

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The ROYAL COLLEGE of SURGEONS of EDINBURGH

OPERATING as ONE

Reference & Administration

Charity Number

SC005317

Royal Charter Number

RC000466

Principal Office

16a Nicolson Street Edinburgh EH8 9DW

Patron

His Majesty King Charles III

Board of Trustees

From September 2025
Mr J Boyle
Prof F V N Din
Ms C Edwards
Mr R Gillespie
Mr N A Harvey
Prof G T McIntyre
Dr C E McNaught
Ms A Paisley
Prof P Turner
Prof R W Paton
Prof A Watson OBE
Ms G Woolman

Professional Advisers

Lawyers:
Brodies LLP, 58 Morrison Street
Edinburgh EH3 8BP

Bankers:
Royal Bank of Scotland
36 St Andrew Square
Edinburgh EH2 2AD

Auditors:
Saffery LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
9 Haymarket Square
Edinburgh EH3 8RY

Investment Advisors:
Rathbones Investment Management
10 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 2PF

Senior Leadership Team

Chief Executive:
Mr M Egan

Director of Exams, Education & Faculties:
Mr I Forster-Smith

Director of Resources:
Ms P Tovey

Director of Heritage and Estates:
Ms C St Clair Inglis

Director of Membership Marketing & Communications:
Ms J Cutting

Director of Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement:
Mrs M Naud-Betteridge

Managing Director of Surgeons Quarter:
Mr S Mitchell

Court of Regents

Mr R Carr
Mrs B Jeffreys
Rt Hon Lord A Kakkar KBE PC
Mrs T Lang
Dr C H Leong
Mrs K Mazumdar-Shaw
RT Hon Lord J McConnell
Prof Sir J McDonald
Mr B Minto OBE FRSE
Prof P Peattie OBE
Mr E Young

President

Up to November 2025
Prof R W Parks
From November 2025
Dr C E McNaught

Vice-Presidents

Up to November 2025
Prof T Graham
Dr C E McNaught
From November 2025
Prof R W Paton
Prof A Watson
Ms A Paisley
Prof P Turner
Prof G T McIntyre

Honorary Secretary

Up to November 2025
Prof R W Paton

Honorary Treasurer

Up to November 2025
Mr S Liau

Council Members

Prof P Brennan
Mr S Clark
Prof F V N Din
Ms C Edwards
Mr S Liau
Prof K K Madhavan
Ms A McCabe
Col A Mountain
Mr M Mukadam
Mr A Nassef
Mr M Okocha
Mr Z Raza
Mr H Rehman
Prof C Selvasekar
Ms E Stapleton
Mr S Vittal
Up to November 2025
Prof N Kumar
From November 2025
Ms L Chagla
Mr P Driscoll
Mr L Samarakoon
Prof M R Khan
Dean of Examinations: Mr J Hines
Dean of Education: Prof J Lund
Dean of the International Postgraduate Deanery: Col P Parker
Chair of Younger Fellows: Mr N Stephens
Deputy Chair of Younger Fellows: Ms S Healy

Other College Officials

Surgical Director of the Regional Advisory Network:
Mr B Green

Chair of the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care:
Up to November 2025
Dr P Hardy
From November 2025
Dr A Smith

Surgical Director of the Faculty of Surgical Trainers:
Up to June 2025
Prof A Phillips
From June 2025
Mr J Tomlinson

Lead of the Faculty of Perioperative Care:
Ms J Murray

Dental Director of the Faculty of Dental Trainers:
Up to May 2025
Dr S Manton
From May 2025
Prof J Field

Chair of the Faculty of Remote, Rural and Humanitarian Healthcare:
Up to August 2025
Dr C R Moen
From August 2025
Dr T Pols

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From here, health

Translated from the College motto, hinc sanitas



Our Vision:

To be the most welcoming, inclusive and innovative royal medical college in the world.

Our Mission:

To be a strong voice for our family of members, developing their careers, upholding standards, and ensuring patient safety across the world.

Our Charitable Purposes:

- The advancement of education
- The advancement of health
- The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science

Our Values:



Inclusivity

Professionalism

Innovation



Respect

Integrity

It is my privilege to serve the College as President, and I am proud to present this annual report, documenting the key achievements of 2025. We still have much to do, but with our army of incredible volunteers and the dedicated College staff, all goals are within our reach.

Dr C E McNaught

Welcome

2025 has undoubtedly been a pivotal year in the history of our College.



In September, our new governance framework came into force, and we transitioned to a three-tier structure comprising the Trustee Board, College Council, and the membership. This significant change was the result of almost four years of dedicated work by the College governance and Office Bearer teams. The new structure is designed to support the College in achieving its aims of financial stability and innovation. The College Council retains full oversight of all professional and educational matters, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council for their ongoing commitment to promoting the highest standards of surgical care for our patients.

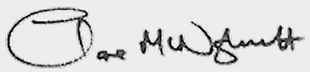
Developments in Our Estate
During 2025, we experienced significant change within our estate, with the opening of two new office premises in Birmingham and Putrajaya, Malaysia. I wish to express my gratitude to the staff in both locations for their patience and perseverance throughout the transition. These new facilities have provided much needed office, conference, and examination space, enabling us to better serve the needs of our members into the future. Our premises in Edinburgh remain a source of pride, and I would particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of Heritage and Estates Director Ms Chanté St Clair Inglis, who continues to care for and transform our heritage portfolio. Our museum has earned recognition as one of the top ten weirdest museums in Europe, with visitor numbers exceeding 130,000 for the first time and generating an income of over £1.1 million.

Our Volunteer Community
At the heart of everything we do is our volunteer community: the hard-working surgeons, dentists, and healthcare professionals who make our work possible. In 2025, we initiated a project to explore ways to better recognise, thank, and support these individuals for the outstanding activity they deliver daily on our behalf.

Membership Growth and Support
Our membership continues to grow, and we are now a community of over 35,000 clinicians across more than 110 countries. Results from our membership survey showed high levels of approval, and our retention rate remains above 96%. In 2025, we awarded 71 grants and fellowships, worth over £323,000, through the College and our Global CARE charity. Despite these successes, we are committed to ensuring our membership offer remains relevant to both established fellows and future generations. To this end, we are working with our education leads to update our portfolio and adopt the latest communication channels for educational delivery. We are also embracing the power of AI in developing all future educational material. These are truly exciting times!

Standardisation of Dental Examinations
In 2025, a process began to standardise postgraduate specialist examinations in dentistry across the three UK-based colleges. This has been a challenging journey, and I wish to pay tribute to our Vice-President and Dental Dean, Grant McIntyre, for his leadership in driving this initiative forward. The new DSFE exams will commence later this year.

Conferences and International Reach
The Triennial and ICOSET conference, themed "A World of Innovation", was an enormous success in 2025, bringing together surgical educational leaders and experts from around the globe, as well as our own Faculties of Dental and Surgical Trainers. The international reach of RCSEd has grown with the appointment of a new group of surgical and dental ambassadors, who are available to support our members and fellows wherever they may live. Our accreditation activity for education outside the UK continues to increase rapidly, particularly in Egypt and the Indian sub-continent. Unfortunately, ongoing international conflict has made our Faculties of Pre-Hospital Care and Remote, Rural, and Humanitarian Healthcare more relevant than ever before.



Dr C E McNaught
President of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

CEO Message

Looking back over 2025, what is striking is the breadth of the College's activities and the hard work by the whole College community to deliver success.



The College remains firmly on an upward trajectory. Membership continues to grow; we are increasing the number of exam diets and candidates taking our exams; and costs are under control, despite the challenging economic environment. Our financial performance has improved significantly since the early part of the decade, helped by another record-breaking year for our commercial arm, Surgeons Quarter. Our hotel, Ten Hill Place, the largest independently-owned hotel in the city, continues to go from strength to strength.

The most momentous achievement in 2025 was the transition to new governance, the culmination of years of work by staff and clinicians alike and championed by Honorary Secretary and now Vice-President, Robin Paton. Not only is there a new Trustee Board, with Lay Trustees and a suite of committees under the Board to oversee the College's resources, Council committees have also been rationalised and reconstituted. Hill Square Educational Trust, the separate charity which formerly oversaw exam and educational activity, has also been dissolved, with those activities again reporting directly into the College.

The launch of Global CARE in June was a particular highlight for me. Driven by the success of our Development Team, we are funding projects in Africa and Asia which will make a tangible difference to surgical practice in a variety of ways, delivering on our mission to ensure patient safety across the world.

Another standout moment was the establishment of our Hunter Doig Women in Surgery Group and the launch of an exhibition to celebrate women in surgery, including the unveiling of a major new portrait of our Hunter Doig medal winners which now hangs at the entrance to our museum. In reflecting on the past we can understand the action needed today to achieve equity and inclusion for under-represented groups in medicine.

2025 was a year of change in other ways. Rowan Parks, President since 2022, demitted from office, as did Tim Graham (Vice-President) and Siong Liau (Honorary Treasurer – remains on Council). Clare McNaught replaced Rowan as our first-ever female President and we also welcomed Anna Paisley, Phil Turner and Angus Watson to the Office Bearer team. As a community of clinicians, the College is nothing without the huge and largely unseen commitment of our Office Bearers, Council members, and other volunteers. I am enormously appreciative of all that they do. I would also like to pay tribute to the College staff for their loyalty and hard work. Together, we've achieved a lot, with a lot more to come.



Mark Egan
CEO of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

Structure & Governance

Trustees

At the start of 2025 the College was made up of:

Fifteen Council Members
Members were elected by the full Fellowship and Membership of the College. They held office for a five-year period and were eligible for a further five-year term of office.

