



**RCSI**

**University of  
Medicine and  
Health  
Sciences**

# **Peer Review Group Report**

**School of Physiotherapy  
April 2021**



**RCSI**

## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Name of Unit	Quality Enhancement Office					
Project Title	Internal Quality Review					
Document Title	PRG Report Template					
This Document Comprises	DCS	TOC	Text	List of Tables	List of Figures	No. of Appendices
	1					

Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date
2	Draftv1	AW		AW	QEO	15 May 2015
2	Final	AW		AW	QEO	19 May 2015
3	Final	AW		AW	QEO	7 April 2021

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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 Physiotherapy at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) University of Medicine and Health Sciences, which was undertaken in April 2021.

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 that includes external experts both national and international.
4. Preparation of a peer review group report that is made public.
5. Development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for implementation of the review report's recommendations (that is made public).
6. Follow-up to appraise progress against the QIP.

### **1.2.3 Membership of the Peer Review Group (PRG)**

- Ms Aisling Reast (Chair), Registrar, Hibernia College.
- Dr Fidelma Moran, Lecturer in Physiotherapy/MSc Course Director, School of Health Sciences, Ulster University, UK.
- Ms Donna Wynne, Academic Team Lead for Physiotherapy, Robert Gordon University, UK.
- Mr Dale Whelehan, PhD Candidate/QA Expert, Trinity College, Dublin.
- Dr Matthew Lynch, Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, School of Pharmacy & Biomolecular Sciences, RCSI.
- Mr Mark Collins, Technical Writer, Independent.

### **1.2.4 Terms of Reference for the PRG**

The terms of reference of the PRG are to:

- Evaluate critically the SAR and the supporting documentation.
- Verify how well the aims and objectives of the Unit are being fulfilled, having regard to the available resources, and comment on the appropriateness of the Unit's mission, objectives and strategic plan.

- Comment on how well the Unit fits with the strategic plans for the 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 visited RCSI from 19-23 April 2021 and held meetings with a wide range of internal and external stakeholder groups, including trainee representatives (see Appendix 1 for details of the site visit schedule).

## **2 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE UNIT**

The School of Physiotherapy was established in 1998 to deliver pre-registration physiotherapy education.

Mature students, those with a level 6 and school leavers complete a 4-year programme, in order to be awarded a BSc Physiotherapy. Graduate entry students, and those with a level 7, undertake a 3-year programme. The Foundation Year of the 4-year programme is delivered jointly to medical and physiotherapy students, primarily by staff from the School of Medicine. A part-time Postgraduate Diploma/MSc. in Neurology and Gerontology programme has been delivered since 2008. The School also has a track record in supervising Master's by Research and PhD students.

The School contributes to teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate courses across RCSI and provides physical activity materials to the Lifestyle Medicine (optional module) for Year 1 Medicine, Physiotherapy and Pharmacy students. The School makes a significant contribution to RCSI service with the leadership of, and representation on, key RCSI committees.

RCSI was established in 1784 and is Ireland's newest university. As an innovative, international health sciences education and research institution it offers education and training at undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional level. 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.

### **3 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The organisation and management of the School have undergone significant change following the appointment of Professor Suzanne McDonough as the Head of School in 2019. The additional appointment of Professor Frances Horgan to the new role of Deputy Head of School, facilitated the establishment of a new School Executive Committee. Year Lead roles have also been established with post holders responsible for the operation, communication, quality assurance, management of student issues, assessment, and curriculum innovation within a year. Staff throughout the School appeared to welcome this new structure and reported that it is effective.

The report of the School review in 2012 recommended that the School “encourage staff ... to chair College and external committees and working groups for greater impact and visibility.” School staff are now represented on a large number of standing committees, working groups and other university committees. This is a resource-intensive exercise for a smaller school. However, staff reported that this engagement is highly beneficial and that, in addition to raising the profile of the School, it is a source of great learning for School staff. Furthermore, this engagement contributes significantly to institutional governance.

The School has developed a comprehensive and highly ambitious draft 5-Year Strategic Plan which includes clear goals and aims. Engagement with School and institutional leadership indicated that refinement of the strategy is underway and that institutional engagement to distil the key priorities was progressing. A clear process, to resource strategic objectives, was described. It is important that the final strategic plan reflects the principal priorities for the School, supported by the University, and that a programme of communication and engagement be undertaken to ensure School and institutional dissemination. The consultative approach to organisational and strategic changes has been welcomed by stakeholders. It will be essential that this approach is continued as the changes required to implement the strategic goals are implemented.

#### **3.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The development of a school structure that has defined roles and appears to be effective and universally welcomed.
- The School’s extensive engagement in university committees ensure that the school is well-versed and represented in institutional activity.
- The preparation of an ambitious draft 5-Year Strategic Plan which includes clear goals and aims.

#### **3.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- The finalisation of the 5-Year Strategic Plan follows a further process to refine and agree the key strategic priorities, aiming to achieve the optimum impact within the resources available to the School.
- A consultative approach continues to be implemented, within the School, to support the changes required to implement the strategic goals.



## 4 STAFF AND FACILITIES

The School of Physiotherapy is staffed by a relatively compact team, which has at its core eight academic personnel including the Head of School (5 FTE, 2 x 0.5 FTE and 1 x 0.6 FTE), one administrator and 2 x 0.5 FTE Practice Education Coordinators (PECs) supporting practice placements. There is a range of other clinical and research positions within the School. Over the course of the review, notwithstanding the relatively small numbers of staff involved, the PRG were favourably struck by the extent of the team's outputs and their high levels of productivity within the three pillars of education, research and service. In response to the changed circumstances heralded by COVID-19, it was apparent that the team worked cohesively and effectively together. They identified innovative approaches to ensuring that the School maintained the high standard of education required by its students in order to ensure their professional formation and attainment. Furthermore, the PRG was satisfied that this increased activity and requirement for innovative educational initiatives was achieved in tandem with the team maintaining its considerable research and service outputs.

However, it was apparent to the PRG that workload is a concern for all staff as they seek to balance and prioritise demands across education, research and service. In the absence of a comparative benchmarking exercise with a similarly sized School of Physiotherapy, it is unclear whether the current staffing levels are sufficient for the range of activities being pursued by the staff. The absence of a model of workload allocation within the School further compounds this as it is difficult for the Head of School to accurately quantify the extent and balance of the workload being undertaken by individual staff members across the areas of education, research and service, assess its appropriateness and to plan accordingly. This workload balance is relevant as it impacts on the promotion prospects of the academic staff who must demonstrate high levels of attainment and achievement across education, research and service in order to be eligible for promotion. Furthermore, it appears that for those academic staff who are not full time and for PECs, the opportunities for career advancement and promotion appear limited.

