Peer Review Group Report

School of Postgraduate Studies 2018

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Name of Unit	School of Postgraduate Studies				
Project Title	Internal Quality Review				
Document Title	Peer Review Group Report				
This Document Comprises	DCS	TOC	Text	List of Tables	List of Figures	No. of Appendices
	1	1	19	0	0	0

Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date
1	Final	PRG	PRG; QEO; SPGS	PRG QEO	QEO	24 October 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1   CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

1.1   Introduction

This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), which was undertaken in June 2018.

RCSI is the second oldest third-level academic institution in Ireland. RCSI is both [a] a health sciences Higher Education Institution with Schools of Leadership, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Postgraduate Studies, and [b] a Postgraduate Training Body in Surgery and related specialties. RCSI is one of four Royal Colleges of Surgeons in Great Britain and Ireland (Edinburgh, England, Glasgow and Ireland). The RCSI School of Medicine was established in 1886 and RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. In the decade from 1996 to 2006, RCSI underwent significant expansion through the establishment of additional Schools/Institutes on the Dublin campus, and of three new international campuses (Penang Medical College, RCSI-Bahrain & RCSI-Dubai). Following an institutional review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), RCSI was granted independent degree awarding powers in 2010. In 2011, RCSI entered into a licensing agreement with Perdana University (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) to establish the PU-RCSI School of Medicine.

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 College 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.

- 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 it 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 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)

The PRG comprised a panel of four peer assessors. Three members of the PRG were external to the RCSI with one member being internal staff of the RCSI. Details of the names, current roles and affiliations of the PRG are as follows:

Dr Turo Virtanen (Chair), Adjunct Professor of Political Science, Administration and Organisation Studies, University of Helsinki.

Dr Jane Wellens, Head of the Graduate School, University of Nottingham, UK.

Padraig Kelly, Associate Director, Surgical Affairs Operations and Planning, RCSI.

Dr Janet Carton, Graduate Education Development Manager, University College Dublin (UCD).

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 College 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 the RCSI from 12th – 15th June 2018 and held meetings according to the planned schedule (in the end of the report).

2   INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE UNIT

The SPGS was established in 2006 and the support that it provides for postgraduate research within the College has evolved considerably since then, and particularly since the last review in 2011. The College currently has 267 postgraduate research students, ~200 supervisors in Dublin and ~50 supervisors off-campus in Irish, English, US, Bahrain and Australia. The SPGS is staffed by a small team comprising 0.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff (Head and two deputy heads) and 3.5 FTE professional staff. Together they provide support addressing both strategic and operational postgraduate matters.

The main strategic objective the SPGS has supported since the last review is in relation to the growth of postgraduate research (PGR) numbers. The SPGS have undertaken activities such as the development and management of the PhD and MD programmes under the new Strategic Academic Recruitment (StAR) Programme, and developed their researcher training provision into a credit-bearing award that has helped to underpin successful Marie-Curie Innovative Training Networks (ITN) bids.

At an operational level, the School has taken on the full remit of postgraduate affairs, including specialist functions relating to recruitment and marketing. These functions, which are carried out by specialist units for undergraduates elsewhere in the College, take a considerable amount of SPGS resources and reduce that available to focus on developing a cohesive set of processes, regulations, and guidelines for the execution and management of postgraduate study as well as the support activities relating to training, development, and programme development support. This is acutely apparent when you consider the overall mission of the school: *The unifying mission of RCSI School of Postgraduate Studies is to deliver world-class training for biomedical and health researchers, who, on completion of their training programme, are qualified to embark on a broad range of career paths and become the next generation of leaders contributing to human health*.

This support that the SPGS provides for student recruitment activities has resulted in a considerably increased workload since the SPGS staff collate and promote most of the potential PhD projects available at RCSI on a single website and provide support for the PGR student application process.

The SPGS has also undertaken significant work to develop, clarify and consolidate the regulations, policies and associated processes for PGR and communicated these to both students and supervisors. Associated with this, they have introduced significant support in the form of a student induction and supervisor training activities and enhanced the quality assurance functions for PGR through the introduction of the Academic Review Committee.

Since the last review they have also extended their support to include postgraduate taught programmes and have established the Postgraduate Programmes Management Committee which has helped to provide consistency in the management of postgraduate programmes as well as acting as a forum for practice sharing. A key feature in the success of this work is the collaboration with Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs (SARA) through a shared/embedded staff member.

The impression given in many of the interviews conducted during the review was that the College culture tends to focus on the difference between undergraduate and postgraduate students and not their commonalities. It appeared that many functions required to support the overarching RCSI student lifecycle are being undertaken as parallel functions for undergraduate and postgraduate students. This came out particularly strongly in the areas of recruitment and pre-arrival support for international students. If the College were to develop specialist knowledge and expertise that could be leveraged to support the elements common to both undergraduate and postgraduate students this would permit the SPGS to focus on areas where there are different and distinct support needs for postgraduate students and programmes, such as researcher skills training and the postgraduate regulatory environment.

Within the College structure, the SPGS sits at the same level as other academic Schools. However, it is not perceived as an equal School to others in RCSI by many of the stakeholders interviewed and as a result there is

a confusion with its identity, authority and remit. Most interviewees, including the Senior Management Team (SMT) regard the School as largely having an administrative function. However, the SPGS staff identify themselves as being a School with developmental, marketing, recruitment, management and support functions although the SPGS Director and Deputy Directors' academic and research activities are discipline specific and based within their 'home' academic Schools. The SPGS appears to be classed as a School because of its role in registering all PGR students, but the students primarily identify with their academic discipline rather than the SPGS. Also the SPGS budget is not based on the numbers of students registered. The clarity around their remit must be provided by senior management in negotiation with the Head of the SPGS and relevant parties in order to accurately and realistically inform the RCSI strategy for postgraduate education.

There has been significant development since the last review of 2011 (considering the resource and staffing constraints), but there are still unresolved issues. Achievements, specifically of note include: the development of the Annual Review Process, the Moodle-based support for supervisors and students; the introduction of a supervisor training programme, the introduction of regular six monthly meetings for MD students; the launch of the Professional Certificate in Research Practice; the dedicated SARA staff resource in the School; and the Postgraduate Taught Programmes Management Committee. A closer review of these and other features of the School will be presented in the following chapters.

