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GOOD PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CONDUCT IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

Institute of Biomedical Science

Code of Conduct

All individuals working in biomedical science are members of a scientific profession and as such are expected to maintain and uphold professional standards. Membership of the Institute of Biomedical Science brings with it additional responsibilities; all members are expected to display the highest standards of professionalism and a commitment to ethical conduct, giving at all times due care and consideration to others and putting the interests of the patient first.

These professional attitudes and behaviours are embodied in the Institute's Code of Conduct, by which all members are bound to abide and uphold.

Application The Code applies to all members of the Institute (Associates, Student Associates, Licentiates, Members and Fellows)

Scope The Code applies at all times to members' conduct in their work, but will also be taken into consideration where their conduct in other contexts could reasonably be considered to reflect on the profession.

Purpose The Code consists of principles, which Institute members are expected to observe in the interests of patients care and in order to promote confidence in the profession of biomedical science.

Code of Conduct

A member of the Institute of Biomedical Science shall:

1. Professionalism

1.1 Uphold the name and reputation of the Institute of Biomedical Science and the biomedical science profession and practice according to its responsibilities, standards, ethics and laws.

1.2 Maintain the highest standards of professional practice and act in the best interests of patients, the service and other professionals.

1.3 Respect the confidentiality of patients, employer, and service users unless disclosure is permitted by law and justified in the patient's interest

1.4 Not practise, nor impose upon others to practise, in conditions where professional integrity, standards and laws would be compromised

2. Competence

- 2.1** Understand and work within the limits of their professional knowledge, skills and experience.
- 2.2** Never delegate a task or duty to anyone who is not trained, qualified or experienced sufficiently to undertake it without supervision
- 2.3** Ensure that colleagues under their management are fully supervised and supported
- 2.4** Exercise and continually develop their professional knowledge and skill throughout their professional life
- 2.5** Communicate effectively and meet all applicable reporting standards

3. Behaviour

- 3.1** Not allow bias, conflict of interest, or the undue influence of others, to override their professional judgement, or to compromise their professional roles or duty of care
- 3.2** Take action without delay if patient safety or service delivery is at risk according to local and national 'whistleblowing' guideline
- 3.3** Treat all patients, service users and colleagues respectfully and equally without any discrimination or prejudice that could hurt or embarrass
- 3.4** Co-operate with employer and professional colleagues in the interests of providing a safe and high-quality service

Good Professional Practice and Conduct

About this document

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) is a standard setting organisation and the professional body for biomedical science professionals; it sets standards of professional practice, conduct and behaviour through its education and training, qualifications, guidance and policy statements

Good Professional Practice and Conduct (GPPCS) is a professional standards policy produced by the IBMS, whose members work in many fields and at all levels of biomedical science including the NHS and private healthcare, academia, research, commerce and industry, with most scientists being regulated as biomedical scientists or clinical scientists through the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or registered with the Science Council as Registered Technicians (RSciTech), Registered Scientists (RSci) or Chartered Scientists (CSci). GPPCS defines a foundation of principles and standards for professional, effective, competent and safe practice. GPPCS includes the Institute's Code of Conduct and together they define a set of standards and principles for professional, effective, competent and safe practice for the direct and indirect care and benefit of patients. These standards will hold true for any changes in science, technology, medicine and service delivery.

GPPCS has also been developed to demonstrate to patients, carers, employers, professional colleagues, service users and the wider public that practice and decisions made will be competent, well-informed, reasoned and justifiable. It also identifies to employers' the standards that are essential for biomedical science professionals to perform their job roles and the support needed to achieve and maintain safe and effective services.

In this document the generic term "biomedical science professional" is used to describe the full breadth of individuals working within the field of biomedical science, including healthcare, academia and industry and includes all IBMS membership classes (Associates, Student Associates, Licentiates, Members and Fellows). The term "biomedical scientist" or "clinical scientist" are protected titles and refer only to those registered as such with the HCPC.