The School's proposed curriculum review and strategic development will undoubtedly create opportunities for the School's further advancement and outputs. However, curriculum review and strategic development are labour intensive undertakings. Accordingly, as part of the associated planning processes for these projects, 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's current experienced and proficient administrator is due to retire in June of this year. Notwithstanding that the administrative requirements as part of any strategic development and revised curriculum remain to be determined, this provides an opportunity for the School to review its current administrative needs in advance of deciding the nature of the replacement administrative resource(s) to be recruited.

The PRG noted that the School's current staffing across all grades appears to be of limited diversity, particularly in terms of gender. While acknowledging the paramount importance of appointing staff based on merit, the PRG recognises the importance of promoting diversity in the educational setting in light of the critical function inter alia that staff play as role models for their students. Accordingly, the PRG would support the School adopting a proactive approach to identifying and implementing ways to promote greater diversity across its collective staff.

Due to the remote nature of the review, the PRG was unable to view in situ the School's facilities. However, it did have access to a detailed overview of the current offering in the SAR and to video recordings of the practical facilities. The PRG noted that the practical facilities have undergone some recent upgrading and refurbishment including the provision of enhanced AV equipment and dedicated space for researchers. The University's Estates team has also undertaken air input/extraction works to alleviate concerns related to ventilation and temperature control in practical room(s). The School also has access to the University's advanced SIM facilities to support its students in their attainment of and proficiency in critical practical skills. The PRG noted that the available space in the practical rooms appears in places to be constrained and that the storage of equipment in the practical rooms, when not in use, contributed to this. The provision of alternative space to store this equipment when not in use, other than in the School's practical rooms and elsewhere within the University campus, would provide welcome additional space within the practical rooms. Changes to the School's curriculum and its further strategic

development are likely to alter its requirements vis-à-vis facilities, and therefore, it is important that these requirements be identified and planned for as appropriate as part of these reforms.

## **4.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- Outstanding outputs from a compact but highly productive and committed cohort of School staff across the three pillars of education, research and service.
- High levels of innovation and flexibility demonstrated by staff to ensure the continued delivery of the requisite high standard of education notwithstanding the changed circumstances due to COVID-19.
- Positive staff engagement facilitating successful implementation of a revised management and organisational structure within the School.
- Effective levels of cooperation and collaboration evident across all staff positions within the School.
- Recent improvements to practical facilities together with expanded access to the University's SIM facilities.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- That a workload allocation model is introduced to:
  - quantify the extent of the workload undertaken by each staff member and its equitable distribution across the areas of education, research and service as appropriate; and
  - inform an assessment of the adequacy of current staffing levels.
- An assessment of the associated future staffing, administrative and facilities requirements is completed as part of both the curriculum review and future strategic development processes and that a plan is developed to address them accordingly.
- That ways to promote and expand diversity among the School's staff are identified and a plan for their implementation is developed.
- The School proactively prepare and implement career progression pathways for staff, in particular academic staff on part-time contracts and PECs, to support their promotion and professional development.
- The School liaise with the University's Estates team to identify separate storage space for practical equipment when not in use.

## 5 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The PRG found evidence both within the SAR and from those interviewed during the virtual consultations that the teaching and learning delivered by the School of Physiotherapy across UG and PG programmes is of an excellent standard. The staff are an experienced, enthusiastic and established team who reflect and listen to the student voice, making changes to the learning environment, when necessary, through informal and formal processes.

Physiotherapy staff, supported by central University services, have been creative in ensuring delivery of teaching, learning and assessment across all year groups, using a blended model of learning in the challenge of delivering education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Examples of good practice in undergraduate curriculum include:

- A personalised, student-centred approach to creation of independent learners.
- Teaching informed by research and scholarship.
- Enhancement of the SIM learning environment: lower-fidelity simulation in the classroom progressing to the use of the high fidelity, high technology centre to safely explore complex skill acquisition and clinical reasoning, in a realistic environment, using case study methodology. Excellent University support and co-production with students will inform the pedagogic for utilising this learning environment.
- The introduction of reflective practice to support the student to develop knowledge, enhance clinical reasoning and ultimately improve patient care. As this is a requirement of continuous professional development by the regulatory body, embedding this form of learning throughout the curriculum will prepare the student for the workplace.

Placement learning opportunities are expanding therefore ongoing communication and collaboration between academic and clinical staff is vital. There is an opportunity to be creative and further develop student learning in non-traditional settings e.g. research, leadership, private practice, digital telehealth and the voluntary sector. Support for career development and recognition of skills of clinical and academic staff involved in practice education will foster engagement.

There is an opportunity to expand the feedback and feedforward process to support learning. Developing more detailed feedback in a constructive and timely manner with an aim to: positively impact on student engagement in learning for future academic work; promote understanding; foster independent and confident learners; and enable staff to more fully differentiate student work for classification banding. This will further support student learning.

The pass mark at undergraduate level is 50%. Students interviewed do not see this as a barrier to success and strive to achieve this. The award classification banding differs from other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ireland and the UK, with a narrow bandwidth for Second Class Honours. As this is accepted by employers and academic institutions as a measure of academic achievement, used to differentiate between degree holders, this may disadvantage the graduates who wish to pursue career advancement.

At postgraduate level examples of good practice include:

- The expertise and enthusiasm of staff to deliver higher-level education.
- The flexible and responsive approach to student needs which is informing and developing clinical practice.
- Developing module recruitment to include allied health professions, in addition to physiotherapy, is supporting a collegiate and stimulating learning environment promoting peer and interprofessional learning.
- The development of a Postgraduate Programme Planning Group is a positive step forward to strategically review higher level provision.

There is an opportunity to enhance the induction programme for those returning to education at PG Master's level. Returning to study part-time, while in a full-time clinical role, is challenging. Further signposting and support, from central University structures and the School of Physiotherapy, will enhance the student learning experience and develop an awareness of the requirements of Master's level learning e.g. digital learning resources, overview of research project and awareness of the ethics process, earlier within the programme. It would be beneficial to encourage part-time students to explore informal opportunities e.g. create their own learning spaces and support groups, to create a sense of belonging and build a community of learners.

An opportunity to further develop blended learning, creating new modules to offer allied health professionals choice within the current programmes exists. This will support advanced practice and global recruitment. Programme titles may require review if there is the internationalisation of the curriculum.

