



RCSI

Code of Conduct

2025-2026

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

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SCOPE:

This Code of Conduct applies to students enrolled to the following programmes:

Dentistry: BDS – all entry routes

Medicine: MB BCh BAO – all entry routes

Pharmacy: BSc and Mpharm – all entry routes

Physiotherapy: BSc Physiotherapy

Physicians Associates: MSc Physician Associate

All RCSI registered students not registered to the above listed programmes should consult their relevant Code of Conduct.



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RCSI Code of Conduct

Membership of a healthcare profession requires the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. During your education and training, while you prepare to enter your profession, you are also obliged to abide by a set of standards. The Code of Conduct (Code) outlines the defined standards and the principles by which you must abide as a student of RCSI.

You must formally agree to abide by the Code. Every student is personally responsible under the Code for their own acts or omissions. Compliance with these standards is considered as evidence of fitness to study and practise.

The Code applies throughout the students' time in RCSI, whether engaged in university activities or otherwise.

Repetitive breaches of the Code will be cumulative.

Sanctions are the responsibility of RCSI and will be applied through the RCSI Disciplinary regulations. A breach of the Code could render you liable to action under the RCSI Disciplinary Regulations with sanctions imposed on you up to and including expulsion.

The Code is based on six core principles:

1. Your primary concern must be to maintain and improve the health, wellbeing, care and safety of patients.
2. Develop your professional competence, skills and standing so as to bring health gain and value to the community and society.
3. Be honest and trustworthy and show respect for others.
4. Conduct yourself in a manner which enhances the service provided to society and which will maintain the good name of your profession.
5. Maintain your professional knowledge and competence.
6. Be aware of your obligations under the Code and do not do anything which constitutes a breach of the Code.

RCSI takes seriously any breach of the Code. If your behaviour fails to meet the standards outlined in the Code, for any reason, the matter may be reviewed in accordance with RCSI's Disciplinary Regulations.

The following information is to direct you on the proper use of the Code in terms of your relationships and interactions with staff, fellow students, placement tutors, patients, carers, and all other individuals with whom you come into contact.

Principle 1

- **Your primary concern must be to maintain and improve the health, wellbeing, care and safety of patients**
Throughout your education and training you are required to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values intrinsic to your practise as a competent healthcare professional. As part of your programme, you will engage with the public and gain knowledge and experience in the clinical and professional setting.



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Even when you are not in direct contact with patients, you must make the health, well-being and safety of patients your main concern. All other principles must be read in light of this first principle.

As a student you must:

- 1.1 Always bear in mind your future role as a healthcare professional when studying. This applies equally to all aspects of your education and training.
 - 1.1.1 Take responsibility for your work, studies and behaviour.
 - 1.2.1 Apply your learning for the maximum benefit of patients.
 - 1.2.2 Behave in a trustworthy and professional manner.
- 1.2 Ensure that your beliefs and actions do not compromise patients, staff or students.
 - 1.2.1 Recognise and respect the rights of others.
 - 1.2.2 Never discriminate on the basis of gender, religion, age, civil status and family status, disability, sexual orientation, race ethnicity, or membership of the Travelling community.
 - 1.2.3 Be prepared to undertake physical examination of patients if appropriate.
 - 1.2.4 Adhere to the dress codes of RCSI in clinical and professional environments and placements.
- 1.3 Never knowingly allow your judgment to be influenced by personal interests, including but not limited to:
 - 1.3.1 Do not abuse the trust of a patient and maintain proper professional boundaries, especially with children and vulnerable adults.
 - 1.3.2 Do not make decisions for personal interest or gain that in any way may adversely affect the health and welfare of patients and a member or members of the public.
- 1.4 Never knowingly mislead others including staff, students and those with whom you come in contact either verbally or in any form of written communications.
 - 1.4.1 You should introduce yourself by name to patients and make it clear to patients and the public that you are a student and not a qualified healthcare professional.
 - 1.4.2 You must never recommend a treatment or course of action to anyone unsupervised.
 - 1.4.3 You should never misrepresent data or information that could adversely affect the health and welfare of patients and a member or members of the public.
- 1.5 Never compromise patient care.
 - 1.5.1 Raise concerns as soon as possible with an appropriate member of staff if you believe that patient safety or care could be compromised.
 - 1.5.2 Be prepared to challenge the judgement of others if you have reason to believe that their decisions could compromise safety or patient care.



