RCSI + UCD
MALAYSIA CAMPUS
(formerly Penang Medical College)

RUMC Joint Internal Quality Review

4 - 7 December 2023

PRG Report

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Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date
1	Draftv1	PRG				
1	Draftv2	PRG	RCSI UCD	PRG, RCSI, UCD		28 Feb 2024
1	Final	PRG	RUMC, PRG, RCSI, UCD	PRG, RCSI, UCD	QEO RCSI	27 March 2024

1. Overview of the Review Process

1.1 Background of the Review Process

This report considers the institutional collaboration between the University College Dublin (UCD) and RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences (RCSI) with RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus (RUMC) in Penang, Malaysia. The legislative framework governing Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement (QA/QI) processes in Higher Education in Ireland, as set out in the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012, as amended, codifies and emphasises the responsibility of all Irish higher education institutions for the quality of their degree programmes whether delivered in Ireland or on international campuses. Pursuant to these legislative requirements, both RCSI and UCD carry out regular quality reviews of Schools and administrative units on their home and overseas campuses, as well as reviews of provision in collaborative partner institutions. A joint RCSI-UCD review of the medicine programme, delivered at RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus (then Penang Medical College), was first undertaken in 2014.

The purpose of the institutional quality review and site visit to RUMC was to assist UCD and RCSI to assure themselves of the quality and standards of their own provision and the validated provision, delivered at off-campus locations. The Review Panel was tasked:

- to clarify and verify the details in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR)
- to 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 RUMC's mission, objective and strategic plan
- to evaluate RUMC's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as outlined in the SAR
- to discuss any perceived strengths and weaknesses not identified in the SAR
- to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance/quality enhancement arrangements
- to assess the suitability of the working environment(s)
- to comment on any recommendations proposed by RUMC in its SAR
- to make appropriate recommendations for improvement, with due consideration of resource implications

1.2 Review Methodology

Overview of the Review Process

The Review is divided into four distinct phases:

- Self-reflection and analysis – RUMC will produce a confidential Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and supporting documentation.

- External review – a site visit to RUMC will be undertaken by a Peer Review Group (PRG) which will issue a draft report.
- Planning for Quality Improvement – RUMC will have an opportunity to respond to the draft report for factual accuracy and will provide a two-page report response. A final PRG report will then be published; RUMC will develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in response to the PRG Report recommendations.
- Monitoring Enhancement of Improvement – RUMC will respond to the PRG Report recommendations and report annually jointly to the Quality Committees of RCSI and UCD.

The Review Group received a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and supporting documentation prepared by RUMC prior to the site visits to Dublin and Malaysia. The Review Group were provided with additional documentation as requested prior to and during the visits.

1.3 Membership of the Peer Review Group

Dr Oliver Vettori (Chair). Dean for Accreditation and Quality Management, Director of Department for Program Management and Teaching & Learning Support, Vienna University of Economics and Business.

Prof Dr Chin Ai-Vyrn (External Subject Expert). Professor of Geriatric Medicine, University Malaya. Head of Geriatric Medicine and Senior Consultant Geriatrician, University Malaya Medical Centre.

Prof Catherine Blake (UCD Internal Representative Expert). Dean and Head of the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sport Science at University College Dublin.

Dr Ian Colquhoun (External Subject Expert). Associate Medical Director, NHS Scotland Academy, Golden Jubilee National University Hospital. Medical Assessment Lead, Associate Clinical Professor and Cardiac and Respiratory Clinical Lead for MB course at University of Glasgow. Director of Clinical Skills, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (RCPSG).

Ms Molly Greenough (Learner Representative). UCD Students' Union (UCDSU) Welfare Officer for the 2021/22 academic year, and the UCDSU President for the 2022/23 academic year.

Mr Noel O'Callaghan (RCSI Internal Representative Expert). Head of Student Development and Wellbeing at RCSI's Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional & Academic Success (CoMPPAS).

The Peer Review Group visited RUMC from 4 December to 7 December 2023 and held meetings with the Governing Boards, Students, Staff and affiliated Staff representatives. The detail of meetings conducted during the site-visit is provided in Appendix 1.

2. Introduction and Context

RUMC (RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus; until 2018 known a Penang Medical College) was established in 1996 as a joint venture by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and University College Dublin (UCD), both constituents of the National University of Ireland (NUI). As the only Irish Foreign University Branch Campus in Malaysia, RUMC enjoys a quite unique and strong position. To a considerable degree, this can be attributed to the RCSI and UCD brands, as well as to the fact that RUMC can award an NUI recognised degree, which also provides graduates with access to attractive job markets outside their own country. In addition, RUMC has managed to build a good reputation and strong network of relationships in the region. The peer review team was particularly impressed with the institution's access to and collaboration with hospitals in the region, even though RUMC is also aware of the potential risks of such co-dependencies.

Students in the 5-year medical programme – which is accredited by both the Irish and Malaysian Medical Councils, gain experience in Ireland (for the first two and a half years, where they either study at RCSI or UCD) as well as in Malaysia (where they undergo clinical training in the context where the majority might later practice). The benefits and challenges that go along with this international and cross-cultural study experience will be reflected in detail in sections 5 and 6 of this PRG report.

Other programmes which RUMC has set up include a Foundation Year programme (accredited in 2012), a MSc in Health Research (accredited in 2016), a MSc in Public Health (accredited in 2017) and a Foundation in Science Programme (accredited in 2019). Currently, RUMC is working at obtaining accreditation for a BSc in Medical Information, aiming for a first cohort in 2024. RUMC recruits globally, though the majority of students come from Malaysia. Student intake has slightly decreased in the recent past, yet the institution is optimistic to carefully grow again.

RUMC's current strategic plan (2021-2025) is organised along five strategic goals/dimensions: Excellence in healthcare education, excellence in research, institutional advancement, development of the institution's physical infrastructure and benefit to society. As such the five goals seem rather generic to the PRG, in particular as the last review of the strategic plan by senior management in 2020 already found that the previous Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was already found lacking. The PRG team acknowledges, however, that the development and implementation of the strategic plan was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the institution' recent leadership change. Both, the new Dean and the new President have only been in their positions for a few months. In light of this, the PRG was deeply impressed with the clear improvements achieved, specifically within the last year. All stakeholder groups which the PRG met during the interviews were very clear on how much they appreciate RUMC's considerable progress towards, as one of the alumni put it, "a leading university in the region". Section 3 will contain more detailed observations on the strategic and operational planning and the organisational set up.

3. Organisation and Management

As noted in the introductory section of the PRG report, RUMC is owned jointly by RCSI and UCD. This requires all three institutions to collaborate closely and align their vision, goals and operations. The ownership model is also reflected in RUMC's governance: RUMC's constitution requires two separate Boards, a Board of Directors, which oversees the company's management and a Board of Governors which supervises the academic side of RUMC's operations. Both Boards are largely composed of highly experienced (senior) representatives from RCSI and UCD, with deliberate overlap in membership.

Executively, RUMC is led by the President/CEO. The President/CEO is responsible for leading development and implementation for the strategies that help the university to operate successfully and potentially even grow/expand. The new President had only stepped into this role a few months prior to the review, succeeding a short-term interim president.

The President/CEO is supported by the Registrar and a small number of department heads. Overall, RUMC has five main administrative departments: the Finance Department, the Corporate Office & Human Resources Department, the Facilities Management Department, the Corporate Marketing & Student Recruitment Department and the Student Registry & Academic Services Department.

RUMC's Dean, who formally reports to the President/CEO, is responsible for leading the university in all academic matters, in particular the programmes/curricula and staff development of the academic staff. Similarly to the president, the new Dean has only taken this position a few months ago. Currently the roles appear to be perceived as a 'package deal', and are operating as such. It is important that the staff and students understand the segregation of duties and the purpose of both roles. It is also key to the success of both roles going forward. The PRG was very impressed, though, with how much the two new leaders had achieved in only a short period of time, as stated in the introductory section. Progress in the recent past is most notable with regard to RUMC's facilities and infrastructure.

The educational, social and support hub facilities (including the staff operating them) appear to enrich the study experience immensely. The new Simulation Centre should serve the institution well, too.

The Dean is supported by four Vice-Deans with responsibilities for academic affairs, research, international relations, and student related matters. Like the Dean, all four Vice-Deans are senior academics who have been working at RUMC for quite some time, but are mostly new in their positions. As RUMC is a rather small institution, already short on staff in some cases (see section 4), the Vice-Deans have to fill their positions in addition to their regular duties. As the roles develop, it is likely that this will have an impact on their availability/capacity. The limited number of academic staff also poses a challenge with regard to staffing the considerable number of Committees, such as the RUMC Studies Committee, the RUMC Curriculum Committee, the RUMC Academic Executive Committee, the RUMC Student Affairs Committee, the RUMC Research Committee, the RUMC Staff Development Committee, RUMC Selection/Promotion Committee, RUMC Executive Management Committee and the RUMC Quality Committee. Striking a balance between effectiveness and efficiency in all matters of internal governance will likely remain a

challenge for some time to come. In the SAR, RUMC already acknowledges the potential need to revise the current management set up in the near future, not least to help the institution to react faster with regard to technological, societal or academic developments.

During the interviews and while studying the self-assessment materials, the PRG gained the impression that all key actors were eager to work together to bring the institution forward – but that responsibilities in practice were not as clear cut as they appear on paper. The administrative and academic side of operations cannot be fully separated, as is also evidenced in the composition of the Boards. In addition, the current job profiles and role descriptions leave quite some room for individual differences in interpretation, not least when it comes to actual responsibility/accountability. There is, in the perspective of the PRG a certain need for clarification.