## **5.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The teaching and learning provision is of an excellent standard. A unique selling point is the personalised approach supporting graduates who are ready for and contribute positively to, the workforce (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- The exceptional simulated learning facilities and infrastructure (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- The development of academic knowledge which transforms clinical and research practice, supporting advanced practice (PGDip/ MSc Neurology & Gerontology).
- The demonstration of students' fitness for practice by their civic contribution in support of the COVID-19 pandemic vaccination programme. Extending students' scope of practice through academic achievement is supporting healthcare (MSK Injection Therapy Module).

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- The School explore how SIM learning is currently embedded within the teaching strategies of the programme, identifying whether this form of learning is to support communication/cognitive skill development or to replace clinical placement hours' provision, in line with regulatory requirements (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- The School explore placement provision in the development of student learning in non-traditional settings (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- The School review assessment strategy, in light of the significant small credit point modules, to facilitate detailed and timely feedback on student assignments, enable greater differentiation, as well as reduce staff and student workload (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- Further consideration be given to award of classification banding to ensure students are treated equitably in relation to graduates from other HEIs (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).

- The induction programme is further enhanced for those returning to academic studies, to build a vibrant community of part-time learners (Postgraduate Programmes).
- The School explore opportunities to engage other healthcare professions within programmes through developing suites of modules to broaden the curriculum, offer choice and support internationalisation (Postgraduate Programmes).

## **6 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

The School of Physiotherapy has established curricula across its undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The undergraduate BSc Physiotherapy is a 4-year programme, however graduate-entry students, and those with a level 7, undertake a 3-year programme. One third of the undergraduate curriculum is in a practice placement environment. Postgraduate provision is established with the delivery of the MSc course in Neurology & Gerontology and postgraduate module in musculoskeletal Injection Therapy.

The School is currently undergoing a curricular review of its undergraduate course and has completed stage one of this review, in consultation with an external academic expert, which is welcomed by the PRG. The panel recognise the significant amount of work that has been undertaken by the School thus far. There has been some student involvement in the first stage; and the next stages of the curricular review would be well informed by a shared approach of ongoing consultation and co-production involving students, as well as wider stakeholders in practice and the profession. The School may consider this shared approach for the subsequent stages of the review to be ultimately led by a named individual to assure decision making and progress.

Discussions with stakeholders reflected a broadly relevant undergraduate curriculum and the enhancements suggested, reflect some of the evidence-based nature of current and contemporary practice. Skills for practice outside the traditional public health service environment were suggested as enhancements to allow graduates to be ready for practice in a number of other sectors, such as private and voluntary sectors. From discussion, it was also evident that students would welcome opportunities for involvement in the ERASMUS scheme as a further enhancement to their course experience.

Simulation, which has also been discussed in Section 4.0, has been a significant development for the School in the undergraduate curriculum, supported by the wider University infrastructure. Discussions identified a number of possible aims for simulation development within the curriculum, such as for the development of core clinical skills as well as replacement practice placement hours. Simulation development is most welcome as an approach for contemporary curriculum development. The panel suggests the School further identify and consider the purpose(s) of the simulation delivery, where it is placed in the curriculum, and ensure that is matched to the available resources in terms of availability of space and personnel.

Practice placements were explored across a number of the panel meetings and are a significant part of curricular delivery for the School. Acquiring sufficient practice placement opportunities are a challenge for the School but also across the sector. Whilst some alternative models of supervision are utilised in some sites, there is the opportunity for sharing of practice to expand such models to different sites and therefore increase capacity across the sector. Differing needs of graduates are reflected across the curricular review plan and it is suggested this is further supported by exploring the expansion of practice placement provision beyond the public health sector.

Specific curricular aspects for postgraduate provision were not explored in depth in panel meetings, however, recommendations for this, from a teaching, learning and assessment perspective, have been made in Section 4.0.

### **6.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The engagement of external academic expertise to support the curriculum review process.
- The exceptional School engagement with curricular review and simulation development.

- The ongoing and planned inclusion of students in the co-production of the curricular review.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- That as part of the curriculum review the School:
  - Include broader stakeholders in the shared approach to the next stage curricular design, under the leadership of a named individual.
  - Ensure revised curriculum content is focused on evidence-based contemporary practice.
  - Carefully consider the purposes of simulation, and match to delivery and available resources.
  - Continue to develop alternative models of supervision for practice placement and consider expansion to other sectors to reflect practice needs of graduates.

## **7 RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

The School Strategic Plan is supporting research growth and development with a focus on translational research to inform clinical practice and improve patient-centred care. Research activity within the school is aligned with the Population Health and Health Sciences research theme.

The positive research culture, within the School along with the University infrastructure, is supporting a highly skilled enthusiastic staff who are research active, producing high impact publications, supported by external collaborative grant funding. More recent developments include gaining external representation on national and international bodies thereby expanding international collaboration and networks. The contribution of international colleagues, through the RCSI Visiting Academic Scheme, is a welcome addition to the school.

Postgraduate research activity is a growing area for the School and there is clear ambition to grow this aspect. All of the research postgraduate students interviewed noted staff support and training as areas of good practice from the School.

Both academic and research staff have research portfolios, as well as some academic staff having grant funding, and there is evidence that these combined portfolios are achieved by staff. In order to ensure the core teaching commitments of academic staff are fulfilled, and also allow for the development of further research capacity, the PRG suggests exploring the possibility of further formally involving research staff in the planned delivery of curricular activity. This may allow for mutual fulfilment of individual and team teaching and research objectives as well as structured opportunities for the development of individual academic and research staff. Building research capacity and ensuring research activity informs teaching is an area for consideration and may be developed by an approach where measures are introduced to support individual staff objectives. Consideration of specific career development training and opportunities as well as the Research Summer School and StAR Programme may encourage PhD applications.

### **7.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The School research ambition and desire to progress in this area which is supported by an exceptional infrastructure.
- The School's development of its research profile and increased visibility within the University, developing collaborations and links to positively influence research ethos.

### **7.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- The School consider a more structured approach to involving research staff in specific teaching as part of workload and curriculum planning.
- The introduction of tangible and tailored measures, to further enable academic staff to pursue their research interests, having regard to their career stage.