Office-Bearers
There are five principal Office-Bearers of the College: The President and two Vice-Presidents, an Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. They are elected by Council and must be/have been elected Members of Council. They hold office for a 3-year period.

Dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery
A past or present Member of the College's Dental Council, elected by the Dental Council for a three-year period.

Representative Members of Council

There are two further members of Council who are not considered trustees for the purposes of charity law;

A Trainees' Member of Council,
A trainee is chosen from and elected by the surgical trainees of the College.

Staff Associate Specialist (SAS)
A Member of Council, elected from and by SAS members of the College.

Changes in 2025

In 2025, a successful petition to the Privy Council was made to amend the College's Royal Charter, Laws and Regulations. This project, initiated in 2021, led to a range of recommendations which were endorsed by the membership at the 2024 AGM and came into effect on 5 September 2025.

This significant change modernised our governance by introducing a Board of Trustees to the College.

The Board now consists of:

- six College Office Bearers (The President, four Vice-Presidents and the Dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, also known as the Vice-President (Dental)),
- up to two members of Council, and
- a minimum of four and up to a maximum of five, Appointed Trustees (who bring additional skills and expertise required by the College, as identified by the Trustees).

The President remains the Chair of the Board of Trustees and Council. The previous Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer roles are replaced with elected Vice-President roles.

Council members now hold office for a 3-year period and are eligible for a further two, 3-year terms of office.

In addition to the introduction of the Board of Trustees, the College Council has been expanded, it now comprises:

- the President,
- five Vice-Presidents,
- 17 elected Fellows,
- one additional member of Dental Council, and
- up to 13 other members (decided by Council)

At present, those places are allocated to the Dean of Examinations, the Dean of Education, the Dean of the International Postgraduate Deanery, the Chair of the Younger Fellows' Network, the Deputy Chair of the Younger Fellows' Network.

Council can also co-opt up to five additional members. At present there are no additional co-opted members. The Board of Trustees now replace Council as the Trustees of the College for the purposes of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Induction of College Trustees

Incoming Trustees are provided with a programme of induction, this includes details of their duties and other relevant information, such as:

- the Laws of the College
- information about the duties and obligations of Charity Trustees
- minutes of previous Council meetings
- the latest annual report and financial statements.

Trustees

All Trustees must complete a register of interest form, which is held centrally and reviewed annually as a minimum. They are also subject to a 'Fit and Proper Persons' test, as required by HMRC for individuals involved in the management of charitable organisations. The Board of Trustees receive at least one yearly update on matters of governance, which includes their duties and responsibilities as Trustees.

Remuneration of College Trustees

As permitted under terms of a written agreement of Council, reimbursement is made to the President's employer in recognition of the President's time and work for the College. No Trustee is remunerated and Council members are reimbursed only for directly incurred travel and subsistence expenses.

Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team

The College employs a Chief Executive, who attends the Trustee Board, Council and Dental Council meetings and is responsible to the Board through the President, for the day-to-day management of the College.

In year, the Chief Executive was supported by a Senior Leadership Team, each of whom brought relevant experience in their field of expertise as listed below:

- Examinations, Education and Faculties
- Resources (Finance, HR, Digital Services and Strategic Change)
- Membership, Marketing and Communications
- Heritage and Estates
- Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

In addition, the Managing Director of the College's commercial subsidiary, Surgeons Quarter, is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Surgical Specialty Boards

There are 11 Surgical Specialty Boards (SSBs), which ensure that the College stays informed of current interests and issues across the surgical profession. They also provide a voice within the College for the membership's specialist professional interests.

The Surgical Specialty Boards are:

- Cardiothoracic Surgery SSB
- General Surgery SSB
- Neurosurgery SSB
- Ophthalmology SSB
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery SSB
- Otolaryngology Surgery SSB
- Paediatric Surgery SSB
- Plastic Surgery SSB
- Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery SSB
- Urology SSB
- Vascular Surgery SSB

The activities of these Boards are coordinated by a committee made up of the Chairperson of each SSB and chaired by a Vice-President.

Intercollegiate Activity

Where appropriate, the College works to fulfil its purpose through collaboration with other sector partners:

- The Royal College of Surgeons of England
- The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
- The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Some activities relating to examinations are coordinated through intercollegiate committees, made up of membership from the four surgical Colleges of the UK and Ireland.

The College collaborates towards patient safety with other medical Royal Colleges through the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the Scottish Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. The College works with a wide range of other partners and stakeholders in the delivery of its activities, including charitable ones.

Decision-Making Processes & Delegation

Strategic Decisions

Council previously agreed its Strategic Plan for 2022-2027, with an annual operational plan for 2025-2026.

Before the change in governance, all strategic-level decisions were made by majority agreement at Council. More detailed work and monitoring are carried out by the sub-committees of Council, which can include external experts advising Council. In addition, Council uses professional advice where appropriate, to ensure due diligence in decision-making.

Following the 2025 changes, all strategic-level decisions are made by the Board of Trustees with detailed work and monitoring carried out by the sub-committees of the Board, such as the Strategy, Estates and Finance Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and Investment Group, which can include external experts advising the Board. In addition, the Board of Trustees uses professional advice where appropriate, to ensure due diligence in decision-making.

Council retains responsibility for oversight of clinical, professional and educational matters, and those matters requiring significant discussion or the involvement of the Council are handled initially through regular Council Development Sessions. Actions are then agreed upon at formal Council meetings.

Key Management Personnel Remuneration

A Remuneration, People, and Workforce Culture Committee, chaired by an Appointed Trustee, is responsible for considering the remuneration of the Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

This Committee is also responsible for approving any annual salary uplift for College staff and any College performance-related bonus (discretionary).

The Group Structure

The group is made up of:

The College

The College, incorporated under Royal Charter, (including its Birmingham office and faculties).



RCSEd Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.

SUBSIDIARY COMPANY

Malaysian company (RCSEd Malaysia SDN. BHD.)

Surgeons Quarter

SUBSIDIARY COMPANY

Commercial arm, Surgeons Quarter limited.

Hill Square Educational Trust (HSET)

On 7 June 2024 the Trustees of HSET, our educational company, approved the dissolution of HSET as a charity. The Trustees also approved the assets of HSET being transferred to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd). On 28 June 2024, Council agreed to accept, as Trustees of the RCSEd, the assets of HSET and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) subsequently provided their consent to wind-up HSET. On 8 June 2025, Hill Square Educational Trust, was taken back into the College. The full results for the year are shown within the accounts that follow and explained in more detail in note page 60.

HSET was subsequently removed from Companies House on 9 December 2025 and in December 2025 an application was made to remove HSET from the Scottish Charity Register.

HSET - a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in Scotland under the Companies Acts, with registered company number SC366348, and a registered charity in Scotland with charity number SC028302, and having its registered office at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9DW

RCSEd - a Scottish charity, incorporated by Royal Charter, with Scottish charity number SC005317, and having its principal office at Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DW.

Volunteers

RCSEd is an independent membership organisation dedicated to the global education, training and advancement of surgeons, dentists, and healthcare individuals.

Since 1505, we have achieved great things thanks to the invaluable support and expertise of our global community of volunteers. Their knowledge, skills, and commitment provide a critical contribution to our work.

The variety of volunteering options available includes serving as a:

- Council Member
- Examiner
- Trustee
- Course Tutor / Course Faculty

Or by:

- Joining our global network of surgical and dental ambassadors
- Contributing to the work of committees.

Our members regularly give their time to support working groups, campaigns, and projects.

We are grateful to our volunteers for their commitment to the College, to the professions they represent, and to improving patient care.



"Everything we do at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh depends on our volunteers - surgeons, dental surgeons, and other clinicians who give up their time to support their professions. From setting high professional standards in surgery and dental surgery, educating the next generation of medics, creating and administering crucial professional exams, and advocating for their professions, to the vital governance work which maintains the College, volunteers are the heart of what we do. Thank you!"

Mark Egan, RCSEd CEO



What happened in 2025

What Happened in the Year?

The College has an ambitious five-year strategy, which has been partially implemented this year. 2025 saw a year of growth, innovation and change, supported by the dedication of every team across the College, as we embark on this journey.

The New President & Governance changes

2025 was a significant year for the College, with a number of major changes taking place. These included the Governance changes, seeing the first female president in 520 years along with increased diversity on the Board of Trustees.

The Trustee Board, commenced in September 2025, was established to become the decision-making body of the College, whilst Council now oversee clinical, professional and educational matters. 50% of our meetings are now conducted virtually to reduce carbon emissions and make it easier for participants to attend around surgical commitments.

It also saw the legal structure of the College change with the educational arm, HSET ceasing and its assets taken back into the College in June 2025, after 16 years of being a separate limited company.

We moved!

The College also opened two new offices, with the Birmingham team moving to a new Birmingham location, which opened in May and Malaysian team moving in to their new office in August.

The College never stands still

The year marked the opening of two new offices for the college:

- In May 2025 the College marked a significant milestone as it officially celebrated the relocation of its Birmingham Regional Centre to new premises in Digbeth. The grand opening was officiated by the Lord-Lieutenant of West Midlands, Derrick Anderson CBE, His Majesty the King's personal representative in the County. Local clinicians, current and former Presidents of the College, in addition to many individuals who supported the development of the centre, were in attendance to mark this special occasion. The official opening of this new facility highlighted the College's commitment to advancing surgical excellence across the UK.
- In August 2025 the College also proudly opened its new International Office at the Medical Academies of Malaysia, Putrajaya. Supported by His Royal Highness Tuanku Muhriz and local partners, this milestone strengthens RCSEd's global commitment, enabling closer regional engagement, stronger professional networks, and contributions to advancing healthcare worldwide.

