



Royal College
of Surgeons

ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE



POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

2014

The Royal College of Surgeons of England

Contents

Postgraduate Programme Accreditation	3
Benefits of Postgraduate Programme Accreditation	5
The Accreditation Process	6
Standards for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes in Surgery	8
Monitoring	20
Postgraduate Programmes in Surgical Care Practice	21
Frequently Asked Questions	23

Postgraduate Programme Accreditation

The Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS) is a leading national and international centre for surgical education, training, assessment, examination and research. As a registered charity, the RCS is committed to promoting and advancing the highest standards of surgical care for patients, and enabling surgeons to achieve those standards. To achieve these aims, the RCS, through its accreditation activities, is dedicated to:

- » providing strong leadership and support for surgeons in all matters relating to their surgical practice, throughout their surgical careers;
- » working in partnership with the providers of surgical education to ensure the highest standards of education in surgery are met;
- » providing assurance that surgical education is developed and delivered to the standards expected by the Royal College of Surgeons of England;
- » ensuring that the content of any educational provision is evidence-based, up-to-date and is relevant to its target audience and the development of competent surgeons;
- » ensuring that any educational provision is well constructed, free from bias, and has appropriate evaluation to ensure constructive improvement;
- » ensuring that the infrastructure and supporting frameworks around any educational provision are of the highest quality.

Following the introduction of the European Working Time Directive, it is essential that further training opportunities are made available to surgical trainees and those wishing to enter into surgical training to enable them to supplement their knowledge and skills. The Royal College of Surgeons therefore supports the development of postgraduate programmes which develop the knowledge and skills underpinning evidence-based clinical practice and research in surgery.

RCS Postgraduate Programme Accreditation is an award of excellence from the Royal College of Surgeons in recognition of outstanding surgery-related educational provision by a Higher Education Institution (HEI). In awarding accreditation, the RCS seeks to work in partnership with such institutions to ensure that the highest standards of education in surgery are achieved.

Benefits of Postgraduate Programme Accreditation

Postgraduate Programme Accreditation provides assurance that the administrative and academic infrastructure, the facilities, quality management processes, and the academic provision and delivery, meet the standards defined by the Royal College of Surgeons. Accreditation from the RCS will confirm that the programme offers a high-quality learning experience which may assist in attracting students.

Accredited programmes will receive the following benefits:

- » expert review of the programme from a panel of leading surgeons;
- » use of the RCS Logo on materials and websites relating to the programme;
- » use of the strap line 'Accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons of England' for a three year accreditation term (subject to satisfactory monitoring and review);
- » listing on RCS Website;
- » listing on RCS Accreditation Portal;
- » listing in RCS *Bulletin*;
- » use of RCS online participant evaluation, SCOPE
- » discount for advertisement in RCS publications

The Accreditation Process

Expression of Interest

Any HEI intending to seek programme accreditation should notify The Royal College of Surgeons of England at the start of the academic year prior to the year in which the programme is to start, or in the case of existing programmes, the academic year prior to that from which the accreditation is to become effective. The initial expression of interest should include the following information in relation to the proposed programme:

- » Title of the programme
- » Award / qualification
- » The level and amount of academic credit
- » Expected date of first/next intake
- » Contact details for the programme leader
- » Course History / Rationale for the programme and target audience
- » Details of NHS Trusts or clinical placement providers (if applicable)
- » Details of the faculty including their name, position, and anticipated role in programme
- » Details of the existing portfolio of health-related provision

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee of The Royal College of Surgeons will consider the expression of interest on behalf of the College Council. If the application is supported, a date for the accreditation visit will be agreed and a panel from the College will be arranged. The applying institution will be required to provide a submission to highlight how the programme complies with the Standards for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes in Surgery.

The accreditation submission must be received by The Royal College of Surgeons of England no less than eight weeks ahead of the scheduled accreditation event.

Accreditation Visit

The accreditation visit is intended to provide the proposing team with an opportunity to demonstrate that the programme complies with the Standards for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes in Surgery and that the necessary mechanisms are in place for the faculty to deliver and further develop the programme. To this end the event is a structured series of meetings with key members of the faculty, programme managers, support staff and students. A visit to clinical areas used for practice elements of the programme may be necessary.

