



27 July 2020

Dear Trainee,

I hope that you are settling in well to your new post since 13 July and that you are enjoying your new career in Surgery! RCSI is committed to supporting you throughout your life as a surgeon and we will do everything we can to provide you with the best possible training experience over the next 8 years. Our aim is to help you develop to your full potential as a highly skilled, caring and professional surgeon for the 21st-century.

At the Induction Day during recent Bootcamp we tried to give you an overview of your surgical training over the next 2 years as Core Surgical Trainees. I realise that we covered a lot of detail on that day and we certainly do not expect you to remember everything that was covered in that short 90-minute session. However, everything that you need to know about your surgical training journey is readily accessible on the mSurgery app, mostly in the sections “Core Surgical Training” or “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines”.

I am writing to you today to give you more detail about your RCSI-based classes for the coming academic year. These comprise the Operative Surgical Skills (OSS) Course and the Human Factors in Patient Safety Course. These programmes are an integral part of your training and your performance on these programmes contributes significantly to your progression score for advancement to ST3.

Operative Surgical Skills Course

Course Director: Dr Dara O’Keeffe

Technical skills acquisition is an integral part of Surgical Training and RCSI places a high priority on delivering high-quality technical skills teaching in our simulation centre. Our Operative Surgical Skills (OSS) Course is designed to give you the skills necessary to maximise the value you get from working in your hospital post. The course is based on a long-established syllabus of technical skills and is delivered by an experienced faculty of surgeon-educators.

You will attend 5 days of OSS Course teaching in RCSI over the coming year. Each module is repeated 4 times so that you will have a choice of dates to choose. However, there is a limit on places available for each date, so please book yourself in early for a date that suits you. Also, please liaise with your consultant trainers and other team members to ensure that the dates you choose for your classes do not conflict with other team arrangements in your hospital. It is your responsibility to make sure that you can attend on the dates chosen!

In addition to your 5 training days, there will be a formal assessment of technical skills in April/May of 2021. This assessment counts for 5% of the total marks for progression to ST3. Non-attendance at any of the 5 training days will incur a penalty deduction from your assessment score and, obviously, this will impact on your competitiveness for ST3 progression.

Human Factors in Patient Safety

Course Director: Professor Eva Doherty

RCSI has long recognised the importance of human factors in patient safety and indeed we were the first surgical training programme in the world to introduce formal syllabus-based human factors training for surgical trainees 15 years ago. The human factors programme is now an integral and well-established part of our training in RCSI and is mandatory for all Core Surgical Trainees. Our programme is based on a clearly defined syllabus of non-technical skills which was designed and delivered by an expert faculty comprised of both surgeons and psychologists. The programme for Year 1 usually consists of 3 full days of face-to-face teaching in RCSI, followed by a year-end high-stakes assessment. The 3 classes for CST 1 are:

- Error and safety in hospital practice
- Talking to patients and relatives
- Professional interactions

The classes are delivered using a combination of didactic teaching, interactive discussions and working groups. There is a heavy emphasis on high-fidelity simulation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated some changes to our usual delivery model although the learning objectives, content and assessment will remain as before. For the coming year, the Human Factors in Patient Safety programme will involve 1 day of on-site attendance at RCSI, plus 2 days/modules which will be covered through online learning. The year-end assessments will, as usual, involve an on-site OSCE which contributes significantly (5%) to your score for progression to ST3.

The 1 day on-site will be delivered entirely through simulation in our state-of-the-art simulation facilities. This day will cover core Communication Skills (including Breaking Bad News) but will also cover some elements of Talking to Patients and Relatives and Professional Interactions. There will be some pre-course preparation which you will need to complete before coming to the course. This face-to-face teaching day will be repeated several times so that you can choose a date that suits. However, it is important that you enrol yourself for this course as soon as possible as there are limited places available on each day.

The 2 online days will require you to complete certain courses which are available on mSurgery. Your participation in these courses will be monitored online.

- The online course, Professionalism in 21st-Century Medical Practice is a comprehensive programme consisting of 12 modules which cover every aspect of Professionalism and is based on the Medical Council's "Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners". We expect all surgical trainees to complete the 12 modules of the online course over the 8 years of surgical training but there are 2 modules which are required to be completed in the coming year in order to address the learning objectives of CST 1.
 1. Module 9: Patient Safety
 2. Module 2: Relationships with Patients: Communication

Each module requires you to watch an introductory video, then complete the reading/viewing in the Learning Resource area, then complete a MCQ test in order to get your Certificate of Completion which you will need to upload to verify your participation.

In addition to the 2 Professionalism modules, you will need to complete the following online courses which are on mSurgery (Courses/Open Online Courses):

- Communication Skills for Telephone Consultations
- Video Consultations
- Clinical Handover

Finally, you will be expected to participate in a live webinar on "Bystander Intervention" which will be delivered on several dates over the coming months. Places on each webinar are strictly limited so, again, enrol EARLY!

In March/April 2021 we will have an online 90-minute class to review the content that you have completed online and to help you prepare for the OSCE in April/May.

In summary, your commitments for Human Factors in Patient Safety for the coming academic year are:

1. One training/simulation day in RCSI (with pre-course viewing of Breaking Bad News)
2. Two modules from RCSI Professionalism course
 - Module 9: Patient Safety
 - Module 2: Relationships with Patients: Communication
3. Three short online courses:
 - Communication Skills for Telephone Consultations
 - Video Consultations
 - Clinical Handover
4. Participation in live webinar: Bystander Intervention
5. Online class to prepare for year-end OSCE
6. OSCE assessment

I hope that these arrangements are clear. The coming year will be challenging for all postgraduate training bodies and for trainees because of the ongoing limitations imposed by COVID-19. However, we will continue to do all we can to ensure that you have the best possible training experience. If you have any queries or issues about your training, please contact the relevant member of our training support team:

OSS Course: Lorraine O’Keeffe 01-402-2719 / email: oss@rcsi.ie

Human Factors Course: Simone Brennan 01-402-2524 / email: humanfactors@rcsi.ie

With best wishes,



Professor Oscar Traynor MCh FRCSI