Why we need Good Professional Practice and Conduct guidance

Those who work in biomedical science require and expect expert guidance from their professional body to provide scientific and clinical leadership and to support safe and effective practice. GPPCS benchmarks against the HCPC Standards of Proficiency, Performance, Conduct and Ethics for biomedical scientists and clinical scientists, plus other professional, statutory or regulatory standards as required and also provides guidance for individuals whose practice is non-regulated.

What this policy does

This policy states the standards of professional competence and conduct expected of biomedical science professionals in all aspects of their professional practice. It is intended to serve as a benchmark of professional practice in biomedical science by providing professional standards of conduct, competence and practice for professionals of all grades, scope of practice and can be applied across all areas/fields of employment. The standards contained herein are the informed opinion of the professional body in respect of best practice and as such are applicable to both members and non-members.

What this policy does not

This policy does not attempt to be fully prescriptive or restrictive, unless referring to an Act of Parliament or statutory obligation. However, it is also recognised that within an individual's specific scope of practice not all standards may be evidenced. The deliberate disregard of professional best practice standards could, however, be cited as part of a disciplinary case.

Good Professional Practice and Conduct is the IBMS' lead policy statement on best practice in biomedical science; for policy and guidance on specific issues please refer to the relevant IBMS Benchmark Policies (<https://www.ibms.org/resources/professional-guidance/>).

Standards of Good Professional Practice and Conduct

1. Professional practice

- As a biomedical science professional, you have a duty of care (directly or indirectly) to the patient and must always ensure their safety and well-being
- As a HCPC registered biomedical scientist or clinical scientist, you must be able to practice as an autonomous professional using your own professional judgement
- You must be able to work safely and effectively within your scope of practice and personal competence, recognising that these will change and evolve as you develop your professional expertise and service needs change
- You have a duty of care and commit to taking appropriate action if service requirements are outside your scope of practice or competency
- You demonstrate your engagement in continuous professional development (CPD) to maintain and develop your knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure up to date, high quality service to patients and /or ensuring teaching practice remains current
- You identify specific gaps in your knowledge and skills required for new roles, scientific and clinical developments or change in services and actively address these
- You ensure that your CPD activities meet HCPC, Science Council, IBMS or other regulatory/professional body requirements as required
- You work in partnership with colleagues in your workplace and other organisations (multi-discipline teams) using available expertise to ensure best patient care/outcomes
- You adhere to your workplace business continuity arrangements to maintain the provision and quality of services

2. Professional responsibility

- You always act and behave in a professional manner, mindful that your actions and conduct represent the standards by which you and the profession are judged
- If HCPC registered, you comply with all the current biomedical scientist or clinical scientist HCPC regulatory standards
- You ensure you have appropriate indemnity cover either provided by your employer, or personally, for your role as a biomedical science professional

- You act as an ambassador for biomedical science, conducting yourself in a manner that upholds the IBMS professional values and reputation that reflects patients', employers', colleagues' and public trust in the profession
- You inform others, as appropriate, of anything that could create a conflict of interest between your professional and workplace activities
- As an IBMS member you are transparent when sharing your professional opinion
- You act professionally and engage transparently, openly and honestly in any complaints or investigation procedures
- You declare to your employer or the HCPC, as appropriate, any issues relating to your health, personal or professional conduct that effects your ability to safely perform your role or puts others at risk
- You must be aware of local procedures for raising concerns (whistleblowing) regarding poor performance of individuals or service that impacts patient safety and care; you may also contact the IBMS for advice and support as it may involve friends and work colleagues and therefore must be done in good faith and for clear reasons.
- You adhere to appropriate standards of personal as well as professional conduct and must not act in a dishonest, indecent, violent or inappropriate manner that could bring the profession into disrepute, irrespective of whether such behaviour is directly connected with your professional practice or not.is in a private capacity
- Use of alcohol or medication must not adversely affect your professional performance or bring the profession into disrepute in the workplace, at organised professional events or online.
- You must not make statements or announcements (including on social media) in connection with your practice (or induce others to do so) that are untrue, misleading or unethical. You must not carry out any other act or omission in connection with your practice that is liable to mislead the public or other professionals
- You must not make false claims regarding your qualifications or membership of organisations to which you do not belong. You must not use titles protected by statute referring to specialisms, which you are not qualified or eligible to use.

