desk duties to relieve professional staff for other roles. Professional staff have developed information literacy programmes, and contribute to the virtual learning environment in various ways. The hospital librarian is working with HSE East librarians on a clinical enquiry service. The research support work is developing – the library providing advice on bibliometric indicators as well as developing support for open access to RCSI research publications through the institutional repository.

Discussions with the library staff indicated the importance to them of good relationships with library users and the support of student learning. This was epitomised by the effect the staff felt registration difficulties (a College problem) had on the user experience of library service. Explaining to students or other users that they could not, because of registration problems, use library services went against the strong customer service ethos. Library staff do not like refusing to serve students that may well be legitimate users of the library, but lacking the necessary credentials. Explaining this, and dealing as diplomatically and effectively with the registration problem is an inappropriate use of staff time. Library staff are noted for being courteous in their dealings with staff and students. The academic support services, for example, commended them for their caring approach to undergraduate students who may be very stressed around exam times.

The library staff have responded carefully and flexibly to the educational and research agendas of the College. The library service has to take the initiative in responding to College developments – there are no models within the College to follow as the library is a unique Unit and external library service models from other academic health institutions often need to be adapted to fit the scale and scope of College activities.

The new strategic plan places emphasis not just on excellence in education, but on leadership in international medical education and research and innovation in health education. The SAR SWOT analysis cites one strength as being "recognised for information skills teaching" and meetings with academic staff, and research staff confirmed this. However, library staff will require ongoing professional development on education to match the expressed needs of the new strategic plan for "impactful research and innovation in health sciences education (p.26)".

The SAR SWOT analysis identified opportunities in research support in data curation and publications management, and this again will require professional development for the library staff, and/or bringing in new staff with the necessary expertise. The appointment of an archivist was welcomed by several of those interviewed as heritage collections are important for the image of the College – a selling point for overseas students – in addition, obviously, to making the College attractive to researchers and historians. Archival collections require maintenance, as well as guidance from professional and paraprofessional staff to assist users.

The existing CPD programme for library staff needs to be updated and resourced to reflect the demands of the strategic plan, for more specialist skills among the library staff – at

professional and library assistant levels. Human resource planning for the library service needs to take account of the need to attract, develop, or retain particular specialist skill sets, and to ensure that valuable experience and knowledge are not lost when staff members move on. It is important also to provide library staff with opportunities to develop further their understanding of the student or researcher experience. One staff stakeholder mentioned a joint publication with one of the professional library staff. Such joint publications, or independent publishing by library staff, should be encouraged as it raises the RCSI profile, and enhances the status of the library.

The details for the library facilities in the Mercer and Beaumont buildings are described fully in the SAR. The PRG visited both buildings and inspected the improved work spaces and staff facilities in both locations. The refurbishments met with approval from the student representatives the PRG met. As the SAR commented, the libraries are dependent on the College IT infrastructure to deliver many of their services, and online library resources are different in scale and functioning to many of the office and educational systems. If students experience problems with the College network when trying to access online resources when working in the library, then such problems may be seen as a "library problem" when it is in fact a problem of inadequate technology infrastructure. Paraprofessional library staff commented that the IT helpline system in the library had helped.

Archives and records have particular storage requirements (temperature, humidity, light) that need to be considered. Some stakeholders commented that it would be desirable to remind undergraduates of the heritage of the College. If, for reasons associated with the preservation and storage of the archives, the archives cannot be situated in or near the new academic building, then perhaps the library service might consider "showcasing" items from the archive in the new academic building, in an exhibition area.

3.1   COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the library staff on:

- Their obvious commitment to student learning and enhancing the student experience

- The value of their contributions to academic programmes

- Their initiative in responding to the needs of the College (e.g. in developing measures of research impact)

- Their initiative in responding to the needs of the local health service community – work on a clinical enquiry service, and supporting systematic review groups

- Strong teamwork ethos among the library staff

- Working with IT to provide an acceptable quality of online library resources and services for students and staff

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Competency frameworks should be reviewed for all staff. For professional staff the MLA's professional competencies for the Academy of Health Information Professionals and the competencies for Canadian research librarians[3] might be helpful. The Chief Librarian should work with the Director of Human Resources to ensure that library service staff have appropriate competency frameworks.

2. The Chief Librarian and Deputy Librarian should develop a publication plan to increase the professional research profile of the library service.

3. Small groups of staff (professional/paraprofessional/library assistants) should be helped to develop more specialist skills in: teaching/learning; bibliometric support; repository and research data management; archival and records management. This has implications for the college in terms of resources – financial and time. The Chief Librarian and Director of Human Resources should agree a staff development plan and appropriate resourcing.

4. To support some project work, the library service might consider using positions for graduate trainees, or interns. The Chief Librarian and Director of Human Resources should liaise with the UCD School of Information and Library Studies.

5. All staff require an understanding of the current and future health service environments in which their users work and study, including the international aspects of College activities. The professional staff in the library should work with clinical staff and health service administrators to identify a strategy that assures that library staff maintain current knowledge of healthcare delivery services.

6. IT infrastructure planning, and improvements for online library services need to be tackled on an ongoing basis, and the particular needs of online library resources considered (See also Section 4 of the review).

7. The Chief Librarian, Records Manager and Archivist, together with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, should work on options for storage and exhibition requirements for archives and records, that meet archival standards.

