



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

**Medical Council
Report on Accreditation Inspection of
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain
Medical School**

Tuesday 23 March – Wednesday 24 March 2021

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VISITING TEAM

Prof Mary O'Sullivan (Chair of the Visiting Team and Medical Council Member)

Dr Tom Crotty (Medical Council Member)

Dr Ailis Ni Riain (Medical Assessor)

Prof Hisham Khalil (Medical Assessor)

Prof Barry Lewis (Medical Assessor)

EXECUTIVE

Ms Aoife Fitzsimmons – Head of Quality Improvement

Ms Aoise O'Reilly – Accreditation Manager

Ms Hannah McGrath – Accreditation Officer

A. Statement with regard to the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR') and the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018

The Medical Council currently makes information routinely available to the public in relation to its functions and activities and, in line with that practice, this report will be available on the Council's website, www.medicalcouncil.ie in due course.

The Freedom of Information Act is designed to allow public access to information held by public bodies which is not routinely available through other sources and access to this document may be sought in accordance with that Act. The Medical Council complies fully with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. It should be noted that access to information under the Freedom of Information Act is subject to certain exemptions and one or more of those exemptions may apply in relation to some or all of this report.

As a Data Controller, the Medical Council is also subject to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR') and the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018. The Medical Council complies with its obligations as a Data Controller under the relevant legislation. Any person on whom the Medical Council holds personal information has certain rights, known as 'Subject Access Rights'. Further information on both Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation is available on our website at: <https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/FOI-Data-Protection/>

B. THE DECISION OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL IS THAT:

1. ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND, BAHRAIN MEDICAL PROGRAMME SHOULD BE APPROVED BY COUNCIL UNDER THE TERMS OF SECTION 88(2)(a)(i)(I) OF THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT 2007. THIS RECOMMENDATION IS MADE ON THE GROUNDS OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL TEAM'S FINDING THAT THE PROGRAMME ADHERES TO THE RULES, CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS APPROVED BY COUNCIL, AS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 88(2)(a) AND 88(2)(d) OF THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT 2007.

THIS APPROVAL SHOULD BE FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL.

2. ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND, BAHRAIN SHOULD BE APPROVED UNDER SECTION 88(2)(a)(II) OF THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT 2007 AS THE BODY WHICH MAY DELIVER THAT PROGRAMME. THIS RECOMMENDATION IS MADE ON THE GROUNDS OF THE RCSI BAHRAIN'S ONGOING COMPLIANCE WITH THE RULES, CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS APPROVED BY COUNCIL AS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 88(2)(a)(i)(II) AND 88(2)(e) OF THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT 2007.

THIS APPROVAL SHOULD BE FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL.

C. PREFACE

1. Context of the visit

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain (RCSI Bahrain) delivers five/six-year Direct Entry medical programme leading to the award of an MB BCh BAO. They are at undergraduate level (basic level in World Federation for Medical Education terminology).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, The Medical Council Assessor Team held virtual meetings with management, academic & clinical staff and students Tuesday 23 & Wednesday 24 March 2021. Its remit was to assess the programmes and to formulate a recommendation on accreditation to the Medical Council's Education and Training Committee. Inspections of the facilities were undertaken remotely, via pre-recorded videos and a set of photos of clinical site facilities. A confirmatory site visit will be completed at a later date, in line with WFME requirements.

It is acknowledged that prior to and during this virtual accreditation, the COVID 19 Pandemic was impacting on the content of the medical education programme the Assessor Team (AT) was accrediting, in a number of ways. These include inter alia the closure of third-level institutions, restricted access to teaching hospitals, cessation of bedside teaching, wind-down of elective clinical activity, time-tabling problems and cancellations and restrictions on teaching space due to social distancing. Unsurprisingly, COVID19-related exigencies prompted some of the comments and criticisms we heard from students, teacher-clinicians and academics during the course of this accreditation. It is a credit to RCSI Bahrain (and indeed to all our medical schools) that they have adapted so well and managed so capably with the pandemic raging around them.

2. The Team

The Medical Council Assessor Team is listed on the title page of this Report. The Council very much appreciates the contribution of the Assessors to the accreditation process.

The Medical Council also thanks the RCSI Bahrain Team, led by Professor Alf Nicholson, Head of the School of Medicine and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dr Kathryn Strachan, Head of Quality Enhancement for the work involved in coordinating the visit. In addition, the Medical Council wishes to thank the staff and students who met the Team, whose feedback was most helpful in formulating this Report.

3. Documentation

Prior to the visit, the Team reviewed the completed *Accreditation of Existing Medical Programmes – WFME Questionnaire*, dated August 2019, supplementary information in January 2021 and information submitted in the form of a survey of RCSI Bahrain medical students, academic teaching staff and clinical site teaching staff. The questionnaire completed by RCSI-Bahrain is based on the World Federation of Medical Education's *Global Standards for Quality improvement, Basic Medical Education*. A supplementary submission was provided by RCSI Bahrain in December 2020.

4. Schedule

The accreditation visit included a presentation by Professor Alf Nicholson, Head of the School of Medicine and Vice President of Academic Affairs; an in-depth discussion between the Medical Council Assessor Team and representatives of the University; along with private sessions with students representing all stages of the course. Under Section 88 (2)(f) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007, a virtual inspection of the facilities was also undertaken at the RCSI Bahrain Medical School, Bahrain Defence Force Hospital, King Hamad University Hospital, and Salmaniya Medical Complex.

Approved by Council on 17 November 2021

5. The Report

The Medical Council's policy is to use the World Federation of Medical Education's Standards to assess medical programmes. The section headings used in part C of this report are therefore those of the World Federation of Medical Education's '*Global Standards for Quality improvement in Medical Education, 2015 revision*'.