Principle 2

- **Develop your professional competence, skills and standing so as to bring health gain and value to the community and society**

It is your responsibility to acquire all necessary knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours to become a competent practitioner. You must not impede other students in acquiring the same knowledge and skills. This should guide you in your academic education, training and during clinical and professional placements

As a student you must:

- 2.1 Take responsibility for your learning.
 - 2.1.1 Use every opportunity to learn. Attend classes. Be punctual. Be contactable. Plan and use your time effectively.
 - 2.1.2 Reflect on feedback about your performance and respond constructively.
 - 2.1.3 Make informed decisions.
- 2.2 Engage constructively in assessment.
 - 2.2.1 Complete and submit your course work on time.
 - 2.2.2 Appropriately reference the academic work of others.
 - 2.2.3 Never misrepresent data, coursework or information that could result in the awarding of a grade not reflective of your competence.
 - 2.2.4 Never cheat.
 - 2.2.5 Always behave with the highest standards of academic integrity.
- 2.3 Recognise and stay within the limits of your competence.
 - 2.3.1 Recognise your limitations and ask for help from a member of staff, where and when appropriate.

Principle 3

- **Be honest and trustworthy and show respect for others.**

Demonstrating respect for the dignity, views and rights of others is fundamental in forming and maintaining appropriate relationships with academic staff, fellow students, placement tutors, patients, carers, and other individuals with whom you come into contact. All health professionals must be guided by their primary responsibility to act in the best interests of their patient without influence of any personal consideration. The public-health professional relationship is a privileged one and is based on trust and professionalism which are enshrined in the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy and justice.

As a student you must:

- 3.1 Act in the best interest of the patient and contribute to the safety of patients.
- 3.2 Accept and agree to be bound by the ethical principle of autonomy.



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- 3.2.1 Obtain consent from the patient before you interview or examine them. The patient should be offered a chaperone as appropriate. In the case of a minor patient or a patient without capacity, obtain the consent of the parent or legal guardian before you interview or examine the minor patient.
- 3.2.2 Respect the patient's right to refuse health care or to take part in teaching.
- 3.3 Preserve the confidentiality of the patient at all times. This includes personal data that is in their clinical records as well as information they disclose to you during a consultation.
 - 3.3.1 Do not share medical information with anyone except those health care professionals involved in the care of the patient.
 - 3.3.2 Make sure that patients, or anyone close to them, cannot be identified. This includes conversations and discussions in person and virtual / social networking sites, texts or e-mails, recordings of interviews or assignments on e.g. smart-phones and/or YouTube, and pictorial records, e.g., photographs and/or video clips.
 - 3.3.3 Do not share or discuss any aspect of patient cases / care with others through any means which could be perceived to bring you, the RCSI or the profession into disrepute.
 - 3.3.4 Recognise the circumstances when confidential information may be disclosed without consent.
- 3.4 Accept and agree to be bound by the ethical principle of justice.
 - 3.4.1 Recognise and respect the rights of the patient to fair treatment and care.
- 3.5 Be honest and trustworthy.
 - 3.5.1 Identify yourself truthfully in all forms of communication and media.
 - 3.5.2 Represent your qualifications, position and abilities honestly at all times.
 - 3.5.3 Do not knowingly mislead others.
 - 3.5.4 Be truthful in verbal and written communications.
 - 3.5.5 Use research and laboratory data honestly and ethically, seeking permission to use data as required.
 - 3.5.6 Ensure any funds you are responsible for are used for the purpose they are intended.
 - 3.5.7 Decline gifts from the pharmaceutical, medical device or biotechnology industries.

Principle 4

- **Conduct yourself in a manner which enhances the service provided to society and which will maintain the good name of RCSI and your profession**

The public trusts healthcare professionals. As a student, and throughout your career, you must justify that trust by acting with integrity and professionalism. You should be aware of the importance of looking after your own health and how it impacts on you and your professional responsibilities. You need to develop skills to work on a multidisciplinary team to deliver a high standard of care and ensure patient safety. You need to be able to work effectively with patients, staff, colleagues and healthcare professionals.