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[3] CARL. Core competencies for 21st century CARL librarians. http://www.carl-abrc.ca/uploads/pdfs/core_comp_profile-e.pdf

4 MISSION, STRATEGIC PLANNING, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIT

The mission and values of the library are aligned with those of the College. The 2009 strategic goals and performance indicators were ambitious and a significant amount of progress has been achieved by 2012. The key goal of a resourcing model has not been achieved yet, but progress was delayed due to cost reduction activities within the College. For some other performance indicators the expected progress might have been a little over-optimistic, given the economic events that occurred.

The three-year strategic plan for the library service was successful in securing a transformation of the physical space of the library into a learning space suited to inquiry based learning and use of technologies within the library. The continued investment in electronic resources is a must, and demands from users for a wider range of e-resources will only increase. Comments made by stakeholder staff to the review group indicated a particular concern about access to journal literature support basic science research; it was also suggested that the 3U partnership is viewed as a possible solution to the lack of social science resources for some of the postgraduate programmes. The representatives from various user groups were aware of the resource constraints but nevertheless desire more e-resources.

Within the library service, the line management appears to work effectively in organising the activities of the unit. The scope of the library activities, as a core service across the College, means that library representation on a range of College working groups and activities is essential. It should be possible to map each main library function to one or more strategic goals (or supporting themes) of the College strategic plan. In the language of business process modelling, this means the library service will be responsible for some product lines (e.g. the repository, information literacy courses, e-resources) and some services (e.g. provision of study spaces, access to e-resources, bibliometric support, enquiry services, systematic review support). Looking after these individual services or products constitutes the essential "units of work" for the library service. The business processes of the library involve looking after these units of work, and – according to one business process modelling scheme[4] there should be, for each unit of work, the case process (the process itself), the case management process (dealing with the flow of work to and from the process)– the negotiating, monitoring type of activities) and a case strategy process (taking the strategic view of the process). For example, "Handle an information literacy course" (as a case process), has at least one associated case management process (liaison with academic staff, producing material for VLE etc, as these determine the flow of work), and the case strategy process should be something to do with maintaining a strategic view of information literacy activities, through the work on the Awards and Qualifications Committee. The case strategy processes are likely to include the activities around College committee work, as the strategy work does not just involve finding out what is going on, but working out how to get to future goals. One of the concerns of the library service in the SAR was representation on key working groups and committees of the College. By mapping carefully from units of work through the various processes to strategic plan, it should be possible to identify whether there are any missing "case strategy processes" and whether there are any superfluous case strategy processes – committees attended which do not contribute much to the core library activities.

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[4] Ould, M.A. (2005). Business process management: a rigorous approach. Swindon: BCS.

The previous rationalisation of activities appeared very successful. To meet the requirements of the new strategic plan for the College, it might be a useful exercise to re-check whether what the library staff are doing (in terms of processes) map to the College's new requirements. At present the services (section 4.2 of the SAR) are divided up by library function, or place of operation (Beaumont). This may not be helpful for the future when the RCSI strategic plan emphasises education innovation and research, a more significant research profile, enhance organisational capabilities, and partnerships. The library service is dependent on the IT department, and the IT department views the library as a key customer, and should continue to do so. There are differences in working practice – the library has had to manage things in-house (but working with hosting services), whereas the IT department operates with third party contracts, outsourcing some functions (e.g. the help desk), but embedding them within the IT department. Web-based hosting for the library solves some technical overhead problems.

For the future, the RCSI strategic plan envisages investment in the IT infrastructure, and there are designated key performance indicators for this part of the plan (e.g. *End user applications that enable RCSI to achieve its strategic objectives; A framework and structure that support the development and use of e-learning across RCSI and its partners in order to achieve strategic goals)*. Students and staff made note of some technical challenges, particularly with regard to wireless network performance at busy times of the year. It was also noted that the Eduroam framework supported by HEANet to facilitate access to wireless network services throughout the higher education sector is not yet in place; particularly given the 3U relationship and the reports of visits to TCD Library by students and staff, implementation of this service is highly desirable. Students also noted that the current wireless service provides no support to mobile devices using the Android operating system—a matter that denies some students access to services. Although these problems are not the responsibility of the Library, there should be processes put in place for the library to input into the IT strategic planning, as those two performance indicators (in particular) involve library activities around research and learning support.

Several of those met during the site visit commented on the pros and cons of informal ways of getting things done. These reflected observations in the SAR on the advantages (quick decision making) but also the disadvantages (lack of transparency, dependency on individual goodwill, lack of consistency and certainty).

4.1 COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the library on

- Efficient and effective strategic planning

- Reacting flexibly and sympathetically to resourcing needs of postgraduates and researchers

- Working collaboratively with the IT department to try to resolve problems that adversely affect students

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College needs to ensure that the library service has the necessary input into planning processes that affect library activities – and hence have an impact on core activities of the College. The Chief Librarian should work with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Managing Director of Surgical Affairs and the Director of Research.

2. Crucially, the library service and the IT department need to work together, with senior management team input, to ensure that the future IT infrastructure will work for all the library services – from the library functions through records management to archives. There are distinct library service needs that will determine how productively the library staff can work, and how effectively they can meet user needs. Lack of such infrastructure will impact on the quality of support the College can offer staff and students. The Chief Librarian, IT manager and the Finance Department need to plan for future requirements

3. The library service should check that the key processes have associated management/monitoring processes and that there are processes for maintaining a strategic view of library activities. All library service staff should contribute to this, under the guidance of the Chief Librarian.