D. SUMMARY AND GENERAL ASSESSMENT

1) Conclusion and main recommendations of Medical Council

The Medical Council's main recommendations are that:

1. Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain medical programme should be approved by Council under the terms of Section 88(2)(a)(i)(I) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007. This recommendation is made on the grounds of the Medical Council Team's finding that the programme adheres to the rules, criteria, guidelines and standards approved by Council, as specified in Section 88(2)(a) and 88(2)(d) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.

This approval should be for a period of five years from the date of approval by Council (see Recommended Further Action below).

2. Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain Medical School should be approved under Section 88(2)(a)(II) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 as the body which may deliver that programme. This recommendation is made on the grounds of RCSI Bahrain's ongoing compliance with the rules, criteria, guidelines and standards approved by Council as specified in Section 88(2)(a)(i)(II) and 88(2)(e) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.

This approval should be for a period of five years from the date of approval by Council (see Recommended Further Action below).

2) Major findings of Council Team

Based on the evidence provided by Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain and the information provided by the students interviewed, no priority recommendations were made for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain.

3) Recommendations additional to the major findings, based on the evidence provided by RCSI Bahrain and the information provided by the staff and students interviewed:

It is recommended that RCSI Bahrain:

Communication

1. review the current policy on assessment feedback and seeks to increase the amount of feedback provided.
2. maintain regular contact with the Medical Council to appraise them of the development of a new curriculum.
3. expand the Terms of Reference of all committees to include membership eligibility, terms of office and how people are appointed to committees.

Curriculum

1. Expand cross-cycle connectivity schemes in the Transforming Healthcare Education Project (THEP)

2. Develop interprofessional learning needs as a more comprehensive element of the new education programme
3. Review its selection process and continue its efforts to support students in Foundation Year to ensure the attrition rates continue to improve.
4. Have more input into the design and implementation of Transformation of Healthcare Education Project (THEP) for the Bahrain context.

Assessment

1. Clarify and highlight the timing of the release of assessment results to students.

Feedback

1. Enhance the involvement of patients and allied health professionals, as well as other stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Resources

1. Increase the uptake of teaching and learning professional development opportunities by clinical staff.
2. Adequate resources including professional development for staff should be assured for successful implementation of the new curriculum

Recommendations that the Medical Council makes to all medical schools:

1. RCSI Bahrain should continue to ensure awareness among students of the following:
 - The Medical Council's *Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice*
 - The Medical Council's *Three Pillars of Professionalism*
 - The Medical Council's *Guidelines for Medical Schools on Ethical Standards and Behaviour appropriate for Medical Students*, particularly on affiliated sites and in general practices used for teaching
 - The revised *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* guidelines in Ireland before students have attachments in the specialty area of paediatrics
 - The World Health Organisation *Patient Safety Guidelines*
2. RCSI Bahrain should continue to ensure that the teaching environment incorporates high standards in hygiene and infection control, including ensuring that students are trained in hand-washing techniques and have access to the necessary facilities

4) The Medical Council commends RCSI Bahrain for:

- The succinct and all-encompassing nature of the Mission Statement.
- The strong presence of Professionalism throughout the programme.
- The centre for Student Success and Wellbeing.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of RCSI Bahrain students to their education and their positive view of the education being provided.
- The careers office for the support they provide to students in preparation for USMLE and other international exams, travel and subsistence for research presentations and alumni presentations to students on career pathways internationally.

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF RCSI BAHRAIN MEDICAL PROGRAMME

- Quality of facilities on campus and at teaching sites – in particular, the investment into the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research.
- The TEL group and IT Support Team for assistance in adjusting to these new teaching and learning environments.
- The support provided by the research office to students and staff across the spectrum of research activities.
- The commitment of staff and RCSI Bahrain leadership to delivering the education programme, particularly under the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

E. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME, BASED ON WORLD FEDERATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION (WFME) GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN MEDICAL EDUCATION – 2015 REVISION

Compliance level rating

The levels of compliance are categorised as follows:

Non- compliance (NC)



No compliance with required criteria

Partial compliance (PC)



Partial compliance with required criteria

Full compliance (FC)



Full compliance with required criteria

The Medical Council has identified the following levels of compliance:

Level of compliance	WFME Global Revision 2015									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
NC										0
PC		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		5
FC	✓					✓	✓		✓	4

Area 1: Mission and Outcomes

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES	Level of compliance:	FC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i> • Admissions Appeal Policy • Appeals Regulations • Conference & Event Participation Policy • Exceptional Circumstances Policy • International Citizenship Award • Learning Communities Personal Tutor Programme Guide • Provision of Learning Support Policy Procedure AY2020-21 • Student Code of Conduct AY20 21 • BIOMED ModuleDescriptor_2021 • CGIEM-ModuleDescriptor_2021 • DDT module descriptors 2021 • FUNBIO-ModuleDescriptor_2021 • FUNCHEM_ModuleDescriptor_2021 • FUNPHYS_ModuleDescriptor_2021 • MEDCHEM_ModuleDescriptor_2020 • MNSR_ModuleDescriptor_2021 • PROF_ModuleDescriptor_2020_2021 • IC2 Module Descriptor CNSLF 2020 • IC2 Module Descriptor GIHEP 2020 • IC2 Module Descriptor REGUB 2020 • IC3 Module Descriptor MSK 2020 • IC3 Module Descriptor SSP 2020 • SC1 GP Module Descriptor 2020 • SC1 MSOO module descriptor 2019_20 • SC1 OG Module Descriptor 2020 • SC1 Paeds Module Descriptor 2019-2020 • SC1 Psych Module Descriptor 2020 • SC2 MedSurg module descriptor 2020-21 • CB Module descriptor 2019 – 2020 • FUN Module descriptor 2020-2021 • GB Module descriptor 2020_2021 • IPCP Module descriptor 2020-21 • MB Module descriptor 2020_2021 • NSB Module descriptor 2020_2021 • REB Module descriptor 2020_2021 • FIIS Module Descriptor 2020 • FIM Module Descriptor 2020 • Resp Module Descriptor 2020 • HEC Modules Marks and Standards 2020-21 • Medical Commencement Programme Marks and Standards 2020.21 • Medicine Foundation Year Marks Standards 2020.21 • Medicine IC2-IC3 Marks and Standards 2020.21		