Exam number and new dental exams

Exams had another incredible year with over 10,000 candidates assessed globally, reinforcing the College's position as a leading provider of professional qualifications. The launch of the new Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations (DSFE) represents a major strategic development, strengthening the College's specialty examination framework and supporting future-facing dental education.

A record year for the Museum

The museum welcomed over 130,000 visitors, its highest ever total, with high visitor satisfaction. This reflects the strength of programmes such as Women in Surgery, which keep the collections relevant, visible and engaging for new and returning visitors.

Global CARE

Global CARE (Creating Access to Resources and Education) was launched. This is a new flagship charitable initiative for the College, focused on reducing global healthcare inequalities through grants, funding and sustainable support. Funded through legacies and donations, it was launched in the Spring and a first round of funding was awarded to six recipients.



2025 at a Glance







2025 at a Glance

2025 was a record breaking year, right across the Group.

Surgeons' Hall Museums

130,465
Visitors
18% increase - highest year on record

£1.079m
Museum Income
From Admissions, Retail & Events

£58k
External Funding
Supporting Women in Surgery & Collection Projects



Surgeons Quarter

£13.2m
Highest Annual Turnover

95.9%
Hotel Occupancy

£403k
Fringe Revenues

3,023
Travel Bookings

17th consecutive year
the Hotel achieved a Gold Award from Green Tourism

Exams, Education & Faculties

+11.5%
increase UK Surgical Exams

+ 121%
increase Dental Exams

+7%
increase Exam Diets

+26%
Webinar Bookings

+8.9%
Growth in Faculty Membership

Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

+34%
Grants, Awards & Fellowships - 71 awardees

£323k
Funding Awarded

+37.5%
Portfolio Growth Number of products offered.

+82.9%
Submitted Applications

+269%
Application Reach Based on applications started.

Membership Engagement

35,396 Members
increase 7.2%

Dental Fellows
increase 60.2%

Surgical Affiliates
increase 34.1%

Retention Rate
96%



How Did We Do?

Membership Engagement and Growth

In 2025 membership reached its highest ever, with over 35,000 Members, Fellows, Associates and Affiliates, confirming our global reach which now spans over 110 countries around the world.

In a joint effort by the Royal Colleges to streamline Dental Fellowship examinations and align the diverse landscape of dental specialty examinations, 2025 saw a boost in new Fellows for the Faculty of Dental Surgery. In readiness for a new suite of examinations in 2027, eligible specialty membership holders, were invited to convert their membership to fellowship leading to a growth in Fellows from 1,525 in 2024 to 2,443 in 2025.

Celebrating success

Celebrating the achievements of all of our Members and Fellows with diploma ceremonies was again a highlight, with events taking place in Edinburgh, Cairo, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong. 1,434 diplomates crossed the stage to collect their diplomas supported by over 2,500 guests acknowledging their success.

To ensure we could bring as many members as possible together, we held our first ceremony in Edinburgh's famous McEwan Hall in October 2025. Two ceremonies were held on the day. 308 new members were welcomed, along with their 669 guests, joining in the celebrations.

"Our volunteers play a critical role across examinations, education and faculties, contributing the expertise, professional insight that underpin delivery and safeguard standards. Their commitment is fundamental to the College's ability to deliver its programmes and maintain the credibility of its qualifications."

Iain Forster-Smith, Director of Examinations, Education and Faculties.

What our members say

Our 2024-25 membership survey reinforced what we hear from members on a regular basis, showing us where we're performing well and where we can do more to provide support.

80%

High-quality source of training
80% said they trust the College as a high-quality source of training.

77%

Serving the profession
77% said the College is serving the profession well.

62%

Training catered to all career stages
62% felt the College provides training that caters to all stages.

64%

Good value for money
64% of members feel the College provides good or very good value for money.

44%

Promotes the College to colleagues or peers
44% of members are likely to promote the College Membership to colleagues and peers.

90%

Renew Membership
90% are likely to renew their Membership or Fellowship when due for renewal.

The College's goal is to ensure we provide the best service for our Membership and that they feel they belong at the College. The survey results indicate that 90% of our membership will renew next year, with nearly three quarters saying we are serving the profession well and 80% that we supply good quality training materials.

"We recognise that whilst many see the work the College does in raising the standards of the wider profession, for some it is harder to see how the College benefits their own career. There's an opportunity for us to provide clear pathways particularly for trainees and signposting to resources and courses that we already offer to develop technical and non-technical skills. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of our Members and Fellows and we will be working hard to learn from these results and make the College stronger still."

Mark Egan, RCSEd CEO

Member Benefits

The RCSEd app continues to evolve to support members in their training and professional development. Updates in 2025 included the addition of the eLogbook link, which allows users to easily document their surgical training activities, professional development and work experience.

Dental members can now access ProDental CPD which provides a continuing professional development benefit, which can also be reached via the app.

In addition, the app enables users to stay informed by accessing the latest College news stories, blogs and press releases.

Members

▲ 35,396

(2024: 33,020)

Retention rate

▼ 96%

(2024: 97%)

Category Breakdown

	2025	2024		2025	2024
Surgical Fellows	12,157	12,326	Dental Fellows	2,443	1,525
Surgical Members	7,694	7,375	Dental Members	5,027	5,221
Surgical Affiliates	5,580	4,161	Dental Affiliates	456	556
Other Faculty memberships	2,039	1,856			
Total	**27,470**	**25,718**		**7,926**	**7,302**

Faculties	2025	2024
Pre-Hospital Care (FPHC)	1,303	1,277
Surgical Trainers (FST)	160	154
Dental Trainers (FDT)	164	158
Perioperative Care (FPC)	113	97
Remote, Rural & Humanitarian Healthcare (FRRHH)	299	170
	2,039	**1,856**

*to avoid double-counting, these numbers do not include those who also hold a surgical or dental Membership or Fellowship of the College



Exams, Education & Faculties

The Directorate of Examinations, Education & Faculties brings together examination delivery, academic standards, faculty engagement, and accreditation activity within a single strategic framework, supporting over 14,000 educational participants globally each year.

During the year, the Directorate has focused on three overarching objectives:

1. Protecting and strengthening the credibility and defensibility of College and intercollegiate examinations.
2. Modernising governance and quality assurance frameworks across education and assessment.
3. Supporting Faculties and Specialty Advisory Boards to align academic standards, accreditation, and professional development activity with the College's strategic priorities.

In 2025 significant progress has been achieved as follows:

- Active leadership within the Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations (JCIE) and contribution to the ongoing MRCS review.
- Advancement of dental examination reform, including implementation of the Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations (DSFE) and progress on MFDS reform.
- Strengthening psychometric, quality assurance and examiner calibration processes across the examination portfolio.
- Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within assessment systems and monitoring frameworks.
- Introducing structured governance for the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in question development.
- Refining committee and oversight structures to strengthen independence, transparency and accountability.
- Progressing the Faculties Governance and Strategic Review (FGSR) to standardise governance arrangements, strengthen succession planning and enhance strategic alignment across the six Faculties.

Collectively, this work ensures that the College continues to operate as both a national leader in professional assessment and a responsible custodian of academic standards.

Directorate Highlights – 2025

- 10,000+ candidates examined across surgical and dental programmes
- 11.5% increase in UK surgical exam delivery
- 14,000+ global webinar participants
- 70–80% international candidate participation
- 46 Skills Centre courses delivered
- 8.9% Faculty membership growth

Directorate activity during 2025 reflects both the scale and international reach of the College's work. More than 10,000 candidates were examined across surgical and dental qualifications, with the majority based overseas, demonstrating continued global demand for College assessments. Education delivery remained strong, supported by expanding digital provision and high utilisation of the Skills Centre, while UK surgical examination delivery increased by 11.5%, improving access for UK trainees, by extending the number of days available within diets.

MRCS Review and JCIE Intercollegiate Leadership

The College has maintained a significant leadership role within JCIE, contributing academic, governance and psychometric expertise to intercollegiate examinations. Lay member and Chair recruitment and succession planning have also ensured continued patient representation within JCIE structures, strengthening public confidence in surgical assessment.

The MRCS review has scrutinised examination structure, blueprint alignment, reliability metrics & performance data, candidate feedback, and governance transparency around standard-setting processes.

Dental Examination Reform and Development

Significant progress has been made during the year in advancing the College's dental examination portfolio through the development of the Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations (DSFE) and the ongoing reform of MFDS.

The implementation of DSFE has been delivered through a joint secretariat model with Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, with RCPSG leading operational delivery and policy, and RCSEd providing oversight of quality assurance, psychometrics and question bank governance. Work during the year focused on clarifying operational responsibilities, strengthening quality assurance processes, aligning standard-setting methodologies, and embedding psychometric oversight to support effective intercollegiate collaboration.

In parallel, progress on MFDS reform has included reviewing eligibility criteria, aligning the examination structure with contemporary dental training pathways, and strengthening governance and reporting processes.

Together, these initiatives represent a coordinated programme to modernise the College's dental examinations while maintaining robust academic standards.

Quality Assurance, Psychometrics and Governance

A central priority this year has been to strengthen examination defensibility through enhanced governance and data-informed oversight.

Improvements include:

- Enhanced psychometric reporting to committees.
- Strengthened standard-setting documentation.
- Systematic question performance review and item retirement processes.
- Improved examiner recruitment, training and calibration.
- Clearer separation between delivery and quality assurance functions.

Committee structures under the Learning & Assessment framework have been refined to ensure independence of oversight and to avoid conflicts of interest. This strengthens transparency and protects institutional credibility.

