



A GUIDE TO THE INSTITUTE AND YOUR MEMBERSHIP

2010 - 2011

www.ibms.org

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About this handbook

This handbook is a general introduction and guide to the IBMS, its activities and work on behalf of the biomedical science profession and its support for its members. It also considers how members can become involved in Institute activities.

Every section has references to the Institute's website at www.ibms.org or other websites for further information and resources.

The IBMS also has a wide range of leaflets and publications that complement this handbook and provide further information.

IBMS vision

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) is the professional body for those who work within the field of biomedical science. Its principal aims are to represent its members, set standards of behaviour for its members, enable career development, educate its members, promote biomedical science to the public and award qualifications appropriate to the collective knowledge and skill base of its members.

The Institute was founded in 1912 and represents over 19,000 members employed predominately within the healthcare arena, but also within university and veterinary laboratories, the National Blood Service, Health Protection Agency, Medical Research Council and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Other members also work in related commercial fields and academia. Although most Institute members live and work in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, many other members are employed throughout the world.

IBMS roles

- To aid and support the development of biomedical science, both nationally and internationally.
- Influence and develop professional standards of practice to guide those who practice biomedical science.
- Assess competence to practise as Health Professions Council (HPC) registered biomedical scientists.
- Define an appropriate structure of membership and associated member benefits.
- Provide personal and professional support for members.
- Represent the interests of biomedical science, provide advice and work with UK governments, public & independent healthcare providers, media, universities, industry and commercial sector, professional organisations and all other partners.
- Develop appropriate education and training for its members enabling them to demonstrate multiple levels of competency
- Develop qualifications and diplomas to demonstrate varying levels of expertise enabling members to plan a career pathway.
- To enable members to achieve their potential through career options, career long learning and continuing professional development.
- Update and inform those who practice biomedical science through all available channels including: the media, professional publications, scientific meetings and events.
- Promote public awareness of biomedical science.

- Produce scientific and professional publications, guidance and other resources for members.
- Award the designation of Chartered Scientist to qualifying members.
- Fund research and support charitable causes in biomedical science.
- Maintain a historical archive of the Institute and biomedical science profession.

The Institute is involved in the education and training of biomedical scientists - accrediting degree courses, assessing the competence of biomedical scientists to practise and organising a programme of higher and advanced diplomas for its members.

Registration is a key professional role that places the Institute at the centre of developing education, training and professional standards. The Institute awards the Certificate of Competence when required for registration by the Health Professions Council, the profession's regulatory body.

The Institute publishes two periodicals, monthly *The Biomedical Scientist* and quarterly *British Journal of Biomedical Science*, which together carry scientific papers, news, articles, opinions, reports, diaries of events and job adverts. They also publish laboratory and professional guidelines and careers information.

The Institute of Biomedical Science can award the designation Chartered Scientist to qualifying IBMS members. Chartered Scientist is a mark of excellence awarded to scientists practising at their full professional level and who stay up-to-date in their scientific field.

A network of Institute regions and branches in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Hong Kong, Cyprus and Gibraltar provides opportunities for members to participate locally in Institute affairs. The 11 Institute regions support local biomedical scientists, promote the profession, develop local networks and organise scientific and social meetings.

Grants and prizes are available for research and other scientific work in biomedical science subjects.

Making decisions and developing policy

About Council

Council is the Institute's governing body made up of the President, Past President, Treasurer, Chief Executive, six national members and 12 regional representatives. Council members are elected by Licentiates, Members and Fellows of the Institute, and must stand for re-election every three years.

Council's elected status gives it the authority to make key decisions and develop policy on behalf of the biomedical science profession. Council members represent both Institute and profession on external working groups, committees and with other organisations.

Standing committees

Council is also responsible for appointing four standing committees made up of Council members and administered by IBMS office executive staff. The standing committees in turn are responsible for various sub-committees, science advisory panels and 'single issue' working groups. The committees produce information, proposals and reports for Council and further examine issues and initiatives raised at Council meetings.

The committees are the Education & Development Committee, Professional Examinations & Awards Committee, Membership Committee and Operational Committee.

Education and Development Committee (EDC)

The EDC is responsible for the strategic development of policy on Institute academic education and training, clinical laboratory training, HPC registration and workforce planning. It also promotes and develops the Institute's scheme for continuing professional development. Contact: education@ibms.org

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee looks after the interests of the Institute's membership. It advises Council on eligibility criteria for membership, develops marketing and publicity activities and is responsible for career information, website matters, non-technical leaflets, subscription schemes, IBMS statistics and conferences. Contact: mc@ibms.org

Operational Committee

The Operational Committee is formed of representatives from the other three standing committees and deals with overall policy, special interests, finance and political matters. Contact: mail@ibms.org

Professional Examinations and Awards Committee (PEAC)

PEAC is responsible for the Institute's professional qualifications and exams, research grants, prizes and awards. It is also the reporting committee to the College of Biomedical Science. Contact: qualifications@ibms.org

Other committees include the Congress Committee, the CPD Unit, the Website Committee and the Editorial Development Committee (for *The Biomedical Scientist*).

Advisory panels

The IBMS advisory panels provide pools of scientific and professional expertise, knowledge and advice to guide the IBMS in determining policy, developing publications and advising government or the media. The members of panels are recognised for their experience and expertise, which is used to further the good of biomedical science and the work of the Institute. The panels also provide expert advice for members on request.