- Medicine Year 1 Marks Standards 2020.21
- Medicine Year 2 Marks Standards 2020.21
- SC1 Marks Standards AY 2020-21 30102020 v3
- SC2 Marks Standards AY 2020-21 27102020
- IEF programme June 2020
- MEDICINE Foundation Year Course Book 2020_21_MUB
- RCSI Handbook of Clinical Medicine_2ndEd_Volume1
- RCSI Handbook of Clinical Medicine_2ndEd_Volume2
- Year 1 Medicine Course Book 2020_21_BH
- Governance of RCSI Bahrain
- MGP 2018
- RCSI Bahrain-RCSI Dublin Operating agreement 2018
- SoM Internal review report
- RCSI Bahrain Strategic plan
- RCSI Bahrain T&L Strategy
- Student policies: Admissions Appeal policy
- Appeals Regulations
- Conference and Travel Awards Policy
- Exceptional Circumstances Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Infectious Diseases Screening and Vaccination
- Learning Commitment
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Maternity Policy
- Learning Communities Personal Tutor Programme Guide
- Plagiarism Policy
- Provision of Learning Support Policy
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Complaint Policy
- Student Council ToR
- Student Disciplinary Regulations
- Student Hardship Fund & Policy
- Student Travel Award Policy
- Withdrawal from Studies Policy
- Module descriptors: FIP Module Descriptor 2020
- GHI Summary documents
- SOME TORs
- CASC TORs
- THEP proposal and membership
- Internal Quality Monitoring-MMR/APA's
- RCSI 50 Map
- Internship Programme Board TORs
- Stakeholder Day 2018-2019 Notes

Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit:

The mission and objectives are clearly detailed in the documentation and highlighted in the presentation at the outset of the visit. Discussions with students and staff demonstrated that the mission and objectives form part

of their ethos. Discussions with the senior management highlighted the functions of the programme advisory board and input from lay stakeholders that allowed for greater alignment with local health system's needs.

Core staff had the opportunity to give feedback on the current curriculum as well as the future curriculum (Transforming Healthcare Education Project). There were some opportunities for clinical staff to feedback on the curriculum. Research is a strong ethos across the curriculum both structured and ad-hoc.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) & Recommendation(s)

- No recommendations made.

Commendation(s)

- RCSI Bahrain are commended for the succinct and all-encompassing nature of the Mission Statement.

Area 2: Educational programme

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Level of compliance:

PC

Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain

- Programme Specification 2020
- Welcoming our Returning Students to RCSI Bahrain - Supporting Health Safety Wellbeing
- Learning Communities Personal Tutor Programme Guide
- Conference and Travel Awards Policy
- Module descriptors
- THEP Proposal & Membership
- Internal Quality Monitoring-MMR/APA's
- Governance Document
- Stakeholder Day 2018-2019 Notes
- Internship Programme Board TORs
- Sub-I assessment form
- List of Staff Publications
- List of FY Projects
- RCSI Bahrain International Research Day 2018 Programme
- Ethical and Legal Curriculum Booklet
- SPR Form
- SC2 Rotation Map
- SC2 Student Schedule
- USMLE Performance year on year
- Module evaluation reports: 5 reports (FY, IC1, JC3, SC1, SC2)
- MOU with John Hopkins University and Lahey hospital and medical centre

Description of evidence of compliance with this standard during the visit

RCSI Bahrain achieved delivery of a transnational curriculum both in content and in timing that matched delivery in Dublin. Similar standards are met for the biomedical sciences, behavioural sciences, ethics and jurisprudence with high priority given to professionalism throughout the programme as evidence of some cross-cycle connectivity.

Technology enhanced learning and simulation has taken a very high profile in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both students and faculty were appreciative of the efforts of the IT team in delivering this and it will play a part in delivering the curriculum in the future.

Cross-cycle connectivity within the schemes relies on IC3 to connect pre-clinical to clinical experience, and it is hoped that the THEP curriculum will improve such curricular linkages. Little evidence of formalised interprofessional learning was apparent in the programme as currently delivered.

Students were happy with the opportunities for engagement in research provided both within RCSI Bahrain and with neighbouring hospitals and clinics. Staff were encouraged to support students in research, and this is an important domain for progression of their academic careers.

The efforts made in the use of simulated patients in the context of Covid-19 is recognised. Prior to this, there were concerns regarding communication barriers between non-Arabic speaking students and non-English speaking patients.

Students and teachers were satisfied that the programme overall prepared the students for the next stage of their medical careers following graduation and for work both in Bahrain and in posts around the world at intern level. This was also confirmed during the meeting with interns in Bahrain.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be partially complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) & Recommendation(s)

- It is recommended that RCSI Bahrain maintains regular contact with the Medical Council to appraise them of the development of a new curriculum.
- It is recommended that cross-cycle connectivity schemes are expanded in the Transforming of Healthcare Education Project (THEP)
- It is recommended that interprofessional learning needs to be a more comprehensive element of the new education programme.

