



**HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
(HUCBMS)**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2021

1 September 2021

Minutes of meeting of the AGM held on Wednesday 1st September 2021 via Teams.

Present: Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Sligo IT), Dr Esther Bell (KCL), Dr Sue Jones (York St John), Professor Hilary MacQueen (HUBS; Open), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lynne Lawrance (UWE), Professor Victor Gault (Ulster), Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Professor Julie McLeod (Birmingham City), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary), Professor Yvonne Barnett (President, Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lowri Mainwaring (Cardiff Metropolitan), and Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex) and over 30 delegates.

In Attendance: Mr Alan Wainwright (IBMS)

1. Minutes:

The minutes of 2020 AGM (previously published and approved by previous circulation) were noted.

2. President's Introductory Comments and Report on HUCBMS Executive Committee activities and discussions in 2020-21:

Professor Yvonne Barnett (President of HUCBMS) detailed the incredible work of the Executive Committee during the past two years to influence leadership

and research in Biomedical Sciences. She also complimented the work involving HUBS and Royal Society of Biology, the work on final year projects especially under Covid-19 pandemic, and other matters relating to UG teaching and learning, and masters' projects etc. The wider impact of Covid-19 on examinations and assessments, student recruitment etc was also noted.

3. TEF Update:

Professor Julie McLeod spoke about the full set of proposals for future TEF and associated indicators in autumn 2021. It is proposed that the TEF assessment would include: provider submission, independent student submission, nationally comparative indicators and metrics. Provisional timeline of the revised TEF scheme involves opening the submission window by Summer 2022 and announcing outcomes in early 2023.

NSS – phase 2 review (includes UK HE regulators and funders) on 5 possible models and questions– review over Summer 2021 with new questions being piloted in 2022 and launch of new survey questions NSS 2023.

4. REF 2021 Update:

Professor Barnett informed the AGM of UoA assessors successfully nominated by HUCBMS and IBMS. Outcomes of the REF will be announced in Spring 2022.

5. Knowledge Exchange Framework:

The results of the first iteration of reporting were released on March 31st 2021. Data came largely from existing sources such as HE-BCI returns, and there is a stated aim to not increase administrative burden for HEIs in completing their KEF submissions. Overall UKRI has been fulsome in its praise for the reported activities notably the high level, quality and diversity of KE activities across the board. HEIs are now encouraged to sign up to the KE Concordat; an agreement that HEIs will seek to progress and improve their performance in eight areas: Mission; Policies and Processes; Engagement; Ethical and Transparent Working; Capacity Building: Recognition and Rewarding Staff Efforts; Continuous improvement; and Evaluation of Success. There is an implicit assumption that future funding will be tied to performance in the KEF and adherence to the Concordat principles.

6. Review of QAA Biomedical Sciences benchmarking statement:

Professor Barnett updated members on the QAA benchmark which was published in 2014 and reviewed in 2019. There will be a meeting with QAA on 3rd September 2021 which will be attended by Professor Barnett; the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor Gerry McKenna; and Mr Alan Wainwright, IBMS.

7. Brexit Update:

Professor McKenna circulated a report on Brexit and HE published in Summer 2021.

8. Brief comments on Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland matters:

Scotland. Dr Linda Walsh reported on the Government elections – SNP government maintain control - entered into partnership with Scottish Green Party, another pro-independence party with a view to holding a 2nd independence referendum.

2021-22 will be first academic year when EU students pay full fees - await impact on admissions. NHS Covid-19 testing hub established in Glasgow, employing final year ABMS/BMS students for evenings and weekends – very successful.

Next academic session all HEIs will operate hybrid model-lectures on-line, with labs and tutorials on Campus. Face coverings are still mandatory on campus, public transport, shops etc.

Wales. Dr Lowri Mainwaring reported that all Welsh universities will be offering programmes via a hybrid approach for 2021-22 academic session.

The 1st phase of HEIW tender is now complete and successful universities are busy taking programmes through reviews in readiness for the 'new' programmes to be delivered from 2022. Also, the 2nd phase of HEIW tender process is underway and will be focussing on advanced practice and UG programme part time routes.

