



RCSI INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF RCSI-BAHRAIN 2017

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

Review Group Report

RCSI-Bahrain Institutional Review October 2017

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1 Terms of Reference for Institutional Review of RCSI Bahrain

1.1 Background and Context for Institutional Review

Context and legislative underpinning

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) is a not-for profit, independent academic institution which is both a surgical Royal College and a single-faculty health sciences higher education institution. RCSI independent degree-awarding powers were commenced by ministerial order in 2010 as the result of a review by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). RCSI was confirmed as one of ten Irish Designated Awarding Bodies (DABs) by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. RCSI is also a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI).

Current legislation ensures that RCSI, in common with other Irish higher education institutions, is subject to review and oversight by the relevant national external quality assurance body, Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Statutory instruments that underpin RCSI and the basis for review in higher education include:

- the Universities Act 1997
- the Education and Training Act 1999
- the RCSI (Charters Amendment) Act 2003
- the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

Review, in this context, refers to the formal review of the effectiveness of the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures established and implemented by RCSI. In this context, the remit of QQI includes educational provision by RCSI both in Ireland and overseas.

RCSI Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement review processes

Following the commencement of RCSI independent degree-awarding powers in 2010, RCSI established a Quality Committee chaired by the Chief Executive Officer to develop and guide the implementation of institutional Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) policies and procedures under the overarching framework of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2009 & 2015) and relevant Irish legislation. In parallel, the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) was established as the executive arm of the Quality Committee. Since 2011, the QEO has developed four parallel cycles of Internal QA/QI Reviews:

- reviews of Schools within the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences (FMHS)
- reviews of Administrative/Support Units within the FMHS
- reviews of Postgraduate/Professional Faculties
- reviews of International Campuses

RCSI currently has four international campuses which exemplify a variety of modes of educational provision:

- RCSI-Bahrain (transnational provision)
- RCSI-Dubai (transnational provision)
- Penang Medical College (RCSI/University College Dublin(UCD) transnational collaborative provision)
- Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (transnational collaborative provision)

The first review of an RCSI international campus, that of the Perdana University-RCSI School of Medicine (PU-RCSI), was carried out by the QEO in 2012-2013; PU-RCSI, as a new 'start-up' has been subject to annual review by the QEO since then. Penang Medical College (PMC), which is owned jointly by RCSI and University College Dublin, was subject to Institutional Review in 2014 in a process managed jointly by the QEO and the UCD Quality Office. RCSI-Dubai is reviewed in the context of internal reviews of the Institute of Leadership which is the sole provider of RCSI educational programmes in Dubai.

RCSI-Bahrain, established in 2004, is both a wholly-owned international campus of RCSI and a university with degree-awarding powers in the Kingdom of Bahrain. As one of the major private universities in the Kingdom, RCSI-Bahrain is subject to a wide range of quality assurance procedures managed by the Bahrain Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA). This is the first time that an internal Institutional Review of RCSI-Bahrain is being carried out by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

1.2 Review Objectives and Criteria

Objective 1 – To consider the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in the context of planning, governance and strategy, taking into consideration the dual roles of RCSI-Bahrain as a wholly-owned international campus of RCSI and as an independent degree-awarding institution in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Criteria

1. the vision for the institution and its relationship to quality assurance systems
2. the engagement of the governing body in strategic planning and quality assurance management
3. the role of quality management in institutional strategic planning, management and operations management
4. the quality assured procedures for underpinning strategic and operations management decisions using external and internal information

Objective 2 – To evaluate the structure and effectiveness of RCSI-Bahrain governance provisions and administrative procedures, in particular as they serve to integrate RCSI-Bahrain into the global institutional/corporate governance of RCSI and to facilitate transnational delivery of RCSI programmes.

Criteria

1. the relative roles of the Board of RCSI-Bahrain vis-à-vis that of College Board and associated RCSI governance structures in the strategic and operational governance and management of RCSI-Bahrain
2. the nature and effectiveness of interactions between academic and administrative functions at RCSI-Bahrain and their counterparts at RCSI
3. the policies and procedures for ensuring coherence in programme delivery between RCSI and RCSI-Bahrain

Objective 3 – To evaluate the structures and procedures implemented by RCSI-Bahrain to ensure that its students enjoy a comparable student experience to that pertaining at the RCSI 'home' (i.e. Dublin) campus.

Criteria

1. procedures for ensuring comparability in the clinical exposure afforded to RCSI-Bahrain students vis-à-vis students at RCSI
2. provision for student representation at all levels in RCSI-Bahrain committee structures
3. provision for student participation in research, inter-campus exchanges and clinical electives
4. provision for Student Clubs, Societies and community outreach
5. mechanisms for gathering and for responding to student feedback

2 Review Methodology

The Review Panel received a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and supporting documentation, prepared by RCSI Bahrain, prior to the site-visits in Dublin and Bahrain. The Review Panel had the opportunity to request additional information/documentation as required. The Quality Review comprised two site-visits. The Review Panel visited RCSI Dublin in the first instance to meet with staff in RCSI. The Review Panel then visited RCSI Bahrain to meet with staff, students and stakeholders.

2.1 Peer Review Panel

The review was conducted by the following reviewers:

Ms. Katrin Mayer-Lantermann [Chair]	Programme Manager, Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany (German Accreditation Council)
Mr. Tony Platt [Coordinating Reviewer]	Assistant Director/Review Manager QAA, UK and formerly a senior administrator at the University of Essex
Dr. Ghada Abaido	Assistant Professor, School of Communication and Media Studies, Canadian University Dubai
Mr. Martin Galevski	Doctoral Student, Department of Education, Oxford University
Dr. Jeremy Groves	Consultant in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care, Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Chesterfield, UK
Prof. Kevin Nolan	Professor Emeritus, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

3 Introduction and Context of RCSI-Bahrain; Summary of findings

This report presents the findings of a quality review of RCSI's international campus: RCSI-Bahrain, which was undertaken in October 2017.

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (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 specialities. RCSI is one of four Royal Colleges of Surgeons in Great Britain and Ireland (Edinburgh, England, Glasgow and Ireland).

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.

Between 1996 and 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 (in collaboration with UCD), RCSI-Bahrain & RCSI-Dubai). Following an institutional review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), RCSI was granted independent degree awarding powers in 2010.

Following a memorandum of agreement for the establishment of a medical university which was agreed between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and RCSI in 2003, RCSI Bahrain accepted its first undergraduate students in 2004. Currently over twelve hundred students from thirty-eight different nationalities are enrolled. These include undergraduate medical and nursing students as well as postgraduate students.

The Peer Review Group (PRG) received a comprehensive Self-Assessment Report (SAR) together with supporting documentation, and met with staff in Dublin and Bahrain and with students in Bahrain. It was clear that the SAR had been developed and discussed widely amongst the group of staff who had contributed to it. The PRG felt that it would have been helpful to outline the KPIs in the strategic review in the SAR and if it had been possible to have had more student involvement in the preparation of the SAR. The PRG learned that the SAR had not been made widely available to staff across the institution.

The SAR had been produced wholly within RCSI Bahrain and the PRG understood the reasons for this. The PRG felt that it would be helpful for future reviews of their overseas campuses if RCSI Dublin provided a written reflection for each review on their view of their relationship to overseas campuses which could accompany the SAR.

In the course of its visits to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain as part of this review together with the documentation which was provided and meetings with staff and students, the PRG was able to conclude a number of positive findings concerning RCSI Bahrain, which are further elaborated in the body of this report.

- A modern state-of-the-art campus
- Clear vision, aims and direction
- Focused management integrating QA at all levels
- Highly professional, focused and engaged staff
- Largely integrated with RCSI Dublin
- Enthusiastic students with engagement in the governance

- Enthusiastic researchers
- Good relationships with stakeholders
- Delivery of curriculum focused and aligned to customer needs
- Student support

The PRG identified overarching areas for improvements. The main suggestions of the PRG, also further elaborated in the text, are to

- improve clarity, synergy and integration between RCSI Bahrain & Dublin through academic and management structures and to
- adjust the balance between the strategic pillars ensuring adequate emphasis on research and community engagement.

