



University of
Medicine and
Health Sciences

RCSI

Peer Review Group Report

School of Pharmacy and
Biomolecular Sciences
March 2022



RCSI

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1 CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PBS), at the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, which was undertaken in March 2022.

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) was established by Royal Charter in 1784 to set and support professional standards for surgical training and practice in Ireland. RCSI has evolved considerably in the intervening years and is now both a university and a postgraduate training body in surgery and related specialties. This dual role brings many advantages to the institution, not least of which is the ability to offer education and training at all career levels (i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate & professional) in medicine, surgery and related disciplines. In fact, it is the only surgical or medical Royal College in these islands to have university status. RCSI is the largest medical school in Ireland and awards medical degrees in Ireland, Bahrain and Malaysia. RCSI also provides undergraduate degree programmes in Pharmacy and Physiotherapy in Ireland, undergraduate Nursing degree programmes in Bahrain and masters (taught & by research) and doctoral programmes variously in Ireland, Bahrain, China, Dubai and Malaysia. RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. Following an institutional review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, RCSI independent degree awarding powers were activated by ministerial order in 2010 pursuant to the terms of The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003. The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 established RCSI as a Designated Awarding Body. In 2019 RCSI received authorization to use the description 'University' and to style itself accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019.

RCSI is an independent, not-for-profit health sciences institution with charitable status in the Republic of Ireland. The institution operates a primarily self-funding model, with State funding accounting for less than 20% of total income. The model is based on the education of a substantial cohort of international students alongside Irish/EU students.

1.2 Methodology for Review

1.2.1 Purpose of the Review

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

- Review the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning opportunities.

- Review research activity, including; management of research activity, assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
- Identify, encourage and disseminate good practice and to identify challenges and how to address these.
- Provide an opportunity for the Units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
- Inform RCSI's strategic planning process.
- Provide robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.
- Provide an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.
- Provide public information on the RCSI's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. RCSI's implementation of its quality procedures enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

1.2.2 The Review Process

The key stages in the internal review process are:

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

1.2.3 Membership of the Peer Review Group

Dr. Yvonne Kavanagh (Chair). Assistant Registrar, Institute of Technology, Carlow

Ms. Eimear Curtain (Learner Representative). Postgraduate Student, NUIG

Prof. Ruth Edwards (External Representative). Head of School of Pharmacy, University of Wolverhampton

Dr. Helen French (Internal RCSI Representative). Senior Lecturer, School of Physiotherapy, RCSI

Prof. Clive Page (External Representative). Professor of Pharmacology, Kings College London

Mr. Mark Collins (Technical Writer / Rapporteur)

1.2.4 Terms of Reference for the Peer Review Group

The terms of reference of the PRG are to:

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

The PRG visit to RCSI took place virtually from 21 – 24 March 2022 and held meetings with relevant stakeholder groups. Please see Appendix 1 for full list of meetings.

2 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE UNIT

RCSI is ranked among the top 250 (top 2%) of universities worldwide in the World University Rankings (2020) and its research citations are ranked first in Ireland and 124th in the world. The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Science (PBS) brings together longstanding expertise in delivery of programmes and research in pharmacy and in the area of biomedical sciences and therapeutics.

The former School of Pharmacy had a School Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018 “*Growth through Excellence*” that aligned with the previous RCSI strategy. The new School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PBS), established in July 2019, developed a new School strategy that aligns with RCSI’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

The Mission Statement for the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences is as follows:

To be at the forefront of health sciences education, research and innovation, whose students, graduates, and staff are responsive to societal needs and act as ambassadors to lead the world to better health.

This underpins the Strategic Development of the School and forms the foundation for its growth since 2019.

The recent merger between School of Pharmacy and Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics, under the leadership of Professor Tracy Robson, has further developed opportunities for growth, fitting with RCSI’s vision and status as a university. The School now has a critical mass of educators and researchers working towards the central focus of new and better medicines, with improved delivery and use. This is a perfect synergy between the research focus of the Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics, on understanding the molecular basis of disease to identify new targets with a view to developing new therapeutics, and diagnostic biomarkers, building on the expertise in pharmaceutical science, pharmacy practice and clinical interactions in the School of Pharmacy.

The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences has enhanced translational research outputs and has developed a pipeline of new and exciting educational programmes. Whilst growing the School’s educational portfolio, it maintains a core commitment to being a leader in pharmacy education. This is reflected in the recent undertaking of further refinement and innovating the integrated five year Master of Pharmacy Programme (the proposed redesigned curriculum was submitted to RCSI Awards and Qualifications Committee [A&QC] in late November 2021 and is scheduled for rollout if approved in September 2022). This curriculum will continue to foster a greater sense of enquiry amongst students, integrate knowledge across systems, prepare graduates for collaborative practice and further enable the ability of graduates to be both critical thinkers and reflective practitioners.

The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences has seen an increase in the number of national and international students, and with the aid of a *Human Capital Initiative* Higher Education Authority grant, has introduced a new MSc in Technologies and Analytics in Precision Management (MSc TAPM) in September 2021. Further programme development includes a new BSc Advanced Therapeutic Technologies, micro-credentials based on the modules within the MSc TAPM, and a new professional

doctorate programme. The wider institution has a distinguished record in providing education and training to international students in both the Dublin and overseas campuses. That expertise has been harnessed in a new venture for a Joint Education Institution (JEI) with Soochow University (SUDA), in China. The JEI application to the Chinese Ministry of Education was submitted in March 2022. This JEI, the SUDA-RCSI International College of Pharmaceutical Innovation will specifically deliver identical, but not equivalent, programmes in China so that students are awarded dual degrees. The aim is to enrol students for the MSc programmes in September 2023 and for the BSc programmes in September 2024. Another pillar of the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences is its focus on supporting societal wellbeing, healthcare, and the healthcare industry, through education, research, and service. This is driven through experiential learning to ensure that their educational training addresses healthcare and industry needs, whilst their research focuses on important healthcare and industry priorities.

The Peer Review Group note that in March 2021, PBS was awarded a departmental bronze Athena SWAN award following an assessment of the School's commitment to gender equality in its policies, practices and structures

PBS is a key School in RCSI. As an innovative, international health sciences education and research institution it offers education and training at undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional level

2.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- The successful merger between the School of Pharmacy and Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics in 2019 to form the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PBS).

3 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

As a result of the merger between the School of Pharmacy and the Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics to form the new School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PBS) (July 2019), the School leadership team was slightly restructured to better represent the new School (see Figure 1 *School of Pharmacy Governance Chart [2019-Present]*). As per the previous governance structure, PBS is led by a Head of School. This role was filled by the previous Head of the Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics, Professor Tracy Robson. Supporting Professor Robson is the leadership team, consisting of three Deputy Heads with assigned responsibilities, Head of Laboratory Operations, Head of Academic Operations, Quality and Operations Manager, staff representatives, and more recently, a Deputy Dean who will lead out on the RCSI-SUDA JEI.