3   ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The SPGS aims to be a leading centre for postgraduate education, research and scholarly activity, both nationally and internationally. Ongoing innovative research at RCSI contributes to improved treatment of disease, tackles important healthcare delivery issues, informs policy and improves clinical practice. The aim of the SPGS is to ensure that graduates are responsive to the needs of employers in academia, health sciences and industry.

The SPGS has a small but very dedicated team that has a well-defined structure. The team work as a cohesive group based in a single open-plan office. The structure of the office supports good communication between the team and helps to resolve issues promptly. Weekly office administrative meetings are held to highlight and discuss individual team member's immediate priorities. According to the SAR and re-enforced by the interviews, communication channels are less reliable beyond the office, and research supervisory staff complain that they do not know about key decisions and processes. Some students also considered that they have limited knowledge of key issues such as mandatory modules and academic regulations.

Service delivery within the SPGS relies heavily on key individuals and their personal skillsets, which increases vulnerability and risk associated with service delivery. The SPGS has a broad remit which has increased in the past number of years causing capacity and delivery issues clearly articulated both by documents and interviews. This means that the School has had limited capacity to proactively develop polices, guidelines, codes of practice etc. Such documents are critical to the quality assurance of outcomes and the standardisation of process. Capacity issues are further compounded by difficulties the staff have in accessing effective management information.

The School is responsible for delivering postgraduate research education but itself has no academic staff, nor authority to hire academic staff. The School uses academic staff of other units who contribute to SPGS activities on a voluntary basis. The School's funding model is flat and not directly linked to performance and increase in student numbers or workload. This causes issues particularly when the School has ambitious plans to develop that are currently being hindered by capacity constraints.

It is obvious that there is ambiguity regarding the alignment of the responsibilities and accountability of carrying out postgraduate education on the one hand, and sufficient autonomy and resources in deciding how to do it and with what resources on the other hand. The problem of being accountable for results created by the voluntary work of staff working in other units beyond the leadership of the SPGS should be resolved. This is part of the confusion over the nature of the School which was revealed by many of the interviews. The School has ambitious plans but many of their key stakeholders have differing opinions in relation to the priorities, roles and responsibilities of the School. There is clearly a need for reconsidering the remit of the School, its authority and general position in the management system of the College.

The RCSI could explore how to maximise the commonalities in undergraduate and postgraduate processes and requirements particularly in relation to specialist provision such as visas and support services to develop a single shared expert service rather than separate 'cottage industries'. These commonalities sit under the umbrella of recruitment, marketing etc., not under the umbrella of undergraduate or postgraduate. If the latter perspective is taken, multiple engagements with similar functions will continue to arise and this is not the best use of the resources within this School.

The School should consider whether to cease its current activity in support of the recruitment of postgraduate students to free up capacity for more relevant activities. The interviews indicated that the recruitment activities undertaken by the School are not required or expected by stakeholders. Although the SPGS report that individual supervisors appreciate this support, our interviews with the student and alumni groups suggested that the SPGS's managed list of projects was not how they would have searched for or found their PhD projects. Other Heads of Schools were not aware of this work by the SPGS and were unsure of its value.

Marketing activity should be limited to promoting and highlighting the postgraduate experience in RCSI. The SPGS can do this very effectively by highlighting through their website the supports, developments and positive attributes about doing postgraduate study at RCSI. Many Graduate Studies units in other higher education institutions do this without carrying out a full recruitment function also.

Over the past number of years the SPGS has made continuous and incremental improvements in relation to the organisation and management of the postgraduate experience. The SPGS gets regular feedback from their key stakeholders and from these surveys it is clear that supervisors and students interactions with the School are very positive. The School has tried to improve engagement with supervisors and one of the major improvements here has been the development of a supervisors' portal on Moodle. Although this portal contains a lot of important content and training material for supervisors, their engagement with this portal is low. Strengthening this engagement is challenging, as the supervisors are not part of the organisation and leadership of the School.

The SPGS is supported and governed by a number of committees:

1.   The SPGS Committee meets every two months.

2.   The Academic Review Committee (ARC) meets every month so as to ensure timely recruitment of new scholars.

3.   Postgraduate Programmes Management Committee (PPMC) meets every two months.

The SPGS Committee is the overarching committee with the responsibility of strategic planning and implementation relating to fourth level education across RCSI. Each of the committees have defined roles and responsibilities. The ARC and PPMC are chaired by members of the SPGS executive. The committees are made up of key stakeholders but do not include independent members. From the interviews it was not clear what role the committees took in relation to the strategic direction or strategic planning activities of the SPGS and appeared to take a more operational role. In some cases committee members were not clear on their specific roles and responsibilities and the ARC are still not clear of their role in relation to the Annual Review process.

The School uses a number of business systems to manage their data, many of which were developed for other purposes and because of this the current way business systems are used is not effective. According to interviews, access to effective management information is difficult and time consuming for the School.

Internal capacity for future growth and development is one of the biggest challenges that face the School in the coming years. The School has taken on additional roles and responsibilities like recruitment and marketing at a time when they are already stretched. This issue is inhibiting future growth and development.

3.1   Commendations

- The School has a well-defined structure and work as a cohesive group based in a single open-plan office. The structure of the office supports open communication between the team and this helps to resolve issues promptly.

- The establishment of PPMC has been instrumental in ensuring the consistency in management across all taught postgraduate programmes and the committee members are very positive in relation to the committee and the improvements it has introduced.

- The joint appointment and embedding of a member of the SARA team into the SPGS to support and enhance consistency and management of postgraduate programmes provides a key example of how

areas with varying expertise can work more effectively together and the good will should be built upon.

- The creation of a more structured and standardised approach to managing postgraduate studies, with appropriate opportunities for flexible solutions based on the needs of programmes, has improved the quality and efficiency of service to students and staff, which is largely recognised and highly appreciated among both staff and students.

3.2   Recommendations

- The main committees that govern the SPGS should all have non-executive chairs and include independent subject matter experts and advisors.