Regarding collaboration on the level of the academic departments, the PRG saw some room for improvement. The recent curriculum review and mapping process already helped the different units to identify some overlaps in content and provided some ideas on how to move forward. Yet in other aspects (not least when it comes to teaching scheduling) RUMC appears to be characterised by a rather strong "silo structure", especially given the size of the institution. In addition, challenges remain in communication between RUMC and their corresponding departments at RCSI and UCD, however it was noted that communication and consultation has improved recently. Prior to 2023 it appears that a campus-wide understanding of strategic direction, or operational decisions was not evident. Similarly, the 'staff voice' was not heard to the extent that it might be. Trust and confidence will only be enhanced if the Management establish a regular and deliberate cadence of communication with staff.

As described in the previous section, RUMC's current strategic plan was developed for the period 2021-2025, following a management review conducted in summer 2020, which, according to the SAR, found senior management to identify that the previous plan had lacked measurable and achievable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that could be cascaded down to the operational level. During the review, however, the PRG perceived some inconsistencies regarding the details on where RUMC should go and how it would get there in the current strategic plan as well. Details on the strategic directions differed not only between, but also within meetings. To a considerable degree this can be attributed to a dynamically changing environment, the many ideas brought in by the Boards and various stakeholders, a new leadership team – but also to a current strategic plan that is partly disconnected from immediate priorities and not yet operationalised sufficiently. Concrete actions have not been defined beyond the present year for most strategic goals in the current strategic plan.

3.2 Commendations

The PRG commends:

3.2.1 The PRG commends RUMC for its proactive and strong management team which shows considerable expertise and a clear understanding of the priorities to be tackled. This includes members of the two boards, who bring an impressive amount of expertise and experience and are clearly invested in RUMC's development and effectively support the management team. It appears evident to the PRG that the new management structure has captured the hearts and minds of the University Staff and Students.

3.2.2 The PRG also appreciates the visible preparatory work and first steps already taken in terms of updating the strategic outlook and objectives. This includes not least a systematic review and mapping of the existing curriculum as well as a thorough analysis of opportunities and impediments in RUMC's operative environment. The recent infrastructure expansions and improvements are particularly impressive.

3.3 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

3.3.1 In light of the recent leadership changes and the identification of key issues to be tackled by the new team, the PRG advises to evaluate and update the current action plan, or even start a process to revise and redefine strategic goals and link strategy to a more thorough and systematic risk assessment. Such a process should pay heed to prioritising objectives and actions as not everything seems feasible at the same time.

3.3.2 The PRG recommends finding ways of ensuring and encouraging more frequent and effective collaborations across different parts of the University (and also between RUMC, RCSI and UCD). A stronger sense of unity and operational alignment would not only benefit the students' learning experience (see sections 5 and 6), but also RUMC's prospects for improving its research activities (see section 7).

3.3.3 The PRG suggests for RUMC to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the management team, including the Vice-Deans, in alignment with the updated strategic/operational plan. More detailed job/role descriptions might be a helpful early step on this.

4. Staffing

The PRG had the opportunity to meet with representatives from clinical, academic, administrative and support staff groups within RUMC. All individuals were both welcoming and open in their response and provided insight to their working relationship between departments and within the organisation. We recognise the considerable change within the organisation and Senior Management Team which has recently taken place. There was an overall sense of commitment to RUMC from the staff and an appreciation of positive changes introduced by the new management team.

4.1 Staff Profile

The staff complement at the time of review comprised 50 administrative and support staff (SAR Table 8), 28 Full-time academic staff and 15 adjunct academic staff (SAR Appendix 3.1). The whole time equivalent (WTE) academic staff totalled n=31, with n=6 WTE vacancies (Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Public Health, Medicine and Surgery). Vacancies in the Departments of Medicine (1.8 WTE) and Surgery (1.8 WTE) were reported to be particularly challenging.

The PRG were made aware of attrition and difficulty in recruiting teaching staff. Lack of flexibility within clinician working hours and compliance with the employment requirements are recognised contributors to this. A reliance on part-time / adjunct staff within the hospitals and health clinics is therefore necessary. It is recognised that this group of clinicians are involved and appropriately informed regarding their teaching roles, but it is noted that it is difficult to engage them in training events and workshops due to their clinical commitments. Making this group of clinicians a more integral part of RUMC by showing greater appreciation or academic recognition might be a mechanism to keep people engaged rather than by simple remuneration alone.

The PRG welcomed a balanced staffing profile in terms of diversity and gender across all academic grades, except Professor (SAR Table 7 Pg 30). It noted the absence of academic staff at lecturer grade and the seniority of the current faculty.

The vital role of the professional support staff is recognised with 50 employees working across the organisation, under the guidance of individual Heads of Department (SAR Table 8 Pg 30). They represent a significant asset to the organisation, delivering services directly to students, providing key educational infrastructure, e.g. library and clinical simulation, and managing the core academic, business and quality functions of RUMC.

It was noted by the PRG that workload and time for professional development is a concern for academic staff across different departments as they seek to balance and prioritise demands across education, service and to a more limited degree research. In the absence of a comparative benchmark to a similar international Medical Schools, it is unclear whether the staffing ratios are sufficient for the activities pursued by the current academic staff. However,

it is noted from the SAR (Table 2, Page 13) that the Student Faculty Ratio is 10.5:1 which is comparable to other Medical Schools in UK & Ireland.

A structured appraisal system is in place for all staff. However, it is perceived that opportunities for academic career progression may vary between different departmental groups. It is hoped that appointment of staff to the vacant positions and the new system of openness, transparency and information sharing will rectify this in due course.

4.2 Professional Education and Development

The PRG noted provision of the Human Resources Development Fund and good support for both Administrative, Support and Academic staff professional development (Appendix 2.2d). The SAR describes access to teaching, learning and research training for the academic staff via the monthly medical education and research meetings/workshops, which are convened by the Medical Education Unit and Research Committee respectively. It is noted that Wednesdays are kept free for staff training and development with sessions recorded to allow access for part-time (Adjunct) staff, but that uptake for these sessions is perceived to be low. Similarly, while the institutional resources are available to the full time and part-time academic staff, there is a lack of understanding about access to the library, particularly by some part-time staff. This relates mainly to the clinician group who may not have formal honorary status with RUMC and therefore would not necessarily enjoy access to some institutional resources.

The regular provision of and encouragement for staff to access third party education is recognised by both Administrative and Academic staff. RUMC supports faculty members to pursue post-graduate qualifications with a scholarship. However, only two staff members are currently engaged in a PhD programme in Dublin. The RCSI Diploma in Health Professions Education has been completed by several staff and is highly regarded by all completing the diploma.

A structured appraisal system is in place for staff. However, it was perceived by some staff that the process was not implemented consistently across the university and RUMC need to ensure that the new appraisal system addresses these perceptions.

4.3 Staff Surveys

The PRG noted that two staff surveys were completed in 2023 and that there is a plan to introduce regular anonymous surveys mirroring mechanisms that are already in place at RCSI and UCD. Lack of openness, transparency and micro-management were themes previously identified. During the interviews, staff indicated they have already perceived a change with recognition of their opinion, closing the loop and improvements based on their input. Further work on this is encouraged, nonetheless.

4.4 Commendations

The PRG commends:

4.4.1 RUMC for their highly motivated and committed clinical, academic and support staff, evidenced in the meetings with staff and in feedback from students and graduates.

4.4.2 The facilitation of the professional development of all staff groups and access to training programmes at UCD and RCSI as demonstrated by the Diploma in Health Professions Education.

4.4.3 The development of a working environment which is open, transparent, safe and supportive.

4.5 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

4.5.1 Balancing the academic workload, support, upskilling and wellbeing of staff during periods of RUMC development. The PRG would advise RUMC to take a new approach to engaging with new academic staff and thereby potentially facilitating the research agenda and future sustainability of the institution.

4.5.2 Develop a clear action plan to recruit and retain newer academic staff, in areas with demonstrated vacancies.

4.5.3 Review the framework for collaboration and engagement with part-time clinical staff, with a view to making them a more visible and integral part of RUMC. This could include recognition of honorary status or adjunct appointments, more structured/standardised cross -departmental induction procedures, enhanced access to library, education and training.

5. Quality of Programmes and Student Learning Experience

RUMC's vision is committed to excellence in its teaching, learning and assessment to produce 'holistic' doctors with the knowledge, professional competence, communication and practical skills necessary to function within 21st century healthcare. It has a unique position in Malaysia building upon the partnership with two internationally recognised Universities. Students have unrivalled access to four hospital facilities in Malaysia with the bonus that Penang General Hospital lies within a short walk from the main campus. Graduates are recognised to have achieved this vision both locally and nationally (Appendix 4.6b) and they have two additional unique benefits i.e. graduating with an international undergraduate medical training and with an NUI recognised degree.

Whilst most of the subsequent narrative will relate to the MB BCh BAO programme, the development of the pre-medical Foundation Year Programme in 2012 and Foundation in Science pre-university pathway course in 2019 must be recognised for achieving their vision, mission and objectives set out in the SAR (1.2 Page 13) and also enabling access to the medical programme. Despite increasing applications for these programmes, the conversion rate has been decreasing. This has been attributed to financial rather than academic factors and additional support mechanisms for these students should be considered.

5.1 Course Structure:

The RUMC curriculum is unique with 2.5 years in Dublin followed by 2.5 years at RUMC. It is interesting to note the differing syllabi of UCD and RCSI for the early years and the recent changes introduced particularly at RCSI. Both appear to prepare the student well for clinical studies at RUMC. Despite this, there were some issues noted in that the preclinical and clinical parts of the programme were viewed separately rather than as a whole programme, and this lack of cohesiveness may negatively impact the student experience.

