RCSI ranked 49th on the Times Higher Education World University Ranking

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland was placed 49th in the latest Times Higher Education World University Rankings for International Outlook. It is the first time the College has appeared in the league table.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2014-2015 lists the best global universities and are the only international university performance tables that judge world-class universities across all their core missions - teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

The diversity of a university’s student body and the extent to which its academics collaborate with international colleagues are signs of how global an institution really is. These factors are among the 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators employed by Times Higher Education to produce the most comprehensive global university rankings available.

The Times Higher Education has produced further data which, for the first time analysed the ‘International Outlook’ sub-category.

This measure considers each institution’s percentage of international staff, its international student numbers and the proportion of its research papers published with a co-author from at least one other country.

RCSI Chief Executive Officer, Professor Cathal Kelly said: “We are very pleased to be seen in the world’s top 50 institutions in terms of international outlook. As the College looks to focus its activities around reputation and institutional metrics, it is an encouraging signal that we are continuing to make progress with our Growth and Excellence strategy.”

Equivalency of RCSI Bahrain’s five-year medical programme in Jordan

Completion of RCSI Bahrain’s five-year medical programme, in addition to a one-year internship at a recognised hospital, is now accepted as an adequate qualification to sit for the internship examination in Jordan.

The Ministry of Health in Jordan and The Jordan Medical Council (JMC) allow Jordanian students who were exempt from the foundation year, to sit for the examination without requesting further requirements.

In May 2012, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Jordan recognised all the programmes offered by RCSI Bahrain, following a site inspection.

Collaboration with the Royal Charity Organisation

On January 29, RCSI Bahrain President, Professor Sameer Otoom and Head of Community Engagement, Ms Julie Sprakel met with Dr Mustafa Al Sayed, Secretary General of the Royal Charity Organisation (RCO). The meeting looked at the potential scope for collaboration between the two entities towards community engagement initiatives both locally, regionally and internationally.

In the coming weeks, the University will welcome Dr Mustafa who will present RCO’s role in the community to staff and students.
Second annual RCSI Bahrain Career Guidance Symposium and Exhibition

On February 7 and 8, the University held its second annual Career Guidance Symposium and Exhibition, under the patronage of His Excellency Dr Shaikh Mohammed Bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, Chairman of Bahrain’s Supreme Council for Health.

Medical students, graduates and delegates from around Bahrain and the GCC region attended the event which included sessions dedicated to expert career advice and support for medical students and junior doctors.

Speakers from Bahrain, Malta, USA, Canada, UK, UAE and Kuwait – including a number of RCSI Bahrain alumni – provided information on postgraduate training opportunities and the complex, ever-changing rules and regulations of different countries and regulatory bodies.

The event also featured sessions on various medical specialisations, during which speakers participated in discussion panels addressing different issues in their respective fields and answered questions about specific aspects of their jobs.

Alongside the symposium, an exhibition of healthcare-related organisations and authorities in the region featured the Bahrain Ministry of Health, King Hamad University Hospital, Bahrain Defence Force Hospital, the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), Kaplan Medical, RCSI Travel, Global Medics, AAMC Global Health Learning Opportunities (GHLO), Medics Away, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) and American Medical Opportunities (AMO) Worldwide.

President of RCSI Bahrain, Professor Sameer Otoom, commented on the importance of the event: “Following the success of last year's symposium, this event aimed to introduce medical students to the administrative procedures and examinations necessary to complete after undergraduate studies which will help determine their future specialties.”

Research project aims to improve marginalised communities in East Sudan

To enable a research project in East Sudan to be conducted, Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf, Lecturer in Epidemiology & Public Health Medicine and coordinator of Population & International Health at RCSI Bahrain, has received a grant from The United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The research project aims to improve communities’ resilience to social and economic shocks in a post-conflict setting and to address underlying conflict-drivers, including disproportionate underdevelopment and marginalisation.

The research project will provide pasteurised milk to 4000 underprivileged, malnourished school children in 14 targeted schools for one academic year. The research will evaluate the impact on nutritional status, health-related quality of life, education coverage, academic achievement, awareness of teachers and students on the nutritional value of milk and other foods, and any change in perceptions of community members, regarding marginalisation and discontent.