4 Mission, Governance and Strategic Planning

RCSI Bahrain is both a wholly-owned international campus of RCSI and an independent private university with degree-awarding powers in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Taking into consideration this dual status of constituent campus and an independent institution, RCSI Bahrain is subject to a wide range of quality assurance procedures and legislative requirements in both Ireland and Bahrain. Despite the complexity that arises from such position (e.g. the existence of multiple and in some cases conflicting obligations) RCSI-Bahrain has done well in satisfying the relevant requirements in both countries and in addressing the challenges that come with it. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on having built and maintained an open relationship with the relevant local state authorities which has contributed to the institutions' stability.**

The PRG commends the senior management of RCSI Bahrain on its clear vision, openness and commitment to the continuous improvement of the institution which creates a good base for future developmental work. This impression was also confirmed during the interviews with other key stakeholders across the organisational structure who felt empowered to raise any queries or concerns to management that might arise in their day-to-day work. There also appeared to be a shared vision and plans for development between RCSI and RCSI-Bahrain in regard to the future of RCSI-Bahrain as a leading higher education institution in the Middle East providing a high-quality holistic education and an enjoyable student experience comparable to that offered in Dublin. One area, however, where there seems to be a discrepancy in views between RCSI and RCSI Bahrain relates to the capacity of the existing physical space at RCSI Bahrain. The SAR states that RCSI Bahrain has "maximised what can be done within the existing space and as the demand continues it is becoming almost impossible to identify further space that can be utilised, without investing in a new building" (p. 7). Interviewees from RCSI Dublin acknowledged the aspirations for expansion of RCSI-Bahrain as an institution which has grown over the years, however, at the same time they believed that the capacity is still adequate and did not envision plans for further expansion in the immediate future.

RCSI Bahrain is coming to the end of its current strategic plan (2012-2017) and is in the process of developing its successor (2017-2022). In regards to the plan for the period of 2012-2017 the SAR underlines that "80% of the Goals, Actions & KPIs will be completed by the conclusion of the plan in September 2017" (p. 27). Because the new strategic plan of RCSI Bahrain is currently in draft it is still not possible to evaluate its alignment with RCSI's overall strategic plan (also currently in draft form), the success of its implementation or how the current quality system helps with the monitoring of progress. In the preparation of the new strategic plan RCSI-Bahrain has taken measure to engage a variety of different stakeholders at various levels of the organisation, including staff, students, alumni and employers.

As with the previous plan the new Strategic Plan consists of three pillars: teaching and learning pillar, research pillar, and community engagement and service pillar. During the interviews the team understood that one of the key changes introduced in the new plan is the integration of the three pillars which currently operate in silos. Whilst this was seen as a commendable approach, the review panel was not convinced that the new strategic plan will be able to achieve this as the KPIs are still developed separately for each pillar.

Besides, there seems to be a discrepancy between the three Strategic Pillars and Institutional reality on the operational level. In regards to the teaching pillar, faculty workload provided by RCSI Bahrain represents a major concern for the PRG. Business hours as outlined in the staff handbook, are adequate. Yet the PRG got the strong impression from the interviews that, in reality, staff have a higher workload. Moreover, teaching assignments seem to differ from contract to contract and generally are much higher than those of staff in Dublin. As a result, RCSI Bahrain staff feel that they do not have enough time for research (see also section 10). Furthermore, due to workload constraints, many of the academic staff are not actively engaged in community outreach programmes. **The PRG recommends that, as a matter of urgency, RCSI Bahrain develops a workload model that helps the institution to adjust the balance between the strategic pillars; strengthening Research and ensuring adequate emphasis on Community Outreach.**

The PRG commends RCSI on the alignment of the academic agenda in medicine. The lectures and examinations of the medical course taught in Bahrain and Dublin are identical. The coherence of programme delivery across RCSI as a whole is facilitated by the different means, procedures and bodies: the system of joint committees and boards, the reporting lines from RCSI Bahrain committees to RCSI Dublin committees, the Quality Committee in Dublin together with its QEO, implementing QA policies and procedures across all of the campuses, and the programmatic review procedures by the Awards and Qualifications Committee (A & QC) (see section 7 for the quality assurance of the undergraduate nursing programme).

Commendations

- The open relationship with the relevant local state authorities
- The clear vision, openness and commitment of the senior management team to the continuous improvement of the institution
- The alignment of the academic agenda in medicine

Recommendations

- that, as a matter of urgency, RCSI Bahrain should develop a workload model that helps the institution to adjust the balance between the strategic pillars; strengthening Research and ensuring adequate emphasis on Community Outreach

5 Organisation and Management

RCSI Bahrain is managed by the President, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPA). All faculty and academic support staff reports through the line management structure to the VPA. The administration staff reports to the COO. Formally the highest body in RCSI Bahrain is the Board of Governors comprising representatives from RCSI Dublin, from RCSI Bahrain and local stakeholders. The PRG learned that it acts as an advisory body, whereas the Executive Committee is seen in Bahrain to be the highest level of operational management.

RCSI Bahrain runs several other internal committees that seem to be functioning effectively. Student involvement and representation in these committees appear to be very satisfactory and **the PRG commends the level of student engagement**. The performance of committees is reviewed on a regular basis and adjustments are made accordingly.

It was felt that management structures would be clearer if committee titles in RCSI Bahrain were more closely aligned with those of the corresponding committees in RCSI Dublin.

Equivalence of programme delivery at RCSI Bahrain on the organisational level is safeguarded by different means: The Management Team in Dublin monitors quality of staff (see also section 6), oversees branding, the IT strategy and financial management (see operating agreement between RCSI Bahrain and RCSI Dublin).

Coherence with Dublin is also safeguarded with the help of reporting lines. The Academic Board in Bahrain reports to the Board of Governors in addition to the Academic Council in RCSI Dublin for noting, and where appropriate for approval (see evidence document 9). The PRG questions why the Academic Board does not report to the Executive Board which then would report to the respective board in Dublin.

Besides, the PRG gained the impression from interviews in both Dublin and Bahrain that co-operation between Dublin and Bahrain via the joint committee structure and among individuals could be enhanced. There is a good level of communication and understanding between RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain on the senior management levels (e. g. weekly conference call between senior managements of Dublin and Bahrain) but connectivity and integration should also be further improved at the lower levels of management to allow engagement on an equal footing. An improved co-ordination of lectures between the campuses, a unified Moodle environment between campuses and a better cross campus communication between cycle heads are urgently needed (see section 9 for details).

It was also strongly emphasised that frequently the meetings tend to be Dublin-centric due to the nature of transnational communication (i.e. via video conference) and the place where the majority of participants are (in most cases Dublin), but also depending on the chair of the meeting. RCSI is currently looking at technological solutions that would facilitate an improved communication. The review panel believes that investing in infrastructure to improve the connectivity between Dublin and Bahrain is a step in the right direction, but at the same time it is only one part of the solution. The PRG believes that chairs of committees should be made aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that participants from remote campuses are afforded parity of esteem.

The PRG recommends to both RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain that steps be taken to improve the clarity, synergy and integration between RCSI Bahrain and Dublin through academic and management structures. One of the measures should be that a VC etiquette (e.g. by having SOPs) is put in place for chairs of committees to ensure that engagement of members from all campuses is similar.

The organisational chart of RCSI Bahrain in some levels seems to be unclear in regards to the departmental relations, duties and reporting relationships inside the hierarchical chain. **The PRG**

recommends that RCSI Bahrain adjusts its organisational charts in order to ensure that they better reflect the University's functioning.

With regard to the budget, RCSI Bahrain seems to manage its budget reasonably, based on a 5-year rolling budget process taking into consideration its current performance, requested targets and future initiatives.