Responsible Use *of* Artificial Intelligence

Recognising the increasing relevance of AI in assessment development, the Directorate has introduced structured governance mechanisms to support responsible innovation.

This has included:

- Development of a formal QA checklist for AI-generated items.
- Implementation of human-in-the-loop validation processes.
- Structured bias and clarity review protocols.
- Governance safeguards to protect validity, reliability and defensibility.

Innovation has been pursued cautiously and responsibly, ensuring academic standards remain paramount.



Education & Accreditation

Academic Standards and Curriculum Alignment

Through engagement with Faculties and Specialty Advisory Boards, the Directorate has ensured that examination blueprints, curricula, and accreditation frameworks remain aligned.

Activity has included:

- Oversight of curriculum-to-assessment alignment.
- Support for accreditation processes and quality review.
- Engagement with specialty leads on evolving training requirements.
- Strengthening documentation and reporting of academic standards.

The Deputy Dean for Accreditation's oversight of RCSEd accreditation activity has ensured consistent and transparent quality processes across programmes.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Embedding EDI within assessment systems remains a priority.

Developments this year have included:

- Enhanced data capture within candidate application systems.
- Structured bias review in question authoring and approval processes.
- Reinforced examiner training on unconscious bias.
- Monitoring of candidate performance data to identify and address differential attainment where appropriate.

This ongoing work reinforces fairness while strengthening public trust in the College's qualifications.

Skills Centre

The Skills Centre continued to support high-quality practical education, delivering 46 (2024: 52) lab-based and simulation-supported courses during the year. The team also supported examination delivery, hosting five on-site examinations and providing technical support for one off-site examination

Additional activity included an examiner anatomy training session, hosting 10 (2024: 12) external Surgeons Quarter events, and supporting the Dental Skills and Surgical Skills Competition finals.

The Centre also contributed to wider educational initiatives, including Indian and International Medical Students Association (IIMSA) Week, the "You Can Be A Doctor" schools outreach event in partnership with Surgeons' Hall Museums, and a Da Vinci surgical robot training session delivered with Intuitive.

Performance Metrics

The following tables summarise Directorate activity for the reporting year.

Courses/Events

	Courses/Events 2025	Attendees 2025	Courses/Events 2024	Attendees 2024
UK	168	2,840	166	2,949
International	46	1,227	53	1,573

Webinars

	Webinars 2025	Attendees 2025	Webinars 2024	Attendees 2024
Webinars	119	14,254	96	11,226

Examination Activity Metrics

	Surgical 2025	Dental 2025	Surgical 2024	Dental 2024
Candidates applied	**6,783**	**3,540**	7,052	1,598
UK	2,114	754	1,896	709
Overseas	4,669	2,786	5,156	889
Different exam types	**18**	**22**	**17**	**17**
Diets delivered	**55**	**55**	**55**	**47**
UK	24	33	22	29
Overseas	31	22	33	18
Locations	**23**	**26**	**23**	**11**
UK	8	4	8	4
Overseas	15	22	15	7

Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations (JCIE)

Specialty	Section 1 2025	Section 2 2025	Section 1 2024	Section 2 2024
Cardiothoracic Surgery	63	61	77	47
General Surgery	397	380	442	370
Neurosurgery	78	71	62	45
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery	37	34	30	20
Otolaryngology	115	101	122	108
Paediatric Surgery	39	18	37	32
Plastic Surgery	138	91	99	99
Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery	387	365	399	402
Urology	169	173	156	150
Vascular Surgery	92	72	92	62
Total	**1,515**	**1,366**	**1,515**	**1,335**

Joint Surgical Colleges' Fellowship Examinations (JSCFE)

Specialty	Section 1 2025	Section 2 2025	Section 1 2024	Section 2 2024
Cardiothoracic Surgery	8	7	10	0
General Surgery	41	18	57	19
Neurosurgery	2	26	27	52
Otolaryngology	3	4	11	8
Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery	46	21	55	53
Urology	27	18	35	36
Total	**127**	**94**	**195**	**168**

These exams end in December 2026.

Faculties

2025 has been a significant year of development across the six Faculties of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, marked by continued international growth, governance reform, and strengthened professional engagement.

Faculty membership now spans more than 105 countries, with overall membership increasing by 8.9%, demonstrating sustained global demand for professional recognition, education and standard-setting across healthcare professions beyond surgery and dentistry.

The Faculties Governance and Strategic Review (FGSR), approved by Council in January 2025, has been the major programme of work this year. The review aims to standardise governance structures, strengthen succession planning and enhance strategic alignment across Faculties. Implementation is progressing well, with 70% of recommendations completed and 97% of implementation plans agreed, with further work continuing into 2026 to embed strategic planning and data-driven performance monitoring.

Faculty *of* Dental Surgery (FDS)

FDS continues to demonstrate strong international engagement, with members across 79 countries. Governance and membership processes have been strengthened, including a successful recruitment round for Dental Board and Council positions. The Member-to-Fellow conversion process saw 854 members convert to Fellowship, strengthening the faculty's professional community. New diplomas in Restorative, Paediatric and Sedation Dentistry have expanded the faculty's qualification portfolio, while policy engagement has increased through participation in national consultations on issues including cancer, dental public health and NHS reform.

Faculty *of* Pre-Hospital Care (FPHC)

FPHC membership grew by 2%, with continued delivery of examinations, conferences and professional development programmes. Demand for key courses such as the Crowd Doctor programme remains strong, with a significant waiting list.
The faculty continues to contribute to national discussions on workforce development through the IBTPHEM Workforce Project, while also engaging with emerging developments in event healthcare regulation.

Faculty *of* Surgical Trainers (FST)

FST membership grew by 4% to 765 members, with ongoing delivery of educational webinars attracting high engagement and positive feedback. Collaboration with the Association of Surgeons in Training (ASiT) continues to strengthen the faculty's role in surgical education. Work is also underway to develop stronger collaboration with the Faculty of Dental Trainers in areas such as trainer standards, non-technical skills and professional recognition.

Faculty *of* Dental Trainers (FDT)

FDT membership grew by 4%, spanning 27 countries. The faculty introduced income-adjusted membership fees to improve accessibility and inclusivity, while governance has been strengthened through new leadership appointments. Work is progressing on redevelopment of the DeNTS and Human Factors programmes and exploration of collaborative training initiatives with FST and NOTSS. The faculty is also expanding engagement with European partners through collaboration with the Association for Dental Education in Europe.

Faculty *of* Perioperative Care (FPC)

FPC experienced significant membership growth of 17% during the year. The faculty progressed a revised application and assessment process, with formal approval expected in early 2026. Governance development included preparation of a 2026–2028 strategy and introduction of a faculty induction programme. The faculty also continues to contribute to national workforce development through its role within the IEST Board.

The faculty has contributed to the Intercollegiate Extended Surgical Team (IEST) Board, while supporting the Intercollegiate Managed Voluntary Register (MVR) for Surgical Care Practitioners to enhance professional recognition.

Faculty *of* Remote, Rural & Humanitarian Healthcare (FRRHH)

FRRHH continues to experience rapid growth as a developing faculty, with membership increasing by 73% during the year. This reflects strong professional demand in the remote and humanitarian healthcare sector. The faculty expanded its webinar programme, strengthened international partnerships, and progressed development of the Capabilities Framework, which is expected to launch in 2026.

See the Membership Engagement and Growth section of the report for a full breakdown of faculty membership numbers.

Heritage & Estates

2025 was a landmark year for Heritage and Estates at RCSEd. Surgeons' Hall Museums welcomed over 130,000 visitors, the Women in Surgery programme brought new visibility to women's surgical histories, and the property team kept our historic buildings safe, welcoming and resilient throughout a record year.

A Record Year For the Museum

2025 was the busiest year in the Museum's history, welcoming 130,465 visitors, an 18 percent increase on 2024. This reflected strong public interest in the Museum's collections, exhibitions, walking tours and events. Visitors stayed longer, engaged more deeply and reported high satisfaction after their visit.

Women in Surgery: Making Histories Visible

The launch of the two year Women in Surgery programme, generously supported by Museums Galleries Scotland and Art Fund, marked a major moment for the College. Through a commissioned portrait, temporary exhibition, talks, events and oral history collecting, the programme attracted over 100,000 visitors.

The programme created space to record, preserve and share women's experiences in surgery, recognising histories that were always present but not always visible. It will culminate in a permanent gallery display in 2026, enriching the collections and strengthening the public offer.

Audiences Who Feel Welcome And Inspired

A full year of visitor research confirmed the Museum attracts a young, diverse and international audience. Satisfaction levels were consistently high, average dwell time exceeded 100 minutes, and the Net Promoter Score increased.

These insights are actively shaping exhibitions, events and visitor experience improvements, supporting future audience growth and engagement.

Collections Brought to Life

The collections reached audiences in new and engaging ways through walking tours, evening events, workshops, outreach and public facing conservation activity.

Learning and engagement activity grew, with over 290 activities reaching more than 6,800 participants. Late and evening programmes also proved popular, with Surgeons' Hall After Hours, Teen Take Over and An Evening with Surgeons' Hall Museum attracting strong attendance.

Behind the scenes, targeted conservation and collections care helped protect high risk material, historic furniture and paper based collections, ensuring the collections remain accessible, meaningful and well cared for.

Library And Archive: Growing Demand and Access

Demand for Library and Archive services remained strong, with over 4,300 recorded enquiries from Members, Fellows, researchers and audiences worldwide. A major upgrade to the Axiell collections management system was completed, while the Library expanded electronic textbook provision to support clinical education, professional development and examination preparation.

The Archives also began to appraise legacy College records, improving governance and strengthening access to the College's institutional archive.