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As a student you must:

- 4.1 Recognise the importance of self-care and take responsibility for your own health, especially if it may impact negatively on other people.
 - 4.1.1 Seek prompt and appropriate professional advice about your general wellbeing, i.e. your physical or mental health, or substance use or other issues which may impact on your ability to complete your studies or interact with patients, staff or colleagues.
 - 4.1.2 Inform appropriate staff if there is anything that could impair your ability to study or to practise as a professional.
 - 4.1.3 Inform the appropriate member of staff if you are being affected by a major life event e.g. divorce or bereavement that may impair your ability to study or practise as a professional.
 - 4.1.4 Inform the appropriate member of staff if you have, to your knowledge, any disability or medical condition that might affect your ability to study or your role as a future healthcare professional, or that might put patients at risk.
 - 4.1.5 Inform the appropriate member of staff if you take medicines that may impair your judgment and impact on the safety of others.
 - 4.1.5 Comply with the requirements of the RCSI IDGHP and BBV policies. Promptly inform the relevant member of staff if you contract or are exposed to any of the diseases set out in these policies.
 - 4.1.6 Respect the confidentiality of your colleagues but appropriately disclose information of concern to include information regarding 4.1. above as relevant to your colleagues.

- 4.2 Learn how to work in partnership with others in RCSI, on professional placement, and with patients and their carers in the management of their treatment and care.
 - 4.2.1 Recognise the expertise of other healthcare professionals.
 - 4.2.2 Respect the knowledge and skills of those involved in your education.
 - 4.2.3 Be aware of the limitations of your knowledge and skills.

- 4.3 Treat others politely with consideration and respect.
 - 4.3.1 Recognise diversity and respect the cultural differences, values and beliefs of others.
 - 4.3.2 Refrain from behaviour that includes intimidation, foul language, threats of violence or retaliation.
 - 4.3.3 Listen to, and respect, the opinions of others and be non-judgemental in your attitudes toward them.

- 4.4 Learn how to communicate effectively.
 - 4.4.1 Ensure you have proficient English Language skills.
 - 4.4.2 Learn how to listen to patients and their carers and communicate effectively with them in a way they understand.
 - 4.4.3 Learn how to communicate effectively with others including academic staff, placement tutors and other healthcare professionals.



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Principle 5

- **Maintain your professional knowledge and competence**

At all stages of your professional journey you must take responsibility for ensuring your knowledge and skills are up-to-date and that you maintain your competence. You have engaged in a career of lifelong learning and teaching.

As a student you must:

- 5.1 Commit to developing, and continuously improving, your professional knowledge and competence.
- 5.2 Learn from experience and grow from the knowledge gained from errors to avoid repeating them.
- 5.3 Ensure that you are aware of continuing professional development requirements.

Principle 6

- **Be aware of your obligations under the Code and do not do anything which constitutes a breach of the Code.**

It is the responsibility of all students to make every reasonable effort to ensure that everything they do conforms with the principles laid down in the Code.

As a student you must:

- 6.1 Ensure you are aware, apply and adhere to the principles of the Code.
 - 6.1.1 Promote and support the principles of the Code by example.
 - 6.1.2 Refrain from any activity that would negatively affect the reputation of RCSI, or your intended profession.
 - 6.1.3 Report breaches of the Code to the appropriate person (e.g. Head of School, member of staff in RCSI or on placements).
- 6.2 Obey the law.
 - 6.2.1 Personally and promptly disclose to the Associate Director for Academic Affairs of RCSI the details of any criminal investigations¹; charges for a criminal offence; pending prosecution for a criminal offence; conviction for a criminal offence (save for “spent convictions”) which may arise during your studies whether within or outside the Republic of Ireland.
- 6.3 Comply with RCSI’s Policies, Rules and Regulations, and those of other organisations linked to your studies.
 - 6.3.1 Respect all RCSI, and clinical and professional placement policies, procedures and property. Never willingly cause damage to such property, remove property from the premises in which it is located, or make use of property for personal reasons.

¹ Criminal investigations include being arrested or interviewed under caution by a police officer whether in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere



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- 6.3.2 Supply accurate information in response to lawful requests and update that information as necessary.
- 6.3.3 Cooperate with honesty and openness in formal investigations about you or others.
- 6.4 Comply with health and safety requirements.
 - 6.4.1 Comply with RCSI's health requirements and health policies in relation to the BBV Policy and the IDGHP Policy.
 - 6.4.2 Comply with RCSI's, clinical and professional placements' safety requirements, including dress code and other safety requirements.