The PRG learned that RCSI Bahrain reviews its risk register at a high level on an annual basis. Whilst staff are aware of the socio-political environment and its constant changes and have already instigated technology-based steps to react better to such change, **the PRG nevertheless recommends that RCSI reviews its risk register on a more frequent basis.**

RCSI Bahrain's Campus is located on a leased parcel of land of approximately 100,000m². The main building was handed over to RCSI Bahrain in October 2008 and has a built-up area of approximately 15,750m² which incorporates one five-story building consisting of tutorial rooms, two lecture theatres, offices, teaching and research laboratories, cafeteria, and library. The expansion of the RCSI Bahrain has resulted in more demand on space therefore a number of refurbishments and fit out initiatives were implemented over the past ten years. The PRG had a tour of the campus but was not able to visit the hospital sites. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on the quality of facilities and the high-quality maintenance of them** (See section 4 concerning the question if a new building is needed.)

Commendations

- The level of student engagement
- The quality of facilities and the high-quality maintenance of them

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain

- that steps should be taken to improve the clarity, synergy and integration between RCSI Bahrain and Dublin through academic and management structures. One of the measures should be that a VC etiquette (e.g. by having SOPs) is put in place for chairs of committees to ensure that engagement of members from all campuses is similar.

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- to adjust its organisational charts in order to ensure that they better reflect the University's functioning
- to review its risk register on a more frequent basis

6 Staff Details

The PRG met with academic, administrative and clinical staff members. **The engagement and enthusiasm of staff is commendable.**

The PRG also commends RCSI Bahrain on the open-door policy at the campus. This concerns the relations of staff and students and of staff members and their line managers. Students were satisfied that their lecturers are accessible to them. They provide feedback to their students and try to solve problems as quickly and effectively as possible. Staff feels supported by their line managers. Staff members reported that concerns are dealt with by their head of department without prerequisites for an appointment.

RCSI Bahrain represents a good example of diversity in the cultural and educational backgrounds of the institution's faculty and administration members. This was clearly demonstrated in the documents presented and during the site visit. **The PRG commends RCSI on the diverse nature of faculty and staff which enriches the educational experience for students.**

The PRG noted a strong focus on teaching. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on their excellent academic staff and their commitment to offer their students quality teaching.**

The PRG also noted the enthusiasm of academics to carry out research. The PRG learned that it is a challenge, though, for academic staff to balance teaching duties, research, community engagement and committee work (see section 4) and that academics are highly frustrated due to lack of support (see section 10).

The Senior Management Team in Dublin monitors quality of staff at the Bahrain campus by different means. It evaluates business cases for new and replacement posts and approves the appointment of senior posts. Besides, a RCSI Dublin Dean's representative is involved in interviewing for academic and joint medical appointments. Recommendations by interview panels are approved by the Academic Board in Bahrain.

All posts are required to get the approval of the Higher Education Council (HEC) in Bahrain prior to advertising. All recommended applicants are required to be approved by the HEC prior to commencing employment. Formal requirements for all academic staff are laid down in HEC Bahrain Bylaws, Resolution #2 for 2007. RCSI Bahrain works closely together with the HEC to minimise staff shortages.

The PRG learned that 65% of staff members are expatriates who usually have a two to three years appointment with an option for renewal. The PRG learned that RCSI Bahrain works closely with the international talent team in Dublin to attract middle-career academics. As the Bahrain campus is now at a mature stage there should be more permanent academic staff to increase diversity of key expertise and to minimise knowledge losses. Further development of research opportunities is crucial in this context. **The PRG recommends that more permanent academic staff should be employed.**

There is a clear policy for academic promotions which applies to all RCSI campuses and considers contributions in teaching, in research and service to RCSI and society. The PRG learned that the lack of promotion structures for non-academic staff leads to continuous dissatisfaction. This issue has also been raised in the staff survey of 2016. **The PRG recommends embedding promotion structures for non-academic staff, as a matter of urgency.**

It is recognised that in a small organisation there may be few opportunities for promotion. Other methods of reward and motivation are therefore essential. But to date PDP processes at RCSI Bahrain have not been fully embedded (SAR, p. 43). In the PDU survey and during the interviews staff members expressed the wish to be more supported in their professional development. **The PRG believes that**

there is an urgent need to enhance these opportunities and **recommends that a formal appraisal system for academic and non-academic staff should be embedded and professional development activities should be aligned with a reward structure.**

The PRG learned that expatriates moving to Bahrain are eligible for financial compensation, but that unlike at RCSI Dublin there is no public pay scale in place at RCSI Bahrain. In the SAR it is indicated that benchmarking has shown that RCSI Bahrain staff are well paid in comparison to market rates. Nevertheless, **the PRG recommends to RCSI Bahrain the implementation of formal pay scales for academic and non-academic staff members.**

The PRG noted that RCSI Bahrain offers a wide range of training and development opportunities including teaching training. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on awarding a prize for the best hospital based clinical lecturer based on the results of the student survey (SAR, p. 61) and recommends that a teaching award for non-clinical lecturers should be considered.**

Commendations

- The engagement and enthusiasm of staff
- The open-door policy at the campus
- The diverse nature of faculty and staff which enriches the educational experience for students.
- The excellent academic staff and their commitment to offer their students quality teaching.
- The award of a prize for the best hospital based clinical lecturer based on the results of the student survey

Recommendations

- to employ more permanent academic staff
- that, as a matter of urgency, promotion structures for non-academic staff should be embedded
- to embed a formal appraisal system for academic and non-academic staff and to align professional development activities with a reward structure
- that pay scales for academic and non-academic staff members should be implemented
- to consider a teaching award for non-clinical lecturers

7 Internal & External (Local & International) Quality Assurance Processes

RCSI Bahrain recognises the national and institutional quality assurance and enhancements within which it sits. As an independent private university in the kingdom of Bahrain, the institution is licensed to deliver programmes and to confer awards and as such is subject to the requirements of the HEC in Bahrain. At the same time as a constituent university of RCSI it also follows the quality assurance processes of RCSI and the requirements laid down in the Republic of Ireland through QQI as well as the requirements and regulations of the National University of Ireland for the award of degrees.

The Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) in Dublin acts as the executive function of RCSI's Quality Committee, being responsible for quality assurance and quality enhancement policies and procedures across all RCSI's campuses, reviews of campuses and internal reviews, surveys and psychometrics and the administration of QQI reviews.

The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on the fact that quality assurance and enhancement are seen as central to RCSI Bahrain's governance, mission and objectives and RCSI Bahrain and RCSI Dublin on the very good working relationships between their QEOs. The senior management of RCSI Bahrain clearly understands the importance of quality assurance systems and is engaged in quality assurance management. The President of RCSI Bahrain chairs the Quality Enhancement Committee and the Head of Quality Enhancement reports directly to the President. Quality enhancement was seen as one of the main enablers for the achievement of the goals in the strategic plan 2012-2017 and will play a similar role in the new strategic plan. The Quality Enhancement Office at RCSI Bahrain (QEO Bahrain), which was established in 2012, supports the implementation of RCSI's QA/QE strategy. The PRG learned that the QEOs in Dublin and Bahrain work together very closely. QEO Bahrain enhances quality by internal quality procedures, assists as to policies and procedures and is also engaged in strategic planning. The Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) is responsible for overseeing the Quality Enhancement governance and ensuring the implementation of policy and quality processes across academic and administrative areas in RCSI Bahrain. It reports to the Academic Board.

The PRG also noted the close working relationship which has been established between QEO Bahrain and the HEC, with contact being carried out on a daily basis. In addition, the Kingdom of Bahrain has established the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), which is responsible through its directorates for institutional and programmatic reviews, institutional listing (=review) and programme placement on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Hosted programmes are currently undergoing this process and all undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programmes have gone through the NQF validation process.

