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RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

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Note: This document may be updated before the revision date. These updates will be notified to staff and posted on the [RCSI Staff Portal](#).



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RCSI Health and Safety Policy FOREWORD

Dear RCSI Employees, Students, Visitors and Contractors,

The RCSI President, RCSI Council, CEO and Senior Management Team acknowledge our responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (hereafter referred to as "the Act") and any regulations made there under. In accordance with the requirements of the Act, RCSI is committed to providing and maintaining, in so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy work environment for all RCSI employees and to meeting our responsibilities under the Act in relation to our students, contractors and visitors.

In accordance with Section 20 of the Act, RCSI has prepared a Safety Statement outlining our policies on occupational health and safety matters and defining the necessary management structure and responsibilities for the implementation of these policies. The Safety Statement's core objective is to protect campus users from potential injury and ill health arising from RCSI's work activities. It is our programme in writing for managing health and safety on campus.

In order to maintain and continually improve health and safety standards the commitment of employees, students and contractors to integrate health and safety fully into their day to day activities is a key element of ensuring safe work practices and a safe working environment for all persons.

Various structures have been established to ensure the consultation and participation of employees in the decision making process in relation to health and safety matters. Recommendations arising from Health and Safety Committees are given full support by the Senior Management Team to ensure implementation in a timely manner.

This Health and Safety Policy also extends to those who work away from the 'office' (working from home, driving for work or travelling for work) for RCSI, who will provide the relevant information, training, support and equipment to protect employee's health, safety and welfare at all times.

The implementation of an effective health and safety management system, as outlined in this Safety Statement, is the collective responsibility of all persons participating in work or study on RCSI premises. Your continued assistance in ensuring that RCSI is a safe and healthy working environment is appreciated.

Signed:

Professor Cathal Kelly
Chief Executive/Registrar
RCSI



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Introduction

The purpose of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all employees in the workplace and to ensure that non-employees, students, visitors and contractors, present in the workplace are safe. The Act applies to employees in all types of work and embraces all the activities and employees of RCSI.

The Act requires the University to prepare a written Safety Statement specifying the manner in which the safety, health and welfare at work of employees be secured and managed. In response to this requirement RCSI has prepared this Safety Statement outlining the University's safety management system on occupational health and safety matters and defining the necessary management structure for the implementation of this system.

Due to the size and complexity of the University, its structure and operations, the Safety Statement addresses the overall University health and safety arrangements. Each School, Faculty and/or Department are required to have their own specific arrangements in place including, but not limited to, documenting hazards, risks, and protective and preventive measures taken, and resources provided for ensuring a safe and healthy work environment.

RCSI continually develops campus wide policies/procedures in areas of specific concern. Existing policies/procedures are available on the [Estate and Support Services Health and Safety web page](#).

This Safety Statement is reviewed annually and updated as necessary in line with new legislation, staff feedback, University structural changes and practical experience.

Roles and Responsibilities

RCSI President and Council

The governing body of RCSI is its Council. The Council appoints the President to oversee the management of the University.

The President and the Council, as the employer, have ultimate accountability to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of employees, in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and other occupational health and safety legislation.

CEO and Senior Management Team

RCSI CEO and Senior Management Team (SMT), through delegation of duties from Council, are responsible for ensuring that due regard is given to health and safety in all operational decisions, all academic and administrative activities, maintenance and upkeep of premises and adaptation of buildings. They must understand their legal responsibilities, maintain a clear understanding of the key safety and health issues for the University and ensure they are continually appraised of the risks likely to arise through University activities and undertakings.

The CEO and SMT are responsible for ensuring that all members of management implement and maintain compliance with the Safety Statement and related safety policies and procedures.

Heads of Departments

The Head of each Department is responsible for ensuring the implementation of RCSI health and safety policies and procedures within their areas of authority.

For the purposes of this document the term 'Head of Department' includes all Heads of Function, Deans, Directors, Deputy Heads/ Managers, Librarian, Officers of the University who are directly responsible for their own work and that of their subordinates, if any. Besides the Heads of Academic Schools and Departments, the term is taken to include Administrative and Professional service Departments, Managers of any campus company, premises or service operated or administered by the Council.