4. The library service has already completed a rationalisation of activities, successfully, but the PRG suggest that a further check by the Chief Librarian and the other professional staff may be required to ensure that the library activities (what is "produced" and the services) map to the new strategic plan. This should help prepare for transition to the new academic building.

5. Library performance indicators need to contribute to some College performance indicators as set out in the strategic plan. This should be the responsibility of the Chief Librarian and the professional staff, and key performance indicators should be approved by the Senior Management Team.

6. Implementation plans derived from the RCSI strategic plan need more focus on the library service which is not mentioned at all in "Investing in our technologies and infrastructure to support our teaching and learning" (p.13). The Senior Management Team need to ensure that this happens.

5   SERVICES, PROCEDURES AND PERFORMANCE

RCSI Estates and Building Services look after Mercer and Beaumont libraries. Beaumont Library has additional services provided by Beaumont Hospital Security and General Services Departments by arrangement with RCSI Estates officeGood facilities management matters – several representatives to the PRG commented on the improvements to noise levels in the library space of some simple changes to the layout, changes that improved user behaviour.

The PRG was shown the plans for the library in the new academic building. These seem to be in tune with the trends in student learning with space for group study rooms, plenty of technology, and the library staff may benefit from being nearer some departments with whom they work. Certainly the philosophy should be to avoid the need, for example, for library policies banning food and drink by providing cafe space near the library. The architecture and layout should encourage "good behaviour" by the library users. The provision of prayer rooms near the library is very welcome.

The PRG understands that there is ongoing work to improve the student registration system to avoid the problems that some users have when trying to access library services. The process of authorising appropriate levels of access seems unnecessarily complex, and relates to a College problem of having various databases of student records, RCSI ID cards that do not permit library access to the Mercer Library without manual registration by filling out a registration form and manual input of data to the library system by library staff, and problems with QUERCUS, the student record system.

The suggestion was made of allowing a 'Day pass' for users such as students who had travelled specifically to Dublin to visit the library but had forgotten their card. It was indicated that access is denied not by Library staff, but by a security official, enforcing current library policy, and who has no mechanism for verifying, visually, that a student who had forgotten an ID card had a valid RCSI status; addressing this issue might provide an alternative solution.

The titles of some recent books on the future of academic libraries (e.g. *Digital information: order or anarchy*; *Envisioning future academic library services: initiatives, ideas and challenges*) indicate the pace of change, largely driven by the growth of the Internet, search engines and social media. However the focus of core library services is still around meeting user needs for information, and technology may or may not provide some solutions to access, organisation or analysis of information. Ranganathan's five "laws of library science"[5] provide a helpful framework for thinking about library services, and their evaluation. The framework is flexible, and can encompass archives and records management. There are benefits of synergy in thinking across the components of the library service activities and seeing how the connections work, rather than thinking purely in terms of library function (as the SAR mostly does in Table 4.2, mostly with inputs and outputs). The framework also has the advantage of simplicity in explaining to people what the library service is about, and what its values are.

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[5] Ranganathan, S. R. *The five laws of library science.* Madras: Madras Library Association. Available in digitised form from http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001661182

Table 1: Evaluation framework for library service activities

Laws	Corresponding library service activities
Books are for use (interpreted as **Collections – physical and electronic – are for use)**	Circulation of books. Basic reference collections in libraries. Open access repository of RCSI items. Serial Solutions management of access to electronic journals – book and journal discovery through Summon. PG thesis management. RCSI antiquarian collections – ongoing organisation of these for external users. Records management policy. Operational issues around registration and library membership, IT support. Provision of study space in libraries, group study rooms Induction and service desk assistance Opening hours – extension around exam time
Every reader – his or her book (interpreted as **Collections should meet the needs of the community – internal and external as appropriate)**	Discussions with cycle directors, PG programme leads on curriculum needs. Identification of key research resources required by research students and staff. Document delivery service for items not available in-house. Review of electronic resource 'bundles'. Resource sharing agreements and access to other libraries – IReL, reciprocal research access. Repository development – sourcing content, permissions. Archival management. Special collections management. Records retention/disposal schedules.
Every book its reader (interpreted as **Each item should be made useful to at least one individual- and that individual should be able to find the item)**	Cataloguing activities –catalogue for books (print and electronic); e-journal portal, link resolvers from e.g. MEDLINE (abstract to article), library webpage with links to databases, ongoing development of archival finding aids, records management system
Save the time of the reader (interpreted as **Library staff should operate an efficient and effective service for users)**	Subject guides on library webpage, Provision of access to clinical summaries. Information skills teaching. Clinical query services. Support services – query services, ask-a-librarian links. Room booking service. Research support – information retrieval, bibliometric support, systematic review support, individualised information management advice. Advice on repository use. Development of archival finding aids. Records management procedures. Information systems management – library management systems, web-based hosting etc.
The library is a growing organism (interpreted according to Gorman's variant on this law: **Honour the past and create the future**	Development of the archives and special collections into a College resource that truly reflects the heritage of the College and which is accessible and useful to external researchers. Taking the initiative in activities increasingly important to the College – research with an impact, local collaborations, working with HSE EAST, international representation on committees.

