



**FACULTY OF
OCCUPATIONAL
MEDICINE**

ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

2022 – 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Cover Image: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Spring Conference, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland 6 Kildare Street, Dublin 2., September 2023. Dr. Claire Rooney, Dr. Sheelagh O'Brien, Dean Faculty of Occupational Medicine, RCPI, Dr. Mary Teresa O'Neill, Dr. Justine Fenn. Back row Dr. Eoin O'Mahony, Dr. Ruth McCullough, Dr. Kirsten McGary, Dr. Patrick Carr, Dr. Gordon Haire.

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FACULTY OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE, RCPI

Background

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine has been an integral part of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) since 1976. The mission of the Faculty is to advance the science, art, interests & medical practice of occupational medicine and to promote education, study and research in the specialty. It is the authoritative body on all matters of educational, professional and public interest concerning occupational medicine.

The Faculty fulfils a wide range of complex functions including:

- Acting in an advisory capacity to governmental and statutory bodies in all matters pertaining to occupational medicine.
- Development and delivery of [postgraduate specialist training and education](#) in occupational medicine in Ireland.
- Setting and maintaining standards for [Licentiate of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine](#) and [Membership of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine examinations](#).
- Assisting in the maintenance of professional standards for doctors with regard to the [Professional Competence Scheme](#) (PCS) in Occupational Medicine, including the delivery of dynamic educational events.
- Acting as a [vital source of information](#) for individuals practicing in occupational medicine.

Membership

The Faculty's current membership includes over 450 Licentiates, 126 Members and over 312 Fellows.

Faculty Board

The Faculty is governed by the Board, the Chair of which is the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean also serves on the Executive Board of the College. The Board ordinarily consists of a combination of 22 Fellow, Member, Licentiate, and Trainee representatives. Board membership for 2022-2023 was as follows:

BOARD MEMBER	TITLE
Dr Sheelagh O'Brien	Dean
Dr Alex Reid	Vice-Dean
Dr David Madden	Treasurer
Dr Grant Jeffrey	Member
Dr Zakiah Amir	Member
Dr Grant Jeffrey	Member
Dr Letchumikandan Loganathan	Licentiate Representative
Dr Martin Tohill	Fellow
Dr Oghenovo Oghuvbu	Fellow
Dr Sasha Hennessy	Fellow
Prof Ken Addley	Advocacy Strategy Lead
Dr Hannorah (Claire) Rooney	Trainee Representative
Ms Marie Daly	Lay Person
Dr Mutasim Mohammed	Licentiate Representative
Dr Nula Kelly	Member
Dr David Mills	NI Representative
Dr Alan Bray	Chief Examiner
Dr Fiona Kevitt	NSD
Dr Thomas O'Connell	Dir Representative Comp
Prof Mohammed Ranavaya	Faculty rep on RCPI Council

Board meetings held since AGM 2021 were as follows:

14 December 2022, 08 February 2023, 12 April 2023, 21 June 2023, 26 June 2023, 08 September 2023 and 15 November 2023.

New/returning Board members will begin their tenures from the 2023 AGM, with their first Board meeting scheduled for 13 December 2023.

Past Deans of the Faculty include:

Dr J F Eustace	1976 – 1981	Dr J Gallagher	2004 – 2006
Dr J A Smiley	1981 – 1983	Dr K Addley	2006 – 2008
Dr L McElearney	1983 – 1987	Dr P Guéret	2008 – 2010
Dr R Pritchard	1987 – 1990	Dr M Hogan	2010 – 2012
Dr I E Eustace	1990 – 1993	Dr T O'Connell	2012 – 2014
Dr D Courtney	1993 – 1996	Dr D Whelan	2014 – 2016
Dr C E Dick	1996 – 1999	Dr B Hayes	2016 – 2018
Dr W A Eakins	1999 – 2002	Dr L Sisson	2018 – 2020
Dr J Malone	2002 – 2004	Dr R Ryan	2020 – 2022

ENROLMENT 2023

Enrolment into Honorary Fellowship

Neil Greenberg

Enrolment into Fellowship (by Elevation)

Aine Jones

Alastair Glasgow

Alex Reid

Alice Quinn

Alison Sigrist

Amy Carolan

Anthony Corcoran

Conor Loftus

Deirdre Gleeson

Fazween Ibrahim

Francis Eric Ramirez

Grainne McNally

Grant Jeffrey

Hugh Anthony O'Keeffe

Irene Moloney

Joseph Sim

Mark Newson-Smith

Martin Tohill

Mohammed Khan

Nataliya Kononenko

Niamh Byrne

Nicholas van de Water

Peter Noone

Robin Griffiths

Rosa De las Cabras

Sarah Kelly

Sasha Hennessy

Sharon Lim

Sujil Jacon

Zamkiah Amir

Enrolment into LicentiateShip by Exam

Ali Hussain

Alvin Tan

Barbara Swaton

Hani Al-Shuraiqi

Hannorah Rooney

Hatem Abdelmaksoud

Islam Samy Emara

Justine Fenn

Katherine Whately

Kelvin Chong

Khalid Saeed

Khari Fadul

Mazin Yousif

Mohammed Abdalaziz

Muhammad Ibrahim Firdaus Sabtu

N Kalaivarmah Nagalinggam

Nora Allsalloum

Patrick Carr

Rozali Athanasaki

Ruth McCullough

Saima Sayed

Shah Fizzan

Vishwaraj Mhalshekar

Zeenathnisa Aribou

Zulgatnain Ramli

Enrolment into Membership by Exam

Eve Gannon

Moza Al Sarihi

Rachel Mary Keelan

DEAN'S REPORT

DR SHEELAGH O'BRIEN, FACULTY DEAN

In preparing this annual report I reflected on the work achieved this last year and the annual reports for the past three years. What an extraordinary time we have witnessed and experienced during and emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic. The changes wrought on the health of our society continue to be evaluated and indeed being lived through.

As doctors we are still seeing people dealing with the effects of Long Covid on their working lives and some still unable to work at all and no real timelines to getting back to productive working lives. At St Luke's Day last month, here in this wonderful building, we heard of the cumulative burn out effects on healthcare workers post pandemic and where one more "ask" sometimes is just too much.

In September we devoted time at the FOM Autumn Scientific Meeting to focusing on the challenges of supporting those who are neurodivergent in the workforce. As practitioners we continue to grapple with assisting this cohort of workers and their employers deal with and adapt to the changes of the working world since the pandemic.

Looking back at Dr Robert Ryan's report for last year it does seem that one of the positive outcomes of the pandemic is increased recognition of occupational medicine and the value we add to all those at work. The demands on our services remain at a heightened level and in my view, this is to be welcomed for the growth and development of the specialty. It seems that the development of our speciality will be a key issue to occupy our Faculty membership as we head into the next couple of years.

These are just some of the issues that are likely to be ongoing challenges for all of us involved in delivering occupational health services and those of us working actively within the Faculty and its various committees. I believe that the FOM Advocacy programme can be central to keeping these topics to the forefront and I look forward to seeing the developments over the next year. Our strength is in our membership, both here in Ireland and our colleagues overseas, and I would welcome all offers of involvement no matter how little or large that might be.

Finance

I would like to thank Dr David Madden for his work as Honorary Treasurer and steering us so adeptly in adapting to the new financial governance model within RCPI. Last year Dr Robert Ryan in his Dean's report mentioned that the College was embarking on a process of reviewing the governance of the Faculty reserves, in tandem with a wider process to create greater transparency in the cost of running the College

and the allocation of such costs to the various Faculties and Institutes. This process has now successfully concluded, and all Faculties and Institutes have signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU indicates the willingness of all parties to continue to work collaboratively for the benefit of RCPI and the Faculties and Institutes.

All Faculties and Institutes have accepted an adjustment in their reserves to account for historic under allocation of College overheads. We have committed to work towards maintaining a balanced budget going forward and to working with the College to pursue opportunities for new income generation, and thereby diminishing our dependency on any one source of income. As part of this process, agreement has been reached on a clear set of rules governing expenditure on budgeted and unbudgeted items with approvals required for each.

We can clarify that the following procedures apply:

- The various Faculty and Institute accounts are signed off by the President and the Treasurer of the College.
- BDO are the Auditors for annual accounts.
- There are 20 trustees on the College Board also involved in overseeing accounts.
- The role of the Faculty Honorary treasurer is presenting the College completed accounts to the FOM board.

NST

You will see the detailed NST reporting of the progress of our training scheme and our 14 SPR's. I would like to thank Dr Fiona Kevitt for her work in carrying out her NSD duties over the past year. NST is one of the most demanding roles on the Faculty board, and Fiona continues to do an excellent job in delivering a quality training scheme, and attracting very high calibre trainees. I recognise the tremendous support provided by Fiona to our SPRs, as indeed do the network of trainers working within our scheme. You will note from Fiona's report that the Faculty now have formalised reciprocity of training. This I believe is particularly important and relevant to Occupational Medicine and hopefully will help in attracting good candidates who can gain accreditation for recognised training prior to entering the scheme.

Examinations

Having completed nine years as Academic Registrar Dr Alan Bray is now "retiring" from the role although I sincerely hope not leaving us entirely! The Faculty and our speciality have been very fortunate to have had Alan's considered expertise, experience and enormous dedication over the last nine years and those of us who worked with him both in the College Examinations Office and as Trainers and NSDs during his tenure will, I am sure, echo my admiration and sincere thanks to him. We all wish him well in the future.

Over the past year Alan was assisted by two new Deputy Chief Examiners, Dr Susan Hill and Dr Sasha Hennessy. Building on the experience of delivering examinations remotely during the pandemic Alan oversaw a successful move to a hybrid format this year. The aim is to work towards “real patients” for the coming years to improve the OSPE examinations. It should be noted that continuing with a hybrid model is in keeping with the College’s strategic plan on sustainability in limiting unnecessary travel.

Our examinations continue to attract large numbers of candidates outside of this island, in the Middle and Far East and this is testament to the quality of the examination process and the value attached to a qualification from the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland internationally.

We also note that the collaboration with the ICGP in delivering the LFOM preparation course was paused by the ICGP during the 2022-2023 academic year. The Faculty engaged with the ICGP over the course of the past few months to review and relaunch this course but sadly due to the low numbers enrolled it was not feasible to proceed for this academic year. This will be kept under review and I will report back on this item next year.

Alan’s report references the early success of the collaboration between the College and iHeed in delivering the first modules of an introductory diploma course in occupational medicine as mentioned in last year’s annual report. Dr Conor McDonnell is the Programme Lead within the College for this course. The Faculty are supportive of this course and will continue to support both parties to see how the course can aid those who wish to sit the LFOM examination.

I would like to formally welcome Dr Lanre Ogunyemi into his post as the incoming Academic Registrar. Lanre comes to this post with a depth of education and examination experience, and we look forward to working with him in the coming years.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Examinations Office, in particular Iain Martel & Marianna Kyjovska, (past & present Team Leaders) & Lorna Furey as the Examinations Co-ordinator as well as Keith Farrington as the Education Specialist who have been tremendous supports throughout the last year. Keith kindly travelled to Belfast to oversee the successful examination question setting and review session. I will leave you to read Alan’s detailed report for other details.