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Departmental Heads may, at their discretion, (*without delegating their responsibility for Health and Safety*), appoint departmental Safety Advisers from amongst the departmental staff to assist in the general supervision of day to day safety matters as listed above. **Department staff includes PI's, Lab Managers, Managers, Supervisors and Senior Technicians.**

Such functions are responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of persons working, studying or visiting their respective departments / area of control. In particular, they are responsible for the following for ensuring:

- health and safety including fire safety is a standing agenda item at local staff/dept meetings
- a system is in place for identifying hazards and implementing controls measures by referring to the University's health and safety risk assessment procedures to implement this system
- standard operating procedures (SOP's) and risk assessment are developed for all tasks / activities, equipment and materials
- all staff complete the relevant health and safety training. [See training requirements and frequency register](#)
- all students are adequately trained and supervised in carrying out practical and experimental work. (*Adequate level of supervision to be determined having regard to the age, level of experience and status (graduate/post graduate etc.) of the student*)
- to report all injuries, illness, dangerous occurrences and near misses to safety@rcsi.ie and complete the [injury/incident report form](#) (*You may also be asked to assist with the investigation to gather further information on how and why it happened*)
- the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn by staff and students in your work areas, where appropriate
- equipment is kept in good condition for staff and students to use and implement a procedure for ensuring that faulty equipment is taken out of service, reported and repaired
- compliance with [RCSI's emergency evacuation procedure](#) and that all staff in your department:
 - Complete the [fire safety awareness course](#)
 - aware of general fire safety in the work locations,
 - review the evacuation routes of your area,
 - if any fire safety issues / concerns are spotted, contact the [Health & Safety Office](#)
- regular safety audits are carried out in your department to monitor compliance with safety controls and follow up action is taken where necessary
- to notify the [Health and Safety Office](#) of any health and safety issues arising, where you need help and support
- that all contractors working in your department are approved to work under [RCSI's Contractor control procedure](#)
- Lead by example in promoting a good safety culture at all times.



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All Staff

It is the duty of all employees to comply with RCSI safety policies and procedures and to carry out their responsibilities as detailed in this document and in accordance with any other relevant legislation. Employees with specific responsibilities for safety, health and welfare must properly delegate these in their absence. Each employee is expected to make themselves familiar with the Safety Statement. In addition, employees must also be familiar with their Departmental safety specific arrangements. To this extent, all employees must:

- follow [RCSI Safety Policies and Procedures](#), including this Safety Statement and emergency requirements in full and to integrate health and safety into daily working practice
- assist with the identifying hazards in your work environment and report to your supervisor as soon as possible
- comply with safety signage and PPE requirements
- attend all necessary [health and safety training courses](#) relevant to you
- to report immediately all injuries, illness, dangerous occurrences and near misses to your Supervisor and / or the Health and Safety Office and complete the [injury/incident report form](#) (*You may also be asked to assist with the investigation to gather further information on how and why it happened so we can put control measures in place to prevent it from happening again*)

Estate and Support Services Department

The Estate and Support Services department has a central role in Health and Safety management in the University and is responsible for:

- The maintenance of the common parts of all University buildings and grounds
- The direct management of the common parts of all University facilities and grounds
- The provision of fire detection and prevention measures
- The provision of security, cleaning and porter services
- The management of external contractors engaged to ensure in so far as is reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare of all campus users who may be affected by the works
- Ensuring that the University, as the “Client” in construction projects, complies in particular with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2013

Given those substantial functions, the Director of Estate and Support Services is to be consulted on and actively engaged in RCSI’s health and safety management; in terms of both the Estate & Support Services departments own operations and the health and safety requirements of other schools/units

Health and Safety Office

The RCSI Health and Safety Office Staff reporting to the Director of Estates are responsible for:

- The provision of health and safety advice and support to RCSI President, Senior Management, all University Departments, employees and students
- The co-ordination of RCSI Health and Safety Committees
- The development and implementation of University Emergency Plans, including fire evacuation plans
- The recording and analysis of injury/incident reports



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- The sourcing and provision of specific health and safety training with campus wide application (e.g. fire warden, first aid, laboratory and chemical safety, etc.)
- The updating / revision of this Safety Statement and related policies and procedures and ensure effective communication of same
- Submitting statutory reports to the Health and Safety Authority and any other relevant bodies, as required

RCSI Students

In addition to RCSI, management and employees having health and safety duties, RCSI Students also have responsibilities. Students are required to:

- Take reasonable care to protect their own safety and the safety of any other person who may be affected by the student's acts or omissions
- Cooperate with safety policies, procedures, arrangements and signage in place on campus
- Wear personal protective equipment as directed
- Comply with evacuation procedures and other safety procedures which may be in place
- Not to intentionally, recklessly or without reasonable cause interfere with or misuse equipment
- Immediately report to a relevant RCSI staff member, any accident resulting in loss or injury. The injured party is also required to co-operate with RCSI in the investigation of the accident and the completion of the [Injury/Incident Report Form](#).

