



## HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 at the IBMS, Coldbath Square, London, and by Teams invitation.

**Present:** Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Dr Sue Jones (IBMS), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Atlantic Technological University), Dr Esther Bell (KCL), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Claire Wynne (TU Dublin) Dr Lynne Lawrance (UWE), Professor Victor Gault (President, Ulster), Dr Simon Fox (Plymouth), Professor Janey Henderson (HUBS), Dr Ashok Patel (Birmingham City), Dr Selwa Alsam (attended 1<sup>st</sup> hour) (Minutes Secretary, Essex), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary)

**Apologies:** Professor Yvonne Barnett (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lowri Mainwaring (Cardiff Metropolitan).

**In Attendance:** Mr David Wells (IBMS)

1. The minutes (approved by previous circulation) of meeting on 19.05.22 were noted.
2. **Minutes of AGM on 06.09.22** - agreed with one correction.
3. **Matters arising from minutes** – none reported
4. **Chair's Communications** –The President proposed that there should be an opportunity for the Committee to reflect on itself; what it does and how to communicate. A short period (30 minutes) at the beginning of each meeting should be set aside for this action. The Committee agreed.. It was agreed that the next meeting should involve meeting up socially on the night before to allow reflection on our performance, and how to move forward.

5. **Web pages and social media strategy** – Professor McCormack informed the committee that the working group has met several times and has reviewed the content of the website in as far as our current editing processes will allow. Discussions are taking place with several web design companies as the designers of the current website are no longer supporting this type of work. With regards to social media the team have not been provided with any content from HUCBMS members and have not been able to post much beyond reposting content from other organisations. It was agreed that this matter would be further discussed at the strategic review session in February. Meantime when minutes are being compiled an update related to each of the key points will be provided for upload to Twitter as appropriate.

6. **Reports from Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales** –

A) From a NI perspective, Professor Gault reported that the students are back on campus and numbers are healthy. The SFI Co-Centre call was mentioned by Professor McCormack in her update, below.

B) Professor McCormack reported the following:

- i. Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris, UK Minister for Science and Investment Security, Nusrat Ghani MP and Northern Irish Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Edwin Poots MLA, have today announced a €74 million (£64 million) investment to create new collaborative research centres across Ireland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The call under the 'Co Centres: Collaboration for Transformative Research and Innovation' Programme will open in November. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/cefe0-ministers-harris-ghani-and-poots-announce-joint-investment-in-co-centres-for-research-and-innovation/>
- ii. Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation is currently undertaking a national review of State support for PhD researchers. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/c8a56-national-review-of-state-supports-for-phd-researchers-announced-by-minister-harris/>
- iii. A national consultation has been carried out on Sourcing of Scientific Advice to government.

C) On Scottish matters, Dr Linda Walsh reported that the recruitment to accredited courses was healthy for 22/23. Placement numbers are steady for Applied Biomedical Science.

IBMS in Scotland Training Forum annual conference held last week. Drs Jones and Walsh were invited speakers.

D) Wales - Nothing reported.

7. **IBMS matters**

Mr Wells updated the committee on the IBMS matters. The IBMS has appointed Dr Sue Jones to replace Mr Wainwright in 2022. He added that the HCPC has changed their standards so, we need to work out how to work on these new standards. Changes of new standards for UKAS delivery services that will take time. Funding is required to close the gap for people coming through other registration routes. As a

national approach, the applied courses are to have interest of study and training, but other routes are to be developed. A lot of interest in closing the gaps and money goes to top ups, but the focus is on the existing roles in clinical practice. Lots of discussions to provide solutions for the country.

Dr Sue Jones updated the committee on the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement and new standards of proficiency. The QAA SBS consultation period will end in November 2022 and the SBS Group will meet in November to discuss all consultation feedback comments. The finalised QAA SBS will be completed by the end of November 2022 and should be released early in 2023. Sue has appointed 7-8 people to work on the updated HCPC standards of proficiency (including practitioners and representatives from all 4 nations). The old HCPC standards will be replaced by the new ones in an updated registration training portfolio by February 2023. The new HCPC SOPs come into effect from September 2023, so the IBMS will offer more training on the updated registration portfolio structure and how to evidence the new standards. The IBMS has also interviewed for the post of Head of Digital Education.

#### **8. REF Financial Outcomes**

Professor Barnett reported that the 2022-23 QR allocation based on REF2021, 4\* research was weighted at 4x that of 3\* research. The full technical note explaining Research England's approach to calculating QR is available here:

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/grant-allocations-2022-to-2023-general-supporting-information/> - for England. Other 3 UK funding bodies may adopt different approaches.