There are performance measures in place to measure the amount of activities undertaken – number of books borrowed, group study room use, number of information skills sessions undertaken, e-resource use, costs, turnaways, numbers entering/leaving the library, number of queries and visitors received by the library. The statistical measures collected are in line with those used by SCONUL and are benchmarked against other academic libraries. The SAR (Appendix 6) provided statistics demonstrating the gross rise in use of RCSI and IReL resources, the fact that costs were kept under control, (despite Library lack of control over external prices and currency fluctuations) and the variations in cost per use of RCSI subscribed resources. There has been a substantial increase in the repository downloads – comparisons are difficult as many institutional repositories are in the early stages of development.

Comments from a wide range of users confirmed that the library service is efficient (as indicated also by the library input/output statistics). The library service ensures its collections are used, whether in print or electronic format. UG students seem content with the textbook collection, although ideally would like warning of an upcoming overdue. Although the UG students use electronic books, they also appreciate consulting print books within the library. Opening hours could be made earlier to suit some needs (rather than automatically thinking of later evening opening or the 24/7 model). The collections, within resource constraints, meet the primary needs of users and the statistics (cost per use) confirm this. Users are able to find the resources they need through the various catalogues and subject guides, and query services (face to face and virtual) help to answer specific questions. The LibQUAL+ survey (April 2010) indicated that the library service generally was performing adequately, and on customer service scored well, with some "below adequate" scores for the facilities and environment at that time.

Comments from academic and research staff indicated huge appreciation of the information skills teaching expertise of the library staff – both at undergraduate and postgraduate (taught and research) levels. Such work saves time for the user and enables them to benefit fully from the resources provided by the College. The main concern raised by these stakeholders was the perceived range of information resources available. This was earlier flagged up in the LibQUAL+ survey (April 10) where, out of eight questions on information resources and access there were two inadequate scores. Several of the problems around facilities and IT problems are being addressed and improvements were noted by users in comments to the PRG. The main difficulties concern communication on specialist resource needs and feedback on usage. There is recognition that not all specialist resource needs can be met in full – some have to be met through special request document delivery for an article, rather than subscription. And some subject areas have progressed faster to electronic format than others. Unfortunately there are no available indicators to use, as SCONUL statistics have traditionally focused on input/output statistics, and these are normally presented as efficiency indicators. Academic and research users are aware of the dangers of the cost per use indicator, as this is only a quantitative efficiency indicator, not a qualitative indicator of effectiveness for College purposes. Library staff have had to discuss resourcing with cycle and programme leads to obtain subventions – and knowledge about the profile of resource usage is appreciated (particularly when the schools are paying for these resources). Discussions with individual leads makes for more informed decision making for the library service, but it is time consuming and there is a possible lack of transparency across the College.   At the extreme, programme by programme decision making on resources encourages hoarding and discourages sharing, which is counterproductive when some resources are valuable across several programmes.

Resourcing needs to be seen to be fair and appropriate to needs – collections should meet the needs of the community. The library service is working on development of a resourcing per capita student (UG, PG) model, with some allowance made for specialist resource

needs. One area highlighted as lacking was social science resources and this is a shared need across several programmes. The 3-U partnership was is viewed as a possible solution to this, in some shape or form, whether through library resource sharing or the establishment of affiliate staff posts across the partnership to enable access to resources through more than one organisation. Staff commented that they were aware they could visit other physical libraries, but ideally the e-resources are desired.

The progress on the repository is judged satisfactory, and research staff believe that funding councils, and perhaps some other funding bodies, will (like the Wellcome Trust) pay for publication fees for the "author-pays" open access journals. The research staff acknowledge that they need continuous reminders about the need to deposit in the repository. RCSI is also an accepted participant in Rian, the national metadata portal for research papers by Irish authors, but has not yet become a regular depositor to it.

The contribution of the library staff to assessment of research impact was appreciated and further contributions would be welcomed.

5.1 COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the library on:

- Operating and managing a wide range of services in a friendly and efficient manner

- Developing Archives and Special Collections to make these resources a valuable asset for the College

- Obtaining value for money on RCSI subscriptions

- Ensuring that users benefit from the resources (through information skills support)

- Establishing a successful repository and providing valued research support

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given the importance of the records management and archival activities to managing, preserving and promoting the College heritage, the College should make the posts of Archivist and the Records Manager permanent.

2. The resourcing model is being considered at present. Resolving this issue to move toward core, central funding for general resources with less dependence on the current distributed model of garnering contributions from areas within the College must be a high priority. The Director of Finance needs to agree the resourcing model with the Chief Librarian, and the resourcing model should be approved by the senior management team.

3. The College should look at social sciences needs and appropriate e-resources. If this cannot be done through the 3U partnership, then other alternatives and licensing arrangements need to be considered for the future. The Chief Librarian should work initially with IReL on this.

4. The library service needs to refine the processes associated with ensuring that the repository expands as quickly as possible. This will involve establishing regular monitoring/chasing. Participation in Rian will also provide the RCSI with additional visibility, potentially assist in increasing the impact of RCSI research, and assure further dissemination of citation metadata to the European OpenAIRE portal. The Director of Research and the Chief Librarian should agree appropriate workflows for these tasks.

5. The library service is well placed to provide research support in bibliometrics and should collaborate further with the Research Office. The Director of Research, and the Chief Librarian should take this forward.