This reorganisation and new management structure ensures complete oversight of the strategic needs of the new School, in terms of its undergraduate and postgraduate students, and is aligned with the strategic priorities of the University in terms of education, research and growth.

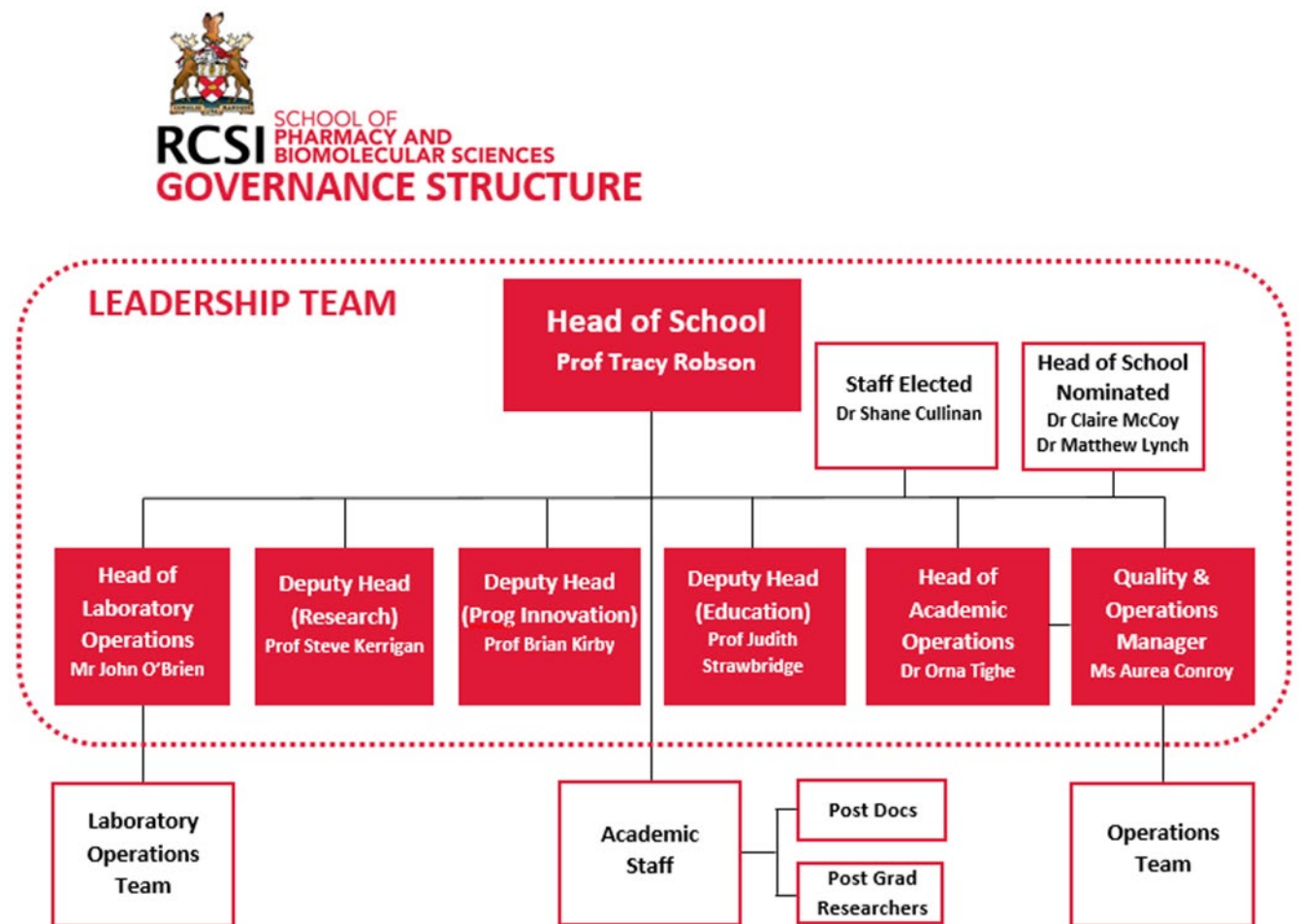


Figure 1. School of Pharmacy Governance Chart (2019-Present)

In addition to the restructured Leadership Team, the School has several teams, committees, and working groups in place to help support the School Strategy including:

- Programme Innovation Committee
- Research Committee
- Education Committee
- Operations Team
- Laboratory Operations Team
- Athena Swan Self-assessment Team

The Peer Review Group was impressed with the level of detail provided in the Self-assessment Report and with the positive and constructive engagement from the members of the School. The passion of the staff in driving the strategy to increase the international reputation of their School was very evident, as was the care and thought that had gone into developing the MPharm programme. Additionally, the PRG was impressed with the development of the new MSc and BSc programmes in more specialised areas of pharmaceutical science and personalised medicine.

3.1 Commendations

The PRGS commends:

- The robust and transparent governance with clear lines of accountability and responsibility. The Governance Chart is much clearer than previous version and involves input from staff at different levels.
- The formation of the PBS and HEA-HCI External Advisory Boards, which enable consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, in implementation of PBS functions and programme development and delivery.
- The development of a 5-year strategic plan (2019-2024), aligned with RCSI strategic goals.
- The formation of a School of PBS Leadership Team, following the merger, to support the Head of School and to drive growth of the School and implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- The expansion of the School through the development of new programmes which are future focused.
- The expansion of the research provision within the School as it works towards being an internationally recognised leader in Pharmaceutical Science.
- The integration of the School organisation and management with the wider RCSI infrastructure is especially evident and recognised by RCSI.

3.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- PBS allows time to consolidate and embed the new programmes as it works through its Strategic Plan.
- The further refinement and implementation of their workload allocation model to inform allocation of roles and responsibilities across education, research and service activities. Ensure

that further iterations of the model are effective, equitable, and sustainable; and support career development and academic promotion.

- To ensure good external communication of the School's educational and research strengths that are distinct from wider dissemination of the RCSI brand. There is much to celebrate, but this is often currently hidden. For research, it is important to convey the research themes within the School and how they interact with the wider research themes across RCSI.

4 STAFF AND FACILITIES

As a result of the merger in 2019, the School doubled in size. Following this PBS entered a stage of intensive growth in part due to successfully securing the significant HEA-HCI grant intended for the development of a new BSc and MSc programmes; the headcount associated with this grant is 14 (six academic and eight professional staff). This growth period saw an increase from 14 recruitments in 2020 (17 resigned or finished their contracts), to 40 new recruitments in 2021 (18 resigned or finished their contracts), spanning academic staff, professional staff, and researchers. Although a lot of movement is expected annually due to some research grants ending and others starting, the growth has been significant. Between 2019 and 2021 the School grew from 109 individuals/100.01 FTE in 2019 to 145 individuals/133.8 FTEs in 2021. Given the addition of new staff and the expansion of PBS, it is important that all staff are included in the journey and that time is taken to consolidate the changes and embed the new programmes.

All categories of staff in PBS see a predominance of female staff with only senior technical roles experiencing a predominance of male staff. As part of Athena SWAN this is an ongoing area of consideration, and gender balance is under active consideration. The PRG support this approach.