The advisory panels are:

- cellular pathology
- clinical chemistry
- cytopathology
- haematology
- immunology
- medical microbiology
- transfusion
- virology.

From international roles to local activities

Regions and branches

The IBMS region and branch network serves as a channel of communication between IBMS Council, the Institute's office and its local members. The region and branch network has an important role to play in supporting local biomedical scientists, promoting the profession, implementing policy, developing local networks, communication and organising meetings.

Many regions and branches have links with local MPs, universities and commercial interests. The regions often work with other groups to organise meetings and events. There is often a social side accompanying the

professional work of organising events and representing the Institute at a local level. Some regions are active in promoting the profession to local schools, healthcare colleagues or organising activities for Healthcare Science Awareness Week and National Science Week.

East Anglia Branches: Cambridge, Essex and Suffolk, Hertfordshire and Norfolk

East Midland Branches: Derby and Nottinghamshire; Leicester, Northampton and Rutland; Lincolnshire

Ireland Branches: Dublin, Limerick and Northern Ireland

London branches: North East Thames, North West Thames, South Thames

North East branches: Cleveland, Durham and Tyneside

North West branches: Cumbria, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, North Wales and the Isle of Man

South East branches: East Kent, Portsmouth & Chichester, Reading, Southampton and Sussex

South West branches: Bristol, Cardiff, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, West Wales and Wiltshire

West Midlands branches: Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire, North Staffordshire and Oxford

Yorkshire branches: East Yorkshire, Sheffield, West and East Riding

Please contact the IBMS office for information on the Cyprus, Gibraltar, and Hong Kong branches. Further information and contact details are available at www.ibms.org/regions.

SERVING THE PROFESSION LOCALLY

Name: Ian Sturdgess
Job title: Histopathology Manager, East Midlands Council Member
Location: Cambridge

I have been involved in the East Midlands region for a number of years, firstly as a member of the Northants IBMS Branch and since 2002 as the East Midlands Chairman and Council Member. I feel that being active in my region is an important and rewarding part of how I can contribute in a small way to the development of the profession.

We organise meetings to communicate important professional information but also to allow for debate and discussion. In the last couple of years we have organised meetings to raise awareness professional issues such as registration, continuing professional development or Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC). We have also hosted science meetings to help local members develop their scientific knowledge with topics on probiotics, *C difficile*, Lean thinking, lab errors in blood transfusion and external quality assurance.

Even in a world where so much can be done online it's useful and very rewarding to see local members meeting and discussing issue face-to-face. It also allows us as regional Council members to know what local members are thinking so we can feed that back to the main Council and help the Institute represent the profession. The meetings also provide useful opportunities for networking, exchanging tips and information and providing support for local biomedical scientists.

Members involved in organising local activities learn a lot of useful skills to add to their CV – from running a newsletter to setting up a meeting, from communicating to dealing with finances as a treasurer, and committee duties. The region has also its own web page on www.ibms.org in which we can post meeting presentations, reports, committee member information and our newsletters.

There is also an important social side to getting involved locally, a way of meeting up with new people. We have held quizzes, dinners and once organised a trip led by one of our retired members to view the bone crypt at Rothwell Church near Kettering. We sponsor local members to go to Congress and enjoy the experience of attending one of the largest biomedical science events in Europe. We are also involved in exhibitions, careers activities and open days for events such as National Pathology Week (NPW) and National Science and Engineering Week (NSEW) to promote laboratory services.

It is about generating enthusiasm, providing professionally useful and helpful activities for local members to enjoy and promote the profession. It can be hard work at times but very enjoyable and rewarding.

Local groups

Members around the UK have set up a number of 'single issue' or discipline specific groups that can link into the regions and branch network or are independent. A full list of local groups is available at www.ibms.org/go/ibms-networks

Devolution

The IBMS works to ensure that interests are properly represented with the devolved authorities in each home country. This involves meetings, working groups, representation on workforce boards and promoting the profession in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Scotland branches: Aberdeen, Dundee and Tayside, Fife, Inverness and North Scotland, Lothian and Borders, West of Scotland

The IBMS Welsh Affairs Committee is responsible for co-ordinating the Welsh branches, working with the Welsh Assembly and representing the interests of Welsh biomedical scientists. For more information please contact the IBMS office by emailing mc@ibms.org

IBMS Northern Ireland represents the interests of biomedical scientists in Northern Ireland and is responsible for political lobbying in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Further information and contact information for the devolved regions is available at www.ibms.org/regions.

International links

The Institute has long-established links across the world through its accredited degree programme, its participation on international working groups and bodies and support of VSO biomedical scientist volunteers working in Africa and the Far East. The IBMS also has links with international and European associations.

Prizes, awards and grants

President's Prize

The President's Prize of £100 plus certificate is awarded to the best biomedical science student graduating in a particular year who is also a member of the Institute. They must be registered with the Institute by the 31 January of the year of their graduation.

R J Lavington Prize

The R J Lavington medal, diploma and a cheque for the sum of £500 are awarded by the Institute to the candidate who secures the highest final mark across all disciplines, in a single sitting, in the IBMS Higher Specialist Diploma examinations.