Within RUMC the final 2.5 years concentrates specifically on the clinical aspects of practice relevant to both regional and international practice including: medicine, surgery, psychiatry, public health, obstetrics and gynaecology and specialist areas of practice. The increased exposure to teaching in orthopaedic surgery is noted in relation to the high incidence of traumatic injuries in the region. Preparation for clinical practice in the first graduate year is addressed by basic life support training and specific medicine and surgery sub-internship modules in the final semester.

The PRG understands that curriculum review is currently underway. This will better align the programme with RCSI and UCD which both have an integrated medical curriculum. However there appears to be some uncertainty with regards to the timeline and coordination as well as inclusivity of the proposed curriculum review. Increased ownership by RUMC and greater alignment of the programme between RCSI, UCD and RUMC will provide a seamless, coherent teaching programme that will lead to an enhanced student experience]

The PRG would suggest an increased ownership of the programme and structure by RUMC across years 1-5 and greater alignment of the three partners to construct a seamless, coherent

teaching programme would lead to an improved student experience. This initially should focus on the transition phases between Dublin and Penang.

5.2 Teaching and Learning

The PRG noted the tentative change in teaching style from didactic lectures towards small group teaching. Modern and recently upgraded facilities to support this are in place with an excellent lecture theatre, classrooms, laboratory space, computer clusters and library. All these facilities have the luxury of spare capacity to enable future expansion of course numbers.

Simulation based education has now been introduced on campus with both low and high-fidelity simulation, debriefing and observation areas and includes a simulated ward / clinic environment. We would support developing this facility further and explore more complex skill acquisition and clinical reasoning in a realistic but safe environment. We note that it is currently dependent on a single individual for setup and technical support. With the plan to increase simulation-based education to 30% of the clinical curriculum, the PRG identify a requirement for additional resources and staffing. The international students that the PRG met during the site visit commented that language and clinical documentation is a major challenge and has a significant impact on learning. The preceptor / translator scheme with retired hospital personnel or graduates works better than the 'buddy scheme' of current students as there is a direct time conflict with these students regarding their own skills and studies. With the planned increase in international students, the PRG would suggest standardisation and improving the role for translators with dedicated training to address medical language and healthcare systems. It is noted that this process has already commenced (Appendix 4.2b) In addition, there is a need to support international students prepare for exams or assessments required for reintegration to their country's health system.

Related to the student learning experience, we observed that there appears to be no strong student identity as yet. Current students identify more as RCSI or UCD students rather than RUMC. Building a strong presence and RUMC identity is necessary and will require work from all three major stakeholders.

5.3 Delivery

A standard delivery method of campus-based morning teaching followed by afternoon clinics or hospital teaching is noted. From a student perspective, this is impacted by challenges related to complex timetables including scheduling conflicts, short-term diary changes and lack of affordable transportation particularly to the more remote clinical sites. However, the communication with the support staff is good.

On campus the educational, social and support hub facilities and the support staff are impressive and appear to enrich the study experience. The plans to develop additional facilities for sports and recreation will further enhance this objective.

The PRG note the digital learning environment provided to the students including ClinicalKey Student and Moodle. However, the SAR noted that Moodle, in particular, was not fully utilised and its role could be expanded for teaching and administrative purposes. Assessment methods remain paper based as witnessed during RUMC tour.

5.4 Curriculum / Design

Although the current curriculum has been improved following work with UCD, RCSI, an external hospital and students, it is still traditional or conventional compared with the integrated curriculum used by other universities. It is noted that no significant change in the curriculum has occurred over the past 10 years and recent changes have largely addressed areas of syllabus overlap and in attempting to streamline assessments.

The principles identified by the RUMC Curriculum Committee in relation to the teaching and assessment of professionalism across all five years is a useful model to adopt identifying vertical themes across multiple disciplines to help modernise the curriculum. However, this is recognised to be a significant labour-intensive undertaking and requires careful planning in the whole strategic action plan for the organisation. The PRG note that the IMC have made a recommendation to review the curriculum. This should be viewed as an opportunity to be creative and further develop student learning in global health, research, digital telehealth and leadership.

5.5 Assessment

The PRG understands that student assessment is currently being reviewed, acknowledging the need for more integrated and complex assessment schemes. The PRG would encourage RUMC to work closely with both RCSI and UCD to build on their expertise and/or look at other benchmarking institutions. Assessment is not just here to certify learning, but to stimulate and support it. Additionally, the PRG would suggest early consideration of both how feedback is generated and the quality of student feedback ensure a uniform approach to all students. The benefits of digitisation would be useful in this process.

5.6 Commendations

The PRG commends:

5.6.1 The quality of graduating students in relation to knowledge, skills and communication. All of these areas were specifically referenced by non-RUMC teaching staff and alumni in established clinical practice.

5.6.2 The recent evolution and priority in developing new on-campus facilities for low and high-fidelity simulation-based education under specific leadership and technical support.

5.7 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

5.7.1 In collaboration with RCSI and UCD, and recognising the recommendation by the IMC, a review of the overall curriculum for the specific needs of RUMC. An adequately staffed and resourced Medical Education Unit and Assessment Office.

5.7.2 A digital strategy across the whole organisation for teaching, assessment, feedback and student management with involvement of an educational technologist.

6. Student Experience

The PRG welcomes the clear commitment to the RUMC student experience that was demonstrated throughout interviews with all stakeholders. Staff, both professional and academic, emphasised the importance of delivering a holistic student experience and educating students to be well-rounded, thoughtful, and curious medical practitioners, who value their own well-being as much as that of their future patients.

The PRG acknowledges the unique set of circumstances in terms of delivering a cohesive student experience for RUMC students due to the nature of the programme, where students spend their pre-clinical years in Ireland and clinical years in Malaysia. While this brings many positive opportunities and experiences for the students, it also brings a unique set of challenges, especially with respect to the student experience. Notwithstanding challenges, it is clear to the PRG that RUMC is delivering a strong student experience on many fronts, and this view was supported by positive feedback from current students and alumni throughout the duration of the review process.

It was clearly demonstrated that there is a strong and collaborative working relationship between the RUMC Student Association and the Management Team, evidenced by student representation on the RUMC Senate and the Student Affairs Committee. A positive culture, one built upon the principles of student-staff partnership, between student representatives and staff is a key indicator of a positive student experience.

Equally, the PRG welcomes the clear passion and broad skillset of the Student Affairs Unit, acknowledging the wide remit. The PRG identified a need to formally review current ongoing approaches to delivering student support and work to formalise them through investing in a policy framework. The review should encompass areas like needs assessments and reasonable accommodations, student complaint processes for issues of bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct, disability supports, etc. The PRG welcomes the recent introduction of the Student Referral Policy and believes that RCSI and UCD should support RUMC in the development of future policies.

The PRG welcomes all the recent positive developments in relation to student amenities and activities in RUMC, including new spaces for student recreation and study, the expansion to the library services, and the broad range of active student clubs and community/voluntary based activities. Feedback from students was resoundingly positive regarding changes in these areas. Improvements in this area were also noted by alumni. Future progress with respect to student amenities and activities should continue to be student-centred and support the evolving needs of RUMC students.

It was evident in the discussions that students loved having the opportunity to study in both Dublin and Penang. For many, it was an influencing factor in their decision to choose to study at RUMC and rightfully understood to be an advantageous and unique opportunity.

Due to the nature of the programme and the current approaches from all three institutions, when RUMC students enter either RCSI or UCD they are incorporated into the wider student bodies at the respective institutions. While this in itself is a great way for students to immerse

themselves fully in Dublin, the PRG notes that in some circumstances students do not identify, gather or socialise as RUMC students and seem to develop their RUMC identity later on once they go to Malaysia. Students identified their eagerness to meet each other while in Dublin and participate in social activities, and this is an area where RCSI and UCD could provide greater support.

The PRG notes the absence of a streamlined student experience, and rather two semi-disconnected halves. While they are both great educational experiences in their own right, ownership of the entire RUMC student experience, from start to finish is less apparent. More emphasis on this area will improve the overall student experience and reduce difficulties around the transition period.

As identified in the SAR and during the interview process, one of RUMC's goals is to increase its international student cohort. While international students undoubtedly bring immense value to RUMC (and both RCSI and UCD), an important area of focus in the coming period should be ensuring equity in the student experience of both domestic and international students.

Discrepancies between the experiences of domestic and international students were identified throughout discussions with students of all backgrounds. Issues relating to language barriers and poor experiences with the 'buddy system' in non-hospital clinical settings were identified. In the forthcoming period, formalised translation services should be prioritised over informal peer-to-peer solutions.

Beyond language barriers, other issues identified included facing discrimination in the private rental sector and increased difficulty transitioning back to RUMC after Dublin. It is very positive that accommodation support is provided to Foundation Year students and extending this support to international students to reduce stress in the transition period is another area for consideration.

6.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

6.1.1 The excellent provision of student support services. The PRG was especially impressed by the positive features like the Counselling Service, the utilisation of local external support where necessary, the appointment of the Vice Dean of Students, and the specialised orientation programmes for the Foundation Year, Foundation in Science, and undergraduate Medicine students.

6.1.2 The improving working relationship between RUMC Student Association and Management.

6.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

6.2.1 That RUMC invests in a policy framework to support the student experience and student supports, benchmarked against RCSI and UCD approaches and policies in this regard.

6.2.2 The PRG recommend that an individual be tasked with mapping out the entire RUMC Student Experience and be a designated point of contact while the students are based in Dublin, and socialising this with all stakeholders. This is important in terms of the formation of a 'RUMC student identity'. This journey can be mapped from admission to first graduation destination, and can be underpinned by student wellbeing, development, success, and safety.

