RCSI History Timeline

1765  Sylvester O’Halloran, a Limerick surgeon, advocates the foundation of a College of Surgeons for Ireland, with admission by examination and the publication of a register of qualified surgeons

1780  Dublin Society of Surgeons formed and met in the Elephant Tavern in Essex St, 29 March

1784  Foundation of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) by charter of George III, 11 February

—  First meeting of RCSI held in the boardroom of the Rotunda Hospital, 2 March

—  First examination for the Licence RCSI, 12 August

1785  First conferring of the licence on John Birch of Roscrea, 14 January

—  First Chair of Surgery in Ireland established in the College

1789  The College Schools of anatomy and surgery open at rear of Mercer’s Hospital

1791  The College recommends the Government establish a hospital for venereal diseases: Westmoreland Lock Hospital in Townsend Street founded

1799  William Lawless, RCSI professor of anatomy and physiology expelled because he had ‘been notoriously engaged in the late rebellion’ (1798)

1800  Jennerian vaccination introduced to Ireland by John Creighton, surgeon, President RCSI 1812, 1824; professor of midwifery 1794-1819

1805  Quaker cemetery in York Street purchased as a site for College premises

1810  Surgeons’ Hall opens on St Stephen’s Green

1817  Conference held with sister colleges of London and Edinburgh to unify standards in surgical education

1825  Dublin first lit by gas

1827  Surgeons’ Hall on St Stephen’s Green extended

1828  Second charter granted to the College by George IV

1831  Surgical Society of Ireland founded
1832  The Oil Gas Company provides gas lighting to the College
  — The Anatomy Act whereby bodies are legally provided for dissection, and the inspection of anatomy schools becomes law
1838  Representatives of the three surgical colleges meet in London and agree standards for preliminary and professional education of surgeons
1839  Medical Association of Ireland founded by Richard Carmichael, President RCSI 1813, 1826, 1845
  — Arthur Jacob, President RCSI 1837, and Henry Maunsell publish the *Dublin Medical Press*
1844  First supplement charter of Queen Victoria institutes the RCSI Fellowship by examination
1845  Francis Rynd, FRCSI, of the Meath Hospital introduces hypodermic medication
1847  John Macdonnell, RCSI professor of anatomy, performs the first operation under anesthesia in Ireland in the Richmond Hospital, 1 January
1849  Albert, Prince Consort, visits the College
  — Carmichael Essay prizes established from the bequest of Richard Carmichael
  — Robert William Smith, licentiate and fellow of the College, elected first professor of surgery in Trinity College Dublin
1851  Richard Butcher, President RCSI 1866, devises “Butcher’s saw”
1854  College purchases a mace and gown for the President
1855  Catholic University Medical School opens in Cecilia Street – RCSI was the first licensing body to recognise its lectures
1858  The Medical Act establishes the General Medical Council and the Medical Register
1859  College subscribes 50 guineas towards a statue of John Hunter (Honorary Fellow RSCI 1790) in the Royal College of Surgeons of England
1862  Replica of Theed’s bust of the Prince Consort is commissioned and installed in the College – the first memorial to him by any public body in Great Britain and Ireland
1863  Written answers to written questions introduced for the first time in examination for the RCSI licence
1864  Hall of the King and Queen’s College of Physicians of Ireland (1654-) opens in Kildare Street
Edward Dillon Mapother, President RCSI 1879 and professor of hygiene appointed the first Medical Officer for Health for Dublin City

1865 Robert Macdonnell, President RCSI 1877 performs first recorded transfusion of human blood in Ireland at Jervis Street Hospital, 20 April

— Francis Cruise, surgeon to the Mater Hospital, describes his ‘endoscope’ – the forerunner of the modern cystoscope

— Academic robes introduced for RCSI Council members, examiners and professors

1867 Examiners for the Licence to use a system of marking instead of the customary single vote – ‘Yes’ or ‘No’

— Candidates for the final examination required to carry out surgical operations on a dead subject

1871 Clinical examination of the patient introduced for final examination

— Regularly appointed meetings introduced for conferring the Licence and administering the Declaration