Keeping Pace with Growing Audiences

As visitor numbers reached record levels, work across the estate focused on keeping buildings safe, welcoming and resilient. Targeted staffing improvements strengthened operational cover, supported consistent standards and reduced risk across a busy and complex heritage site.

Caring for Historic Buildings

The first phase of estate verification improved understanding of building systems, condition and future maintenance needs. This supports more informed decision making, better prioritisation of investment and long term care of the College's historic estate.

Alongside this, the fit out of the Walker Building, our Birmingham office, was completed, bringing the space into use and supporting the College's wider operations.

Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Formed in 2024 through the merger of several functions, the Directorate exists to strengthen the College's influence and reputation in the UK and internationally. It ensures the College is heard where it matters, connected to the right partners, and equipped to support its members while building long-term financial resilience.

The work of the directorate is delivered from three College sites. Our International Office in Malaysia relocated to a new purpose-built facility in Putrajaya in August and is now co-located with other medical organisations. The office continues to support examinations, fellowships and regional engagement. In Birmingham, the new Regional Centre officially opened in May and has already hosted several flagship events, strengthening the College's presence in England where the largest part of our membership is located.

Policy, Public Affairs & Strategic Influence

Strengthened Advocacy and Political Engagement
In 2025, a core priority was to increase the College's visibility and influence across all four UK nations. A new Public Affairs Plan was approved, and election manifestos were drafted for Scotland (2026), Northern Ireland (2026) and Wales (2027).

Importantly, we intensified our engagement in Scotland and strengthened our relationship with the Scottish Government, ensuring the College has a clear and visible presence in national workforce discussions.

Key contributions were made by the College to the following:

- NHS 10-Year Workforce Plan,
- Leng Review,
- Postgraduate Medical Education & Training Review,
- reform of the Dental contract,
- workforce planning in Scotland and Wales,
- 49 consultation responses submitted across surgery and dentistry,
- 27 public statements and responses to major public health issues and
- 65 high profile meetings with Government departments, NHS bodies, regulators and AOMRC.

The relaunch of the Green Theatre Checklist, in collaboration with our sister UK Surgical Colleges, positions the College as a sustainability leader in healthcare, with endorsement from multiple professional bodies.

Championing Patient Safety
Patient safety remains central to the College's Mission.

In 2025, the patient safety group expanded its reach and impact. It delivered workshops on team-based quality review and learning from errors, hosted webinars, and led activity during patient safety week. The group also contributed directly to national consultations and external collaborations.

This year saw the award of the inaugural MacLeod McLaren Medal in Patient Safety, recognising innovation and excellence in improving surgical safety.

Supporting Equity and Inclusion
The Hunter-Doig Women in Surgery Group was established to address barriers to access and progression in surgical and dental training. The group will focus on leadership access, networking, training and resources, and strategic communications. This initiative builds on existing college programmes and reflects our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive profession.

Professional Support & Training Pathways

Enhancing Professional Support
In Spring 2025, we launched SupportEd, a central online hub providing guidance, resources and signposting for Fellows, Members and the wider medical community.

While still in development, SupportEd brings together authoritative advice on professional challenges, wellbeing, career pathways and training. A comprehensive review and expansion of the hub is planned for 2026 to ensure it continues to meet members' needs.

International Postgraduate Deanery
The International Postgraduate Deanery continues to perform strongly, with the 2025 intake being the second highest since the programme began in 2019. Feedback from participants remains consistently positive. The College also contributed actively to the ongoing national review of the Medical Training Initiative (MTI) scheme and undertook scenario planning to ensure continued support for international trainees.

Strengthening International Partnerships
In 2025, the College established a dedicated Strategic Partnerships function. A Partnerships Framework was developed to ensure that collaborations are aligned with the College's priorities and deliver meaningful impact. Around 25 agreements were signed in 2025, with approximately 60 active partners under ongoing engagement. Work also began on a College-wide Ethical Framework to ensure our partnerships and international work align consistently with our values.

Among these, the College deepened its collaboration with the David Nott Foundation, hosting the HEST-UK course and delivering a Train-the-Trainers programme for surgeons working in conflict settings. We also signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the HALO Trust to support training for medical professionals working in complex and austere environments.

International Postgraduate Deanery (intake of international medical graduates)

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
75	75	75	137	97	105

Building Sustainable Income

Financial sustainability is essential to the College's sustainability and impact, with 2025 being a landmark year for development and fundraising.

Philanthropic Income
Total philanthropic income reached over £700,000 — a significant achievement. This includes a series of smaller donations amounting to approximately £25,000, sponsorship of events and competitions of £121,000, donations to specific funds £189,000 and fund income of £221,000.

Notable new income:

- £58,000 in support of the Women in Surgery heritage programme
- A £50,000 legacy pledge

Several long-standing funders renewed multi-year agreements, providing welcome stability and predictability of income.

Such as:

- A £50,000 annual grant from the James Weir Foundation for pump-priming grants
- £60,000pa from Sight Scotland for a multi-year programme of ophthalmology research

Awards, Grants and Fellowships
In 2025, we supported 71 awardees, 18 more than in 2024, reflecting growing demand and improved portfolio management.

New awards included fellowships in aortic surgery and robotics, research pump-priming grants, and new professional development grants across specialties. This growth demonstrates both the generosity of our supporters and the continued appetite among members for high-quality development opportunities.

"I have gained experience in an exciting and progressive aspect of endoscopic sinus surgery that I can hopefully build on as I move towards applying for a fellowship and my consultant career and have also returned with a newfound appreciation for our training in the United Kingdom. I can't stress how valuable this experience was and how much I was able to learn and experience in the few weeks that I was there. I can't thank the RCSEd and the Thalanany Family enough for their support in enabling me to pursue this." Mr Ding Yang - Elizabeth Anita Mathew Thalanany ENT Fellowship - 2025 Awardee

"Giving something back to the College to support the next generation of surgeons just seems the right thing to do. In some ways, leaving a legacy will also leave a memory of what you have achieved in your life as a surgeon. I think it is a nice thought that when you've left and departed this world that maybe someone will benefit from the gift you have left and be a better surgeon because of it."

Legacy pledger.

Global CARE: Addressing Surgical Inequality

In June, we formally launched Global CARE (Creating Access to Resources and Education) — the College's flagship charitable initiative focused on reducing global healthcare inequalities.

Funded through legacies and designated donations, the inaugural funding round received 41 applications and supported one scholarship and five grants. Projects are based in Tanzania, Kenya, Nepal, Ethiopia, Thailand and Nigeria, covering areas such as cataract surgery, limb salvage, oral cancer detection and paediatric surgical nutrition.

We also formed a strategic partnership with KidsOR, committing £37,500 toward a joint scholarship programme, over a 3-year period.

Global CARE represents an important step in aligning the College's global activity with a clear, sustainable impact framework.

"Looking back to how I was by this time last year and how I am now, mere words cannot express fully the proficiency and confidence my training has given me. This will greatly impact positively in preventing avoidable blindness from cataract in my community in Nigeria." Dr Kuburat Oluwatoyin Adenrele, Global CARE Scholarship Recipient 2025

"By introducing nutrition screening and family guidance into paediatric surgical care, this project is changing how children in Nepal are prepared for recovery. Parents report greater confidence in supporting their child's healing, with simple, practical changes making a visible difference in strength and recovery." Jayanth Kesave, Large Global CARE grant Recipient 2025. Project: Nutritional support for paediatric surgical patients in Nepal



Marketing & Communications

We take pride in connecting our members and prospective members around the world. Our Marketing and Communications Team is at the helm, promoting the College's achievements and services and providing valuable content to support members in their careers.

Our focus remains on growing our membership and nurturing individuals to feel supported at every stage of their career journey.

We're always exploring new ways to innovate and engage, one of which was our Operating as One campaign demonstrating our commitment to mentoring, training, upskilling, improving standards and advancing our collective knowledge.

We also continued to share news and updates through our established marketing channels.

- Public relations
- Social media channels
- Our popular weekly news digest
- Mobile App
- Email campaigns and reports
- Surgeons' News

The College sponsored and presented at several conferences and events, where we had the opportunity to meet world experts and learn about pioneering techniques:

American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, **Chicago**

AEEDC Annual Scientific Dental Conference and Exhibition, **Dubai**

The Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland Annual Congress, **Edinburgh**

The Association of Surgeons in Training Annual Conference, **Belfast**

The Association of Surgeons in Training Robotics Conference, **London**

British Orthopaedic Association Annual Congress, **Liverpool**

British Orthopaedic Association Trainee Association Annual Congress, **Leeds**

College of Surgeons Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, **Kuala Lumpur**

College of Surgeons of Brazil Congress of Surgery, **Brazil**

Combined Services Orthopaedic Society Conference, **Warwick**

Core Surgical Trainees Conference, **Birmingham**

Edinburgh School of Surgery Undergraduate Student and Foundation Years Research Symposium, **Edinburgh**

Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine Conference, **Edinburgh**

Engaging with our Members

The College engages with its members in a range of ways around the world, some of these are highlighted below.

Skills Competitions

The Grand Final of the 2024/25 RCSEd and Medtronic Surgical Skills Competition took place in March at the College. A total of 43 medical students from universities across the UK participated in a series of 10 surgical skill challenges, including suturing, laparoscopy, and combat tourniquet application, over a two-hour period. Laura Saunders (Queen's University Belfast) secured first place, with Poppy Fletcher (University of Plymouth) taking second place and Matthew Hough (Keele University) in third place, respectively.