## **8 MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

The quality processes which are encompassed in the School of Physiotherapy are comprehensive, rigorous and consistently applied. For these reasons, the provision of programmes, which the School offers, are of a high quality and student-centred. Students have the opportunity, 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 new curricular activities as partners in the quality enhancement process. This has been most noticeable during the COVID-19 pandemic when students worked with staff in adapting to the changing clinical environment while also encompassing consideration of the regulatory requirements for clinical hours as a matriculation prerequisite for entry-to-practice. In the spirit of further enhancement, consideration of strategic engagement in the student engagement programme provided by the RCSI should be embedded within the School's quality efforts, to both reduce staff and student burden on quality process review, and facilitate collaboration on innovative partnered solutions to longer-standing issues within the School. In particular, the quality processes to enhance clinical education may be one such area, and consideration should be given to engaging students in identifying common themes which emerge on clinical placement and how they might best be resolved. During the course of discussions, it was evident from many stakeholders that the clinical environment brings context-specific considerations for the provision of education, and that oftentimes, when issues arise on clinical placement, they can remain unnoticed, unreported, and thus not resolved. In the spirit of quality enhancement, and with consideration of the significance of this aspect of the programme for students, further efforts to enhance clinical education using the aforementioned opportunities should be considered.

The staff are to be commended additionally for their engagement with stakeholders beyond the student cohort, including engagement with alumni and with clinical staff. The fostering of these relationships was particularly felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which clinical staff welcomed the training which the School offer, through the provision of educational opportunities and greater virtual collaboration. The openness and receptiveness of the School to external stakeholders has led to a positive review by these stakeholders, with regards to opportunities to feedback into the quality enhancement opportunities in the programmes provided.

### **8.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The significant innovation in enhancing quality of education during COVID-19 including engagement with clinical educators through the provision of seminar series and other upskilling provision.
- The School's relationships with very satisfied internal and external stakeholders who feel there is always an opportunity to communicate with staff in an honest and constructive manner.

### **8.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- The School proactively engage students further, through ongoing innovative StEP projects, to enable enhancement of quality processes of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Further developing the communication processes available to students with which to address issues on clinical placement.

- Enhancing awareness of the communication processes and supports available to students when on clinical placement.
- Embedding the multi-stakeholder formal and informal feedback opportunities, which were trialled during COVID-19, for enhancement of clinical education.

## **9 SUPPORT SERVICES**

The provision of support services within RCSI and the School is exceptional. This was felt consistently by the PRG throughout the discussions with internal and external stakeholders. There appears to be a very student-centred approach to support students in their learning journeys. The available formal supports within RCSI, including counselling services, COMPASS, SARA and student services, as examples, should be commended for their significant considerations of the student voice in quality processes. Students have easy access to a wide array of services to facilitate personal and professional development, as well as formal and informal mechanisms to feedback on the services provided in the spirit of enhancement. The support aspect of the institution is one of its core strengths, and it is unsurprising therefore that RCSI was ranked joint 2nd for Universities of Wellbeing in the recent THE rankings.

Beyond the formal mechanisms which RCSI provides, the School is evidently student-centred, supporting students throughout their academic journey. This is facilitated formally through the provision of a tutor system, and a culture of positive wellbeing was noticeable throughout discussions with staff and students alike. It is difficult to create this, and particularly to maintain it when faced with a myriad of environmental stressors or competing efforts, and thus the School must be commended for their focused effort on maintaining the integrity of student-centred teaching and learning. In line with the previous recommendation in section 8, the PRG recommends the embedding of student-centred support services, which were trialled during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as online counselling, as well as future opportunities. This will provide a sustainable means to create greater access to support services in what remains an ever-changing environment.

### **9.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The open and honest relationship between staff and students which facilitates a culture of well-being within the School, as supported by the University.
- The comprehensive quality and student representation opportunities, available to students, to feedback on a variety of student supports, closing the feedback loop in these processes.

### **9.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- The School embed the ongoing innovative student-centred approaches to support students on clinical placement that were trialled during COVID-19.

## **10 EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

The PRG acknowledges the extensive relationships that the School has forged and developed, both within the wider University and beyond. Within the wider University, the School and its staff, by means of various educational and service-related activities, have positively cultivated a range of relationships and contributed to various important initiatives across the University. This proactivity is replicated beyond the University, with the School fostering important and ongoing relationships with international universities and academics, professional bodies such as the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists and other health-related entities such as the Irish Heart Foundation and the Health Services Executive. As the School finalises its strategic direction for future development and undertakes an extensive review of its curriculum, its relationships with these external bodies, in particular with other universities, provides it with an invaluable opportunity to learn from and be informed by their experiences in this regard.

The PRG acknowledges the pivotal role that the various clinical settings play, through the provision of practice placements, in the education and professional formation of the School's students. In many instances, these sites are also research collaborators with the School's staff and facilitate the conduct of important clinically based studies as part of that research. The School provides tangible supports to these clinical settings, in particular through its PECs and clinical tutors. The PRG notes the School's desire to expand the number and variety of clinical placements that it can provide to its students year-on-year. It considers that the School, by proactively exploring ways to support practitioners in clinical sites, including the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, could attract more practitioners to provide clinical placements. Similarly, research collaboration can be mutually beneficial to both the School and clinical sites; therefore, the active pursuit of the School engaging with these sites, in relation to continued and fresh collaborations, is encouraged and advised.

The PRG welcomes the proactive approach of the School to engaging with its alumni, including the hosting of reunions for its graduates. The maintenance of close connections with its graduate base provides the School with opportunities to develop such contact into more tangible relationships with the School. Such relationships could result in alumni providing additional clinical placements, particularly in areas where there appears to be a shortage, such as in primary care and private practice where a number of the School's alumni practise.

### **10.1 Commendations**

The PRG commends:

- The School's proactive engagement with clinical sites, in terms of both education (placements) and research activities.
- The effective networking with a range of national and international organisations, including other universities and professional bodies.
- The development of tangible outreach and linkages with School alumni.

### **10.2 Recommendations**

The PRG recommends:

- The School continue to develop further research collaborations with colleagues in clinical sites for the mutual benefit of both parties.

- The School proactively explore opportunities with RCSI alumni, including through the provision of CPD opportunities, to expand the available network of clinical placements.
- That the facilitation of the curriculum review and future strategic development processes be informed by experiences from the School's international network of universities.