Academic staff across RCSI are generally involved in a significant amount of service work both internally and externally which can be challenging for workload management. A workload management system is in place and has undergone one iteration to ensure it is representative of the workload. During the review, it was evident that the workload model currently utilised in PBS is supporting development in the three pillars of education, research and service. However, workload remains a concern as staff try to find a balance between competing priorities and the many roles and responsibilities.

The School's proposed strategic development is ambitious and will enhance outputs in both education and research. However, it is important that staffing requirements across the various grades, for both project completion and subsequent implementation be identified and planned for, as appropriate. The School is aware of the requirements and has already started the process in relation to the JEI. Included in that is the awareness of the associated administrative and technical requirements which should be considered.

This review was conducted remotely and therefore the PRG relied on the extensive documentation provided by PBS when evaluating the facilities available. As a university in the centre of Dublin city, space is at a premium. Furthermore, its available laboratory, teaching and office facilities are complex to manage. As the PBS grows with its new BSc and MSc programmes, its available facilities will be under increased pressure. The PRG welcome the development of the new Dispensing Laboratory which will be available in September 2022 and will expand the laboratory provision. This will allow PBS some flexibility in its timetabling.

The introduction and assignment of 'home rooms' is welcomed and will support the students' sense of belonging to a programme.

As part of the 2014 School of Pharmacy Internal Quality Review report, it was recommended that the School's staff be accommodated in one unified area. This was enacted and resulted in the development of office space on a dedicated floor in Ardilaun House for the School of Pharmacy which allowed all its academic and administrative staff to be located on one floor with a selection of shared and single occupancy offices, operational facilities, meeting rooms, and a communal staff area. For the first time since the School's foundation, its entire academic and administrative staff was located together. This

proved successful at the time, however the merger, with its success and growth, has brought challenges in this area. The construction of a new building which is due to be online in 2025 should help with this.

The dedicated personal office space for postgraduate researchers, in place pre-Covid-19, enhanced the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere of the School, has been eroded during the pandemic, leaving some students with limited access to required facilities.

4.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- The highly motivated staff, excellent collegiality and an enthusiasm to continue to grow the School on an international stage.
- The staff on their ability to deal with the complex regulatory and practical requirements of the School during Covid-19 as well as drive future growth.
- The Professional Technical Staff for their in-person and online support for students during Covid-19.
- The outstanding commitment of staff to the students, both undergraduate and postgraduate. The focus of all the team is to provide an excellent student experience through the provision of high quality professionally focused programmes. The students are considered partners on their educational journey.
- The excellent working relationships with colleagues across RCSI.
- The Workload Model, as commended in the feedback from Athena SWAN, and should be considered as a template for use across RCSI.
- The welcome development of the new Dispensing Laboratory which will be available in September 2022 and will expand the laboratory provision. Also welcome the construction of a new RCSI building which is due to be online for 2025.
- The dedicated personal office space for postgraduate researchers pre-Covid-19 which enhanced the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere of the School.
- The planning for the interaction with industry for the curriculum and placement development of the new BSc in Advanced Therapeutic Technologies.
- The governance structure has been clearly defined and put in place to oversee the establishment of the joint initiative with Soochow University.

4.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- To consider the impact of the pandemic and significant changes in curricula on staff wellbeing and halt further growth until existing programmes are embedded. A period of consolidation is needed after a sustained period of growth.
- The School is proactive in Risk Assessing requirements. However, in view of the upcoming significant delivery of new programmes and partnerships, review the staffing requirements with a view to maintaining the quality experience for students. This would include ensuring sufficient administration and technical support being available.

- To review the over reliance on contract and honorary staff and to convert where appropriate to full-time and permanent in line with RCSI policy.
- The School review its space allocation across all staff in line with future growth requirements and to show flexibility post-Covid-19.
- To provide more formalised training sessions for staff, especially new staff, on IT systems and ensure that they are supported with any issues.
- To review the workload model to ensure that student facing engagement outside of lecturing is captured sufficiently and that the model aligns with Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Strategy.
- The prioritisation of space for students, especially postgraduate research students, to allow them to access appropriate personal space for their needs, especially during the write-up phase of their studies. This should be dedicated space separate to any provision for undergraduates.
- The improved communication across the whole School to ensure that all staff are aware of the developments within the School. This is particularly important with respect to the upcoming joint venture with Soochow University in China and the impact this will have on all aspects of the School's activities.
- The PRG note the considerable expertise of RCSI in overseas delivery of education programmes and commend the early HR planning in relation to the staff requirements for the international programme delivery with Soochow University, but recommend that this is maintained as a priority due to the commitment required from staff, including administration and technical staff as the project progresses. The PRG further recommend that they identify and recruit the 17 extra staff to be associated with the Soochow University joint initiative as soon as possible, (including the Deputy Dean, 11 academic staff, and 5 professional staff all to be based in Ireland), and a further 2 based in China
- The School reviews the communication of career development and promotional opportunities across all staff, including technical and administration roles.
- The School work closely with the University to ensure appropriate service and maintenance and service contracts for laboratory equipment to support the continuity of teaching and research.

5 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies across educational programmes in PBS are student-centred and underpinned by a shared decision making that is constantly informed by a range of sources including external examiner feedback and student feedback. They are supported by experienced, dedicated and enthusiastic staff.

PBS is committed to excellence in its teaching, learning and assessment, to producing graduates with the scientific and clinical knowledge, professional competence and other skills as appropriate that are required to effectively discharge their various roles and functions within the clinical, industrial or other settings where they are engaged. Accordingly, each educational programme in RCSI has its own bespoke teaching, learning and assessment strategies which set out in detail the approaches to teaching learning and assessment that facilitates the delivery of a transformative learning experience, and the associated supporting requirements for each programme.

For the Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) programme, the central focus insofar as its curriculum and teaching, learning and assessment strategy is concerned, is the professional formation of pharmacists with the knowledge, skills and professional judgement to act as a medicines expert and deliver patient-centred care to all members of society. Unconditional reaccreditation by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) until 2025 demonstrates the high quality of this programme.

The newly planned/introduced programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level (MSc in Technologies & Analytics in Precision Medicine commenced in September 2021 and BSc [Advanced Therapeutic Technologies] scheduled to commence in September 2022) recognise the importance of their graduates demonstrating best scientific discipline and practice for the betterment of global society. The programmes seek to develop scientific practitioners who are committed to continuous development throughout their professional careers and who excel in the diverse and emerging roles of the scientist both nationally and internationally. These programmes have been designed to meet the identified current and future skills needs of the bio/pharmaceutical industry in line with both national and international skills policies (National Skills Strategy 2025, Enterprise 2025 and Innovation 2020, OECD Skills for Jobs, 2020).

The PRG note the interaction and engagement with students as part of teaching, learning and assessment. The robust placement management in place is noted and the experience with this will prove invaluable for the new programmes.