Company Members Prize

The Company Members Prize was established in 2006 by the Institute and its company members in support of the Institute's qualifications and to recognise individual achievement of high standards. The Institute and its company members enjoy a strong working relationship and a history of collaboration, especially with the Institute's Biomedical Science Congress.

The prize is awarded annually to the candidate who at first attempt achieves the highest pass mark in each specialist subject of the Higher Specialist Examination.

Research Grants

IBMS research grants are awarded annually to members of the Institute to support original investigations and other suitable research work. The grants awarded are usually between £500 and £4500. A single grant of up

to £2000 to support original investigations may be awarded annually to a member of the Institute employed outside the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland.

Life membership

Life membership is awarded to those who have contributed outstanding service to the profession and its professional body. It is one of the highest honours that can be bestowed on a member of the Institute.

Honorary membership

Honorary membership is awarded to members who have retired from active professional life and have given long and valuable service in the interests of the Institute or any of its branches.

IBMS members

How to join and why to join

There are three classes of IBMS corporate membership, Licentiate, Member and Fellow, while Associate is the non-corporate class available for individuals who do not meet the criteria for corporate membership.

Licentiate

Licentiate is the initial class of corporate membership for a person who has been awarded the Institute's Certificate of Competence or demonstrated equivalence as determined by the Institute through an individual assessment.

The Institute's Certificate of Competence has two elements:

- an Institute accredited honours degree in biomedical science (or the equivalent through supplementary education)
- completion of a portfolio of evidence that meets the professional standards set by the Health Professions Council.

Licentiates of the Institute have the opportunity to work towards an Institute specialist diploma, a qualification that accompanied by at least two years professional experience as a Licentiate will allow individuals to apply for the next class of Institute membership, Member.

Individuals in the class of Licentiate are entitled to use the designatory letters LIBMS.

Member

Member is the next class of corporate membership and applicants to the class of Member will be required to have a minimum two years professional experience as a Licentiate and hold an Institute Specialist Diploma or a Diploma of Specialist Practice.

Members of the Institute also have the opportunity to work towards an Institute Higher Specialist Diploma, a qualification that accompanied by at least three years professional experience as a Member will allow individuals to apply for the highest class of Institute membership, Fellow.

Please note: following admittance to the class of Licentiate, membership class upgrade is only granted following an application and Institute assessment of this application.

Individuals in the class of Member are entitled to use the designatory letters MIBMS.

Fellow

Fellow is the highest corporate class of Institute membership and applicants to the class of Fellow will be required to have a minimum of three years professional experience as a Member and hold an Institute Higher Specialist Diploma or Diploma of Higher Specialist Practice.

Fellows are eligible to sit the Institute's advanced specialist diplomas in order to evidence practice at the level of a consultant biomedical scientist.

Please note: following admittance to the class of Member, membership class upgrade is only granted following an application and Institute assessment of this application.

Individuals in the class of Fellow can use the designatory letters FIBMS.

Associate (including student)

Associate is the non-corporate class of Institute membership for persons who are not eligible for corporate membership but who possess a suitable level of educational and vocational standards and are working within the field of, or related to, biomedical science. All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

Categories of Associate class include:

- students on accredited biomedical science degree courses, including those entitled to free membership - see below
- graduate trainees employed in an Institute approved training laboratory, either undertaking supplementary education or working towards the Institute's Certificate of Competence
- associate practitioners (non- HPC registered)
- overseas qualified, HPC registered individuals who do not meet the Institute's educational standard for corporate membership
- overseas qualified individuals who don't meet the above.
- Free Associate membership
- One year's free Associate membership is offered to all undergraduate students studying on Institute accredited biomedical science courses or employed as graduate trainees in an Institute approved training laboratory leading to the award of an Institute Certificate of Competence. Please contact your local university liaison officer or visit the Institute's website to download an application form.

There are no designatory letters for the class of Associate.

Equivalence and non-standard routes to membership

The IBMS has developed other routes for laboratory-based practitioners of biomedical science who for a variety of reasons are not able to apply for Institute membership or membership class upgrade using the standard routes. These routes are:

- becoming a member of the Institute using the equivalence route
- becoming a member via the non-standard route
- becoming a Member of the Institute by the Diploma of Specialist Practice (Membership by Dissertation)
- becoming a Fellow by the Diploma of Higher Specialist Practice (Fellowship by Thesis)

Further information at ibms.org/join.

Chartered Scientist

The designation Chartered Scientist (CSci) is a mark of high achievement in science. You can apply for CSci status if:

- you have at least four years corporate Institute membership and in the appropriate class of membership for which you are eligible (either a Fellow or Member)
- you have a Masters level qualification, or equivalent
- you have documented evidence of continuing professional development, either through the Institute's portfolio scheme, another professional association or a personal development plan for the 2 years prior to your application
- you are currently in practice, application and teaching of biomedical science with at least four years post graduate professional experience.

Why join the IBMS?

The Institute has a package of membership benefits designed to provide both personal and professional support to help biomedical scientists develop their careers, scientific knowledge and expertise.

Publications and media benefits

The Biomedical Scientist

All members receive *The Biomedical Scientist*, the major professional publication for news, science articles and job adverts. There are features on a wide range of subjects including education, training, management, laboratory practice, safety, scientific and technological developments, members' correspondence and Institute activities.

Regular features include Institute news and local events, a large continuing professional development (CPD) section listing credited activities and journal based learning (JBL) questions, together with company and product updates. *The Biomedical Scientist* is also the largest source of information on professional vacancies in the UK.