## **11 SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **11.1 The PRG commends:**

- 11.1.1 The development of a school structure that has defined roles and appears to be effective and universally welcomed.
- 11.1.2 The School's extensive engagement in university committees to ensure that the school is well-versed and represented in institutional activity.
- 11.1.3 The preparation of an ambitious draft 5-Year Strategic Plan which includes clear goals and aims.
- 11.1.4 Outstanding outputs from a compact but highly productive and committed cohort of School staff across the three pillars of education, research and service.
- 11.1.5 High levels of innovation and flexibility demonstrated by staff to ensure the continued delivery of the requisite high standard of education notwithstanding the changed circumstances due to COVID-19.
- 11.1.6 Positive staff engagement facilitating successful implementation of a revised management and organisational structure within the School.
- 11.1.7 Effective levels of cooperation and collaboration evident across all staff positions within the School.
- 11.1.8 Recent improvements to practical facilities together with expanded access to the University's SIM facilities.
- 11.1.9 The teaching and learning provision is of an excellent standard. A unique selling point is the personalised approach supporting graduates who are ready for and contribute positively to, the workforce (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- 11.1.10 The exceptional simulated learning facilities and infrastructure (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- 11.1.11 The development of academic knowledge which transforms clinical and research practice, supporting advanced practice (Dip/ MSc Neurology/ Gerontology).
- 11.1.12 The demonstration of students' fitness for practice by their civic contribution in support of the COVID-19 pandemic vaccination programme. Extending students scope of practice through academic achievement is supporting healthcare. (MSK Injection Therapy Module)
- 11.1.13 The engagement of external academic expertise to support the curriculum review process.
- 11.1.14 The exceptional School engagement with curricular review and simulation development.
- 11.1.15 The ongoing and planned inclusion of students in the co-production of the curricular review.
- 11.1.16 The School research ambition and desire to progress in this area which is supported by an exceptional infrastructure.

- 11.1.17 The School's development of its research profile and increased visibility within the University, developing collaborations and links to positively influence research ethos.
- 11.1.18 The significant innovation in enhancing quality of education during COVID-19 including engagement with clinical educators through the provision of seminar series and other upskilling provision.
- 11.1.19 The School's relationships with very satisfied internal and external stakeholders who feel there is always an opportunity to communicate with staff in an honest and constructive manner.
- 11.1.20 The open and honest relationship between staff and students which facilitates a culture of well-being within the School, as supported by the University.
- 11.1.21 The comprehensive quality and student representation opportunities, provided to students, to feedback on a variety of student supports, closing the feedback loop in these processes.
- 11.1.22 The School's proactive engagement with clinical sites, in terms of both education (placements) and research activities.
- 11.1.23 The effective networking with a range of national and international organisations, including other universities and professional bodies.
- 11.1.24 The development of tangible outreach and linkages with School alumni.

## **11.2 The PRG recommends:**

- 11.2.1 The finalisation of the 5-Year Strategic Plan follows a further process to refine and agree the key strategic priorities, aiming to achieve the optimum impact within the resources available to the School.
- 11.2.2 A consultative approach continues to be implemented, within the School, to support the changes required to implement the strategic goals.
- 11.2.3 That a workload allocation model is introduced to:
- quantify the extent of the workload undertaken by each staff member and its equitable distribution across the areas of education, research and service as appropriate; and
  - inform an assessment of the adequacy of current staffing levels.
- 11.2.4 An assessment of the associated future staffing, administrative and facilities requirements is completed as part of both the curriculum review and future strategic development processes and that a plan is developed to address them accordingly.
- 11.2.5 That ways to promote and expand diversity among the School's staff are identified and a plan for their implementation is developed.
- 11.2.6 The School proactively prepare and implement career progression pathways for staff, in particular academic staff on part-time contracts and PECs, to support their promotion and professional development.
- 11.2.7 The School liaise with the University's Estates team to identify separate storage space for practical equipment when not in use.
- 11.2.8 The School explore how SIM learning is currently embedded within the teaching strategies of the programme, identifying whether this form of learning is to support communication/cognitive skill development or to replace clinical placement hours' provision, in line with regulatory requirements (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- 11.2.9 The School explore placement provision in the development of student learning in non-traditional settings (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- 11.2.10 The School review assessment strategy, in light of the significant small credit point modules, to facilitate detailed and timely feedback on student assignments, enable greater differentiation, as well as reduce staff and student workload (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- 11.2.11 Further consideration be given to award of classification banding to ensure students are treated equitably in relation to graduates from other HEIs (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).
- 11.2.12 The induction programme is further enhanced for those returning to academic studies, to build a vibrant community of part-time learners. (Postgraduate Programmes)
- 11.2.13 The School explore opportunities to engage other healthcare professions within programmes through developing suites of modules to broaden the curriculum, offer choice and support internationalisation (Postgraduate Programmes).



11.2.14 That as part of the curriculum review the School:

- Include broader stakeholders in the shared approach to the next stage curricular design, under the leadership of a named individual.
- Ensure revised curriculum content is focused on evidence-based contemporary practice.
- Carefully consider the purposes of simulation, and match to delivery and available resources.
- Continue to develop alternative models of supervision for practice placement and consider expansion to other sectors to reflect practice needs of graduates.

11.2.15 The School consider a more structured approach to involving research staff in specific teaching as part of workload and curriculum planning.

11.2.16 The introduction of tangible and tailored measures, to further enable academic staff to pursue their research interests, having regard to their career stage.

11.2.17 The School proactively engage students further, through ongoing innovative StEP projects, to enable enhancement of quality processes of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

11.2.18 Further developing the communication processes available to students with which to address issues on clinical placement.

11.2.19 Enhancing awareness of the communication processes and supports available to students when on clinical placement.

11.2.20 Embedding the multi-stakeholder formal and informal feedback opportunities, which were trialled during COVID-19, for enhancement of clinical education.

11.2.21 The School embed the ongoing innovative student-centred approaches to support students on clinical placement that were trialled during COVID-19.

11.2.22 The School continue to develop further research collaborations with colleagues in clinical sites for the mutual benefit of both parties.

11.2.23 The School proactively explore opportunities with RCSI alumni, including through the provision of CPD opportunities, to expand the available network of clinical placements.

11.2.24 That the facilitation of the curriculum review and future strategic development processes be informed by experiences from the School's international network of universities.