The RCS panel will draw conclusions at the end of the event and communicate their recommendation to the proposing team. The panel can recommend accreditation be awarded, accreditation be awarded conditionally, or accreditation not be awarded. Where conditional accreditation has been awarded, a timescale for the fulfilment of the conditions will be agreed. Accreditation will only be awarded once all the conditions have been fulfilled.

Following the Accreditation Visit

A report on the visit will be compiled and discussed at the RCS Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee. If the committee supports the accreditation, the report will be tabled at College Council. The College will then write formally to the applying institution.

Standards for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes in Surgery

1. The Higher Education Institution (HEI)

- 1.1 The HEI seeking accreditation must be a bona fide UK university or institution that holds taught degree awarding powers from the QAA. HEIs without degree awarding powers that operate in partnership with a validating university are advised to seek guidance from the quality assurance team at The Royal College of Surgeons of England ahead of application for accreditation.
- 1.2 The HEI must both deliver the programme and award the academic credit (and qualification). The Royal College of Surgeons of England will not accredit any programme that is delivered by anybody other than that body accredited by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. Any sub-contracting, serial validation or serial franchising of a programme must be subject to a separate accreditation process.
- 1.3 The HEI must demonstrate an established and successful record of medical education, including the provision related to support for surgery, or in the case of a new provider, that it has the capacity to develop such, based on a successful portfolio of health related provision.
- 1.4 The HEI must be able to demonstrate a positive appreciation of the programme from students and a successful pass/completion rate
- 1.5 The institution(s) must be financially sound. Where the programme is to be delivered by a unit within a larger organisation, for example, the medical or health faculty of a university, written assurances from the CEO (vice- chancellor) that appropriate capital and revenue funding will be maintained throughout the accreditation period, must be included within the submission.

- 1.6 The institution must have an acceptable record of quality assurance and quality management. The proposal should include a summary of the outcomes of any relevant external review. This would include QAA institutional audits, developmental engagements and major reviews and clinical audits of the proposed practice areas. The report of the most recent internal faculty/school/departmental review of quality management should be included within the supporting documentation. Appropriate quality assurance mechanisms must be in place to support the programme, including (inter alia):
- » A process of periodic review of both the academic content and quality management of programmes.
 - » External examination of programmes.
 - » Student evaluation of programmes.
 - » Annual programme monitoring.
 - » An academic management committee for the programme, including student representation.
 - » A designated programme manager, who will act as the point of contact for The Royal College of Surgeons of England on all matters related to the programme.

2. Programme Definitions

2.1 MSc (Master of Science) in Surgery

Post graduate university degree in a scientific subject related to general surgical science or specialty specific aspects of surgery which contains defined minimum of 20 surgery-specific credits and a research component.

2.2 MCh/ChM (Master of Surgery)

Advanced postgraduate programme in surgery for entrants with a previous medical degree which contains a minimum of 40 surgery-specific credits and formal taught practical/clinical component with formal assessment.

MCh programmes should contain a taught clinical/practical component with skills related competencies that can be formally assessed.

2.3 MPhil (Postgraduate Research Degree)

Postgraduate Master's degree based on original research and examined by thesis.

3. Admissions

- 3.1 The provider must have in place appropriate policies and procedures for the admission of students to the programme
- 3.2 Admission with advanced standing is permitted. The HEI must have appropriate procedures in place to judge the extent to which prior certificated learning matches both the academic and practical requirements of the programme. The use of general credit is discouraged and HEIs should ensure that potential students can demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes before claims for prior learning are accredited. HEI practices must articulate with QAA guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning.
- 3.3 Pre-entry materials must accurately describe the programme, not least in terms of academic and practice demands.
- 3.4 Where course participants are required to work or undertake placements in the NHS or otherwise be in contact with vulnerable people, the provider must have in place mechanisms to verify that potential students satisfy all statutory requirements for employment within the National Health Service, including Criminal Records Bureau checks and actions resulting from disclosures.

- 3.5 The provider should ensure that potential students are appropriately numerate and possess competence in English fitting to the level of study. This would normally be at GCSE (level C or above) or equivalent.
- 3.6 HEIs should conduct inductions for new students, to encompass all appropriate facets of student support
- 3.7 All programmes must demonstrate compliance with the QAA Academic Infrastructure.