Contractors

All contractors coming onto RCSI campus must comply with [RCSI's Contractor Manual](#) and including but not limited to:

- Providing specific risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) and insurance details prior to work commencing.
- Sign in /out at Security as specified, review work permits and sign.
- Complete the Task Risk Assessment (TRA) at the place of work (on reverse of work permit).
- Ensure to induct your own staff on RCSI safety procedures and ensure you staff have the relevant training to carry out the work.
- Immediately report any incidents that occur or concerns you may have to RCSI Security or Estate & Support Services Department or the Health and Safety Office and provide assistance in respect to incident investigations being completed by RCSI.

Campus Companies

Within campus companies, the Board and Management of each company have ultimate responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of their employees. Day to day responsibility for health and safety matters rests with the Manager of each company. Their responsibilities are as for RCSI Head of Departments above.



Health and Safety Consultation and Communication

In order to ensure effective consultation with staff and other campus users, RCSI has established relevant Health and Safety Committees to provide a formal structure for the highlighting and escalation of health and safety problems/issues that cannot be resolved locally.

The committees are co-ordinated by the Health and Safety Office and minutes are communicated to all staff and the Director of Human Resources via the Director of Estates.

Staff or students who wish to raise a safety concern should in the first instance contact their manager (*either directly or through their Health and Safety Representative*) or can contact the Health and Safety office [directly](#).

Communication of Safety Statement

RCSI, in compliance with Section 20.3 of the Act, will bring the contents of this Safety Statement to the attention of all employees following its amendment or, where no amendment is required, annually.

Health and Safety Resources

There are considerable sources of information to help you work safely while in RCSI:

- Health and Safety policies, procedures, manuals, forms and other information contained on the [staff portal](#).
- Your department's health and safety folder, where all SOP's, Risk Assessment and other information relevant to your work is contained.
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing noticeboard throughout the University with relevant information. Keep an eye on these boards as some info changes regularly.
- RCSI internal social media platform – WorkVivo.
- Contact with the [Health and Safety Office](#) at any time, who can provide you with the advice and support you need.

Financial Resources

In balancing the competing demands on overall University finances, RCSI endeavours to provide the necessary financial resources to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all authorised campus users. This includes:

- Providing on-going funding for competent health and safety advisors, both external and internal including Health and Safety Manager, Biological Safety Advisor, Dangerous Goods Safety Advisors and Chemical Waste Coordinators and as required specialist consultants.
- Allocating an annual budgetary sum to the Health & Safety Office to support the implementation of various health and safety programs and projects across the campus.
- Rectifying safety shortcomings in existing buildings by way of a phased programme of work prioritised in accordance with the level of risk and the resources available.
- Engaging reputable contractors to maintain and service fire protection equipment and machinery and to maintain all buildings and equipment in a clean and safe condition.
- Ensuring that all new buildings/refurbishments comply with relevant fire and health and safety standards from the outset.



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Health and Safety Training

Health and Safety Training

Health and safety legislation requires that employees must receive adequate training, based on the hazard identification risk assessment and such training must be in a form, manner and, as appropriate, language that is likely to be understood by the affected employees.

RCSI recognises that the provision of relevant training and instruction by competent trainers is an important tool in the control of risks within the University. The objective of safety training is to *"help people to acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make them competent in the health and safety aspects of their job"*.

The Health and Safety Office is responsible for providing the following specific training on an on-going basis:

- Health and Safety Induction of all new employees and students including information on fire and emergency procedures (*delivered in conjunction with HR scheduled New Employee Induction Training and Student Orientation Week*)
- Laboratory Safety Training (*including chemical spill kit use training and how to complete a risk assessment*)
- Fire Safety Awareness
- First Aid training
- Manual and People handling training
- Other training – specialist training can be arranged as required / requested.

Individual Departments / School Health and Safety Training

Individual departments work in collaboration with the Health and Safety Office to identify local training needs, develop appropriate training materials and identify competent training providers.

