



**IBMS CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE
BY EQUIVALENCE
(BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST)**

Guidance for Mentors

2023-2024

Version 4.0

IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)

Guidance for Mentors

Foreword

Thank you for agreeing to mentor a candidate for the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist). We greatly value your expertise and guidance that will support the applicant to succeed in their education, training and evidencing that they meet the threshold standards to become registered as a biomedical scientist.

Producing the evidence required to meet the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency can be challenging for some candidates and it is important to ensure that you, as a mentor, fully appreciate what will be involved for the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist).

It is important that all candidates for the equivalence route to have a mentor who is experienced in the preparation of evidence for the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) Registration Training Portfolio for Biomedical Scientists, plus a supportive environment for training. As a mentor for this route, you should already have extensive experience of supporting candidates through laboratory-based training and the supervision of other candidates/ trainees to successfully complete the Registration Training Portfolio.

During the application, each applicant for the equivalence route should consider the HCPC standards of proficiency (updated in 2022 and implemented from 1st September 2023) and discuss with you as their mentor how easily they can provide suitable evidenced against them. We require a Portfolio Development Plan to be submitted with the initial application, to assist with mapping current experience, knowledge, understanding and skills. It may be that additional training time in a routine clinical pathology diagnostic laboratory (that has IBMS approval for pre-registration training) is required for the candidate to be able to provide effective evidence against all the HCPC standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists.

If an applicant does not have access to a suitable biomedical scientist mentor and an environment that can provide the experience necessary to evidence the standards it will not be possible to accept them on to the programme.

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1. IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Requirements

- 1.1. Applicants admitted onto the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) must have sufficient support in place from a named mentor who is HCPC registered as a biomedical scientist. Their mentor must have extensive experience of overseeing and signing off evidence for the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio. This can be achieved either supervision of other candidates / trainees to successful completion and / or as an IBMS registration training portfolio verifier.
- 1.2. Mentors should be identified by the applicant before they complete the application form.
- 1.3. Applicants who do not have access to a suitable mentor must contact the IBMS for advice before they submit their application form.
- 1.4. The mentor is required to sign a declaration on the application form to confirm they have read and understood information available on the IBMS website related to the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) award.

2. Programme Information

- 2.1. General Information on the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) award can be found in the following documents:
 - Programme Specification for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
 - Programme Handbook for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
 - Module Information for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
 - Guidance for Candidates
 - Guidance for Mentors
- 2.2. Documentation specific to the Candidate
 - IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Guidance for Candidates
 - Application Form
 - IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio (hosted on Onefile)
 - IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio Development Plan
 - IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Candidate Final Feedback Form

- 2.3. Documentation specific to the Mentor
- IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Mentor Final Feedback Form

3. Purpose of the Mentor

- 3.1. The mentor should provide professional support and guidance for individuals applying for admittance to the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist). The individual is referred to as the applicant and, if accepted onto the equivalence route, the candidate. As the mentor, you will advise and guide the candidate on the submission of relevant and appropriate evidence against the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists. You may also be required to help resolve any issues that might occur during the application process or submission of evidence if the applicant is accepted onto the programme.
- 3.2. The mentor is expected to understand the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) programme and have the ability and capacity to support the candidate. Specifically, this support includes guiding the applicant to provide relevant information in the description of their current role and the environment in which they have gained experience, to satisfy the IBMS criteria for entry to the programme and establish relevance to HCPC registration. If accepted on to the programme, as a mentor, you will be expected to support the candidate in obtaining any additional practical training and experience to facilitate the production of appropriate evidence.
- 3.3. The mentoring role is primarily an advisory one and specifically requires the mentor to offer advice on the following:
- a. That to be eligible for the Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) an applicant must demonstrate that they have at least three years of training and professional practice in the duties and responsibilities commensurate with the minimum level of practice for a registered biomedical scientist*. Applicants are required to submit, as part of their application, a summary of their professional experience (around 1000 words) which contains a description of main duties currently undertaken and a brief summary of previous experience that is relevant to the application. Less than three years' relevant experience will be deemed inadequate for the application of equivalence.
- *Biomedical Scientist is a protected title regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council who define this as: "A biomedical scientist analyses specimens from patients to provide data to help doctors diagnose and treat disease".*
- b. Mentors should be able to advise the applicant on key points to include in their application statement to show that their experience and role is commensurate with that of a biomedical scientist. Similarly, based on their own training experience, mentors should be able to help identify areas of the applicant's development that mirror standards of training for biomedical scientists on other HCPC approved programmes and identify and address any gaps.
 - c. Mentors should familiarise themselves with the portfolio sections and modules, learning outcomes and the requirements for the provision of evidence to demonstrate how the