6 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: STAFF, FACILITIES, BUDGET AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

RCSI has demonstrated commitment to investment in the library service in the plans for the library in the new academic building, and the income generated from the sale of the antiquarian books not core to RCSI needs has been put towards funding of an archivist who will redevelop the archives services, and possibly provide some income generation. The appointment of the records manager within the library service also demonstrates commitment to development of information services fit for the future. The improvements brought about through refurbishment of both the Mercer and Beaumont libraries has been gratefully acknowledged by the undergraduate students in particular.

There are resourcing challenges for the library service. Some of these are general, and shared by all units such as the impact of the current economic climate, and the exchange rate but other difficulties are unique to academic libraries. The "serials crisis" that faces all academic libraries concerns the steep rise in the subscription costs of journals since 2000. This can partly be attributed to the publishers' investment in electronic platforms, and the need for publishers to continue to support both print and electronic publications, as well as investing in e-book production that makes the most of the new format. However, even changing to electronic only subscriptions makes little difference for an academic library as VAT is charged on the electronic journal (but not the print journal) – thus wiping out potential savings.

A benchmarking exercise conducted by the library service in 2009 indicates the scale of the challenge for RCSI. Against UK medical schools, for example, the RCSI library accounted for 1.03% of total institutional expenditure, and the information resources budget was 0.4% of total institutional expenditure. The corresponding minimum figures were 1.6% (library budget) and 0.7% (information resources) (both for Imperial College). The library service has responded through discussions with the research school and the individual postgraduate programme leads, to identify what the core needs are. The academic and research staff confirm that this process has worked, but it is time-consuming, lacks transparency, and some shared needs might not be met – resources for the "common good" may not be identified. A one-off year by year funding commitment lacks the consistency required for some recurrent funding needs.

There are also hidden needs for capital expenditure on information technology associated with the changes in the way electronic information services are delivered. Library management systems and some electronic information services require payment of annual licences. Open source applications and web-based services may offer some nominal savings but they often require in-house expertise to fine tune the delivery and presentation of the services – not always a cheap solution.

The library service is working with the Finance Department on a new financial allocation model that is based around a resourcing per capita student, with allowance made for specialist (e.g. PG research) needs.

The internationalisation agenda in the strategic plan points out the need to upgrade and develop the information technology support. However, the information content delivered via subscription services also needs to be considered as there are licensing concerns and costs. Publishers and aggregator services differ in their approach to licensing of content across different countries and regions. The lack of clarity in relationships between RCSI entities may adversely affect licensing negotiations.

6.1   COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the library on

- Responding flexibly to the resourcing challenge faced in a comparatively small academic specialist institution, such as the College, and working with academic PG programme co-ordinators and research staff to ensure access to resources

- Benchmarking of resource spending to demonstrate the mismatch between the College and other competitor institutions

- Being aware, and alerting the College to the licensing implications of some of the internationalisation activities

- Developing web-based services.

6.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The current financial model must change, to reflect resource allocation per UG student and per PG student, and to position the Library as a central resource for the whole organisation, not just a support department of the Medical School. This is a responsibility for the Senior Management Team.

2. The library is a heavy user of IT services. Capital investment (e.g. for iterative upgrading of wireless network services) is likely to be ongoing. One difference for many of the library IT services, as opposed to other IT investments is that there will be annual licensing/maintenance costs to be considered. This is a responsibility of the Senior Management Team.

3. There should be a transparent ongoing evaluation of electronic resource usage but the cost/use comparisons needs to be sensitive to research project needs, factoring both quantitative and qualitative measures of use. More discussions are required with research staff over suitable metrics to use, under the direction of the Director of Research.

4. The library service should consider joining or developing other purchasing consortia for some resourcing needs. The Chief Librarian should work with the Director of Finance, and the 3U partnership.

5. Library staff may need to have specialist training to allow them to use web-based services effectively. The Chief Librarian, Director of Human Resources and the IT manager need to liaise over this.

7   SERVICE USERS AND FEEDBACK

The library service obtains feedback from undergraduates in a variety of ways – at curriculum level from the annual curriculum survey, student committees and representatives, and through email and suggestion boxes, library forum on Moodle. Feedback may be provided through Faculty Executive or Cycle Directors. Feedback from postgraduates is obtained from similar routes (with the exception of the annual curriculum survey) and course co-ordinators and the School of Postgraduate Studies and School Heads are the feedback routes. Comments on problems and possible improvements from staff would receive feedback response directly or through Academic Council, staff email lists.

There are groups that are nominally part of the customer base (trainees and interns) but for a variety of reasons needs assessment is not satisfactory for them, and therefore there is no virtuous cycle of needs assessment-service provision-feedback.

Although most of the UG and PG student mechanisms appear to be in place and working, the SAR indicates that the feedback does not necessarily provide the type of information required for proper and thorough needs assessment. There are two related problems here. The first is that of the 'low expectations, low reward' type. From the LibQual+ survey conducted in 2010 the general estimation of the library service was 'adequate'. The standard of the library service has clearly improved since then, but the vestiges of low expectations probably mean that users simply "put up" and "shut up" for many problems and irritants. The second problem is finding out what users really value and what makes a difference to their work and study. It is probably fair to say that the current needs assessment routes and feedback mechanisms will inform adjustments to service quality that should make the users more satisfied and reduce the service irritants. This would cover adjustments to loan periods, warnings of overdue books, introduction of day passes or implementing more effective solutions to the student problems in gaining access to facilities, for example, as well as working with student records on improvements to the QUERCUS system.