Commendation(s)

- RCSI Bahrain is commended on the strong presence of Professionalism throughout the programme.

Area 3: Assessment of students

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS	Level of compliance:	PC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i>		
• School of Medicine Assessment Strategy		

- RCSI Online Examination Proctor Approach AY 2020-21
- RCSI-SARA-POL-Online Examinations Code of Conduct Proctored
- RCSI-SARA-POL-Online Examinations Code of Conduct
- HEC Modules Marks and Standards 2020-21
- Medical Commencement Programme Marks and Standards 2020.21
- Medicine Foundation Year Marks Standards 2020.21
- Medicine IC2-IC3 Marks and Standards 2020.21
- Medicine Year 1 Marks Standards 2020.21
- Medicine Year 2 Marks Standards 2020.21
- SC1 Marks Standards AY 2020-21 30102020 v3
- SC2 Marks Standards AY 2020-21 27102020
- Programme Specification 2020
- Internal Quality Monitoring-MMR/APA's
- RCSI Examinations and Assessment Regulations
- Examination Schedule
- NUI Policy on Extern Examiners
- Post assessment moderation guidance
- Sample blueprint

Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit:

The documentation and meetings demonstrated a clear assessment framework that is communicated to the student body. The students reported a lack of feedback for some types of assessments e.g. MCQ or SBA. Whilst the challenges in giving feedback are recognised in these types of assessment, there should be an opportunity for students to learn about their areas of weakness so they can work to improve them. The feedback seemed more focused on students who have failed assessments and does not routinely extend to students who have passed but seek to improve their performance. Some students felt the need for more formative assessments and feedback. The students appreciated the provision of model answers to some assignments. Some students reported lack of clarity on the timing for the release of assessment results. This caused unnecessary frustration amongst students.

The impact of Covid-19 on the authenticity of assessments, including clinical assessments was explored. Discussions with students and staff did not suggest it was an issue.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be partially complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) & Recommendation(s)

- It is recommended that RCSI Bahrain review the current policy on assessment feedback and increase the amount and value of feedback provided.
- RCSI Bahrain should clarify and highlight the timing of the release of assessment results to students.

Commendation(s)

- No commendations made.

Area 4: Students

STUDENTS	Level of compliance:	PC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i> • Admissions policy February 2020 • Medicine Entry Requirements 2021 • RecommendationsRevisionsEntryRequirements_2122_Binder • Design Approval and Verification of Award Policy • Monitoring and Periodic Review of Curricula Programmes and Awards Policy • RCSI Bahrain Quality Policy • Learning Communities Personal Tutor Programme Guide • The PathWay Programme Outline AY2020-21 • RCSI Bahrain International Students Supporting Your Health Safety and Wellbeing • ORIENTATION Handbook 2020 • Learning Communities at RCSI Bahrain • First year First semester student engagement map • Protocol for follow up and support of students who have tested positive for Covid-19 • Shared Accommodation Roommate Guide • Programme Specification 2020 • Internal Quality Monitoring-MMR/APA's • RCSI Examinations and Assessment Regulations • Examination Schedule • NUI Policy on Extern Examiners • Post assessment moderation guidance • Sample blueprint • Conference and Travel Awards Policy • Withdrawal from Studies Policy • Exceptional Circumstances Policy • Fitness to Study Policy • Harassment Policy • Leave of Absence Policy • Maternity Policy • Student Complaint Policy • Student Hardship Fund & Policy • THEP Proposal & Membership • Interview Rubric • Guidelines for RPL • PAL Guidelines • PathWay programme outline • Buddy Booklet • Student services & events booklet • PASS Programme Document • List of all elective opportunities • ISSE • Student Feedback & actions 18/19 • Passport for Success Document		

- Student Council Posts Document
- List of HUB events

Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit:

There is an admissions policy which is reviewed annually. It was noted that there was concern with the attrition rates in foundation year from the annual returns information provided by RCSI Bahrain.

There was evidence that students with special needs have been enrolled in the programme and reasonable accommodations made to support their success. While it was noted that accessibility and mobility for wheelchair users was widespread there were some incidences where electric buttons were missing on internal doors.

The students spoke very positively of the pastoral support system provided by the Centre for Student Success and Wellbeing. This was much appreciated particularly in the last year. The students commented that RCSI Bahrain made extra special efforts to communicate with them in the adjustments needed to their timetables and modes of teaching during Covid-19. These efforts alleviated some of their anxieties during this difficult period.

The students had particular praise for the student health and wellbeing centre, for pathology teaching, early patient contact and GP rotations, Anatomy teaching online as well as the positive attitudes and care of clinical staff in support of their learning during rotations.

Formal student representation was noted on the Quality Enhancement Committee and Student Council was engaged in the Mission Statement for the new Strategic Plan. The students commented positively on the effectiveness on the student representative system and felt their voices were heard by RCSI Bahrain leadership, particularly on minor issues. They did note occasions where they needed to engage with their Dublin counterparts to better ensure that revisions they requested were taken seriously.

However, it was both unfortunate and unusual that of the eight (8) meetings arranged with students and interns, three had to be cancelled across the two days because either one or no students attended. The lone student from a year group was facilitated to join another year cohort.

It was evident that students were represented on several committees.

Meeting with Year 1 and Year 2

A meeting was held with a number of students from Year 1 and 2 of the programme. They were assured of confidentiality and advised of the Medical Council's role. The students all confirmed that they had volunteered to meet with the Medical Council Team.