Education

You will see the report of our Education Committee, chaired by Dr Grant Jeffrey. Grant and the committee have delivered a diverse, high quality and relevant series of meetings throughout the year. I am so grateful

for the hard work that Grant in particular, puts into creating and delivering this program. The feedback is extremely positive, and where there have been issues to improve upon these have been actioned. The meetings continue to be held in hybrid format and I while acknowledge and concur with the views expressed by those attending in person that the personal contact is very important in our small specialty, it is also clear that with a hybrid model, participation rates are higher than at any time when in-person only meetings were the norm. This will be kept under review but for the coming year this format will continue.

Advocacy

I wish to give you an update on the Model of Care document that had been adopted by the Faculty and the actions that were taken to follow through on this. As you will have read in last year's Annual Report the most substantive action has been the work of the Advocacy Subcommittee. Prof Ken Addley heads up this programme and I wish to say a huge thank you to Ken for the work already achieved and the leadership he has provided to date. The main outputs are Resource Articles including "Occupational Medicine what is it?" due to be published on the RCPI website, collaboration with University of Manchester in re-launching THOR Ireland reporting scheme and preparation of a job specification for an Advocacy Officer.

Fellowship of the College

At the 2022 AGM the Board of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine proposed a motion to amend the Standing Orders, to wit:

- adopting recommendations made by the Fellowship Steering Group to introduce equitable fellowship across the 6 specialties within RCPI
- evolving the pathways to fellowship, using best practice, toward continued recruitment of domestic and international expertise.

This was discussed at the AGM last November and approved by the membership. To this end we have received over 31 applications from Fellows of the Faculty to become full Fellows of the College. Our colleagues will be admitted as such later this evening at the annual Admission Ceremony. These doctors will now have the additional post nominals of FRCPI (OM). Having full Fellowship of the College grants voting rights and thereby the opportunity to influence the future direction of the College as a whole. It also gives our specialty a stronger voice in the wider College community to promote the values we hold in the interests of the health of all people at work in this country. As such it fits well with the Advocacy Strategy as a whole.

Trainees

The future of occupational medicine is intrinsically linked to the future doctors who study and practice in this field. As such I would like to acknowledge the importance of our trainees as a vibrant and active part of the Faculty community. Later this morning we will hear from some of the trainees presenting their original research projects. I would like to say a particular thank you to Dr Patrick Carr who stepped down last July after completing two years as SpR representative on the Board. Patrick was a very willing and valuable voice on the board. He is also a member of the FOM Advocacy Committee as well as the Health and Wellbeing subcommittee of the RCPI Training Committee. Due to his work, I am very pleased to announce the inaugural Arthur Eakins Occupational Medicine Award which will be introduced in 2024. In so naming this award we continue the tradition of honouring our late Past Deans. This award aims to recognise the importance of trainee health and wellbeing and encourage trainees to become actively involved in improving and promoting health & wellbeing. It will be awarded to a trainee for a research project or quality improvement initiative which improves and promotes trainee Health & Wellbeing. The medal and education grant worth €1,000 will be funded by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.

The Faculty also recognises the support that we receive from the College and it is appropriate to recognise that we would not be capable of delivering on any of our core activities without the support we receive in this regard. I invite you to read the contributions from Mr Colm Small, Head of Training and Education; Ms Sinéad Lucy, Head of Business Development; Ms Janet Carton, Head of Education; and Dr Trevor Duffy, Director of Healthcare Leadership. Their scope of activity and the support they provide to the Faculty highlights the interdependence and connectivity between the Faculty and the College and the tremendous support we received from them as individuals and from the teams they manage.

Ann has now moved from her position in Education and personally I would like to acknowledge her guidance, knowledge, and wisdom over the years when I served as NSD. Ann remains working with the College on projects and I wish her well in the future.

Finally, just a few personal thank yous.

I would like to say a special thank you to Robert Ryan our immediate Past Dean. Robert has been a steady sounding board when I needed support or advice over the last year as I learned the “ropes” and for this I am very grateful.

I would like to recognise the tremendous work that is done by the Faculty Board, the contribution they make in so many ways and the wise counsel they provide in all matters. In particular I would like to take this occasion to thank the following who are demitting this month as scheduled: Dr Zakiah Amir, Dr Logantah

Letchumik and Dr Mohammad Ranavaya. Prof Ken Addley has kindly agreed to remain on for another year to ensure the safe handover of the Advocacy Committee.

A very special word of thanks to Ms Marie Daly who is demitting after a very successful three-year term as the first Lay Member on the Board. I think it fair to say that the Board was interested to see what a Lay Member might contribute, and our expectations were indeed exceeded. Marie's legal background and natural curiosity and attention to the minutiae ensured that the Board examined issues in a detail that perhaps might not have happened without her input. Marie we are indebted to you and hope that you remain a friend to the Faculty into the future.

I congratulate our Past Dean, and my colleague, Dr Martin Hogan on his election as Faculty Representative to the Council and as such Martin comes back to the Board. I know we will all benefit from his vast Board and College experience and wisdom in all matters pertaining to the Faculty.

I would also like to recognise the tremendous work done by all those within the college who support the Board and in particular our Faculty administrators. At the start of the year, we were supported by Lanchana Chandralal and more recently by John Hunt. Throughout they have been supported by Barbara Conneely, who provides an invaluable depth of knowledge on all matters relating to how the Board and College works! This team has worked tirelessly on our behalf and are deserving of our praise and gratitude.

It would also be amiss of me not to mention others who support the Board from the college, and I know that by naming them I will almost inevitably overlook someone, for which I apologise. Notwithstanding this risk I would like to say a particular thank you to Maria Golden with whom I have worked closely over the last few years in Training. Maria is a reservoir of knowledge of her subject matter and will be sorely missed in that role. However, Maria has now moved to a new role in Health and Wellbeing and we wish her well.

Further thanks to the following Kate Healy, Siobhán Creaton, Niamh O'Sullivan, Siobhán Kearns, Jemma Smith, Phoung-Khanh Bui, Roisin O'Donnell, Hilary Copeland and, all of whom are committed to supporting our Faculty and our Specialty.

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

DR DAVID MADDEN, HONORARY TREASURER

General

A surplus of €36,283 was generated for the 12 months to the end of June 2023. This is €9,596 (36%) higher than last year's surplus of €26,687.

Income

Total Income (excluding investment income) generated for the year end June 2023 was €203,288, an increase of €53,411 (36%) on last years. Income is classed under three board headings:

- Subscriptions and Admission Fees
- Event Fee Income and Sponsorship
- HSE Grant Income

Subscriptions and Admission Fees

Receipts from Subscriptions were €67,495 in 2022-23 versus €70,144 in 2021 - 22, a decrease of €2,648 (4%) on last year.

Faculty admissions totalled €435 in 2022-23 versus €2,425 in 2021-22.

23, 72% of Fellows, 46% of Members, and 34% of Licentiates paid their subscriptions. By comparison, in 2021-22, 68% of Fellows, 50% of Members, and 37% of Licentiates paid their subscriptions.

Event Fee Income and Sponsorship

Event fee income for 2022-23 was €39,730 compared to €14,470 in 2021-22. This was due to larger events for the FOM Autumn Conference, Smiley Lecture and Spring Conference, and more in-person attendees following the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Faculty received €13,396 in LFOM course fees from the ICGP in 2022 - 23, compared with nil received in 2021-22.

HSE Grant Income

This relates to the SLA to deliver training.

The amount of €82,232 is the proportion of the grant relating to the Faculty to cover cost of overheads and administrative running costs. This has increased by €19,424 when compared to 2021- 22.

Investments

Investments held by the College at the end of June 2023 were €8,839,497 of which €391,422 were apportioned to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine. The investments apportioned to the Faculty increased by €9,553 in 2022-23, compared with a decrease of €15,795 in 2021-22.

Costs

Costs are categorised as follows:

- Direct Costs, which are staffing and administration costs.
- Overhead recharge, which is for rent, insurance, light, heat, etc, and, to cover the provision of the services of Finance, Facilities, IT and HR, etc.

Direct Costs

Direct Costs total €105,622 for the year, an increase of €46,440 on 2021-22.

Included under direct costs are:

- room hire & catering, which increased by €17,482
- wages and salaries, which increased by €12,397
- Professional Fees, which increased by €12,303
- travel & accommodation, which decreased by €9,190
- IT infrastructure, which increased €13,166

The higher spend in 2022-23 versus 2021 -

22 is due to overall increased event activity, especially AV requirements (IT infrastructure), and consultancy costs for advocacy.

Overhead recharge

Overhead recharge of €70,897 has been charged to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine accounts for 2022-23, compared with €48,143 in 2021- 22.

The increase relates to overheads associated with events and general overhead increases throughout the year (support staff costs, utilities, insurance). This constitutes 0.9% of the overall College overhead

Profit & Loss					
Company: Faculty of Occupational Medicine			 FACULTY OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE <small>SCHOOL COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONALS OF IRELAND</small>		
Financial Year Ending: 2023					
Calendar Period: 12 - June					
Dimension: Cost Centre Element: FOM - SLA,Occupational Medicine					
	Actual 30/06/2023	Budget 30/06/2023	€ Var	Prior Yr Actual 30/06/2022	€ Var
Income					
Fee Income	53,126	21,500	31,626	14,470	38,656
Subscriptions Income	67,495	59,006	8,489	70,144	-2,648
Admissions/Conferring Income	435	3,750	-3,315	2,425	-1,990
HSE Main SLA Funding	82,232	59,162	23,070	62,808	19,424
	203,288	143,418	59,870	149,847	53,441
Direct Costs					
Direct Room Hire	0	0	0	-823	823
Direct Catering	-24,381	-16,500	-7,881	-5,194	-19,187
Direct Beverages	-26	0	-26	-908	882
Direct Wages & Salaries	-37,705	-54,001	16,296	-27,217	-10,488
Direct PRSI	-4,156	-5,967	1,811	-3,002	-1,153
Direct Pension	-1,550	-3,600	2,050	-1,069	-482
Direct Employee Benefits	-402	0	-402	-129	-273
Direct Professional Fees	-12,303	-10,000	-2,303	0	-12,303
Direct Accommodation	-2,950	-9,000	6,050	-8,825	5,875
Direct Travel - Mileage	-45	0	-45	-830	785
Direct Travel - Taxis	0	0	0	-451	451
Direct Travel - Flights	0	0	0	-4,430	4,430
Direct Travel - Other	-2,473	-9,000	6,527	-46	-2,427
Direct Subsistence	0	-2,100	2,100	-77	77
Direct Stationery	0	-460	460	-221	221
Direct Photography	-1,230	-1,120	-110	0	-1,230
Direct Presentations, Gifts, Medals	-2,068	-2,000	-68	-1,214	-854
Direct IT Operations: IT Managed Service	0	0	0	-556	556
Direct IT Infrastructure: Hardware	-1,255	0	-1,255	0	-1,255
Direct IT Telecommunications: Data	-11,911	-3,668	-8,243	0	-11,911
Direct Subscriptions	0	-2,900	2,900	-1,973	1,973
Direct Miscellaneous Costs	-3,207	-42,900	39,693	-2,258	-949
	-105,662	-163,217	57,555	-59,222	-46,440
Gross Profit	97,627	-19,799	117,425	90,625	7,001
Indirect Costs					
Overhead Allocation	-70,897	0	-70,897	-48,143	-22,754
Investment Income & Bank Interest Received					
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Valuation of Investments	9,553	0	9,553	-15,795	25,349
NET INCOME(LOSS)	36,283	-19,799	56,082	26,687	9,596