## APPENDIX 1: SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

[Insert copy of site-visit schedule (individual names removed)]

### IN ADVANCE | Monday 12 April 2021

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
10.30 – 11.15	45 mins	1	<b>Welcome and Introduction for PRG; Housekeeping and guidance for virtual review</b>  Director of Quality & Quality Reviews Manager
11.15 – 11.30	15 mins	2	Break
11.30 – 13.00	90 mins	3	<b>Private Planning Meeting for PRG</b>  Allow 10 minute break during meeting

**WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 1 | Monday 19 April 2021**

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
<b>08.45 – 09.45</b>	45 mins	4	PRG: Review of preparatory work
<b>10.00 – 11.00</b>	60 mins	5	<b>Meeting with Head of School and Deputy Head of School</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Strategic planning and future development of the School with a focus on curriculum review, new programmes, research and management of resources. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10
<b>11.00 – 11.30</b>	30 mins	6	Break for PRG
<b>11.30 – 12.15</b>	45 mins	7	<b>Meeting with academic and administration staff of the School</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Working environment; career development and opportunities; collaboration and support; teaching learning & assessment; curriculum development and review; challenges and future potential. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
<b>12.30 – 13.15</b>	45 mins	8	<b>Meeting with research staff and PhD students</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Experiences of research staff and PhD students of the School; developing research profile; opportunities for collaboration; challenges and future potential. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 2, 3, 6
<b>13.15 – 14.00</b>	45 mins	9	Break for PRG
<b>14.00 – 14.25</b>	25 mins	10a	<b>Meeting with Clinical Tutors</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Quality Improvement and Capacity in Practice Education <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 4, 8, 9
<b>14.25 – 14.45</b>	20 mins	10b	<b>Meeting with Practice Education Coordinators</b>
<b>15.00 – 15.45</b>	45 mins	11	<b>Meeting with members of RCSI Senior Management Team</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> RCSI Strategy and the strategic development of the School. Plans for the future and management of resources. Topics that <b>may</b> be raised by the panel: UG curriculum review; potential for developing new programmes; development of research profile; workload modelling; management of resources. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 2, 3, 5, 6, 10
<b>15.45 – 16.15</b>	30 mins	12	<b>PRG Review of afternoon's meetings; draft commendations &amp; recommendations; planning for next day</b>

WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 2 | Tuesday 20 April 2021

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
09.00 – 09.45	45 mins	13	PRG: Review of preparatory work
10.00 – 10.45	45 mins	14	<b>Meeting with postgraduate students and alumni</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Experience as postgraduate students and alumni of the School; student supports; research opportunities; student engagement opportunities; career preparedness. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 6, 8, 9
10.45 – 11.15	30 mins	15	Break for PRG
11.15 – 12.00	45 mins	16	<b>Meeting with RCSI colleagues with a focus on research activity and development.</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> The development of research activity and research profile within the School; opportunities for research collaboration across RCSI and raising the School's research profile externally; research supports in RCSI. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 6
12.15 – 13.00	45 mins	17	<b>Meeting with undergraduate student class representatives</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Experience as undergraduate students of the School; teaching, learning and assessment; clinical placements; student supports; student engagement opportunities within the School and RCSI; student feedback; ongoing quality enhancement. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 4, 7, 8
13.00 – 13.45	45mins	18	Break for PRG
13.45 – 14.30	45 mins	19	<b>Meeting with RCSI colleagues with a focus on curriculum reviews &amp; development, IT, online learning and simulation.</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> Future growth and development of the School focusing on curriculum review; potential for new programmes; role of blended learning; role of simulation; micro-credentials; collaboration and available supports. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 5, 8
14.45 – 15.15	30 mins	20	<b>Meeting with Heads and/or Managers of Professional Support Service Units in RCSI.</b> <b>Meeting Theme:</b> 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; Finance. <b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 2, 3, 4, 5, 8
15.15 – 15.45	30 mins	20b	<b>Additional meeting with School Staff (requested by PRG)</b>
15.30 – 16.00	30 mins	21	<b>PRG Review of afternoon's meetings; draft commendations &amp; recommendations; planning for next day</b>

**WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 3 | Wednesday 21 April 2021**

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
<b>09.00 – 09.30</b>	30 mins	22	PRG: Review of preparatory work
<b>09.45 – 10.30</b>	45 mins	23	<p><b>Meeting with RCSI colleagues with a focus on student supports; student engagement; student feedback and ongoing quality enhancement.</b></p> <p><b>Meeting Theme:</b> 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><b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 8</p>
<b>10.30 – 11.00</b>	30 mins	24	Break for PRG
<b>11.00 – 11.45</b>	45 mins	25	<p><b>Meeting with colleagues external to RCSI with a focus on collaboration on clinical placements.</b></p> <p><b>Meeting theme:</b> Resourcing for enhanced quality placement and future growth.</p> <p><b>Suggested SAR Sections:</b> 4, 5, 9</p>
<b>12.00 – 12.30</b>	30 mins	25b	<b>Meeting with Head and Deputy Head of School</b>
<b>12.30 – 13.30</b>	60 mins	26	<b>PRG meeting to draft commendations and recommendations.</b>

**WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 4 | Friday 23 April 2021**

Date	Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
	09.00 – 10.30	90 mins	27	<b>PRG meeting to finalise commendations and recommendations.</b>
	10.30 – 11.00	30 mins		Break for PRG
	11.00 – 11.30	30 mins	28	<b>PRG meeting with QEO for clarification and discussion of main findings</b>
	11.30 – 12.00	30 mins	29	<b>Meeting with Head of Unit &amp; QEO to present main findings</b>
	12.00 – 12.30	30 mins	30	<b>PRG meeting to finalise closing presentation</b>
	12.45 – 13.15	30 mins	31	<b>Closing presentation to all Unit staff</b>
	13.15			<b>Review Ends</b>



Quality Improvement Plan May 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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**Summary of recommendations**

The finalisation of the 5-Year Strategic Plan follows a further process to refine and agree the key strategic priorities, aiming to achieve the optimum impact within the resources available to the School.	11.2.1	The School will refine and agree key strategic priorities in order to achieve optimum impact within the resources available to the School.	HOS	The SEC will identify additional staff to include in the School business plans	Annually	School are able to meet agreed objectives	
		This will be operationalised via work of the School executive committee (SEC) that meets on a monthly basis.	SEC		Ongoing		
		The SEC will prioritise short and long term objectives and each member will take responsibility to lead on specific objectives with SMART goals.	SEC		Ongoing		
A consultative approach continues to be implemented, within the School, to support the changes required to implement the strategic goals.	11.2.2	Wider consultation beyond SEC will be implemented via the monthly staff meeting.	HOS	Can be supported within current resources	Ongoing	This section will be evidenced by SEC and staff meeting agendas and minutes.	
		All staff will be invited to participate in working groups set up around key strategic priorities.	HOS, Year Leads		Ongoing		
		Students will be supported to engage with staff on key strategic priorities.	Year Leads		Ongoing	Annual achievement of StEP funding recorded in the School annual report	