Finding out what users really value is an ongoing process – the initial "wow factor" of electronic journals has quickly transformed into a basic expectation that they will be there. Given the low response rate to surveys, it seems that small focus groups or informal interviews with individuals might be the best route forward to assessing what the users must have, should have and could have.

Information about service standards, policies, procedures and library news is available on the library web page, with some relevant user guides on Moodle, and information for staff on the RCSI staff portal. The customer charter covers the ethical aspects of information service provision, the various formats for communication with users, the methods for dealing with complaints and comments and response times. The charter also includes a list of the responsibilities of users – eminently sensible.

The main service users of the Beaumont Hospital Library are the Final Year Undergraduate Medical Students. The hospital staff (Nursing and Administrative) that were interviewed were very satisfied with the services provided by the Library.   However it became apparent that a number of staff within the hospital were not aware what Library facilities were available to them. Clarity on what level of service could be provided should be agreed

7.1   COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the library on:

- Reacting quickly and sensitively to user feedback

- Providing a range of information points about library services

- Developing new services with appropriate quality standards

7.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There need to be more informed relationships between Beaumont Hospital management and the Library service. To speed up this process, and prior to publication of the PRG report, a meeting was set up by one member of the PRG (Professor Michael Walsh) for the Chief Librarian and the Assistant Librarian in charge of the Beaumont Hospital Library to meet with the CEO of the Hospital, and formal arrangements are to be enacted to:

   - Facilitate earlier opening and later closure of the library which will be managed by hospital staff.
   - Organise an "Open Day" to inform the hospital staff of the facilities provided by the Library.
   - Forming a Hospital Library Committee
   - Restructuring of the RCSI Library service in Beaumount to further the continued development of the clinical information services as best practice as part of the CLIKS consortial approach.

2. Continued representation of library on professional groups that work on quality standards for library services is essential – and archivists and record managers have distinct professional needs that may differ from those of librarians. The Chief Librarian should ensure that RCSI is represented on appropriate groups.

3. Feedback on IS skills teaching is essential for the library staff involved. This is (and should be) part of course evaluations. The library staff involved in IS skills teaching and VLE support need to be involved in course review processes to ensure that their contributions remain relevant to courses. The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the Health Professions, and the Director of Research should ensure that library staff are involved in course evaluations.

8   COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

Informally, internal communications with the major support departments rated good in the SAR. The support departments confirm that library staff are helpful, knowledgeable, willing to listen and ready to find solutions to problems. The senior managers (SMT) commend the library service for their notable contribution to learning through the information skills teaching, and emphasise the enhanced role that might develop for research support, working with the research office on the development of metrics to assess research impact, and perhaps more management of research data.

The SAR comments on the problems of maintaining good – and transparent - working relationships with academic and research staff. The library is now represented on various RCSI forums, and the professional staff are members of appropriate working groups. The main shared concern among library, academic and research staff is that of information resource needs. Library representation on the AQC should help future curriculum resourcing needs to be addressed earlier, but there are current difficulties that require discussion at a higher level than is possible at present. Such formal discussion would be a more transparent process than trying to resolve issues with individual Cycle Directors or PG leads.

The library website provides details of all the services, resources and facilities, together with links to the relevant electronic resources, news about recent developments via the library blog, and guides to the use of the various services. Students may not necessarily look at the library website first, but the library is represented on the home page of all Moodle users, and the information skills resource area has all the necessary documentation to help students. The library service is developing expertise with use of social media.

The RSCI staff portal contains details of the compliance and regulatory documents, and information about library services and resources is included in the Research Office handbook for researchers and the HR handbook for new employees. The Records Manager gives a presentation during employee induction and the records management policies and procedures are stored on the RCSI staff portal.

In Beaumont Hospital, there is an email list for RCSI Beaumont staff, and notices may be circulated through the intranet or posted on BH Centre for Education & ERC noticeboards. The Beaumont librarian is involved in outreach activities and Beaumont staff would welcome more outreach. There seems to be some doubt among hospital staff of their rights of access to the library services (including the online resources) – and more outreach work would help with this. A library steering group with hospital representatives might also improve communication (see Section 7 for actions taken)

The library service represents the interests of RCSI on several external committees and organisations – academic networks (e.g. SCONUL), library networks, system user groups, and policymakers (National Steering Committee on Open Access policy). In addition, library staff are members of various professional associations and these are essential to continuing professional development. As an academic department of the RCSI, the professional library staff received support from the College for attendance at conferences.

Under the 3U Partnership Academic Programmes Subcommittee, a digitisation cooperation project is being explored. Several of the groups met during the site visit expressed a hope that the 3U Partnership would result in resource sharing, and better access to social sciences resources for RCSI staff, students and researchers.

The pattern of responses to the SAR stakeholder survey reflected some of the current communication difficulties. The Quality and Enhancement Office understandably used RCSI email accounts, but the library service is already aware that some categories of staff or students may not use their RCSI email accounts regularly, and some may be based at remote sites.

The positioning of the library service in relation to RCSI forums and working groups is reasonably satisfactory, and the professional staff are represented on appropriate groups for their interests and responsibilities (there will be some adjustment once one member of staff has returned from maternity leave). However, formal relationships with the PG Faculties, the Directorate of Surgery, and the Research Institute would probably benefit from being stronger, as the PG/Research areas are likely to have specific (and possibly expensive) resourcing needs.