Balance Sheet**Company: Faculty of Occupational Medicine**

Financial Year Ending: 2023

Calendar Period: 12 - June 2023


**FACULTY OF
OCCUPATIONAL
MEDICINE**
ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

	FYE 30/06/2023	FYE 30/06/2022
Fixed Assets		
Investments at Cost	391,422	381,869
	391,422	381,869
Current Assets		
Bank & Cash	800,457	844,363
Debtors Ledger Control Account	13,396	0
Accrued Income	82,232	62,808
Intercompany - Amounts Owed from College	122,166	81,601
	1,018,251	988,772
Current Liabilities		
Creditors Control Account - Trade	-2,773	-671
Accruals	-647	0
	-3,420	-671
Net Current Assets	1,014,831	988,101
Net Assets	1,406,253	1,369,970
Surplus & Reserves		
Retained Reserves B/F	1,369,970	1,343,283
Profit & Loss Account	36,283	26,687
Equities and Reserves	1,406,253	1,369,970

NSD REPORT

DR FIONA KEVITT, NSD

Clinical posts in Ireland 2022-2023

13 funded Posts. All funding is now allocated through the WHWU, to ensure trainees are on NCHD contracts.

- 3 First Years
- 3 Second Years
- 3 Third Years
- 5 Fourth Years*

*1 fourth year is being funded in a stand-alone post in order to complete their remaining 4 months of training.

1 SpR resigned from the scheme in July 2023 to pursue a different specialty. This post was then filled from the panel. Two SpRs have applied for reciprocity of training; one has been granted the maximum of 12 months in recognition of time spent in a recognised Occupational Medicine training practice; the other was granted 4 months in recognition of time spent in a recognised Occupational Medicine training practice.

Trainees in Research

No trainees are currently in formal/out of scheme research.

Trainees outside of Ireland

N/A

Recruitment and Selection

- Applicants: 7
- Shortlisted: 7
- Interviewed: 6 (one applicant withdrew)
- Appointed: 2 (subsequently 3 due to one resignation)

HST Interviews

Interviews were held on the 01 February 2023 in person. Dr Fiona Kevitt and Dr Declan Whelan took part as panel members and Ms was independent chair on the day. Six candidates were interviewed, and two

candidates were appointed. Four candidates were panelled and one of those was subsequently appointed following the resignation of an existing SpR.

Evaluations

Evaluations took place on the 06May 2023. All assessments were held online through Zoom. Dr David Mills acted as Extern for all PYEs. The breakdown of evaluations is below:

- 12 EYE
- 1 PYE

CSCSTs Awarded

One CSCST awarded in July 2023

International Clinical Fellowship Programme 2024/2025 and 2025/2026

There were 4 applications to the international fellowship programme for 2024/2025. 2 were shortlisted and interviewed remotely via Zoom and onsite in Dubai on 24th September. Dr Fiona Kevitt and Dr Sasha Hennessy took part remotely as panel members and Dr Anna Clarke was there in person as independent chair. None of the candidates were deemed appointable and were advised to re-apply after gaining further knowledge and experience in Occupational Medicine. There are 2 applicants from 2022/2023 who have deferred their place until 2024, pending funding approval and/or passing the LFOM.

Training Site Inspections

RCPI have transitioned to a structured site accreditation model and away from hospital/site inspections. In all, 3 new training sites have applied for recognition as a training site. These assessments will take place in the autumn. One site will be re-assessed following implementation of recommendations from previous assessment. One site due to be assessed in November 2023 alongside the wider hospital accreditation to which they are attached. This leaves a potential total of 20 training sites available for the 2024/25 intake.

Study Days

02.09.2022	Induction	Colette Cassidy/Maria Golden
07.10.2022	FOM Autumn Conference	RCPI
11.11.2022	Smiley Day	RCPI
25.11.2022	WSV: Garda Shooting Range	Dr Ovo Oghuvbu
02.12.2022	Organisational Health / Team Dynamics	Online
30.03.2023	WSV: Lidl	Dr Robert Ryan

21.04.2023	FOM Spring Conference	RCPI
08.05.2023	WSV: Dawn Meat Factory Visit	Dr Deirdre Gleeson
23.06.2023	WSV: RTE	Dr Robert Ryan

All study days/site visits have reverted to in person events, although some stand-alone tutorials and teaching sessions will remain virtual. There is an expectation that SpRs will attend these unless they have a valid reason not to.

STC Meetings

There were four STC meetings held between July 2022 and July 2023. The following is a summary of some of the discussions:

- The RCPI Trainer Project
- The Occupational Medicine Outcomes Based Education Curriculum Revision Project
- Specific tutorials for SpRs
- Training course for SpRs
- Proposed Study days

SDR

For the period July 2022 – June 2023 we had a total of 1 Application received from the IMC for our review and 1 is still in progress.

EXAMINATIONS REPORT

DR ALAN BRAY, CHIEF EXAMINER

The Faculty has been able to expand its clinical exams now that we have emerged from the severe manifestations of Covid-19 and are seeking a suitable database of “real patients” to enable candidates to demonstrate their skills in detecting disease as well as making decisions about their effects within the workplace.

In addition to handling on-going exam diets the Examinations Committee with the expert help of specialist College staff continue to concentrate to improve the assessment processes. Formal meetings of the Examinations Committee were held either in Dublin or remotely at least quarterly on the morning of FOM Board meetings. There was a very successful meeting at the Business School of Ulster University in Belfast on Friday 0808 October 2023 to consolidate the written questions database prior to the Board meeting.

In November 2022 the newly appointed Deputy Chief Examiners, Dr Susan Hill & Dr Sasha Hennessey stepped into the shoes previously occupied by Dr Alex Reid and Dr Hemal Thakore and are mainly responsible for the preparation for MCQs and the OSPEs respectively. In line with other educational establishments and College Faculties we have successfully implemented anti-plagiarism software for the submitted portfolios. Through the diligence of the Examinations Team and particularly Iain Martell & Marianna Kyjovska, (past & present Team Leaders) & Lorna Furey as the Examinations Co-ordinator we have incorporated previously submitted portfolios into the screening system.

The 2023 LFOM and MFOM Examinations were conducted with a mixed format, virtually and in person. The Written exams were held online via Remote Invigilation (TestReach), and portfolios were submitted and marked online. The LFOM Portfolio Viva Exam continued to be held online via Zoom. The MFOM OSPE continues to be held over two days, with the written component taking place on the first day of the exam. Both days of the OSPE were held in person at the Beaumont Hospital. For Day 2 of the OSPE six actors and two data interpretations were used instead of live patients this year. The MFOM Viva dealing with a submitted policy portfolio was a new component added to the MFOM Examinations this year, which was ran in person and held alongside Day 2 of the OSPE.

The numbers initially enrolling for both the Licentiate and Membership written exams were similar to previous years although the pass mark in the initial written exams were disappointing at 49% & 13% for the exams respectively. There has been a very thorough review of the level of question difficulty for the SBAs

and although we are very satisfied the appropriate standards have been applied a larger exercise will be conducted soon when resources are available.

Of a total of 22 submitting written portfolios for the LFOM 89% were successful and the four MFOM candidates all achieved the acquired standard. The written portfolio passes are still heavily centred on Irish candidates.

Of the 20 remote vivas conducted by our truly international group of experienced examiners for the LFOM all but one candidate achieved the pass mark of 60%. Of the four MFOM portfolio viva candidates three were successful.

It is hoped candidate numbers and Faculty resources will allow alternate venues for OSPEs in the Middle and Far East. Minimal changes have been made to the wording of the exam regulations to enhance clarity in portfolio submissions and marking.

The new introductory diploma course run by iHeed & the College has been highly successful in enrolling large numbers of candidates from many areas of the globe. The Faculty will continue working with the iHeed& College staff to see how their course can aid those taking LFOM examinations.

Acknowledgements

I personally would like to express my thanks for the unstinting support offered by the Deans, Deputy Chief Examiners, Examinations Committee and Faculty Board during my tenure. I am indebted to the enthusiastic and highly professional examiner groups in the Middle & Far East and Prof David Koh's high level of support as an unstinting external referee. I am saddened by the recent untimely demise of Dr Yvette Jaramillo who has ably co-ordinated the development of examiners and hopefully soon examinations in the Philippines.

Thanks are due to all those who have contributed to the content and running of the examinations. The College Educationalists continue advising on exam development and Keith Farrington, Sinead Freeman and her College Examinations Department in general are due special recognition for their support and guidance.

This is my ninth and last year as Chief Examiner and I am pleased to hand over the role to my colleague, Dr Lanre Ogunyeme, who I am sure will continue to develop our examinations and maintain the widely approved standards in Occupational Medicine.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DR GRANT JEFFERY, CONVENER OF MEETINGS

The following report outlines the hybrid event activity for the academic year 2022-23. There were two completed Occupational Medicine events in 2023 at the time of providing this update.

Events, Themes and Topics:

21 April 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Spring Conference

Theme(s): Focusing on the Future.

Topics Covered: Employment Law, Protected Disclosures, Data Protection Law, Human Resource Issues, Emerging Infections, THOR, Gender, Lifestyle Medicine, Obesity.

29 September 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference

Theme(s): Mental Health, Neurodiversity, Intoxicants, and Women's Health in the Workplace.

Topics Covered: Personality Disorders, Neurodiversity, Eating Disorders, Intoxicants, Menopause.

Event Evaluation:

21 April 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Spring Conference

- 154 registrations received. 146 attendees (57 in-person, 89 virtual)
- 81 attendees would recommend, 0 attendees would not recommend.
- Suggestions for topics included: Neurodiversity, Mental Health, Personality Disorders, Women's Health, and Occupational Cancer.

29 September 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference

- 187 registrations received. 175 attendance (61 attended in-person , 114 virtual)
- 72 attendees would recommend, 0 attendees would not recommend.
- Suggestions for future topics included: Ophthalmology, Rheumatology, Cardiology, Respiratory, Irish Legislation, and Burnout.