Quality Improvement Plan May 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
That a workload allocation model is introduced to: · Quantify the extent of the workload undertaken by each staff member and its equitable distribution across the areas of education, research and service as appropriate; and · Inform an assessment of the adequacy of current staffing levels.	11.2.3	Modifications to the PBS workload model was conducted by SEC members. All staff to complete the workload model.  SEC to use this information to allocate workload across the School.  Workload information will be used to inform requests made for staff in future business plans.	SEC  SEC  SEC	Additional resources to be identified as part of this process, if required.	By April 22  June 22  Annually	EDI survey responses indicate that staff think that work is allocated according to the workload model, and is equitable.	
An assessment of the associated future staffing, administrative and facilities requirements is completed as part of both the curriculum review and future strategic development processes and that a plan is developed to address them accordingly.	11.2.4	The information gathered using the workload model will inform curriculum development.  Decisions as a result of curriculum development will inform refinement of the annual strategic objectives for the School.  The School administrator will undergo Lean Management training to support the set up of efficient operational procedures in the School.	HOS  SEC	Funding for and external consultant was agreed as part of School's business plan 21/22  None  TBC	Sept 22  2023  2023	Documented as part of resources implications in the curriculum review.  Reflected in 2022/23 School objectives  Development of a set of standard operating procedures for the School	



Quality Improvement Plan May 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
That ways to promote and expand diversity among the School's staff are identified and a plan for their implementation is developed.	11.2.5	This will be actioned specifically as part of Athena Swan application for a Bronze award.	DHOS	None	June 22	Documented in the School Athena Swan action plan	
The School proactively prepare and implement career progression pathways for staff, in particular academic staff on part-time contracts and PECs, to support their promotion and professional development	11.2.6	This will be identified as part of the Athena Swan action plan.	HOS	This will be identified in the action plan.	Ongoing	Documented in the School Athena Swan action plan	
The School liaise with the University's Estates team to identify separate storage space for practical equipment when not in use.	11.2.7	School Administrator liaised with estates, completed an inventory of equipment and reorganised storage	Administrator	Estates covered the costs of additional storage units.	Dec 2021		Complete





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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 explore how SIM learning is currently embedded within the teaching strategies of the programme, identifying whether this form of learning is to support communication/cognitive skill development or to replace clinical placement hours' provision, in line with regulatory requirements (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).	11.2.8	SIM learning is part of the School's strategic objectives 21-22.  A bid for a PhD student to support SIM has been included in the School business plan 22/23	Associate Professor  HOS	4 Year SIM PhD studentship included in School business plan 2022-23. This will be part funded by diverting funds from two Prof Doc studentships already secured and ear marked for the School.	Aug 2021  2022-2026	Documented in the School business plan and annual objectives; SEC minutes.	
The School explore placement provision in the development of student learning in non-traditional settings (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).	11.2.9	A working group will be set up in the School to consider and enact opportunities to broaden the scope of placement.  This will also be considered as part of curriculum review with Steve Ryall.  A recruitment campaign of Private Practices November – December 2021	HOS/PEC  HOS  PEC	Funding for additional tutor posts requested from HEA, as well as bid for internal funding via Business plan 2021/22.	Ongoing  Sept 2022  Dec 2021	Expansion of placement beyond traditional HSE sites	Complete



Quality Improvement Plan May 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 review assessment strategy, in light of the significant small credit point modules, to facilitate detailed and timely feedback on student assignments, enable greater differentiation, as well as reduce staff and student workload (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).	11.2.10	As part of the planned curriculum review (April-Sept 22) the School will aim to reduce the number of small credit modules in order to reduce staff and student workload.	HOS	Funding already secured for consultants time	2023	Updated programme document with fewer/no small credit modules.	
		The team will seek advice from the QEO office where there is expertise on assessment strategies, and the external examiner to ensure greater differentiation between student grades.	HOS		2023	Reduced number of module coordination per staff member in workload model	
		The annual quality review plan will include timely and detailed feedback on student assignments as part of the action plan.	Year Leads		Ongoing	Evidenced in the annual QIP. Positive feedback via student survey on timeliness and quality of student feedback	



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Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
Further consideration be given to award of classification banding to ensure students are treated equitably in relation to graduates from other HEIs (BSc Physiotherapy Programme).	11.2.11	To be discussed as part of wider implications of moving to GPA with SARA office.  To be considered as part of the curriculum review.	HOS  HOS	None	Sept 2022		
The induction programme is further enhanced for those returning to academic studies, to build a vibrant community of part-time learners. (Postgraduate Programmes)	11.2.12	The School has used previous feedback from students relating to their onboarding experience to develop an induction programme which will be delivered to the MScNG intake 2022.  Some stakeholder feedback from present cohort to be incorporated. Semester II survey will incorporate specific questions, DHOS to liaise with QEO	DHOS	None	Ongoing	Positive student feedback on the induction programme in the student survey	



Quality Improvement Plan May 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 will explore opportunities to engage other healthcare professions within programmes through developing suites of modules to broaden the curriculum, offer choice and support internationalisation (Postgraduate Programmes)	11.2.13	DHOS has met with colleagues re sharing modules from MSc in Advanced Practice, team are supportive of this approach.  Other options are to follow-up are with Leadership School Healthcare Mx.  School to consider microcredentialling of existing Masters programme and modules to open up admission to a wider group of HSCP, nursing and medical colleagues.	DHOS	Request for a term time teacher practitioner post in the School business plan 2022/23 to free up existing staff to broaden the postgraduate curriculum	Ongoing	Increase choice evidence on School webpages.  Increased number of students on PG programmes, and increase in applications from international students.	
That as part of the curriculum review the School: 1. Include broader stakeholders in the shared approach to the next stage curricular design, under the leadership of a named individual 2. Ensure revised curriculum content is focused on evidence-based contemporary practice. 3. Carefully consider the purposes of simulation, and match to delivery and available resources. 4. Continue to develop alternative models of supervision for practice placement and consider expansion to other	11.2.14	1. Students, and other key stakeholders will be included as partners in curriculum review, and the HOS will lead this review.  2&3 will be considered in the curriculum review  4. This will be actively addressed as part of our curriculum review, and work towards this is already underway: RCSI's School of Physiotherapy Practice Education lecture series is an online training program that was offered to all RCSI Educators. The curriculum included training that related to alternative models of student supervision.	1& 2 HOS  3. Associate Professor  4. PEC team	The School will fund a StEP project to support student engagement in our curriculum review over the summer (3K)	April-Sept 2022  4. Ongoing	1-4 will be evidence in the revised BSc programme document for the School.  There will be a documented increase in diversity of placements beyond the more traditional secondary care HSE sites	