6.2.3 Students described how the transition back to Malaysia was extremely challenging, however the PRG noted that this was a particular challenge for International Students (non-Malaysian). The PRG recommend that as part of mapping the student experience, there is an additional consideration for international students when it comes to language, accommodation, mentoring/tutoring, and integration into the RUMC campus.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

The section on Management of Quality and Enhancement in the SAR is comparably shorter compared to most other sections, yet the PRG conducted a specific interview on quality management with the President, the Registrar, the Quality Assurance Officer as well as selected members of RUMC's quality committee. Overall, it became clear that RUMC has really invested in its quality assurance, not least by employing a new senior QA officer who has already started to align her work with her counterparts at RCSI and UCD. Operatively, the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Standards Unit, which currently reports to the Registry, is responsible for RUMC's quality management and enhancement procedures.

The successfully obtained accreditations (among others from the IMC, MQA, MOHA, MoH, the Malaysian Public Services Commission) can be read as a testimony to the university's overall quality. Upcoming external reviews include an MQA programme level review and the MyRa assessment of research activities. In other words, RUMC is constantly engaged in some kind of quality assessment of its operations. This does not only affect the workload of the actors involved, but also raises the issue of managing the "homework assignments" and of following up. The PRG gained the impression, though, that these processes are effectively and efficiently managed by the institution.

Nevertheless, the rather compliance heavy approach to Quality and Enhancement comes at the price of being reactive rather than proactive. Instruments, processes and approaches for internally driven quality enhancement are comparatively underdeveloped, and as the university itself states in the SAR, there is currently "little involvement from students and staff in formal quality assurance processes". The institution showed awareness of this fact and is ambitious to improve in this regard, but the concrete way forward still seems opaque. Given the size of the institution, the vast number of recurring reviews and the limited staff numbers, it might make sense to find creative and innovative approaches here, rather than establishing additional structures or introducing new regular surveys.

7.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

7.1.1 The PRG commends RUMC for its effective and efficient handling of its multitude of external reviews, not least demonstrated in the professional way how this Joint Internal Quality Review was handled, despite most key actors being in office for a short time only.

7.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

7.2.1 The PRG encourages RUMC to develop a clear scheme for strengthening the internal quality assurance part of its Quality Management and Enhancement system.

8. Quality of Postgraduate Research Education

The vision of RUMC is to be a health- and wellbeing focussed, globally recognised education and research centre of the highest quality. Thus, while the principal objectives centre on undergraduate medical education, RUMC is also committed to postgraduate education and training. It is within this continuum of research education from undergraduate to postgraduate and support for staff research, that the quality of research education was explored by the PRG.

Research skills and information literacy are embedded in the 5-year medical degree curriculum, comprising formal modules/courses in epidemiology, evidence-based medicine (EBM) and research methodology within the first 2.5 years in Dublin, which is then advanced in RUMC. In addition, the PRG heard that EBM and research inquiry were integrated into the clinical curricula by each Department. Some students have an opportunity to participate in summer research projects during their studies in Dublin, but there is a new plan to integrate research practice into the curriculum for all students from January 2024, in the form of group research projects, running from the semester 6-9 (year 3-5). This will enable experiential learning of active research, from inception, through planning, execution and reporting of the research outcomes, under the guidance of a supervisory team. In order to provide mentorship for the academic supervisors, staff with different levels of research experience will collaborate in co-supervisory arrangements, while some funding has also been made available for the lead author of the best project to present the results at a national or international conference. The recent enhancements and new strategic plan for the RUMC library will be key to supporting this curricular change, while development of analytical skills will require additional access to software and training for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

There are currently few registered postgraduate research students in RUMC. Three candidates are undertaking PhD studies, registered in UCD under the RUMC structured PhD programme with RCSI and UCD. An MD programme is offered under the same arrangement. The PRG noted that RUMC taught master's programmes, MSc Health Research with RCSI and MSc Public Health with UCD, are currently paused due to falling market demand.

The academic staff expressed that time/workload and access to funding for research were key barriers to research activity and publication. At the same time, there was evidence in the SAR that several staff are highly research active with international success, while over 40 research projects were listed in June 2023. The PRG were concerned that excessive breadth in research might spread the staff effort, which could be detrimental to maintaining an institutional focus on areas of unique research strength and strategic research collaborations. External grant income over the past 5 years is variable, but the appetite from both academic staff and management to foster greater success was very clear.

The PRG welcomed evidence that there is an active Research Committee, led by a Vice Dean of Research with representation from RUMC, Head of Clinical Research Centre of Penang Hospital, RCSI and UCD. The Research Strategy 2021-2025 was re-invigorated for 2023/24 (Appendix 6b), with specific actions on external grant funding, research skills support for faculty members, provision of a RUMC Research Office, Research Officer and enhanced

research infrastructure, strengthening RCSI and UCD research links, enabling exposure to research for all students, internal grant support, re-commencement of a local Institutional Review Board (IRB) for ethical review and approval, networking and development of regional research alliances and enhancing visibility/dissemination of research. The Research Budget for 2023/4 (appendix 2.2e) includes salary provision for a Research Officer, funding for up to 6 seed funding grants to staff, publication grants, support for research workshops, staff and student stipends to attend conferences and funding for junior research fellowship awards. The protected time for academic staff to attend the monthly research meeting is positive.

The PRG noted that RUMC is aiming to take part in its first external research assessments from 2024. MyRA is an assessment of research performance of higher education institutions in Malaysia, while one of the three core functions assessed in the SETARA methodology is research. The benchmarks for these assessments are reported to be high and this poses an imminent challenge for RUMC.

8.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

8.1.1 The PRG commends the office of the Vice Dean for Research and the Research Committee, who have revised the RUMC Research Strategy from 2023/24 and are tasked with its implementation. The objectives, set out in the Research Strategy to support staff, develop RUMC research infrastructure and further research collaborations, are accompanied by clearly articulated actions.

8.1.2 The focus on research skills at the undergraduate level is also to be commended. This provides a framework to grow both research culture and competence in future RUMC medical graduates. In time, this may lead to greater demand for higher research degrees (MD, MSc and PhD) and expansion of a collaborative research-active alumni network.

8.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

8.2.1 Establish the local Institutional Review Board (IRB) for minimal-risk ethical approvals to enable permissions for staff and student projects. Re-establish and support the Joint Penang Independent Ethics Committee to facilitate research ethics approval for non-Malaysian Ministry of Health-related projects. This is critical for research integrity and governance of clinical research and is key enabler of the planned student-led projects from 2024.

8.2.2 Develop strategic partnerships between research groups in RCSI, UCD and RUMC to explore possible synergistic existing research, the feasibility of innovative comparative research between two uniquely different populations (Dublin and Penang), collaborative grant applications and inter-university doctoral candidate supervision.

8.2.3 Promote the involvement of adjunct teaching staff in RUMC clinical research projects.

8.2.4 Develop synergistic partnerships between research groups in RCSI, UCD and RUMC to explore feasibility of comparative research between different populations. UCD/ RCSI /RUMC has a unique opportunity to do comparative research in two very different populations.

9. Support Services

RUMC has built out a strong spine to the organisation in terms of its support services. These functions (including Marketing, Recruitment, IT, Finance, HR, Facilities and the Library) are well placed to support the future ambitions of the University and accompanying student numbers. The various functions were observed to be staffed by competent, qualified and engaged individuals. What was less apparent however was a greater alignment to the overall RUMC strategy and brand awareness. These individuals appeared to 'belong' to their various functions and sought purpose from there, as opposed to 'belonging' to the broader RUMC, its vision and values.

In recent times an upgrade in faculty facilities and investment in this area has been to the fore. The students appear to value that greatly. Additionally, it is recognised that the marketing team, while all new joiners, have revived the focus and support of the Board and senior management. Refreshing the marketing strategy both on the ground at school level, and internationally at fairs and conferences is underway. Linking both these areas back to the parent organisations (particularly the marketing and recruitment strategies) has also become a focus in light of the declining conversion rate of applications to enrolment.

Linked to the student experience, there seems to be a misalignment when it comes to the student access to library resources when comparing the students who attend RCSI and UCD. To some degree this translates back to when the students return to Malaysia.

9.1 Commendations

The PRG observed a highly engaged and enthusiast support services team. In large part we see these functions as well-resourced and working effectively.

The PRG commends:

9.1.1 A credible library offering supported by expertise in the recent appointment of the library management.

9.1.2 Facilities development in recent years has gone from strength to strength and this has been appreciated by staff and students alike. In particular the SIM centre and the student centre are strong offerings.

9.1.3 Security and student safety is to the fore and appears to be at a high standard.

9.1.4 The PRG recognise and commend the future plans that will provide a more holistic student experience.

9.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

9.2.1 Linked to the earlier observations about the organisational structure, the RUMC brand awareness does appear to be incoherent and misinterpreted. RUMC is owned and supported by two globally recognised and respected institutions. This is not translating into a strong brand awareness or effectiveness, and that needs to be investigated. Support staff, Clinical staff and RUMC alumni in particular commented on this. The PRG recommend a review of brand effectiveness and optimisation in light of the new strategic aims. In doing so external voices such as local UCD alumni and local RCSI alumni could also be engaged in this review.

9.2.2 ICT utilisation and effectiveness within RUMC is a service that is not operating to its full potential. The PRG recommend that there is a Digital Working Plan created that uplifts the operational effective of RUMC. Key areas of focus should include the promotion and development of an effective Virtual Learning Environment, Improved Cybersecurity, and Internet stability. Linkage to and consistency with RCSI and UCD digital security plans is encouraged. Presently it is observed that ICT is operating as a helpdesk and hardware provision function. The true potential of ICT as a service for education, assessment, security and beyond is yet to be realised.

10. External Relations

RUMC has forged and developed relationships with external organizations for teaching, recruitment, research and service- related activities. The PRG had opportunities to discuss the impact and breath of these relationships with different levels of RUMC staff as well as directly with various stakeholders.