1874 Students examined for the first time in histology

1878 Roll of Presidents which hangs in College presented by the Vice-President, Edward Dillon Mapother

1880 Committee appointed by RCSI Council to confer with the College of Physicians on the unhealthy state and high death-rate of Dublin city

1881 Examination in ophthalmology introduced for the Licence examination

1882 RCSI refuses to recognise medical schools in which evening lectures are delivered

— Academy of Medicine in Ireland founded – the prefix ‘Royal’ added in 1887

1883 Establishment of a Veterinary College in Ireland approved by RCSI, with a promise of support

— Second supplementary charter of Queen Victoria granted

— Telephone installed in College by The Telephone Co – rent £12 p.a.

1885 Third supplemental charter of Queen Victoria opens the RCSI Medical School, Licence and Fellowship to women

— RCSI recognises lectures delivered in the London School of Medicine for Women

1886 The first woman, Mrs Mary Dawson admitted Licentiate RCSI
— The conjoint diploma of the Irish Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons establishes the joint qualification LRCPI and LRCSI: LRCP&SI

1889 Presidential gold chain commissioned

1890 Laboratory provided for the study of bacteriology

1891 Electric lighting in College

— RCSI deputation visits Berlin to investigate and procure Professor Koch’s tuberculin
— The Barker Anatomical Prize awarded to Miss Isabel Wamptyn Harper for a dissection of the axilla – the first woman to win a College prize

1892 First USA Honorary Fellow elected: John Shaw-Billings, Surgeon-General

1893 Unsuccessful attempt by licentiates to obtain voting rights in RCSI Council elections

— RCSI Fellows petition against Gladstone’s Government of Ireland Bill (Home Rule) for fear of its effect on College and the profession

1893 The first woman Fellow RCSI, Miss Emily Winifred Dickson (LRCP&SI, 1891)

1895 Discovery of X-rays by Conrad Röntgen

1896 First recorded use of x-rays in Ireland: R Bolton McCausland, FRCSI, removes a needle from a woman’s hand at Dr. Steevens’ Hospital

1901 College Dinner to be held annually

1903 Gaelic League delegation attends Council meeting requesting that Irish be included among the subjects for the Preliminary Examination, which was agreed

1904 New examination and banqueting hall completed: College Hall

1907 Sir Henry Rosborough Swanzy, President RCS, attends Commission on Vivisection and supports investigation by animal experiment

1909 Students’ Union formed with College’s Albert Hall at its disposal

1910 The annual dinner to be known as the ‘Charter Day Dinner’ to be held on or near February 11

— Athletic grounds in Terenure purchased

1911 Presidential badge commissioned
1916 Insurgents occupy College during Easter Week under the command of Michael Mallin and Countess Markievicz

1918 RCSi World War Roll of Honour is published containing some 1500 names

1921 RCSi Council deputation attends the Congress of the American College of Surgeons in Philadelphia to confer honorary fellowship on eight American surgeons: Brewer, Crile, Finny, Harte, Keen, the Mayo brothers and Ochsner

— Irish Free State established

1922 Civil War in Ireland

— Special vote of thanks passed to the Minister of Defence for sending a guard to take charge of the College during the recent disturbances in Dublin, and appreciation expressed for their care of the property whilst in possession

— The Incorporated Law Society is allowed to hold lectures and examinations in the College, pending the reconstruction of the Four Courts after the Civil War

— At the request of the Provisional Government, RCSi Council nominates two members to the first Senate: Sir William de Courcey Wheeler, President RCSi and Sir Arthur Chance

1923 Address of welcome presented by RCSi to the first Governor-General of the Free State, Timothy M. Healy, K.C

1925 Special meeting of RCSi Council considers Government’s proposal of a separate Medical Register for the Irish State: a local Register is instituted in addition to the General Medical Register

1927 The President and Council urge early action upon the Government regarding the retention in England of Sir Hugh Lane’s collection of pictures