5.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- The positive engagement of staff with students on developing and reviewing curriculum and assessment methodologies. For example, initiatives such as the opportunity for co-creation of curriculum in the fourth-year optional Education and Training module.
- The engagement of the staff and students of the School through the University StEP Programme to support student engagement and partnership, reflecting the student voice.
- The creation of a culture that supports the students being able to seek external funding for partnership initiatives.

5.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- Ensuring the mechanisms currently in place are expanded and refined as needed to the new programmes, with a specific focus on future students from Soochow University.
- Exploring opportunities to co-teach pharmacy and medical students for optimisation of resources while maintaining the PBS focus.

6 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

PBS has established curricula across its undergraduate and postgraduate provision. Since its establishment in 2002, the School's principal educational focus has been the education of persons eligible for first registration and independent practice as pharmacists in Ireland. In the intervening period, since the School's establishment, its pharmacy undergraduate programme has undergone a number of revisions and changes. PBS has direct responsibility for ensuring that its MPharm programme satisfies the accreditation criteria of the PSI and is approved by it. The MPharm has unconditional approval in place until 2025. In its report following its visit in 2020, the PSI Accreditation Team commended PBS on its evidence-based approach to curriculum development.

Following the creation of PBS in 2019, the School has moved to build on its considerable experience and expertise in the design and rollout of pharmacy educational programmes with the development and introduction of a number of new programmes in various related areas. These additional programmes are at differing levels of progress in terms of their curricular development.

In addition to the educational programmes that the PBS is directly responsible for in terms of curriculum development, rollout, assessment and quality assurance, a number of its staff also teach into various other programmes which are directly managed by other schools including Medicine, Nursing, and Physiotherapy. While principal responsibility for the curricula of these programmes rests in the relevant School, PBS staff support the delivery of the curriculum in accordance with requirements in place.

6.1 Commendations

The PRG commend:

- The reflective and evidence-based approach to curriculum design with significant publication output on educational developments.

6.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- Reviewing the curriculum to explore joint teaching of PBS students alongside Medical students. It is important that the School ensures that the focus of the curriculum delivery to PBS students is maintained.
- Regularly reviewing the delivery of material in the curricula by staff external to PBS as appropriate.

7 RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Overall, the research activity across the School is of a high standard that in many cases is internationally competitive. Where appropriate, members of the School actively contribute to the cross-cutting research themes across RCSI and in some cases are driving this activity.

However, the prominent and important role PBS faculty play does not appear to always receive the credit and exposure that it deserves. Much of the School research output is hidden under the RCSI brand making it a struggle for the School to gain greater international visibility for their subject area. The School is increasingly attracting high levels of external peer-reviewed funding and publishing research in high quality internationally recognised journals. Whilst the School does not appear to be performing as well on some metrics as other Schools of Pharmacy when using the arbitrary “Pharmacy and Pharmacology” banner, this is not a reflection of lack of quality of the research output, but rather reflects that much of the research emanating from the School is being published in more traditional, but high quality, medical journals.

7.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- The high-quality research outputs and growing success of the School in attracting external competitive, peer-reviewed research funding.
- The interactions with industry and first start-up companies arising from research in the School. The Panel note the launch of the spinout company Inthelia Therapeutics in July 2021, reinforcing the strong focus of translational research.
- The good provision of core equipment and laboratory facilities.
- The positive feedback from research students, interactions with supervisors, supervisor structure, personable support available.
- The joint PhD programmes with Soochow University which are progressing successfully despite Covid-19.
- The initiative regarding the flow of indirect cost overheads to the School.

7.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- Strengthening the website and utilise all communication channels to highlight research themes within PBS to help raise international visibility.
- PBS maintain and support their focus on key research strengths and themes.
- The further development of research activity needs to be carefully balanced against space provision.

8 MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

The commitment to achieving the highest standards of quality in all of its activities is evident across PBS. The responsibility for the high quality student experience and its continuous enhancement is clearly demonstrated by the opportunities, through both formal and informal mechanisms, to feed into the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, efforts have been made to engage students in the design of co-creation curricular activities as partners in the quality enhancement process.

In respect of the MPharm programme, it is subject to approval by the PSI pursuant to Section 16 of the Pharmacy Act 2007 in order for its graduates to be eligible for registration as a pharmacist in Ireland. Unconditional approval was granted following a detailed accreditation process which included visitations to PBS to satisfy the PSI that the programme fulfilled its rigorous accreditation standards. The documentation supplied to the PRG was comprehensive and detailed all quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms in place within PBS. This included the action plan for each module which is collated into a master Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the programme and is scheduled for implementation in the following academic year. The QIP is also shared with the students. Implementation of the QIP is monitored by the Deputy Head (Education). The PRG note this partnership approach, which extends to the inclusion of student representatives at the bi-monthly Schoolmeetings, and various Committee meetings.

A robust system of feedback for both students and preceptors specifically in respect of the experiential placement in addition to the standard student feedback processes is required. The Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning (APPEL) has developed an evaluation tool which is administered to all students at the end of each Experiential Learning Placement. In parallel with the student feedback process, preceptor pharmacists are also given the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of training students on the APPEL programmes. This process is administered and analysed by the RCSI Quality Enhancement Office on behalf of APPEL

The upcoming JEI with Soochow University is an area where there is a requirement for a dedicated quality assurance and this has been actioned by PBS through the presence of JEI staff on the Quality Committee ,quality oversight for SU, and the inclusion of student surveys and programmatic reviews as practiced in Dublin

The PRG engagement with external stakeholders was very positive, with the stakeholders reinforcing the School's commitment to quality assurance and enhancement.

8.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- The regular engagement with students, through formal and informal mechanisms, resulting in a student body who feel valued and listened to.
- The thorough Quality Cycle, and commitment to ongoing quality enhancement, through the explicit and supportive quality system in place.
- The Quality Assurance processes in place in advance of the joint initiative with Soochow University.
- The inclusion of student representatives at the monthly faculty meetings, demonstrating the commitment to quality enhancement and engagement.

8.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- Reviewing current practice to enhance closing the feedback loop, ensuring that students are informed of curricular changes in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the quality assurance mechanisms currently in place are expanded and refined as needed for new programmes and the joint initiative with Soochow University, to ensure equity of student experience.

9 SUPPORT SERVICES

PBS is highly active in both research and education delivery. PBS will be offering two taught Masters programmes (including the MPharm) and one BSc programme in the next academic year in addition to the research and support outputs. It is exceptional in the provision of support systems and it is acknowledged that the expansion will require extra supports.

PBS staff are commended for their continuous engagement with external stakeholders and have fostered collegial relationships across RCSI. The PRG's engagement with external stakeholders was very positive, with the stakeholders complimenting the PBS on its timely and professional engagement.

The School collaborates across key areas of research and education with the RCSI Communications Office regarding successful outputs which contribute to the enhancement of their international reputation; newsworthy items such as key prestigious grants, publications, and awards which are all promoted. However, it is noted that the communications are currently linked to RCSI rather than promotion of PBS and its reputation.

Beyond the School, staff are very engaged in numerous committees within RCSI.

9.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- PBS engagement across a range of support services in relation to working relationships and pre-emptive action in planning future growth of programmes
- PBS on the interaction with support services in relation to engaging students in curriculum and assessment design. This includes the rollout of peer mentoring and other initiatives to support students.
- PBS on its involvement with committees across the University.

9.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure clarity the roles of the Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs (SARA) and the PBS operations teams to avoid duplication of work related to student-facing activities.
- PBS be engaged earlier in processes related to development of IT systems for curricular activities.
- PBS ensure that the Estates Department are aware of the requirements of research staff and students in relation to defined space availability.

10 EXTERNAL RELATIONS

PBS maintains excellent working relationships with many RCSI departments to facilitate the smooth running of undergraduate programmes and postgraduate support. The School has a particularly strong relationship with departments of the School of Medicine (SoM). PBS staff contribute to SoM teaching programmes. PBS staff support SoM across all years of the programme and, in addition to delivering lecture content, they undertake leadership roles such as module leadership, cycle director, pharmacology leads etc. In addition, PBS staff are central to many of the new initiatives such as curriculum reform elements of the SoM teaching programmes. PBS staff also provide research guidance and support as part of the Student Selected Component (SSC) of the undergraduate medicine programme. This support extends to the Research Summer School (RSS) and Student Engagement Projects.

PBS staff participation in activities across RCSI is evident and includes participation in the StEP programme.

Excellent engagement with the APPEL, which has responsibility for provision of MPharm placements is noted.

10.1 Commendations

The PRG commends:

- The excellent relationship with APPEL, which has responsibility for provision of MPharm placements. APPEL was very complimentary of their engagement with the PBS.

10.2 Recommendations

The PRG recommends:

- PBS explore how to enhance alumni engagement and consider identifying a dedicated person within the School for Alumni liaison.

11 SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The PRG commends:

- The successful merger between the School of Pharmacy and Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics in 2019 to form the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PBS).
- The robust and transparent governance with clear lines of accountability and responsibility. The Governance Chart is much clearer than previous version and involves input from staff at different levels.
- The formation of the PBS and HEA-HCI External Advisory Boards, which enable consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, in implementation of PBS functions and programme development and delivery.
- The development of a 5-year strategic plan (2019-2024), aligned with RCSI strategic goals.
- The formation of a School of PBS Leadership Team, following the merger, to support the Head of School and to drive growth of the School and implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- The expansion of the School through the development of new programmes which are future focused.
- The expansion of the research provision within the School as it works towards being an internationally recognised leader in Pharmaceutical Science.
- The integration of the School organisation and management with the wider RCSI infrastructure is especially evident and recognised by RCSI.
- The highly motivated staff, excellent collegiality and an enthusiasm to continue to grow the School on an international stage.
- The staff on their ability to deal with the complex regulatory and practical requirements of the School during Covid-19 as well as drive future growth.
- The Professional Technical Staff for their in-person and online support for students during Covid-19.
- The outstanding commitment of staff to the students, both undergraduate and postgraduate. The focus of all the team is to provide an excellent student experience through the provision of high quality professionally focused programmes. The students are considered partners on their educational journey.
- The excellent working relationships with colleagues across RCSI.
- The Workload Model, as commended in the feedback from Athena SWAN, and should provide a template for use across RCSI.
- The welcome development of the new Dispensing Laboratory which will be available in September 2022 and will expand the laboratory provision. Also welcome the construction of a new RCSI building which is due to be online for 2025.
- The dedicated personal office space for postgraduate researchers pre-Covid-19 which enhanced the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere of the School.
- The planning for the interaction with industry for the curriculum and placement development of the new BSc in Advanced Therapeutic Technologies.
- The governance structure has been clearly defined and put in place to oversee the establishment of the joint initiative with Soochow University.
- The positive engagement of staff with students on developing and reviewing curriculum and assessment methodologies. For example, initiatives such as the opportunity for co-creation of curriculum in the fourth-year optional Education and Training module
- The engagement of the staff and students of the School through the University StEP Programme to support student engagement and partnership, reflecting the student voice.
- The creation of a culture that supports the students being able to seek external funding for partnership initiatives.

- The reflective and evidence-based approach to curriculum design with significant publication output on educational developments.
- The high-quality research outputs and growing success of the School in attracting external competitive, peer-reviewed research funding.
- The interactions with industry and first start-up companies arising from research in the School. The Panel note the launch of the spinout company Inthelia Therapeutics in July 2021, reinforcing the strong focus of translational research.
- The good provision of core equipment and laboratory facilities.
- The positive feedback from research students, interactions with supervisors, supervisor structure, personable support available.
- The joint PhD programmes with Soochow University which are progressing successfully despite Covid-19.
- The initiative regarding the flow of indirect cost overheads to the School.
- The regular engagement with students, through formal and informal mechanisms, resulting in a student body who feel valued and listened to.
- The thorough Quality Cycle, and commitment to ongoing quality enhancement, through the explicit and supportive quality system in place.
- The Quality Assurance processes in place in advance of the joint initiative with Soochow University.
- The inclusion of student representatives at the monthly faculty meetings, demonstrating the commitment to quality enhancement and engagement.
- PBS engagement across a range of support services in relation to working relationships and pre-emptive action in planning future growth of programmes
- PBS on the interaction with support services in relation to engaging students in curriculum and assessment design. This includes the rollout of peer mentoring and other initiatives to support students.
- PBS on its involvement with committees across the University.
- The excellent relationship with APPEL, which has responsibility for provision of MPharm placements. APPEL was very complimentary of their engagement with the PBS.

The PRG recommends:

- PBS allows time to consolidate and embed the new programmes as it works through its Strategic Plan.
- The further refinement and implementation of their workload allocation model to inform allocation of roles and responsibilities across education, research and service activities. Ensure that further iterations of the model are effective, equitable, and sustainable; and support career development and academic promotion.
- To ensure good external communication of the School's educational and research strengths that are distinct from wider dissemination of the RCSI brand. There is much to celebrate, but this is often currently hidden. For research, it is important to convey the research themes within the School and how they interact with the wider research themes across RCSI.
- To consider the impact of the pandemic and significant changes in curricula on staff wellbeing and halt further growth until existing programmes are embedded. A period of consolidation is needed after a sustained period of growth.
- The School is proactive in Risk Assessing requirements. However, in view of the upcoming significant delivery of new programmes and partnerships, review the staffing requirements with a view to maintaining the quality experience for students. This would include ensuring sufficient administration and technical support being available.