- The Committees that govern the SPGS should provide greater leadership and support to the School in relation to developing and implementing its strategic initiatives.

- The terms of reference of all committees should be reviewed regularly and clearly understood by all members.

- Given the strong orientation of the SPGS to find ICT-based solutions to manage effectively the increasing service needs, an ICT project should be established together with existing actors/stakeholders responsible for the college-wide development of ICT services.

- In light of the current capacity issues, the School should review its existing commitments and prioritise these based on the SPGS and RCSI strategies with consideration given to current resources. These priorities should be developed into an operational plan that is approved and regularly reviewed at the SPGS Committee. As part of this reconsideration, the School should analyse the option of stopping the current activity to support recruitment of postgraduate students since this is not required or expected by stakeholders. Marketing activity should be limited to promoting and highlighting the postgraduate experience in RCSI. The clarity around remit must be provided by senior management in negotiation with the Head of the SPGS and relevant parties in order to accurately and realistically inform the RCSI strategy for postgraduate education.

- The RCSI should explore commonalities in undergraduate and postgraduate processes and requirements particularly in relation to specialist provision such as visas and support services to develop a single shared service of expertise rather than 'cottage industries'. If the College were to develop specialist knowledge and expertise that could be leveraged to support the elements common to both undergraduate and postgraduate students this would permit the SPGS to focus on areas where there are different and distinct support needs for postgraduate students and programmes, such as researcher skills training and the postgraduate regulatory environment.

- The SPGS should undertake a gap analysis around the current policies, procedures and guidelines it has in place to identify priorities from those to be developed and implemented in the future. Priority should be given to introducing a single regulations document for postgraduate studies.

4   STAFF AND FACILITIES

According to interviews, the staff of the SPGS are enthusiastic, strongly service-oriented and very efficient in providing the services for students, supervisors and the staff responsible for running the RCSI postgraduate programmes. The feedback from the stakeholders of the SPGS is overwhelmingly positive. Some interviewees were concerned with the details of specific policies that the School has been actively developing around postgraduate studies over the last years. They were sometimes characterized as 'too bureaucratic', for example, the processes of reviewing research proposals by external experts. It seems that there is a need for reconsidering to what extent the rationale of the new regulation has been understood and whether this is due to incomplete communication processes or to what extent there might exist over-regulation in some areas.

The SAR and the interviews indicate that the staff are actively taking part in training related to their professional development and this activity is instrumental in developing the quality of its services – to the extent they have time under the daily service pressures. The SAR shows that the office has benchmarked their resources against those of other higher education institutions. However, the comparison of resources is not sufficiently transparent without more detailed analysis of the responsibilities and volumes of teachers and students being served.

The School has been strongly focussed on filling gaps in many services that are necessary for the smooth delivery of postgraduate studies. As a result it has been very efficient in reacting to individual problems emerging in everyday practice and creating policies and processes to address these in association with the directors of study programmes that are instrumental in solving the problems. However it has very limited capacity to proactively develop wider policies and processes.

In some areas, such as recruitment of students, marketing, and payroll issues, the School is operating in areas where the College already has expertise sitting elsewhere. According to interviews, it is not clear, whether there is lack of proactive collaboration between college-wide and school-level actors or whether the attempts to collaborate have not led to effective interaction and the SPGS has responded by undertaking sole responsibility for these activities.

The School's proposal to recruit a staff member dedicated to the recruitment of new students should be part of the wider consideration of the identity, remit, authority and resources of the School. The present operating model leaves the College vulnerable to unexpected interruptions in the delivery of multiple services by a small team.

The SPGS staff are satisfied with the open office space, provision of meeting rooms including their IT equipment, and general working conditions.

4.1   Commendations

- The staff of the SPGS are dedicated and hard-working, and are a creative problem-solving team undertaking a vast range of operational activities to support postgraduate functions of the College.

- They are customer focused, responsive and highly valued by stakeholders.

- The generally, very positive feedback can be crystallized in the following phrase: *'Extremely helpful and very effective and always available at the end of the phone'*.

4.2   Recommendations

- The small number of staff undertaking many functions causes considerable vulnerability, because even if one member of the staff leaves or cannot fully engage in the work, severe problems will occur. There is a clear and urgent need for creating wider support and shared ownership to build expertise and resilience. This is linked to the need for overall reconsideration of the remit, authority and resources of the School (see 3.2).

5   TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The SPGS contributes to the teaching and learning of PGR students at RCSI largely through the delivery and management of the core and optional research training modules and their oversight of the new postgraduate certificate in research practice which provides an overarching framework bringing these modules together. The modules are delivered by a combination of SPGS staff, academic colleagues and other professional service teams. The research training programme and the SPGS are heavily dependent upon the goodwill of colleagues who receive no formal recognition in terms of workload allocation for their contribution to the programme. This means that the programme is heavily reliant on certain individuals with resultant potential for points of failure and risk. With the move to structured PhD programmes and embedded training the sustainability of this model of operation needs exploring.

Module evaluations are undertaken and students report that they find the courses useful/very useful although there is quite a marked inter-module variability with satisfaction varying between 45 and 77%. Student interviewees in general reported that they found the courses useful although they felt that there was some overlap and duplication between the postgraduate essentials course and other modules. They reported the challenges of participating in the programme were largely in terms of having to take time away from their research to attend the courses and the lack of direct relevance of some core modules to their specific research project. Similar concerns were shared by supervisors who do not always appear clear as to what the compulsory training elements are required for their students. These challenges are shared by research training units at other institutions which have introduced similar requirements and it does take time for the necessary culture change to embed. The SPGS has identified a number of different approaches to developing these programmes including blended and online learning to address some of these issues. Feedback from the PRG drawn from College PhD alumni had graduated between three and 10 years ago clearly identified that the research training programme has improved, grown and evolved in recent years. The alumni were also able to reflect that the courses that they had undertaken had been useful although they had not necessarily fully appreciated their value at the time.

Indirectly, the SPGS also contributes to the quality of the teaching and learning experience of PGR students through their coordination and delivery of the Research Supervisor Support and Development Programme through Moodle; their role in coordinating and sharing practice in relation to postgraduate taught programmes and their development of policies and regulations to support postgraduate programmes. Supervisors who have participated in the Supervisor Development Programme were all extremely positive. However, it was noted that there are still some areas where further policy and guidance would be helpful including a corresponding document to the supervisor charter which captures the responsibilities of the student.

