



HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on 21 February 2018 at IBMS, Coldbath Square, London.

Present: Professor Kevan Gartland (President & Chair, Glasgow Caledonian), Dr Craig Donaldson (Plymouth), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Ulster), Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor Julie McLeod (Oxford Brookes), Professor Hilary MacQueen (Open), Mr Merfyn Williams (Bangor), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary, Ulster).

In Attendance: Ms Jill Rodney (IBMS), Mr Andrew Usher (IBMS, by teleconference)

Apologies: Professor Sue Jones (York St John), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Professor Yvonne Barnett (Nottingham Trent), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Mr Alan Wainwright (IBMS).

1. The previously approved minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 23 November 2017 were noted.
2. The President, Professor Gartland, welcomed Andrew Usher, Chair of the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee, who joined the meeting by teleconference for agenda items recorded under minutes 1 to 12 below.

Professor Gartland informed the Committee that Alison Johns had been appointed Chief Executive of the newly established 'Advance HE' which brings together activities of the Equality Challenge Unit, Higher Education Academy, and the Leadership Foundation.

He also congratulated Professor McLeod on her appointment as a member of the TEF Subject Pilot Panel for Medical & Health Sciences.

3. Professor McLeod updated the Committee on TEF. There was considerable discussion about the most appropriate Subject Panel for the assessment of Biomedical Sciences. It was noted that individual institutions would be free to aggregate disciplines in accordance with their internal academic structures. The Executive Committee concluded that: given the overlap in academic content, the essential use of laboratory practical classes, and the similar subject delivery costs for Biomedical Sciences and Biosciences, as identified in their respective QAA Benchmarking Statements, Natural Sciences is the most obvious TEF Subject Panel to assess Biomedical Sciences (and Biosciences). It was felt also that this would facilitate the construction of a coherent narrative for TEF purposes. The Committee agreed that this advice should be provided to member institutions.
4. The Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, informed the Committee that the agreed HUCBMS Equality and Diversity Statement was now included in the HUCBMS website. Equality and Diversity is now a standing item on HUCBMS Executive Committee meetings agendas. Dr Jones will update the Committee on developments at its next meeting.
5. Professor McKenna updated the Committee on REF 2021 matters. It was noted that HUCBMS had nominated 6 distinguished researchers from member institutions to serve as members of REF Sub-Panel 3. The Committee noted the revised criteria for staff inclusion and outputs.
6. Professor Gartland discussed the matter of maternity payments for research students and the extent to which this varied between regions, institutions and funding sources. He thanked members who had supplied him with information from their institutions. It was felt that institutions should ensure, as far as possible, that all students should be treated equally in respect of maternity entitlements.
7. The Committee noted the concerns of the academic and research community that UK researchers should continue to have full access to, and participation in, future European Framework programmes post-Brexit. The Committee noted also the regional dependence within the UK on EU structural funding

for research and training and the importance of such capacity enhancement funding continuing in order to promote regional development.

8. The Committee noted the introduction by HEFCE of a measurement of the vocational nature of degree programme subjects.

9. The Committee received verbal reports on Irish, Scottish and Welsh matters.

- The continued underfunding of HE in Northern Ireland was noted including the proposed withdrawal of NI-specific funds for PhD studentships. Professor McKenna informed the Committee that the Royal Irish Academy had made a robust submission to the NI Department of Finance regarding the proposed NI budget for 2018-20.

Professor McCormack informed the Committee of continuing interaction with CORU (the Republic of Ireland regulatory body for health and social care professionals) re: approval of NI-based BMS programmes.

- Mr Williams informed the Committee of proposed Welsh HE funding re-alignment with England. It was noted that BMS undergraduate applications in Wales remain strong despite an overall downturn in other subject areas.
- Professor Gartland commented on a more interventionist approach being taken by the Scottish Funding Council with a cap on student numbers being introduced and new programmes requiring funding council approval. The arrangements for transfer of students from FE into the 3rd year of Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of the West of Scotland was noted.

10. It was agreed that the provision of funding for international speakers at the annual HUCBMS conference would be the most appropriate use of HUCBMS travel funds.

11. Dr Donaldson reported on the development of apprenticeships. Universities are starting to streamline and move away from smaller specialisms/courses which are no longer financially viable. The only guaranteed funding for Healthcare Science courses is via the apprenticeship scheme.

Apprenticeship leads in each Trust will need to work closely with the universities to discuss their requirements and to plan ahead. The dynamics are changing as students are increasingly aware of university fees and are now considering apprenticeships and workplace training as a means of avoiding large debts.

12. Ms Rodney reported on IBMS matters.

It was noted that a number of policy reviews were underway. These include: guidelines for results and their transmission and review and updating of specialist advisory panels.

Most significantly the Institute has been reviewing its strategy for 2018-20 including review of existing IBMS qualifications and potential new ones.

The Institute has also been investing in technology to assist learning and communication. The Committee noted with approval the new video-conferencing system.

The Institute has also issued a statement on reflective practice.

13. Professor MacQueen updated the Committee on activities by HUBS. These included the Winter Meeting at the Natural History Museum. In future the winter and spring HUBS meetings will be combined into a larger spring meeting.

The 2018 HUBS Spring Meeting will take place in Leicester on 18-19 April.

The 2019 HUBS meeting will take place at the Sanger Institute.

HUBS remains open to further joint workshops with HUCBMS and IBMS on themes of mutual interest.

14. Dr Donaldson informed the Committee that there was little to report from the Council for Healthcare Science Education which is undergoing some reorganisation.

15. Dr Alsam reported on the arrangements for accommodation, social programme and sponsorship for HUCBMS 2018 which will take place at the University of Essex on 4-5 September. The Committee expressed satisfaction with what is proposed including the fees for attendance and accommodation. It was noted that Dr Alsam and Dr Locke would liaise on linking the conference webpages to the HUCBMS website.

The Committee discussed the academic programme and agreed that designated Committee members would contact proposed speakers. The main themes will be: teaching and learning developments; research and research impact; internationalisation; and communication.

16. It was noted that future HUCBMS conferences will take place as follows:

Dublin Institute of Technology (2019)

York St John University (2020)

Coventry University (2021 tbc.)

17. Professor McKenna informed the Committee of the arrangements for the House of Lords reception to mark 25 Years of HUCBMS. The event, sponsored by Lord Rana, will take place from 18.30 - 20.30 on Tuesday 1st May.

All HUCBMS designated contact persons from member institutions will be invited. In the event that they are unable to attend they can nominate an

alternative individual from their institution. Invitations will also be forwarded to senior representatives of organisations with which HUCBMS has a close association.

18. The Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke, updated the Committee on HUCBMS finances which remain healthy.
19. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on 1 May at IBMS, London.