The Grand Final of the RCSEd Dental Clinical Skills Competition was successfully held on Saturday, 29 March. Celebrating 10 years, the competition brought together 16 finalists, each competing in a range of dental challenges to secure a top three position. The winner was Dora Jones, (Cardiff University), second place went to Thomas Gent (UCLAN) and third place to Jessica Preda (University of Birmingham).

The College hosted the third International Dental Clinical Skills Competition in Malaysia. The event showcased students' knowledge, technical skills, and decision-making under pressure. Winners were: Chan Hua En (Universiti Malaya) in first place, Jared Wee Jing Xian (IMU) in second place and Alia Amani Abdul Aziz (Universiti Malaya) in third place. Our thanks go to IMU for hosting and to Straumann for their continued sponsorship and support in developing future dental professionals.

Conferences

June saw the College host the President's Triennial Conference in conjunction with International Conference on Surgical Education and Training (ICOSET). This flagship conference, held once each Presidential term ends, brought together the brightest minds in surgery to explore 'A World of Innovation'.

Showcasing the future of surgery, the conference explored cutting-edge technology and groundbreaking ideas that will shape the next era of medical excellence. With a programme led by Ms Anna Paisley, RCSEd Member of Council, and Professor Alex Phillips, Chair of the RCSEd Faculty of Surgical Trainers, highlights included:

- a collaborative space to examine cutting-edge technology, pioneering techniques and forward-thinking strategies that will shape the future of surgical excellence.
- a unique opportunity to learn about modernising global surgical education, training and assessment, to consider the future role of surgeons and how surgical services will be delivered.

The event fostered collegiality and fellowship, promoting meaningful networking and discussions that strengthened professional relationships and inspired future collaborations.

Campaigns

In September, the College led the World Patient Safety Day campaign, themed “Safe care for every newborn and child” with the slogan Patient Safety From The Start.

The campaign highlighted the need for early, consistent action to prevent harm in childhood. With over 30 blogs and videos, a webinar and podcast, as well as a dedicated webpage generating 1,047 views and 3,008 interactions in just one week. Social media engagement rose 48% year-on-year.

The College remains committed to raising awareness of patient safety and will continue its efforts to engage with the medical community on this critical topic.



Surgeons Quarter

Surgeons Quarter delivered an exceptional performance in 2025, achieving record financial results while further strengthening its reputation for innovation, service excellence, and responsible business practice.

How We Support the College

Operating Ten Hill Place Hotel, the College's conference and events facilities, Surgeons Quarter Travel, and Hill Square Suites, SQ continues to play a vital role in generating sustainable commercial income to support the College's wider strategic objectives.

Against a challenging economic backdrop marked by rising costs and continued operational pressures, SQ generated record revenue of over £13 million and achieved a profit of £1.1 million. These results reflect disciplined financial management, strategic investment, and a consistent focus on delivering high-quality customer experiences across the portfolio.

Ten Hill Place

In 2025, Ten Hill Place Hotel, Edinburgh's largest independent four-star hotel, continued to outperform its competitors. The hotel achieved an exceptional occupancy rate of 95.9%.

The Festival

During August, Surgeons Quarter once again became one of the city's most vibrant cultural hubs, hosting one of the largest performance venues at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. In 2025, SQ strengthened its collaboration with long-standing partner theSpaceUK, which delivered a record number of shows and attracted significant audience numbers. This partnership generated exceptional trading performance.

Travel

Surgeons Quarter Travel, originally established to streamline travel arrangements for Members and Fellows of the College, has evolved into a full-service in-house agency serving College staff, Members, Fellows, and the wider public.

In 2025, SQ Travel generated its highest ever revenue and bookings made on behalf of RCSEd. This reflected a 47% increase year-on-year and delivered savings to the College.

Hill Square Suites

Accommodation diversification also contributed positively to overall performance.

2025 marked the first full year of operation of our first Hill Square Suite (Number 2). It is a premium self-catering property, accommodating up to eight guests across four rooms and located within walking distance of Edinburgh's principal attractions. The suite generated higher than expected revenues during its first full year.

Development of a second Hill Square Suite will commence in 2026, further strengthening the accommodation portfolio and creating additional income potential.

Sustainability and Ethical Responsibility

Sustainability remains embedded within SQ's long-term strategy.

- 2025 marked the 17th consecutive year that Ten Hill Place Hotel retained its Gold Award from Green Tourism,
- SQ introduced a campus-wide reusable cup initiative during the Festival Fringe. Thousands of reusable souvenir cups replaced single-use plastics, significantly reducing waste during the festival period. Visitors contributed £2 per cup for use throughout their visit, with proceeds supporting global carbon offsetting projects via Ecologi and the work of Cyrenians, assisting individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Commercial Innovation

Commercial innovation remained a priority throughout the year. Surgeons Quarter introduced a Conference Management Service to enhance income opportunities and provide a more comprehensive offering to event organisers. Following investment in a dedicated conference management platform, Surgeons Quarter now offers registration management, abstract submission processing, and bespoke conference website development, creating an end-to-end solution that strengthens its competitive position within Edinburgh's events market.



Looking ahead



Looking ahead

Every year we take the College on a journey of change and development, 2026 will be no different.

Exams, Education & Faculties

Our educational priorities for the coming year include:

- Progression and implementation of MRCS review outcomes.
- Consolidation of DSFE governance and service-level arrangements.
- Completion of MFDS reform phases.
- Further enhancement of psychometric analytics and digital reporting.
- Continued embedding of AI governance frameworks.
- Strengthening Faculty strategic alignment within the new College strategy.
- Enhancing candidate experience while maintaining academic rigour.
- Expansion of robotics education, building on existing activity to develop structured training opportunities, including simulation and technology-enhanced learning, aligned to advances in surgical practice.
- Further development of invited review activity, enhancing the College's external advisory and quality assurance role through a more coordinated and strategically aligned approach.

The Directorate remains committed to protecting the integrity of College qualifications while ensuring they evolve responsibly in response to professional, regulatory and technological change.

Membership

As our membership goes from strength to strength, so too does our approach to how we welcome, support and keep our members engaged in the wider College.

Operating as one is at the heart of who we are so looking ahead will see us broaden and deepen the mutual connection we have with our members. In practice, that means us keeping our offer up to date so that it feels fresh and relevant to everyone regardless of their specialty, location or career stage.

Our focus for deepening engagement will be on supporting our members to get involved in other College activities, listening and responding proactively to the challenges surrounding giving time to exam, assess and advocate on the College's behalf. We know from our research that our members have a strong desire to give back and share their skills and expertise with the next generation, and we're committed to making that experience even more positive and valuable over the coming year.

Heritage & Estates

Work is underway on Playfair 200, shaped by an important milestone: in 2032, the Playfair Building will turn 200. The programme will help prepare one of the College's most significant buildings for its next two centuries, bringing together conservation, renewal and careful improvement.

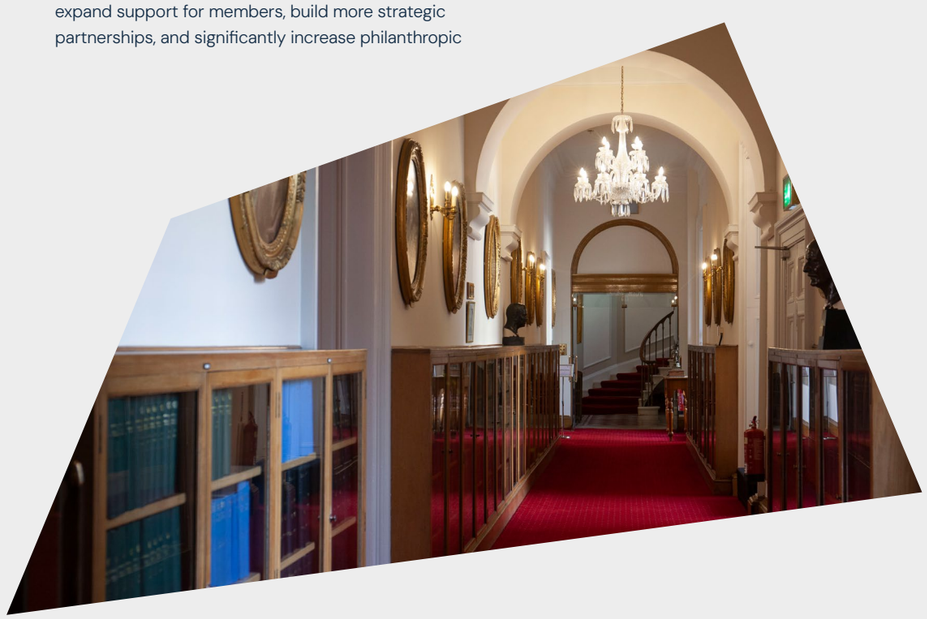
This work sits within a wider long term estates plan, setting out how the College's buildings will be cared for, maintained and adapted over time. It will guide future investment, protect the historic estate, support access to the collections and ensure the buildings continue to welcome, inspire and serve the College today and in the future.

Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement

Building on its first year, PSE will continue to strengthen the College's voice in policy debates, expand support for members, build more strategic partnerships, and significantly increase philanthropic income. At the same time, we have invested in governance, systems and ethical oversight to ensure long-term sustainability. As we move into 2026, our focus will be on deepening impact, prioritising high-value partnerships, expanding Global CARE, strengthening SupportEd, and continuing to ensure the College remains visible, influential and future-ready.