Funding for Health and Safety Training

The University through the Health and Safety Office funds training courses outlined above centrally. The individual School / Department normally fund local departmental training. In certain circumstances, application for part funding of such courses may be made to the Health and Safety Office.

Health and Safety Training Records

The Health and Safety Office retains participation and (where applicable) examination records of all staff involved in the Health and Safety Office sponsored training. Records of School / Department specific training is normally retained within the School / Department. The Health and Safety Office retains all training records for a minimum 10 years or longer where required by specific Regulation.

Attendance at Health and Safety Training

Specific Health and Safety courses are deemed mandatory and thus all new employees are obliged to attend. These courses are specified by the Health and Safety Office and communicated via [Training Requirements and Frequency Register](#).

Fire and Emergency Management

Fire Safety Management

RCSI have a comprehensive [Emergency Evacuation Plan](#) and procedures in place. All staff to assist in the evacuation of staff and students. Fire/Emergency Drills are organised annually by the Health and Safety Office



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in cooperation with the Estate and Support Services department. Feedback on performance in terms of time taken to evacuate and particular difficulties with alarm systems / building fabric are recorded.

Fire Alarm System

Each building is fitted with a fully addressable Fire Alarm System, which is maintained by the Estate and Support Services department. All alarm activations are received in the RCSI Security Control Room in each of our buildings and are investigated by RCSI Security and / or Building Services personnel.

First Aid, Injury and Illness Management

The Health and Safety Office has responsibility for the provision of occupational first aid training complying with the requirements of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007.

Trained occupational first aiders are available in all buildings to respond to first aid incidents during normal office hours. In addition, all permanent members of the RCSI Security Team undergo first aid response training.

A defibrillator is retained by RCSI Security services, and one is in each building usually at reception.

All Schools/Departments are required to ensure that they have enough first aiders in place to provide for effective response to injuries/illnesses.

All injuries, illnesses, dangerous occurrence and near misses must be reported as soon as possible to the Health and Safety Office and the [procedure](#) must be followed.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

Section 19 of the Act requires that employers carry out identification of hazards and an assessment of risks posed by those hazards. Section 20 of the Act requires that Safety Statements be based on hazard identification and risk assessment. In addition, several specific pieces of legislation require that risk assessment be carried out to establish appropriate control measures. These include:

- Chemical Agents Regulations (Amendment), 2001
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations, 2013
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007
- Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2013

The goal of hazard identification and risk assessment is to devise and implement appropriate controls to ensure in so far as is reasonably practicable, that the risk is reduced to an acceptable level.

Definitions

A **hazard** is something that has the potential to cause harm such as a chemical or trailing cable on floor.

A **risk** is the chance of something happening, which has a potential to cause harm where we identify how likely the injury / incident will happen and if it happens what will the outcome or the consequence be.

A **risk assessment** is a careful examination of anything in your work environment that could cause injury or ill health.

Risk Assessment Methodologies

Many different formats of risk assessment documents are in use in RCSI, depending on the type of activity being undertaken (e.g., young person's work placement, pregnant, post-natal & breastfeeding employees, student events, construction, out of hours etc. All can be found [here](#) in the Health and Safety Office webpage.

Risk Control

The outcome of the risk assessment identifies appropriate control measures to be implemented to reduce the risk from the hazards identified to "as low as is reasonably practicable". Several factors may affect your risk control decision:



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- Number of people you're trying to protect
- Reliance on behaviour
- Maintenance
- Cost

If it is not possible to reduce the risk, controls that are currently in place must be continually monitored and the risk assessment reviewed on a regular basis.

Check out the [Risk Assessment procedure](#) for further information.

Management of Contractors

The scale and complexity of the University requires the employment of external contractors, particularly in the areas of building maintenance, equipment installation, refurbishment and grounds maintenance. The Act requires RCSI, in so far as is reasonably practicable; to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all University users whom contractor may affect works. To this end the Estate and Support Services Department operates a mandatory Permit to Work system for all contractors.

All RCSI Employees and Students must ensure that any contractors working on their behalf in the University do so under the Permit to Work process. Full details on the permit to work procedure can be found [here](#).

Bullying and Workplace Stress

Bullying in the workplace has been described in various ways. The Health and Safety Authority's definition is that it is:

"Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work."

