



**RCSI**

# Examination & Assessment Regulations

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

## Policy/Regulation History

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## A. Introduction

Assessment is a key function within the educational mission of the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences and an integral part of teaching and learning across the degree programmes.

## B. Accreditation & Validation of RCSI Programmes

RCSI is a university and a recognised college of the National University of Ireland (NUI) [<http://www.nui.ie/>]. Graduates of all programmes delivered are conferred with the degrees of the NUI and the RCSI. RCSI's professional programmes are accredited by the relevant professional bodies:

### 1. Medicine: Irish Medical Council

RCSI is accredited by the Irish Medical Council (IMC) [<http://www.medicalcouncil.ie/>] which carries out accreditation visits to RCSI and the other Irish medical schools to review ongoing programmes. Graduates of the medical programme will be awarded the degrees of MB, BCh, BAO (RCSI-NUI) in addition to the historic Licentiates of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

### 2. Pharmacy: Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

RCSI is accredited by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) [<http://www.thepsi.ie>] which carries out accreditation visits to RCSI and the other Irish pharmacy schools to review ongoing programmes.

### 3. Physiotherapy: CORU

RCSI is accredited by CORU – Regulating Health & Social Care Professionals [<http://www.coru.ie>] which carries out accreditation visits to RCSI and the other Irish physiotherapy schools to review ongoing programmes.

### 4. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI).

All RCSI nursing programmes are accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland [<http://www.nursingboard.ie>] which carries out accreditation visits to RCSI to review ongoing programmes.



## **C. Overview of Formative & Summative Assessment**

### **1. Assessment within the programmes**

Studying for a degree is within an independent learning environment. Academic success requires students to develop new learning styles and techniques to enable them to move beyond simple recall of material presented.

In an outcomes-focused curriculum, the learning outcomes represent the shared understanding of the coverage and level of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students should have achieved by the end of the course/module. These outcomes will be achieved through a combination of formal teaching activities and independent inquiry.

It is therefore appropriate for examiners to include material on examinations that has not been explicitly covered in a formal teaching engagement, or which has not been explicitly given in teaching material such as slides or hand-outs, but which can be reasonably considered to pertain to the subject matter, as knowledge of such material may be used to evaluate the extent to which a student has broadly studied a topic.

### **2. Feedback within the programmes**

Feedback on your performance can be gained throughout the year by completing a variety of formative assessments on offer. Continuous summative assessments take place throughout all semesters of all programmes, with high-stakes summative assessments typically taking place at the end of semesters. Students should refer to the associated Marks & Standards for their specific course and year of study.

### **3. A wide variety of assessment modalities are used across RCSI including but not limited to:**

- Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs),
- Written (Very Short Answer Questions (VSAs), Short Notes Questions (SNQs), constructed response questions, essays, coursework assignments),
- Practical examinations
- Clinical examinations
- Oral examinations (Viva based)
- OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination)
- Projects
- Portfolios
- TOSBA (Team Objective Structured Bedside Assessment)
- TOSCE (Team Objective Structured Clinical Examination)



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4. Considerable use is made across all programmes of a range of technologies to deliver assessments including Moodle (virtual learning Environment (VLE)) and online examination systems for the delivery of formative and summative assessments. Facilities are made available to students for the submission of Projects and Portfolio entries online.

## **D. General Regulations in the Administration of Examinations**

### **1. Examinations**

These are the examination regulations of RCSI and apply to all examinations across RCSI. There are additional and separate regulations for higher degree by research examinations.

- 1.1 Details of examinations and timetables will be communicated to students electronically.
- 1.2 Examinations must be taken at the appointed time annually. Every student is required to sit all relevant examinations.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of each student to ascertain the correct time and place of each examination. Notices concerning this information are displayed as soon as they are available. It is important to note that examination times and venues are subject to change at short notice. It is the responsibility of the student to be available for the duration of the entire assessment period as outlined by Academic Council.
- 1.4 A student who has failed any examination may be required to produce evidence of such further study or clinical practice in the subjects of that examination as may be directed by the Examination Board, prior to sitting the supplemental examination.
- 1.5 Applications for repeat examinations and the associated fee payments must be made using the online application system (available on Moodle).
- 1.6 All prior examinations must be passed to be eligible to sit the final examinations. This includes pass by compensation where applicable. Students should refer to the individual programme Marks & Standards for further information.
- 1.7 Students with a disability as defined in the Equal Status Acts (Ireland) 2000 to 2004 are advised to contact the Learning Access and Facilitation Services [learningsupport@rcsi.ie](mailto:learningsupport@rcsi.ie) on admission to RCSI or on subsequent diagnoses.
  - 1.7.1 If a request for alternative examination arrangements is denied, the student has the right to an appeal and should follow the RCSI Appeals Regulations (available on Moodle).