- To review the over reliance on contract and honorary staff and to convert where appropriate to full-time and permanent in line with RCSI policy.
- The School review its space allocation across all staff in line with future growth requirements and to show flexibility post-Covid-19.
- To provide more formalised training sessions for staff, especially new staff, on IT systems and ensure that they are supported with any issues.
- To review the workload model to ensure that student facing engagement outside of lecturing is captured sufficiently and that the model aligns with Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Strategy.
- The prioritisation of space for students, especially postgraduate research students, to allow them to access appropriate personal space for their needs, especially during the write-up phase of their studies. This should be dedicated space separate to any provision for undergraduates.
- The improved communication across the whole School to ensure that all staff are aware of the developments within the School. This is particularly important with respect to the upcoming joint venture with Soochow University in China and the impact this will have on all aspects of the School's activities.
- The PRG note the considerable expertise of RCSI in overseas delivery of education programmes and commend the early HR planning in relation to the staff requirements for the international programme delivery with Soochow University, but recommend that this is maintained as a priority due to the commitment required from staff, including administration and technical staff as the project progresses. The PRG further recommend that they identify and recruit the 17 extra staff to be associated with the Soochow University joint initiative as soon as possible, (including the Deputy Dean, 11 academic staff, and 5 professional staff all to be based in Ireland), and a further 2 based in China
- The School reviews the communication of career development and promotional opportunities across all staff, including technical and administration roles.
- The School work closely with the University to ensure appropriate service and maintenance and service contracts for laboratory equipment to support the continuity of teaching and research.
- Ensuring the mechanisms currently in place are expanded and refined as needed to the new programmes, with a specific focus on future students from Soochow University.
- Exploring opportunities to co-teach pharmacy and medical students for optimisation of resources while maintaining the PBS focus.
- Reviewing the curriculum to explore joint teaching of PBS students alongside Medical students. It is important that the School ensures that the focus of the curriculum delivery to PBS students is maintained.
- Regularly reviewing the delivery of material in the curricula by staff external to PBS as appropriate.
- Strengthening the website and utilise all communication channels to highlight research themes within PBS to help raise international visibility.
- PBS maintain and support their focus on key research strengths and themes.
- The further development of research activity needs to be carefully balanced against space provision.
- Reviewing current practice to enhance closing the feedback loop, ensuring that students are informed of curricular changes in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the quality assurance mechanisms currently in place are expanded and refined as needed for new programmes and the joint initiative with Soochow University, to ensure equity of student experience.
- Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure clarity the roles of the Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs (SARA) and the PBS operations teams to avoid duplication of work related to student-facing activities.
- PBS be engaged earlier in processes related to development of IT systems for curricular activities.

- PBS ensure that the Estates Department are aware of the requirements of research staff and students in relation to defined space availability.
- PBS explore how to enhance alumni engagement and consider identifying a dedicated person within the School for Alumni liaison.

APPENDIX 1: SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 1 | Monday 21 March 2022

Date	Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
Monday 21 March	09.00 – 09.20	20 mins	4	PRG: Review of preparatory work
	09.20 – 10.20	60 mins	5	Meeting with PBS Leadership Team Meeting Theme: Review of strategic planning, future developments of the School and governance structures; growth; resources and space. Suggested SAR Sections: 1, 2, 3,10
10 minute break between meetings				
Monday 21 March	10.30 – 11.15	45 mins	6	Programme Directors and Overseas Development Meeting Theme: Education Programmes; curriculum development, review and enhancement; teaching learning and assessment; challenges and future potential; resourcing; microcredentialling; sufficient supports for staff on programmes sitting outside PBS; extent of change; workload Suggested SAR Sections: 3,4, 5, 8
	11.15 – 11.35	20 mins	7	Break for PRG
Monday 21 March	11.35 – 12.20	45 mins	8	Academic Staff Meeting Theme: Working environment; career development and opportunities; collaboration and support; teaching learning & assessment; curriculum development and review; career development opportunities; challenges and future potential; workload; Athena SWAN; space Suggested SAR Sections: 3, 4, 5
10 Minute break between meetings				
Monday 21 March	12.30 – 13.00	30 mins	9	Professional Technical Staff Meeting Theme: Working environment; career development and opportunities; collaboration and support; teaching learning & assessment; curriculum development and review; career development opportunities; challenges and future potential; workload; Athena SWAN; space Suggested SAR Sections: 3, 4, 5
	13.00 – 13.45	45 mins	10	Break for PRG
Monday 21 March	13.45 – 14.30	45 mins	11	Research Meeting Theme: Experiences of research staff and PhD students of the School; developing an internationally recognized research

				profile; challenges and future potential; career development opportunities; workload; space – labs and write up. Suggested SAR Sections: 3, 6
15 minute break between meetings				
Monday 21 March	14.45 – 15.30	45 mins	12	RCSI Senior Management Team Meeting Theme: RCSI Strategy and the strategic development of the School. Plans for the future and management of resources beyond the HEA grant. Topics that may be raised by the panel: career structures for all categories of staff to facilitate progression; space; future resources to cover administration of additional education programmes; institutional workload modelling Suggested SAR Sections: 1, 2, 3, 8 & 10
	15.30 – 16.00	30 mins	13	PRG Review of afternoon’s meetings; draft commendations & recommendations; planning for next day

WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day Tuesday 22 March 2022

Date	Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
Tuesday 22 March	09.00 – 09.20	20 mins	14	PRG: Review of preparatory work
	09.20 – 09.50	30 mins	15	Education support from other academic departments Meeting Theme: experience interaction with PBS curriculum development, teaching delivery, operational support Suggested SAR Sections: 4, 5
10 minute break between meetings				
Tuesday 22 March	10.00 – 10.45	45 mins	16	Research Support Meeting Theme: Experiences of research staff and PhD students of the School; developing an internationally recognized research profile; challenges and future potential; career development opportunities; workload; space – labs and write up. Suggested SAR Sections: 3, 6
	10.45 – 11.05	20 mins	17	Break for PRG
Tuesday 22 March	11.05 – 11.50	45 mins	18	Operations Meeting Theme: Current supports and resources provided; impact of the potential growth of the School on service supports; collaboration and planning for the future. Areas for consideration: IT; Library; SARA; Admissions; Estates; Support for growth; support for marketing and impact Suggested SAR Sections: 3, 8
10 minute break between meetings				
	12.00 – 12.45	45 mins	19	Student Representatives Meeting Theme: Experience as students of the School; teaching, learning and assessment; clinical placements; research opportunities; student supports; student engagement opportunities within the School and RCSI; student feedback; ongoing quality enhancement. Suggested SAR Sections: 4, 5, 9
	12.45 – 13.30	45 mins	20	Break for PRG
	13.30 – 14.15	45 mins	21	External Stakeholders Meeting Theme: Partnership for enhanced quality placements and future growth. Topics that may be raised by the panel: does the school do enough for its external stakeholders; how can we

				support each other further; how can we improve further engagement for the benefit of our students Suggested SAR Sections: 4, 5, 9
10 minute break between meetings				
Tuesday 22 March	14.25 14.55	–	30 mins	22 APPEL Meeting Theme: Experiential Learning Placements, Years 2, 4 & 5 MPharm programme Suggested SAR Sections 4, 5 & 8
Tuesday 22 March	14.55 15.30	–	35 mins	23 PRG Review of afternoon’s meetings; draft commendations & recommendations; planning for next day

WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 3 | Wednesday 23 March 2022