One of the primary activities of the QEO is the co-ordination of quality reviews. There are two types of quality reviews: statutory external reviews and internal 'rolling' reviews of Schools and administrative support units within RCSI Bahrain in keeping with international quality assurance guidelines. RCSI Bahrain also submits to voluntary reviews such as the Irish Medical Council accreditation.

RCSI runs a system of Programmatic Reviews, administered by A&QC. When it was designed, the guidelines and documents developed by the Bahrain authorities for statutory reviews had been adopted to avoid duplication of effort. **The PRG commends RCSI's approach to a programmatic review system focused on local needs.**

The PRG understood that the BSc in Nursing has not been scheduled for programmatic review by A&QC, yet. RCSI Bahrain relies on their internal reviews and the external examiner system to safeguard that Irish Nursing education standards are complied with. Even though the BSc nursing in Bahrain has no equivalent in Dublin, the PRG found this statement perplexing as the group felt that since RCSI Dublin 'owns' RCSI Bahrain, quality assurance of the latter's nursing curricula should be overseen by RCSI Dublin. As RCSI has a postgraduate school of nursing and midwifery in Dublin there will be the relevant expertise there. The PRG noted very positive feedback from employers. **Still, the PRG recommends that, as a matter of urgency, RCSI Dublin works with RCSI Bahrain on the QA of**

the nursing programme in Bahrain. RCSI Dublin should use its nursing expertise and the established mechanisms and joint committees to quality assure the nursing programme there. RCSI Dublin should also ensure that the undergraduate nursing programme in Bahrain is scheduled for programmatic review by the A & QC as soon as possible and thereafter on a regular basis.

Besides internal and external reviews, student, staff, alumni and employer surveys are carried out. Student feedback is gathered annually and employer, alumni and staff feedback biennially, through the QEO. The PRG learned that changes resulting from student feedback are not always communicated back to students. **The PRG thus recommends that steps are taken to ensure that all results of QA reviews are fed back to students.**

The programme advisory boards, including staff, students, alumni, employers and lay public meet annually to consider the views of internal and external representatives on how the programmes are preparing RCSI Bahrain graduates for the workplace and for further study.

Then, there is a process for monitoring modules, programmes and overall provision within each school of RCSI Bahrain. Module co-ordinators submit a monitoring report, which includes statistical data on student performance, feedback from stakeholders and module development work, at the end of each semester. Programme Directors submit an annual programme analysis to the School Academic Committee and onward to the Academic Board. In addition, an annual monitoring report on each School's portfolio is submitted to the Quality Enhancement Committee and the Academic Board. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on its module and programme monitoring procedures and recommends that RCSI Dublin implements module and programme monitoring at all campuses as a standard component in its quality assurance and enhancement processes.**

The PRG noted that, whilst comprehensive action plans are produced and published in the annual monitoring reports published by schools, currently there is no system in place for heads of departments/schools to confirm that these actions have indeed been completed and **the PRG therefore recommends that the Academic Board should monitor compliance of departmental heads with actions arising from QA/QE work.**

The National University of Ireland (NUI) is responsible for the administration of external examiners' reports. It was noted that reports are not made available from them to RCSI and then to heads of departments until a very late stage if indeed at all. **The PRG recommends that RCSI Dublin should ensure that NUI expedites the delivery of external examiners' reports.**

Commendations

- Quality assurance and enhancement seen as central to RCSI Bahrain's governance, mission and objectives
- The very good working relationships between QEOs in Dublin and Bahrain
- RCSI's approach to a programmatic review system focused on local needs
- RCSI Bahrain's module and programme monitoring procedures

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin

- that, as a matter of urgency, RCSI Dublin works with RCSI Bahrain on the QA of the nursing programme in Bahrain. RCSI Dublin should use its nursing expertise and the established mechanisms and joint committees to quality assure the nursing programme in Bahrain
- to ensure that the undergraduate nursing programme in Bahrain is scheduled for programmatic review by the A & QC as soon as possible and thereafter on a regular basis
- to implement module and programme monitoring at all campuses as a standard component in its quality assurance and enhancement processes
- to ensure that NUI expedites the delivery of external examiners' reports

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- that steps should be taken to ensure that all results of QA reviews are fed back to students
- that the Academic Board should monitor compliance of departmental heads with actions arising from QA/QE work

8 Student Recruitment

The RCSI Bahrain Admissions Department and Student Recruitment Office both report to the RCSI Bahrain COO. Admissions also work with the Student Records Office which manages registration of new intakes with the HEC and works with the MOE, Bahrain for secondary education qualification recognition. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on the work-intensive but satisfactory interaction between Admissions and Student Records with the HEC.**

The recent appointment of an Academic Director of Admissions who previously was Director of the Foundation Year augurs well for recruitment and admissions.

The PRG also commends RCSI Bahrain on having a good understanding of risk and other issues e.g. focussing too much on a single market; non-recognition by a potentially important market of the RCSI Bahrain (but not the RCSI Dublin) degree, and higher attrition rates in the Foundation Year relative to those in Dublin.

Applicants are made online through RCSI Bahrain's website and the Admissions Office collects relevant documentation before calling suitable candidates for interview. Applicants are informed about the outcomes promptly. In 2016/17 there were 175 medical students (112, 6 –year students; 39, 5-year students; 24, MCP students). There are around 1000 applicants for places in the medical school, about 300-400 of which are realistic, taking into account those who have no intention of coming to RCSI Bahrain but make multiple applications, those who are unlikely to reach the required grades, those who cannot afford fees etc. **The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on the healthy ratio of applicants per medical school place.**

There were 68 students registered for the BSc in Nursing. Recruitment and admissions to this programme seems to proceed satisfactorily.

Many important tasks in the Admissions Office, e.g. dealing with incomplete applications are completed manually. Much of this follow-up work could be done automatically via a new reporting tool in Quercus but implementation of this has been delayed, risking possible loss of students. **The PRG recommends that the reporting tool in Quercus be installed immediately and used to provide, prompt, detailed automated reports on applications etc.**

There is good interaction between RCSI Bahrain and RCSI Dublin Recruitment and Admissions offices with meetings taking place as necessary. However, there may be a conflict of interest as both are competing for a cohort of the same students. This needs to be managed carefully. Furthermore, admissions criteria should be agreed to much earlier than heretofore. The main difference in entry criteria is that the Tawjihiya with an average of 95% is acceptable for the 6-year programme in Bahrain but only for the 7-year programme in Ireland. This, as well as other entry routes, seem to have a detrimental effect on progression from FY to JC in Bahrain. **Ways of improving this situation are being addressed e.g. in relation to the American High School Diploma route of entry, submission of SAT scores in science subjects will be required and results used as a basis for admission; which is commended. The PRG recommends that there be at least two formal meetings per year between RCSI campuses to discuss matters such as student recruitment, demographic profiles, entry requirements and how competition for a cohort of the same students is managed.**

RCSI Bahrain operates a rolling admissions process which means that interviews take place throughout the period January-August. This poses problems for academics to be involved in the recruitment and admissions. **The PRG strongly recommends that in view of its importance i.e. risk of decrease in student numbers, that all academic staff should be required to spend a minimum amount of time on recruitment and admissions. The PRG particularly notes the importance of having medically qualified staff involved in these processes to optimise engagement with prospective medical students.**

Up until now recruitment was on a first come first served basis (SAR, p. 52) but as this was perceived to be detrimental to quality, attempts are being made to alter it to a merit-based system. **The PRG recommends that this policy be continued.**

The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on the number of recruitment activities in the medical school including school visits, workshops and roadshows. The PRG recommends that recruitment and admission of all RCSI students from the Middle East should take place from a single Middle East venue. This would ensure that all campuses are aware of offers and acceptances and are better able to predict at an earlier stage the levels of recruitment from this pool of students.