This research is a collaboration project between Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, RCSI Bahrain and Reproductive and Child Health Research Unit (RCRU) at University of Medical Sciences and Technology in Khartoum, Sudan.

It is worth mentioning that Dr Elmusharaf has recently been awarded a PhD from National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway on his research titled “Access to maternal healthcare in post-conflict South Sudan: Is the health system designed for the context?” Congratulations Dr Elmusharaf.
New Pathology Museum at RCSI Bahrain

A Pathology Museum was initiated at RCSI Bahrain in October 2014. It features approximately 40 glass pots displaying specimens of a variety of disease processes in several organ systems.

It is anticipated that the museum will grow over the next few years incorporating a larger number of specimens; computer-based pathology learning tools, including a vast collection of macroscopic and microscopic images; and an array of self-test questions with expanded answers including knowledge pearls rarely found in modern undergraduate text books.

“This initiative marks an important step in the developmental history of RCSI Bahrain,” said Professor Naseem Ansari, Head of Department of Pathology, RCSI Bahrain. “Pathology constitutes a significant component of instruction in the Intermediate Cycle of study at the School of Medicine, and it is envisaged that the Pathology Museum will prove to be a valuable resource for undergraduate medical students, for pathology residents at RCSI Bahrain affiliated hospitals and for those medical graduates required to pass pathology components of their professional/licensing examination.”

While the fledgling museum waits for relocation to a larger, permanent site, its current location is in the Anatomy Laboratory (second floor, Room 219).

Clinical Coordinator offices at SMC and KHUH

In a recent development, two offices were allocated for RCSI Bahrain clinical coordinators, at King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH) and Salamiya Medical Complex (SMC).

The Student clinical coordinators, Ms Anita Ghavami at KHUH and Ms Ejal Ahmed at SMC, along with Ms Muriel Murray at the existing office at the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Hospital, are the first point-of-contact for students in the clinical years of the medicine programme.

They act as liaisons between RCSI Bahrain students, academics, administration staff and clinical staff at the respective hospitals. They assist with the coordination of clinical placements and clinical teaching by organising local teaching sessions; they book rooms, organise catering, manage facilities, resources and clinical attendance and support all aspects of the student clinical experience. They also coordinate the running of hospital-based clinical examinations and assist with the distribution and collection of examination scripts.

These offices will ensure smoother communication in clinical training between the two hospitals and the University. This step is one of many taken to facilitate the cooperation between RCSI Bahrain and its primary teaching hospitals.

New cardiovascular research laboratory at RCSI Bahrain

A Cardiovascular Research Laboratory is currently being set up at RCSI Bahrain.

This new development is the first step in addressing a large gap in the current understanding of the vascular ageing process in the Middle Eastern region. With a research background in cardiovascular medicine and a PhD in Arterial Stiffness, Dr Azra Mahmud, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Pharmacology, School of Medicine, will initiate the BLAST (Bahrain Lifestyle and Arterial Stiffness) Study in a healthy population, over the coming months, subject to ethical approval which was applied for in June 2014.

The laboratory will be equipped with haemodynamic equipment to measure clinical and 24-hour ambulatory brachial and aortic blood pressures, 24-hour ambulatory arterial stiffness, heart rate variability, physical activity using accelerometers and fasting metabolic parameters, including glucose and lipid profile.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death, around the globe. It is estimated that by the year 2030, almost 23.6 million people will die from a cardiovascular disease, mainly from heart disease and stroke.

A number of well-documented factors associated with this increased risk such as age, smoking, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, can result in hypertension, diabetes and obesity. These associations are particularly evident in the Middle East region which is witnessing an epidemic of cardiovascular disease, due largely to an unhealthy lifestyle. More alarmingly, however, is the anecdotal evidence for accelerated vascular ageing in this region, reflected in the high number of cardiovascular instances happening within a younger age group compared to a European or North American population.
RCSI Bahrain holds annual White Coat Ceremony for medical students

The transition of 147 medical students to clinical training was celebrated during the White Coat Ceremony on February 10. The ceremony is a symbolic event which celebrates this transition and derives its name from the presentation of individual physician’s white coats, embroidered with the student’s name.