3. Professional competence

- As a biomedical scientist or clinical scientist, you have achieved and must maintain your statutory registration to practice through the HCPC. Failure to do so could result in your suspension or removal from the HCPC's register.
- Alternatively, as a biomedical science professional you may have achieved and should maintain voluntary Science Council registration as a Registered Scientist or Registered Science Technician as evidence that professional standards have been achieved
- If you are not registered on either a statutory or voluntary register, you have a professional duty of care to achieve and maintain a standard of professional competence commensurate with your scope of practice.
- As an IBMS member, you will adhere to legal requirements of practice and the recommended principles of professional good practice and conduct. Failure to do so may result in the suspension or removal of your IBMS membership
- You must have a job description, clear role and understanding of your scope of practice and clear provision of education and training support by your employer to support and develop you in your role
- You must understand the need for active participation in training, supervision and mentoring to maintain your knowledge, skills and competency within your scope of practice and reflect on your performance to improve your practice
- You must continuously develop your professional practice and demonstrate your knowledge and skills that reflect professional, clinical, academic, and scientific advances to guide best professional practice
- You work within your scope of practice and limits of knowledge and skills. If you are uncertain, you must always seek advice from and offer support to, fellow professionals and colleagues
- You must undertake regular Continue Professional Development (CPD) and reflective practice to fulfil your statutory or voluntary register requirements and/or duty of care and you are recommended to demonstrate compliance through the IBMS CPD Scheme
- Following a break in practice you have a duty of care to comply with regulator guidance to undergo a period of re-familiarisation and training as required and competencies, knowledge and skills reassessed and documented before resuming full duties

4. Scientific practice

- You undertake, teach or develop scientific investigations within your scope of practice that you are trained and competent to perform, using and evaluating appropriate methodology for the clinical question, standard operating and quality assurance procedures
- You demonstrate competence in the application and utilisation of all equipment and reagents required to perform investigations
- You report on investigations, clearly, accurately and timely within your scope of practice
- You recognise the value of gathering and using data for quality assurance and developing investigation strategies for more complex clinical questions
- You interpret results and provide advice on further investigations or management
- You adhere to all health and safety requirements to perform investigations
- You are competent in the use of information, communication and digital technologies appropriate to your practice required e.g to analyse and issue patient reports

5. Clinical practice

- Following local procedures, you can demonstrate evidence of informed consent to perform investigations required
- Using your skills, knowledge, experience, and the information available, you provide clinical analysis and advice relating to your specialism and scope of practice
- You interpret and advise on complex data and results related to the clinical question
- You refer patients/results of concern to other appropriate healthcare professionals
- You recognise when aspects of patient care are outside your scope of practice and seek advice accordingly

6. Education, training, mentoring and supervision

- You engage in the education, training, mentoring and supervision of less experienced staff, students and other healthcare professionals as required, within their scope of

practice to ensure knowledge, skills, standards of practice and values are maintained and disseminated throughout the profession for the safety and care of patients

- You undergo personal training to demonstrate the skills, attitudes and practices of a caring and competent mentor /trainer
- You must be objective and honest when supervising, appraising, mentoring, evaluating or assessing the performance of others and be aware that patients and/or service users will be at risk if someone is described as competent who has not yet met or maintained a satisfactory standard of practice
- You understand your own responsibilities when delegating tasks to others
- You will have gained or be working towards the appropriate IBMS professional qualifications or qualifications from other education providers to evidence, support and develop your scope of practice, career development and roles with specific responsibilities