Surgeons Quarter

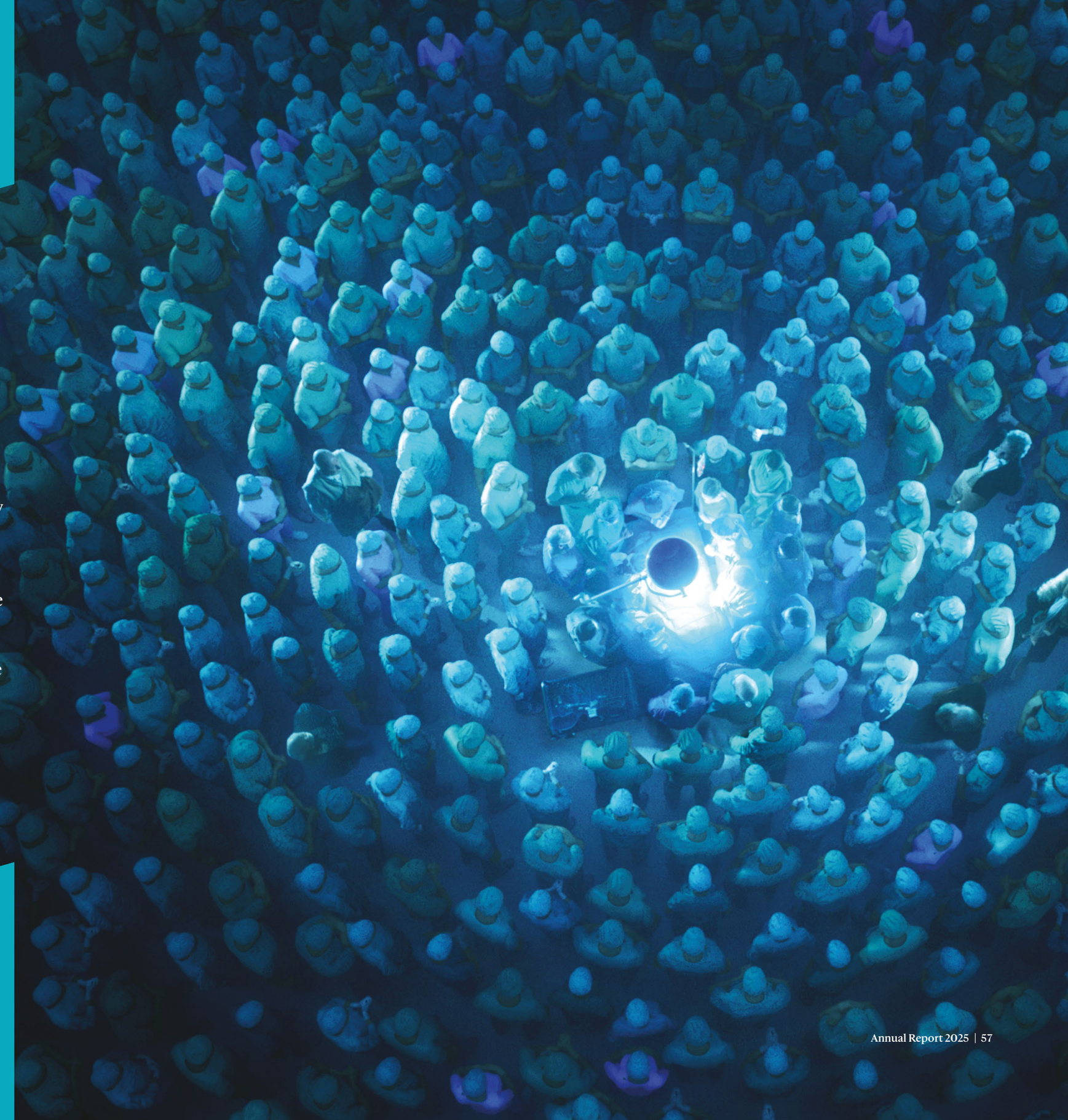
As SQ looks ahead to 2026, it does so with clear awareness of increasing costs, regulatory changes, and evolving operational demands. The strategic focus will remain on resilience, disciplined growth, and continued innovation. With strong financial foundations, diversified income streams, and a committed workforce, Surgeons Quarter is well positioned to navigate the changing landscape while continuing to deliver sustainable commercial success, in support of its parent company, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.



Since 1505, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, has not only grown in size but in spirit. We are committed to mentoring each other. We train and upskill together. We pass on expertise that was born from the pioneers who practiced and perfected their skills before us, continually improving standards and advancing our collective knowledge.

And we may be the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, but our reach is all over the world. And no matter what, whoever we are, whatever our skills, however long we've been practicing; the thing that makes us who we are, the thing that keeps us together, and makes us better at what we do, is that we operate, together, as one.

OPERATING AS ONE



Financial Review



Financial Review

Financial Outlook

The College has had a few financially turbulent years reaching a maximum deficit position (in 2022) of £2.4m. In response, the financial strategy was reviewed, new controls developed and a target set for break-even by 2025. This has required an exponential decrease in the deficit year on year.

While the College made a surplus and Surgeons Quarter made a profit for the year, as this included intercompany sales and expenditure which are stripped out on consolidation, the Group has finished the year with a deficit of £269k (£209k before gains) in its unrestricted funds which includes the College's charitable activities and Surgeon Quarter's trading activities.

The Group overall has a deficit (which is made up of unrestricted funds above, plus the restricted and endowment funds) of £656k largely driven by of the restricted funds paid out in collaboration with College partners' and the completion of a large multi-year project in association with the University of Edinburgh.

Group income for the year is up 5.0%, achieved by a combination of exploring new income streams and maximising existing ones, whilst group cost control has been ongoing to continue reducing costs where possible.

New technologies have been exploited wherever possible, and this continues into 2026 with both a new Finance system and exams system coming online during the year. Investment in new courses, exams and innovative income streams will continue into 2027 and beyond, helping shore up the financial position of the College.

Education, Examination & Faculties

The headline activity for the College's 2025 accounts was the amalgamation of Hill Square Education Trust (HSET), formerly a subsidiary of the College, into the College's activities. This amalgamation has been in progress for a few years and with the approval of OSCR in 2024 and the transfer agreed by the College's Council, the College's accounts now feature the educational efforts of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

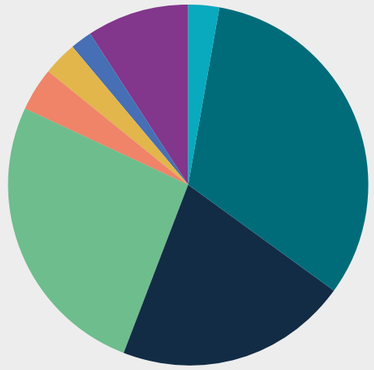
The details of the above transfer can be found in Note 26 of the financials which outlines how £823k in general funds were transferred to the College on 8 June 2025, along with £884k in designated and restricted funds. As a result, the 2025 figures for the College look different to prior years with both the donations figures appearing larger than prior years because of the £823k donation and the educational activities now being included in the College's revenue note. However, as HSET was a part of the Group, the Group's financial activities remain comparable.

Even with HSET's transfer, the donations and gifts received by the College in 2025 was higher than previous years at £306k (2024: £180k). These donations were partially to restricted funds (£60k) demonstrating the continued support the College receives, but also to initiatives that are close to donors' hearts and show their strong belief in the College's purpose.

With regard to the educational activities, the examination teams have continued to increase the offerings provided to our members and applicants of the College with the total income from examinations increasing by 13% (from £7,311k to £8,234k) which contributed to the College's charitable funds. While costs also increased, as would be expected from an increase in activities, synergies within the team have helped to ensure that costs for 2025 have been well controlled.

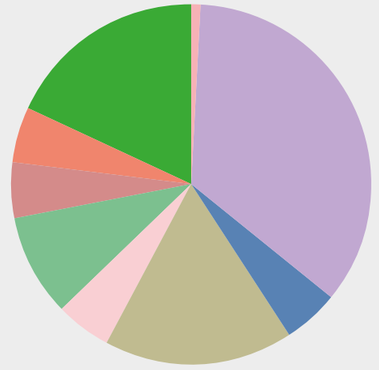
The Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care continues to improve its surplus contribution as well increasing from £112k to £143k while other faculties continue to develop and improve their offerings to applicants. However, as most continue to post small deficits, there is still some work ahead.

Charitable activities - Income



- Donations and legacies **3%**
- Trading Activities **32%**
- Subscriptions **21%**
- Examinations **26%**
- Courses **4%**
- Library and Museums **3%**
- Investments **2%**
- Other **9%**

Charitable activities - Expenditure



- Raising funds **1%**
- Cost of trading activities **35%**
- Subscriptions **5%**
- Examinations **17%**
- Courses **5%**
- Professional activities **9%**
- Property and conferencing **5%**
- Publications and marketing **5%**
- Other **18%**

Heritage

Our museum continues to break records, with visitor numbers continuing to increase year on year, resulting in the museum revenue, which was approximately £640k in 2022, has now broken through the £1m mark, finishing the year at £1,079k. This is testament to the Museum team's initiatives, the new reception layout and special exhibitions, including the Women in Surgery exhibition, which ran during the year.

When considering the group activities, while trading activities appear to be returning a loss to the Group of £1.2m, Surgeons Quarter had a profitable year. However, as the College uses Surgeons Quarter Travel for its international travel bookings, the revenue (and costs to the College) are consolidated out of the financials.

Balance Sheet

The Group balance sheet has not changed drastically for 2025 with small movements in the Group and College's fixed assets, largely due to some minor additions being offset by depreciation.

However, with the amalgamation of HSET, the College's cash position is stronger, sitting at £6,486k from £4,334k in 2024. But the College also captured the prepaid income received for exams that would be held in the first few months of the 2026 calendar year, causing the sharp rise from £5,746k to £9,510k in current liabilities owed.

The funds continue to be in a healthy position, with the fund review in 2024 allowing the College to move forward with confidence and ensuring their purposes are met. Of note was the completion of the Scottish Collaborative Optometry-Ophthalmology Network e-research (SCONe) project in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, resulting in significant payments from the restricted funds in 2025 but continuing to promote the College's dedication to medical research and development.

1. Reserves and Reserves Policy

The College finished the 2025 financial year with non-designated unrestricted general reserves of £32.1m (2024: £31.9m).

Reserves are required to meet the working capital requirements of the College and to allow for the development of new services and fundraising initiatives and to provide a buffer against a significant drop in funding.

While the College expects that it will be able to continue to meet its operational requirements for the next financial period, the College is looking to improve its free reserve levels in the medium term. The current reserve levels are adequate for at least the next 12 months of operation and will allow the College to continue meeting its obligations to both suppliers and staff, the majority of the College's non-designated unrestricted funds are held as physical buildings such as the Ten Hill Place Hotel, managed by Surgeons Quarter Limited, for the Group and the Playfair building that houses our museum and heritage.

While these physical assets return cash to the College each year, the current reserve policy reflects the Trustee's commitment to improve the liquid funds held such that the College is prepared for future unexpected financial shocks. The College intends to achieve this by making a surplus in future years so that after accounting for its membership, examinations and charitable activities, reserves are held that can be used for capital improvements of the College each year which has a self-servicing purpose of reducing the cost of maintenance and repair on our estate.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Fixed asset funds are both designated and restricted fund that have been used to finance a portion of the College's fixed assets that the trustees consider essential to the operation of the College's activities.

Restricted funds are funds which are required to be used in accordance with specific aims imposed by donors, or which have been raised by the College for a specific purpose.

2. Investment Policy and Heritage

Under the laws of the College, funds not required immediately for the ordinary purposes of the College may be invested by the Board. Investments are held by the College to fund any future shortfall in income to ensure that it can continue to meet its charitable objectives.

2.1. Investment in subsidiary company

The College holds an investment in Surgeons Quarter Limited (SQ), a trading subsidiary operating as a hotel, cafe, event management and travel agent. This investment returns income to the College by way of lease payments, rental income, contributing to group services and gift aid. The funds generated by this have been utilised by the College to support its charitable activities.

2.2. Investment in property

The College owns Ten Hill Place Hotel, which is leased to Surgeons Quarter Limited (SQ), together with other commercial and residential property onsite which it rents to external customers. The investment returns to the College are by way of rental income and have been utilised by the College for charitable purposes.

2.3 Investment in listed securities and unit trusts

The College has invested its restricted funds in listed securities and unit trusts, which are managed on the College's behalf by Rathbones Investment Management. The overall portfolio objectives are to maintain a medium risk profile and to generate an annual income to be utilised by the College for charitable purposes. The College policy is that it will not hold any investment in stocks related to defence and tobacco.

2.4 Investments in wine

The College is currently the owner of a selection of wine investments that were built up over the previous decade. However, it is the opinion of the Trustees that this investment in alcohol is no longer in line with the College's health objective and the College continues to divest this investment in a manner that ensures a return is produced.

3. Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the group is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and are satisfied that actions are on-going, and systems are in place to mitigate the exposure to the major risks. The major risks identified for the group are detailed below.

3.1 A reduction in the College membership

To mitigate the risk of falling membership numbers we continue to develop strategies for increased acquisition and greater retention of our members and with a new approach to retention with increased membership engagement on subjects more relevant to their needs. In addition, we continue to develop a more customer friendly approach to membership renewal whereby we engage more about the benefits of the College and take time to understand why someone may have concerns about renewal which has led to reduced attrition.

3.2. Loss of income and market share

The College is heavily dependent on examination income. Efforts have been made to sustain the level of marketing of these examinations to potential candidates. Examination candidate numbers are continually monitored in order that any changes can be responded to in a timely manner. Additionally, courses are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain viable.

3.3. A downturn in the commercial subsidiary's performance

This risk has been mitigated through the ongoing development of Surgeons Quarter Limited (SQ) under the supervision of the SQ Board. There has also been a significant investment by the College in the assets used by SQ, under its licence to occupy, to generate income. These include the re-development of the Prince Philip Building as a multi-purpose events space and the use of a previously rented commercial unit as Café 1505. For 2025, SQ continues to distribute gift aid to the College but expectations are set to ensure that SQ is also funding its capital ambitions.

3.4 Cybersecurity

With the ongoing issues noted across the UK with regards to IT security, the College also faces cybersecurity risks that could compromise our operations, funding, and reputation. Cybercriminals often target nonprofit organisations due to their reliance on donor information, financial transactions, and volunteer databases, which may not always be secured to the same standards as corporate entities.

The College and Group hold regular training and testing for staff to undergo to mitigate the risk of phishing and hacking attempts. In addition, ongoing work is being performed to ensure we are compliant with security recommendations and regulations so that we can continue protecting our data and online presence. The College also holds cyber insurance in the case of any significant events.

3.5 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

While AI is not a new phenomenon, 2025 has seen significant disruption as a result of the advancements made by AI, both in its contribution to work and roles and as a tool to improve productivity for both College staff and members. The College knows that AI is not expected to go away and will look to ensure that it can be used properly and in line with professional expectations.

AI has also contributed to increases in costs for computer components and energy around its data centres. The College continues to monitor these costs and plans for any potential disruption to the supply of our IT environment and electrical costs.

Financial Summaries

Financial Activity:	Group Total 2025	Group Total 2024	Charity Total 2025	Charity Total 2024
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Income				
Donations, grants & legacies	844	858	2,551	858
Charitable activities	20,071	18,372	15,486	8,648
Trading activities	10,216	10,428	-	-
Investments	634	585	2,603	2,547
Total income	**31,765**	**30,243**	**20,640**	**12,053**
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	20,916	20,303	19,671	12,344
Trading activities	11,694	10,330	299	165
Investment costs	32	22	32	22
Total expenditure	**32,642**	**30,655**	**20,002**	**12,531**
Net income/ expenditure before gains	**(877)**	**(412)**	**638**	**(478)**
Gains/(losses) on investments	221	155	221	155
Gain on revaluations	-	7	-	7
Net income	**(656)**	**(250)**	**859**	**(316)**

Fund distribution of net income:	Group Total 2025	Group Total 2024	Charity Total 2025	Charity Total 2024
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Distribution of net income				
Unrestricted funds	(162)	(662)	1,260	(790)
Restricted funds	(775)	340	(682)	402
Endowment funds	281	72	281	72
Total net income	**(656)**	**(250)**	**859**	**(316)**

Reconciliation of Funds:	Group Total 2025	Group Total 2024	Charity Total 2025	Charity Total 2024
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Reconciliation of funds				
Opening funds balance	47,920	48,170	57,887	58,203
Net movement in funds	(656)	(250)	859	(316)
Closing funds balance	**47,264**	**47,920**	**58,746**	**57,887**

Balance Sheet	Group Total 2025	Group Total 2024	Charity Total 2025	Charity Total 2024
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Fixed Assets				
Intangible fixed assets	1,018	1,171	1,018	1,171
Tangible fixed assets	31,825	32,136	12,967	13,342
Heritage assets	9,352	9,337	9,352	9,337
Investments	5,085	4,391	7,085	6,391
Investment property	5,535	5,822	33,770	33,770
	52,815	**52,857**	**64,192**	**64,011**
Current assets				
Stock	137	136	14	22
Debtors	3,721	4,605	4,847	3,050
Cash at bank and in hand	8,735	9,046	6,486	4,334
	12,593	**13,787**	**11,347**	**7,406**
Creditors				
Due within one year	(10,435)	(10,250)	(9,510)	(5,746)
Due after one year	(7,709)	(8,474)	(7,283)	(7,784)
	(18,144)	**(18,724)**	**(16,793)**	**(13,530)**
Net Assets	**47,264**	**47,920**	**58,746**	**57,887**
The funds of the charity:				
General funds	20,634	21,032	32,114	31,881
Revaluation reserve	9,195	9,241	9,195	9,241
Designated funds	2,612	2,061	2,612	1,270
Designated fixed asset funds	1,316	1,585	1,316	1,585
Restricted fixed asset funds	6,024	6,255	6,024	6,255
Restricted funds	5,126	5,670	5,128	5,579
Endowment funds	2,357	2,076	2,357	2,076
Total Funds	**47,264**	**47,920**	**58,746**	**57,887**

Cash flows	Group Total 2025	Group Total 2024	Charity Total 2025	Charity Total 2024
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Net cash flows from:				
Operating activities	1,437	2,254	2,193	(1,093)
Investing activities	(161)	94	1,067	2,104
Financing activities	(1,587)	(1,436)	(1,108)	(1,047)
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	**(311)**	**912**	**2,152**	**(36)**
Opening cash and cash equivalents	9,046	8,134	4,334	4,370
Closing cash and cash equivalents	**8,735**	**9,046**	**6,486**	**4,334**

Statement of Board Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Scotland requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, The Trustee Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102) (second edition – October 2019);
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

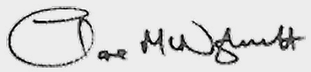
The Trustee Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and group and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the provisions of the Trust Deed and Royal Charter of Incorporation. The Trustee Board is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustee Board is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Charity and financial information included on the Charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Statement of Disclosure to Auditors

So far as The Trustee Board is aware, there is no relevant information of which the Charity's auditors are unaware. Additionally, the Board has taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken in order to make itself aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the Charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Signed on behalf of The Board of Trustees
23 September 2026



Dr C E McNaught
President



Professor Angus Watson
Vice-President

Contact

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