candidate meets the HCPC standards of proficiency. It is expected that the candidate can achieve equivalence based on their current qualifications, professional experience and current role without significant further training, the mentor will guide them in preparing suitable evidence to demonstrate how the standards of proficiency have been met.

- d. Mentors should understand what constitutes good evidence and be able to offer advice on the appropriateness of evidence for different modules in the portfolio that effectively demonstrate the HCPC standards of proficiency. Examples of evidence are set out in Appendix 1 in the IBMS Registration Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Programme Specification and Portfolio Development Plan template document.
 - e. Mentors / trainers should ensure that all evidence included in the portfolio is signed and dated by both parties and contains reflection, analysis and evaluation of how the evidence has supported the candidate to improve their practice and meet the required standards of proficiency. Each piece of evidence should also clearly state which HCPC SoP(s) are being demonstrated.
 - f. Mentors should ensure that the candidate is making good progress in completing the portfolio evidence in order to meet the agreed 12 month submission date.
 - g. Mentors should be readily available to support the candidate and offer advice as required. If required mentors can contact the IBMS to assist them in the provision of guidance via equivalence@ibms.org
- 3.5. Mentors (and candidates) are asked to hold regular (for example monthly) feedback meetings to monitor progress and provide an opportunity for any problems to be highlighted and resolved in a timely manner. The application forms also ask for confirmation there are processes in place to support and enable the candidate to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users and also the ongoing suitability of candidate's conduct, character and health and their understanding of the application of the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics (updated in 2023) to their professional practice. Final feedback reports are also to be submitted at the end of the programme.
- 3.6. Mentors should be willing to provide support for candidates during periods of sick leave and, if necessary, liaise with the candidate's employer and/or IBMS in order to support the welfare and wellbeing of candidates once they have been admitted onto the programme.
- 3.7. Mentors should note that candidates can apply for extensions to periods of evidence collection and portfolio completion by writing to the IBMS Education Department and formally setting out extenuating circumstances for the extension. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the IBMS Executive Head of Education and Education Manager and an extension may be granted. All information is treated in the strictest confidence.

- 3.8. Mentors may become directly or indirectly (from the employer) aware of fitness to practice issues with the candidate. Our guidance documents state that *“Once accepted onto the programme applicants expected to comply with the HCPC standards of conduct, performance, and ethics (2016) as these are reflected in the standards of proficiency against which the candidate will be providing evidence from their prior learning and development. Their understanding of the implications of the standards of performance and ethics to their professional practice must be confirmed in the application form. If during the programme the employer or mentor has any issues or concerns about a candidate’s profession-related conduct this should be reported to the IBMS. Failure to comply with these standards of conduct, performance, and ethics could lead to withdrawal from the programme”*.
- 3.9. As a HCPC registrant, mentors should understand the implications of the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics and be able to recognise behaviour that does not comply with this. Mentors are advised to discuss any concerns with the employer and reach agreement on the action that needs to be taken.
- 3.10. Mentors should support and be able to advise candidates if they wish to raise concerns about any aspect of their work. They should be able to provide support to learners to recognize situations where service users may be at risk, how to raise concerns and ensure action has been taken in response to the concerns.

About this document

Title:	IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist): Guidance for Mentors
Produced by:	Education Department
Version:	Version 4.0
Active date:	November 2023
Review date:	September 2024
Contact:	Education Department T: +44 (0)20 7713 0214 E: equivalence@ibms.org

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