When asked if students had opportunities to feed into the curriculum, the students advised that they could only do so by providing feedback at the end of each semester, through the class representatives.

There were a number of extracurricular research opportunities and access to research seminars, however, there are no formal research opportunities available to Year one and Year two students.

When asked about the impact of Covid-19 on teaching, the students advised that there were some difficulties with lectures being cancelled and Lecturers having difficulties using the IT systems, however, they have noticed improvements since the beginning of the year. They were grateful for lectures being recorded. Overall, the quality of online teaching was considered to be good, and lecturers very approachable.

The teaching of professionalism and ethics was delivered online due to Covid-19 as the in-person element was no longer possible.

Prior to Covid-19, Year One students had an early patient contact module where they could interact with patients and take histories. However, this year, online seminars replaced this module. Patients would present conditions virtually to students, the students felt it was satisfactory, but it was not sufficient.

When asked about assessments, the students confirmed they received a schedule of exam times, however, the timings of release of results was very slow which left little time to reflect and prepare areas for improvement ahead of their next assessment.

The students advised that when they sought feedback on their assessments, they were told that qualitative feedback is not provided in Years One and Two; only the breakdown of marks is provided.

When asked about their awareness of student supports available to them, the students had a good understanding of what was provided through the school. They discussed the Buddy System that is available to first year students and said it is working well. The students did say that the campus is not accessible enough to students with disabilities, with no automatic doors or ramps.

Meeting with Year 3

A meeting was held with a number of students from Year 3 of the programme. They were assured of confidentiality and advised of the Medical Council's role. The students all confirmed that they had volunteered to meet with the Medical Council Team.

When asked if they had an opportunity to feed into the curriculum, the students confirmed that they completed a survey at the end of each semester and the class representatives provided the information to the school. They have seen positive changes being made to aspects of their programme based on their feedback.

There is a 6-week student selected research project available in Year 3 with a lot of opportunities to work with Professors at other campuses. Because of Covid-19, there was no opportunity to travel abroad this year for research projects. Overall, the students were happy with the support provided by RCSI.

The students were complimentary of how well Years 1 & 2 prepared them for Year 3. The focus on Anatomy, Pathology and Sciences prepared them to put those learnings into practice in Year 3. In particular, the students praised Pathology teaching.

The students were satisfied with the feedback process available to them, they could seek feedback on assessments if they felt they needed it.

The students were very aware of the breadth of support services available to them. Career guidance was promoted very well, and the careers office was welcoming and supportive to students.

The students highlighted the facilities available on campus with no restrictions on library access, excellent anatomy facilities and free gym facilities.

Overall, the students felt they were having a positive experience and transitioning into self-directed learners well.

Meeting with Year 5

A meeting was held with a number of students from Year 5 of the programme. They were assured of confidentiality and advised of the Medical Council's role. The students all confirmed that they had volunteered to meet with the Medical Council Team.

When asked if they had an opportunity to feed into the curriculum, they advised of the surveys received at the end of each semester which the class representatives brought back to the school. The students confirmed they had seen the changes being made in the following years based on some of the feedback.

There were opportunities for students to take on research projects, however, they felt the medical school could provide more direct research opportunities. Although there was flexibility and support in allowing students to carry out research projects, there was no direct involvement from the medical school.

The students discussed the use of simulated patients due to Covid-19, they felt that they worked well for exams, however, they didn't feel simulation gave students full exposure to practical skills but understood it had to be used during the pandemic. The students also discussed the difficulties they faced when meeting patients who speak Arabic. A translator was needed to speak on the student's behalf, and this caused some issues.

The students noted there were excellent supports in place for the USMLE exams. They had, access to alumni who had taken the exams previously and the medical school gave students the time to study and take exams.

The students advised of the excellent support provided from the career's office with advice available about career options in other countries also.

Overall, the students had a positive experience throughout the programme.

Student Representatives

The Team met with a number of student representatives from various years of the programme. They were assured of confidentiality and advised of the Medical Council's role. The students all confirmed that they had volunteered to meet with the Medical Council Team.

Overall, the student representatives spoke positively of their experience as representatives, they felt their voices were heard when providing feedback on curriculum, assessments and clinical placements. Although not all feedback is acted upon, they have seen some changes being made based on their feedback.

Based on student feedback about independent research opportunities, the student representatives are actively working with the careers office to implement student-led research projects.

When asked about assessments, the student representatives advised that the delay in results being released is one of the most common issues brought by the students. There is a long delay because Dublin results are issued first, and this has resulted in unnecessary stress on students awaiting results.

The student representatives praised the level of support from the faculty staff and felt they were very receptive to student feedback.

Due to Covid-19, there has been an impact on student relationships and experience, however, there was support provided to students from the school and this noticeably increased throughout the pandemic.

Overall, the student representatives were very positive of their experience to-date.

Interns

The Team met with a number of interns who are graduates from the RCSI Bahrain programme. They were assured of confidentiality and advised of the Medical Council's role. They all confirmed that they had volunteered to meet with the Medical Council Team.

The purpose of this meeting was to assess how well prepared the Interns felt upon graduating from RCSI Bahrain for their internship.

Overall, the Interns felt the programme gave them excellent clinical skills knowledge which exceeded other medical schools; however, physical clinical skills were not taught as well. The noted that RCSI graduates believed their professionalism stood out above all other medical school students.

Due to Covid-19, the shadowing component of Year 5 was made optional, therefore, a lot of students chose not to do it and took up an Intern post immediately after graduation. Those who did the shadowing felt it was a huge benefit to them in preparing them for the year ahead.

When asked about the highlights of the programme, the Interns praised the strong sense of community in RCSI Bahrain. There was a strong emphasis on the non-medical aspects i.e. ethics and professionalism.