Pathology in Practice is a quarterly supplement on commercial news, products, system installations and the latest commercial developments in the medical laboratory environment.

British Journal of Biomedical Science

Members can access the *British Journal of Biomedical Science (BJBS)* online. The *BJBS* is one of the major scientific journals covering biomedical science, and features scientific papers, book reviews and reports on new laboratory techniques and developments. Online *BJBS* also includes an archive of back-issues. *BJBS* website: bjbs-online.org

IBMS website (www.ibms.org)

Members enjoy access to the members' area of the IBMS website which has the following facilities:

- member news and information
- CPD Centre including online JBL and other resources for the IBMS's CPD scheme
- web discussion forums allowing members to exchange views, professional advice and scientific information in discipline specific, general, CPD, education and management forums,
- online lectures which hosts a series of scientific and professional lectures for members to listen and gain CPD points,
- advice and guidance,
- archive of *The Biomedical Scientist*.

Career development

- Access to the Institute's CPD scheme which enables members to improve and extend their scientific knowledge and skills (www.ibms.org/cpd). The Institute's scheme also assists members to provide evidence that they meet the Health Professions Council's requirements for renewal of registration.
- Access to the Institute's professional qualifications, which include examinations for higher, expert and advanced levels of practice aimed at members of the profession seeking more senior appointments. The qualifications aim to support the progression of biomedical scientists through a modern career and pay structure. Visit ibms.org/education for more information.

IBMS Congress and local events

- Reduced fees at the IBMS Congress, the largest and most comprehensive biomedical science conference in the UK (www.ibms.org/congress)
- Reduced fees at national and local Institute meetings, CPD activities and other conferences and courses (ibms.org/events)
- Access to branch, region and discussion group meetings.

Professional recognition

- Chartered Scientist - the Institute of Biomedical Science has been granted a licence by The Science Council to award the designation Chartered Scientist to qualifying IBMS members (see box or www.ibms.org/chartered). Chartered Scientist is a mark of excellence and achievement available through Institute membership.
- Recognition from other professional bodies of your IBMS membership
- IBMS Fellowship is recognised as appropriate for senior grade posts and professional appointments
- Designatory letters to confer professional status

Professional support

- Professional indemnity insurance: free monetary protection for eligible corporate members in respect of legal responsibility for damage or loss, and support, advice and representation in cases of legal action related to their profession (except for members not based in the UK, Hong Kong, Cyprus and Gibraltar)
- Expert and scientific advice to members on professional issues such as safety, education, careers, management and other matters affecting their working lives
- Access to the IBMS advisory panels, which can advise and guide in areas of their expertise and specialty
- Specialised support and professional representation in the devolved home countries of the United Kingdom.

IBMS general benefits

- Access to professional qualifications that provide evidence of knowledge skills and competence at all professional levels, and that are designed to assist members seeking professional advancement within biomedical science.
- The opportunity to become involved on Institute branch and regional committees and, for corporate members, to stand for election to Council, providing experience of committee working and the handling of professional and political issues. It also contributes to shaping the future of the profession. This may add an extra dimension to an individual's professional portfolio of experience.
- Get involved in professional activities where members can develop skills in media, politics, organising events and discussion groups, networking and professional representation and roles.
- Eligibility for corporate members to vote in Institute elections.
- Eligibility to apply for prizes, awards and research grants offered by the Institute to members to encourage research, continuing education and personal development.

- Access to the IBMS library, which holds a large collection of books, Fellowship theses and journals.
- Legal advice: 24 hour legal helpline (domestic and employment problems).

Get involved: Making the most of your membership

The strength behind the Institute

Members' subscriptions fund activities that directly benefit all members in their careers as a biomedical scientist. These activities include the CPD scheme, developing professional quality standards and IBMS publications. These kinds of activities, however, are not just achieved by subscription funding.

The IBMS's success is also built on the hard work and voluntary contributions by its members at all levels involved in a wide range of national and local activities that cut across areas of interest such as media, professional representation, networking, science and education. Without their hard work and dedication on behalf of the Institute and the profession the work, activities and influence of the Institute would be greatly diminished.

Many members are engaged in representing and working for their profession and professional body. The Institute has members volunteering to be involved in a myriad of activities and roles: pathology benchmarking, international ISO standards, qualifications and university degree accreditation to name but a few. Our members write articles, organise events, liaise with universities, support student placements, help with CPD, join with hospital networks and promote biomedical science to schools all of which help to develop and progress their profession.

Why become involved?

In addition to enhancing the strength of the IBMS and working for the benefit of their profession, members also find that becoming involved in such activities can be immensely rewarding. Networking and meeting with colleagues, maintaining professional interest, learning and developing new skills and interest, giving something back to the profession, enhancing CVs and personal development have all been cited as reasons why members become involved in helping their profession.

If you would like to become more involved in promoting biomedical science and helping your professional body to represent your interests there are activities that could take up as much or as little of your time as you are able to contribute. It all helps us to provide an organisation that serves the needs of the profession and plans for the future.

Get involved: support

Many members (and non-members) are already involved or are interested in promoting biomedical science and contributing to Institute activities. The Institute has compiled resources, presentations, articles, image archives and information available from the website to help and support those looking to be more active.

