



Disability Policy

Introduction:

RCSI is committed to building an inclusive learning environment and believe that in the majority of cases a disability, health condition or learning difficulty is not an impediment to pursuing a career in healthcare. Indeed, RCSI is committed to a positive action approach to improve the participation rate of those traditionally under-represented in third level education.

Notwithstanding the above, RCSI's Undergraduate courses are vocational, which implies subsequent registration and practice as a healthcare professional. Consequently, the applicant and the College have a responsibility to explore and clarify that the College can meet the applicant's needs and that the applicant can meet 'fitness to practice' requirements for professional registration.

Students are strongly advised to find out as much as possible about the course of study and occupation they hope to pursue so that they can make informed occupational choices. This advice applies to all candidates applying for RCSI programmes. A candidate with a disability/health condition is no different in this regard but may also need to consider if additional measures are required to allow them to successfully complete the programme and move into the work environment.

The Application Process:

An applicant with a disability, health condition or learning difficulty is eligible for admission through the same RCSI admission routes as any other candidate. However, it is important to note the following.

EU CAO Applicants:

EU applicants applying through the CAO have the option to declare their disability/health condition on the CAO application form by ticking the 'disability box'. RCSI applicants who have declared a disability will be entered into the Supplementary Disability Access Route to Education (DARE).

All applicants with a disability/health condition who believe they may need support are urged to declare their disability/health condition so that, in the event of securing a place, the College can provide reasonable accommodation to ensure that they have the maximum opportunity to successfully undertake their programme of study. RCSI may not be able to respond appropriately if a candidate's particular circumstances are undeclared.

Declaration of disability on the CAO application form is not mandatory and does not preclude the applicant from declaring his/her disability/health condition at a later stage. However, in order to avail of 'Reasonable Accommodation', students must register with the RCSI Learning Access & Facilitation Service and supply evidence of their disability/health condition. **Registration is confidential.**

RCSI recognises that a student can be educationally disadvantaged as a result of disability or health condition and reserves 6% of places on each undergraduate course (Medicine, Physiotherapy and Pharmacy) for CAO candidates with a disability who do not reach the CAO points requirement. In each of these programmes, the candidate will be required to meet NUI matriculation requirements to be deemed eligible for consideration.

CAO applicants who wish to be considered through the Supplementary DARE Admissions Route should declare their disability on the CAO application form (i.e. tick the 'disability box'). Applicants who do so enter into the DARE Supplementary Admission Route, are assessed separately (at a lower points threshold) from the main CAO application pool.

Non CAO Candidates

EU Graduates applying to the School of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy and all Non-EU applicants applying to RCSI, apply directly via an online application system. The online application does not require that students declare disabilities or health conditions.

Applicants are however free to declare a disability or health issue at any time during the application process or may declare and register with the Learning Access & Facilitation Service at any time after registering as a student of the College.

Registering with the Learning Access & Facilitation Service

A candidate may decide 'not' to inform RCSI during the application process of his/her disability or health condition.

Candidates with a disability or health condition, who wish to avail of reasonable accommodation, should register with the Learning Access & Facilitation Service in a timely manner to begin the process of clarifying if any disability-related supports are required. Students should adopt a pro-active approach to working with the service at an early stage in order to participate fully and succeed in the chosen programme.

If a registered student with a previously unknown or undiagnosed disability subsequently becomes aware that he/she has disability-related needs, then it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the Learning Access & Facilitation Service.

Unless a student is formally registered with the Learning Access & Facilitation Service, RCSI cannot be held responsible for issues related to a student's disability or health condition or the provision of related supports.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Statement of Commitment:

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is committed to building an inclusive learning environment. The College is further committed to the provision of reasonable accommodation as a response to meet individual needs and as far as possible to enable full access and participation for all students with a disability, health condition or learning difficulty.

Policy:

It is RCSI policy to recognise the importance of reasonable accommodation and to actively support the implementation of a reasonable accommodation response for students with a disability, health condition or learning difficulty.

Definition:

The term 'Disability' is as defined in the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011 as:

- *The total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body*
- *The presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness*
- *The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body*
- *A condition or malfunction which results in the person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or*
- *A condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour (Equal Status Act, 2004, Part 1, 2(1))*

The term reasonable accommodation is taken throughout this policy to be that contained in the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011 (for students who apply to join RCSI or who are currently studying with RCSI).

Legal Framework:

In the operation of this policy the College are guided by the Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011) which prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods and services including educational services.

In reference to people with disabilities the Equal Status Acts require the provision of 'reasonable accommodation'.

Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to all students including students applying to join RCSI and those currently studying with RCSI. The policy also extends to all aspects of student life, e.g. teaching, examinations and the built environment.

Limitation of Policy:

Notwithstanding the fact that RCSI is committed to the adoption of reasonable accommodation there may be times when this is not possible. However, the College is committed to implementing not only the letter but also the spirit of the legislation. Every effort will be made to explore all avenues when a request is made.

Right of Recourse:

If any student believes their request for a reasonable accommodation has not been considered fairly in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner, the individual has a right to appeal as detailed in the Appeals Regulations which are available from RCSI's Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional and Academic Success (CoMPPAS) office and Student Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) office.

Monitoring and Reporting:

In order to monitor effective implementation of this policy the Head of Student Engagement & Development will be responsible for monitoring the College response to requests for reasonable accommodation from a potential or existing student.

The Head of Student Engagement & Development in collaboration with relevant service team members will ensure that records are kept of all requests for reasonable accommodation and the subsequent response and outcome of such requests.

Responsibility:

The Head of Student Engagement & Development has overall responsibility for the interpretation and implementation of this policy in relation to applicants and registered students.

The designated Learning Access & Facilitation Officer has operational responsibility for interpretation and implementation of this policy in relation to applicants and registered students.

It is important to note that each person applying to study with RCSI or currently studying with RCSI has primary responsibility to make a request for reasonable accommodation in a timely manner and if possible to outline the nature of the accommodation being requested.