Ireland. In the unavoidable absence of Professor Jacqueline McCormack, Professor Neville McClenaghan reported on Irish matters. Since the last face to face conference the Registration Board via CORU for Medical Scientists in

Ireland is now well established. Medical Scientists (Biomedical Scientists) working in clinical practice in Ireland need to be registered with CORU. The Medical Scientists Registration Board at CORU has statutory responsibility for establishing and maintaining a Register of members of the profession, assessing, approving and monitoring training courses for the health and social care professions; establishing the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics and standards performance to which Medical Scientists must adhere.

CORU is seeking applications for Panel of Assessors with weblink (quote from <https://coru.ie/files-vacancies/coru-panel-of-assessors-policy.pdf> "*All members of the 'Panel of Assessors' must be registered (in their jurisdiction). Where the grandparenting period for a newly opened register has not yet closed, a person who is not yet registered may be considered as an assessor if s/he meets the qualifications requirements for registration.*")

All HEI's in Ireland are working optimistically towards a "safe return to Campus" in the coming weeks. There was a small delay in the CAO (UCAS equivalent) process this Summer so most Colleges are starting slightly later than normal. <https://www.iaa.ie/press-releases/03-08-21-iaa-thea-and-rcsi-joint-statement-higher-education-reopening-plans-confirmed/>.

It is currently planned that most Covid-19 restrictions in Ireland will be lifted from 22nd October as close to 90% of all adults are fully vaccinated and children down to age 12 are currently being vaccinated, with a high uptake so far.

Northern Ireland. Professor Victor Gault reported the following:

The huge efforts of staff and students during the past academic year.

The NI Executive, at their last COVID briefing (12 August 2021), stated that for the new academic year there will be a full return to face-to-face on-site delivery including the removal of social distancing restrictions in classrooms.

The €40M shared island fund to enhance strategic collaboration in research and innovation across the island of Ireland is a welcome development.

There has been a significant upgrade of Mass Spectrometry facilities on Ulster's Coleraine campus that will significantly benefit undergraduate and

postgraduate students – the funding was received from the Higher Education Research Capital (HERC) fund.

9. Equality and Diversity:

Dr Sue Jones attended 3 DIWG (Diversity and Inclusion Working Group) meetings for the RSB in Sept 2020, Dec 2020 and March 2021 to represent HUCBMS and disseminated the information through Professor McKenna to members.

Dr Jones also reported that Dr Linda Walsh attended the first HCPC EDI meeting for her in December 2020, and she then attended two HCPC EDI meetings in April 2021 and July 2021. She also coordinated a response with Dr Claire Pike from HUCBMS to a Government All Party Group inquiry into equality and diversity in STEM (Dec 2020).

The EDI survey was sent out to all HUCBMS Executive members in Feb / March 2021, and the data was disseminated and discussed at the June 2021 meeting.

10. Social Media Strategy:

Professor McCormack encourages all members to follow HUCBMS @hucbms on Twitter and on Facebook and LinkedIn. For any items, issues or events that HUCBMS members would like considered for sharing (other than marketing individual universities or colleges) They should email email:

mccormack.jacqueline@itsligo.ie .

11. Reports from HUCBMS representatives on other bodies-IBMS E&PS Committee:

IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee. Professor Valerie Randall attended four virtual meetings of the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee in the last 12 months.

The Chair and Deputy Chair, Andrew Usher and Joanna Andrew, were each elected for a further 3-year term.

Accreditation of 4 full-time BMS BSc programmes at University of Derby.
Reaccreditation of: full-time BMS programmes at Aston, Coventry, International Medical University Malaysia & Sultan Qaboos Universities &

part- & full-time MSc programmes at Cardiff Metropolitan, Manchester Metropolitan & Wolverhampton Universities.

There has been a large increase in students from non-accredited degrees applying for top-up modules. IBMS is raising awareness of accredited degrees/pathology careers by marketing directed at Schools.

The IBMS responded well to major Covid-19 related issues eg. this year's Professional Examinations scheduled for Autumn 2020 were postponed twice but in early 2021 some 60 candidates took examinations at 40 locations with individual invigilation instead of at a central location. This approach will continue for 2021 with papers delivered via Teams to invigilators and probably Examiners.