Get involved: IBMS activities and professional roles

IBMS media

News items about interesting meetings and events or about the personal achievements of individual members, announcements, IBMS local events and letters are always welcomed by the editor of *The Biomedical Scientist*, the Institute's monthly publication, and the editor of the website. We always need to

hear from you with material, stories or news for the Institute's media, so that we can let others know what is happening within their profession.

In addition the Institute encourages members and non-members to offer for publication, articles and features that have a broad appeal. Articles may be on any subject pertaining to the profession, for example on science, personal experiences, safety matters, overseas issues or projects. Any reader who wishes to offer an article to *The Biomedical Scientist* should contact the editor.

Members are also encouraged to contact the website team on website@ibms.org if they have interesting links, stories or suggestions for the Institute's online media services.

Communication

Communication is one of those vague, clichéd concepts that is difficult to define yet there's no escaping the fact that the work of the IBMS and its members thrives on good communication and can be held back by its absence. One of the most valuable and easiest ways to help the IBMS is by simply letting Institute representatives know when something is happening in your laboratory or hospital. Members are involved in all kinds of initiatives, working groups and committees within their trust so networking and communication helps us to build up a national picture of emerging trends.

If you know of any stories, lab 'issues', events or local press interest in your laboratory then letting the IBMS know will allow for suitable responses to be organised and information to be distributed to the rest of the profession. Good communication enables better co-ordination, networking, consultation and planning of policy.

Regions and branches

The region and branch network has important roles to play which are sustained by the work and efforts of local members. Locally active members find their roles give them personal satisfaction; they enjoy meeting colleagues from other laboratories and staff in other departments; enjoy being actively involved in something worthwhile and benefit from increased contact, good discussions and exchanges of ideas.

If you would like to become involved with activities in your areas please contact the Membership Committee on mc@ibms.org and we'll put you in touch with your local group. You can also visit the IBMS website at www.ibms.org/regions.

Further information on the roles of regions and networks is available on page 3.

IBMS advisory panels

Appropriately qualified members can apply to join the IBMS advisory panels. Vacancies on the panels are advertised in *The Biomedical Scientist* and on the website. Further information on the roles of the panels is available on page 3.

University employer liaison committees

University liaison committees are set-up as part of the process of IBMS accreditation of biomedical science degree courses. The committees act as a conduit between university and local employees and are crucial to ensuring that courses remain up to date, that both employer and university understand and share the responsibility for the practical elements of the course to ensure that graduates are well prepared for working in the laboratory, and that delivery of patient care is integrated within the programme.

Members can become involved in university liaison committees by contacting their local Institute regions or local universities.

Institute registration portfolio verifiers

Portfolio verifiers are Institute representatives who verify that trainees or coterminus students have met the required HPC standards of proficiency through completion of the Registration Portfolio.

Specialist portfolio assessors

Members with the requisite professional experience, who wish to take on an active role in the development of biomedical scientists furthering their career options, can become Specialist Portfolio Assessors. Members who have been an examiner for the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine Logbook will already have experience which is of significant relevance to the Assessor's role, in particular because the level of engagement with candidates from which they are assessed is similar.

Continuing Professional Development

One of the most rewarding roles undertaken by members is that of CPD representatives and local CPD officers. Much of the work achieved by CPD officers is laboratory based and their role contributes to the professional and educational development of colleagues.

They are a vital part of the CPD scheme, helping to organise meetings, accredit activities, offer advice and technical information and liaise with the CPD dept. at head office. They promote the importance of CPD and lifelong learning to colleagues.

Responsibilities of CPD Officers

Responsibilities include promoting, co-ordinating and encouraging local active participation, advising activity organisers, liaising with the local branch and the Institute's CPD department, acting as a local source of CPD documents and sharing experience and advice with other members. CPD officers accredit meetings, issue certificates and validate members' records.

Activities organiser

Members can contribute to the substantial programme of scientific and managerial CPD activities to help organise lunchtime meetings, courses, lectures, discussion groups and journal clubs.

If you would like to organise lectures and discussion groups, share your scientific and professional knowledge with colleagues or have your meeting accredited then please contact the CPD department.

GET INVOLVED: CPD OFFICER

Name: Angus Wyatt
Job title: Biomedical Scientist Section Leader
Location: Homerton University Hospital, London

"My personal decision to become a Local CPD Officer came about after spending months preparing for a CPA visit and feeling that I needed a new challenge to 'fill the void'.

I found working as part of an integrated pathology service, comprising of busy multi-disciplinary departments gave me a chance to talk to staff from completely different backgrounds about the theories and practice underpinning their work. This in turn enabled me to better understand my role in the parent organisation, find mutual common-ground and highlight better working practices through improved communication between the disciplines.

I quickly realised that the fundamental requirement would be to make CPD as easy as possible for staff so as to discourage them from neglecting their own CPD activities. Subsequently, I drew up a freely-accessible database of current CPD resources and conducted a short series of talks outlining the relative ease with which the HPC standards could be met by simply following people's general day-to-day working practices. I later received positive feedback from this during the one-to-one consultations held whilst reviewing staff Annual Validations, especially with respect to participation of the JBL exercises.

Speaking personally, I find engaging in CPD activities gives me a sense of satisfaction that I am contributing to the development of colleagues, the service we provide and ultimately the knowledge of the profession. It also comes as something of a diversion from what might otherwise become the mundane, helping me to realise an important role despite the ever-increasing twin demands of workload and budget. Ultimately CPD does not need to be onerous as long as one remembers it can actually be quite interesting...."