Event Attendance by Membership Category:

21 April 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Spring Conference

- Fellow 38
- Member 34
- BST 0
- HST 13

- PCS 17

29 September 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference

- Fellow 23
- Member 28
- BST 2
- HST 5
- PCS 9

Conclusions & Key Insights:

- Positive feedback received for the Spring Conference 2023 and the Autumn Conference 2023.
- Hybrid events remain extremely popular, and preferred option for attendees.
- The moderators linked together the in-person and virtual attendees/audiences well.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

PROF KEN ADDLEY OBE, CHAIR FACULTY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Members

Prof Ken Addley OBE (Chair)

Dr. Sheelagh O'Brien (Dean)

Dr. Alex Reid (Dean Designate)

Dr. David Mills

Dr. Eoin O'Mahony

Dr. Ovo Oghuvbu

Dr Nuala Kelly

Dr Tom Brannigan

Ms Niamh O'Sullivan (RCPI)

Ms Mairead Heffron (RCPI)

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the launch of the Faculty's new strategy, *Advocating for the Value of Occupational Health in Ireland 2023 – 2026*, at its Annual General Meeting in November 2022.

The aim of the strategy is to enhance understanding of what Occupational Health is and its importance and relevance to the health and well-being of the nation. The strategy lays out an action plan to empower and mobilise Occupational Health Professionals, as well as business and government stakeholders, to explore opportunities for access to better and more equitable occupational health to meet changing global demands.

The strategy was launched by Dr Robert Ryan, Dean of the Faculty, Dr Zoe Healey, Associate Partner at Dotio Health and Professor Ken Addley OBE, Chair of the Faculty Advocacy Subgroup, at the home of the Royal College of Physicians at No 6 Kildare Street. It represents our call to action to work with our membership, the college, and all of the other stakeholders to take forward the OH agenda within the country.

The strategy was also welcomed by Tánaiste [Deputy Prime Minister, Ireland] Leo Varadkar via video message at the launch event, he said: "We spend a lot of time in the workplace, so it makes sense to give Occupational Medicine the attention it deserves. Managing employee health is just as important as managing other functions and resources in any organisation."

The committee held a number of meetings during the year where discussions as part of the implementation of the strategy action plan included the following:

- **Advocacy Officer** – a job specification has been drafted.
- **RCPI Website Faculty Pages** – a link button to the Faculty home page for our Publications has been actioned.
- **Resource Articles** – “Occupational Medicine what is it?” was compiled and is due for publication on the RCPI website. “A Career in Occupational Medicine” is being finalised. As is “OPRA reporting in Ireland”.
- **THOR Ireland** - the Faculty have supported a re-launch of this reporting scheme with the University of Manchester.

A number of other contacts have been made with interested groups and the Chair is due to speak at an OH nurses conference at the end of November. An article on “Advocacy for OH” was published in the October edition of the Irish Medical Journal.

I want to thank all of the members of the committee who made contributions and supported the work of advocacy during the year. Thanks also to Barbara Conneely and John Hunt for their administration support.

RCPI SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS:

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

COLM SMALL, HEAD OF FUNCTION, POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND EDUCATION, RCPI

Purpose

The overall aim of the Postgraduate Training and Examinations Function is to pursue excellence in all that we do as we support doctors. Key parts to that include the delivery and supports for training, examinations, accreditation (including the Irish Medical Council), projects, initiatives and quality assurance / quality improvement as it relates to training, supports in health and wellbeing and supports for the effective operation and management of RCPI's six Faculties and Institutes.

The College and the PTE Function prides itself in being responsive and innovative.

Training and Faculties Office (TFO)

The purpose of the TFO is to support the key activities of the RCPI Training Bodies. It is responsible for providing high-quality administrative services to the Boards and various Committees of the six Faculties and Institutes.

TFO is also responsible for the delivery of the RCPI postgraduate training programmes. The purpose of the office is to be a model for excellence and leadership in the development and delivery of postgraduate specialist training programmes, emphasising high quality service, efficiency, effectiveness and excellence in Trainer and Trainee engagement on behalf of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the other five Faculties and Institutes: Faculty of Paediatrics, Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Faculty of Pathology and the Institute of Medicine (IoM).

The office supports approximately 1,750 trainees and 1,300 trainers in the administration of the College's 29 training programmes. In terms of Occupational Medicine, this is the four year HST training programme.

The office also runs four RCPI Regional Offices across the country.

HST Completing Trainees

The Faculty graduated 1 CSCSTs in summer 2023.

Examinations Department

The purpose of the Department is to develop, manage, coordinate and deliver the College's examinations both nationally and internationally. The College's Membership and Licentiate examinations have a global footprint.

As well as leading in the development of virtual platforms and classrooms for education and assessment, RCPI was the first training body in Ireland or the UK to introduce high stakes written examination by remote invigilation. We did so in March 2020. Others followed our lead such as the Royal Colleges in the UK. We have continued to successfully run our written examinations by remote invigilation over the last year ramping up to and overtaking pre-pandemic examination candidate numbers.

We have increased our capacity in examination offerings and we continue to support our trainees in their career progression while at the same time looking after all our international and other examination candidates.

Over the last year the College has engaged with our colleagues in Europe and won the business to support and deliver an end-to-end examination solution for the European Board Examination in Endocrinology, CESMA – provision of their written exam at HST level. The College is really proud of this deeper partnership with our European partners. CESMA is an advisory body of the UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES (UEMS). It was created in 2007 with an aim to provide recommendation and advice on the organisation of European examinations for medical specialists at European level. We are looking to deepen our relationship with them.

In terms of Occupational Medicine MFOM examination numbers, below are for the last three years.

Licentiate of The Faculty of Occupational

The next examination LFOM Written will take place in January 2024 and the applications will open in September 2023.

Membership of The Faculty of Occupational Medicine

The next examination will be MFOM Written will take place in January 2024 and the applications will open in September 2023.

MFOM OSPE	Total	
	Candidates	Pass Rate
2021		
June	13	62%
2022		
June	8	50%

2023		
June	4	75%

Accreditation and Improvement Projects Department

As part of an overall approach to improving quality in postgraduate medical education and training, RCPI and its constituent training bodies are committed to a programme of continuous quality improvement. This Department leads out on these key projects as we support and develop the best training we can provide as a College.

Projects and initiatives are achieved through driving and developing standards in the quality of postgraduate medical education and training, ensuring improved standards are maintained, and delivering robust processes that will assure and engage the medical profession and the public about the standards and quality of postgraduate medical education and training in Ireland. .

A key priority for this Department is our system of Training Site QAQI. This model works on a five-year timeline for each training site and it is chaired by an extern from outside of Ireland. There are embedded annual quality checks.

We conducted a full review of this area with Occupational Medicine in summer 2023.

The Department also supports the Medical Council accreditation for all of the RCPI's postgraduate training bodies and programmes as well as the assessment of applications to the Specialist Division of the Register.

An example of a successful project worked on over the last year includes the RCPI Trainer Programme. This important project started in 2021 and saw the College's first ever Trainer Conference held in December 2022. We have our second Conference in November 2023. The project has also included the rolling out of more enhanced supports for trainers.

Health and Wellbeing

Our health and wellbeing service is a key support for those trainees who are experiencing challenge or difficulty. Apart from supporting individual doctors, this office has been proactive with various initiatives and projects. It is also supporting a number of trainers.

Over the last year a Review has been conducted. The College has recommitted itself to supporting trainees in difficulty and a manager will continue to deliver the support infrastructure to support trainees and those who support them (e.g. NSDs, RPDs, Dean, RCPI staff). The Manager will ensure that there is excellent communication transfer between the College, hospital sites, the HSE NCHD Hub (this sits under the

Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit) and the HSE National Doctors Training Programme to ensure that supports are maintained throughout the individual's training programme. Appropriate referrals for additional care will be advised to the HSE as the employer.

GLOBAL TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIPS

SINÉAD LUCEY, HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RCPI

International Medical Graduate Training Initiative – Sponsored

The International Medical Graduate Training Initiative continues to provide a route for sponsored overseas doctors to experience structured postgraduate medical training in the Irish public health service. It enables suitably qualified medical Trainees from the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) to undertake a fixed period of training in clinical services in Ireland. Trainees participating in these programmes are fully sponsored by their governments for the duration of their training. Income generated through the programme is invested into improvement projects that benefit all RCPI training programmes. RCPI offers two training streams under this Initiative: Residency and Clinical Fellowship training.

International Residency Programme

The International Residency Training Programme (IRTP) is designed for doctors who have completed their internship. This program allows doctors to do their Residency training in Ireland, enabling them to acquire a qualification equivalent to the Saudi/Arab Board and become members of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Currently, this program is available for Internal Medicine and Paediatrics, with plans for Histopathology to be offered next year. There have been nine graduates to date of the IRTP.

International Clinical Fellowship Programme

The International Clinical Fellowship Programme (ICFP) offers structured, curriculum-based specialist training for post-Residency doctors who wish to pursue higher training in their chosen speciality or sub-specialty. There are currently forty-six on the programme across all specialities. There are thirty-eight speciality programmes offered across RCPI Faculties and Institutes. Now in its ninth year, a hundred and forty-nine trainees have graduated from the Clinical Fellowship programmes and returned home to embed their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the health services of their home countries. However, there has been a limited number of trainees in the field of Occupational Medicine joining the International Clinical Fellowship Programme. This can be attributed to the speciality being in its early stages of development in the Middle East, making it challenging for trainees to gain exposure to or access the necessary training required for eligibility. Additionally, there have been difficulties in passing the LFOM exam, which is necessary for joining the programme. Thus far, there has been only one international fellowship graduate in Occupational Medicine.

International Conferring Ceremony Dubai 2023:

On 23 September, 41 specialist doctors in Dubai celebrated a significant career milestone as they joined a global community of Members of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

The graduates from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates successfully completed the International Residency Training Programme or the International Clinical Fellowship programme to become Members of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

Her excellency Ms Alison Milton, Irish Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, and colleagues from SEHA, the Dubai Health Authority, SSMC, Ministry for Health, Abu Dhabi, Emirates Health Service, the Saudi Commission, and Enterprise Ireland, as well as regional advisors attended the event to celebrate this outstanding achievement. Ambassador Milton spoke of the important relationship between Ireland and the United Arab Emirates to deliver medical education and training.

“We value our ongoing relationship with the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the world leading medical education you provide to our outstanding doctors. Speaking to the graduates she said: “You are highly specialised doctors and your contribution to healthcare both in Ireland and on returning home is immense. You make a difference every day through your work and we are so grateful to you.”



EQUALS Initiative Focus on Zambia: On 06 September 2023, Bernard Gloster, CEO of the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Professor Mary Horgan, President of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, signed a Memorandum of Understanding, extending their partnership to deliver the EQUALS initiative for a further three years. Now in its tenth year, the EQUALS Initiative is a joint venture between RCPI and the HSE that supports training and equipment needs in low to middle income countries and those countries experiencing humanitarian crises. In August 2022, January 2023 and February 2023, a total of 4 additional shipments of decommissioned medical equipment were sent from hospitals in Ireland to Lusaka, Zambia. In total 17 40ft containers of equipment have been donated to date. The equipment was tested pre and post shipment by clinical engineers of the EQUALS Initiative, before it was distributed across the country to larger teaching hospitals and smaller health clinics. Through the collaboration between RCPI and the Zambia College of Medicine and Surgery (ZACOMS), RCPI continues to provide access to online courses to Zambian trainees on various specialist training programmes, which comprises part of their core curriculum. RCPI and the HSE are also currently working together with ZACOMS to assist in developing their strategy plan for the future as they continue to grow. Both funding and resource support is being offered for this process.