When asked if they had encountered a lack of dignity or respect towards patients, those that had witnessed instances believed they were not intentional but borne out of miscommunication. They believe that doctors can tend to spend less time with patients than they should, and this is usually due to communication issues (i.e. language barriers). However, they have seen improvements in doctors' treatments of patients over the course of their medical education.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be partially complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) and Recommendation(s)

- It is recommended that RCSI Bahrain review its selection process and continue its efforts to support students in Foundation Year to ensure the attrition rates continue to improve.

Commendation(s)

- The centre for Student Success and Wellbeing
- The enthusiasm and commitment of RCSI Bahrain students to their education and their positive view of the education being provided in Bahrain.
- The careers office and the support they provide to students for preparation for USMLE and other international exams, travel and subsistence for research presentations and alumni presentations on career pathways internationally.

Area 5: Academic staff/faculty

ACADEMIC STAFF/FACULTY	Level of compliance	PC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i> • Module evaluation reports: 5 reports (FY, IC1, JC3, SC1, SC2) • Academic promotions policy • Dignity at Work Charter - RCSI Bahrain - March 2017 • Grievance Policy & Procedure - Jan2018 • Recruitment & Selection Policy • Staff-Disciplinary-Policy-Jan2018 • Observation of Teaching Handbook • Peer Evaluation of Instructional Skills		

- Peer Observation of Teaching form
- Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures RCSI-Rev-05
- HSEQ RC 08-04 Simple Incident Accident Investigation Report (RCSI) Rev 05
- HSEQ RC 10-01 Simple Incident Investigation Report (RCSI) (Rev 04)
- HSEQ RC 10-05 Near Miss Report (RCSI) (Rev 03)
- HSEQ-PR-08-02-First-Aid-Procedure-RCSI-Rev-06-Full-1
- RCSI-HSEQ-Policy-Statement-Rev-01
- Conference Participation Fund Policy AY2019-2020
- Staff Learning and Development Policy AY2019-2020
- Staff Training Fund Policy AY2019-2020
- Induction – training
- Sample PDP Form

Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit:

The impressive commitment of staff to the educational programme.

The staff recruitment and selection policy are clearly outlined. The profile of the academic and clinical staff suggested a good staff to student ratio.

RCSI Bahrain has a clearly defined Clinical Academic Promotions Policy and staff were made aware of the relevant criteria. It was noted that there were a number of recent staff promotions.

It is acknowledged that there is a growing focus on research, and in this shift the school will need to ensure an appropriate balance between teaching, research and service in order to maintain a commitment high quality teaching.

There was evidence of appropriate induction for newly appointed clinical teachers. The availability of ongoing training for clinical teachers e.g. Train the Trainer courses was evident, however, the uptake appeared to be variable. A renewed emphasis on this important activity should be considered.

It was noted that there was increased availability for staff to achieve the Advanced Higher Education Certificate from the UK to support their teaching capabilities.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be partially complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) and Recommendation(s)

- RCSI Bahrain should increase the uptake of teaching and learning professional development opportunities by clinical staff.

Commendations

- No commendations are made

Area 6: Educational Resources

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF RCSI BAHRAIN MEDICAL PROGRAMME

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	Level of Compliance	FC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i> • RCSI Bahrain – TEL • Observation of Teaching Handbook • Peer Evaluation of Instructional Skills • Peer Observation of Teaching form • Staff Policies Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures RCSI-Rev-05 • HSEQ RC 08-04 Simple Incident Accident Investigation Report (RCSI) Rev 05 • HSEQ RC 10-01 Simple Incident Investigation Report (RCSI) (Rev 04) • HSEQ RC 10-05 Near Miss Report (RCSI) (Rev 03) • HSEQ-PR-08-02-First-Aid-Procedure-RCSI-Rev-06-Full-1 • RCSI-HSEQ-Policy-Statement-Rev-01 • Conference Participation Fund Policy AY2019-2020 • Staff Learning and Development Policy AY2019-2020 • Staff Training Fund Policy AY2019-2020 • Induction – training • Sample PDP Form • Observation of Teaching Handbook • Peer Evaluation of Instructional Skills • Peer Observation of Teaching form • Guidelines for RPL • RCSI Bahrain research strategy • Sample Training Needs Assessment • PDU Survey • PDU Review 2018-2019 & 2017-2018 • RCSI Competency Framework • CPD flyer • Institutional research/evaluation projects		
<i>Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit</i> <u>Physical facilities:</u> Virtual tours of the campus and the clinical training sites, Bahrain Defence Force Hospital, King Hamad University Hospital, and Salmaniya Medical Complex, were provided. The high quality of the physical training facilities was noted. The simulation centres are very well equipped. Issues around safe learning environments both within the school of medicine and on the clinical sites were explored. In discussions with faculty, clinical staff and students, no evidence of an unsafe learning environment was found. Some students highlighted the ethics curriculum as a tool for recognising unprofessional behaviour and how to raise concerns regarding these issues. <u>Clinical Training Resources:</u> There has been a significant investment in medical education resources on the clinical sites (simulation rooms, extensive laboratories, new small case-based meeting rooms in the library). RCSI Bahrain has put a lot of effort into ensuring adequate access to patients. It was noted that the addition of simulated patients helped to ensure continued learning by students in the pandemic environment. It was noted that the students had access to clinical learning that was relayed remotely to students (simulated bedside teaching) during Covid-19 restrictions.		

The use of the American Mission Hospital provided training for all students to gain experience in managing natural childbirth.