The SAR and meetings with the SPGS staff indicated that they consider that they are not communicating the existence of this guidance effectively because of the number of queries that they still receive on issues that are addressed in the guidance. However, feedback from all the interviewees in relation to this resource was overwhelmingly positive and there was a strong reinforcement that the SPGS is the 'go to' authority on advice in matters relating to supervision of postgraduate students. The delineation between what regulations the SPGS introduce locally and what is now accepted good practice in Irish higher education is not evident; this leads to stakeholders being 'on board' with regulations they like and assigning blame to the SPGS for 'developing' new regulations that are challenging, but are actually standard practice (e.g. use of external examiners-frequency regulations). The introduction of Annual Review of the progress of doctoral students carried out by the ARC is an important initiative. However, the ARC should agree and clarify the approaches that will be used to handle the Annual Review reports. It also needs to address the process that will be followed in the unlikely event that they do receive a research proposal that they are unable to approve.

Interviewees including the supervisors, Heads of School and postgraduate programme directors all expressed some frustration with regard to the rules and restrictions regarding eligibility for nomination as a PhD external examiner. The College follows the National University of Ireland requirements, however, because of the SPGS role in the development of PGR regulations they are wrongly perceived to be responsible for the eligibility criteria.

5.1   Commendations

- The positive alumni feedback on the evolution and value of the research training programme and their positive reflections on how the skills taught in it are relevant to their current careers.

- The introduction of the Annual Review process.

- The SPGS have built a strong network of colleagues who are willing to contribute to the delivery of the researcher development and training programme.

5.2   Recommendations

- The processes of appointing supervisors and admitting research students should ensure that both supervisors and research students are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of each other.

- The ARC should agree and clarify the approaches that will be used to handle the PGR students' annual review reports. It also needs to address the process that will be followed in the unlikely event that they do receive a research proposal that they are unable to approve.

- The academic staff's contribution to the delivery of the research training modules needs to be formally recognised in order that it can be factored into workload planning and the resourcing of modules can be planned appropriately.

6   CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

Introduction of the Thesis by Publication is a welcome and complementary alternative to the production of the thesis primarily through monograph. However, feedback has indicated that staff are confused as to the exact parameters which must be met in order to engage in this alternative mechanism. For example, how many papers are required to be submitted and if there is a particular standard or level of journal that papers need to be published in.

The School has developed the Professional Certificate in Research Practice which brings together existing resources/courses into a coherent and useful research training package for graduate research students and supports the structured PhD programmes. Benchmarking the skills offerings within this certificate against the recommendations in the Irish Universities Association skills statement and the National Framework for Doctoral Education would be valuable, as this would be consistent with Ireland's approach to transferable skills development and training in doctoral programmes.

6.1   Commendations

- The SPGS has actively contributed to the establishment of new postgraduate research programmes to ensure continued recruitment of excellent students (for example, BioAT PhD programme, the Dilmun PhD Scholars Programme, the StAR MD programme).

- The enhancement of the MD Degree Programme in 2013-18 (as specified in the SAR) indicates professional and effective orientation in developing learning and teaching and their management.

- The development of the Professional Certificate in Research Practice is an admirable addition to the supports offered by the SPGS and is in line with their overall mission statement.

- The SPGS has investigated the need for the Professional Certificate In Research Practice award.

- The SPGS has investigated the need for the Intercalated MSc.

- There have also been a number of developments in the administrative management domain with specification and accreditation of modules in the graduate domain in the Dublin campus and also in Bahrain.

6.2   Recommendations

- The SPGS should highlight their achievements in the space of curriculum development, review and support, particularly in the context of the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and the mission statement of the School itself. This could be done on their website, perhaps in a 'what we do' section which is accessible to internal staff and students as well as external parties. This is an important service that is offered and should be highlighted.

7   RESEARCH ACTIVITY

The SPGS is similar to the Office of Research and Innovation in that it contributes to supporting the College research strategy and research activity rather than directly undertaking research itself. The SPGS Director and Deputy Directors' academic and research activities are based within their 'home' academic schools. The development of the SPGS activities including the introduction of the structured research training and PhD programmes have helped the College's success in external scholarship funding schemes and Marie Curie networks. Both the SPGS and the Office of Research and Innovation identified the possibility of working more closely in future to build on these successes.

The SPGS has started to collect and collate data which evidences how the postgraduate research activities contributes to the College's research impact. Postgraduate students were co-authors on 185 papers accounting for 17% of the College publications in 2016-17 and it is estimated that 30% of the research portfolio includes some element of studentship funding. Data on PhD completion rates has proved more challenging to collate. As the college considers the roles and responsibilities that the SPGS should undertake, they may identify and clarify the postgraduate research metrics that it would be most useful to capture, and determine whether this responsibility lies with the SPGS and what the appropriate reporting channels for these are.

The introduction of the ARC to oversee the quality of research proposals at the start of PhD programmes and the introduction of a structured Annual Review process also means that the SPGS has a role in the assessment and evaluation of research quality. To date however, the ARC has not had to deal with any situation where their assessment of a research proposal has not been satisfactory nor have they yet determined what process will be used to monitor and review the outcomes of the postgraduate process.

The School's link to the College's research strategy is problematic, as the major part of research involves PhD candidates who are supervised by their home departments. ARC reviews research proposals and reviews student progress using external reviewers, but can hardly indicate that some proposals are not in line with the research strategy. This means that the School has to find a proper role, for example in concentrating on wider data collection and the reporting of metrics at College level – with reference to College research strategy.

7.1   Commendations

- The contribution that the SPGS innovations such as the introduction of the structured research training and PhD programmes have made to securing external grant and scholarship funding.

- The SPGS has collected and collated data on student publications that serves as a pilot to demonstrate the impact that the PGR community make to the College research endeavour.

7.2   Recommendations

- That the SPGS plan aligns to the College Research Strategy and clearly articulates how the SPGS supports the strategy.