Date	Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
Wednesday 23 March	09.00 – 09.15	15 mins	24	PRG: Review of preparatory work
	09.15 – 10.00	45 mins	25	<p>Internal Stakeholders</p> <p>Meeting Theme: Current supports and resources provided; impact of the potential growth of the School on service supports/supports tailored to the School; collaboration and planning for the future. Areas for consideration: IT; Library; SARA; Admissions; Estates; Finance; Marketing needs of School beyond the HEA grant; Alumni support; space allocation for education and research</p> <p>Suggested SAR Sections: 8</p>
15 minute break between meetings				
Wednesday 23 March	10.15 – 11.00	45 mins	26	<p>Meeting with RCSI colleagues with a focus on student supports; student engagement; student feedback and ongoing quality enhancement.</p> <p>Meeting Theme: Provision of student supports; opportunities for student engagement within the school and across RCSI; how student feedback informs quality enhancement processes and initiatives.</p> <p>Suggested SAR Sections: 9</p>
	11.00 – 11.30	30 mins	27	Break for PRG
Wednesday 23 March	11.30 – 12.15	45 mins	28	<p>Optional additional meeting with staff members if required by the PRG</p> <p>Theme: Opportunity for PRG for additional questions or clarification on items arising from discussions with stakeholders.</p>
15 minute break between meetings				
	12.30 – 13.00	30 mins	29	<p>Meeting with Head of Unit</p> <p>Meeting Theme: Opportunity for additional questions or clarification on items arising from discussions with stakeholders.</p>
Wednesday 23 March	13.00 – 13.45	45 mins	30	PRG meeting to draft commendations and recommendations.

WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 4 | Thursday 24 March 2022

Date	Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
Thursday 24 March	09.00 – 11.30	150 mins	31	PRG meeting to finalise commendations and recommendations.
	11.30 – 12.00	30 mins		Break for PRG
Thursday 24 March	12.00 – 12.30	30 mins	32	PRG meeting with QEO for clarification and discussion of main findings
	12.30 – 12.50	20 mins	33	Meeting with Head of Unit & QEO to present main findings
	13.00– 13.15	15 mins	34	Closing presentation to <u>all Unit staff</u>
	13.15			Review Ends



RCSI

Leading the world
to better health

**Internal Quality Review
Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
School of Pharmacy &
Biomolecular Sciences Dec 2022**

Quality Improvement Plan

**School of Pharmacy & Biomolecular Sciences
December 2022**

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Name of Unit	School of Pharmacy & Biomolecular Sciences (PBS)					
Project Title	Internal Quality Review					
Document Title	QIP					
This Document Comprises	DCS	TOC	Text	List of Tables	List of Figures	No. of Appendices
	1	0	13	0	0	0

Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date
1	Final Draft	PBS	PBS, QEO	PBS	PBS	Dec 2022
2	Final Draft	PBS	PBS, QEO, SMT	PBS	PBS	Feb 2023

PBS



Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
PBS allows time to consolidate and embed the new programmes as it works through its Strategic Plan.	3.2A	No new programmes are being developed over the next 2-3 years– agreed Senior Mgmt. Nov 2022	Head of School	None	Q4 2022	n/a	Complete
The further refinement and implementation of their workload allocation model to inform allocation of roles and responsibilities across education, research and service activities. Ensure that further iterations of the model are effective, equitable, and sustainable; and support career development and academic promotion.	3.2B	Re-run in summer 2022 fed into PDP discussions Dec 2022, further consultation and feedback planned in Jan 2023	Head of Academic Operations	none	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff feedback via PDPs - Fair distribution of teaching - WLM 2nd round Staff survey - Benchmark teaching hours against research -External Review Group recommendations 	
To ensure good external communication of the School’s educational and research strengths that are distinct from wider dissemination of the RCSI brand. There is much to celebrate,	3.2C	New HEA-funded PT marketing person to become more involved in the marketing of the School – develop a robust marketing plan	Deputy Head for Programmes Innovation	Contract ends in March 2025- Limited capacity among faculty to support. This would require a permanent	March 2024	<p>Increased international students</p> <p>Increased international collaborations</p>	

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
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but this is often currently hidden. For research, it is important to convey the research themes within the School and how they interact with the wider research themes across RCSI.		New PBS Twitter working group with updated strategy	PBS Social Media team	0.5 FTE beyond March 2025 based in PBS	Ongoing	Increased altmetrics Annual Marketing analytics report THE World Rankings QS Subject Rankings	
		Annual Newsletter	Deputy Head of School, Research		Dec 2022		
		National and International external engagement (i.e. Overseas university visits, clinical partner engagement, industry engagements)	PBS Leadership Team		Ongoing Ongoing		

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
To consider the impact of the pandemic and significant changes in curricula on staff wellbeing and halt further growth until existing programmes are embedded. A period of consolidation is needed after a sustained period of growth.	4.2A	See 3.2A for action planned					
The School is proactive in Risk Assessing requirements. However, in view of the upcoming significant delivery of new programmes and partnerships, review the staffing requirements with a view to maintaining the quality experience for students. This would include ensuring sufficient administration and technical support being available.	4.2B	Staff planning and recruitment will be reviewed by PBS LT and presented as part of the annual SMT business and financial planning session in Feb/March annually	Head of School	Making Teacher Practitioner contracts permanent Making Pharmacy Technician contracts permanent Review of HEA – funded Posts Soochow recruitment	March 2023 March 2023 March 2023/24 Active Review March 2023	Continued accreditation of MPharm End of semester student surveys Staff retention Workload Allocation Model	Ongoing

PBS



Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
				Laboratory Technicians			
To review the over reliance on contract and honorary staff and to convert where appropriate to full-time and permanent in line with RCSI policy.	4.2C	Assessment of postdoctoral researchers teaching hours	Head of School	As above – 4.2B	Ongoing	Capture Postdoc teaching hours via direct contact with postdocs Workload Model	Ongoing
The School review its space allocation across all staff in line with future growth requirements and to show flexibility post-Covid-19.	4.2D	Evaluated at annual business and Financial Planning meeting with SMT Updated Risk Register Regular communication with Bookings team to plan future teaching delivery requirements Source a suitable space for a Computer Lab for	Head of School/ Head of Academic Operations	Institutional resources required Potential Impact on staff capacity dependent of space availability/double teaching	Q1 2023/2024/2025 for teaching space Plan needs to be in place by Q2 2024 for Staff space in preparation for vacation of Ardilaun House	Delivering programme (Timetables) PBS staff in 1-2 buildings	Ongoing until 2025+