IT Facilities:

The excellent IT facilities and the expansive suite of digital learning technologies available to students and staff was noted. This is underpinned by a technology enhanced learning team which was effective in mitigating the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on medical education.

The TEL group and IT Support Team for assistance in adjusting to these new teaching and learning environments.

Medical Research and Scholarship:

The curriculum is evidence and research based. The teaching staff are increasingly research active and engage students in writing and publishing for research and use research to inform their teaching. The support provided to students and staff in completing research was noted (access to statisticians and clinical writers and support to submit articles for publication).

Educational expertise:

The diversity and experience of the staff contribute to the ethos of teaching and learning. There is a nice staff profile of senior experienced academics who are committed to teaching with a regular rotation of early career staff who bring enthusiasm and new ideas to the school.

Educational Exchanges:

The opportunities for educational exchanges with RCSI Dublin were noted. Support and involvement of alumni in organising student electives across the world was evident. Global initiatives which provide opportunities for students to undertake summer electives in developing countries were also noted.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) and Recommendation(s)

- No recommendations made.

Commendation(s)

- Quality of facilities on campus and at teaching sites – in particular, the investment into the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research.
- RCSI Bahrain are commended for their move to a virtual learning environment in a timely way in response to Covid-19 and the subsequent evolution to blended learning.
- The TEL group and IT Support Team for assistance in adjusting to these new teaching and learning environments.
- We commend RCSI Bahrain for the support provided by the research office to students and staff across the spectrum of research activities.

Area 7: Programme evaluation

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Level of compliance

FC

Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF RCSI BAHRAIN MEDICAL PROGRAMME

- RCSI Bahrain Rolling schedule of reviews
- Design, approval and verification of awards policy
- Monitoring and Periodic Review of Awards Policy
- Internal Quality Monitoring-MMR/APA's
- Governance Document
- IEF programme June 2020
- Student policies
- Module descriptors
- THEP Proposal & Membership
- Module evaluation reports: 5 reports (FY, IC1, JC3, SC1, SC2)
- Staff policies
- Programme Specification 2020
- Internship Programme Board TORs
- Awards and Qualifications Committee ToR
- NUI Procedural Guidelines for Review of Programmes
- SOM PRG Report
- External Examiner Report
- Comparative results RCSI Bahrain and RCSI Dublin
- Bridging the Gap – Working Group Strategy Document
- Presentation to Board of Governors
- RCSI Internship Award Document
- Alumni Survey
- Employer Survey

Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit:

There was evidence of programme monitoring and evaluation in the form of annual student surveys, comparison of results between Bahrain and Dublin, monitoring of exam success rates (e.g. USMLE), success in appointment to Postgraduate training programmes.

Each module is evaluated by the students and an annual report presented to staff. Departments noted they use regular monthly meetings to discuss the delivery of the programme with staff. It was also noted that any staff struggling with teaching is supported. The annual anonymous survey by student is used to inform teaching and learning.

The creation of the Programme Advisory Committee with lay representation was noted, as was the annual stakeholder day. However, the team is of the view that there is room for increased involvement of patient, allied health professionals and other stakeholders in programme evaluation.

Compliance

RCSI Bahrain was found to be complying with the basic standard.

Observation(s) and Recommendation(s)

- RCSI Bahrain enhances the involvement of patients and allied health professionals, as well as other stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Commendation(s)

- No commendations made.

Area 8: Governance and Administration

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	Level of compliance	PC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i>		
• Governance Document • Sample PDP Form • List of Staff Publications • List of FY Projects		
<i>Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit</i>		
The team notes RCSI Bahrain as a relatively young university and its relationship with RCSI Dublin is continuing to evolve to ensure a greater partnership between the institutions. This is a work in progress and should continue to develop. We note that the senior leadership at the RCSI Bahrain board work together in the development of the new curriculum (Transforming Healthcare Education Project) and other strategic initiatives. In discussions with clinical staff, it was evident they felt they had limited opportunities and autonomy to revise elements of the programme. There was some evidence of their ability to adapt the delivery of the programme to the context in which they worked. Discussions around budget suggested significant expenditures to support remote learning and student wellbeing were largely offset this year with reductions in travel and subsistence budgets and external examiners not needing to travel. This is an issue that will have to be monitored into the future in terms of recurring IT costs for blended learning supports. The policies and procedures for the administration and governance of RCSI Bahrain are well documented. The Terms of Reference outline clear duties for each committee but there is silence on membership eligibility, how members are appointed and terms of membership. The assessor team note the creation of the programme advisory board and annual stakeholder engagement days. It was much less clear the degree to which other agencies and other agencies (Dept. of Health) were involved in the governance structure to ensure the programme addresses the local medical system needs.		
<u>Compliance</u>		
RCSI Bahrain was found to be partially complying with the basic standard.		
<u>Observation(s) and Recommendation(s)</u>		
• Expand the Terms of Reference of all committees to include membership eligibility, terms of office and how people are appointed to committees • In the evolving partnership between RCSI Bahrain and RCSI Dublin, it would be important for RCSI Bahrain to have more input into the design and implementation of THEP for the Bahrain context. • It will be important that adequate resources and professional development are provided to all teaching staff for successful implementation of the new curriculum.		