4. Staffing

- 4.1 The programme must operate within an academic and practice environment where appropriate standards are both evident and promoted. Evidence must be provided that staff in both academic and practice settings are appropriately qualified and experienced. Placement staff must possess an appropriate educational supervision or mentorship qualification. The range of expertise within the delivery team must encompass all areas of the curriculum to be delivered. Staff should be engaged in academic and professional development.
- 4.2 All staff involved in the delivery of the programme must be identified and areas of curriculum responsibility identified. Roles of individual staff should be identified, including clinical supervisors, mentors, educational supervisors and teachers.
- 4.3 The faculty must have a formal relationship with the University and have protected teaching time
- 4.4. All clinicians who are involved in teaching and/or examining should be encouraged to be included in the core faculty activities in practical ways such as newsletters, events, contact lists etc.

- 4.5 The University must have in place appropriate faculty selection, induction and monitoring processes, and must ensure that their faculty have relevant and up-to-date teaching qualifications such as Training the Trainers.

5. Programme

5.1 Programme general criteria

- » There must be a clearly defined programme rationale detailing the purpose; target audience; and level of entry for the programme.
- » The minimum level of prior knowledge and experience must be appropriate for the target audience and entry level
- » Each programme must state a minimum completion term and must be achievable within this timeframe
- » All programme delegates should have a formal induction
- » For research projects and dissertations, a bank of approved topics and examples for the dissertation or research elements should be available prior to the commencement of the programme in order to minimise the deferral and/or non-completion rate and minimise delays with ethical approval considerations. Good support should be given during this critical self-directed phase of programme.
- » There should be a module on introduction to research which has to be offered as early as reasonably possible within the programme
- » For direct surgery-related programmes, students must have access to both an academic and an appropriate surgically-qualified supervisor throughout their programme

5.2 Programme Subject Areas

- » Programme subjects could be related to Surgical Sciences (Generic Surgery Related Programmes) or Surgical Specialties.
- » Where programmes are developed in surgical sub-specialty areas, learning outcomes and modules should clearly reflect deep learning of a particular sub-

specialty area. The entry criteria to the sub-specialty programmes for surgical trainees should be defined as minimum post-MRCS/ST3+ level or equivalent

5.3. Programme Title

- » The programme title and learning outcomes must be appropriate for the target audience and entry level
- » The programme title should have a clear indication that the programme provides a general knowledge in a subject matter rather than develops subject matter experts with clinical skills

5.4 Programme Learning Outcomes

- » All Programme modules should have a very clear set of learning outcomes and assessment based on the level and background degree of entrants
- » Programme modules related to deep knowledge and skills, in a particular surgical-related subject area should provide a clear indication of its nature and intentions, in particular that these modules are aimed to develop some deeper knowledge but do not extend proficiency in clinical skills
- » The programme learning outcomes and assessment methodology for surgical trainees should be mapped with ISCP

5.5 Programme Aims and Objectives

- » There must be clear linkages between programme aims, programme objectives and/or programme learning outcomes.
- » All programme learning outcomes must be evidenced within the curriculum. It is helpful to accreditation panels if there is an indication, by means of a summary, where in the programme specific programme learning outcomes are demonstrated.

5.6 Curriculum Content and Structure

- » All programmes must exhibit the appropriate level of academic challenge.

- » This must be evidenced through the design of the course and evidence of benchmarking the course against national or international published standards.
- » The programme must have an appropriate credit structure in line with the relevant QAA framework for higher education qualifications. For example a master's programme should comprise 180 credits at FHEQ level 4(M), or equivalent. It should be a minimum of the equivalent of one calendar year of full-time study.
- » The programme must require students to demonstrate knowledge, skills and practice at a level appropriate to the award and this should be evidenced through articulation with the appropriate QAA level descriptor. In general terms, the programme should allow the student to demonstrate:
 - » a breadth and depth of knowledge related to surgery and/or one or more specialist areas of surgery;
 - » a systematic understanding of, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights within surgery and the specific area of surgery being studied;
 - » a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship and where necessary, skills to utilise those techniques;
 - » originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in medicine, and in particular, surgery;
 - » a conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in surgery; and to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;
 - » an advanced understanding of ethical issues including duties under personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct, and the ability to formulate solutions to ethical issues as they impact on research or practice.