Get involved: networking and promoting

Members and biomedical scientists can get involved in a number of activities for their profession that are separate although linked to Institute professional roles. Full information on getting involved in promoting biomedical science and networking is available in the members area of the website at www.ibms.org/getinvolved.

Promoting biomedical science

Many members are involved with the promotion of biomedical science through media, the public, trusts and hospitals and even within the profession itself! Promoting biomedical science ranges from national events to briefing healthcare colleagues on the work of the laboratory, attending hospital/trust meetings to dealing with the local press. The Institute, with its focus at national level, depends on the voluntary efforts of members to promote their profession at local level.

Professional promotion: healthcare science and networking

Biomedical science, by its perceived 'backroom' nature, all too often can be overlooked or misunderstood rather than seen as a key diagnostic resource at the centre of patient care. There are ongoing initiatives by government, professional bodies and other stakeholders to provide better integrated, long-term planning of service and patient-care. Change to pathology services are being influenced by Modernising Scientific Careers, the Carter Report, pathology reconfiguration, technological innovation, quality, accreditation, commissioning guidance, clinical leadership and IT developments.

Get involved links

www.ibms.org/getinvolved
www.ibms.org/cpd

National Science and Engineering Week
www.the-ba.net/nsw

Who has the time?

Like many of us with family or work responsibilities you may feel you are too busy to help but there are ways to be involved that will only take a few minutes and can still make a difference.

10 mins to spare...

- Vote - ensure Council is accountable to the members
- Let us know a problem, an event or a story about your lab
- Recruit a member and strengthen the Institute in numbers and expertise
- IBMS eNewsletter - enter your email address to the eNewsletter. It's the easiest way of keeping up to date with issues and news affecting the profession.

20 mins to spare...

- IBMS Website Forum - help a colleague with a query or keep the debates rolling
- Events/meetings - know of an event that might interest fellow members? Email the details to mail@ibms.org.

2 hours to spare...

- Attend lunchtime meetings
- Contribute to local press/hospital press
- Give a tour of your lab to local press and politicians
- Attend your local branch or region meeting
- Distribute or send promotional leaflets to libraries, GP surgery waiting rooms
- Stay informed - keep yourself updated with the latest political and professional issues affecting the profession.

1-3 days to spare...

- Represent the profession at a meeting, conference or professional event
- Become involved in National Science Week

Science ambassador

- Help with school visits to laboratories.
- National Science and Engineering Week, National Pathology Week, Healthcare Science Week
- Be an ambassador

Ongoing

- Be a CPD officer
- Become a member of your local region or branch and help organise activities
- Serve on an advisory panel
- Serve on a university liaison committee
- Institute registration portfolio verifiers
- Trust and networks
- Healthcare science groups
- Science ambassador

Career pathways: from education to advanced practice

From education to advanced practice

The career pathway for biomedical scientists is now more diverse and has more opportunities than ever before. The IBMS has developed a programme of professional qualifications to support the progress of biomedical scientists through a modern career structure point of registration to the far reaches of specialised and higher laboratory practice.

The framework of qualification is an independent, nationally recognised system of professional certification aligned with other reforms affecting biomedical scientists, such as national occupational standards, the career pathway for healthcare scientists and Agenda for Change. The aim is not just for skill and expertise to be recognised by the professional body, but also to help the biomedical scientist demonstrate required knowledge and skills to advance through the pay bands of Agenda for Change.

The first step: accredited degrees

The IBMS's programme of accredited honours degrees plays a key role in the education of biomedical scientists and helps to ensure that graduates are suitably qualified before entering the profession.

The accreditation process, developed in tandem with Heads of University Centres of Biomedical Science (HUCBMS), assesses degree courses for academic content, learning outcomes and assessment, delivery, quality assurance and involvement of the profession in the development and delivery of the course. The accreditation process has led to an important collaboration between employer and university.

Entering the profession: registration

The IBMS verifies professional competence against the Health Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency. The Institute then awards a Certificate of Competence that can be presented as part of an application to the Health Professions Council (HPC) to register as a biomedical scientist.

Specialist diplomas

Specialist diplomas are awarded by the Institute on completion of a specialist portfolio to demonstrate that a recently qualified biomedical scientist has acquired a depth of knowledge and competence in their chosen discipline. It is generally gained over a period of two-years' post-registration experience in an Institute-approved training laboratory.

Certificates and diplomas of expert practice

Certificates and diplomas of expert practice serve to evidence areas of knowledge and skills complementary to the main biomedical science subject areas.

SPECIALISING IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE: TAKING THE IBMS SPECIALIST DIPLOMA

Name: Anna Dobson
Job title: Specialist Biomedical Scientist
Location: New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton

"I was one of the first to complete a specialist diploma when they were introduced and being the first to tackle a new task is always daunting but also exciting. After being the first person in my laboratory to successfully complete the pre-registration portfolio I was determined to live up to that achievement by becoming a specialist in haematology and hospital transfusion.

One of the main motivations was knowing that my experience would enable me to provide a template and assist the training officer and co-ordinator in developing future training programmes.