Digital Marketing approach:

As of FY24, RCPI has taken a digital-first marketing approach to support the continued growth and awareness of the International Medical Graduate Training Initiative. Utilising new systems and a new way of marketing ourselves, we are embracing this new digital-first approach as a means to reach our target audience wherever they spend their time online. Having now used this strategy for Fellowship and Residency programs, we are now seeing lots of new doors open to us for not only marketing ourselves but also pushing specific specialties lacking in applications, it allows us to pivot as needed and invest more granularly.

To date (May 1st – August 31st) our ads have been seen 3,712,015 times and have been clicked 53,705 times leading to an overall average click-through rate (CTR) of 1.45%. We have seen a total of 540 conversions meaning 540 people have followed our ads and either signed into or created accounts on Quercus meaning a conversion rate of 1.01% across all platforms.

Membership and Fellowship:

47 doctors were invited to apply for fellowship from Occupational Medicine under the new pathways to Fellowship and 29 applications were received. A range of doctors were invited, those with a CSCST, those on the SDR on our Specialist PC Schemes and some Faculty Fellows. The response was extremely positive highlighted that doctors in Occupational Medicine value FRCPI and being involved with the college.

RCPI EDUCATION

JANET CARTON, HEAD OF PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS, RCPI

Education Projects:

Mandatory Teaching

The new Teaching Programme for BST will launch for year 1 trainees in July 2023 which will replace the generic mandatory courses. Trainees will be given access to online teaching components which will be released every quarter. Each quarter will round up with a 90-minute virtual tutorial to help consolidate that quarter's learning. Trainees will be allocated to Tutorial Groups and assigned a Clinical Tutor that they will stay with for the duration of their BST Training Programme.

Simulation Governance

A Simulation Steering Committee had its first meeting in February 2023. The steering committee is the decision-making body in RCPI for implementation of a simulation strategy and for ongoing decisions relating to simulation-based education. All of RCPI's six training bodies are represented on the committee and includes BST and HST trainees. The committee is chaired by Prof Dara Byrne, RCPI Clinical Lead for Simulation and there is a place available for an Occupational Medicine representative.

The first RCPI Simulation Governance Steering Committee Train the Trainers Day is due to take place on 25 May in the ICAPSS simulation facility Galway University Hospital. A number of programmes for trainers in simulation are planned for 23/24.

OBE

Dr Fiona Kevitt was appointed as the clinical lead for the revision of the HST curriculum.

Examination Development

An examination writing workshop was held in September 2022, this was well attended and resulted in a series of new questions for the membership bank.

Education Programmes - Development and Delivery

QQI

The first intakes of the newly QQI validated Postgraduate Certificate in Quality Improvement Leadership in Healthcare commenced in September 2022.

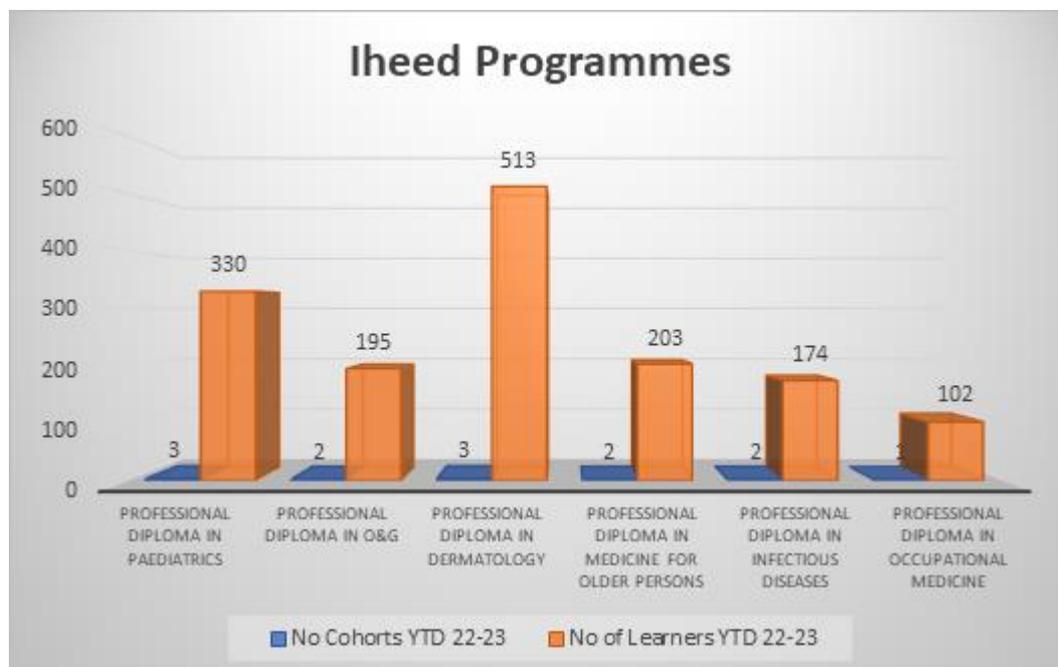
Two further programmes were validated by Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) as an NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Certificate in 2022/2023 - the PG Certificate in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the PG Certificate in Cancer Genetics and Genomics.

iHeed/RCPI Partnership

The partnership with iHeed continues to be a huge success in terms of programmes delivered and revenue generated. There are now six live programmes:

- Professional Diploma in Paediatrics
- Postgraduate Certificate in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Professional Diploma in Dermatology
- Professional Diploma in Medicine for the Older Person
- Professional Diploma in Infectious Diseases
- Professional Diploma in Occupational Medicine

The table below outlines the collaborative programmes developed and delivered with iHeed in 2022-2023. There were 13 cohorts of the six programmes with over 1,500 learners.



Revenues were strong with iHeed this year a total projected income of € 1.49 million.

Quality Improvement

Twelve teams from HSE paediatric, maternity and acute adult medical and surgical settings and one self-funding private hospital team recently graduated from the 5th Irish cohort of the Situation Awareness For Everyone (SAFE) patient safety programme. Each team implemented or improved a bespoke safety huddle in their clinical setting and focused on measuring the impact on key safety measures. In May, RCPI hosted an inaugural SAFE Sustainability Workshop to draw on the learning and achievements of SAFE 2018-23 Teams. Wave 6 of the programme, funded this year by HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate for HSE teams, will commence in September 2023 with 10 acute hospital teams and one self-funding private hospital.

Two cohorts of the RCPI Quality Improvement in Action course ran virtually with 20 and 12 learners respectively. Three learners from CHI Crumlin attended one cohort and worked on complementary projects in respiratory medicine. Two paediatric non-consultant doctors completed the second cohort.

The QI Scholarship in Residence Programme took place with five scholars from a range of specialities including Obstetrics, Psychiatry and Gastroenterology. The programme helps specialist registrars develop as clinical leaders through mentoring and bespoke QI training.

New Course in 2022-2023

Certificate in Clinical Care for Residential Facilities launched in September 2022 and was designed for General Practitioners, physicians, Directors of Nursing, Clinical Nurse Managers and Persons in Charge who wanted to develop their expertise in the care of older people living in residential care and collaborate with other healthcare professionals and experts to drive improvements in this area. The programme covers clinical care of the older person, including the management of dementia, therapeutics, the prescribing and de-prescribing of medication where appropriate and end of life care. It also provides learners with an opportunity to gain an understanding of best practice when communicating with residents, families, and carers and when working as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

The Reflective Practice Guide was developed as an introduction to the theory of reflective practice and to provide practical examples of how to enrich your own reflective practice. The guide is beneficial to those with little or no experience of reflective practice and may also direct those seasoned practitioners into novel areas to use this skill. Reflective practice can be applied to many domains of a physician's practice, from clinical decisions, patient interactions and teamwork, to personal development and lifelong learning.

Introduction to Telemedicine and Digital Health module was launched in early 2023. The aim of the programme is to provide learners with foundational knowledge of Telemedicine and Digital Health and to enhance the outcomes of telemedical consultations for both patients and clinicians in Ireland.

Delirium Recognition and Response was redesigned and redeveloped in collaboration with colleagues from the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland. This online course is composed of six short modules designed to improve the screening and diagnosis of delirium, awareness of risks of developing delirium, management of patients with delirium, and arranging appropriate continuous care.

Mandatory courses

The Occupational mandatory courses delivered during 2022-2023 include the following:

- Ethics Foundation
- Ethics for Occupational Medicine
- An introduction to Health and Research methods
- HST Leadership in Clinical Practice
- Mastering Communication
- Performing Audit
- Wellness Matters

Other courses open to Trainees, Members or Fellows in Occupational Medicine in 2022-2023 were:

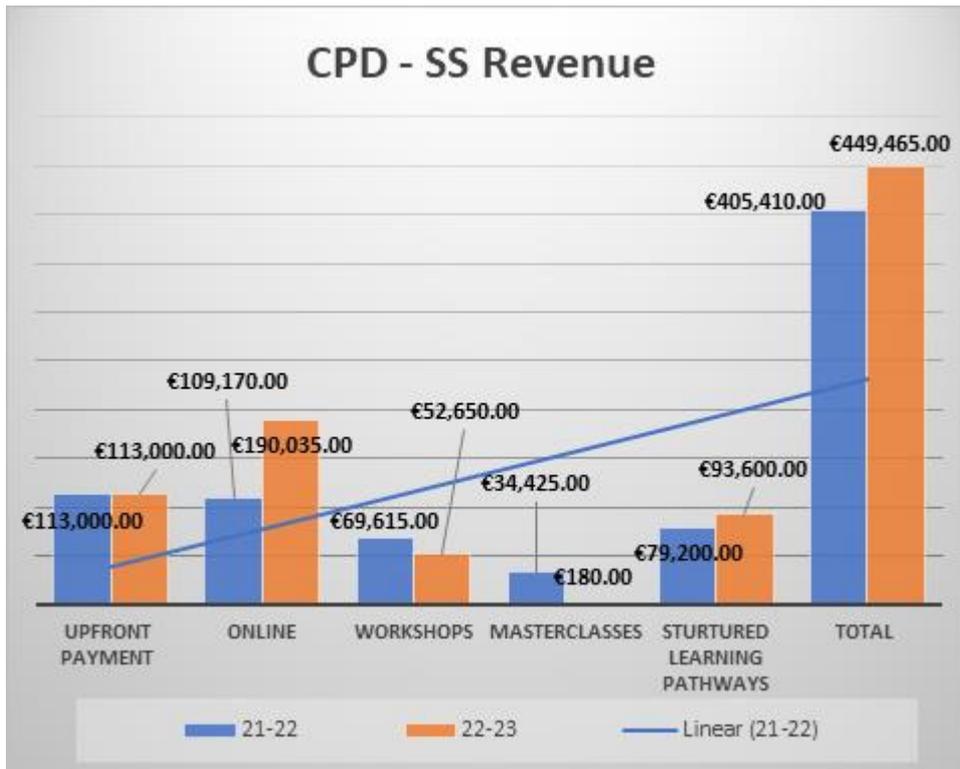
- QI in Action
- Introduction to data analysis using SPSS
- Certificate in Essential Leadership for New Consultants
- Certificate in Cancer Genetics
- Physicians as Trainers – Essential Skills for Trainers

There are also a large number of standalone online courses available.