Clear incentivisation for world-leading research. Interesting to compare grade profiles for sub-panels of Main Panel A.

#### **9. Future research assessment**

It has been reported that Catriona Firth, identified manager within Research England for next research assessment exercise has been hosting a number of round table events with former REF chairs of sub-panels on aspects of REF process – identifying good practice/advantages and areas that could be enhanced etc. Research England looking at systems in place elsewhere and engaging with a broader set of stakeholders to inform what might happen next. It is expected that Research England will consult with the sector in Spring 2023 on proposals.

#### **10. QAA Benchmark update – Report not received**

#### **11. To note reporting responsibilities and receive brief updates:**

- EDI – Dr Patel reported that the last EDI Forum meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October focussed on developing principles supporting preceptorship in the professions. The draft principles which were used for discussion and breakout groups during this meeting is attached. He added that it would be of value to have structured preceptorships for Biomedical Scientists but there was some discussion around the difference between preceptorships and good line management relationships. Also, does this information need to be integrated into Biomedical Sciences courses bearing in mind that there are varying percentages of BMS students going on to the Biomedical Scientist career?

- RSB Diversity and Inclusion WG – Professor Pike reported that there are three key events for **Diversity and Inclusion Network of the RSB**:

7<sup>th</sup> September: A special meeting that focussed on increasing diversity and inclusion in RSB-hosted competitions.

20<sup>th</sup> September: ‘Tackling inequity in clinical research’ – policy online roundtable, focusing on inclusive design of clinical trials and population studies.

19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> December: Decolonising and Diversifying Bioscience Curriculum (Society for Experimental Biology). 2-day symposium in Cambridge.

- HCPC EDI Forum – Dr Patel reported this under item 12.

- HCPC – Dr Alsam reported that there was a workshop on the new standards organised by the HCPC which included:  
The standards are all equally important. Aimed to order the standards logically and clearly. Generally, list generic standards first, followed by profession-specific standards. Use words like ‘understand’, ‘know’, and ‘be able to’, to ensure that prospective and current registrants will be able to meet the standards. Use the term ‘service user’ and words like ‘treatment’ or ‘intervention’, Thematic revisions, Active implementation of the standards  
Promoting public health and preventing ill-health. Equality, diversity and inclusion. The Registrants’ mental health, Digital skills and new technologies, and Leadership issues were also discussed.
- TEF – Dr Simon Fox reported the following from the consultation earlier this year. He added that the format of TEF 2023 has now been finalised by the Office For Students (OFS). The dashboard containing benchmarked institutional student experience and outcome measures went live in late September [link](#). This data is based on NSS and Graduate outcomes. Student outcome and experience measures are presented with ‘shaded bars’ to represent the statistical uncertainty associated with the indicator value and the difference between the indicator and benchmark value. This data is used to assess if providers have met condition B3 that courses must provide positive outcomes for students.

Further Regulatory advice guidance was published early October [link](#). This details the TEF 2023 assessment framework and timetable, evidence to be submitted by institutions and students, how assessment panels will function and potential outcomes.

Providers should submit documents putting their data in context by 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023, which is a tight deadline and there is some uncertainty on what constitutes excellence. Institutions will form their own interpretation of this based on their strengths. What assessment panels consider to be excellent may become clearer after the publication of outcomes from September 2023.”

Proposed Tweet.

In response to HUCBMS and other submissions to the Teaching Excellence Framework consultation the OFS have extended provider deadlines. This gives member institutions

more time to promote the excellent level of student support and Biomedical education our students benefit from.

- RSB -Education Policy Advisory Committee

Professor Pike reported the following:

- i. RSB is preparing policy material to try to influence the main political party manifestos. Member organisations were invited to put forward one or two key suggestions. In consultation with the HUCBMS Executive Committee, we submitted the following two points:
  - A concern is the current discussion re spending Government science research money on specialised research institutes at the expense of research funding in universities. A balance of both is surely best. Universities generally initiate original concepts and are much better at producing/inspiring the next generation of researchers, while Institutes produce an important mass (which may be less open to more controversial new concepts).
  - The current emphasis on increased profile and availability of technical education/apprenticeships makes good national sense. For implementation to be successful, however, further mechanisms to increase 'buy in' from employers/industry are required. Otherwise, T-Levels and apprenticeships will falter at the placement/work-based training/employment stage.
- ii. The RSB hosts two policy internship positions annually for current PhD students who are funded by [AHRC](#), [BBSRC](#), [EPSRC](#), [ESRC](#), [MRC](#), and [NERC](#). The successful applicants each spend three months working at the RSB within our education or science policy teams. Within the education policy team the intern will help develop policy positions, synthesise and disseminate research reports, and support teaching and learning in the biosciences. Applications are now open.

