



HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8 May 2019 at IBMS, Coldbath Square, London.

Present: Professor Yvonne Barnett (Acting-President, and chair), Dr Craig Donaldson (Plymouth), Dr Claire Wynn (Technological University Dublin), Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Sligo IT), Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Dr Sue Jones (York St John), Mr Merfyn Williams (Bangor), Professor Hilary MacQueen (HUBS, Open), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary).

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

Apologies: Professor Julie McLeod (Buckinghamshire New), Mr Andrew Usher (IBMS).

1. It was noted that following the sad death of the HUCBMS President, Professor Kevan Gartland, the Past-President, Professor Yvonne Barnett, had accepted the request of the Executive Committee to act as President for the remaining months of Professor Gartland's tenure.
2. A moment's silence was observed in respect of Professor Gartland's passing. It was noted that the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor Gerry McKenna, had written to Professor Gartland's widow, Jill, to express sympathy on behalf of HUCBMS and the biomedical sciences community. It was also noted that Professor McKenna and Dr Walsh would be attending Kevan's funeral
3. It was noted that Dr Ian Locke and Mr Alan Wainwright had represented HUCBMS and the IBMS, respectively, at the recent funeral of former President. Professor Dave Rogers.
4. The previously approved minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 6 February 2019 were noted.
5. It was noted that a HUCBMS submission relating to the recent consultation on the proposed Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) had been prepared by Professor Barnett. It is not known when, and if, the results of the consultation will be implemented.
6. Professor Barnett informed the Committee that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was currently updating subject benchmark statements. A light review was envisaged for most subjects. Professor Barnett, as chair of the Biomedical Sciences panel would be seeking input from previous panel members. She would also be liaising with Professor David Coates, chair of the Biosciences panel to ensure continued complementarity between the two benchmark statements.
7. It was noted that the report by Philip Augar on tertiary education, including student funding, was likely to be published shortly. While its

recommendations will be confined to England the report is likely to have implications across all of the UK.

8. The recent report on Open Learning by Liam Earney, Director of Licensing at Jisc was noted as was his agreement to speak at HUCBMS 2019.
9. Recent TEF developments were noted including the decision to split Subjects Allied to Medicine into 'Allied Health Professions' and 'Medical Sciences'. The Executive Committee supports this decision. It was also noted that some institutions will submit biomedical sciences for assessment along with other subject combinations including biosciences.
10. Professor Barnett updated the Committee on recent REF 2021 publications including those relating to: codes of practice, research environment, and multiple submissions. It was noted that pedagogical research should not be submitted under Main Panel A except for UoA 3. This may have long term implications for the academic priorities of Biosciences departments submitting to UoA 5 in that they, unlike the other pure sciences (eg chemistry, physics, mathematics) to be included within Main Panel B, may consequently afford relatively less credit to pedagogical research in appointment and promotion processes. It was agreed that HUCBMS would support HUBS in raising this matter with the REF Team.
11. The Executive Committee expressed concern at the decision to not permit multiple submissions to UoA 3 in REF 2021. It was noted that the decision to deny this option will, in some cases, result in the construction of academically incoherent narratives through organisationally and academically unrelated subject areas being 'force-fitted' into a single submission. This may, in the view of HUCBMS, have unintended implications for the future organisation and priorities within health-related disciplines in UK universities.

The Committee noted the explicit reference to biomedical sciences in the descriptors for UoA 5 (Biological Sciences): ***'The UOA also covers all***

aspects of the biomedical sciences, including biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology and anatomy at the genetic, molecular, cellular, organ system and whole organism level. It includes work relevant to the nervous and cardiovascular systems at all levels of enquiry.'

While HUCBMS member institutions have traditionally submitted research in the biomedical sciences to UoA 3 in the REF (and its predecessor UoA in previous research assessment exercises) and a number of institutions will do so again, it would appear that UoA 5 may now also provide a suitable assessment locus for most or all of the output of biomedical sciences centres. Professor McKenna has written to the REF Team to explore this option further. In particular, HUCBMS would wish to provide reassurance to its member institutions that submission to UoA 5 is now a realistic option for dealing with the full range of biomedical sciences submissions and that the final range of expertise within the UoA 5 panel during the assessment phase would reflect this.

12. Dr Jones reported to the Committee on equality and diversity issues. It was agreed that the Committee should focus on issues under its direct control including the composition of the Executive Committee and the list of speakers for the Annual HUCBMS conference. Advice, as appropriate, will be sought from the IBMS and the RSB.
13. Professor McKenna updated the Committee on Brexit and the continued uncertainty regarding previously EU-funded programmes. He had produced a briefing paper update for HUBS and it was agreed that this should be shared with Committee members and the HUCBMS membership.
14. Professor McCormack, Dr Walsh and Mr Williams reported on Irish, Scottish and Welsh matters, respectively.