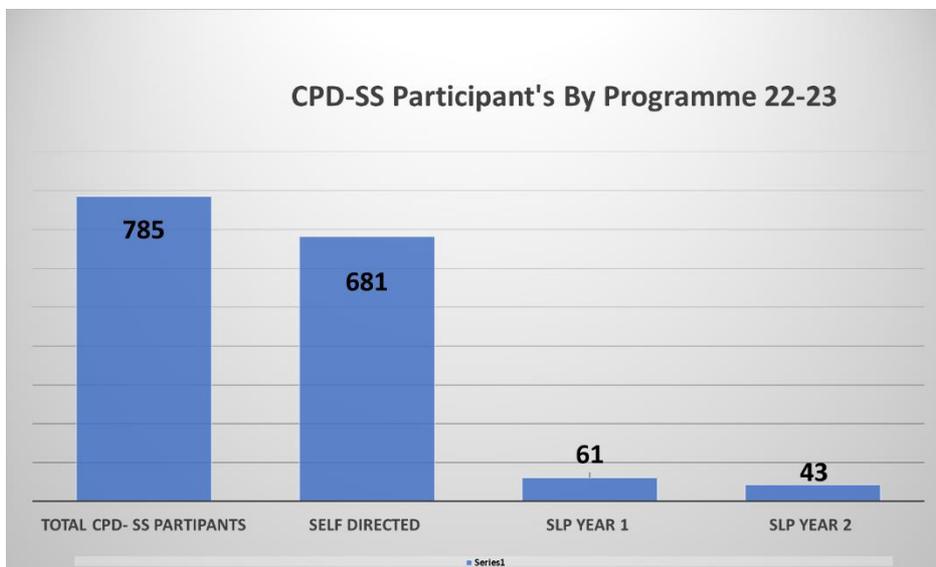
CPD-SS

The CPD-SS programme continues to grow in terms of participants and in revenue year on year.

The forecasted revenue for year end 22-23 for CPD- SS is approx. €449K which is almost 10% increase on last year.



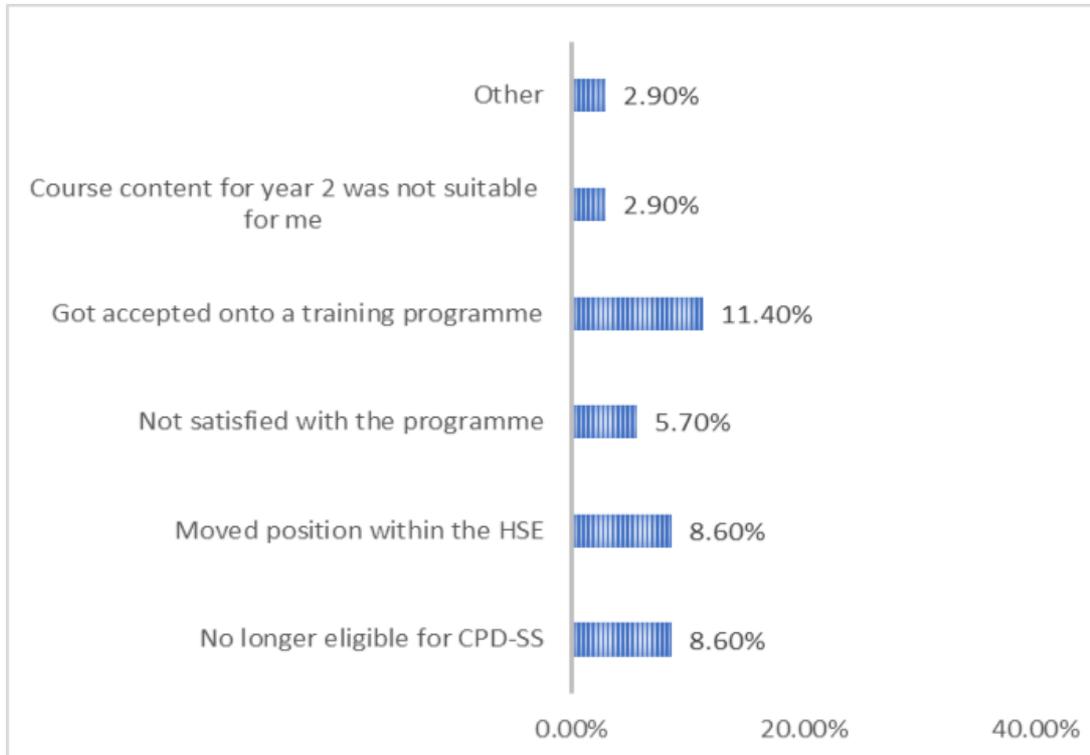
Total number of learners on the programme reached the highest intake for RCPI since the programme began with a total of 785 NCHDs signing up to our CPD- SS scheme.



The structured learning pathways (SLP) programme which launched in 2021-2022 saw only approx. 50% of learners progress from SLP Yr1 to SLP Yr2. The reason doctors gave when surveyed as to why this was the case was varied. Of those who provided feedback, the most prevalent reasons cited included being accepted on to a formal Training Programme, moving position within the HSE and no longer being eligible for CPD-SS. One respondent noted that “While the courses provided are very helpful and important they

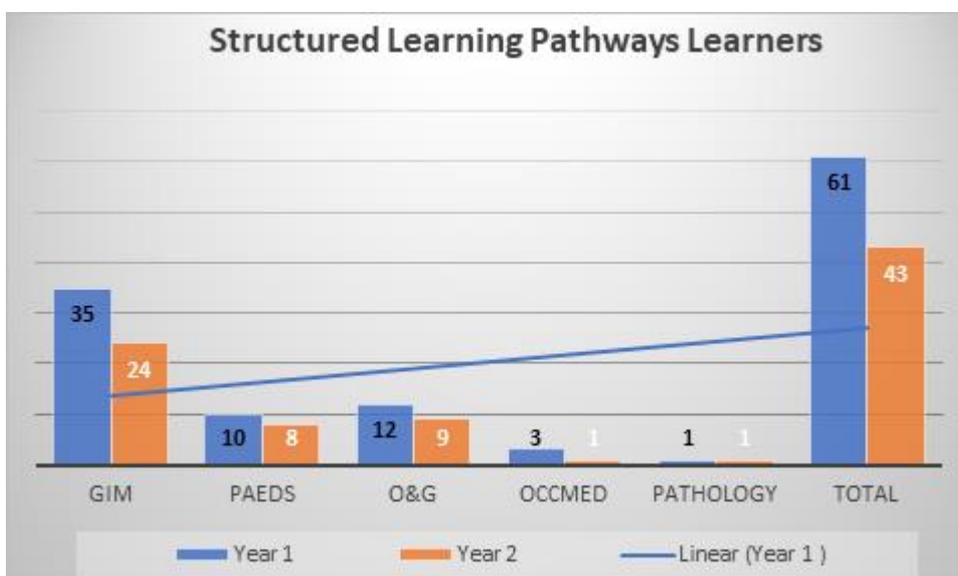
may not necessarily meet every member’s needs and interests. The selection of courses was not optional I had to repeat some courses I have done in the past.” However, 71.4% did report that they would recommend the CPD-SS programme to a colleague.

Reasons for not progressing to Year 2 of the CPD-SS structured learning programme cited.



Engagement to date on the programme in terms of completing online content and attending tutorials has been mixed.

The table below outlines the total number of learners on the SLP years 1 and 2.



Learners used their CPD-SS vouchers for many RCPI workshops and online courses.

This year 12 virtual workshops ran between October and April.

- Ethics Foundation x2
- Ethics for Paeds x2
- Ethics for O&G x2
- Mastering Communication x2
- Leadership in Clinical Practice x2
- Wellness Matters x2

Research

Strategy and staffing

In early 2022, a new research strategy focusing on internal institutional research, aligning with college and broader health research standards was produced. This set out a focus on research governance and forming a Research Committee to oversee this, with representation from across the college's institutes and faculties. The associated Research Committee, with oversight of research to be undertaken internally and overseeing implementation of the strategy, had its first meeting in June 2022, Chaired by the College Registrar, Prof Michael Keane.

Training Post Evaluation

The Training Post Evaluation (TPE) is an anonymous online survey of all trainees (BST and HST) rolled out by RCPI in 2016. The purpose of the evaluation is for trainees to harness feedback on each rotation trainees have completed over the past year. The most recent survey, conducted in June 2022, based on the 2021-2022 year, gathered feedback from doctors in Basic and Higher Specialist Training programmes in 86 training sites across Ireland. The majority of posts were in the Institute of Medicine who represented 67.8% of respondent BST Trainees and 55.6% of HST Trainees.

This data has been used throughout the year to inform site accreditation visits and provides an important source of confidential feedback from Trainees regarding their training posts. Additional data collection led by Research, in collaboration with colleagues in Quality Assurance and supported by colleagues in communications is due to take place for six weeks from the 14 June 2023. A cross-training body sub-group of the Training Committee was convened in 2022 and reviewed and amended questions and approaches for the 2023 survey, ensuring accuracy, appropriateness and utility of the survey for the future. Questions will broadly mirror those utilised in recent years but reflect these amendments.

Supporting engagement within RCPI's Professional Competence Schemes

This research project explores the compliance trends in RCPI Professional Competence Schemes (PCS) in order to identify factors contributing to meeting the PCS criteria and to improve the process and develop more appropriate Continuing Professional Development opportunities. The research team have supported the PCS team through analysis of annual data and compiling an annual report integrating information regarding RCPI PCS enrolees including members, fellows and non-affiliates and their PCS-associated behaviour in 2022. This report will be launched in 2023.

The research team also supported CPD Education Delivery in January and February 2022 by surveying registered CPD-SS enrolees. This had a 58% response rate, with the majority of respondents to the survey reporting to be working in a registrar role (N=30, 61%) and working in General Internal Medicine (GIM) (N=29, 62%). When asked if CPD-SS learners wished to apply for a second year of the structured learning path, all but one respondent (98%) declared that they would. Respondents were also offered the opportunity to give feedback on the course and their experience to date. This was broadly very positive, with a recognition that this was a supportive initiative for NCHDs not in a specialist training programme. Suggestions included making the training more hands-on, clinical and practical, and more personalised.

Behaviour and attitudes towards mentorship for new consultants: a qualitative study

Much of the mentoring that takes place in medicine is traditionally informal in nature, and while valued by physicians and often extremely important and useful for their personal and professional development, the lack of a more formalised mentorship structure may codify inequality as regards opportunities for all interested physicians to avail of the benefits of mentorship. Formal mentorship programmes have been established in many countries and by various institutions and bodies for medical physicians at various stages in their career. The majority of mentorship arrangements, however, whether formal or informal, focus on the junior stages of the physician career. This focus group study aimed to investigate the understanding of and attitudes towards mentorship with the aim of informing the design and development of a pilot RCPI mentorship programme for new hospital consultants in their first two years of independent practice in Ireland. The study also aimed to gain further information on the factors that would facilitate effective and sustained engagement with a mentorship programme for new hospital consultants in the present-day Irish context.