- That the SPGS works closely with the Office of Research and Innovation to identify and establish common goals and KPIs that capture the PGR contribution to the College research strategy including outputs and wider research environment. Also, that ownership and responsibility for monitoring and reporting these metrics is shared and that there are formal review processes in place.

8   MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

The SPGS is tasked with establishing the structures and supports to enable the efficient implementation of quality postgraduate education across all National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 9 and Level 10 programmes. The SPGS oversees all research higher degrees across a number of campuses in Ireland, Bahrain and Penang and Perdana, postdoctoral and supervisor training, and quality oversight in taught Masters' programs. It is involved in every aspect of the student pathway from initial recruitment, through registration and monitoring of progress, to the examination processes and graduation.

The School underwent an internal quality review in 2011. Following submission of a SAR and receipt of the PRG report, a QIP was compiled and has being implemented. As part of this plan, a strategic assessment was carried out. This strategic plan results directly from the recommendations of the quality review and addresses the five major goals of the school, namely: excellence in postgraduate education, internationalization of the student population, impactful research and innovation, enhanced school capabilities, and strong strategic partnerships. Quality is also now a key element in the School's strategy and a pillar in the 2016-21 Strategy of the School.

From an academic governance and quality assurance point of view the RCSI Awards and Qualification Committee (A&QC) is the delegated authority and operational responsibility for the Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB) to evaluate and consider programmes which fall under the NFQ for approval, rejection and accreditation.

As such the A&CQ oversee the end-to-end processes for programme accreditation at the RCSI from application through to approval by the MHSB and National University of Ireland (NUI).

A&QC carries the main responsibility in the quality control of current and new academic awards. The School is represented on A&QC by Deputy Head of School of Postgraduate Studies who also sits on the SPGS Committee.

Moreover, the RCSI Academic Council (AC) meets monthly. The AC approves all policy documents relating to degree awarding. The Head of the School represents the SPGS at the AC and reports back on issues of interest to the office and to the SPGS Committee.

The governance structure has helped the School to develop clearly defined requirements and qualifications for all supervisors. To support this a supervisor's charter has been developed and is available in the supervisors section in Moodle. A supervisors' training programme has also been developed.

In general, the interviewed supervisors considered the charter as a good policy. For postgraduate students the relatively recent charter was often unknown. The roles and responsibilities of supervised students might be specified and confirmed also as part of the charter, as some students may be active in areas where they are not expected to be (e.g. in contacting possible examiners). If so, the connections to student agreements should be checked.

The SPGS has been active in collecting feedback from its stakeholders and drafting suggestions that would address the problems that have arisen. The School in conjunction with the College should define strategic priorities drawing on these suggestions as it develops annual plans. These will need to identify and specify which parts of the College is responsible for progressing these and who are the major partners within RCSI contributing to effective problem solving, and set timelines for the activity.

The programmes taught on overseas campuses pursue similar quality enhancement practices as in Dublin. The interviews indicated examples of special solutions that are based on local quality requirements and culturally different contexts. For example, a supervisor sign-off sheet that ensures the adequacy of the protocol – and a detailed marking template ensuring marking against a standard.

The academic Programme Directors do not get structured feedback (quantitative or qualitative) on the performance of their programmes. This type of feedback is critical to the continual renewal and improvements of these programmes. If it is not the SPGS's role to measure and analyse this data then the Programme Directors should compile a structured annual report for the SPGS.

The SPGS and the ARC have implemented a new annual review of postgraduate process which has provided consistency of approach to the management of student progression. This has been well received by stakeholders as was evidenced during the interviews with both students and supervisors. However, the terms of reference of the ARC do not detail the committee responsibility in relation to students whose progression is not satisfactory (enhanced monitoring) or where a supervisor's performance is below expectations (see 5.2). The overall outcomes of the Annual Review Process do not feed into the overall quality system that aims at continually improving the overall quality of postgraduate studies in the college.

Although an extensive supervisor training programme is in place the uptake on this programme has been very low. Although there is a supervisor charter in place, supervisors are not required to sign the charter and may not be aware of the charter if they have not completed the supervisors' training programme.

Much of the quality interactions / improvements seem to be reactionary and not part of a cohesive plan or part of a continual renew agenda. It's not clear how the quality of the various programmes is measured and critically analysed. There is also no evidence that supervisors get feedback on their performance.

8.1   Commendations

- The creation of a compulsory Moodle-based Annual Review process in 2016 has helped to ensure that all postgraduate students are subject to an annual and independent progression review. Developing this on Moodle has made the process more efficient and effective for both students and supervisors.

- The establishment of the ARC is instrumental in conforming to the need specified by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland and ensuring the consistency of with expectations.

- The SPGS implementation of the PPMC of taught programmes has been an excellent development which has facilitated a more consistent approach to quality assurance and management for taught postgraduate programmes. The course directors and administrators also valued its role as a practice sharing network.

- Supervisor training and regular six monthly meetings constitute an enormously positive step receiving very positive feedback from supervisors. This activity contributes towards creating a community of practice and is an excellent form of communication, highlighting updates and changes in practices and processes.

- The SPGS office has been responsive to the Quality Review of 2011 and the quality plan was put in place to address and implement suggestions of the reviewing team.

- Appendix 4 of the SAR shows a systematic approach in quality enhancement of the MD Degree Programme. The measures of improving the programme stretch over a number of years and there is a plan to ensure the success of implementation with focus groups feedback and surveys.

- A benchmarking exercise of the policies and procedures of postgraduate supervision employed by national and UK universities was performed, resulting in a revised quality charter of guidelines of supervision.

- SPGS Risk Register is an innovative solution to fulfil the needs of risk management as part of the institutional management of postgraduate studies.

- The quality enhancement activities have produced results that have been recognized externally: the MD Programme was shortlisted for the Best Student Experience Award in 2018.

8.2   Recommendations

- The SPGS should define annual quality plans as to how the quality of postgraduate studies in the college will be critically assessed on an ongoing basis. Feedback from the various stakeholder engagement surveys should be developed into regular quality improvement plans that are reported and tracked within the various committee structures. Feedback should be collected also from external actors (partners, employers, etc.). Surveys should be complemented with qualitative information (e.g. focus groups interviews).

- Feedback questionnaires for students should include more fields for open text comments, including for all major topics enquired about in the survey, to convey better the information about student experiences and improve students' motivation to respond. Students need to have some structured way to give feedback to the ARC on the performance of their supervisors. The SPGS should continually review this against the requirements of the Supervisor Charter.

- The SPGS should undertake a gap analysis of their Management Information Systems and how effective they are in quality enhancement (see 3.2).

- The School needs to identify appropriate metrics to reflect activity and report on these. These metrics should also include quality metrics on the performance of academic and research programmes.

- The SPGS should continue to benchmark itself against similar units nationally and internationally to support, grow and develop postgraduate activity and focus also on the variety of organisational structures of corresponding units.

9   SUPPORT SERVICES

As previously indicated there is considerable multiplication of tasks within the College based on whether they are undergraduate or postgraduate driven, for example, CORE HR software does not appear to support postgraduate recruitment and the PGR students have been removed from the HR portal. This results in the perceived need for a bespoke SPGS website with a CMS. But there is the question as to whether the School should be engaged in this activity in the first place. The existing website is already quite attractive and its 'function' should be clarified so that the messages the SPGS wish to convey are clear.

The SPGS works with the fees office to ensure fees compliance: is this a job for this School? Does this not lead to division of labour and focus as discussed in earlier sections?

Supports for students are catered for the undergraduate population. The approach that undergraduate and postgraduate are very different and that postgraduate should be dealt with by the SPGS only is a challenge which has been referred to above (see chapter 3). The SPGS should be providing supports, but in line with their overall mission.

9.1   Commendations

- The SPGS leaflet outlining how the RCSI looks after postgraduate researchers.

- The online Moodle support for students to access relevant information.

- The positive approach by staff of the SPGS and their willingness and creative approach to support postgraduate students wherever and whenever possible.

- The integration of a SARA team member in the SPGS to develop and enhance support services and quality assurance processes.

- The induction programme for new postgraduate students which dovetails with the first core module of the professional certificate.

9.2   Recommendations

- The School should be supported to leverage existing support services so they do not rely so heavily on key individuals and their personal skillsets which increases vulnerability and risk associated with service delivery, e.g. using the model they have with Registry.

- The SPGS should develop their existing website as it already has a good supportive and signposting function.

- Clarity around exactly what supports are offered by the SPGS must be made and should be in line with the RCSI's strategy 2018-2022 and the SPGS mission statement.

10   EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The SPGS provides support and services to a large variety of constituencies within the RCSI and to external groups. Within the RCSI the School collaborates with a broad range of stakeholders at various times of the year. Much of the engagements are not regular but the feedback from all the interviews in relation to these engagements is very positive.

The current SPGS strategy aims on building strong strategic partnerships with a particular focus on building relationships with international training sites, collaborations with other academic institutes, and building stronger relationships with alumni. However, the interviews indicated that the progress in achieving these aims is relatively weak.

During the interviews with the stakeholders of the SPGS it was clear that there is confusion among the various stakeholders in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the SPGS.

Examiners regularly complain of problems with their fees being processed and this is attributed to the SPGS but in most cases this is an issue with the NUI.

The SPGS emphasises clearly more the stakeholders within RCSI than stakeholders external to the College. For example, the knowledge of the graduates' employers, which is useful in the marketing of the programmes, is very limited.

10.1 Commendations

- The SPGS team is very customer focused and responsive to the needs of all their stakeholders.

10.2 Recommendations

- The SPGS should develop a communication strategy and plan which captures the communications format, frequency and nature of the messages that they need to convey to their key internal and external stakeholders. This would help to remove much of the confusion in relation to their role and remit.

- The SPGS should extend its knowledge of the careers of alumni and their employers together with supervisors and directors of study programmes and find ways to support the programmes in their (joint) dialogue with employers and other relevant stakeholders.

11   SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1   Organisation and Management

11.1.1   Commendations

- The School has a well-defined structure and work as a cohesive group based in a single open-plan office. The structure of the office supports open communication between the team and this helps to resolve issues promptly.

- The establishment of the PPMC has been instrumental in ensuring the consistency in management across all taught postgraduate programmes and the committee members are very positive in relation to the committee and the improvements it has introduced.

- The joint appointment and embedding of a member of the SARA team into the SPGS to support and enhance consistency and management of postgraduate programmes provides a key example of how areas with varying expertise can work more effectively together and the good will should be built upon.

- The creation of a more structured and standardised approach to managing postgraduate studies, with appropriate opportunities for flexible solutions based on the needs of programmes, has improved the quality and efficiency of service to students and staff, which is largely recognised and highly appreciated among both staff and students.

11.1.2   Recommendations

- The main committees that govern the SPGS should all have non-executive chairs and include independent subject matter experts and advisors.

- The Committees that govern the SPGS should provide greater leadership and support to the School in relation to developing and implementing its strategic initiatives

- The terms of reference of all committees should be reviewed regularly and clearly understood by all members.

- Given the strong orientation of the SPGS to find ICT-based solutions to manage effectively the increasing service needs, an ICT project should be established together with actors responsible for the college-wide development of ICT services.

- In light of the current capacity issues, the School should review its existing commitments and prioritise these based on the SPGS and RCSI strategies with consideration given to current resources. These priorities should be developed into an operational plan that is approved and regularly reviewed at the SPGS Committee. As part of this reconsideration, the School should analyse the option of stopping the current activity to support recruitment of postgraduate students since this is not required or expected by stakeholders. Marketing activity should be limited to promoting and highlighting the postgraduate experience in RCSI. The clarity around remit must be provided by senior management in negotiation with the Head of the SPGS and relevant parties in order to accurately and realistically inform the RCSI strategy for postgraduate education.

- The RCSI should explore commonalities in undergraduate and postgraduate processes and requirements particularly in relation to specialist provision such as visas and support services to develop single shared expert service rather than 'cottage industries'. The RCSI should explore commonalities in undergraduate and postgraduate processes and requirements particularly in relation to specialist provision such as visas and support services to develop a single shared service of expertise rather than 'cottage industries'. If the College were to develop specialist knowledge and expertise that could be leveraged to support the elements common to both undergraduate and postgraduate students this would permit the SPGS to focus on areas where there are different and distinct support needs for postgraduate students and programmes, such as researcher skills training and the postgraduate regulatory environment.