7. Quality Control, Quality Assurance, Audit and Data Protection

- You perform quality control (QC) procedures according to diagnostic investigations and verify results are within acceptance limits
- You follow procedures according to your scope of practice to address a QC failure
- You notify service users of any clinically significant service delays
- You contribute to peer reviewed external quality assurance (QA) programmes
- You participate in QC/QA performance review meetings and resolving non-compliances
- You perform and comply to Quality Management Standards by monitoring and systematically evaluating the quality of practice and maintain an effective quality management and quality assurance process working towards continual improvement
- You contribute to the maintenance of ISO Laboratory Accreditation Standards (ISO15189 and other appropriate ISO standards)
- You contribute to the maintenance of subject specific QAA benchmark statements if appropriate

- You contribute to the maintenance of IBMS accredited degree standards if appropriate
- You comply with IBMS or employer procedures for the quality assurance and consistency of education, training and academic qualification assessments and award if appropriate
- You contribute to clinical and service audits to maintain and improve quality of direct and indirect patient care
- You must adhere to the legislation concerning storage and use of individual identifiable data (General Data Protection Regulations, 2018 and any subsequent legislation)

8. Research and Development

- You actively participate in healthcare and biomedical science research associated with your job role and/or academic/research interests and contribute and apply evidence-based practice
- You support your employer's research portfolio in collaboration with others as required for the benefit and safety of patients
- You undertake regular "Good Clinical Practice (GCP)" training that includes international ethical, scientific and practical standards to which all clinical research is conducted
- You act with honesty and integrity in all stages of research and development from study concept and design, ethics approval, funding, patient involvement, analysis and data collection, results, interpretation and publication/dissemination of findings
- You critically review clinical and scientific advances and apply them to your practice and/or service developments for the benefits of patients
- You introduce new patient diagnostics having developed, evaluated, adapted, validated, verified, and confirmed safety and clinical and cost effectiveness
- You contribute to service evaluation and quality improvement projects by using research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions

- You present and actively encourage your colleagues to present research and development projects at IBMS meetings and in publications

9. Clinical Leadership and Management

- You identify your own leadership style, qualities, behaviours, approaches and how you interact with others, taking into account the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion
- You demonstrate, develop and apply your leadership behaviours and management skills appropriate to your scope of practice
- You value, recognise and respect other colleagues' knowledge, skills and ideas and encourage contribution to service development and patient care
- You offer advice and expertise to individuals, teams, committees or working groups where your input can contribute positively to a service or project outcome
- You provide leadership according to your scope of practice in the effective function of the team through training and enhancing performance
- You work with biomedical science colleagues or groups to enhance networking, workforce planning and clinical engagement

10. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- You will demonstrate a good understanding of equality legislation and apply it to your practice. This includes the Equality Act 2010 that defines protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland protects age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- You will recognise the potential impact of your own values, beliefs and personal biases (which may be unconscious) on your practice and take personal action to ensure all service users and carers are treated with appropriate dignity and respect
- You will understand your duty to make reasonable adjustments in practice and be able to make and support reasonable adjustments in yours and others' practice

- You will recognise the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion, including for socially isolated groups and will actively challenge these barriers, supporting the implementation of change wherever possible
- You will recognise that regard to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to be embedded in the application of all HCPC standards, across all areas/fields of practice

11. Communication

- You must maintain patient confidentiality and only communicate personal/clinical information to appropriate healthcare professionals or in specific situations to patient/carer
- You understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- You communicate professionally, clearly and effectively information within your scope of practice, ensuring the recipient has accurately recorded and understood the information, then acted upon appropriately
- You use effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate with service users, carers, colleagues and others
- You have the appropriate English language proficiency and communication skills for service delivery and patient care in the UK (equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5)
- You listen carefully to patients, carers and other healthcare professionals to ensure you understand their requirements
- You use information, communication and digital technologies appropriate to your practice to keep accurate records ensuring you comply with local and/or legal requirements
- You produce documentation as required which is clear, accurate, precise with the appropriate content and format