- Brexit/Research Policy

Professor McKenna reported that outstanding difficulties with the NI Protocol were preventing the acceptance of the UK into the Horizon Europe programme. It is to be hoped that agreement between the EU and UK will be reached soon in order to allow the programme to proceed. The UK has developed a plan B in the event of negotiations failing but this would be a sub-optimal way forward.

## **12. Joint HUBS/HUCBMS workshops for 2022-23**

Dr Linda Walsh reported that the new academic liaison contacts at HUBs are Stephen Price and Gina Manning.

Canvassed for subjects to discuss with HUBs regarding topic for this year's joint workshop.

### **13. Report from meetings of IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee**

Professor Val Randall reported that the IBMS Educational & Professional Standards Committee (EPSC) on 20.10.2022 was the first with the new Chair, Joanna Andrew Network Lead for Blood Sciences, Scarborough, Hull, York Pathology Service. This onsite meeting at IBMS had a few attending virtually (via a table-top laptop as conference facilities malfunctioned).

The meeting content was extensive. Items of particular interest to HUCBMS included the accreditation and reaccreditation of 13 full and part-time degree courses in Biomedical Science and 3 Masters programmes in England and Scotland reflecting a great deal of interest in the subject and widespread University support.

In addition, two documents of significance for HUCBMS courses will need to be taken into account in 2023. The ***Communication of Pathology Diagnostic Results and Clinical Reports*** document is finalised and will be launched on the IBMS web-site imminently. The revised ***Good Professional Practice in Biomedical Science and IBMS Code of Practice*** needs only minor revisions and should be completed in the Spring.

Important changes to the HCPC Standards of Proficiency were published this summer. The IBMS is working on revising documentation particularly for the registration training portfolios. They expect to have a draft prepared by February when the implications for HUCBMS members will be clearer.

Concern was expressed at EPSC about skills gaps in recent graduates revealed by a small study of employers (45) and HEIs (11) (Hussain & Hicks, *The Biomedical Scientist*, 09. 2022). They reported only 55% had pre-employment modules or tutorials covering employability skills e.g, CV writing, reflection, CPD, practical lab-based competencies and placement preparation. Ways to address this were discussed by the Executive.

#### **Proposed tweet**

The new ***Communication of Pathology Diagnostic Results and Clinical Reports*** document will be on the IBMS web-site imminently.

14. **RSB** – Reported under item 12

#### **15. HUBS - to receive report from HUBS Executive Committee**

Professor Henderson reported that HUBS is pleased to announce that the next annual meeting will be held at the Wellcome Collection in London, 20 – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This will be face to face following the success of the last meeting in March 2022 held at the Francis Crick Institute in London. A full programme will be announced at the end of the year and registration will be opened at that point.

HUBS is also pleased to continue with its series of funded Learning and Teaching Workshops, including a jointly funded workshop with HUCBMS. Full details will be available shortly.

Professor Henderson noted that the Bioscience Teacher of the Year (BTOY) was open for applications. HUBS would be pleased to receive applications from HUCBMS members. The call would close 30th November 2022 and a reminder with a link would be forwarded to the Secretary to circulate to members. The winner and shortlisted applicants will present at the HUBS annual conference in March 2023.

16. **Finances** – Report from Dr Locke indicated that finances remain healthy.

17. **HUCBMS 2022 at UWE** - Dr Lawrance indicated that for HUCBMS 2022 – final accounts are nearly settled and then the surplus will be split as per the agreement. HUCBMS will be getting a little under £1000. The Committee congratulated Dr Lawrance on the excellent organisation of the conference and its management.

18. **HUCBMS 2023 (Atlantic Technological University)**

The HUCBMS conference 2023 will take place at Atlantic Technological University in Sligo on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September.

19. **Future conferences** –A number of institutions have shown interest to host future conferences; Leeds Beckett University, University of Greenwich, and Birmingham City University. It was agreed that HUCBMS 2024 should take place at Leeds Beckett.

20. **Date of next meeting** – 6-7 February 2023.

21. **AOB.** There was no other business.