Two focus groups, consisting of a purposive sample of RCPI faculty members, were facilitated by members of the RCPI Research Department between 26 October and 24 November 2022. Faculty members were recruited by the Programme Manager in Healthcare Leadership on behalf of Consultant Dr Trevor Duffy and the RCPI Research Department to represent a diverse range of specialties.

Findings were grouped into two core umbrella themes:

1. Perceived value of mentorship, and
2. Facilitators of participation and sustained engagement.

These have been used to inform the development of a pilot RCPI mentorship programme for new hospital consultants in their first two years of independent practice in Ireland, commencing in 2023.

Less than Fulltime Training and Geographical Rotations.

In 2022, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) was engaged by HSE NDTP to conduct two strategic Trainee Projects aimed at exploring the opportunities to:

1. develop less than full time training positions
2. reducing cross-regional rotations for trainees

A nine-member Steering Group was established in August 2022 comprising representation across RCPI Departments of Research, Education, Medical Training and Healthcare Leadership. The group was Chaired by John Magner and met fortnightly for the duration of the projects. Clinical representation was ensured through membership of the Clinical Working Group, established in September 2022. All Faculties and Institutes were represented alongside three Trainee Committee nominees. This group met monthly from October 2022 to February 2023 and was Chaired by Dr Trevor Duffy.

The Research Department conducted a significant body of work, gathering, evaluating and synthesising evidence, including conducting national and international literature reviews, Trainer and Trainee views and attitudes surveys and focus groups, a survey of Medical Manpower personnel and consultation with other European Postgraduate Medical Education Bodies to inform this process in 2022. Based on evidence, the Trainee Projects Steering Group and Clinical Working Groups drafted recommendations for RCPI's Postgraduate Medical Education Bodies, the NDTP and Medical Manpower consideration.

RCPI Research Ethics Committee

The RCPI Research Ethics Committee met quarterly in 2022. This Committee was chaired by Dr Una Fallon until March 2022, when she stepped down after Chairing the Committee from its inception in 2013, having given a decade of her dedication and expertise to RCPI Research Ethics. Additionally, in June 2022, the Committee's Vice-Chair, Prof Kathleen Bennett, also stepped down from the Committee. Dr Fiona Boland was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee from June, and in practice led the Committee in 2022. Following an extended recruitment period, in March 2023, a new Chair, Dr Niamh Clarke, has taken up the

role. The Committee reviewed 18 applications in 2022, with 17 of these favourably reviewed applications listed below. One of these projects had an Occupational Medicine focus (RECSAF 185).

Research reviewed by the RCPI Research Ethics Committee 2022

1. RECSAF 169: Breastfeeding education in postgraduate training. PI: Dr Anne Doolan
2. RECSAF 170: An evaluation of the impact of plain packaging for tobacco products in Ireland PI: Dr Paul Kavanagh
3. RECSAF 171: Awareness, knowledge, practices and barriers in relation to annual seasonal influenza vaccination and appropriate infection prevention and control practices among individuals in regular contact with poultry or waterfowl in Ireland. PI: Dr Ellen Cosgrave
4. RECSAF 172: Understanding transitions in medical education: a qualitative study of first year Basic Specialist Trainees PI: Assoc Prof Mary Higgins
5. RECSAF173: Assessment of a New Education Intervention to Deliver Teaching on Paediatric Electrocardiogram Interpretation. V2. PI: Dr Niall Linnane
6. RECSAF174: Breastfeeding support for doctors on returning to work in Ireland
PI: Dr Ann Doolan
7. RECSAF175: Behaviour and Attitudes study on new consultant Mentorship. PI: Prof Trevor Duffy
8. RCPI RECSAF 176: Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Mandatory Training Programme Redesign Evaluation Project. PI: Ms Janet O' Farrell
9. RCPI RECSAF 177: Irish Medical Trainees and Digital Health PI: Dr Lizeri Jansen
10. RCPI RECSAF 178: A prospective review of paediatric trainees' exposure to palliative care in Irish hospitals. PI: Dr Katie Flinn
11. RCPI RECSAF 179: Building an evidence base to define acceptable transfer times from home to maternity units for planned home births in Ireland. PI: Dr Paul Kavanagh
12. RCPI RECSAF 180: Evaluation of the outcomes-based curriculum for Public Health Medicine. PI: Dr Niamh Bambury
13. RCPI RECSAF 181: Meat processing plant COVID-19 outbreak – retrospective cohort study. PI: Dr Lucinda Ryan
14. RCPI RECSAF 182: Preparing Paediatricians for a career in Local Hospitals in Ireland. PI: Prof Nigel Fancourt
15. RCPI RECSAF 183: Peer Review and its Impact in Histopathology- a National Study. PI: Prof Niall Swan
16. RCPI RECSAF 184: Royal College of Physicians of Ireland: Perceptions of less-than-fulltime training and geographical rotations. PI: Prof Trevor Duffy
17. Chair review: RECSAF 185: Telephone Consultation in Occupational Medicine: opinions of Occupational Medicine Physicians. PI: Dr Abigail O' Reilly

HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP

TREVOR DUFFY, HEAD OF HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP, RCPI

Overview

This is a new function within the RCPI. Strategic Initiative 7 of the strategic plan is: to be the voice of physicians, shaping and influencing healthcare policy, at a national level. In partnership with a range of stakeholders, RCPI already provides leadership in areas such as National Quality Assurance System (National Quality Improvement), National Immunisation Advisory Committee, National Office for Traffic medicine and National Clinical Programmes.

New activities within the function include a strategic approach to gathering advocacy wishes and views of trainees, members and fellows. This will be backed up by an education programme, individual policy development and active advocacy, pushing the voice of RCPI out into the healthcare community. To strengthen current RCPI offerings of formal leadership education the Healthcare Leadership function will develop a programme of supports for doctors in their day-to-day role as leaders and will also continue to develop the college's own leadership role.

Healthcare Leadership Projects

Pilot Mentorship Programme for New Consultants

The project is live. Mentorship sessions have commenced, and we have received positive feedback from both mentors and mentees. The research evaluation survey aims to measure changes in priority areas of professional and personal development as a result of participating in the mentorship programme (survey completed at start-mid-end of programme). There is ongoing communication and engagement with both existing and new mentees and mentors which will continue throughout the pilot programme.

During the next phase of the project, we are planning peer networking events incorporating training for mentees. To support mentors, we will arrange a reflective learning session. We will also explore potential funding sources which would be required to scale the programme in the future.

RCPI Academy for Retired Doctors

The Academy has been actively involved in St Luke's Symposium. Dr Carole Barry Kinsella spoke on 'The interface of Medicine and the Arts' on Heritage Day and many Academy members were in attendance. Over forty retired and semi-retired doctors attended a social gathering and lunch in Dun's Library. Eleven volunteers got involved in the invigilation of the Climate and Health Art Exhibition.

Through the work of the Academy, we endeavour to get more retired Members and Fellows involved in many activities of the College. Currently we have 14 mentors supporting early stage consultants, six Examiners and six Reviewers participating in the verification process. Other Members are involved in education, Faculty and Institute Boards, RCPI Committees, volunteer work with EQUALs and College representation. Recently, a few volunteers participated in Membership graduation ceremonies, and we will encourage others to participate in future College events.

We will continue to seek opportunities to connect and engage this group of retired and semi-retired doctors through social and educational events and provide ongoing support to the committee as this new College initiative evolves.

Professional Competence

Summary of Key Activities 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023

Scheme Enrolment

The numbers enrolled on our Professional Competence Schemes have been increasing year on year since they were first introduced in May 2011, with the highest number of doctors enrolled to date at the end of the 2022 – 23 PCS year. This included 1,053 new enrolments during the year.

Compliance with Scheme Requirements

The overall percentage of participants across RCPI's 11 Professional Competence Schemes who met the PCS requirements for the 2022 – 23 PCS year was 82%, an increase of 7% on last year. The individual Scheme compliance rates for the 2022-23 year ranged from 74% to 94%. The percentage of Participants in the Faculty of Occupational Medicine Schemes who met the PCS requirements for the 2022 – 23 PCS year was 94% in both the Specialist and General Division Schemes.

Annual Verification Process (AVP)

The Annual Verification Process was undertaken for the 2021 - 2022 PCS year between July 2022 and April 2023. A random selection of 4% of all Scheme participants plus a further 4% of those who had not met requirements for 2021-2022, were chosen from each of RCPI's 11 Schemes. Detailed administrator and clinician reviews were conducted with a view to preparing constructive advice for the relevant doctors. Reviews were completed in March 2023 and at the conclusion of the process, 61% of doctors were verified with no further action required. Doctors who were Verified with no corrective actions received an annotation on their 2022-2023 Annual Statement.

Annual Statements

The Annual Statements issued in May 2023 were once again annotated to indicate that there may have been extenuating circumstances which may have prevented doctors from engaging in and recording the required CPD and Audit activities.

Medical Council Reporting

The following PCS Annual Reports were submitted to the Medical Council on Friday, 30 June 2023 on behalf of RCPI's six Training Bodies:

- Qualitative Report, which consists of: -
 - Implementation Plan for new Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC) Framework
 - List of CPD Activities Provided by RCPI
 - List of CPD Activities Recognised by RCPI
- Quantitative Report for each Training Body containing KPIs on their Specialist & General
- Division Schemes

New Maintenance of Professional Competence Framework Model

RCPI engaged with the Medical Council on their Public Consultation on the new Draft Rules and Guidelines for the Maintenance of Professional Competence. The new Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC) Framework will be implemented on 1 May 2024. The new framework is more flexible and relevant to individual doctors, enabling them to plan, engage in and record required CPD activities relevant to their scope and stage of practice. RCPI will continue to collaborate with the Medical Council, RCPI's six Training Bodies and the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies Sub Committee with regard to the implementation of the new MPC Framework.

IACPDA – Substantive Equivalence

RCPI submitted an application to the International Academy for CPD Accreditation (IACPDA) for substantive equivalency for RCPI's CPD programme on 24 February 2022. However, the IACPDA is aware that the Irish Medical Council, following the recent Public Consultation, is reviewing its roles/procedures/requirements including a new accreditation process and is also collaborating with and being advised by Dr Graham McMahon President and CEO of ACCME regarding this. The IACPDA have suggested that RCPI waits until that process is complete.

RCPI will continue to collaborate with the Medical Council, the ACCME and Dr Graham McMahon. We will also continue to work with the IACPDA and pursue RCPI Substantive Equivalency, an evolving process, in order to further enhance our international profile along with opportunities to conduct independent

initiatives and innovations in education, accreditation and research and contribute to CPD & lifelong learning in Ireland and internationally.

CPD Event Approval

RCPI facilitates a process of reviewing and accrediting external activities provided by both RCPI and other individuals or bodies for the purpose of awarding CPD credits.

