



## **HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on 1 May 2018 at IBMS, Coldbath Square, London.

Present: Professor Kevan Gartland (President & Chair, Glasgow Caledonian), Dr Craig Donaldson (Plymouth), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor Julie McLeod (Oxford Brookes), Professor Hilary MacQueen (Open), Mr Merfyn Williams (Bangor), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Professor Sue Jones (York St John), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary, Ulster).

In Attendance: Ms Jill Rodney (IBMS), Mr Andrew Usher (IBMS), Mr Alan Wainwright (IBMS).

Apologies: Professor Yvonne Barnett (Nottingham Trent), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Ulster).

1. The previously approved minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 21 February 2017 were noted with the amendment to minute 9 that the approved arrangement for the transfer of FE students into the universities applies to all Scottish universities.

2. The President, Professor Gartland, noted recent changes in HE oversight including the replacement of HEFCE by the Office for Students (OfS) and the allocation of 1500 additional medical training places in England. He also noted that he is due to meet the new IBMS President, Alison Geddis, shortly.
3. Professor McLeod updated the Committee on TEF, noting that details of the pilot model(s) are scheduled to be published in September. It was agreed that the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, should write to HUCBMS member institutions with the recommendation from the HUCBMS Executive Committee 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 to seek clarity in the future role of QAA.
4. Dr Jones updated the Committee on equality and diversity issues including:
  - a. meetings of the RSB Member Organisation working group on Diversity and Inclusion. The main website for the RSB has a section where all of this information is detailed - <https://www.rsb.org.uk/policy/policy-issues/equality-diversity>
  - b. An Athena Swan Biosciences best practice workshop took place on 7 March.
  - c. Further meetings of the working group are scheduled for June, September and December. They are looking to hold a Speed-Networking event in September for member organisations - sharing best practice and expertise and experiences of addressing diversity and inclusion issues within a particular area of their organisation.
  - d. **Action Point for HUCBMS Executive Committee members:** Please forward comments to Dr Jones on the questionnaire shared at the 1 May meeting . When updated, the information will be sent to the HUCBMS members / University contact list.
5. Professor McKenna updated members on the REF noting that a consultation document on assessment criteria would be published over the summer.

6. Professor McKenna informed members of concerns within the academic and research communities regarding Brexit, including lack of clarity on future participation in EU Framework programmes, ERASMUS, student fees, and a potential UK successor to the current EU structural funds.
7. Dr Walsh, Mr Williams and Professor McKenna (in the absence of Professor McCormack) updated the Committee on Scottish, Welsh and Irish matters. Applications for undergraduate admissions remain strong in all three countries. A number of BMS-related programmes are being developed building on the strong biomedical sciences base that has been established in all four countries of the UK.
8. Dr Donaldson informed the Committee of recent developments regarding apprenticeships and the Council for Healthcare Science Education (CHSE).
  - a. Apprenticeships
    - i. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance for organisations on the register of end-point assessment organisations for non-integrated degrees stated organisations “must not collude with other EPA organisations, providers, employers or any other organisation in the delivery of end-point assessment.” The Institute for Apprenticeships has recently issued <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/quality/what-is-a-quality-apprenticeship/> which clarifies that “Degree Apprenticeships where the Degree incorporates both the workplace and off the job training (known as “Integrated Degree Apprenticeships”) are exempt from the requirement for independence of end-point assessment.”
    - ii. Current guidance on the EPA is that all three elements of the EPA, a written Readiness for Practice Test (RPT, a face-to-face Professional Discussion based on the apprentice’s record of evidence/portfolio and a research presentation of 15 minutes followed by discussion, must be completed on a single day. Apprentices must pass the RPT before completing the remaining elements of the EPA. The NSHCS is to look at the practicalities of the EPA and is developing a number of operational scenarios for the EPA to take to the IfA for discussion.
  - b. Update from CHCS PTP SIG
    - i. HEIs providing the Healthcare Science PTP programmes are now represented on the NSCHS Themed Boards. Carol Ainley (MMU) is the PTP SIG representative on the HCS Life Science, Sara Coulson (De Montfort) for Physiological Sciences and Joe Purdon (Swansea University) for the Physical Science Themed Boards.
    - ii. Healthcare Science was excluded from the financial support being provided through the Learning Support Fund <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund> which was

established to support additional costs incurred by students on placement for those courses that were previously commissioned by the NHS. HEIs offering the Healthcare Science degrees reported high attrition rates due to financial pressures faced by students. Of great concern was the reported incidence of mental health issues on the PTP programme compared to comparable courses, with stress over finance reported in many cases. The issues over placement support are also feeding into poor NSS responses; difficulties in recruiting to the programmes making many programmes unviable – Audiology at Southampton, Life Sciences at UWE Bristol and Hertfordshire are closed for recruitment for the next academic year. The NSHCS is collating information from the HEI providers to prepare a paper highlighting the issues faced by the PTP programmes to present to the Healthcare Science Implementation Network Group.

9. Mr Usher reported on the activities of the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee. These include: recent degree accreditations, updating of employer liaison committee guidelines, preparation of guidelines for pathology results reporting, approval of accreditation procedures for Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas in biomedical sciences, input to the development of the IBMS strategy for 2018-20, and IBMS qualifications update.
10. Ms Rodney updated members on other IBMS matters including: the value of maintaining the biomedical sciences name brand for degree programmes, the proposed reconfiguration of pathology laboratories in Northern Ireland including agreement on a NI-wide Laboratory Information system, the potential re-introduction student bursaries in NI for laboratory placements, and proposed changes by DoH to rules governing the supply and administration of medicines and their implications for BMS programmes.
11. The Committee received a draft of the academic and social programme for HUCBMS 2018 from Professor McKenna and Dr Alsam. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the overall programme and congratulated Dr Alsam and her colleagues for their work in planning and preparing for the conference.
12. 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.)
13. The Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke, updated the Committee on HUCBMS finances which remain healthy.

14. Professor Gartland informed the Committee that his review of maternity pay entitlements for research students was now complete and would be circulated to members in due course.
15. Professor McKenna updated the Committee on the arrangements for the reception later in the day at the House of Lords to mark 25 years of success of HUCBMS. The Committee expressed gratitude to Lord Rana MBE for sponsoring the event and to Professor McKenna for organising it.
16. Professor McKenna informed the Committee that the current terms of office on the Executive Committee of Professor McLeod, Dr Jones and Professor Randall end in September (all are eligible for re-election). He will write to HUCBMS members in July seeking nominations for election.
17. The Committee expressed its congratulations to Professor McCormack on her appointment as Vice President of Sligo Institute of Technology and wished her well in her new role.