1930 The Minister for Defence grants a petition from RCSi students for the revival of the Officers’ Training Corps

— New sports ground purchased at Bird Avenue, Clonskea

1932 RCSi Association of Graduates formed under the presidency of Sir William Taylor

— Bird Avenue sports ground opened by Frank Crawley, President RCSi and memorial to Alfred Scott, professor of pathology 1889-1926 unveiled there by Sir William Taylor

1936 Neurosurgeon Adams McConnell, President RCSi 1936, performs the first posterior fossa craniotomy in the Richmond Hospital

1940 Public air-raid shelter constructed in the basement of College; Air Raid Precautions organised in the building
1942  Diploma in anaesthetics established

1944  Extension of the pathology department opened as a memorial to William Boxwell, professor of pathology 1918-1943

1951  Reciprocity in the primary fellowship examinations established among the Royal Colleges

1953  Number 33, first of York Street houses bought by RCSI

1957  RCSI – a founder member of the International Federation of Surgical Colleges

1958  Royal College of Physicians of London admits approved RCSI licentiates to its Membership examination

—  Clinical tutors appointed to co-ordinate teaching in the schools with that in the hospitals

1959  Faculty of Anaesthesia constituted, T Gilmartin first Dean

1960  Faculty of Radiologists inaugurated, Desmond Riordan first Dean

1961  Eoin O’ Malley President RCSI 1984-5 performs successful open heart bypass for ventricular septal defect in the Mater Hospital

1962  Joint Conference of Surgical Colleges Ireland, Britain, U.S.A., Australasia and South Africa meet for the first time

—  Dr Harry O’Flanagan appointed RCSI Registrar – marking a period of rapid expansion at RCSI

1963  Joint committee of surgical colleges held in RSCI – Edinburgh, London and Glasgow represented by their Presidents and Canada by its Vice-President

—  Faculty of Dentistry founded

1965  Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charter Amendment) Bill 1964 becomes law – College recognised as a ‘charitable body’

1966  Council acquires more York Street houses from Dublin Corporation

1967  First joint meeting of the Royal Colleges of Great Britain and Ireland

1968  First announcement of RCSI intention to build new Medical School

—  Irish Surgical Training Committee established with representatives of RCSI, Department of Health, Universities and Hospitals to structure and supervise surgical training

1970  The first Department of International Health in Ireland established at RCSI
1973  Abraham Colles (1773-1843) bicentenary. President RCSI 1802, 1830, professor of anatomy, surgery and physiology, described his eponymous fracture in 1825

1974  Foundation stone of new Medical School laid by President RCSI John McAuliffe-Curtin

—  RCSI Faculty of Nursing inaugurated, Mary Frances Crowley, first Dean

—  Maurice Neligan performs the first coronary artery bypass in the Mater Hospital

1975  Inauguration of Department of the History of Medicine and Chair in the subject

1976  New Medical School formally opened by the President of Ireland Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh

1978  RCSI becomes a recognised college of the National University of Ireland – RCSI Licentiates henceforth conferred with university degrees (MB, BCh, BAO) in addition to the traditional licence of RCSI

—  Primary FRCSI examinations take place in Kuwait for the first time

1980  Link building connecting the new Medical School with the older College completed

—  The Biological Society RCP&SI begins its 50th session

1981  RCSI President and Council travel to Washington DC and confer Honorary Fellowship on Loyal Davis, professor of surgery in Northwestern University, Chicago

1983  Mercer’s Hospital closes after 250 years – RCSI purchase the building

1984  Bicentenary of RCSI – seven distinguished international surgeons conferred with Honorary Fellowships at the Charter Day Dinner 11 Feb 1984

—  Council meet in the Rotunda Hospital Board Room commemorating the first meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland there on 2 March 1784

—  Co-operation agreement with Bahrain Defence Forces Hospital to assist in training surgeons for the Bahrain Defence Forces

1985  Final FRSCI examination first held outside Ireland takes place in Saudi Arabia

—  First heart transplant in Ireland carried out in the Mater Hospital by Maurice Nelligan and Freddie Wood