- » The programme should facilitate the development of students:
 - » to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in complex and unpredictable situations and in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
 - » to demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level and gain confidence in the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - » as autonomous learners to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding and to develop new skills to a high level
- » The final award must be clearly articulated within the submission.
- » The programme must be structured to facilitate an appropriate balance between theoretical and practical elements.
- » Skills development is an essential element of many programmes and the submission must demonstrate clearly how this is to be achieved.

6. Learning and Teaching

- 6.1 The provider should present a cohesive learning and teaching strategy for the programme, which reflects both the curriculum and principles of teaching and learning. An appropriate range of learning and teaching methods should be employed, whilst individual learning and teaching methods should be designed to allow students to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. There should be clear linkages between theoretical and practical elements of the programme, with opportunities for students to reflect on the practical application of theoretical knowledge.

- 6.2 Learning and teaching in practice must allow for the development of skills concurrently with theoretical knowledge. Learning and teaching in practice must be facilitated within an ethical and professional environment whereby the rights and responsibilities of patients, staff and students are fully respected.

7. Assessment

- 7.1 The provider should present a cohesive assessment strategy for the programme, which reflects the requirements of the curriculum. An appropriate variety of assessment methods should be employed, whilst individual assessments should be designed to allow students to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.
- 7.2 Where practice-based staff are involved in the assessment of students, the provider must have policies and procedures in place to ensure standards of the award are guaranteed.
- 7.3 Assessment criteria, related to learning outcomes should be employed for individual assessments and marking schemes should be used to ensure consistency of assessment standards across assessments.
- 7.4 The provider should have effective mechanisms to combat plagiarism and related academic offences.

8. Placements

The submission must detail the full range of quality assurance mechanisms employed in the placement of students in surgical and healthcare environments. This should include:

- » The mechanisms and criteria for the selection, approval and monitoring of placements;
- » The mechanisms and criteria for the selection, approval and monitoring of staff to support students in placement, including the training and support of placement staff and the establishment of an appropriate range of staff. Placement staff must possess an appropriate educational supervision or mentorship qualification;
- » Mechanisms for conflict resolution and interrupted placements;
- » Criminal Records Bureau and other statutory checks and actions resulting from disclosures;
- » Mechanisms to ensure a safe environment for students;
- » Mechanisms to ensure safe, ethical and professional practice by students;
- » The clear communication of the learning expectations of students, to both students and staff;
- » Arrangements for assessment in practice, including types of assessment, timing, loading and weighting in relation to credit, and the mechanisms for observation and moderation of practice based assessment by external examiners.

9. Student Support

An appropriate range of pastoral and academic (including personal tutor) mechanisms must be in place, including mechanisms for the monitoring of attendance.

10. Equal Opportunities

Both the provider and organisations offering placements must have in place equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policies and mechanisms for monitoring and implementation.

11. Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- 11.1 A minimum of one external examiner from outside the local region must be appointed to the programme by the HEI in line with its normal processes for the appointment of an external examiner.
- 11.2 Nominations for external examiners for accredited programmes must be approved by The Royal College of Surgeons of England prior to appointment. External examination must comply with the precepts of section 4 of the QAA code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. External examiners' reports must be forwarded to The Royal College of Surgeons of England. External examiners should report on all aspects of provision in relation to precept 1 of the QAA code, including student performance on placements. HEIs must afford sufficient opportunities to external examiners to allow them to observe and come to judgments as to the quality of placements and standards of student attainment on placement.
- 11.3 Providers must have appropriate regulations in place governing student progression and achievement. This must include specifications for the failure of programmes, or components of programmes and opportunities for students to retrieve referral. Students may not be awarded more than the threshold passing grade on referral. No compensation or condonement of failed or referred elements is permissible.
- 11.4 Providers must have mechanisms in place to ensure the appropriate monitoring of student progression and remedial action, when required
- 11.5 HEIs must have appropriate policies in place in relation to academic appeals.
- 11.6 HEIs must have appropriate policies in place in relation to student complaints.

- 11.7 HEIs must have appropriate disciplinary procedures in place in relation to student (non-academic) misconduct, including misconduct on placement.
- 11.8 HEIs must undertake regular evaluation of the programme by students.
- 11.9 Student representatives should sit on the appropriate course management committee.
- 11.10 The operation of the programme should be monitored annually. An evaluative report should be produced in which the following areas should be evidenced:
- » On-going actions from previous evaluation (including previous monitoring and any internal or external inspection, validation or monitoring).
 - » Maintenance of the standard of the award and developments in assessment.
 - » Student progression and achievement (including statistical analysis).
 - » The quality of the programme through developments in teaching and learning, staffing (including research activity underpinning the programme), learning resources, student support.
 - » Student evaluation of the programme and resultant actions.
 - » Any proposed changes to the approved programme.
- 11.11 For all surgery-related programmes, there should be surgical representation on the relevant programme oversight/QA board
- 11.12 Providers are required to ask faculty to declare any interest they may have relating to the programme.

Monitoring

Providers of accredited programmes are required to comply with the College's monitoring and review processes. At the end of each academic year, the College requires the following information to be provided for each accredited programme:

- » A copy of the External Examiners Report on the programme including a summary of student performance over the year. Any response to this report or planned action to be taken as a result should be included;
- » A summary of the student evaluation of the programme;
- » Any annual report on the programme or details of any other annual module or programme monitoring that took place during the period such as a review of the academic content or quality management of programme;
- » The minutes of the programme or overarching board responsible for the programme;
- » A summary of any amendments that were made to the programme over the previous year, and details of any proposed amendments that may take effect over the forthcoming year;
- » For programmes in Surgical Care Practice, the College will also require details of all students who have successfully completed the programme;

The information listed above should be provided to the College in a timely manner and will be reviewed by the College's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee on an annual basis. It will also feed into any re-accreditation application at the conclusion of the accreditation term.

The College will charge a monitoring fee at the end of each year of the accreditation. Details of the fee can be found on the Accreditation Portal at <http://accreditation.rcseng.ac.uk/Home/Fees>.

Postgraduate Programmes in Surgical Care Practice

Assistants in surgical practice have been a part of the NHS since 1989 and have developed as extended roles for nurses and operating department practitioners demonstrating their value in the surgical environment. As part of the NHS modernisation agenda, a range of medically and non-medically qualified practitioner roles were developed, including the Surgical Care Practitioner (SCP). This role is now well established within healthcare organisations and has been shown to enhance patient care, maintain surgical services and support surgical training. In recent times the scope of practice has widened and now embraces working in clinics, conducting pre-operative assessment and facilitating the continuity of patient care on the wards.

As the role developed in practice, the need to ensure that consistent and appropriate standards in training were maintained became evident. The Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) therefore led a steering group to agree the general framework, principles, assessment and specialty specific syllabi which cover the scope of SCP practice. Following a period of public consultation led by the Department of Health, the National Curriculum Framework for the Surgical Care Practitioner was published in April 2006. In 2013 a robust and extensive review exercise was conducted by the RCS in collaboration with University Academics involved in SCP programme delivery, Lead Clinicians, Surgical Specialty Advisory Committee and Association representatives, patient representatives and other stakeholders. A revised and updated Framework was published in February 2014 and is available on the RCS website at <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/surgeons/training/accreditation/surgical-care-practitioners-scps>.

The RCS is working to further develop and formalise its relationship with the wider surgical team. By approving and publicising the Curriculum Framework for the Surgical Care Practitioner (2014) and accrediting programmes which comply with this Curriculum, the RCS is addressing patient concerns about lack of regulation and professional standards for wider surgical team members. The RCS will continue to work closely with the Government, regulatory bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that these concerns are addressed. Moving forward, the RCS will only recognise

SCP training that is aligned with the Curriculum Framework for the Surgical Care Practitioner (2014).

SCP Programme Accreditation from the RCS is a public acknowledgement that a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in partnership with NHS institutions, has developed and delivers a programme that complies with the Curriculum Framework for the Surgical Care Practitioner (2014) and the above RCS Standards for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes in Surgery. It acknowledges that following successful completion of the programme, students will be qualified Surgical Care Practitioners. It also provides assurance that the administrative and academic infrastructure, the facilities, quality management processes, and the academic provision and delivery, meet the standards defined by the RCS. In undertaking an RCS-accredited SCP Programme, students will have confidence that their programme and qualification have been benchmarked against nationally-agreed standards. They will also benefit from a closer and ongoing relationship with the RCS.

Any SCP programme which is delivered in the United Kingdom may apply for accreditation from the RCS. The RCS Council has the authority to accredit programmes in Surgery as well as programmes in gynaecology on behalf of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for programme accreditation?

In order to apply, a designated contact from the Institution must register an account with the RCS Accreditation Portal at <http://accreditation.rcseng.ac.uk/> and complete an application under 'Higher Education / Degree Programmes'. They will be required to provide an overview of the Institution and the Programme. The RCS Quality Assurance & Accreditation Department will then be able to outline the specific information that will be required. Alternatively, applicants can contact the QA & Accreditation Department directly at qa@rcseng.ac.uk.

Who can apply for postgraduate programme accreditation?

Any University or Higher Education Institution which provides postgraduate education and training for surgeons or members of the wider surgical team is eligible to apply for postgraduate programme accreditation. The Accreditation usually focusses on degree programmes or their equivalent, or modular, or credit awarding programmes.

Any University or Higher Education Institution which provides a programme that is aligned with the Curriculum Framework for the Surgical Care Practitioner (2014) is eligible to apply for SCP Programme Accreditation.

If my programme is not a formal degree, can I apply for Accreditation?

If your programme is markedly different from that of a University degree or its equivalent, please contact the Quality Assurance & Accreditation Department on 020 7869 6221 / 6236 to discuss your application.

Can more than one programme receive accreditation at the same time?

Yes. Faculty and delegates from each programme will need to be available during the programme visit.

What documentation is required for Postgraduate Programme Accreditation?

It is intended that documents submitted to The Royal College of Surgeons of England in support of an accreditation process should reflect the normal requirements for a course validation process within the HEI. The College would expect a single set of documents that would include (as a minimum):

- » The programme specification (in accordance with QAA requirements)
- » A critical review of the programme, where accreditation is sought in respect of an existing programme. When accreditation is sought for a programme developed from existing modules (offered either as standalone or as part of another programme) a critical review of the operation of those modules should be included.
- » A submission document (or combination thereof) covering all aspects of provision detailed in the Standards for the accreditation of postgraduate programmes in Surgery. Where it is the HEI's policy to provide existing documents, such as student handbooks, as part of the submission, this is acceptable to the College. HEIs should ensure that sufficient evidence is included for accreditation decisions to be made.

For programmes in Surgical Care Practice, the submission document(s) should also detail how the programme complies with the Curriculum Framework for the Surgical Care Practitioner (2014). The Curriculum Framework is available in an electronic format on the RCS website at: <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/surgeons/training/accreditation/surgical-care-practitioners-scps>

How long does the accreditation process take?

The process takes several months. The accreditation visit will usually be scheduled once the full set of documentation has been submitted and any queries have been addressed. The RCS panel requires a minimum of ten weeks notice prior to the accreditation visit, and any accreditation will need to be supported by the RCS Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, and approved by College Council. It is advised that the programme organiser begin the process at the start of the academic year to ensure that any accreditation is in place in advance of the following intake of students.

What is the length of the accreditation term?

The usual accreditation term is three years, subject to satisfactory annual monitoring and review. This can be further extended by mutual agreement.

Who will review the application for Postgraduate Programme Accreditation?

A panel of at least two senior surgeons from the College Quality Assurance & Accreditation Committee and one QA staff member will review the application and attend the accreditation visit for each programme. A report on the visit will be discussed at the Committee and a recommendation will be provided to the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons.

How much are the fees and when will they need to be paid?

The fees for Postgraduate Programme Accreditation are listed on the RCS Accreditation Portal. The initial review and processing fee is payable upon submission of the application and documentation. The applying institution will be expected to meet all

costs of the accreditation panel visit including any travel and accommodation costs that are required. Payment of the visitation fees will be required prior to the accreditation visit. Payment of the accreditation fee will only be required following confirmation of the accreditation from the RCS.

Will the programme be listed upon the RCS website?

Yes, details of each accredited programme will be listed on the Accreditation section of the RCS website.

Where can I find further information?

If you have any queries about the accreditation processes then please contact the Quality Assurance Department at qa@rcseng.ac.uk or on 020 7869 6221/6236.