



# Masters (MCh) in Surgical Science and Practice

## FAQ's 2021

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

Below is a list of **FAQ's** to keep prospective postgraduate students for RCSI's **Masters in Surgical Science and Practice** up-to-date ahead of course commencement in August 2021.

### **COVID related FAQ's**

#### **What procedures have you taken to make sure students will be safe on this programme during COVID-19?**

Physical distancing measures have been implemented across all RCSI campuses to make sure students are safe during face-to-face lessons. A variety of safety precautions have been made which include:

- One-way systems
- Entrance and exit only locations
- PPE provided to all students
- Sanatising stations
- COVID Signage located in all RCSI buildings
- Protective screens
- Floor markings
- New entrance and exit measures
- Plus additional measures to assist with maintaining physical distancing

All our classes take place in large rooms to ensure adequate social distancing. Each of our classrooms is linked to a filtered ventilation system which changes the air in the room every two hours to make sure students are safe.

Students on the Masters in Surgical Science and Practice programme will have custom scrubs, N95 masks, visors, plastic aprons and gloves for all simulation classes. Close contact is limited to less than 15 minutes with full PPE provided.

Also, to ensure students are safe on this programme, students will study in their own student bubble and will not crossover with other programmes. Staff and students are also required to complete a daily health questionnaire before attending the campus.



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### **Has there been a case of COVID-19 from anyone on this programme previously?**

We have not had any MSSP faculty, student, administrator, technician or simulated patient test COVID positive on-campus.

### **What happens if I do become unwell?**

Supporting students if they become ill is a priority at RCSI. We have our own RCSI Medical Centre and have access to general practice (GP) healthcare. RCSI Mercer's Medical Centre has a specific section of their website dedicated to the details:

<https://www.mercersmedicalcentre.com/rcsi-students/>

We have put in place additional resources at RCSI Mercer's Medical Centre to ensure that all students have rapid access to medical care, should they require it during their time at RCSI.

### **Will the graduation ceremony of this programme be online due to COVID-19?**

Where safe, the graduation ceremony will be face-to-face but this will depend on the COVID status in Ireland.

### **What happens if I register for this programme but I can't come to Ireland due to COVID-19 restrictions in my own country?**

You will have 2 options if this situation arises:

- a) If it's a short delay of 2 weeks or less you can attend the programme remotely.
- b) If it's a delay of more than 2 weeks – you can defer to the 2022 programme.

### **What happens if I can no longer sit an official academic IELTS test to meet the minimum English language requirements for study visa purposes or to meet RCSI academic conditions?**

RCSI has partnered with Castel Education to provide prospective postgraduate students with an option for an online diagnostic English language assessment as an interim measure of your language skills.

If you would like to avail of this assessment please email Castel Education at [info@casteleducation.com](mailto:info@casteleducation.com). Please mention when contacting the team at Castel Education that you are applying for a place on RCSI's Masters (MCh) in Surgical Science and Practice.



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### **Will the programmes be delivered online for a period of time?**

Under current Irish Government guidance, the first two weeks in Ireland will be a self-isolation period for students who are recently arrived in Ireland. During this period, you will complete your Bootcamp online.

On completion of the self-isolation period, face-to-face teaching (lectures, practical demonstrations and simulated clinical training) will commence in a safe environment consistent with the highest health and safety protocols. This will include allocated times on Campus to ensure students can partake in the full range of educational and social activities. This will remain in place until social distancing is no longer required. The class sizes for the **Masters (MCh) in Surgical Science and Practice** are small which means students will not be significantly impacted by requirements for social distancing.

### **Does RCSI hope to start the programmes in late August as previously outlined?**

Yes, the Anatomy and Physiology 2-week Bootcamp will commence on Monday, 16th August 2021. We have planned to deliver this Bootcamp face to face and have an on-line curriculum planned also should Ireland be in lockdown. We have run both formats previously with great success during covid.

We will then start the programme face-to-face taught on **Monday 30 August**. We have a programme ready to deliver face-to-face and an on-line programme. Last year's students came to Ireland for the start of Bootcamp and did their 2-week quarantine whilst attending daily online classes. Face-to-face teaching started at the end of August and we have run the programme face-to-face during level 5 lockdown whilst strictly adhering to all safety precautions.

### **What happens if classes cannot start in August 2021?**

We do not currently anticipate start dates being pushed back to a later date, but as outlined above, there may be a requirement for social distancing for a period of time and a combination of classroom-based and online teaching, in line with the National Department of Health guidelines.

### **Will I be offered the option of a deferral or refund of fees if the programme does not start in 2021?**

The option to defer or claim a refund of fees can be discussed by email to [mssp@rcsi.ie](mailto:mssp@rcsi.ie).



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#### **Should I book my flights and/or accommodation now based on the start dates outlined above?**

The RCSI Travel Office is available to provide assistance and advice on booking flights from your home country to Ireland. They also offer advice on hotels located in close proximity to the university, which are often used by families who visit RCSI. RCSI Travel are happy to provide support and travel advice to all RCSI students, regardless of whether they book their flights through RCSI Travel or directly with an airline. They can be contacted by email at [travel@rcsi.ie](mailto:travel@rcsi.ie). Queries regarding accommodation can be addressed to [mssp@rcsi.ie](mailto:mssp@rcsi.ie).