The PRG considered the pros and cons of Library Steering Group to reduce the amount of bilateral discussions required for some planning and problem resolution. One difficulty is ensuring that those who come to the Steering Group have the power required to initiate action. Following the PRG site visit, the establishment of a Hospital Library Committee at Beaumont Hospital (see Section 7) has been proposed. This should help to ensure visibility of the library at senior management level in Beaumont Hospital, something which was lacking previously. .

8.1   COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the Library Service on

- The range of communication mechanisms used to inform, and provided feedback to students and staff. Library staff are keenly aware of their role in supporting student learning. The library has developed useful YouTube videos to help, and remind students how, for example, to renew books online, how to place a hold on a book. The library has a Facebook page and a library blog.

- The continued efforts to support the Research Institute, researchers and postgraduate students, and to engage in dialogue over their (ever-changing) needs

- The efforts made to attract external researchers to the Archives and Special Collections

- The high level of engagement with other RCSI departments via RCSI Forums and Working Groups.

- The high level of engagement with external professional bodies that have an input into library services

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The library service should continue to work with a variety of social media and develop some initial goals, and set out reasons for using some of the tools.[6] The main aim should be to encourage interaction and gain some feedback – this is likely to need more work and experimentation. Library staff could do some research on this that would be of interest to other libraries, as well as raising the profile of RCSI.

2. In the new strategic plan, under organisational capabilities the College intends to: *Review and improve internal processes across the College.* The PRG recommends this as a priority action. Under the current governance structure, the surgical postgraduate training appears divorced from much of the other College activities. It is unsurprising that there are communication problems for the library service with the surgical community.

3. The Chief Librarian and SMT should consider the feasibility of establishing a Library Steering Group that would provide a mechanism, for example, for transparent, cross-College discussion of resourcing issues, and IT-related infrastructure needs for the library service. There should, as indicated earlier, be a Library Steering Group for Beaumont Hospital as there are issues that are specific to Beaumont Hospital that need to be addressed.

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[6] Burkhardt A. Social media: a guide for college and university libraries. http://crln.acrl.org/content/71/1/10.short

9   ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The SWOT analysis done by the library service (reproduced below, with some changes) offers a very fair assessment of the situation. The PRG group consider, generally, that the weaknesses and threats are less than indicated and the strengths greater.

Within Table 2, where the PRG agrees with the SWOT analysis – the points are checked with a tick symbol. Where the PRG believes that the weaknesses or threats are now less than indicated, there is a star/diamond symbol.

In particular, the lack of progress on key action items of the 2009 strategic plan is a problem that has been superseded by the new strategic plan for the College with the opportunity for the library to align any incomplete items with the new plan and get them completed. The lack of engagement with academic, research and clinical staff is better considered as the ongoing business of a library service for customer relationship management – the library has to have relationships with so many groups of users and support staff. The user groups and support staff groups have different perspectives on the library, the relationships vary, the library needs to find an appropriate mechanism to balance these differing views and requirements.

We believe that the progress on the information skills programmes has been very satisfactory and the programmes are appreciated. Comparison with other medical education programmes may be beneficial – particularly those that have done some surveys of provision of information skills/information literacy programmes that include investigation of the curriculum integration (recent work might have been done in the South Western area of the USA, John Eldredge probably the best contact). To continue to develop this work, library staff may have to develop more specialist e-learning competencies.

The library service depends on the Irish Research e-Library (IReL) and, like the other university library services involved in IReL, obtaining value for money is essential. RCSI participation in IReL commenced in the autumn of 2008 for a selection of 28 IReL resources, which increased to 33 in 2009; this number was reduced, however, following IReL cancellations in 2010. While IReL offers benefits for RCSI, it must be remembered that IReL, at July 2010, offered only 13 of the top 20 surgery journals (by ISI impact factor ranking).[7] In contrast, for biomedical engineering and biochemical research methods, 17 of the top 20 journals were offered through IReL. E-Resources available due to IReL participation therefore must be regarded in this context when contrasted with the core resources licensed directly by the RCSI.

The IT infrastructure is critical for further development of many library services. One of the difficulties, as the SAR points out (p.27) is that interaction with many of the core support services and functional groupings (HR, IT, Research Institute, Estates and Building Services, SARA and Finance) is bilateral. A cross departmental approach is necessary.

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[7] Impact factors http://www.irelibrary.ie/about.aspx#linkFuture