<u>Commendation(s)</u>		
The commitment of staff and RCSI Bahrain leadership to delivering the education programme, particularly under the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.		
<u>Area 9: Continuous Renewal</u>		
CONTINUOUS RENEWAL	Level of compliance	FC
<i>Description of documentary evidence of compliance with this standard provided by RCSI Bahrain</i>		
- DL - QA Framework November 2020 - Q e-Handbook - RCSI Bahrain QMS – excerpt - IPE Proposal - SIMBIPE Report - Market analysis results		
<i>Description of evidence of compliance with this standard found during the visit</i>		
The team noted that RCSI Bahrain responded to the recommendations made by the Medical Council in 2014 and has implemented most changes. The team noted that RCSI Bahrain are engaged in the full review of the curriculum, Transforming Healthcare Education Project (THEP) which is being led by RCSI Dublin.		
<u>Compliance</u>		
RCSI Bahrain was found to be complying with the basic standard.		
<u>Observation(s) and Recommendation(s)</u>		
RCSI Bahrain maintains regular contact with the Medical Council to appraise them of the development of a new curriculum.		
<u>Commendation(s)</u>		
No commendations made.		

F. INSPECTION OF CLINICAL TRAINING SITES

Bahrain Defence Force Hospital

The Team met with the Clinical Staff and Management of Bahrain Defence Force Hospital. The Chair introduced the Team and advised those in attendance of the purpose of the meeting. The Team appreciated the time the staff took to meet with them. They also appreciated the insight into the full scope of the practice at the hospital and the hospital's involvement with education and training.

Management at Bahrain Defence Force Hospital gave a presentation which detailed the scope of practice at the hospital and the hospitals involvement with students from RCSI Bahrain.

Overall, the staff and management enjoy teaching students from RCSI Bahrain, however, they feel that embedding students more into medical teams within the hospital would be more beneficial. It would give students more responsibilities and opportunities to learn in the clinical environment.

The clinical staff were satisfied with the level of engagement with RCSI Bahrain regarding the delivery of the programme with regular departmental meetings to provide feedback on the programme content. However, there has been no opportunity for clinical tutors to be involved in the development of the new curriculum.

RCSI give continuous opportunities for training to clinical staff and have a very good orientation for any new staff taking on teaching roles.

When asked about their awareness of any mistreatment of patients, no staff member had ever witnessed any form of mistreatment and were aware of the hospitals protocols that were in place should they witness something or be informed of such.

The staff in general felt very supported by RCSI Bahrain with plenty of opportunities for training and direct access through the coordinators onsite for providing and receiving feedback.

King Hamad University Hospital

The Team met with the Clinical Staff and Management of King Hamad University Hospital. The Chair introduced the Team and advised those in attendance of the purpose of the meeting. The Team appreciated the time the staff took to meet with them. They also appreciated the insight into the full scope of the practice at the hospital and the hospital's involvement with education and training.

There was a presentation given which provided detailed information regarding the scope of practice at the hospital and the hospitals involvement with education and training. It was evident from the presentation and from the meeting that there is huge emphasis on education and training in King Hamad University Hospital. There are three full-time teachers onsite.

The staff at the hospital also have significant interest in research as it is an important part of the clinicians' contract renewal and promotion opportunities.

The staff advised they do not have much opportunity to input into the development of the new curriculum and feel it needs to be more inclusive of clinical staff. They have good opportunities for providing feedback on training to RCSI Bahrain, however, they feel that due to the oversight by RCSI

Dublin, it can be difficult to get some changes made in assessments in particular. They feel that there is a need for more case-based scenarios and competency assessments.

The staff in attendance at the meeting were all aware of the hospitals dignity and respect policies and believe that justice is an important component of care and treatment. It is the hospitals policy to treat all patients equally.

When asked about their awareness of any mistreatment of patients, no staff member had ever witnessed any form of mistreatment and were aware of the hospitals protocols that were in place should they witness something or be informed of such.

Overall, the staff at the hospital believe that RCSI Bahrain are very supportive of them and their needs and can be contacted easily with any issues that may arise.

Salmaniya Medical Complex

The Team met with the Clinical Staff and Management of Salmaniya Medical Complex. The Chair introduced the Team and advised those in attendance of the purpose of the meeting. The Team appreciated the time the staff took to meet with them. They also appreciated the insight into the full scope of the practice at the hospital and the hospital's involvement with education and training.

The staff at Salmaniya Medical Complex advised that they do not have much involvement in curriculum changes, however, based on their feedback, they have seen some changes made. In particular to the Ophthalmology module.

The students are on one-week placements in Paediatrics, Surgery and Psychiatry and the staff found it extremely difficult to cover all of the learning objectives within one week.

The staff were regularly invited to attend training sessions with RCSI Bahrain; however it was not compulsory and staff found it difficult to find time to attend.

When asked about their awareness of any mistreatment of patients, no staff member had ever witnessed any form of mistreatment and were aware of the hospitals protocols that were in place should they witness something or be informed of such.

The staff believe the students from RCSI Bahrain were of a higher standard than the other medical schools and they had very few difficulties with performance.

GP Practice & Community Health

The Team met with the Staff and Management involved in GP and Community Health Training. The Chair introduced the Team and advised those in attendance of the purpose of the meeting. The Team appreciated the time the staff took to meet with them. They also appreciated the insight into the full scope of the practice at the practices and their involvement with education and training.

The staff involved in training at GP Practices and in Community Health settings advised that they did not have much input into curriculum development. The new curriculum will bring a lot more case-based learning and tutorial work which will require clinicians and generalists. As GPs are the only remaining generalists, consideration will need to be given to this as it will need resourcing.

There is a great difficulty with language barriers in these settings as students are taught in English but a large number of patients that attend the practices are Arabic speaking patients.

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF RCSI BAHRAIN MEDICAL PROGRAMME

The trainers were satisfied with the level of training and induction provided by RCSI Bahrain and agreed that the students who attend the practices are always an impressive cohort who are eager to learn.

Overall, the trainers in the GP Practices and Community Health settings had no major issues or concerns to raise and were satisfied that the structure currently in place is working well.

End of report