Quality Improvement Plan May 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
sectors to reflect practice needs of graduates.		<p>The extending of Final Year placement blocks to 6weeks (or longer) will facilitate the integration of alternative models of supervision. In tangent with this will be a proposal for how capacity can be increased with Sim (item 11.2.8)</p> <p>The PEC team are currently actively working on the expansion to other sectors to reflect practice needs of graduates. Private Practices, Private hospitals, Primary care settings, care sector sites and sports teams have been contacted as part of this endeavor.</p>					
The School consider a more structured approach to involving research staff in specific teaching as part of workload and curriculum planning.	11.2.15	<p>Staff responsible for research staff in the School will consider nominating their research staff for 'RCSI Honorary Lecturer – Researcher Route' which provides a mechanism for formally recognising the contribution of research staff to teaching and administration in the School.</p> <p>The School will also formally apply for funding for a 4 year PhD student who will contribute 20% of their time to teaching onto the programme. Such roles exist in other parts of RCSI and are very successful</p>	SEC	<p>No funding implications</p> <p>Funding for a 4 year PhD studentships has been submitted as part of the 2022/23 School Business Plan.</p>	<p>Annually staff will nominate research staff</p> <p>PhD student to start in Oct 22</p>	<p>Up to two research staff to be nominated annually for an Honorary Lecturer Role</p> <p>RCSI funded PhD studentship who teaches for 20% of their time.</p>	



Quality Improvement Plan May 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 introduction of tangible and tailored measures, to further enable academic staff to pursue their research interests, having regard to their career stage.	11.2.16	To discuss with VP, Prof Baxter to put a plan in place to share with the wider School. Buddy staff together Invite research office to give a seminar at our research event. Research seminar series	HOS	It is not immediately clear what the resources implications of this may be, we expect not significant, and can be covered via in School or across School mentors, as well as support from HR-staff development, and the research office.	2023/24 to start to implement	Positive feedback from EDI survey that staff at all levels feel supported pursue their research interests	
The School proactively engage students further, through ongoing innovative StEP projects, to enable enhancement of quality processes of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.	11.2.17	This will be a standing item under Teaching Updates on our monthly staff meeting agenda.  Staff to update on any StEP projects at the staff meeting. Rebecca to add list of awarded StEP projects onto a Teams folder.	Administrator/ HOS	If there is a StEP project of strategic importance consideration should be given to fund from the School budget if central bid for funding is unsuccessful.	Ongoing	List of successful StEP projects	



Quality Improvement Plan May 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
Further developing the communication processes available to students with which to address issues on clinical placement.	11.2.18	<p>Content related to reasonable accommodations will be incorporated into the Professional Development 1 module for semester 2 of 2021/ 2022 academic year.</p> <p>The PEC team have been working with IT colleagues in the integration of a bespoke platform for the management of placement provision. This will allow for improvements in communication with students and sites alike.</p>	PEC team and IT	Inplace software has been purchased centrally and there is not cost to the School	<p>Sept 22 for InPlace</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Improved feedback from students on surveys	
Enhancing awareness of the communication processes and supports available to students when on clinical placement	11.2.19	PEC met with student welfare officer in relation to the support services available. The details of services and an associated brochure (developed by the student welfare officer) will be made available to students via moodle.	PEC team	None	Jan 2022	Improved student feedback	



Quality Improvement Plan May 2022

Recommendation in order of priority	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
Embedding the multi-stakeholder formal and informal feedback opportunities, which were trialled during COVID-19, for enhancement of clinical education.	11.2.20	<p>A communication strategy was developed in 2021</p> <p>A lecture series was delivered remotely.</p> <p>The Practice Education meetings were moved to remote</p> <p>In partnership with IT we are developing a bespoke platform for practice Education (utilizing the In-Place platform) for recording clinical assessments, delivering feedback, recording clinical hours and releasing student placement allocations.</p>	PEC team	None	<p>Sept 21</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sept 22</p>	<p>Evidence of multistakeholder attendance at the lecture series</p> <p>Positive feedback from clinical tutors and students on the InPlace platform.</p>	
The School embed the ongoing innovative student-centred approaches to support students on clinical placement that were trialled during COVID-19	11.2.21	The School is supporting Tutors to deliver online content when relevant. Students are supported when they are unable to attend placement due to Covid.	PEC team	Cost of laptops and dongles for clinical tutors.	Ongoing	Evidence of a range of approaches to support learning on placement in our programme document.	





Quality Improvement Plan May 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 continue to develop further research collaborations with colleagues in clinical sites for the mutual benefit of both parties.	11.2.22	<p>Associate Prof to collate all clinical collaborations from staff.</p> <p>Hold an annual RCSI research symposium, previously for RCSI hospital group centres, (cancelled 2020 due to COVID) but now to include all clinical research collaboration sites . HF and SmD to meet with postdocs mid Nov who will organise)</p> <p>Associate Prof to identify timeline and complete remaining headings.</p> <p>RCSI research symposium will take place 17/05/22. RCSI hospital group site and other affiliated sites (e.g. CP providers) will be invited. Post doc/PhD student group are organising and liaising with HOS/Associate Prof</p>	Associate Professor	In-person symposium for our clinical partner sites to take place 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2022, led by the postdoctoral researchers under the guidance of HOS and Associate Prof. This will continue to be an annual event.	Ongoing		



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The School proactively explore opportunities with RCSI alumni, including through the provision of CPD opportunities, to expand the available network of clinical placements.	11.2.23	<p>(Need to discuss with PEC team re clinical placements)</p> <p>Alumni Lead to meet with Alumni to discuss resource requirements, other models from RCSI Schools in relation to CPD for Alumni</p> <p>RCSI ran a successful Practice Education lecture series. CPD certs were provided to each of the registrants along with a recording of the lecture and an evaluation form.</p> <p>Alumni Lead for the School met with Alumni team who developed draft strategy to increase Alumni engagement, including clinical placement provision. This was shared with SOP staff. HF to arrange follow-up with Alumni</p>	School Alumni Lead	Alumni Lead to work with Alumni Office to develop a strategy to increase engagement with Alumni, which will include CPD opportunities, Alumni events and clinical placement provision opportunities			
That the facilitation of the curriculum review and future strategic development processes be informed by experiences from the School's international network of universities.	11.2.24	Need to have a more formal structure of engaging with VP appropriately	<p>HOS</p> <p>HF</p>	<p>Budget to support staff to travel to other Universities to formalise links and carry out benchmarking against RCSI</p> <p>Setting up of External advisory Committee with representation from external colleagues</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>First meeting academic year 22/23</p>	<p>Evidence of benchmarking visits.</p> <p>Agenda, minutes and attendance list for the external</p>	.



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						advisory committee.	