Commendations

- The work-intensive but satisfactory interaction between Admissions and Student Records with the HEC
- Good understanding of risk and other issues
- The healthy ratio of applicants per medical school place
- The effort to lower the attrition rate in the pre-clinical years e.g. by reviewing the entry requirements
- The number of recruitment activities in the medical school including school visits, workshops and roadshows

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin

- that recruitment and admission of all RCSI students from the Middle East should take place from a single Middle East venue

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- that the reporting tool in Quercus should be installed immediately and used to provide, prompt, detailed automated reports on applications etc.
- that there should be at least two formal meetings per year between RCSI campuses to discuss matters such as student recruitment, demographic profiles, entry requirements and how competition for a cohort of the same students is managed
- that all academic staff should be required to spend a minimum amount of time on recruitment and admissions
- that medically qualified staff should be involved in these processes to engage better with prospective medical students

- that in order to preserve quality, admissions should be based on merit rather than a first come first served basis

9 Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Feedback from Students

Curriculum

RCSI Bahrain delivers the same 5- and 6-year RCSI medicine curriculum with the same learning outcomes and assessment as in the other RCSI institutions. This curriculum is based on the Medical Graduate Profile which identifies the key knowledge, skills and competencies required of a medical graduate. While the common RCSI curriculum is Ireland-centric, **the PRG commends the way RCSI Bahrain, as well as delivering an international curriculum, fulfils the HEC requirements to deliver local modules focused to local needs.**

An area of concern for the PRG is that input by Bahrain staff to cross-cycle committees for curriculum change varies greatly. In some instances, Bahrain staff are afforded parity of esteem, contributing equally to curriculum changes as their RCSI and Perdana counterparts. However, in other instances staff from the Bahrain campus feel like observers rather than participants, particularly in the senior cycles. This is a source of great frustration. The PRG supports the desire of academics in RCSI Bahrain for a greater input into blue printing. The disparity in input from RCSI Bahrain also extends to examinations. For some cycles participation is optimal, for others it is non-existent. An improved VC connectivity and VC etiquette could help to ensure that all present at cross-campus curriculum and examination meetings participate in decision making. The PRG also notes that improved communication channels between module leads would be beneficial.

The review group noted that while visiting lecturers from RCSI Dublin regularly visit RCSI Bahrain, this arrangement is not reciprocated. This is viewed by the review group as a lost opportunity for RCSI Bahrain staff to familiarize themselves with systems, practices, staff and students in RCSI Dublin. It would also go some way to ensuring parity of esteem amongst staff. **The PRG thus recommends that intercampus mobility for all academic staff is promoted.**

The undergraduate nursing programme is autonomous from RCSI Dublin with regard to curriculum and teaching and learning. The PRG felt unable to get as good a handle on these courses as the School of Medicine courses. There was a concern that the lack of an undergraduate nursing programme in Dublin resulted in over reliance on external examiners in final assessments to quality assure the programme (see also section 7). Nevertheless, the PRG noted that feedback from the employers suggested extreme satisfaction with the nursing graduates.

The PRG noted the excellence of student facilities e.g. the sports facilities. With so many of the medical issues facing society being amenable to lifestyle changes **the PRG recommends that the use of the sports staff and facilities available should be expanded to reflect this educational imperative.**

There should be more opportunities for non-Arabic speakers to improve their language skills (see also section 12). In the medical foundation year, the PRG was pleased to note the rapid assimilation of English language skills for Arabic speakers.

Teaching and learning

The PRG is confident that in medical education there is a good approach to the teaching of basic and clinical sciences using a wide range of teaching methods including lectures, on-line material, books, face to face clinical teaching with low student-mentor ratios and clinical simulation. There is broad exposure to clinical cases in local hospitals and health centres. The PRG noted the eagerness of clinicians in hospitals to be involved in teaching RCSI Bahrain medical students and the pride resulting from their efforts. The PRG noted appropriate use of translators and student placements where languages or cultural issues could be obstacles. In obstetrics and gynaecology, **the PRG commends the evolving relationship with the American Mission Hospital allowing male students to observe**

child birth and gynaecological procedures. The joint teaching of nurses and medical students in the simulation centre is to be commended. The PRG recommends that consideration should be given to more joint undergraduate medical and nursing teaching. The PRG notes that, while the attrition rate in the Medicine Foundation Year in Bahrain is higher than that in Dublin, the performance of clinical students in Bahrain is at least comparable to GCC students in Dublin. The PRG is concerned that lectures are occasionally changed at short notice in Dublin, sometimes after they have been delivered in Bahrain. A Moodle environment, unified over all RCSI campuses, so students can view all lectures and changes made to those on which examinations may be based, would seem prudent. **The PRG recommends that there should be improved co-ordination of lectures between the campuses, a move to a unified Moodle environment between campuses and better cross campus communication between cycle heads.** There should be greater emphasis on ensuring that clinical teachers in Bahrain can engage in curriculum construction and, when involved in examination setting, view the final product.

In undergraduate nursing the PRG noted the difficulty some students have with English language skills and the efforts taken to address this. **The PRG commends the significant patient contact building year on year as the course progresses.** To further assure the quality of the teaching programme, the PRG is of the opinion, that an exchange programme, possibly with one of the nursing schools in Dublin, would be beneficial. **The PRG commends the integration of male nursing students and the efforts made to overcome traditional stereotypes.**

The PRG heard that the facilities were under significant pressure because of the gratifying expansion in student numbers. **The PRG recommends that further work on timetabling to maximise the use of the facilities should be explored.**

Feedback from students

The PRG commends the regular meetings between cycle directors and student representatives and the involvement with students in University committees. There was positive feedback from medical and nursing students. The elected student representatives are engaged and participating in relevant committees.

Commendations

- The way RCSI Bahrain, as well as delivering an international curriculum, fulfils the HEC requirements to deliver local modules focused to local needs
- The evolving relationship with the American Mission Hospital allowing male students to observe child birth and gynaecological procedures
- The joint teaching of nurses and medical students in the simulation centre
- The significant patient contact in the undergraduate nursing programme
- The integration of male nursing students and the efforts made to overcome traditional stereotypes
- The regular meetings between cycle directors and student representatives and the involvement with students in University committees

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain

- to promote intercampus mobility for all academic staff
- to improve co-ordination of lectures between the campuses, move to a unified Moodle environment between campuses and ensure a better cross campus communication between cycle heads

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- that the use of the sports staff and facilities available should be expanded to reflect this educational imperative
- that consideration should be given to more joint undergraduate medical and nursing teaching
- that further work on timetabling to maximise the use of the facilities should be explored

10 Research Activity

Despite a number of challenges, research activity at RCSI Bahrain has progressed well over the past few years. The main reasons for this are investment in the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research (SPGS&R) to which a full-time Head has been appointed; dedicated space for the SPGS&R and support for the Head by a Research Officer. There has also been investment of ca. \$100K per annum, 2014-2017 incl., as seed funding for research and as capital spend. In 2016 publications from RCSI Bahrain rose to 41, representing 11 percent of all publications in Bahrain.

In order to optimise research activity, clusters in Biosciences, Oncology, Cardiovascular & Endocrinology and Health Professions Education Research have been created. **A commendable move to stimulate collaboration between RCSI Bahrain and Dublin has been the Dilmun PhD Scholarship Scheme whereby scholars are supervised by appropriate PIs from Dublin supported by appropriate staff in RCSI Bahrain and spend the 1st year in Dublin and the remaining years in Bahrain. The PRG recommends that every effort should be made to ensure continuation of the Dilmun PhD Scholarship scheme.**

The PRG also recommends that support and provision for research students should be enhanced to make RCSI Bahrain attractive for postgraduates.