I was very excited about taking the specialist portfolio as each section gave me a clear direction for my training. The whole department contributed to my training and I was able to squeeze much information out of the specialists in each section. I felt that all of us managed to learn something new during this time.

The portfolio also inspired many of the senior biomedical scientist staff to develop staff training. For example, a blood film training package was developed which has since been used successfully by all staff in the department.

I found the format of the specialist portfolio very helpful, especially the reflective reviews at the end of each section. Every time I completed a different section I not only improved my specialist knowledge but I could also reflect on how my style of working had changed, or how my improved specialist knowledge enabled me to review results more thoroughly. This format will be useful throughout my career, especially for my CPD records.

The IBMS model for career progression has inspired me to learn more about my profession and carry on with my ambition to become a senior biomedical scientist. My next step will be to train for my Higher Specialist Diploma in Transfusion Science and I am looking forward to continuing with my professional development."

Higher Specialist Diploma

The Higher Specialist Diploma is designed to complement the academic knowledge attained through a postgraduate qualification and is intended to test candidates' competence to practise at a high level within their chosen biomedical science discipline. The Higher Specialist Diploma is the entry qualification for the highest class of Institute membership, Fellow.

Advanced specialist diplomas

Advanced Specialist Diplomas consolidate the highest levels of knowledge and expertise and demonstrate evidence of expertise within a discipline, build upon the IBMS Higher Specialist Diploma and link to professional doctorates.

HIGHER SPECIALIST DIPLOMA: SO WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

Name: Jennifer List
Job title: Chief Biomedical Scientist
Location: Colchester General Hospital, Essex

"So why are you doing this?"

I was asked this question in 2006 as I was waiting to start the Higher Specialist Diploma in Immunology.

A very good question. As I am already a Fellow of the IBMS and a chief biomedical scientist it seemed professionally a little superfluous and let's face it - the HSD is not easy! Why should it be? Why should our professional body not set high standards for its Fellows? The exam is demanding and the preparation rigorous. It is not a taught course so self-motivation and study-organisation are essential. So why was I doing this?

In my case I had changed discipline from haematology to immunology and I felt it appropriate to prove myself in my new area. However, what I gained from the experience of completing the diploma was far more than I had anticipated. I developed new skills, sharpened old ones, made some fantastic contacts and really got to the heart of what I do every day. I spoke to many tremendously knowledgeable and helpful people during the year prior to my exam. I found it important to recognise the limits of my own laboratory so I visited other labs to fill in technical gaps and observe how the service is provided in other hospitals. I was also lucky enough to sit in on clinic and seeing the service from the patient perspective is very educational.

There is an overwhelming amount of information out there. I learnt to scan current literature effectively for useful key points (hint: use the internet - many journals email current contents free of charge and it is a great time saver). For the generic paper I had to understand the changes and influences affecting the profession, especially in immunology. Additionally, in this computer-age, I even had to practice hand-writing!

So the HSD is tough. Anyone who commits to taking the exam is to be admired. However, whatever happens on the day it is important that one makes the experience leading up to the exam itself worthwhile. I found it so and I'm glad that I did it."

Since taking this exam I have continued in my role as chief biomedical scientist in immunology and am very aware of the changes that have and are taking place within the profession. One change in my professional life following the HSD was to become a member of the IBMS Immunology Specialist Advisory Panel which has given me an insight into the IBMS professional qualifications from the 'other side'. I have been amazed at the amount of work which the exam teams put in to the exam and qualification processes.

Candidates taking the HSD, or indeed any of the Institute's other qualifications, can be reassured they are engaging in a process which not only requires their own high levels of knowledge, commitment and professional understanding, but which is also the product of high levels of knowledge, commitment and professional understanding in others.

Professional: Your development

The IBMS provides many opportunities for personal and professional development through its Continuing Professional Development scheme as well as providing opportunities for its members to get involved with its many activities (see *Get involved*).

Continuing professional development

The IBMS CPD scheme encourages biomedical scientists to maintain, improve and extend their knowledge, skills and practice for the purpose of maintaining Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The CPD scheme is a benefit of membership available and free to all its members.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a process of lifelong learning, which enables members to expand and fulfil personal and professional potential, as well as meet the present and future needs of patients and deliver health outcomes and priorities. Participation in the IBMS scheme also helps the individual to broaden their knowledge base and acquire new skills, learn new techniques, increase their job satisfaction by promotion of professional ideas and new initiatives, enhances CVs, encourages reflective practice and provides evidence for HPC requirements.

The Health Professions Council (HPC) sets standards for continuing professional development. All registrants have a professional responsibility to adhere to these standards and the Institute's scheme is designed to enable participants to fulfil these standards by providing a framework for recording CPD activity and demonstrating the range of activities undertaken.

Chartered scientists

The designation Chartered Scientist was granted by Royal Charter to The Science Council and is a recognised mark of scientific excellence and expertise. Professional member bodies are licensed by The Science Council to confer Chartered Scientist status on individuals who meet the criteria.

Members and Fellows who possess a Masters degree, have at least four years' postgraduate professional experience as a corporate Institute member and are able to demonstrate ongoing professional development (CPD) are eligible to apply to the Institute for Chartered Scientist status.

Publications

The Institute publishes a wide range of publications, leaflets and statements including career publications, laboratory and professional guidelines, information for members and guidance on getting involved.