- The SPGS should undertake a gap analysis around the current policies, procedures and guidelines it has in place to identify priorities from those to be developed and implemented in the future. Priority should be given to introducing a single regulations document for postgraduate studies.

11.2 Staff and Facilities

11.2.1 Commendations

- The staff of the SPGS are dedicated and hard-working, and are a creative problem-solving team undertaking a vast range of operational activities to support postgraduate functions of the College.

- They are customer focused, responsive and highly valued by stakeholders.

- The generally, very positive feedback can be crystallized in the following phrase: *'Extremely helpful and very effective and always available at the end of the phone'*.

11.2.2 Recommendations

- The small staff numbers with multiple functions is vulnerable, because even if one member of the staff leaves or cannot fully engage in the work for one reason or another, severe problems will occur. There is a clear and urgent need for creating wider support and shared ownership to build expertise and resilience. This is linked to the need for overall reconsideration the remit, authority and resources of the School (see 3.2).

11.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

11.3.1 Commendations

- The positive alumni feedback on the evolution and value of the research training programme and their positive reflections on how the skills taught in it are relevant to their current careers.

- The introduction of the Annual Review process.

- The SPGS have built a strong network of colleagues who are willing to contribute to the delivery of the researcher development and training programme.

11.3.2 Recommendations

- The processes of appointing supervisors and admitting research students should ensure that both supervisors and research students are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of each other.

- The ARC should agree and clarify the approaches that will be used to handle the PGR students' annual review reports. It also needs to address the process that will be followed in the unlikely event that they do receive a research proposal that they are unable to approve.

- The academic staff's contribution to the delivery of the research training modules needs to be formally recognised so that it can be factored into workload planning and the resourcing of modules can be planned appropriately.

11.4 Curriculum Development and Review

11.4.1 Commendations

- The SPGS has actively contributed to the establishment of new postgraduate research programmes to ensure continued recruitment of excellent students (for example, BioAT PhD programme, the Dilmun PhD Scholars Programme, the StAR MD programme).

- The enhancement of the MD Degree Programme in 2013-18 (as specified in the SAR) indicates professional and effective orientation in developing learning and teaching and their management.

- The development of the Professional Certificate in Research Practice is an admirable addition to the supports offered by the SPGS and is in line with their overall mission statement.

- The SPGS has investigated the need for the intercalated programme.

- There have also been a number of developments in the administrative management domain with specification and accreditation of modules in the graduate domain in the Dublin campus and also in Bahrain.

11.4.2 Recommendations

- The SPGS should highlight their achievements in the space of curriculum development, review and support, particularly in the context of the RCSI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and the mission statement of the School itself. This could be done on their website, perhaps in a 'what we do' section which is accessible to internal staff and students as well as external parties. This is an important service that is offered and should be highlighted.

11.5 Research Activity

11.5.1 Commendations

- The contribution that the SPGS innovations such as the introduction of the structured research training and PhD programmes have made to securing external grant and scholarship funding.

- The SPGS has collected and collated data on student publications that serves as a pilot to demonstrate the impact that the PGR community make to the College research endeavour.

11.5.2 Recommendations

- That the SPGS plan aligns to the College Research Strategy and clearly articulates how the SPGS supports the strategy.

- That the SPGS works closely with the Office of Research and Innovation to identify and establish common goals and KPIs that capture the PGR contribution to the College research strategy including outputs and wider research environment. Also, that ownership and responsibility for monitoring and reporting these metrics is shared and that there are formal review processes in place.

11.6 Management of Quality Enhancement

11.6.1 Commendations

- The creation of a compulsory Moodle-based Annual Review process in 2016 has helped to ensure that all postgraduate students are subject to an annual and independent progression review. Developing this on Moodle has made the process more efficient and effective for both students and supervisors.

- The establishment of the ARC is instrumental in conforming to the need specified by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland and ensuring the consistency of with expectations.

- The SPGS implementation of the PPMC of taught programmes has been an excellent development which has facilitated a more consistent approach to quality assurance and management for taught postgraduate programmes. The course directors and administrators also valued its role as a practice sharing network.

- Supervisor training and regular six monthly meetings constitute an enormously positive step receiving very positive feedback from supervisors. This activity contributes towards creating a community of practice and is an excellent form of communication, highlighting updates and changes in practices and processes.

- The SPGS office has been responsive to the Quality Review of 2011 and the quality plan was put in place to address and implement suggestions of the reviewing team.

- Appendix 4 of the SAR shows a systematic approach in quality enhancement of the MD Degree Programme. The measures of improving the programme stretch over a number years and there is a plan to ensure the success of implementation with focus groups feedback and surveys.

- A benchmarking exercise of the policies and procedures of postgraduate supervision employed by national and UK universities was performed, resulting in a revised quality charter of guidelines of supervision.

- The SPGS Risk Register is an innovative solution to fulfil the needs of risk management as part of the institutional management of postgraduate studies.

- The quality enhancement activities have produced results that have been recognized externally: the MD Programme was shortlisted for the Best Student Experience Award in 2018.

11.6.2 Recommendations

- The SPGS should define annual quality plans as to how the quality of postgraduate studies in the college will be critically assessed on an ongoing basis. Feedback from the various stakeholder engagement surveys should be developed into regular quality improvement plans that are reported and tracked within the various committee structures. Feedback should be collected also from external actors (partners, employers, etc.). Surveys should be complemented with qualitative information (e.g. focus groups interviews).

- Feedback questionnaires of students should include more fields for comments, one for all major topics highlighted in the survey, to convey better the information about student experiences and improve students' motivation to respond. Students need to have some structured way to give feedback to the ARC on the performance of their supervisors. SPGS should continually review this against the requirements of the Supervisor Charter.

- SPGS should undertake a gap analysis of their Management Information Systems and how effective they are in quality enhancement (see 3.2).

- The School needs to identity appropriate metrics to reflect activity and report on these. These metrics should also include quality metrics on the performance of academic and research programmes.