It was noted that Professor McKenna, as Vice President & Chair of the North-South Standing Committee of the Royal Irish Academy had written to the Minister for Education concerning the anomaly whereby holders of UK

biomedical sciences and other health-related degrees were being treated by the regulatory body, CORU, as foreigners for the purpose of degree recognition in the Irish Republic.

Recruitment to biomedical sciences programmes in Wales and Scotland remains strong despite demographic trends and falling enrolments of home students to other programmes. Overall, HE funding across the three devolved nations has suffered significant cuts.

15. Dr Donaldson provided an update on apprenticeships and a report from the Council of Healthcare Science.

a. Apprenticeships Update

Practicalities remain around End Point Assessment for apprenticeships. Currently 24 hours are permitted between completion of Readiness for Practice Test and remaining elements of EPA, although up to "48" hours is suggested in some documentation from the IfA (now renamed Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education). PTP SIG asked for guidelines in writing.

It is understood any longer period between completion of parts of the EPA would require review and approval by the Trailblazer Group.

b. Update from National School for Healthcare Science

The NSHCS is to undertake a review of the PTP Programmes. Although the scope of PTP Review is currently being drafted, it will be looking at programme structures / flexibility of mode of delivery / what is working etc. This will not be a curriculum review. The NSHCS is currently recruiting for members of various working groups and an overall review group. The review is aiming to utilise questionnaires and focussed interviews, with the first draft report by November.

16. Dr Walsh provided an update on the forthcoming joint HUBS/HUCBMS workshop on 'Overcoming barriers in chemistry teaching within the biosciences' to be held at the University of Bradford on 1 July 2019.

It was suggested that a future joint workshop could focus on undergraduate projects.

17. Dr Locke (who had substituted for Professor Randall) and Mr Wainwright reported on activities of the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee. These include: the deliberations of the Education Accreditation Review Group and the wider range of degree programmes being accredited - with the focus being on quality and fitness for purpose; the successful HCPC audit; and the 2020 Strategy including e-learning considerations.

18. Ms Rodney updated the Committee on other IBMS issues. These include the UK-wide Biomedical Science Day on 20 June; the current cycle of IBMS national Council elections (It was noted that Dr Walsh has been elected as a regional representative); and the forthcoming refurbishments to IBMS headquarters which may require the next meeting of the HUCBMS Executive Committee to take place elsewhere.

Ms Rodney also reported on the recent consultation by Health Education England on a proposed Academy for Advancing Practice. The consultation period had been very short and its distribution/circulation limited (it did not include HUCBMS). The Committee queried the 'value-added' extent of the proposal and the limited range of professions included. It was agreed that Professor McKenna would submit a response from HUCBMS following input from Dr Donaldson.

19. Dr Pike reported on the RSB Education Policy Advisory Committee:

- There is concern at the dilution of science content in A-levels
- A joint RSB/ RSC/IoP survey is being undertaken of HE staff who regard education as their primary function, in order to evaluate the relative esteem within which teaching is held within the HE system.

20. Professor MacQueen updated the Committee on HUBS activities including:

- The recent successful 2-day annual meeting at the Wellcome-Sanger campus in Cambridge
- Plans for the 2020 conference (26-28 April) at the Crick Institute in London

- The ongoing early career lecturers' forum
- Planned refreshment of the Open Education Resource online

21. Dr Wynne reported on the administrative arrangements including accommodation and social events, registration and sponsorship for HUCBMS 2019 which will be held on 3-4 September at the Technological University Dublin. Professor McKenna confirmed that the academic programme was now finalised. Members expressed thanks to all involved in the conference organisation. Discussion took place on possible topics for inclusion in the short session to be introduced by Professor McKenna on *'Future challenges and opportunities in teaching and research for Biomedical Sciences'*.

It was agreed that as a mark of recognition for the contributions of Kevan Gartland and Dave Rogers, HUCBMS 2019 should be dedicated to their memory.

22. It was noted that future HUCBMS conferences are scheduled for York St John University in 2020 and Coventry University in 2021.

23. The Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke, reported that HUCBMS' finances remain healthy.

24. There was discussion on the need for HUCBMS to enhance its social media profile. It was agreed that an Executive Committee member (or members) should oversee this activity. Also, that assistance with the growing secretarial demands of HUCBMS would be appreciated. Potential volunteers should contact Professor McKenna.

25. It was noted that Dr Donaldson will be taking early retirement from Plymouth University during the summer and that this was his final meeting as a member of the Executive Committee. The Committee thanked him for his outstanding service to the Committee and to the HUCBMS community. Professor McKenna informed the Committee that he would be writing to HUCBMS members seeking nominations for election of up to three

individuals to the Executive Committee for 3-year terms commencing immediately after the HUCBMS 2019 AGM.

26. Professor McKenna indicated that he would take soundings from members of the Executive Committee with a view to seeking consensus on who should be invited to be the next President of HUCBMS.