The IBMS has prepared useful 'How to' booklets on Reflection, Tips for Exam Success & Referencing to help students preparing for Institute examinations. These are available on IBMS website.

The IBMS awards research grants to members (£20,000 total per year).

IBMS Council noted the value and strength of working in partnership with HUCBMS eg. recent correspondence with the Universities Minister & the NI Health Department. Dr Selwa Alsam has joined their working group on the potential for biomedical scientists to supply and administer medicines.

HUBS. Professor Hilary McQueen reported that HUBS held their annual meeting online over two days (April 12-13, 2021) which was well attended throughout, with an interesting programme. As part of the meeting the finalists for the HE Biosciences Teacher of the Year presented their submissions, and the winner of this prestigious award was Dr Nigel Francis (University of Swansea), who gave the opening talk at HUCBMS 2021.

HUBS and HUCBMS continue to support joint workshops, with two this year: 'Robust online assessment and avoiding plagiarism' (March 2021) and 'Co-creating assessments for the remote world' (June 2021).

The HUBS ECLBio network, for early career academics, has been very active this year. There is an invitation out now to join the second cohort of

mentoring for early career staff. Senior staff are asked to encourage their new starters to get involved.

RSB Education Policy Advisory Committee. Dr Claire Pike has contributed on behalf of HUCBMS to RSB's response on DfE and Ofqual's consultation on GCSE and A level grade awards. Also, in collaboration with Dr Sue Jones, to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Diversity and Inclusion in STEM's inquiry into Equity in the UK STEM Workforce, and the RSB's responses to Defra's consultation on the regulation of genetic technologies.

Stormont STEM All-Party Group. Professor McKenna reported on the activities of the Stormont STEM All Part Group which focussed *inter alia* on R&D, regional imbalances within the UK and climate change.

Foundation for Science and Technology. Professor McKenna reported on meetings of the FST which included sessions on: Vaccines and UK science, Biodiversity and reaching net zero, UK research policy and online teaching post-Covid.

12. External Examiners List update:

Professor Jacqueline McCormack has sent a message through the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, encouraging suitably experienced individuals to submit details for inclusion on the HUCBMS External Examiner list. The current call closes on 30 Sept 2021. See recent email to members from Professor McKenna for template or email mccormack.jacqueline@itsligo.ie .

13. IBMS developments and accreditation update:

Mr Alan Wainwright reported that the IBMS had continued to maintain its accreditation/re-accreditation cycle. All meetings were conducted virtually and these worked well, so the Institute will continue this process for the foreseeable future. Accreditation criteria have been reviewed for greater clarity, there are no major changes.

The IBMS participated in an HCPC QA Pilot project based on data points and reflection, and which is designed to replace annual monitoring by giving greater recognition to established/proven institutional processes. The IBMS received recognition of good practice including the range of programmes that have been extended across different education providers over the years, the

effectiveness of partnership and collaboration between the IBMS and their approved education providers, and the changes such as use of technology to meet their requirements whilst also dealing with COVID-19. The IBMS is committed to supporting its members through greater use of E-learning activities.

The IBMS new CEO David Wells, will be leading a Council strategy day at the end of September which will inform priorities for the next 3-5 years.

14. Report by Hon. Treasurer.

The Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke, informed the meeting that HUCBMS' finances remain relatively healthy. He proposed that there should be no change in the membership fee for the coming year.

15. Elections to Executive Committee:

Three vacancies were available and three nominations were received, obviating the need for a formal election. Professor Valerie Randall has been re-elected as a member of the Executive Committee. Two new members were elected: Dr Jonathan Fletcher from the University of Bradford, and Dr Ashok Patel from Birmingham City University. The successful candidates will serve for 3 years until 2024. Professor Barnett warmly welcomed Jonathan and Ashok to the Committee and Val for another term.

16. HUCBMS 2022 and subsequent conferences:

Professor Gerry McKenna reported that there is uncertainty regarding the location of the 2022 HUCBMS conference. He hoped this would be settled shortly and also invited proposals to host future conferences.

17. Any other business:

Dr Sue Jones and Professor Julie McLeod are stepping down from the HUCBMS Executive. The President, Professor Barnett expressed the thanks of the Executive Committee and the membership for their outstanding contributions over a number of years.