12. Partnerships and cooperation

- You will work in partnership and cooperation with service users, carers, colleagues and others for the benefit of the patient and service
- You will recognise the principles and practices of other health and care professionals and systems and how they interact with your profession
- You will understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- You will contribute effectively to undertaken work as part of a multi-disciplinary and/or multi-professional team
- You will recognise that leadership is a skill all professionals can demonstrate and demonstrate leadership behaviours appropriate to your practice, including acting as a role model for others

General Information

IBMS and developing standards of practice

The Institute through its Council, its advisory panels and its network of representatives is fully involved in the development of many of the external standards referenced in this policy. The Institute's involvement in developing standards includes representation on external committees and working groups, expert responses to consultations and partnership with other bodies and organisations.

In addition, a professional qualification framework supports lifelong learning to enhance scope of practice throughout a career pathway. All laboratories providing biomedical science training for IBMS qualifications must meet the standards in the Institute's Laboratory Training Standards (Clinical Laboratory Standards for IBMS Qualifications and Guidance for Training Laboratory Management and Approval).

The role of the IBMS is to support the development of biomedical science, both nationally and internationally, and develop professional standards for those who practice biomedical science within the NHS and private healthcare providers, academia, commerce and industry for the benefit of service users and the wider general public.

The HCPC has published a guidance document *Returning to Practice* for regulated health professionals who have taken a break from practising, and who wish to start practising again. Individuals wishing to return to practice in a clinical laboratory should use the Institute portfolios as a framework for updating their knowledge and skills, for example, the Specialist Portfolio in discipline specific areas. A self-assessment of knowledge and skills achieved prior to a break in practice should be conducted against the e.g specialist portfolio to identify training needs (Gap Analysis). Training should be carried out in an Institute approved training laboratory. The period of updating must be signed off by an appropriate experienced registered biomedical scientist as a record of the areas of the e.g specialist portfolio completed and whether competence to practice was achieved.

IBMS Education and Training Framework

The Institute's education and training framework exists to help support its members to develop their scope of practice and to demonstrate adherence to GPPCS throughout their careers and encompasses assessments, examinations and continuous professional development, in specialisms covering scientific, clinical, management and leadership. The IBMS provides members with simple and seamless access to training, qualifications and knowledge to progress their careers and stay relevant as the profession changes.

Career Pathway

The Institute provides qualifications for its members to enable them to demonstrate their increasing levels of knowledge and skills as experience and expertise is gained. It is important to recognise that IBMS qualifications do not automatically entitle the recipient an employment upgrade, promotion or banding, but the table below outlines qualifications with levels of knowledge and skills that could be helpful in supporting different stages of our members career development and aspirations.

Full details of career stage, specialisms, entry eligibility criteria, course details, assessment and examination format can be found on the IBMS website:

<https://www.ibms.org/education/>

IBMS Qualification Achievement	Career Development Opportunities	IBMS Membership Grade Award	Statutory Register	Professional Voluntary Registers
Certificate of Achievement Part 1	Assistant Practitioner (Bands 2 & 3)	Associate		Registered Science Technician (RSciTech)
Certificate of Achievement Part 2	Associate Practitioner (Band 4)	Associate		Registered Scientist (RSCi)
Certificate of Competence	Biomedical Scientist (Band 5)	Licentiate	HCPC	Registered Scientist (RSCi)
Specialist Diploma	Specialist Biomedical Scientist (Band 6)	Member	HCPC	Chartered Scientist (CSCi)
Diploma of Specialist Practice	Specialist Biomedical Scientist (Band 6)	Member	HCPC	Chartered Scientist (CSCi)
Higher Specialist Diploma	Advanced Biomedical Scientist (Bands 7 & 8)	Fellow	HCPC	Chartered Scientist (CSCi)
Diploma of Higher Specialist Practice	Advanced Biomedical Scientist (Bands 7 & 8)	Fellow	HCPC	Chartered Scientist (CSCi)
Experiential Route to Fellowship	Advanced Biomedical Scientist (Bands 7 & 8)	Fellow	HCPC	Chartered Scientist (CSCi)
Joint/External Awards				
Advance Specialist Diploma	Consultant Biomedical Scientist Band 8 (c - d)	Fellow	HCPC	
Higher Specialist Scientific Training (HSST)	Consultant Biomedical Scientist Band 8 (c – d)	Fellow	HCPC	Academy Healthcare Science HSS Register