#### **Will there be an extension to the tuition fees payment deadline or option to pay in instalments this year?**

We are extremely mindful of the impact that COVID-19 has potentially had on people's finances and understand your need for flexibility at this time.

On this basis, for offer-holders whose finances have been temporarily impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak and require a more flexible payment plan, we would ask that you please outline your fee payment requirements to [mssp@rcsi.ie](mailto:mssp@rcsi.ie) in advance of the acceptance deadline date.

Rest assured that each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and we will guarantee a comprehensive response within three working days of the request being made.

#### **My sponsor is looking for an official RCSI offer letter to process my scholarship papers. Can RCSI provide me with this document?**

Yes. RCSI can provide you with an official letter on RCSI headed paper confirming your current offer-holder status. Please email your request to [mssp@rcsi.ie](mailto:mssp@rcsi.ie).

#### **Where can I check the most up to date information regarding COVID-19 in Ireland?**

The Department of Health in Ireland has daily updates on its website, which you can view by clicking [here](#) and read the latest information on how Ireland is responding to cases of COVID-19. All the latest information, advice and guidelines will be published on this webpage and updated daily.



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### General FAQ's

#### Who can apply for this programme?

This programme is open to applications from those holding a Medical Degree with an interest in pursuing surgical training and a surgical career. Places are also open to those that may have completed an intern year but this is not essential for application to this programme.

#### What are the entry requirements for the MCh Programme?

There are only two entry requirements for this programme:

1. Academic requirements; MB BCh BAO holder (or equivalent level-8 undergraduate medical degree) from a recognised WHO (World Health Organisation) institution.
2. English Language Requirements:
  - Students should have an IELTS certificate (dated within the last two years at date of application) with an average IELTS score of at least 6.5 (no domain < 6.5), OR
  - Students should have satisfactory proof that their basic medical degree was completed through English (in a country where English is the language spoken by the vast majority of the population).

As part of the application process, you are required to submit the following supporting documentation:

- CV
- Copy of passport
- Copy of educational transcripts
- Proof of sponsorship (where applicable) Evidence of English language qualification\* (where applicable)
- Contact details of two referees



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### **Will an internationally obtained medical degree be recognised for entry to the MCh Programme?**

The medical degree submitted to support your application must be obtained from a recognised WHO ([World Health Organisation](#)) university, irrespective of what country it was completed in.

### **What is the structure of this MCh programme?**

This Masters is a **one year, full-time programme** of study and is delivered through five taught modules (80 credits) and a research report (10 credits). The programme is delivered for approx. 7-9 hours each day in RCSI's new National Surgical and Clinical Skills Centre and teaching will comprise of predominantly face-to-face, some directed-learning and continuous-assessment. All 5 modules are delivered simultaneously across each week of the programme to simulate a clinical surgical post.

### **What skills will students learn by undertaking the MCh programme?**

Students will acquire Clinical, Technical, Non-Technical and Research Skills. In addition, students will study Core Knowledge (Including basic sciences, anatomy, physiology and surgical pathology in preparation for the MRCS Part A examination), Clinical Judgement (decision making and judgment will be developed through simulated ward rounds, out-patient clinics, nights on call, simulated MDT meetings, surgical forum and case-based discussions). Students will undertake a module on professional development and write a research report. The programme is designed to give prospective surgical trainees the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours required to maximise their competitiveness for entry to surgical residency programmes anywhere in the world.

### **Who accredits the MCh programme and is it recognised by regulatory bodies in Ireland or elsewhere in the world?**

This Masters is accredited by the National University of Ireland and is a Level 9 qualification on the NFQ ([Irish National Framework of Qualification](#)). It is internationally recognised on other regional frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).



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#### **Is there a clinical placement involved in the MCh programme? If not, why not?**

There is **not** a clinical component to the programme. This Masters programme will use simulated patients who are trained to demonstrate common surgical conditions so you can apply your knowledge and skills in a safe observed environment. Professional actors and real hospital patients are also part of this programme. The programme is designed to help you to acquire the skills necessary to perform well in surgical residency training or an intern post.

#### **Will students be entitled to apply for entry onto a residency programme in Ireland or elsewhere in the world on successful completion of the MCh Programme?**

Yes, on completion of this programme, students can apply for residency training in a country of their choice. This programme should maximise your competitiveness. However, candidates are responsible for understanding the eligibility criteria for residency programmes for which they may wish to apply and whether or not they are likely to meet those criteria.

#### **Is it possible for someone to acquire this Masters with distant learning?**

No, it is not possible to undertake/complete this programme online or via distance learning. This programme requires that candidates be in full-time attendance at RCSI's Dublin campus for the full-duration of the programme.