Outlined below is a summary of activity for the period 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023:

Type	Applications Approved	Credits Allowed
RCPI	369	2884
Non RCPI	465	2357
TOTAL	834	5231

National Specialty Quality Improvement (NSQI) Programmes

RCPI currently manages four National Quality Improvement Programmes in Histopathology, Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Radiology and Bronchoscopy. The goal of these programmes, three of which are funded by the HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate and Bronchoscopy which is funded by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), is to optimise patient care through facilitating and supporting the use of evidence-based quality improvement in diagnosis and reporting. The data gathered via these programmes are available to report on locally and are also aggregated in annual national data reports by the NSQI programme management team, which can then be used to drive quality improvement in 50 participating public, voluntary and 14 private hospitals.

National GI Endoscopy QI Programme

The National GI Endoscopy Quality Improvement (NEQI) Programme published the 7th annual national data report in 2022 with 36 public and voluntary hospitals and 15 private hospitals contributing to the national dataset. This report was a retrospective review of programme activity from 2016 to 2021, with additional analysis on available data from 1st January to 31st December 2021. This year, the NEQI programme also began the development of a new key quality indicator, endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP).

National Radiology QI Programme

In 2022, the National Radiology QI (NRQI) programme published its 3rd national data report, outlining findings from analysis of data from 48 public and voluntary hospitals. The programme has also commenced a total turnaround time (TAT) pilot project which aims to investigate turnaround times at one pilot site and

how to better capture the current patient journey and to explore how delays might be minimised. The programme is also liaising with the NTPF on work looking at waiting lists nationally.

National Bronchoscopy QI Programme

The working group was set up in November 2022, successfully recruiting 13 members from public and voluntary hospitals around the country. The engagement with this new programme has been positive and bronchoscopists are in agreement with the need to establish QI processes within the specialty to benefit patient care. The NBQI working group has begun the first phase of key quality indicator development focusing on sedation, the use of reversal agents, patient comfort score and complication rates.

National Histopathology QI Programme

The National Histopathology QI Programme launched the 9th annual national data report in 2022, with 21 laboratories in public and voluntary hospitals and seven private laboratories contributing to the national dataset. Two presentations were delivered at the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) annual meeting; “The role of MDT Histopathology Review and Impact on Revised Reports” and “Persistence of Peer Review During the Pandemic, prepared by the National Histopathology QI (NHQI) programmes research group. The NHQI programme is also collaborating with the newly established Autopsy Quality Improvement Committee (AQIC), the aim of which is to improve the quality of autopsy practice in Ireland and gathering data from all autopsies carried out in hospitals and by coroners.

Data Sharing and Data Protection

The NSQI programme management completed a large body of work in increasing the standardisation and transparency of all policies across the programmes, including a large collaborative project on the information governance policy. This led to a robust data requesting process which was used four times in the last year, contributing to research conducted by the NHQI programme, the Irish Cancer Society investigating the impact of COVID-19 on Irish cancer services, the NCCP and the National Acute Operations Endoscopy Programme. This ensures the high-quality data reported on by the programmes can be used to contribute towards improved patient care.

Advocacy

Advocacy refers to actions to influence people, primarily decision-makers, to create change.

For RCPI this change may be in legislation supporting healthcare and health and wellbeing; health sector plans and actions; or plans and actions in other sectors - impacted by, or which have an impact upon, health or healthcare.

RCPI engages in advocacy by defining the issue or desired change through:

- Development of position papers and reports.

- Communication of these issues directly to stakeholders and decision makers, including internal stakeholders.
- Using media to promote messages or recommendations on the issue.
- Providing responses to relevant national consultations as they arise.

Advocacy priorities

New advocacy priorities for 2023-2025 were approved by Executive Board and Council in May 2023. These priorities followed consultation with trainees, members and fellows at three hospital sites, consultation with exec board, council, senior management and other staff and a survey open to all RCPI members fellows and trainees. This is the first time that RCPI developed advocacy priorities through wide consultation with its membership. The process also included a review of previous advocacy work and successes, and the new priorities will build on this work and existing collaborations. These priorities are:

- Patient Safety and Dignity
- Health Equity
- Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases (with a focus on obesity, in particular obesity in children, also with focus on tobacco and vaping)
- Climate Change and Healthcare / Sustainable Healthcare
- Influencing Public Health Legislation

Advocacy Activities Oct 2022 to Oct 2023

- Climate Action paper developed in collaboration with Irish Doctors for the Environment (IDE) and formally launched in Oct 2023 during the ST Luke's Symposium. The theme of Climate and Health running throughout the ST Luke's symposium events reflect RCPI's commitment to action on climate and health, articulated in the paper.
- RCPI was represented at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying in Oct 2023 by Dr Feargal Twomey, a consultant in palliative care.
- A Masterclass - Achieving Equity in Healthcare – More than just an appointment” was held in March 2023 and included an overview of inclusion health –including inclusion health in paediatrics, presentation of real-life stories behind the statistics of social adversity, discussion of mismatch between service delivery and need and overview of work of the National Social Inclusion office and the Slaintecare Healthy Communities Programmes. The masterclass, developed by the advocacy department had a record number of registrations of 461, with total live attendance of 445.
- Arising from the masterclass, RCPI published a [Report on Health Equity](#) which includes tips on inclusive clinical practice, principles for delivering trauma-informed care and recommendations for policy makers and healthcare leaders. The Faculty of Occupational Medicine (Prof Ken Addley)

contributed a section of the report *“The role of employment and job seeking as a determinant of health”*.

- A [position statement](#) from the Faculty of Paediatrics on vaping and young people was published in October 2023. The statement called for introduction of legislation to ban disposable vapes to protect the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- The Faculty of Paediatrics and the RCPI Policy Group on Tobacco made submissions
- to a Department of Environment, Climate and Communications consultation on Disposable Vaping Devices. The consultation submission highlighted the harms caused to the environment and the disproportionate usage of disposable vaping devices among children and young people, and the associated health concerns.

National Immunisation Advisory Committee Oct 2022-Oct 2023

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) plays an essential role in Irish healthcare. This expert group is a standing committee of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and comprises members nominated by a range of healthcare professional bodies and lay members. NIAC provides independent, evidence-based advice to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Department of Health on vaccines, immunisation and related health matters.

NIAC experienced a significant transition in personnel in the past year, which included the retirements of Professor Karina Butler (Chair/Interim Clinical Lead), Drs Brenda Corcoran and Kevin Connolly (Special Advisors). Their dedication, wealth of expertise and significant contributions have been greatly appreciated.

NIAC welcomed the appointment of Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan who served as NIAC Chair over the past number of months but has recently stepped down. NIAC hopes to appoint a new Chair later this month.

Dr Bryony Treston served as Interim Clinical Lead following Professor Butler’s departure and has now returned to her role as Technical Researcher. NIAC welcomed the appointment of Dr Sarah Geoghegan as Clinical Lead. NIAC looks forward to working with Dr Geoghegan and continuing NIAC’s progressive trajectory in the years ahead.

A new team of Special Advisors (Dr Fiona Cullinane, Dr Helena Murray, Professor Corinna Sadlier) and a Programme Coordinator (Grace Horan) have been appointed in the past year. NIAC has also experienced numerous changes in membership which has added further depth to the expertise and skillsets of the Committee.

NIAC's workload in the past year has remained demanding and was regularly performed under considerable pressure. This has relied upon the dedication and availability of respected and experienced voluntary members, supported by an agile, skilled, and resilient Secretariat.

The provision of vaccine related advice has been and continues to be an important element of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. NIAC has also provided advice for topics including but not limited to: BCG vaccination, HPV vaccination, and the immunisation of children aged 2 months to 5 years of age.

Governance and Operations

NIAC awaits an update from the Department of Health (DOH) regarding the transformation of NIAC to a National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG), in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO). This formal designation will enable NIAC to operate more sustainably, with additional resources to support capacity building. An update from the DOH is also awaited on hosting arrangements for NIAC in 2024 and beyond.

NIAC has continued to host Full Committee meetings on a bimonthly basis, with working groups (including COVID-19, RSV) meeting as needed to focus on specific work tasks.

Advice provided to the Chief Medical Officer and Department of Health

NIAC have produced recommendations through considered and timely decision making, informed by reliable and robust evidence. This work was aided by regular meetings of working groups, participation in European Union NITAG meetings and engagement with global experts on vaccines. Over 15 recommendations to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) have been made since October 2022 (Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of NIAC advice issued to Chief Medical Officer since October 2022.

Date of Issue	Recommendation
10 October 2022	Selective strategy for BCG vaccination (version 1.2)
12 December 2022	Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines
15 February 2023	Immunisation of children aged 2 months to 5 years of age
11 April 2023	2023 COVID-19 vaccination strategy (version 1.1)
17 August 2023	Letter re: Review of Autumn 2023 COVID-19 booster recommendations

NIAC has also been involved in updating the Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 vaccines for people with pre-existing allergic conditions, and Questions and Answers for pregnant and breastfeeding women about COVID-19 vaccination.

Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland

The Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland have been prepared and maintained by NIAC as a robust and reliable immunisation resource for healthcare professionals. Ten chapters (20 updates in total) have been updated since October 2022.

National Resource, Stakeholder Support and International Collaboration

NIAC has continued to serve as a trusted and respected national resource for healthcare professionals and the public. Over 90 queries have been received pertaining to immunisation and national recommendations in the past year. These have been addressed by NIAC or referred to the appropriate agency for response.

As a standing committee of RCPI, NIAC has profited from being sited in a collegial setting at the forefront of postgraduate medical education. This has facilitated critical inputs from the Institutes and Faculties of the College and also supported dissemination of NIAC's outputs. At a time when trust in vaccination information is so important, NIAC as a committee of RCPI, is further validated because of that association as a trusted information source.

NIAC continues to benefit from its strong collaborative working relationship with stakeholders including the DOH, HSE, HPRA, and HPSC, among others.

NIAC has engaged with the wider international immunisation community and participated in the EU NITAG meetings as well as national and international meetings as appropriate (for e.g., EU NITAG, WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on immunisation).

NIAC continues to reinforce these relationships with regard to general immunisation practices through continued engagement, participation and advocacy.

ADMINISTRATION IN RCPI

Key personnel in RCPI who conducted work on behalf of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine during 2022 - 2023:

Faculty	John Hunt	01 8639 738 fom@rcpi.ie
Training (HST)	John Hunt	01 8639 738 hst@rcpi.ie dianasantos@rcpi.ie
Examinations	General	01 8639 706 examinations@rcpi.ie iainmartel@rcpi.ie
Professional Competence	Deirdre Donegan	01 8639 739 professionalcompetence@rcpi.ie deirdredonegan@rcpi.ie
Specialist Division of the Register	Siobhán Kearns	01 8639 720 siobhankearns@rcpi.ie
Conferences and Events	Hilary Copeland	01 8639 794 conferences@rcpi.ie

NOTES



Back Image: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland 6 Kildare Street, Dublin 2., September 2023. Dr. Grant Jeffreys, Dr. Seamus O’Ceallaigh, Dr. Sheelagh O’Brien, Dean, Faculty of Occupational Medicine, RCPI, Dr. Art Malone, Dr. Alyson Lee, Prof Damien McElvenny, Dr. Hugh Gallagher.



FACULTY OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

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