A very encouraging development is the recent establishment of a RCSI/King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH) Nursing Research Council which is currently prioritising Nursing Research. **The PRG recommends that opportunities for collaborative research between RCSI Bahrain and KHUH are exploited maximally. It also recommends that clinicians in KHUH and other hospitals should be encouraged to participate as much as possible in RCSI Bahrain's research activities.**

The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain staff on their efforts and enthusiasm to carry out research. There is clearly much frustration, though, at barriers to research activity. The main ones are the very heavy teaching loads of Bahrain staff compared to their Dublin counterparts. Due to the low staff quota there is little or no protected time for research. A way of counteracting this is to appoint post-doctoral fellows reporting to cluster leads and to establish research teams involving Academic PIs, Post-doctoral Fellow(s), Postgraduate Student(s), Undergraduate Student(s). **The PRG recommends the recruitment of post-doctoral fellows to allow the academics to manage teaching/research activities.**

Despite recent expenditure on research infrastructure, this requires further investment to bring it into line with the remainder of RCSI Bahrain's facilities. **The PRG recommends that further expenditure on RCSI Bahrain's research infrastructure is necessary.**

The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on offering an ample supply of research projects for undergraduate students. The PRG recommends exploration of the possibility of introducing an intercalated degree with a high research component in the 'extra' year.

Another source of frustration is the time required to import materials for research (see SAR, p. 69). A way of counteracting this is to strengthen the Health Professions Education Research cluster, and to introduce a Health Services Research cluster (as aspired to in the SAR, p 9) to enable more high quality research outputs in medicine and nursing while circumventing the problems associated with import of materials. **The PRG therefore recommends that the Health Professions Education Research cluster should be strengthened and a Health Services Research cluster should be developed in order to enhance quality medical and nursing education research.**

While there is some research collaboration between RCSI Bahrain and Dublin, this could be improved. **The PRG recommends that ways are explored to incentivise research collaboration between RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain.** Although good working relationships exist between the Schools of

Postgraduate Studies Dublin and the SPGS&R, Bahrain as well as between the Research Directors in Bahrain and Dublin, it is unclear if the remit of the RCSI Research Office extends to RCSI Bahrain. **The PRG recommends higher engagement between the Research Offices in RCSI Bahrain and Dublin and discussions between the Directors of Research on how best to achieve good working relationships.**

There are ample measures in place to ensure quality enhancement in research such as increased number and quality of publications, increasing impact factors of journals used and hiring of staff with increased H indices. **The PRG recommends that staff should be encouraged and supported to enhance their publishing record.**

Commendations

- The Dilmun PhD Scholarship Scheme whereby scholars are supervised by appropriate PIs from Dublin supported by appropriate staff in RCSI Bahrain and spend the 1st year in Dublin and the remaining years in Bahrain
- Staff on their efforts and enthusiasm to carry out research
- An ample supply of research projects for undergraduate students

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain

- that ways are explored to incentivise research collaboration between RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain
- higher engagement between the Research Offices in RCSI Bahrain and Dublin and discussions between the Directors of Research on how best to achieve good working relationships

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- that every effort should be made to ensure continuation of the Dilmun PhD Scholarship scheme
- that support and provision for research students should be enhanced to make RCSI Bahrain attractive for postgraduates
- that opportunities for collaborative research between RCSI Bahrain and KHUH are exploited maximally
- that clinicians in KHUH and other hospitals should be encouraged to participate as much as possible in RCSI Bahrain's research activities

- the recruitment of post-doctoral fellows to allow the academics to manage teaching/research activities
- that further expenditure on RCSI Bahrain's research infrastructure is necessary
- exploration of the possibility of introducing an intercalated degree with a high research component in the 'extra' year.
- that the Health Professions Education Research cluster should be strengthened and a Health Services Research cluster should be developed in order to enhance quality medical and nursing education research
- that staff should be encouraged and supported to enhance their publishing record

11 External Relations

The PRG commends RCSI Bahrain on its strong relationships with external stakeholders. The level of engagement with government health institutions and private providers is exemplary. The PRG would encourage continued development and strengthening of links with external stakeholders but, as these seem both functional and robust at present, has made no specific recommendations in this area.

The university maintains a good working relationship with the HEC. There is an appropriate awareness that working with, supporting the aims of, and learning from the HEC furthers the academic goals of the university.

It was evident from the meeting with local stakeholders that the local health service institutions are extremely satisfied with both medical and nursing graduates from RCSI Bahrain. The University has regular meetings with stakeholders. **The PRG commends the graduate opportunities provided locally, particularly for nurses, enabling career development to be dovetailed with family commitments.** Medical graduates have no difficulty obtaining internships in Bahrain if they so desire. The University is facilitating the evolution of excellence in local leadership through its graduate programme.

The PRG was of the opinion that academic success in both the undergraduate medical and nursing curricula should be underpinned by ensuring health care workers are able to interact extensively with the community they serve. For the undergraduate nursing programme, it was clear that this was the case. However, it was also apparent that in the medical undergraduate programme, due to the pressures on the curriculum, there was less time for such activities. The PRG understands that the next strategic plan will include topics on health awareness such as obesity, and the issues facing socially deprived areas. The PRG sees this as an opportunity to strengthen community outreach, particularly for medical undergraduates. **The PRG recommends expansion of the community outreach programmes and advocates greater inclusion of medical students in them.** As curricula are common across all campuses of RCSI the group also sees this as an opportunity for global curriculum development building on the good work being done in Bahrain. **The PRG recommends that RCSI considers including an outreach programme in the curriculum across all campuses.**

In the international arena, the PRG would encourage the continuation of the work being done at all campuses in respect of opening up medical student elective opportunities. The PRG was satisfied that currently opportunities exist and that development work is being done in this area. The PRG notes that an inter-campus exchange programme (rotation) is embedded in the medical student's curriculum and the feedback the PRG received from a Dublin medical student on an elective placement was positive. **The PRG commends the international opportunities provided by rotations in medicine with Dublin.**

There is good interaction with the alumni and the students find talks from them helpful. The PRG supports the proposed development of the alumni network.

Commendations

- Strong relationships with external stakeholders
- The graduate opportunities provided locally, particularly for nurses, enabling career development to be dovetailed with family commitments
- The international opportunities provided by rotations in medicine with Dublin

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin

- that RCSI considers including an outreach programme in the curriculum across all campuses

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- to expand the community outreach programmes and to facilitate greater inclusion of medical students in them

12 Support Services

The PRG commends RCSI-Bahrain on the wide range of support services as well as clubs and societies (e.g. ICT, Library and Learning Resources, Student Development and Wellbeing, Career Guidance, Sports and Recreation) it offers to ensure an adequate support for students and staff in their everyday work. Key support services function well and are sufficient to satisfy the needs of the institution. The students and academic staff interviewed by the panel expressed satisfaction with the support services on offer, and did not perceive any major discrepancy in comparison with the available support services across the other international campuses. During the interviews with representatives from the different support services the PRG got the impression that there is a culture of proactive and continuous support focused on finding solutions to the issues that arise in day-to-day work.

The available support services have developed good practices in a number of areas: ensuring sufficient library resources to students and staff; engaging alumni through 'Alumni talks' in sharing career experience information and advice to students, developing intercampus initiatives and forums (e.g. the Global Campus Initiative, the yearly International Education Forum, etc.), developing a target-oriented marketing strategy for the recruitment of students, providing emotional and academic support to students. Nevertheless there is still room for improvement and fine tuning in some areas to increase the scope and satisfaction with support services as a way to bring them even closer to their users:

The PRG learnt from interviews with students and with library staff that there are insufficient trained librarians to cover the extensive opening hours of the library. **The PRG recommends that RCSI Bahrain invests in a greater number of trained librarians.**

Another possible area of improvement would be to establish opportunities for non-Arabic speakers to improve their language skills. **The PRG recommends developing Arabic language learning beyond level 1 for non-Arabic speakers.**

The PRG learned that RCSI in Dublin has many long-standing agreements concerning electives due for renewal and that RCSI Dublin is endeavouring to introduce these in Bahrain as they are renewed. **The PRG recommends RCSI Dublin to continue with its efforts to and ensure equivalent access to elective placements for students at RCSI Bahrain wherever possible.**

The responsibilities for the overview of support services are split between the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chief Operating Officer. Even though the academic and non-academic services report to different heads the existing structure allows a good strategic overview of the functionality and effectiveness of all support service operations. **This is mainly ensured by the commendable practice of holding joint meetings through the Operational Management Committee where both types of services come together to discuss the quality and efficiency of the services on offer.**

The PRG was pleased to note that RCSI Bahrain centrally organises internal reviews not only of schools but also of support units (see also section 7). Besides, most support services employ some decentralised form of mechanisms and procedures to assess the quality of their services. This is in some cases done on the basis of customer satisfaction surveys collected from the groups using the services, while in others based on committee discussions, verbal feedback and direct engagement with users. Hence, currently each support service has its own way and schedule for those instruments as well as ways of handling and working with the data gathered. In this respect, RCSI-Bahrain may wish to put further emphasis on harmonising the quality procedures across support services as a way to further streamline their oversight. Due to the varying nature of the support services in existence, this should be done in a way that provides a balance between the specificity of each service and support services as a whole.