#### **What if after getting this Master's Degree the doctor has a change of mind and decides to go into medicine instead of surgery?**

This is a Master's Degree in Surgery - the Science and Practice of Surgery. There are 5 Modules in this Masters - the technical skills will focus mainly on operative surgical skills but more generic skills will also be included. The other 4 Modules cover topics useful to both surgical and medical practice – clinical skills, communication skills, teamwork, conflict management, research methods, global surgery, health economics, health informatics, professionalism, and healthcare management. There will be simulated MDT's and simulated ward rounds which will include patients with surgical and medical problems. These modules will be beneficial to doctors who ultimately choose to practice in a specialty other than surgery.



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#### **What are the fees for the MCh Programme for EU / non-EU students?**

Fees for the academic year 2021 are as follows: €18,250 PA for EU students/ €26,500 PA for non-EU students. There is a non-refundable online application fee of €100. All students also need to pay an annual NUI fee of €45.

#### **How can I manage payment for this Masters Programme?**

Payment can be made by instalments, for further information on this please email [studentfees@rcsi.ie](mailto:studentfees@rcsi.ie).

#### **Is there tax reliefs on fees paid available?**

Students may qualify for tax relief on fees paid and further information is available at [revenue.ie](http://revenue.ie).

#### **Are there any scholarships available for this Masters Programme?**

There are currently no scholarships available for this programme.

#### **Is the MCh Programme recognised for the purposes of applying for a student visa for Ireland?**

Yes, those who successfully secure a place on the programme can apply for a student visa. RCSI will be able to provide a visa letter to support an application for a student visa; **however, students will have to liaise with immigration services to secure their own visa.**

#### **Can I work in Ireland while on a student visa?**

Yes, from an immigration perspective you are allowed to take up casual employment of up to 20 hours part-time work per week in term time. Your entitlement to take up employment ceases when your permission to remain expires. However, this is a full-time programme of study, of approx. 38 hours of attendance/face time each week, so whilst in theory, you can work, in practice, it may be quite challenging.

#### **Does RCSI provide Accommodation?**

RCSI's Students Services Department may be able to support you in sourcing accommodation. Accommodation and all other living expenses must be paid for by the student.



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#### **How should I apply for the MCh Programme?**

Applications are processed online, click [here](#) to commence an application for this Masters Programme.

#### **What is the closing date for applications for the MCh Programme?**

The closing date for 2021 applications is the **31<sup>st</sup> May 2021**. Conditional offers will be made to those successful at interview pending final medical year examination results.

#### **When will I know if I have been accepted onto the MCh Programme?**

Eligible applicants for round 1 interviews will be notified by email and advised of an interview date from the **middle of February 2021**. Interviews are currently scheduled to be held online and can be conducted via Skype or video conference.

#### **Can I take the MRCS Examinations during this programme?**

**Yes** – you will have covered all the basic sciences content of the RCSI Inter-collegiate core surgical curriculum in time for the April sitting of the MRCS Part A. You will have covered the content of the Part B examination by the completion of the course in June and can sit the Part B in September.

#### **Can I talk to a previous student from this programme?**

**Yes** – both our first cohort of students and current students are willing to address any queries you may have. Please email [mssp@rcsi.ie](mailto:mssp@rcsi.ie) if you would like to talk to a previous student of this programme.

#### **Is there an opportunity to work in a hospital during this programme?**

Prior to the pandemic, we were able to arrange clinical observerships. We will recommence this once safe to do so. Most modules are delivered by practising Surgical Consultants so you will have direct access to General and Sub-Specialist Consultants daily. You can also choose to have a Clinical Surgeon to supervise your research report either from your own hospital or an Irish Hospital and work with them to get your report published.



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### **Is there an opportunity to handle real patients?**

Yes, for our simulated out-patient clinics we liaise with the Beaumont Hospital in Dublin and have a large pool of real patients with clinical signs. We also have a high fidelity simulator in our Mock Emergency room who can physiologically represent most acute surgical presentations to the ED.

We have high fidelity simulators in our Mock operating room who can be programmed to physiologically represent most intra-operative surgical complications.

### **When would I have to travel to Ireland to do this programme?**

The programme starts on Monday 16 August for a Basic Sciences Bootcamp – whether this will be face to face or online will be directed by the status of the pandemic. We would recommend that you aim to be in Ireland by 16 August to orientate yourself to the area, set up bank accounts etc.

### **Will, there be guest lecturers on this programme**

Yes, we have a number of world experts within RCSI including Professor Mark Shrime, Professor Walter Epich and Professor Jan Illing. You will also attend Charter Day and the Millin Conference where you will have the opportunity to network with Consultant Surgeons from all over the World.

### **Does this programme relate to the MCh in Surgery programme?**

The MCh in Surgery is a research-based programme suited to those with some post-graduate clinical experience. The MSSP is a taught programme for more junior candidates concentrating on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours required to enter surgical training at a more advanced level.

**Can I apply for this programme after final year medicine?** Yes, this is the perfect time to apply for this programme as it will prepare you very well for an Intern year.