1986  Millin House opened by Victor Lane, President RCSI – College’s first students’ residence

1987  Established the first Department of Family Medicine in Ireland
— Conferring ceremony in Dammam
— Fellowship examination in ophthalmology held in Saudi Arabia
— Richmond and Jervis Street Hospitals close and amalgamate as Beaumont Hospital

1988 Beaumont Hospital opens
— First RCSI Overseas meeting takes place in Bahrain

1989 First Interfaith Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for those who donated their bodies for medical education and research at RCSI
— Purchase of 32 acre site in Dardistown for new sports complex

1990 David Boucher-Hayes, RCSI professor of surgery, leads team performing the first laparoscopic cholecystectomy – heralding the era of minimally invasive surgery
— RCSI enters eight year contract with the Ministry of Defence and Aviation in Saudi Arabia to manage the NW Armed Forces Hospital in Tabuk

1991 Opening of reconstructed Mercer’s building with RCSI general practice unit, student accommodation and new library by Mary Robinson, President of Ireland
— RCSI Department of Orthopaedic Surgery opens in Cappagh Hospital

1993 RCSI first to embrace new technologies in third level education in Ireland by providing laptops to all medical students
— Senate of the Royal Colleges and Speciality Associations founded

1996 Penang Medical College opens as a co-operative initiative between RCSI and UCD to facilitate training of Malaysian medical students in pre-clinical studies in Dublin and hospital training in Penang
— Intercollegiate Speciality Fellowships awarded at the end of surgical training
— Associated Fellowship replaces the traditional FRCSI

1998 President Bill Clinton visits the College
— SurGen Research Laboratories open

1999 RCSI School of Physiotherapy opens

2000 RCSI first to establish a Clinical Research Centre on an Irish hospital site: RCSI Education and Research Centre, Smurfit Building at Beaumont Hospital
RCSI first to develop an On-line Surgical Education Programme (BeST) globally

— College of Anaesthetists located at 22 Merrion Square

2001  Professor of Medical Informatics appointed

2002  RCSI School of Pharmacy opens

— RCSI runs MSc course in Women’s Health

2003  Changes to RCSI Charter signed into law by President of Ireland, Mary McAleese

— Foundation stone laid for York House by Dermot Desmond, Chairman, RCSI International Development Board

2004  RCSI Medical University in Bahrain opens in temporary quarters

— Minister for Health and Children recognises Sports & Exercise Medicine as a Specialty

2005  RCSI Institute of Leadership established – specifically dedicated to developing the leadership and management capacity of health professionals

— RCSI independently adopts the standards of the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME)

— RCSI joins the Dublin Molecular Medicine Centre

— RCSI confers Ireland’s first graduates with MSc in Women’s Health

— First conferring of RCSI Fellowship by Special Election

— York House opened by An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern – accommodating the RCSI School of Pharmacy

2006  Foundation stone laid for new building for RCSI Medical University of Bahrain

— RCSI awarded its first ETS Walton Visitor Award by Science Foundation Ireland

— Penang Medical College celebrates 10th anniversary

— RCSI forms new Strategic Partnership in Medicine with TCD

— RCSI confers its first cohort of Pharmacy graduates

2007  RCSI first to launch Graduate Entry Programme in medicine in Ireland

— RCSI launches first Nurse Prescribing Programme in Ireland
— First chair in Medical Education in Ireland at RCSI

2008  Physiotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Neurology and Gerontology launched at RCSI

— First Mini-Med School for transition year students at RCSI

— RCSI endorses the World Health Organisation’s second Global Patient Safety Challenge

— RCSI establishes first Chair in Translational Medicine in Ireland

2010  Graduates of Ireland’s first National Pharmacy Internship Masters Programme (MPharm) conferred in RCSI

— RCSI receives Designated Awarding Body status from the State giving the College the power to award its own degrees

2012  First graduate in medicine through a Traveller Access Programme in Ireland

— 3U Partnership launched – bringing together a new force in Irish higher education that combines the complementary strengths of Dublin City University, NUI Maynooth and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland