

Stadium provides innovative learning space for Irish medical students

To ensure that medical students can continue their education in a safe environment during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI) University of Medicine and Health Sciences will create a unique satellite campus at Ireland's largest stadium, Croke Park.



RCSI lectures will be held in event spaces throughout Croke Park for the 2020/2021 academic year beginning in September. Over 650 students will use these facilities to continue their learning at a safe physical distance in smaller learning communities, which will cycle through the campus on alternate days over a six-day week.

In addition to being well connected to the RCSI city centre campus and the rest of Dublin, Croke Park is close to Beaumont Hospital, the main RCSI teaching hospital. This proximity of the new satellite campus to Beaumont will allow academics who work there to easily travel to deliver lectures.

From Monday through Saturday, students will also have access to study spaces, restaurants and other amenities at the Croke Park facilities beyond teaching hours. Provisions have been put in place to allow the facilities to be used for sporting events on Saturdays if matches return in the autumn.

“There is no doubt that the academic year ahead will be like no other in our university’s 236-year history. Across the university, our academic and professional staff are working tirelessly to address the challenge of continuing to deliver an

exceptional education in a much altered environment”, said Professor Cathal Kelly, CEO/Registrar of RCSI.

“We are developing an engaged blended learning programme and putting robust safety measures in place in order ensure we can provide a positive educational experience in a safe environment. Teaming up with Croke Park Meetings & Events will ensure that our students receive a meaningful and safe educational experience when they return this autumn.”

Safe, flexible spaces

Most of the students that will use the new satellite campus would typically attend lectures in Beaumont Hospital. The facilities in the Dublin city centre campus will also reopen with social distancing measures and innovative timetables, which will allow for a balance of both on-campus and digitally-engaged teaching.

“Croke Park is delighted to provide a range of safe, flexible spaces where the RCSI can continue the educational experience of future doctors during these unprecedented times. We look forward to working with the university team and accommodating its students in our meeting and events spaces, which are reopening this week.” said Mark Dorman, head of stadium business, Croke Park.

Outside of Croke Park, RCSI students will continue to benefit from clinical teaching in one of Europe’s most advanced clinical healthcare simulation centres on 26 York Street and in the Education and Research Centre at Beaumont Hospital.

In early March, RCSI made the decision to move forward some final examinations for medical students by seven weeks, anticipating the closure of universities. This allowed the final medical students to graduate early and enter the workforce on time.

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