10.1 Research groups and Networks.

RUMC clearly recognizes the value of both local and international cooperation and networking with links to a number of significant organizations. It remains the coordinating centre for the Malaysian Cochrane Network, is part of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action, and is an active participant in the One Health University Network. Significant areas of collaborative research with other institutions include research in indigenous populations as well as research in older persons. There is, however, a perception that participation within RUMC itself appears to be limited to individuals or individual teams and there is a danger that these teams may be working in silos, limiting opportunities for synergistic initiatives.

RUMC has also been the acting secretariat for the Joint Penang Independent Ethics Committee, which is the ethics committee for non- Ministry of Health clinical trials in Penang since 2020. Approval activities which ceased in 2022 have recently restarted with one meeting in 2023, which will enhance collaboration and research activities.

10.2 Teaching, clinical sites and regulatory related stakeholders

RUMC has maintained an understanding with the Malaysian Ministry of Health that allows RUMC to use Penang General Hospital and Hospital Seberang Perai (a combination of Bukit Mertajam and Seberang Jaya Hospitals), the largest and second largest hospitals in Penang as well as Taiping General Hospital as teaching hospitals. Although the PRG did not visit these sites due to time constraints, these hospitals are tertiary and secondary level hospitals, providing a good casemix for clinical exposure with potential to support a higher intake of undergraduate medical students as well as postgraduate training. No other public or private medical schools are attached to these hospitals. In addition, RUMC has access to Health Clinics (Klinik Kesihatan) for public health and primary care attachments for students. Stakeholders including specialist hospital and clinical staff employed as adjunct teaching staff were largely positive about their interactions with RUMC. Working relationships were described as good although occasional lapses in communication were reported that affected teaching effectiveness and inclusivity.

10.3 Student Recruitment

A percentage of students admitted to RUMC previously were mainly sponsored by the Malaysian Government. However, this has changed in recent years and current students are mainly self-sponsored, from the local population as well as internationally. International recruitment is under the purview of the Vice Dean of International Relations. Identifying

significant stakeholders and developing a coherent strategy for recruitment especially for international students will be crucial.

10.4 Community involvement and corporate partnerships

RUMC has been proactive in seeking community involvement and promoting activities to enhance its relationship with the local community. This not only benefits the local community but also increases the visibility of RUMC. Feedback from students and support staff organizing such activities were very positive. There is potential for RUMC to further develop community and corporate partnerships that will be mutually beneficial.

10.5 Alumni

RUMC has a strong alumni with a good reputation for being well trained. There appears to be only one alumnus currently on the RUMC staff. RUMC alumni have expressed a desire to contribute to their alma mater and there are many ways for them to do so. However, not all alumni are members of the alumni association with some not even aware that there was such an association. The PRG notes that RUMC recognizes the importance of maintaining contact and engaging with its alumni, as well as obtaining appropriate feedback to further develop its relationship with its graduate base.

10.6 Commendations

The PRG commends:

10.6.1 Proactive management that recognises the importance of strengthening current relationships and developing new external relations with local and international institutions, organisations, corporate entities as well as research support networks.

10.6.2 Established relationships with internationally recognised institutions and networks that can act as a springboard for future collaborative work.

10.6.3 Maintaining good relationships with significant stakeholders and initiation of Alumni engagement.

10.7 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

10.7.1 A review of current external relations to clearly identify, classify and prioritise relationships and stakeholders in order to align current and future relationships with RUMC's strategic plans. In particular, this includes continuation of efforts to strengthen the relationship with RUMC Alumni and explore opportunities to enhance Alumni engagement.

10.7.2 A reassessment of the current organizational structure to develop positions of responsibility for coordinating external relations. This would include maintaining and optimising current relationships with key stakeholders, improving communication and synergistic collaboration as well as identifying future areas for development that will enhance research output, teaching and service provisions, visibility of RUMC and student recruitment. A stakeholder engagement plan that will promote inclusivity in order to meet stakeholder expectations and reduce miscommunication should be part of it.

Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

Section	Number	Commendation	Number	Recommendation
3	3.2.1	The PRG commends RUMC for its proactive and strong management team which shows considerable expertise and a clear understanding of the priorities to be tackled. This includes members of the two boards, who bring an impressive amount of expertise and experience and are clearly invested in RUMC's development and effectively support the management team. It appears evident to the PRG that the new management structure has captured the hearts and minds of the University Staff and Students.	3.3.1	In light of the recent leadership changes and the identification of key issues to be tackled by the new team, the PRG advises to evaluate and update the current action plan, or even start a process to revise and redefine strategic goals and link strategy to a more thorough and systematic risk assessment. Such a process should pay heed to prioritising objectives and actions as not everything seems feasible at the same time.
3	3.2.2	The PRG also appreciates the visible preparatory work and first steps already taken in terms of updating the strategic outlook and objectives. This includes not least a systematic review and mapping of the existing curriculum as well as a thorough analysis of opportunities and impediments in RUMC's operative environment. The recent infrastructure expansions and improvements are particularly impressive.	3.3.2	The PRG recommends finding ways of ensuring and encouraging more frequent and effective collaborations across different parts of the University (and also between RUMC, RCSI and UCD). A stronger sense of unity and operational alignment would not only benefit the students' learning experience (see sections 5 and 6), but also RUMC's prospects for improving its research activities (see section 7).
3			3.3.3	The PRG suggests for RUMC to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the management team, including the Vice-Deans, in alignment with the updated strategic/operational plan. More detailed job/role descriptions might be a helpful early step on this.
4	4.4.1	RUMC for their highly motivated and committed clinical, academic and support staff, evidenced in the meetings with staff and in feedback from students and graduates.	4.5.1	Balancing the academic workload, support, upskilling and wellbeing of staff during periods of RUMC development. The PRG would advise RUMC to take a new approach to engaging with new academic staff and thereby potentially facilitating the research agenda and future sustainability of the institution.
4	4.4.2	The facilitation of the professional development of all staff groups and access to training programmes at UCD and RCSI as	4.5.2	Develop a clear action plan to recruit and retain newer academic staff, in areas with demonstrated vacancies.

Section	Number	Commendation	Number	Recommendation
		demonstrated by the Diploma in Health Professions Education.		
4	4.4.3	The development of a working environment which is open, transparent, safe and supportive.	4.5.3	Review the framework for collaboration and engagement with part-time clinical staff, with a view to making them a more visible and integral part of RUMC. This could include recognition of honorary status or adjunct appointments, more structured/standardised cross -departmental induction procedures, enhanced access to library, education and training.
5	5.6.1	The quality of graduating students in relation to knowledge, skills and communication. All of these areas were specifically referenced by non-RUMC teaching staff and alumni in established clinical practice.	5.7.1	In collaboration with RCSI and UCD, and recognising the recommendation by the IMC, a review of the overall curriculum for the specific needs of RUMC. An adequately staffed and resourced Medical Education Unit and Assessment Office
5	5.6.2	The recent evolution and priority in developing new on-campus facilities for low and high-fidelity simulation-based education under specific leadership and technical support.	5.7.2	A digital strategy across the whole organisation for teaching, assessment, feedback and student management with involvement of an educational technologist.
6	6.1.1	The excellent provision of student support services. The PRG was especially impressed by the positive features like the Counselling Service, the utilisation of local external support where necessary, the appointment of the Vice Dean of Students, and the specialised orientation programmes for the Foundation Year, Foundation in Science, and undergraduate Medicine students.	6.2.1	That RUMC invests in a policy framework to support the student experience and student supports, benchmarked against RCSI and UCD approaches and policies in this regard.
6	6.1.2	The improving working relationship between RUMC Student Association and Management.	6.2.2	The PRG recommend that an individual be tasked with mapping out the entire RUMC Student Experience and be a designated point of contact while the students are based in Dublin, and socialising this with all stakeholders. This is important in terms of the formation of a 'RUMC student identity'. This journey can be mapped from admission to first graduation destination, and can be underpinned by student wellbeing, development, success, and safety.

Section	Number	Commendation	Number	Recommendation
6			6.2.3	Students described how the transition back to Malaysia was extremely challenging, however the PRG noted that this was a particular challenge for International Students (non-Malaysian). The PRG recommend that as part of mapping the student experience, there is an additional consideration for international students when it comes to language, accommodation, mentoring/tutoring, and integration into the RUMC campus.
7	7.1.1	The PRG commends RUMC for its effective and efficient handling of its multitude of external reviews, not least demonstrated in the professional way how this Joint Internal Quality Review was handled, despite most key actors being in office for a short time only.	7.2.1	The PRG encourages RUMC to develop a clear scheme for strengthening the internal quality assurance part of its Quality Management and Enhancement system.
8	8.1.1	The PRG commends the office of the Vice Dean for Research and the Research Committee, who have revised the RUMC Research Strategy from 2023/24 and are tasked with its implementation. The objectives, set out in the Research Strategy to support staff, develop RUMC research infrastructure and further research collaborations, are accompanied by clearly articulated actions.	8.2.1	Establish the local Institutional Review Board (IRB) for minimal-risk ethical approvals to enable permissions for staff and student projects. Re-establish and support the Joint Penang Independent Ethics Committee to facilitate research ethics approval for non-Malaysian Ministry of Health-related projects. This is critical for research integrity and governance of clinical research and is key enabler of the planned student-led projects from 2024.
8	8.1.2	The focus on research skills at the undergraduate level is also to be commended. This provides a framework to grow both research culture and competence in future RUMC medical graduates. In time, this may lead to greater demand for higher research degrees (MD, MSc and PhD) and expansion of a collaborative research-active alumni network.	8.2.2	Develop strategic partnerships between research groups in RCSI, UCD and RUMC to explore possible synergistic existing research, the feasibility of innovative comparative research between two uniquely different populations (Dublin and Penang), collaborative grant applications and inter-university doctoral candidate supervision.
8			8.2.3	Promote the involvement of adjunct teaching staff in RUMC clinical research projects.
8			8.2.4	Develop synergistic partnerships between research groups in RCSI, UCD and RUMC to explore feasibility of comparative research between different populations. UCD/ RCSI /RUMC

Section	Number	Commendation	Number	Recommendation
				has a unique opportunity to do comparative research in two very different populations.
9	9.1.1	A credible library offering supported by expertise in the recent appointment of the library management.	9.2.1	Linked to the earlier observations about the organisational structure, the RUMC brand awareness does appear to be incoherent and misinterpreted. RUMC is owned and supported by two globally recognised and respected institutions. This is not translating into a strong brand awareness or effectiveness, and that needs to be investigated. Support staff, Clinical staff and RUMC alumni in particular commented on this. The PRG recommend a review of brand effectiveness and optimisation in light of the new strategic aims. In doing so external voices such as local UCD alumni and local RCSI alumni could also be engaged in this review.
9	9.1.2	Facilities development in recent years has gone from strength to strength and this has been appreciated by staff and students alike. In particular the SIM centre and the student centre are strong offerings.	9.2.2	ICT utilisation and effectiveness within RUMC is a service that is not operating to its full potential. The PRG recommend that there is a Digital Working Plan created that uplifts the operational effective of RUMC. Key areas of focus should include the promotion and development of an effective Virtual Learning Environment, Improved Cybersecurity, and Internet stability. Linkage to and consistency with RCSI and UCD digital security plans is encouraged. Presently it is observed that ICT is operating as a helpdesk and hardware provision function. The true potential of ICT as a service for education, assessment, security and beyond is yet to be realised.
9	9.1.3	Security and student safety is to the fore and appears to be at a high standard.		
9	9.1.4	The PRG recognise and commend the future plans that will provide a more holistic student experience.		
10	10.6.1	Proactive management that recognises the importance of strengthening current relationships and developing new external relations with local and international institutions,	10.7.1	A review of current external relations to clearly identify, classify and prioritise relationships and stakeholders in order to align current and future relationships with RUMC's

Section	Number	Commendation	Number	Recommendation
		organisations, corporate entities as well as research support networks.		strategic plans. In particular, this includes continuation of efforts to strengthen the relationship with RUMC Alumni and explore opportunities to enhance Alumni engagement.
10	10.6.2	Established relationships with internationally recognised institutions and networks that can act as a springboard for future collaborative work.	10.7.2	A reassessment of the current organizational structure to develop positions of responsibility for coordinating external relations. This would include maintaining and optimising current relationships with key stakeholders, improving communication and synergistic collaboration as well as identifying future areas for development that will enhance research output, teaching and service provisions, visibility of RUMC and student recruitment. A stakeholder engagement plan that will promote inclusivity in order to meet stakeholder expectations and reduce miscommunication should be part of it.
10	10.6.3	Maintaining good relationships with significant stakeholders and initiation of Alumni engagement.		

Appendix 1: Site Visit Schedule

Sunday 3 December 2023

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title	
			Review Group arrives in Penang	
19.00			Dinner and private meeting for Review Group	Review Group and RCSI & UCD staff

Day 1 | Monday 4 December 2023

Time	Dur. Mins	Sched. No.	Mtg. Title	Attendees
10.00	15 mins	Mon 1	Ground Transportation from Hotel to RUMC	Review Group and RCSI & UCD staff
10.15 – 11.00	45 mins	Mon 2	Review Group: Review of preparatory work	Review Group
11.00 – 12.30	90 mins	Mon 3	**Campus tour of facilities to include:** Clinical Simulation Centre; Library; Student Hub; Support Hub; Exam Office; Lecture Theatre	Review Group
12.30 – 14.00	90 mins	Mon 4	Lunch and meeting preparation	Review Group and RCSI & UCD staff
14.00 – 16.00	120 mins	Mon 5	**Meeting with Board of Directors and Board of Governors** **Meeting theme:** To discuss institutional mission, strategic planning and future development of the University with a focus on governance, student recruitment; new programmes, research and management of resources.	Review Group Vice Chancellor & CEO/ Registrar, RCSI Vice Principal College of Health and Agricultural Science, UCD Dean of Medicine, Head of School, UCD Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, RCSI Director, Hospital Bukit Mertajam RUMC President RUMC Dean Head of Department, Paediatrics Head of Department, Psychiatry
16.00 – 16.30	30 mins	Mon 6	Review Group: Wrap-up and preparation for next day	Review Group
16.30	15 mins	Mon 7	Transport to Hotel	Review Group and RCSI & UCD Staff

Day 2 | Tuesday 5 December 2023

Time	Dur. Mins	Sched. No.	Mtg. Title	Attendees
08.15	15 mins	Tue 1	Ground Transportation from Hotel to RUMC	Review Group and RCSI & UCD staff
08.30 – 09.00	30 mins	Tue 2	**Review Group:** Private meeting and review of preparatory work	Review Group
09.00 – 10.00	60 mins	Tue 3	**Meeting with RUMC Management Team** **Meeting theme:** Strategic planning and future development of RUMC with a focus on curriculum review, new programmes, admissions, research and management of resources.	Review Group RUMC President RUMC Dean RUMC Acting Registrar
10.15 – 11.00	45 mins	Tue 4	**Meeting with Heads of Academic Departments** (excluding management) **Meeting theme:** Curriculum development, review and enhancement; teaching learning and assessment; challenges and future potential; resourcing; sufficient supports for staff; roles and responsibility for QA and enhancement.	Review Group Heads of Academic Departments
11.05– 11.30	25 mins	Tue 5	**Review Group break**	Review Group
11.35 – 12.20	45 mins	Tue 6	**Meeting with Vice Deans** **Meeting theme:** Discuss how the University monitors the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner. Focus on international relations, student engagement, research and academic provision.	Review Group Vice Dean Academics Vice Dean International Relations Vice Dean Student Vice Dean Research
12.30 – 13.00	30 mins	Tue 7	**PRG private meeting time**	
13.00- 13.50	50 mins	Tue 8	**Lunch meeting with Malaysian Students (Year 4 & 5)** **Meeting theme:** Experience as students of the University; teaching, learning and assessment; clinical placements; research opportunities;	Review Group 6-8 student representatives

			student supports; student engagement opportunities within RUMC; student feedback; ongoing quality enhancement.	
14.00 – 14.50	50 mins	Tue 9	**Meeting with RUMC Alumni** **Meeting theme:** Experience as students of RUMC, student supports, student feedback, career readiness and impact.	Review Group Alumni representatives
15.00 – 15.50	50 mins	Tue 10	**Meeting with Clinical Staff representatives** (Hospital/ DHO/ GP) *Online meeting* **Meeting theme:** clinical teaching and placement supports and resources; challenges and future potential.	Review Group Invitees from: HPP Medicine DHO Surgery Family Medicine
16.00 – 16.45	45 mins	Tue 11	**Review Group:** Wrap-up, report writing and preparation for next day	Review Group
16.45	15 mins	Tue 12	Transport to Hotel	Review Group and RCSI & UCD Staff

Day 3 | Wednesday 6 December 2023

Time	Dur. Mins	Sched. No.	Mtg. Title	Attendees
08.15	15 mins	Wed 1	Ground Transportation from Hotel to RUMC	Review Group and RCSI & UCD staff
08.30 – 09.00	30 mins	Wed 2	**Review Group:** Private meeting and review of preparatory work	Review Group
09.00 – 09.45	45 mins	Wed 3	**Meeting with Academic Staff representatives** **Meeting theme:** Working environment; career development and opportunities; collaboration and support; teaching learning & assessment; curriculum development and review; challenges and future potential	Review Group Staff representatives from: MED SUR PHM PAEDS PSYCH O&G FOUNDATION ENT/EYE/RAD/EM FM
09.55 – 10.40	45 mins	Wed 4	**Meeting with representatives from RUMC Professional Support Staff** **Meeting theme:** Current supports and resources provided; challenges; impact of the potential growth on service/supports; collaboration and planning for the future. Areas for consideration: HR; Finance; IT; Library; Marketing; Admissions; Estates	Review Group HoD Facilities HoD Finance HoD Corporate Office HoD Academics Support Staff representative(s) responsible for managing clinical placements
10.45 – 11.10	25 mins	Wed 5	**Review Group Break**	Review Group
11.10 – 11.50	40 mins	Wed 6	**Meeting with RUMC Student Affairs representatives** **Meeting theme:** Focus on student supports; student engagement; student feedback.	Review Group Student Service Manager Student Affairs Officer Accommodation Officer International Office Officer Counsellor
12.00 - 12.30	30 mins	Wed 7	**Meeting with staff representatives with a focus on Quality Assurance / Quality Enhancement processes and initiatives** **Meeting theme:** Student feedback, staff feedback; external examiners; accrediting bodies, governance; implementation of QA/QE processes and initiatives	Review Group QA Officer QA Committee member(s)

12.40-13.20	40 mins	Wed 8	**Lunch meeting with International Students (Year 4 & 5, FIS & FY)** **Meeting theme:** Experience as students of RUMC; teaching, learning and assessment; clinical placements; research opportunities; student supports; student engagement opportunities within RUMC; student feedback; ongoing quality enhancement.	Review Group 6-8 student representatives TBC
13.25 – 14.05	40 mins	Wed 9	**Lunch meeting with Malaysian Students (FIS & FY)** **Meeting theme:** Experience as students of RUMC; teaching, learning and assessment; clinical placements; research opportunities; student supports; student engagement opportunities within RUMC; student feedback; ongoing quality enhancement.	Review Group 6-8 student representatives TBC
14.15 – 15.00	45 mins	Wed 10	**Meeting with staff representatives with a focus on curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning** **Meeting theme:** Panel interested in how curriculum is developed/delivered and how it progresses from pre-clinical years in Dublin. How is it aligned and managed; how is it assessed	Review Group Academic staff representatives
15.10 – 15.50	40mins	Wed 11	**Meeting with academic staff representatives with a focus on research activity and development.** **Meeting theme:** Developing research profile; opportunities for collaboration; challenges and future potential.	Review Group Academic staff representatives
15.55 – 16.15	20 mins	Wed 12	**Review Group:** Private meeting time	
16.20 – 17.00	40 mins	Wed 13	**Meeting with RUMC Students based in Dublin**	Review Group 3 x RCSI students; 3 x UCD students
17.10 – 17.30	20 mins	Wed 14	Review Group: Wrap-up and preparation for next day.	Review Group
17.30 – 17.45	15 mins	Wed 15	Transport to Hotel	Review Group and RCSI & UCD Staff

Day 4 | Thursday 7 December 2023

Time	Dur. Mins	Sched. No.	Mtg. Title	Attendees
08.30	15 mins	Thur 1	Ground Transportation from Hotel to RUMC	Review Group and RCSI & UCD staff
09.00 – 12.00	180 mins	Thur 2	**Review Group:** Private meeting, finalise commendations and recommendations, report writing.	Review Group
12.00 – 12.30	30 mins	Thur 3	**Review Group meeting with RCSI & UCD staff for clarification and discussion of main findings**	Review Group Head of Quality Enhancement, RCSI Director of Quality, UCD
12.40 – 13.10	30 mins	Thur 4	**Review Group meeting with RUMC Management to present main findings**	Review Group RUMC President RUMC Dean RUMC Acting Registrar Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, RCSI Dean of Medicine, Head of School, UCD
13.15 – 13.30	15 mins	Thur 5	**Closing presentation to RUMC staff**	Review Group All RUMC Staff
13.30 – 14.15	45 mins	Thur 6	**Light lunch reception**	Review Group All RUMC staff
14.30	15 mins	Thur 7	Transport to Hotel	Review Group and RCSI & UCD Staff

Appendix 2: RUMC Response to Peer Review Group Report

Response to PRG Report

22 March 2024

We would like to extend our appreciation to the Peer Review Group Team for the comprehensive review conducted before and during the RUMC Joint Internal Quality Review from 4th – 7th December 2023.

We welcome the findings contained in the report which we believe will further RUMC's vision to be a health and well-being-focused, globally recognised, education and research centre of the highest quality and our mission is to contribute to patients and society through excellence in education, learning and research and to benefit healthcare in Malaysia and the surrounding region.

We were pleased with our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of compliance and integrity in all aspects of our operations. We will work closely with the RCSI & UCD teams to acknowledge and address the commendations and recommendations made by the PRG Team. Their recognition of our committed, proactive, dedicated and strong management team and passionate staff in providing high-quality student experiences, enhancing collaborations with our stakeholders, and strengthening the RUMC brand, internal quality assurance, facilities and research has inspired the entire RUMC community.

The RUMC team is developing the Quality Improvement Plan (QIPs) in preparation to rectify many of the findings. We look forward to addressing the recommendations by the PRG Team as we review and develop our structures, policies and processes in the future years.

In conclusion, we want to express our appreciation for the valuable feedback and insights of the Review Team. We would also like to thank all the staff, students and external stakeholders who engaged with this review. We look forward to working towards implementing the review findings and are confident that they will contribute to the continued success and sustainability of RUMC.

RCSI ✣ UCD MALAYSIA CAMPUS

RUMC

RUMC Joint Quality Review **2023** **Quality Improvement Plan**	

Please use the following descriptions when completing the QIP template:

Categories of finding:

- Recommendations concerning academic, organisational and other matters which are entirely under the control of the unit
- Recommendations concerning shortcomings in services, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the unit
- Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

Timeframe:

A. Recommendation already implemented
B. Recommendations to be implemented within one year
C. Recommendations to be implemented within five years
D. Recommendations which will not be implemented

Status:

Pending
In progress
Complete
Will not be progressed

RUMC

RUMC

Quality Improvement Plan [1.4.2024]

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
2 RUMC Strategic Plan 2021-2025 seems rather generic and lacking. The current strategic plan had lacked measurable and achievable KPIs that could be cascaded down to the operational level.	RUMC welcomes this recommendation and will work with senior leaders within RUMC to make the existing strategic plan less generic and more impactful. This work will also incorporate, specific time-bound key performance indicators which will be measurable and achievable	1	President	None, this will be managed through the Corporate Affairs Office	B Q1 2024	Corporate Affairs will schedule this as an agenda item on the Executive Management Committee The President's Office will monitor and provide feedback on the effective and timely delivery of agreed targets to the RUMC Board	In progress
3.3.1 In light of the recent leadership changes and the identification of key issues to be tackled by the new team, the PRG	RUMC agrees with this recommendation. As the current strategic plan will come to an end in 2025 RUMC will begin the process of a	1	President	Dependent on the scale and use of external advisors for the review process.	B	A strategic review committee will be formed which will include key	In progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
advises to evaluate and update the current action plan, or even start a process to **revise and redefine strategic goals** and **link strategy to a more thorough and systematic risk assessment.** Such a process should pay heed to prioritising objectives and actions as not everything seems feasible at the same time.	comprehensive review of the current strategic goals to identify areas needing revision or enhancement. Alongside this work will be the development of the 2026-2031 strategic plan taking into account current realities and future aspirations beyond the timeline of the current strategic plan.			Travel and accommodation expenses		stakeholders, including RUMC leadership, staff, and external advisors to oversee the evaluation and updating process. This review committee will report on progress to the President who in turn will report to the RUMC Board on progress	
3.3.2 The PRG recommends finding ways of **ensuring and encouraging more frequent and effective collaborations** across different parts of the University (and also between	This will be addressed in a number of ways; • The appointment of the Head of RUMC Collaboration based in Dublin	2		RUMC professional services/registry staff to train with their counterparts in UCD/RCSI Dublin	B	Quarterly updates to the Executive Management Committee	In progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
RUMC, RCSI and UCD). A stronger sense of unity and operational alignment would not only benefit the students' learning experience (see sections 5 and 6), but also RUMC's prospects for improving its research activities (see section 7).	• The appointment of a Registrar whose team will work closely with the equivalent teams in UCD & RCSI to increase awareness and align processes between all three institutions, RUMC, RCSI and UCD. • Increased participation between RCSI, UCD Academic Departments representatives on the various committee structures in RUMC						
3.3.3 The PRG suggests for RUMC **to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the management team**, including the Vice-Deans, in alignment with the updated strategic/operational plan. More detailed job/role descriptions might be a helpful early step on this.	RUMC welcomes this recommendation. A role analysis has been conducted by the Dean and each role has been evaluated to ensure that they are all clearly linked to the strategic and operational goals of RUMC	1	President/ Dean	None	A	The roles are reviewed as part of the Annual performance review process	Complete

RUMC

Quality Improvement Plan [1.4.2024]

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
4.5.1 Balancing the academic workload, support, upskilling and wellbeing of staff during periods of RUMC development. The PRG would advise RUMC to take a **new approach to engaging with new academic staff and thereby potentially facilitating the research agenda and future sustainability** of the institution.	• Create a survey to monitor academic workload, support, upskilling and wellbeing • RUMC management has planned that all new staff will undergo training in medical education and research. • Human resources provide support for new staff and also provide wellbeing supports and workshops for all staff • 4 RUMC academics have graduated from the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Profession Education from RCSI and 1 academic graduated from the Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning	1	Dean	• Ongoing financial support for training • Support for staff members to complete HPEC Medical Education programmes	A	Progress is reviewed quarterly by the Executive Management Committee. Review of initiatives through the Staff Development Committee.	Complete

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
	• 2 staff are being supported to complete PhDs and 1 staff for MBA						
4.5.2 **Develop a clear action plan to recruit and retain newer academic staff**, in areas with demonstrated vacancies.	• An adequate sourcing plan for HR has been put in place and will be requested for review by the RUMC management, Board of Directors, and Board of Governors. • 10 academic posts have been filled since September 2023 and 2 posts are open for recruitment. • Development of a new Recruitment policy – lead HR Department. • Currently, RUMC has a Staff Hiring Policy. A clear recruitment policy that states the recruitment and retention plan will be established in 2025.	1	HR	N/A	B Q2 2025	Recruitment policy	In Progress

RUMC

Quality Improvement Plan [1.4.2024]

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
4.5.3 **Review the framework for collaboration and engagement** with part-time clinical staff, with a view to making them a more visible and integral part of RUMC. This could include recognition of honorary status or adjunct appointments, more structured/standardised cross - departmental induction procedures, enhanced access to library, education and training.	The overall framework will be considered. Currently, all part-time staff have access to recordings of the medical education and research workshops but the uptake is poor, probably because there is no strict requirement for clinicians from the public hospitals to conduct research. Moving forward, RUMC staff are encouraged to collaborate with clinicians from the hospitals for research using available research funds from the institution. The monthly faculty meetings, the monthly scientific research meetings, and the requirements to present the exam results to faculty will help break down the silo mentality which has persisted.	1	Dean / HR Department	N/A	A	The Dean will update the Executive Management Committee quarterly on progress	Ongoing

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
	3 honorary professors have been appointed since September 2023.						
5. 1 **Increase ownership of the programme and structure by RUMC** across year 1-5 and greater alignment of the three partners to construct a seamless, coherent teaching programme would lead to an improved student experience.	To enhance the ownership of the programme and structure by RUMC from year 1 to year 5, and to ensure greater alignment among the three partners, RUMC proposes the implementation of a collaborative governance framework. This framework will include regular joint meetings, shared decision-making processes, and integrated planning sessions. With open communication and mutual accountability, we aim to create a seamless and coherent teaching programme. This approach will streamline the curriculum and enhance the overall student experience	2	President/ Dean	New appointment of The Head of RUMC Collaboration to facilitate and strengthen the communication between three institutions	C	The Dean will provide quarterly reports to the Board of Governors	In Progress

RUMC

Quality Improvement Plan [1.4.2024]

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
5.7.1 In collaboration with RCSI and UCD, and recognising the recommendation by the IMC, **a review of the overall curriculum for the specific needs of RUMC**. **An adequately staffed and resourced Medical Education Unit and Assessment Office**	See above. RUMC acknowledges this as a key piece of work and plans to address this in two ways 1. In the immediate term a reordering of the curriculum, specifically the addition of longer semester breaks, to facilitate research and elective opportunities for students. 2. In the medium to long term a curriculum transformation working group will be established whose members will include key stakeholders including academics from RCSI and UCD who are familiar with curriculum transformation.	1	Dean/ Chair of the Board of Governors	Travel and Accommodation Expenses	A	• Bi-Monthly reports to the President • Quarterly update reports to the Board of Governor • Bi-yearly accreditation updates to the Board of Governors • A report on the Assessment Office and Medical Education Unit audit will be presented to the	Complete Ongoing

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
	As part of operational improvement an audit of the assessment office and Medical Education Unit will be carried out.					Board through the President	
5.7.2 **A digital strategy** across the whole organisation for teaching, assessment, feedback and student management with **involvement of an educational technologist**.	RUMC welcomes this recommendation. An IT audit has been completed and a review is planned of student, learning and assessment management systems. A digital strategy working group will be formed and a transformation strategy will be prepared in 2024-2025	1	President	• Student Management System • External technology support • Appointment of an Educational Technologist	A	Monthly report to the Executive Management Committee	In progress
6.2.1 That RUMC invests in a **policy framework to support the student experience and student supports**, benchmarked against RCSI and UCD	The policy framework to support students will be reviewed following the mapping of the RUMC student journey by the Head of RUMC Collaboration.	1	President	Nil	C	Policy on Student Experience and Support	In Progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
approaches and policies in this regard.							
6.2.2 The PRG recommend that **an individual be tasked with mapping out the entire RUMC Student Experience** and be a designated point of contact while the students are based in Dublin, and socialising this with all stakeholders. This is important in terms of the formation of a 'RUMC student identity'. This journey can be mapped from admission to first graduation destination, and can be underpinned by student wellbeing, development, success, and safety.	• The Head of RUMC Collaboration was appointed in May 2024 and has commenced work on the RUMC student journey. We are confident this piece of work will help identify key areas where improvements can be made in the short, medium and long term. • RUMC established the Career Support Hub to assist all students in shaping their future careers, helping with electives, internship applications, licencing examinations, and CV development.	3	President	HOC Salary	C	Progress on the student journey workstreams will be reported quarterly to the President who in turn reports to the Board.	In Progress

RUMC

Quality Improvement Plan [1.4.2024]

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
6.2.3 Students described how the transition back to Malaysia was extremely challenging; however the PRG noted that this was a particular challenge for International Students (non-Malaysian). The PRG recommend that as part of mapping the student experience, there is an additional consideration for international students when it comes to language, accommodation, mentoring/tutoring, and integration into the RUMC campus.	Additional consideration was given to the unique challenges faced by international students during the student journey mapping process. To ensure their perspectives were accurately represented, focus groups consisting of international students were formed and actively participated in the mapping exercise. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and needs, ensuring that the final plan addressed the specific issues they encounter.	1	President	None	C	As 6.2.2 above	In progress
7.2.1 The PRG encourages RUMC to develop a clear scheme for **strengthening the internal quality assurance** part of its Quality	• RUMC QA Unit established in February 2023 aims to ensure RUMC's compliance with internal and external quality assurance	1	Registrar	Financial resources – Financial allocation for the training to improve RUMC's	B	Reviewed quarterly at the Executive Management Committee	In progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
Management and Enhancement system.	standards for academic institutions, as well as professional standards, we have established a committee with representation from internal members (RUMC administrative, academic, RCSI, and UCD), external members (members from other institutions), and student representatives. • The RUMC QA Officer is undergoing a Certified Quality Assurance course organised and recognised by the MQA. • A clear quality framework strategy will be developed in 2025 which will include a strategy on student feedback from years 1-5.			internal quality assurance.			
8.2.1 **Establish the local Institutional Review Board (IRB) for**	• JPEC ceased to operate and has been replaced by the	1	Dean /	New Appointment - RUMC Head of	A	Ethics Committee ToR	Complete

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
minimal-risk ethical approvals to enable permissions for staff and student projects. Re-establish and support the Joint Penang Independent Ethics Committee to facilitate research ethics approval for non-Malaysian Ministry of Health-related projects. This is critical for research integrity and governance of clinical research and is key enabler of the planned student-led projects from 2024.	establishment of the RUMC Ethics Committee (IRB)for minimal-risk research projects. Staff and student projects which are minimal risk are channelled to the Ethics for approval. For other types of research, such as clinical trials, the RUMC Ethics Committee will review applications for ethics and provide advice to the principal investigator and get approval from the National Medical Research Register (NMRR). • Information on the Research at RUMC can be found in the RUMC Moodle (VLE)		Research Office	Research Centre in September 2024 to implement the planned action.			
8.2.2 **Develop strategic partnerships between research groups in RCSI, UCD and RUMC to**	• This will be a key part of the research strategy from 24-25.	1 ,2	President/ Dean	New Appointment - RUMC Head of Research Centre in	B	Research collaborations, joint fund applications,	In Progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
explore possible synergistic existing research, the feasibility of innovative comparative research between two uniquely different populations (Dublin and Penang), collaborative grant applications and inter-university doctoral candidate supervision.	• The President and the Dean had visited RCSI and UCD to showcase the potential for joint research between the three institutions such as in One Health and Population Health. • Staff from UCD and RUMC are currently co-supervising 2 students. The HoD and Lead departments in Dublin plan to collaborate more in all areas, including research and medical education.			September 2024 to implement the planned action.		and joint publications are currently underway.	
8.2.3 **Promote the involvement of adjunct teaching staff in RUMC clinical research projects**.	The RUMC staff and hospital staff are conducting joint research using RUMC grants as seed funding.	2	Dean	N/A	C	Grants applied and publications	In Progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
8.2.4 **Develop synergistic partnerships between research groups in RCSI, UCD and RUMC to explore feasibility of comparative research between different populations**. UCD/ RCSI /RUMC has a unique opportunity to do comparative research in two very different populations.	See above 8.2.2.	1,2	Dean	A fully functional research office involving hiring of a research officer with adequate administrative support	B	Research collaborations, joint fund applications and joint publications	In Progress
9.2.1 Linked to the earlier observations about the organisational structure, the RUMC brand awareness does appear to be incoherent and misinterpreted. RUMC is owned and supported by two globally recognised and respected institutions. This is not translating into a strong brand awareness or effectiveness, and	• The RUMC management team has considered this recommendation as part of the strategic plan. Engagement with stakeholders is a key part of mapping the student journey, as is Alumni engagement, and this will inform brand awareness.	1	President	Undetermined	C		Pending

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
that needs to be investigated. Support staff, Clinical staff and RUMC alumni in particular commented on this. The PRG recommend a **review of brand effectiveness and optimisation in light of the new strategic aims**. In doing so external voices such as local UCD alumni and local RCSI alumni could also be engaged in this review.	• New strategic plan will review the brand effectiveness and optimisation.						
9.2.2 ICT utilisation and effectiveness within RUMC is a service that is not operating to its full potential. The PRG recommend that there is a **Digital Working Plan created that uplifts the operational effective of RUMC**. Key areas of focus should include the promotion	An IT audit has been conducted and the final report received in May 2024. This will be considered by UCD, RCSI, and RUMC, and an IT plan will be developed. This will align as appropriate with the digital strategy.	2	Facilities Department	Development of new Digital Strategy – lead IT Department	C		Pending

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
and development of an effective Virtual Learning Environment, Improved Cybersecurity, and Internet stability. There should be a linkage to and consistency with RCSI and UCD digital resources. security plans is encouraged. Presently it is observed that ICT is operating as a helpdesk and hardware provision function. The true potential of ICT as a service for education, assessment, security and beyond is yet to be realised.							
10.7.1 A review of current external relations to clearly identify, classify and prioritise relationships and stakeholders in order to align current and future relationships with RUMC's strategic plans. In	• The BOG which consists of representatives from RCSI & UCD regularly reviews and reports on external relations as a standing item on the agenda.	1	President/ Registry	Nil	B		In Progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
particular, this includes the continuation of efforts to strengthen the relationship with RUMC Alumni and explore opportunities to enhance Alumni engagement.	• A strategy for alumni engagement is planned to be established in 24-25 in conjunction with UCD including UCD Global office in Malaysia and RCSI						
10.7.2 A reassessment of the current organizational structure to develop positions of responsibility for coordinating external relations. This would include maintaining and optimising current relationships with key stakeholders, improving communication and synergistic collaboration as well as identifying future areas for development that will enhance research output, teaching and service provisions, visibility of RUMC and student	• A stakeholder engagement plan aims to be established in 24-25 to improve and optimise current relationships with all the key stakeholders.	1	President	Nil	B		In Progress

Recommendation and PRGR Reference	Response /planned Action Planned	Category of finding: 1; 2; 3	Responsibilities for Action	Resource Implications	Timeframe A; B; C; D	Measurement / Benchmarking	Status
recruitment. A stakeholder engagement plan that will promote inclusivity in order to meet stakeholder expectations and reduce miscommunication should be part of it.							

Update: 20 Nov 2024