An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition above is described as dignity at work in RCSI but as a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.

For help, guidance and support please go to [RCSI's dignity-at-work policy](#).

Out of Hours and Lone Working

If you work outside main office hours and at weekend's incl bank holidays, you must complete the [Out of Hours Risk Assessment](#). If you are working alone during these times, please complete the same form. For further details on RCSI'S Out of Hours and Lone Working Procedure, please click [here](#).

Occupational Health

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, RCSI is required to "ensure that health surveillance is made available to all staff appropriate to the health and safety risks present in the place of work". For further information, please contact the [Health and Safety Office](#).

Pregnancy, Post-Natal and Breastfeeding Employees

As an academic institution, employees and students of RCSI may work with agents known or suspected to be hazardous to human reproduction. The University is committed to protecting the reproductive health of all employees and students and minimising risks to the unborn.

Risk Assessment

In accordance with Part 6, Chapter 2 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007, pregnant employees must notify her Line Manager or the Head of School / Department of her condition "as soon as is practicable after it occurs and, at the time of the notification, given to her employer or produce for her employer's inspection a medical or other appropriate certificate confirming her condition".



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For full details regarding the Risk Assessment process, follow details in the [Pregnancy Risk Assessment Procedure](#).

Display Screen Equipment

In compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations, 2007, RCSI is committed to providing appropriate equipment and training to DSE Users (*defined as those employees who use a display screen for more than one hour per day at work*).

The Health and Safety Office can complete an assessment and adjust your workstation (chair, desk, pc monitor etc.) to ensure it is suitable for your use. The employee completes the first part of the assessment. Click [here](#) to access this assessment.

Smoking

The University Council recognises that through the University's position as a leading provider of medical and public health education it has both a moral and legal duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that employees, students and visitors to the University have the right to work, study or visit without being exposed to tobacco smoke. The issues involved concern the comfort, health (particularly in relation to the dangers of passive smoking) and safety of all those working, studying or visiting the University in any of its locations.

This Policy applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors and subcontractors and is part of the University's commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of its students and staff. The University's No Smoking Policy also applies to external companies renting space within the University and this should be reflected in all lease agreements with such companies. **SMOKING & VAPING IS PROHIBITED:**

- Within, or within 8 meters of, all RCSI buildings and property including RCSI operated student accommodation
- Within vehicles owned and operated by the University
- Within leased vehicles used during university business

Injury, Incident, Dangerous Occurrence, Illness & Near Miss Reporting & Investigation

The Health and Safety Office is responsible for ensuring that all "notifiable" injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences are reported to the Health and Safety Authority.

RCSI Injury/Incident Reporting Procedure

For the purposes of internal reporting within RCSI the [injury/illness/incident response procedure](#) must be followed, and the completed [injury/incident form](#) must be submitted to the [Health and Safety Office](#) as soon as possible after any injury/ incidents occurs.

When an injury / illness / incident occurs within a specific School or Department, the Manager or designate must complete the injury/incident form. When an injury / incident occurs in a common area e.g., in a lecture theatre or on university grounds, the member of staff to whom the injury / incident is reported must ensure that the report form is completed.

In the case of a fatality, the Health and Safety Office will immediately inform the Health and Safety Authority by phone and the scene of the injury / dangerous occurrence will be preserved, except where action is necessary for securing the safety of any person(s). This latter stipulation also applies in the event of a serious injury / dangerous occurrence.

The inclusion of SARS-CoV-2 in the 2020 Biological Agents Code of Practice requires RCSI to notify the Health and Safety Authority if an employee is a confirmed case of COVID-19 (e.g., informed by a medical practitioner, public health or other health professional) because of the work they are carrying out for the University.



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In the case of a death of an employee from COVID-19, where it has been established that the death was because of the employee's work with the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), RCSI (or medical practitioner) must notify this death to the Authority.

Health and Safety Performance Monitoring

Certain data on health, safety and welfare matters will be used to monitor health and safety performance. Such data may include:

- Injuries/incidents/dangerous occurrences/near misses
- Attendance records for health and safety/fire safety training
- Fire drill and evacuation
- Completed risk assessments
- Infrastructural improvements
- Safety projects completed
- Safety initiatives
- Compliance with specific health and safety policies

These will be collated regularly and formally reported to the Health and Safety Committees and the Director of Estates, which in turn will report to SMT where applicable.

End.