Commendations

- The wide range of support services as well as clubs and societies (e.g. ICT, Library and Learning Resources, Student Development and Wellbeing, Career Guidance, Sports and Recreation) RCSI Bahrain offers to ensure an adequate support for students and staff in their everyday work
- Holding joint meetings through the Operational Management Committee where academic and non-academic services come together to discuss the quality and efficiency of the services on offer.

Recommendations

(a) to RCSI Dublin

- to continue with its efforts to and ensure equivalent access to elective placements for students at RCSI Bahrain wherever possible

(b) to RCSI Bahrain

- to invest in a greater number of trained librarians
- developing Arabic language learning beyond level 1 for non-Arabic speakers

Summary of commendations and recommendations

Section	Commendation	Recommendation
<p>Mission, Governance & Strategic Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The open relationship with the relevant local state authorities • The clear vision, openness and commitment of the senior management team to the continuous improvement of the institution • The alignment of the academic agenda in medicine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that, as a matter of urgency, RCSI Bahrain should develop a workload model that helps the institution to adjust the balance between the strategic pillars; strengthening Research and ensuring adequate emphasis on Community Outreach
<p>Organisation and Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of student engagement • The quality of facilities and the high-quality maintenance of them 	<p><i>to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that steps should be taken to improve the clarity, synergy and integration between RCSI Bahrain and Dublin through academic and management structures. One of the measures should be that a VC etiquette (e.g. by having SOPs) is put in place for chairs of committees to ensure that engagement of members from all campuses is similar <p><i>to RCSI Bahrain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to adjust its organisational charts in order to ensure that they better reflect the University's functioning • to review its risk register on a more frequent basis
<p>Staff Details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement and enthusiasm of staff • The open-door policy at the campus • The diverse nature of faculty and staff which enriches the educational experience for students • The excellent academic staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to employ more permanent academic staff • that, as a matter of urgency, promotion structures for non-academic staff should be embedded • to embed a formal appraisal system for academic and non-academic staff and to

Internal and External (Local and International) Quality Assurance Processes

<p>and their commitment to offer their students quality teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The award of a prize for the best hospital based clinical lecturer based on the results of the student survey 	<p>align professional development activities with a reward structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that pay scales for academic and non-academic staff members should be implemented • to consider a teaching award for non-clinical lecturers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance and enhancement seen as central to RCSI Bahrain's governance, mission and objectives • The very good working relationships between QEOs in Dublin and Bahrain • RCSI's approach to a programmatic review system focused on local needs • RCSI Bahrain's module and programme monitoring procedures 	<p><i>to RCSI Dublin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that, as a matter of urgency, RCSI Dublin works with RCSI Bahrain on the QA of the nursing programme in Bahrain. RCSI Dublin should use its nursing expertise and the established mechanisms and joint committees to quality assure the nursing programme in Bahrain • to ensure that the undergraduate nursing programme in Bahrain is scheduled for programmatic review by the A & QC as soon as possible and thereafter on a regular basis • to implement module and programme monitoring at all campuses as a standard component in its quality assurance and enhancement processes • to ensure that NUI expedites the delivery of external examiners' reports <p><i>to RCSI Bahrain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that steps should be taken to ensure that all results of QA reviews are fed back to students • that the Academic Board should monitor compliance of departmental heads with actions arising from QA/QE work

Student Recruitment

- The work-intensive but satisfactory interaction between Admissions and Student Records with the HEC
- Good understanding of risk and other issues
- The healthy ratio of applicants per medical school place
- The effort to lower the attrition rate in the pre-clinical years e.g. by reviewing the entry requirements
- The number of recruitment activities in the medical school including school visits, workshops and roadshows

to RCSI Dublin

- that recruitment and admission of all RCSI students from the Middle East should take place from a single Middle East venue

to RCSI Bahrain

- that the reporting tool in Quercus should be installed immediately and used to provide, prompt, detailed automated reports on applications etc.
- that there should be at least two formal meetings per year between RCSI campuses to discuss matters such as student recruitment, demographic profiles, entry requirements and how competition for a cohort of the same students is managed
- that all academic staff should be required to spend a minimum amount of time on recruitment and admissions
- that medically qualified staff should be involved in these processes to engage better with prospective medical students
- that in order to preserve quality, admissions should be based on merit rather than a first come first served basis

Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Feedback from students

- The way RCSI Bahrain, as well as delivering an international curriculum, fulfils the HEC requirements to deliver local modules focused to local needs
- The evolving relationship with the American Mission Hospital allowing male students to observe child birth and gynaecological procedures

to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain

- to promote intercampus mobility for all academic staff
- to improve co-ordination of lectures between the campuses, move to a unified Moodle environment between campuses and ensure a better cross campus communication

Research Activity

- The joint teaching of nurses and medical students in the simulation centre
 - The significant patient contact in the undergraduate nursing programme
 - The integration of male nursing students and the efforts made to overcome traditional stereotypes
 - The regular meetings between cycle directors and student representatives and the involvement with students in University committees
- between cycle heads to RCSI Bahrain
 - that the use of the sports staff and facilities available should be expanded to reflect this educational imperative
 - that consideration should be given to more joint undergraduate medical and nursing teaching
 - that further work on timetabling to maximise the use of the facilities should be explored
- The Dilmun PhD Scholarship Scheme whereby scholars are supervised by appropriate PIs from Dublin supported by appropriate staff in RCSI Bahrain and spend the 1st year in Dublin and the remaining years in Bahrain
 - Staff on their efforts and enthusiasm to carry out research
 - An ample supply of research projects for undergraduate students
- to RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain*
- that ways are explored to incentivise research collaboration between RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain
 - higher engagement between the Research Offices in RCSI Bahrain and Dublin and discussions between the Directors of Research on how best to achieve good working relationships
- to RCSI Bahrain*
- that every effort should be made to ensure continuation of the Dilmun PhD Scholarship scheme
 - that support and provision for research students should be enhanced to make RCSI Bahrain attractive for postgraduates
 - that opportunities for collaborative research between RCSI Bahrain and KHUH are exploited maximally
 - that clinicians in KHUH and other hospitals should be encouraged to participate as

		<p>much as possible in RCSI Bahrain's research activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the recruitment of post-doctoral fellows to allow the academics to manage teaching/research activities • that further expenditure on RCSI Bahrain's research infrastructure is necessary • exploration of the possibility of introducing an intercalated degree with a high research component in the 'extra' year • that the Health Professions Education Research cluster should be strengthened and a Health Services Research cluster should be developed in order to enhance quality medical and nursing education research • that staff should be encouraged and supported to enhance their publishing record
<p>External Relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships with external stakeholders • The graduate opportunities provided locally, particularly for nurses, enabling career development to be dovetailed with family commitments • The international opportunities provided by rotations in medicine with Dublin 	<p><i>to RCSI Dublin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that RCSI considers including an outreach programme in the curriculum across all campuses <p><i>to RCSI Bahrain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to expand the community outreach programmes and to facilitate greater inclusion of medical students in them
<p>Support Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wide range of support services as well as clubs and societies (e.g. ICT, Library and Learning Resources, Student Development and Wellbeing, Career Guidance, Sports and 	<p><i>to RCSI Dublin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to continue with its efforts to and ensure equivalent access to elective placements for students at RCSI Bahrain wherever possible