The event opened with an address by Professor Joe McMenamin, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine, RCSI Bahrain. Through his encouraging speech, Professor McMenamin spoke to the students about the future as doctors and highlighted the significance of wearing a white medical coat and the responsibility with which it is associated.

This year’s ceremony featured guest speaker, Dr Bahaa Fateha, Chief Executive Officer of the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA). Dr Fateha congratulated the students on reaching this milestone in their medical studies, and spoke to them about the promising career of healthcare in Bahrain.

At the end of his presentation, Dr Fateha announced that RCSI Bahrain graduates who took the Bahrain Medical Licensing Examination (BMLE) achieved a 100% pass rate for the second year in succession. He congratulated the University on this great accomplishment and wished staff and students continued success in the future.

Mr Alaaeddin Obied from RCSI Bahrain’s senior class, also addressed his fellow students, speaking about his experience and what they should expect in the years ahead.

The ceremony concluded with the students’ recital of the professional declaration, through which they vowed to maintain professional attitudes and behaviour in work and in relationships with classmates, teachers, patients and the community.

The Centre for Student Success art competition

An art competition organised by the Centre for Student Success, selected new art pieces to be displayed as ceiling tiles in the centre. The competition took place on January 21 and was judged by Dr Fiza Rashid-Doubill and Professor Robin O’Sullivan.

The centre’s previously plain ceiling tiles have been transformed into artistic works of inspiration to be enjoyed by those who use the centre for studying.

The winning entry was created by Zahraa Abdulla Hasan (IC1) whose artwork earned a total of 24 from a maximum 30 points.

Congratulations to Zahraa and all the other entrants who invested the time to create artistic pieces for the benefit of all. Those who haven’t yet seen the paintings should drop into the centre when they get a chance!
RCSI Bahrain's annual Winter Ball took place at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain Hotel & Spa on February 19. The Winter Ball is one of the largest formal events on the University's calendar, attended this year by more than 450 students and staff. In line with RCSI Bahrain’s tenth anniversary celebrations, the theme for this year’s ball was classic ‘black and white’, which extended to special decorations at the venue. The event also featured live entertainment from the locally-based Past Masters as well as plenty of prize giveaways.

RCSI Bahrain students participate in Model UN conference, Japan

During the final week of December 2014, a group of RCSI Bahrain students were among about 350 participants in the 26th All Japan Model United Nations (AJMUN) held in Tokyo.

In 2010, JMUN was established as the sole, nationwide Model United Nations (MUN) organisation in Japan. Participants in Model UN conferences, referred to as delegates, represent countries from around the world to partake in simulative United Nations sessions of intergovernmental organisations.

AJMUN includes 7 conferences, 2 of which are held entirely in English; the Durban Conference and the IAEA Conference.

The Durban conference would not have been as memorable without certain event highlights. Delegates for Qatar (IC1 student, Nikita Evangeline) and Senegal (JC2 student Aseel AlHermi) each brought tactical insights during both moderated and unmoderated caucuses (debates which, respectively, allow delegates to make short comments on specific sub-issues and – in an informal caucus – to leave their seats to talk freely and informally with others).

Other representatives during this conference were UAE (Ghayda Al-Shami, JC2), Sri Lanka (Shaheer Khan, FY), Brazil (Nouf v v Shaheen, JC2), Germany (Fatima Shirazi, JC2) and Spain (Ali Khader, JC2).

At the (IAEA) conference, Venezuela (Sidra Rauf, SC1) displayed her lionhearted spirit as she progressed to become the lone representative of RCSI Bahrain at the conference.