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
		<p>projected student numbers for MSCTAPM</p> <p>Source a suitable BScATT flat space to support computer based activities</p>		More flat teaching spaces required			
To provide more formalised training sessions for staff, especially new staff, on IT systems and ensure that they are supported with any issues.	4.2E	Feedback to SMT of insufficient training period rolling out new software, more training, more robust training and that in future RCSI needs to design systems fit for all programmes	Head of School	HEA grant will fund changes to Kaizen to support BScATT; future changes should be supported by IT	Ongoing	<p>Successful running of assessments 2023</p> <p>Staff feedback on Kaizen</p> <p>Positive student feedback</p> <p>Staff feedback re: training success</p>	Ongoing
To review the workload model to ensure that student facing engagement outside of lecturing is captured sufficiently and that the model aligns with Teaching,	4.2F	Appoint a PBS committee to further investigate the amount of effort outside of direct contact teaching with view to	Deputy Head of School, Education /Head of Academic Operations	Aligned to resources available	Q2/Q3 2023 (biannually)	<p>Workload model</p> <p>Successful Implementation of student feedback strategy</p>	Ongoing

PBS



Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
Learning and Assessment (TLA) Strategy.		reweighting types of activities Develop a feedback strategy collaboratively with students		Institutional funding to roll out Kaizen for MPharm			
The prioritisation of space for students, especially postgraduate research students, to allow them to access appropriate personal space for their needs, especially during the write-up phase of their studies. This should be dedicated space separate to any provision for undergraduates.	4.2G	New Hot-desking policy implemented	Head of Laboratory Operations/Deputy Head of School, Research	Screens required due to Health & Safety requirements (Institutional)	Ongoing	Reviewed monthly	Ongoing
The improved communication across the whole School to ensure that all staff are aware of the developments within the School. This is particularly important with respect to the upcoming joint venture with Soochow University	4.2H	6-weekly Staff Meetings – sharing slides via sharepoint site in advance with staff and use session for more of a discussion on pertinent points –	Operations support to Head of School	None	Q1 2023	Staff Feedback Better engagement and attendance at staff	Ongoing



Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
in China and the impact this will have on all aspects of the School's activities.		reducing length of meeting Creation of central sharepoint information resource and email links to all staff	Quality and Operations Manager				
The PRG note the considerable expertise of RCSI in overseas delivery of education programmes and commend the early HR planning in relation to the staff requirements for the international programme delivery with Soochow University, but recommend that this is maintained as a priority due to the commitment required from staff, including administration and technical staff as the project progresses. The PRG further recommend that they identify and	4.21	JEI rollout delayed to Sep 2024 Equivalent programmes/quality will be delivered in line with A&QC QEO requirements Actively review the WLM when JEI teaching required to not overburden teaching staff	Deputy Dean, SUDA-RCSI Int. College of Pharmaceutical Innovation	Resources already allocated	Ongoing	Successful delivery of programme Timely recruitment of staff	Ongoing

PBS



Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
recruit the 17 extra staff to be associated with the Soochow University joint initiative as soon as possible, (including the Deputy Dean, 11 academic staff, and 5 professional staff all to be based in Ireland), and a further 2 based in China							
The School reviews the communication of career development and promotional opportunities across all staff, including technical and administration roles.	4.2J	Proforma developed and circulated for enhancing career development (i.e. attending programmes/courses) Standing item agenda for Athena Swan to promote development opportunities, highlighted at staff meetings	PBS Leadership Team Athena SWAN Champions	Financial support within both institutional and School budget to attend career enhancing programmes/ conference – within usual annual budget- no additional funding required	Ongoing	KPIs PDPs	Ongoing

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
The School work closely with the University to ensure appropriate service and maintenance and service contracts for laboratory equipment to support the continuity of teaching and research.	4.2K	Continued interaction between PBS and ORI to use overheads and grants to fund ongoing repair and maintenance	Head of Laboratory Operations	Financial support from ORI and PBS	Ongoing	Successful running of Research and Education labs Grant success	Ongoing
Ensuring the mechanisms currently in place are expanded and refined as needed to the new programmes, with a specific focus on future students from Soochow University.	5.2A	Ref 4.2I above and address capacity considerations in relation to the MScTAPM	Deputy Dean, SUDA-RCSI Int. College of Pharmaceutical Innovation	Ref 4.1I	Ref 4.1I	Ref 4.1I	Ref 4.1I
Exploring opportunities to co-teach pharmacy and medical students for optimisation of resources while maintaining the PBS focus.	5.2B	Co-teaching with FY Med in place Investigate potential for jointly taught Optional Modules dependent on length and ECTS	Deputy Head of School, Education	Shared across Schools	Ongoing	Student Feedback Workload model	Ongoing

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
Reviewing the curriculum to explore joint teaching of PBS students alongside Medical students. It is important that the School ensures that the focus of the curriculum delivery to PBS students is maintained.	6.2A	Ref 5.2B	Deputy Head of School, Education	Resources already allocated	Ongoing	Student Feedback	Ongoing
Regularly reviewing the delivery of material in the curricula by staff external to PBS as appropriate.	6.2B	Orientation of Guest Lecturers re: expectations	Deputy Head of School, Education Relevant Programme Directors	None	Annually	Student Feedback Module Lead Feedback	Ongoing
Strengthening the website and utilise all communication channels to highlight research themes within PBS to help raise international visibility.	7.2A	Restructured website to address issues Development of z-cards	Deputy Head of School, Research	IT support	Annually	Website analytics	Ongoing
PBS maintain and support their focus on key research strengths and themes.	7.2B	Encouraging staff to align to School and institutional themes	Deputy Head of School, Research	None	Ongoing	School benchmarking nationally and internationally	Ongoing



Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
		Advocating redevelopment of institutional themes which map better for PBS					
The further development of research activity needs to be carefully balanced against space provision.	7.2C	Ref 4.2D					
Reviewing current practice to enhance closing the feedback loop, ensuring that students are informed of curricular changes in a timely manner.	8.2A	Ref 4.2F Develop a feedback strategy collaboratively with students					
Ensuring the quality assurance mechanisms currently in place are expanded and refined as needed for new programmes and the joint initiative with Soochow University, to ensure equity of student experience.	8.2B	New programmes and JEI will maintain quality as per Institutional standards Educational Lead will sit on Education panel for Soochow	Deputy Dean, SUDA-RCSI Int. College of Pharmaceutical Innovation	None	2024-2028	Annual QIPs Full programmatic review of JEI in 2028 after first cohort graduate	Ongoing

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
						External Examiner Reports	
Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure clarity the roles of the Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs (SARA) and the PBS operations teams to avoid duplication of work related to student-facing activities.	9.2A	SARA undergoing institutional review of operational processes Remains a strategic aim of PBS to relocate all operational processes within School	SMT	n/a	Q2/Q3 2023	Improved and more efficient operational processes including less errors and interventions by PBS operations team	Ongoing
PBS be engaged earlier in processes related to development of IT systems for curricular activities.	9.2B	Ref 4.2E					
PBS ensure that the Estates Department are aware of the requirements of research staff and students in relation to defined space availability.	9.2C	Ref 4.2D					
PBS explore how to enhance alumni engagement and consider	9.2D	Regular Alumni engagement re:	Teacher Practitioner (RCSI Alumni)	None	Ongoing	To be agreed with Alumni Office	Ongoing

PBS



RCSI

Quality Improvement Plan December 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
identifying a dedicated person within the School for Alumni liaison.		engaging with PBS Alumni Identify a resource within the School to act as an Alumni liaison from within PBS					