IBMS Qualification Achievement	Career Development Opportunities	Open to IBMS	Specialism Areas
Certificate of Expert Practice	Development or demonstration of specialist knowledge and skills	Licentiate/Member/Fellow	Molecular Pathology and POCT
Certificate of Expert Practice	Development or demonstration of specialist knowledge and skills	Members	Microbiology Flow Cytometry
Certificate of Expert Practice	Development or demonstration of specialist knowledge and skills	Members/Fellows	Management Training Quality
Diploma of Expert Practice	Development or demonstration of high level of specialist knowledge and skills	Members/Fellows	Histology Cytology Routine Haematology

Continuous Professional Development

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the record of activities that HCPC registrants need to keep demonstrating their learning and development throughout their careers, which show that their skills and knowledge are current and appropriate for their changing and developing scope of practice and demonstrate good professional practice.

The Institute has developed its CPD scheme as outlined below, to provide an opportunity for members to participate in a variety of structured activities and formally record learning experience and outcomes, which can be used to demonstrate HCPC CPD requirements.

Full details of CPD activities, can be found on the IBMS website:

<https://www.ibms.org/cpd/>

IBMS CPD	Career Support	Open to IBMS	Registration Support
CPD Diploma	Enhanced knowledge and skills through structured learning	Licentiate/Member/Fellow	HCPC
Journal Based Learning	Update scientific and clinical advances	Licentiate/Member/Fellow	HCPC
Scientific Reading	Knowledge and skills support from experts in the field	Licentiate/Member/Fellow	HCPC
Support Hub	Support Tools for Professional Development	Licentiate/Member/Fellow	HCPC
Transformation and Improvement	Training programme for continuous improvement of patient care	Licentiate/Member/Fellow	HCPC

Help and support for good professional practice and conduct

Good Professional Practice and Conduct in Biomedical Science reflects and outlines standards and practice that in the modern professional and scientific environment are constantly evolving. One set of standards cannot fully embrace the diversity and complexity of biomedical science and these should be used in conjunction with other organisational, regulatory and professional standards. Individuals working in biomedical science are therefore encouraged to communicate with the Institute with suggestions and feedback on *Good Professional Practice and Conduct in Biomedical Science* to further develop and enhance professional guidance for the benefit of colleagues and the profession.

The Institute can provide professional advice and support for its members in a number of ways.

- Institute members can directly contact the IBMS, either by telephone on + 44 (0)20 7713 0214 or by email on mail@ibms.org
- Institute members can contact their local national or regional Council member for advice and support. Contact details are available in the IBMS diary or by contacting the IBMS office.
- Specialist support and professional representation is also available in the devolved home countries of the United Kingdom – please contact the IBMS office for further information.
- The IBMS is a multidiscipline organisation with members working in a diverse range of specialties. Specialist advisory panels provide scientific and professional expertise, knowledge and advice to guide the IBMS. The panel members are recognised for their experience and expertise, which is used to develop biomedical science and the work of the Institute. The panels also provide expert advice for members on request. To request Panel advice please email: examinations@ibms.org
- Web discussion forums are available in the members' area of the Institute's website that enables biomedical science professionals to provide support, exchange information and post questions and comments.

Further information

IBMS guidance and standards publications

The Institute's BenchMark series of professional policies and guidance are available to download at www.ibms.org/resources/professional-guidance/

Articles, resources and further information on the biomedical science profession and getting involved in promoting the profession are available at www.ibms.org/getinvolved/

Information on the Institute's Continuing Professional Scheme is available at www.ibms.org/cpd/

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