The University’s delegation was one of the most active groups at the conference and the students returned with newfound knowledge, broader mindsets and a more comprehensive cognition than they had at the outset.
RCSI Bahrain supports international campaign aid of the Red Crescent

Since January, RCSI Bahrain staff and students have been supporting an aid campaign for Syrian refugee children. The campaign is part of a collaboration between the University and Bahrain Red Crescent – a national society member of The International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), the world's largest humanitarian organisation. The wider scope of this campaign involves a joint effort between the regional Red Crescent societies in Dubai, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain to provide much-needed support to displaced Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

After extensive communication between the Bahrain Red Crescent and the Lebanese Red Cross, it was decided that support should focus on refugee children, partly because of the existing continuous support at governmental levels for food, aid and shelter.

RCSI Bahrain’s Community Engagement Office, along with two students Abdulla Khaled Alshenow and Fatema Abdulameer Almadhoob, have attended meetings with the charity and, via the Toy Collection Drive, they are driving the message through the University.

As part of a regional convoy, the collected toys will be included in the first shipment to Lebanon in early March.

Special acknowledgement must go to the various RCSI Bahrain clubs and societies which have supported this drive including the Surgical Society, Film Society and Cricket Society.

More funds will be directed towards this campaign through upcoming events planned by the Art Society, Medics in Leadership, the American Football Club and the Music Society.

The toy donation box can be found outside the Community Engagement Office during office hours. For more information about the aid campaign, visit the Community Engagement office or email: communityengagement@rcsi-mub.com

RCSI Bahrain students participate in Al Bawasil Diabetes Camp, Doha

Over five days from January 31, three undergraduate nursing students from RCSI Bahrain volunteered at the annual Al Bawasil Camp for diabetic children in Doha. Sajida Ali Salman, Amnah Ali Salman and Fatimah Fadhel Ebrahim represented both RCSI Bahrain and the Bahrain Diabetes Society.

Run by doctors, nurses, nutritionists and social specialists, Al Bawasil Camp, an official International Diabetes Federation (IDF) event, was attended this year by more than a hundred children with diabetes from the Qatar and the MENA regions.

Through technical, knowledgeable and educational activities, the camp addresses issues about diabetes, providing the children with confidence to manage emotional and physical issues caused by the diagnosis of diabetes.

The three students were selected to represent RCSI Bahrain after winning a competition designed for Year 4 nursing students, for which they were asked to generate new educational games that will be used to increase children’s awareness about preventing obesity and diabetes during the Diabetes Mobile Unit’s school visits.

The University gives special thanks to the Bahrain Diabetes Society, especially Dr Mariam Al Hajri and Dr Samia Al Ghutan who, along with the University’s Community Engagement Office, made the trip possible.

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RCSI Bahrain alumni research publication

A research paper titled “The influence of patient factors on patient-reported outcomes of orthopedic surgery involving implantable devices: A systematic review” by RCSI Bahrain alumni Dr Androu Waheeb has recently been published.

Dr Waheeb graduated from RCSI Bahrain in June 2013 and since then, he has been a research trainee at the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, Toronto Western Hospital, University of Toronto.

The full publication can be found online at http://www.semarthritisrheumatism.com/article/S0049-0172(14)00184-X/abstract
Hello Everybody,

Thanks to everyone for attending the SRC’s first inaugural Health & Fitness Week and making it a roaring success. Just to make sure everyone is up to date, please read the below to grasp why this is now an annual event on our social calendar.

What is the purpose of Health & Fitness Week?

The purpose of this event is to promote health and fitness across the entire population of RCSI Bahrain through a series of interactive events.

Why is this important?

RCSI’s mission is to develop healthcare leaders who make a difference worldwide but what are you doing to promote a healthy lifestyle as a healthcare professional?

We want to actively encourage all students and staff to be more health-orientated and to instil in them a range of healthy habits that they can carry on and pass forward into the future.

How are we going to achieve this?

This annual event is presented by our own staff on our own campus! In collaboration with health focused external companies, we hope to increase awareness of and change perceptions on healthy habits in order to develop a more health conscious, well rounded graduate.

RCSI Bahrain’s Health and Fitness Week is an opportunity for the entire university community to join forces for the benefit of each and every one of us. Its potential success therefore, will depend on the input and support of a number of different individuals, volunteers, departments, societies and groups, now and into the future.