- The SPGS should continue to benchmark itself against similar units nationally and internationally to support, grow and develop postgraduate activity and focus also on the variety of organisational structures of corresponding units.

11.7 Support Services

11.7.1 Commendations

- The SPGS leaflet outlining how the RCSI looks after postgraduate researchers.

- The online Moodle support for students to access relevant information.

- The positive approach by staff of the SPGS and their willingness and creative approach to support postgraduate students wherever and whenever possible.

- The integration of a SARA team member in the SPGS to develop and enhance support services and quality assurance processes.

- The induction programme for new postgraduate students which dovetails with the first core module of the professional certificate.

11.7.2 Recommendations

- The School should be supported to leverage existing support services so they do not rely so heavily on key individuals and their personal skillsets. This increases vulnerability and risk associated with service delivery, e.g. using the model they have with Registry.

- The SPGS should develop their existing website as it already has a good supportive and signposting function.

- Clarity around exactly what supports are offered by the SPGS must be made and should be in line with the RCSI strategy 2018-2022 and the SPGS mission statement.

11.8 External Relations

11.8.1 Commendations

- The SPGS team is very customer focused and responsive to the needs of all their stakeholders.

11.8.2 Recommendations

- The SPGS should develop a communication strategy and plan which captures the communications format, frequency and nature of the messages that they need to convey to their key internal and external stakeholders. This would help to remove much of the confusion in relation to their role and remit.

- The SPGS should extend its knowledge of the careers of alumni and their employers together with supervisors and directors of study programmes and find ways to support the programmes in their (joint) dialogue with employers and other relevant stakeholders.

School of Postgraduate Studies Internal Quality Review 12 – 15 June 2018

Site Visit Schedule 12 – 15 June 2018.

Evening prior to site visit: Tuesday 12 June 2018

Dur. mins	Time	Meeting Theme	Attendees	Venue
15	16.00 – 16.15	Welcome Director of Quality and Quality Reviews Manager Tea/coffee	PRG QEO	Robert Smith Room
90	16.30 – 18.45	Private planning meeting for members of the Peer Review Group	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	19.00 – 21.00	Dinner	PRG QEO	

Day 1: Wednesday 13 June 2018

Dur.	Time	Meeting Theme	Attendees	Venue
	0845	Tea/coffee. Review of preparatory work	PRG	Robert Smith Room
35	09.15 – 09.50	**M1: Meeting with Head of School** Suggested SAR Sections - All	PRG; Head of School	Robert Smith Room
45	10.00 – 10.45	**M2: Meeting with SPGS Team – focus on strategic planning and development of the School** Suggested SAR Sections - All	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
30	10.45 – 11.15	Tea / coffee. Private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
40	11.20 – 12.00	**M3: Meeting with SPGS Team – Professional Support Staff** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 2, 3, 7, 8	See list of attendees	
50	12.20 – 13.10	**M4: Meeting with Heads of Schools – focus on strategic planning and development of postgraduate research and postgraduate programmes across the schools.** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 4, 5, 6	See list of attendees	
50	13.15 – 14.05	Lunch & private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
45	14.15– 15.00	**M5: Meeting with members of SPGS Committee and ARC Committee** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 4, 5, 6, 7	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
45	15.15 – 16.00	**M6: Meeting with members of SMT: RCSI Strategy and plans for the future** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 3, 7	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
20	16.10 – 16.30	Tea/coffee Private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
30	16.30 – 17.00	**M7: Tour of Facilities** Suggested SAR Section 3		
45	17.15 – 18.00	Review of afternoon's meetings and planning for next day	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	18.30 – 20.30	PRG Dinner if required (TBC)	PRG	Hotel

Day 2: Thursday 14 June 2018

Dur. mins	Time	Meeting Theme	Attendees	Venue
25	08.45	Tea/coffee. Private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
45	09.15 – 10.00	**M8: Meetings with key stakeholders form RCSI overseas sites** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 6, 7	See list of attendees	President's Meeting Room
50	10.10 – 11.00	**M9: Meeting with Head or Senior Representative from professional support & service departments** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 2, 8, 9	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
25	11.00 – 11.25	Tea / coffee. Private meeting time for PRG.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
40	11.30 – 12.15	**M10: Meeting with Research Supervisors** Suggested SAR Sections 4, 5, 8, 9	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
40	12.30 – 13.10	**M11: Meeting with Postgraduate Research Students** Suggested SAR Sections 4, 6, 8	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
60	13.10 – 14.00	Lunch & private meeting time for PRG	PRG	Robert Smith Room
45	14.10 – 14.55	**M12: Meeting with Programme Directors & Course Coordinators of taught postgraduate programmes** Suggested SAR Sections 1, 4, 5, 7, 9	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
45	15.05 - 15.50	**M13: Meeting with key stakeholders providing professional services and supports to SPGS** Suggested SAR Sections 2, 8, 9	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
30	16.00 – 16.30	**M14: Meeting with Alumni of the SPGS** Suggested SAR Sections 8, 9	See list of attendees	Robert Smith Room
60	16.30 – 17.30	Tea/coffee. Private meeting time for PRG members for review of afternoon's meeting and draft commendations and recommendations	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	18.00	PRG Dinner and a chance to discuss key issues (if required)	PRG	Hotel

Day 3: Friday 15 June 2018

	Time	Meeting Theme	Attendees	Venue
195	08.45 – 12.00	Private meeting time for PRG – discussion and finalisation of Commendations and Recommendations for all sections.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	10.30	Tea / coffee.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
	08.45 – 12.00	Private meeting time for PRG – discussion and finalisation of Commendations and Recommendations for all sections.	PRG	Robert Smith Room
20	12.00 – 12.20	**M15: Private meeting with QEO**	PRG; QEO	Robert Smith Room
15	12.25 – 12.40	**M16: Meeting with Head of Unit & QEO**	PRG; QEO, Head of School	Robert Smith Room
20	12.40 – 13.00	**M17: Exit presentation to all SPGS Staff**	PRG; QEO; All Unit Staff	Robert Smith Room
60	13.00 – 14.00	Lunch and Private meeting with QEO	PRG; QEO	Robert Smith Room
	14.00	Review ends		