	<p>Recreation) RCSI Bahrain offers to ensure an adequate support for students and staff in their everyday work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding joint meetings through the Operational Management Committee where academic and non-academic services come together to discuss the quality and efficiency of the services on offer 	<p><i>to RCSI Bahrain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to invest in a greater number of trained librarians • developing Arabic language learning beyond level 1 for non-Arabic speakers
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APPENDIX 1 Site Visit Schedule

RCSI Bahrain Institutional Review

Site-Visit Schedule 13 – 18 October 2017

RCSI Dublin Thursday 12 October 2017			
Thurs 12 Oct	19.00	Dinner	Review Panel QEO Staff

Venue Sir Thomas Myles Room

Date, Time & Venue	Mtg. Dur.	Meeting Title
Fri 13 Oct 08.30 – 09.15	45 mins	<i>Review Panel Convenes</i>
Fri 13 Oct 09.15 – 10.15	60 mins	<i>M1: SAR Ref: 2 Mission, Governance & Strategic Planning</i> Meeting with the CEO and Dean of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS)
Fri 13 Oct 10.30 – 11.15	45 mins	<i>M2: SAR Ref: 2 Mission, Governance & Strategic Planning</i> Meeting with President and Vice President, RCSI
Fri 13 Oct 11.15 – 11.45	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Fri 13 Oct 11.45 – 12.45	60 mins	<i>M3: SAR Ref: 3 Organisation & Management; 4 Staff Details; 6 Student Recruitment; 10 Support Services</i> Meeting with Heads of Functions: HR, Finance, IT, Admissions, SARA
Fri 13 Oct 13.00 – 14.00	60 mins	<i>Lunch and private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Fri 13 Oct 14.00 – 15.15	75 mins	<i>M4: SAR Ref: 7 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning & Feedback from students</i> Meeting with Heads of Schools or nominees; Members of RCSI Quality Committee
Fri 13 Oct 15.30 – 16.00	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Fri 13 Oct 16.00 – 16.45	45 mins	<i>M5: SAR Ref: 8 Research</i> Meeting with Director and members of staff from the Office of Research & Innovation; SPGS; Principal Investigators with research collaborations in Bahrain
Fri 13 Oct 17.00 – 18.00	60 mins	<i>Wrap up of the day's meetings and private meeting time for Review Panel</i>

RCSI Bahrain Institutional Review
Site-Visit Schedule 13 – 18 October 2017
Venue Boardroom 505

Date, Time & Venue	Mtg. Dur.	Meeting Title
Sun 15 Oct 11.30	30 mins	<i>Review Panel Travel from Hotel to RCSI Bahrain</i>
Sun 15 Oct 12.00 – 13.00	60 mins	<i>Review Panel Convene</i>
Sun 15 Oct 13.00 – 13.20	20mins	<i>M6: SAR Ref: 2 Mission, Governance & Strategic Planning</i> Private meeting with the President, RCSI Bahrain
Sun 15 Oct 13.20 – 13.50	30 mins	<i>Site tour (University only)</i>
Sun 15 Oct 14.00 – 15.00	60 mins	<i>M7: SAR Ref: 2 Mission, Governance & Strategic Planning</i> Meeting with Senior Management Team & Head of Quality Enhancement
Sun 15 Oct 15.00 – 15.30	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Sun 15 Oct 15.40 – 16.30	40 mins	<i>M8: Meeting with the SAR Co-ordinating Committee Leads or their nominee(s)</i>
Sun 15 Oct 16.30 – 17.00		<i>Wrap up of the day's meetings and private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Sun 15 Oct 19.30 – 21.30	120 mins	<i>Dinner</i>
Date, Time & Venue	Mtg. Dur.	Meeting Title
Mon 16 Oct 08.00 – 08.30	30 mins	Review Panel travel from hotel to RCSI Bahrain
Mon 16 Oct 08.30 – 09.00	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Mon 16 Oct 09.00 – 10.00	60 mins	<i>M9: SAR Ref: 3 Organisation & Management</i> Meeting with representatives of the Executive Committee
Mon 16 Oct 10.15 – 11.15	60 mins	<i>M10: SAR Ref: 5 Internal & External Quality Assurance</i> Meeting with Quality Enhancement Office staff representatives; Senior Staff Representatives from Schools engaged in QA
Mon 16 Oct 11.15 – 11.45	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>

Mon 16 Oct 12.00 – 12.45	45mins	<i>M11: SAR Ref: 9 Staff details</i> Meeting with academic and administration staff representatives
Mon 16 Oct 12.45 – 13.30	45mins	<i>Lunch and private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Mon 16 Oct 13.30 – 14.20	50 mins	<i>M12: SAR Ref: 4 Staff Details</i> Meeting with staff responsible for recruitment, professional development, appraisal and promotions
Mon 16 Oct 14.30 – 15.20	50 mins	<i>M13: SAR Ref: 6 Student Recruitment</i> Meeting with staff representatives from Admissions; Student Recruitment Office; academic staff involved recruitment interviews; Chief Operating Officer
Mon 16 Oct 15.20 – 15.45	25 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Mon 16 Oct 15.45 – 16.30	50 mins	<i>M14: Meeting with student representatives from School of Medicine</i>
Mon 16 Oct 16.30 – 17.00	30 mins	<i>Wrap up of the day's meetings and private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Mon 16 Oct 19.30 – 21.30		<i>Dinner</i>
Date, Time & Venue		
Tues 17 Oct 08.00 – 08.30	30 mins	Review Panel travel from hotel to RCSI Bahrain
Tues 17 Oct 08.30 – 09.00	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Tues 17 Oct 09.00 – 10.00	60 mins	<i>M15: SAR Ref: 8 Research</i> Meeting with Head of SPGS&R; Representatives of the REC; Research active staff representatives; staff overseeing students involved in summer research
Tues 17 Oct 10.15 – 11.15	60 mins	<i>M16: SAR Ref: 7 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and Feedback from students</i> Meeting with Senior Academic Staff with responsibility for curriculum development ; teaching & learning; student feedback
Tues 17 Oct 11.15 – 11.45	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Tues 17 Oct 11.45 – 12.45	60 mins	<i>M17: SAR Ref: 10 Support Services</i> Meeting with staff representatives from SARA; Library & Learning Resource Centre; Student Development & Wellbeing; ICT; Career Guidance; Marketing & Communications
Tues 17 Oct 13.00 – 14.00	60 mins	<i>M18: Working lunch with postgraduate students and PhD students</i>
Tues 17 Oct 14.00 – 14.30	30 mins	<i>Private meeting time for Review Panel</i>

Mon 16 Oct 14.30 – 15.20	50 mins	<i>M19: Meeting with student representatives from School of Nursing & Midwifery</i>
Tues 17 Oct 15.30 – 16.30	60 mins	<i>M20: SAR Ref: 9 External Relations</i> Meeting with external stakeholders from clinical sites; employers
Tue 17 Oct 16.30 – 17.30	45 mins	<i>Wrap up of the day's meetings and private meeting time for Review Panel</i>
Tues 17th Oct 19.30 – 21.30		<i>Dinner</i>
Date, Time & Venue	Mtg. Dur.	Meeting Title
Wed 18 Oct 08.00 – 08.30	30 mins	Review Panel travel from hotel to RCSI Bahrain
Wed 18 Oct 08.30 – 12.30	240 mins	<i>Meeting time for Review Panel to prepare key findings</i>
Wed 18 Oct 12.30 – 13.00	30 mins	<i>Presentation of key findings to the President and EXCO, RCSI Bahrain</i>
Wed 18 Oct 13.00		<i>Review ends</i>