Watch this space for post event updates in the next edition of Connected!

We would like to thank our sponsors, Euromotors, for their support in improving facilities in the SRC.

Calories & Carbs

Change. Are you really ready?

Are you serious about getting healthier in a bid to shed some weight? Have you thought about how long it will take and what it involves?

There are no quick fixes, there are no easy ways around it. Nutrition is key, we know this by now. Paired with a good exercise programme, there is no reason you cannot get results, but it takes time. You have to be persistent with your diet and lifestyle, and you have to make it fit your life and work hard until it becomes natural.

The results will come.

Everyone can make time to exercise. Everyone can prepare food if they really have to. Everyone can change what they eat for breakfast - yes you can eat meat! Everyone can continue to eat healthily on holidays and on the weekends.

But do you want to?? You must have the mind-set to change because no one can do it for you!

If you are ready to start making some changes, here are six tips on simple food swaps that will aid your process of losing weight and becoming healthier:

1. Swap Pasta for Zucchini or Courgette (either cut into sheets for lasagne or as a spaghetti pasta using a Julienne peeler) giving a significantly lower carb content to the meal with the added vitamins and minerals from the zucchini as well as being gluten-free.

2. Swap Mayonnaise for Mashed Avocado. The avocado provides healthy monounsaturated fats as well as vitamins and minerals. Can also be used as a substitute for butter in baking recipes such as brownies.

3. Swap All Potatoes for 1/2 potatoes, 1/2 cauliflower in mash, and use coconut milk or almond milk instead of butter and milk for that creamy consistency.

4. Swap White Refined Sugar for Coconut Sugar, Raw Honey or Pure Maple Syrup.

5. Swap White Rice for Grated Cauliflower for when you need a lower carb meal.

6. Swap Table Salt (depleted of natural minerals) for Himalayan Sea Salt (full of minerals and good source of magnesium).

7. Swap White Bread for 100% Whole Wheat, Rye, Pumpernickel or Gluten-free. White bread is full of sugar; there are no benefits to eating it! If a package says ‘wheat’ or ‘contains ‘x’ amount of whole grains’ or ‘multigrain’, it probably isn’t much better than buying white bread itself.

• www.caloriesandcarbs.net
• Instagram: @caloriesandcarbs
• Facebook: Caloriesandcarbs
Frank McCarthy selected to represent the Middle East

Head of Student Recreation & Services, Frank McCarthy, has been selected to play for the first Middle East representative Gaelic football team in the world championship Gaelic games next month.

After a series of trial games in January, Frank was selected as one of five players from the Arabian Celts GAA club in Bahrain who were chosen from the best in the region. Teams from all over the world will travel to Abu Dhabi to take part in the inaugural World GAA Games on March 6 and 7.

The Professional Development Unit’s Inspirational Talk

On February 17, the Professional Development Unit (PDU) hosted the third inspirational talk titled “Empowering Women; Turning Obstacles into Opportunities”, during which, Mr Khalid AlKhudair, founder and CEO of Glowork, inspired attendees with his story and the journey that led him to becoming a successful millionaire.

Mr Alkhudair has established himself as an accomplished writer and speaker on women employment issues and social entrepreneurship. He is the creator of Glowork; a website dedicated to empowering women and providing them with an equal chance in the workplace. The website has listed over 11000 vacancies for women in KSA, and has received international recognition from politicians, celebrities and executives.

Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, COO, noted that “RCSI Bahrain’s vision is to develop healthcare leaders that make a difference worldwide; inviting one of the foremost entrepreneurs in the Middle East to inspire staff and students is key for leadership development”.

Dr Kathryn Strachan, Head of Quality Enhancement, said “A leader has vision and is willing to embrace challenge. It is important to invite local experts and leaders that can share their story in making history. If they can do it than so can our staff and students!”.

These inspirational talks are available at the RCSI Bahrain YouTube channel. The next and last inspirational talk for this Academic Year is scheduled to take place on April 26.