Strengths	Weaknesses
✓ Visible improvements & changes since 2008 in Online, Mercer & Beaumont libraries	❖ Lack of progress on key action items of 2009 strategic plan
✓ Well positioned to focus on future	✓ Dependence on IT infrastructure to develop
✓ Support of SMT (no budget cuts, investment in physical space, divestment of non-core collections, library as a strategic asset)	✓ Dependence on IReL
✓ Understanding from some academics/researchers that librarians understand databases, information management, bibliometrics, open access etc = opportunity	✓ Still no formal financial allocation model for library
	✓ No capital budget nor clear mechanism for planning capital projects with confidence
✓ Recognised for information skills teaching	✓ Archives/records dependence on book sale funds
✓ Range of information management skills, i.e., library, archives & records	✓ Lack of clarity about relationships between RCSI entities, from teaching sites to international sites to faculties - this affects licensing potential
✓ Significant understanding of how students study	
✓ Participation in AQC, MERG & Cycle committees	❖ General lack of engagement with academic, research & clinical staff & no real fora to engage re resourcing and service issues
✓ Relationship with Bahrain LRC	
✓ Specialist expertise	❖ Information skills programmes largely based on goodwill and cooperation of module coordinators, rather than being embedded in curriculum
✓ Experienced, loyal, committed and flexible staff	
✓ Strong customer service ethic	
✓ Good trouble shooters & advocates, good relationships with students & staff	
✓ Curatorial responsibilities for archives & records	✓ Lack of depth in health sciences librarianship
✓ Understanding of registry process & how it affects access to College resources	✓ Insufficient capacity and skill sets in some areas to take full advantage of opportunities
✓ Good working relationships with IT & Estates	✓ Registration issues and problems caused by and dependent on departments/faculties/schools to sort out
✓ Improved working relationships with Beaumont	
✓ Membership of CONUL, SCONUL IReL (& RIAN soon)& relationships with other external libraries and professional associations	✓ Physical separation from College and College activities ('out of sight' risk)
✓ Stable financial position of RCSI (relative to most other educational bodies) and growth potential	
✓ Our location in town	
✓ History of the College in Irish history, life and society	
✓ Good opening hours cf others	
Opportunities	**Threats**
✓ New Academic Building & new RCSI strategy	❖ Attitude in some quarters of the College & elsewhere that "nobody uses/needs libraries" = irrelevance
✓ Position as active education support, students & staff	
✓ Position us as research support – e.g. data curation, publications management	✓ Changes in publishing/education/IT sectors which may or may not come to pass in near future with unknown impacts e.g. shift to gold open access publishing; further convergence in higher education sector; national purchasing; print on demand; full-self service etc
✓ Internationalisation/globalisation of RCSI – revisit the global RCSI library	
✓ Clinical information service in Beaumont &/or AHC if happens – continue HSE EAST relationship	
✓ Archives & Records Management – new skills	
✓ 3U partnership initiative on archives	✓ Further shift to skills & knowledge-based service support as opposed to processing/transactional based support very challenging
✓ Mobile communications & social media	
✓ Up skilling, re-skilling and specialisation	
✓ To be more creative with the staff working days/hours, this will strengthen/enhance what we are beginning to get right.	✓ Loss of control over the library environment and material at un-staffed hours – loss of say /responsibility
	✓ Virtual learning if it ignores virtual library.
✓ Communication/Marketing opportunities with refurbishments done.	
✓ Possibilities to work with SARA to improve registration issues and therefore library access	

Table 2 SAR SWOT analysis – amended summary

9.1 COMMENDATIONS

The PRG commend the library service on:

- Assessing, fully and fairly, the status of the library service in the SWOT analysis

- Working continuously to make the most of new opportunities, and capitalising on the strengths of the library service

- Working well together as a team, and with other RCSI staff to deal with identified weaknesses

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Competency frameworks for library staff should be mapped to the needs implicit in the new strategic plan. Some specific recommendations for the Director of Human Resources and the Chief Librarian to consider, are listed as follows (See also 3.2).

    a. Some library staff need to develop more specialist e-learning and pedagogical, research competencies required for "excellence in education" – and an international research profile in health professions education for RCSI.

    b. Some library staff need to develop additional competencies in research metrics, research support, and research data management. Knowledge about new developments in resources and research software support needs to be shared with research staff and students. Perhaps this might be a good opportunity for a social media trial.

    c. Library staff need to develop additional competencies in social media to capitalise on opportunities for feedback and interaction through mobile communications.

    d. Library service staff such as the archivist and the hospital librarian should develop specialist competencies (e.g. in promotion of specialist exhibitions, clinical librarian support of HSE EAST projects in clinical guidelines). These activities promote the RCSI in the local community, and further afield as well.

2. The ongoing improvements to resolve student registration problems should be accelerated, and the various registration problems with the surgical trainees, GP trainees, and others (psychiatry, dentistry, sports medicine, ophthalmology, bereavement studies and other external courses) need to be resolved by the appropriate RCSI departments as a matter of urgency.

3. The ongoing work to develop a better financial model is a high priority – it will not solve all problems as clearly surgical journal provision is difficult, as one example, and some researchers have very specific and expensive requirements. But

transparency in resource allocation will help. As indicated in 6.2, this is a priority for the Senior Management Team and the Chief Librarian.

4. The College should support the library service in exploring solutions to the resourcing needs for social science resources. Purchasing consortia agreements within the 3U partnership might be one possibility, there may be other options.

5. The review of internal processes proposed under the new strategic plan needs to consider the extent of bilateral communication required to plan and to take decisions. More cross departmental communication mechanisms might help other departments as well as benefiting the library service.

6. The library service should be encouraged to support the internationalisation agenda – cost savings might be possible under some international resource sharing and licensing agreements. The Director of Corporate Strategy should liaise with the Chief Librarian on the possible solutions.

7. Library performance indicators need to contribute to some College performance indicators as set out in the strategic plan. This may require some mapping of current library activities to those required to contribute effectively to the new strategic plan. The Chief Librarian needs to agree a set of library performance indicators[8] with the library service staff, and key performance indicators, that reflect the impact of library service on key components of the RCSI strategic plan, should be approved by the Senior Management Team.

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[8] ISO 11620 is currently under revision but performance indicators for preservation of rare collections, digitisation, library partnerships and repositories are being considered.