RCSI PROGRESS Women in Surgery Fellowship

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN SURGERY

Application Information and Criteria

Introduction

RCSI has a long tradition of excellence in surgical training. Our surgeons, male and female, have over many decades, earned leading positions in institutions across the world.

The College has been at the forefront in developing transparent selection processes for future surgeons. But despite more than 20 years of gender parity among medical graduates, female consultant surgeon numbers in Ireland remain very low. Evidence from other sectors shows that gender diversity within organisations results in better decision making. RCSI believes that surgery as a profession will also benefit by ensuring the unique contribution of male and female surgeons is valued and enabled.

In 2017 RCSI undertook to publish a comprehensive report ***'PROGRESS: Promoting Gender Equality in Surgery'***, which highlights the scale of the problem and seeks to make meaningful recommendations that will ensure that surgery as a profession is an attractive and practical career for both men and women.

RCSI is committed to the findings within the report and is seeking to make substantial changes to career pathways for females interested in pursuing a career in surgery. RCSI understands that the provision of fellowships and programmes that advance female role models will do much to break down barriers and unlock the potential of women in surgery.

Fellowship Description

The **RCSI PROGRESS Women in Surgery Fellowship** is a prestigious bursary awarded by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland to promote female participation in surgical training at fellowship level that will support the acquisition of additional surgical skills and knowledge contributing to the advancement of surgical science and practice on the island of Ireland.

The successful candidate will be awarded a Fellowship up to an amount of €45,000 for one year. She will also be awarded the RCSI PROGRESS Fellowship Medal and her name will be added to the Fellowship in Surgery board, displayed in RCSI. The Fellowship will be presented at the annual RCSI Charter Day Meeting and will be asked to present a report on the Fellowship and the impact of the bursary at a prestigious RCSI meeting.

Aims of the Fellowship

The aims of the Fellowship include:

- The Scholarship will financially assist female surgeons wishing to avail of international fellowship opportunities which require relocation.
- With funding in place, female surgeons will be empowered to strategically target placements with world-leading teams in prestigious institutions.
- Female surgeons will gain exceptional experience and exposure to their chosen field supporting their progression to consultant.

Application Criteria

The transition from senior trainee to consultant can be a challenging step. Fellowships help bridge the gap by providing subspecialty training typically at a level higher than normally received under the Intercollegiate Surgical Curriculum Programme. Because of this, the proposed **Clinical Fellowship** must have a substantial surgery component where the applicant will participate in surgery and receive surgical training in the operating theatre.

The proposed Fellowship should be approximately 12 months duration and have a clearly defined curriculum and learning outcomes. Within the application, the candidate must give clear evidence of the deliverability of the proposed curriculum.

The required clinical activity for satisfactory completion of the Fellowship should be clearly defined and agreed with the host institution (for example, indicative rota, minimum logbook numbers, case-mix, primary/secondary operator level, operating sessions and outpatient clinics).

Among the criteria which the Selection Board will consider in making recommendations will be:

- Academic and training record of the applicant.
- The reputation of the international host institution.
- The defined curriculum and learning outcomes of the Fellowship.
- Value of learning experience to surgical practice on the island of Ireland.
- How the applicant would use their time during and after the Fellowship to promote female participation in surgery.

The Expectations of the Candidate

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Provide the College with a full report within three months of completing the Fellowship.
- Provide the College with regular updates during the Fellowship which can be used in internal and external communications by RCSI.
- Use the Fellowship to promote a career in surgery for females.
- Present a report of the Fellowship at two or more RCSI or International meetings.
- Acknowledge the support of RCSI in any publication arising as a result of the Fellowship.
- Return to substantial public practice in Ireland after completing the Fellowship.

Eligibility

Applications will be considered from the following candidates:

Candidates who have received a confirmed offer of an international fellowship opportunity that will commence no later than the end of July 2027.

AND:

A. A Female Fellow of RCSI in good standing, who has been awarded their CSCST in the island of Ireland within the previous 5 years.

Or

B. A Female Surgical Trainee who, at the date of application, are at such an advanced stage of surgical training in the island of Ireland, that they will be in receipt of a CSCST on or before the end of December 2027 and are Fellows of the RCSI in good standing*****.

**** The assessment board reserves the right to contact the TPD and JCST to ensure that there is no impediment to the candidate receiving a CSCST on or before the end of 2027.***

Application Process

The application process requires candidates to make an online application (link below), providing details of their proposed Fellowship. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their completed application is received in full before the closing date.

In order for an application to be deemed fully complete, the applicant must submit the following documentation:

- A completed **Online Application Form (*Click Here*)**.
- An up-to-date copy of their **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**.
- **Written Acknowledgement from the Unit to be Visited**, which supports the proposed fellowship curriculum and learning outcomes. This acknowledgement should also detail the commencement and conclusion dates of the proposed fellowship.

All application documentation must be sent to Mr Daniel Howard, Practice and Policy Development Executive, RCSI Department for Surgical Affairs (Email: RCSIFellowships@rcsi.ie).

Timeline for the 2027 Award	
5th November 2026	Application Period Opens
20th November 2026	Application Closing Date
24th November - 11th December (TBC)	Candidate Interviews

Report

Recipients of the **RCSI PROGRESS Women in Surgery Fellowship** must provide RCSI with a full report within three months of completing their Fellowship. Reports from the Awardee may be published on the RCSI website or circulated via RCSI social media platforms. The award recipient will also be invited to make a presentation at two College Meetings.

Recipients must acknowledge the support of the College in any publication arising as a result of the award(s) and must supply the College with copies of the papers at the time of publication.

Terms and Conditions

1. RCSI accepts no responsibility for any personal tax liability arising in any jurisdiction from the receipt of this Fellowship.
2. The Grant shall be provided to support independent medical education in accordance with the MedTech Europe Code of Ethical Business Practice and all applicable laws, regulations and country-specific industry codes of conduct.
3. RCSI reserves the right not to award fellowships in any given year depending on the assessed standard of the applications.
4. Any subsequent publication based on work undertaken during the applicant's overseas visit should acknowledge the support the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.
5. Failure to submit a report and expenses within three months of the completion of travel will result in withdrawal of the Award.
6. Candidates must inform the College of any change in their circumstances which will prevent them from completing their overseas visit. The College may, on the advice of the Advisory Board, withdraw all or a proportion of the initial grant.