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## 2. Conduct during Examinations

2.1 Students must not enter the examination until instructed to do so.

2.2 Each student must be present fifteen minutes before the advertised start time of an examination.

2.3 Examination conditions commence from the moment of entry to the examination.

2.4 Students must comply with all instructions and directions given to them.

2.5 For in-person examinations:

2.5.1 Outdoor clothing, bags, etc. must be left away from the students, usually at the rear of the examination venue. RCSI does not accept responsibility for personal possessions in or outside examination venues.

2.5.2 Each student must sit at the desk prescribed.

2.5.3 Students must leave their RCSI ID card on their desks for verification purposes.

2.5.4 If a student needs to ask a question or to obtain an extra answer book, they should raise their hand and an invigilator will attend.

2.5.5 Students must not write anything on either the question paper or the answer book until instructed to do so by the invigilator.

2.6 During the examination, students must not leave their seats.

2.7 Failure to comply with instructions/directions is an offence under the RCSI Examinations & Assessment Regulations and may result in the forfeiting of an examination and referral under the Disciplinary Regulations.

2.8 Students must not attempt to communicate in any way with any person.

2.9 Students must not share their papers or their answers by any means.

2.10 Students shall always observe silence during the examination.

2.11 A student who causes a disturbance, or who brings equipment into the assessment which may cause a disturbance, will be required to leave the assessment. This may result in the forfeiting of an examination and referral under the Disciplinary Regulations.

2.12 Other than bottled water, students shall not be permitted to eat or drink during an examination.

2.12.1 Students who for medical reasons are required to take medicine or food into the examination centre must register with the Disability Officer.



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- 2.13 A 'clear area and desk' approach applies to all examinations. In addition to pens, pencils, rulers, and analogue watches, no other materials i.e. are permitted for an examination unless expressly advised.
- 2.14 Mobile phones and all electronic devices enabled for communication or searching of any sort are strictly forbidden in all examinations and all examination centres.
- 2.14.1 Students found to have such devices in their possession during an examination will be deemed to have breached these examination regulations, will forfeit the examination and may be referred under the disciplinary regulations. For the avoidance of doubt, RCSI includes digital watches, smart watches and all forms of wearable technology as electronic devices.
- 2.15 The only watches permitted in any examination are analogue watches. All other watches and devices must be removed from the assessment/left at home or handed to an invigilator in advance of the examination. Analogue watches must be placed on the desk. A student found to be wearing a watch, of any description, will be deemed to be in breach of examination regulations and will forfeit the examination.
- 2.16 Students must not have any notebooks, textbooks or any device which in the opinion of RCSI could confer or be perceived to confer an advantage in any assessment including Clinical, OSCE, or Practical examinations unless otherwise specified. Only clinical note paper supplied by the invigilator is permitted.
- 2.17 For in-person examinations, students are advised that random pocket searches may be conducted during an examination session. Upon request, students must remove all items from their pockets for scrutiny by an officer of RCSI. Failure to empty your pockets when requested will be considered behaviour that is prejudicial to the proper conduct of the examination, will be deemed to have breached these examination regulations and will forfeit the examination.
- 2.18 Students must follow the instructions given for the examination paper. Where answer sheets / booklets are provided please ensure the student number is written on every page.
- 2.19 Students may be prohibited from visiting the examination area of a hospital in which clinical, OSCE or practical examinations are scheduled to take place for a period of time before the examinations, which if relevant may be specified in advance and notified to students on Moodle. If a student ignores this prohibition, they will be deemed to have breached these examination regulations, will forfeit the examination and will be referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.
- 2.20 For the purpose of visual identification and academic integrity proctoring, any student sitting any examination will be required to remove any clothing and/or other items which cover all,



or part of, the student's face, including the ears. RCSI will observe sensitivity and, in specific circumstances, privacy, in meeting this requirement. If students have concerns in this regard they should contact a member of staff in advance of the relevant assessments.

### **3. Late Arrival / Entry Examinations**

#### **3.1 Written Examinations**

- 3.1.1 In-person: No student will be admitted to the Examination Area more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination. Only in exceptional circumstances and provided that no other student has withdrawn and left the examination room on any campus, may a student be admitted later at the discretion of the chief invigilator (or nominee).
- 3.1.2 Extra time will not be allowed in the case of a student commencing late.
- 3.1.3 Where a student is admitted to the examination, a report giving details of the late admission will be produced. The Board of Examiners will, on the basis of that report, decide whether the examination script will be accepted.

#### **3.2 Clinical Exams**

- 3.2.1 Students are expected to arrive at the reporting time given. At the discretion of RCSI, a student may be admitted to a Clinical Examination provided the first student examination has not been completed (on any campus where clinical examinations are being run in sync).

### **4. Leaving the Examination during the Examination**

#### **4.1 In-person examinations:**

- 4.1.1 Except in cases of illness or other sufficient cause, a student shall not leave an in-person examination room earlier than one hour after the commencement of the examination or during the final fifteen (15) minutes of a written examination.
- 4.1.2 Students who complete their examination between the permitted times to leave may leave the examination room after asking permission of an Invigilator and after handing in their completed script(s). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure all scripts are handed up.
- 4.1.3 Students wishing to leave the examination area temporarily may not do so unless accompanied by an invigilator. In any event, no person may enter or leave the Examination Area without the Invigilator's permission.

4.2 A distressed or ill student may be permitted to leave the examination area temporarily during



an examination, accompanied by an Invigilator, and subsequently return to complete the examination, provided the continuity and quality of supervision are not affected. No extra time is permitted. The invigilator will complete a report and will bring this to the attention of the Examination Board.

4.3 During online assessments, students may not leave the assessment/remove themselves from view of the proctoring, without forfeiting the examinations.

4.4 Where a written examination is being run across more than one site but not at exactly the same time (where one site starts earlier or later than the other(s), students may be required to remain in place until all students have completed in all sites.

4.5 If a student is ill during any examination or part of an examination, they should follow the procedure for exceptional circumstances (RCSI Exceptional Circumstances regulations - available on Moodle), detailing the circumstances that may have affected their performance.

## **5. Use of Aids**

5.1 Students may not use dictionaries, reference books or computers in the examination unless expressly approved. Similarly, students may not bring lecture notes, textbooks or study aids of any kind into the examination area.

5.2 The equipment permitted in clinical examinations (such as stethoscopes, tuning forks, optical charts, etc.) will be notified to students in advance of each exam.

5.3 Approved models of personal electronic calculators may only be used for specific exams/modules which will be detailed in advance of the examination on Moodle/by email.

5.4 Students who are in possession of materials or any other aids not specifically permitted will be deemed to have breached these examination regulations and will forfeit the examination.

## **6. End of the Examination**

6.1 In-person:

6.1.1 At the end of the examination each student must remain silently in their place until the invigilator has collected all scripts and answer book(s).

6.1.2 It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that his or her script has been collected by an invigilator before leaving the examination area.

6.1.3 Students are not permitted to remove any examination material or stationery from the examination room. Any student who is suspected of removing an examination paper (whole or in part) from the examination will be deemed to have breached these examination regulations will forfeit the examination and will be referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.



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- 6.1.4 Students must stop immediately when instructed by the chief invigilator. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action. Answer books and/or other examination material must be handed immediately to the invigilator on request.
- 6.1.5 Students must remain seated and silent until the Invigilator has announced that students may leave the examination area. Students must remain silent until they have left the examination area.

## **7. Absence from an Examination**

- 7.1 A student who absents themselves from any assessment without prior permission renders themselves liable for disciplinary action which may include discontinuation or expulsion from the RCSI. At the very least, this absence will be counted as a recorded sitting of the relevant examination.
- 7.2 Following discussions with relevant academic and professional staff, i.e. Head of School, Cycle Director, Head of Clinical Department (as appropriate), a student may, with written agreement, withdraw from an examination.
- 7.3 In the event of illness, a student who is unable to attend the examination must lodge a medical certificate as soon as possible and always within THREE working days of the examination. Further details can be found in the RCSI Exceptional Circumstances regulations (available on Moodle).
- 7.4 Supplemental examinations (re-sits) are normally offered in all modules and/or subjects. If a student who has not presented for the main sitting of an examination subsequently fails the examination at the supplemental sitting, that student is deemed to have failed the examination for the academic year.
- 7.5 A student who is absent from supplemental examination(s) for any reason will be required to complete a full academic year, provided they have not become time-expired, in accordance with progression rules pertaining at the time, to be permitted to take the next available sittings of the examination(s). This includes students for whom the supplemental examination(s) are their first attempt.

## **8. Breaches of Examination Regulations**

- 8.1 In pursuit of a culture of academic integrity, students are expected to abide by these regulations, the Online Examinations Code of Conduct, and any accompanying instructions and guidance issued by RCSI in relation to assessments.
- 8.2 Failure to do so may constitute examination malpractice, result in your examination being considered invalid, being awarded a zero and the student being required to reattempt the



examination at the next available sitting. It could also result in a referral under the Disciplinary Regulations which could mean the issuance of an additional sanction, up to and including expulsion.

8.3 An invigilator or other officer of RCSI, who has reason to believe that a student may be suspected of examination malpractice will inform the relevant RCSI staff. The student will be referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.

8.3.1 For in-person examinations the student may be permitted to complete the examination and the invigilator will note the time and mark on the script the point at which the malpractice was suspected.

8.4 A student who is suspected or found to have unauthorised materials in their possession in any assessment, including Written, Practical, Oral or Clinical Examinations, or whose behaviour is prejudicial to the proper conduct of the examination, or who is suspected of introducing books, notes or electronic devices or other materials to confer advantage into the examination, will be considered to have breached these examination regulations, will forfeit the examination and will be referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.

8.5 Any attempt to memorise or share examination materials, during or after an examination is considered prejudicial to the proper conduct of the examination. Students will forfeit the examination and will be referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.

8.6 In the event of a suspected examination breach, any student can inform [registry@rcsi.ie](mailto:registry@rcsi.ie) as soon as possible. If the breach becomes evident during an examination, then the student must alert an invigilator as soon as possible either during the examination or by emailing [registry@rcsi.ie](mailto:registry@rcsi.ie) or the relevant staff immediately after the examination has concluded.

8.7 Any student who knowingly seeks to gain an advantage by behaviour which is considered prejudicial to the proper conduct of examinations will forfeit the examination and will be reviewed under the disciplinary regulations.

8.8 If, for any reason, the integrity of an assessment is perceived to be compromised after the fact, the Associate Director of Academic Affairs may, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Examiners, require any or all students at any/all examination centres, to attend a repeat examination, to preserve the integrity and academic standard of the RCSI award.

## **9. Procedures following evacuation of a University building during an examination**

9.1 Examinations take place simultaneously in multiple RCSI campuses. If an examination



venue/area/building is evacuated during an examination and it is determined that the integrity of the examination has been compromised, the other examination centres will be contacted and a review conducted to agree on the next steps.

9.2 Students are required to follow the instructions of the invigilators and RCSI staff both on evacuation and if permitted to return to the building. Failure to do this will result in the student forfeiting the examination and being referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.

## **E. Supplemental Regulations for Online Examinations**

1. Online examinations will be conducted through Moodle, the RCSI Virtual Learning Environment, or any other online system as advised to students.
2. Students taking any online examination must hold an active, fully functioning RCSI Network account and must access the examination using this account only.
3. Students are advised to present with a fully-charged laptop that is configured for the WiFi network appropriate to that venue.
4. Students must not attempt to save or copy any examination material, by any means, before, during, or after any examination. Any student suspected of doing so will be deemed to have breached these examination regulations, will forfeit the examination and will be referred for review under the disciplinary regulations.
5. Students who are unable to sit a remote online examination, may, by prior arrangement, be facilitated to take a version of the examination under the direction of an approved invigilator.
6. Students are reminded of the *Online Examination Code of Conduct* available [here](#) and their responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional manner which upholds the integrity of the examination processes at all times.
7. Tutorial videos on using the assessment software are available on Moodle.

## **8. Starting the Examination**

8.1. Students must start every exam on time. Failure to start an exam at the scheduled time will automatically delete the exam from the student's system. Students who have a technical issue preventing them from starting the exam on time, must email RCSI immediately as advised in advance of your examination.

8.2. Students must be in a quiet room on their own where they will not be disturbed.

8.3. Students should ensure the lighting is appropriate so that their facial features can be seen. They must not sit with a window behind them. If there is a window behind them, they should ensure the blinds or curtains are closed and lighting is on.



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- 8.4. Students will receive the password before the designated start time for the examination.
- 8.5. Once the student enters the unique exam-specific password they will progress through the proctoring initiation steps, including granting access to their camera and microphone.
- 8.6. Students will be requested to take a picture of their face. This should include a photo id to the side of their face or under their chin.

## 9. During the Examination

- 9.1. Students must ensure their full face (including eyes and ears) are always in full view during their exam.
- 9.2. The camera or microphone must not be obstructed.
- 9.3. Students are not permitted to speak or read out loud.
- 9.4. Headphones, air pods or any in-ear device are not permitted.
- 9.5. Students are not permitted to take a break/move away from the camera and screen during the assessment.
- 9.6. If a student needs to restart their computer/assessment and requires a resume code, they must email from their computer.

## 10. After the Examination

- 10.1 It is the student's responsibility to ensure the exam completes the upload process. This may take up to 45 minutes.
- 10.2 When the option "Return to Dashboard" appears, the student can return to the Dashboard before the upload is complete. Students will see the progress of the upload on the Dashboard.
11. If a student has any difficulties at any time during the examination, or they think they may not be able to comply with any of these instructions, they should email their designated RCSI contact so that they can receive assistance.
12. Students must note that the general examination regulations apply to online examinations, with the exception of specifics relating to in-person examinations.

## F. Procedures for Post Assessment Moderation

1. RCSI has a system of internal moderation and review which takes place after all summative



assessments and in advance of an Examination Board. This process of internal moderation demonstrates that best practice is applied consistently across RCSI in its assessments. The following is a minimum requirement for moderation within RCSI:

- 1.1 First sitting: A representative sample of the cohort should be moderated and this should include a higher proportion of work which has been first marked as a fail or at the borderlines between marking/grading bands.
- 1.2 Supplemental Sitting: A representative sample of the cohort which must include ALL failing scripts.
- 1.3 In the case of inconsistencies, the moderator should discuss these with the first marker and if resolution cannot be reached, they should bring these to the attention of the Module Leader. If the Module Leader is one of the markers involved, then resolution should involve the Cycle Director or Programme Director.
- 1.4 Moderation should be carried out by staff who have not been involved in the marking of the original assessment.
- 1.5 The same two people should not always moderate each other's work and the marking/grading of less experienced staff should be moderated by more experienced staff.
- 1.6 Evidence of internal moderation should be retained by completing the Moderator's Comments sheet, which should be returned to the Module Leader.

## **G. Appealing the decision of an Examination Board**

- 1 Once an examination result has been published, it cannot be amended, for any reason without the approval of the Chair of the Board of Examiners.
- 2 Students should note that it is not permissible to appeal against the academic judgement of examiners (see the RCSI Appeals Regulations for more information).
- 3 Students who believe they have grounds for appeal should follow the RCSI Appeals Policy available on Moodle.

## **H. Delivery of Examination Results to Students**

- 1 Students' marks and grades are delivered to them directly and on a confidential basis electronically as soon as is practicable following the relevant Board of Examiners meeting.
- 2 Students' marks may also be published by student number verbally, on notice boards and on the Examination & Assessment Regulations



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## Virtual Learning Environment

- 3 Each semester/year, students may request a transcript of results which provides a full breakdown of all major summative and professional examinations taken by that student that year. This is an official record of the student's results. Further transcripts can be ordered via Moodle

### **I. Academic Integrity & Plagiarism**

- 1 Students must read and be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity Policy, which is available on Moodle.
- 2 Any behaviour or action which contravenes academic integrity and breaches its fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and courage is considered to constitute academic misconduct. Academic misconduct is any attempt to seek an unfair advantage in relation to any academic activity. Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating in any forum or form, purchase of examination material, breaches of the Examinations and Assessment Regulations, Online Examinations Code of Conduct, impersonation, and any other act which dishonestly uses information to gain academic credit.
- 3 Where a suspected incidence of academic misconduct by a student occurs during an examination, it will be addressed in accordance with these Regulations. Suspected incidences of academic misconduct by any student other than in an examination setting will be investigated in accordance with the provisions of the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

### **Other Documentation Relevant to Examinations and Assessment**

A full list of RCSI Regulations and policy documents is available on Moodle at:  
<https://vle.rcsi.ie/mod/folder/view.php?id=30506>