Advice

See *Advice, elections, representation, FAQ, contact us* section

Jobs and employment

Please note that the IBMS cannot help find employment for any members. However job vacancies are advertised in *The Biomedical Scientist*, on the IBMS-affiliated website at www.careerscene.com or the NHS jobs website at www.jobs.nhs.uk.

Advice, elections, representation, FAQ, contact us

Advice

IBMS members are entitled to professional advice on professional indemnity insurance; expert advice on professional issues such as safety, education, careers, management and other matters affecting their working lives; access to the IBMS advisory panels, and specialised support and professional representation in the devolved home countries of the United Kingdom.

Scientific and professional advice

The Institute's advisory panels can provide expert advice for members on request. The advisory panels can guide members in areas of their expertise and specialty. See *IBMS roles* section or contact the advisory panels secretary on qualifications@ibms.org.

The IBMS can advise members on work-related problems or issues, and professional representation is available if necessary.

Advice from other biomedical scientists

The IBMS has set-up professional and scientific discussion forums in the members' section of the website for members to exchange ideas, technical help and information. If you have a query chances are another member can help you. See frequently asked questions (FAQ) section for information on accessing the members' section.

Please note that the forums are solely for informal discussion and are not a direct route to contact staff or IBMS Council. The Institute cannot take responsibility for comments posted by individual members.

Devolution

Specialised support and professional representation is available for the devolved home countries of the United Kingdom.

Publications

Professional, general and scientific advice is also available through the Institute's publications and articles available on the website in the professional section.

Advice contact: mail@ibms.org

IBMS regions: www.ibms.org/regions

IBMS publications: www.ibms.org/publications

Elections and representation

Elections and representation enable important accountability and communication between IBMS members and the IBMS Council, the Institute's governing body. Members have a number of options to make their views known, contact their elected representatives or submit feedback and suggestions on IBMS activities.

Voting them in, voting them out

Council is the Institute's governing body and its elected status gives it the authority to make key decisions and develop policy on behalf of the biomedical science profession. Council members represent the Institute (and hence the profession) on external working groups, committees and with other organisations. Regional Council members represent their local laboratories, members and, if the need arises, the Institute itself.

This makes Council's accountability to the Institute's members extremely important so members are asked to make sure their vote is counted and opinions are represented. Each year members can nominate candidates and elect colleagues to Council. News of forthcoming elections is published in *The Biomedical Scientist* and on the website. Corporate members will automatically receive ballot papers.

Representation

Institute members can have their professional interests or issues represented by:

- contacting their regional Council member,
- formally writing to the IBMS Council at the IBMS office
- contacting the appropriate department for help and advice (see Contacting the Institute section)
- writing to the Chief Executive at the IBMS office.

Complaints and feedback

The IBMS aims to provide a high-quality standard of service to its members. If the Institute falls below these standards there are a number of ways members can contact the Institute. If in doubt you can contact the IBMS on mail@ibms.org or 020 7713 0214 and staff will ensure your query or comments is forwarded to the right department. See below for further information on contacting the Institute.

The Institute provides services for members and non members which generate a large number of enquiries. For quality monitoring and improvement purposes we would like to know about your experience of how we handled your enquiry. Whether your contact resulted in a helpful outcome or if you believe our handling of your enquiry was not to a standard to which we ordinarily would aim to provide. Our policy and further information on this can be found at ibms.org/contact.

Feedback

Suggestions, feedback and constructive criticism are vital, always welcome and can be expressed through regional Council members and other local IBMS representatives or by contacting the appropriate department or standing committee at the IBMS office.

Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) are also available on the Institute's website and also feature common queries on Continuing Professional Development and Journal Based learning. The FAQ section on the website also continues to be developed in direct response to member queries, suggestions and feedback.

Information on applying for membership

Frequently asked questions and help for those applying for membership are available on the membership application form, on the FAQ page on the website or emailing mc@ibms.org.

Member queries

How do I change my membership and personal details?

Please contact the subscriptions department on 020 7713 0214 or subscriptions@ibms.org - and remember to quote your membership number. Members can also update their personal and employment details through the members section of the IBMS website.

I'm a member but am not receiving *The Biomedical Scientist*?

Please contact the IBMS office with your membership number to confirm you are a current member and that we have your correct postal details.

How do I find out my IBMS membership number?

Your IBMS membership number will be on your membership card, renewals subscription form or membership confirmation letter. If you don't have any of these please contact the IBMS office.

Website queries

How do I access the members section?

If you are a current member you need to set yourself up with a password using your IBMS membership number before you can access the members' section. Visit the home page at www.ibms.org and click on the Register here link in the left-hand navigation.

I have forgotten my password

There is a password reminder facility available on every webpage in the members login box in the right-hand bottom corner.

For further queries on site registration, passwords and website queries please visit the FAQ page on the website.

Jobs and employment

Please note that the IBMS cannot help find employment for any members. However job vacancies are advertised in *The Biomedical Scientist*, on the IBMS-affiliated website at www.careerscene.com or the NHS jobs website at www.jobs.nhs.uk.

Contacting the IBMS

How to contact the IBMS

When contacting the IBMS please include your membership number or have it ready to quote. To contact departments by telephone please use the general number + 44 (0)20 7713 0214 and then follow further instructions.

General contact details

Institute of Biomedical Science

12 Coldbath Square
London EC1R 5HL
England

T: + 44 (0)20 7713 0214

F: + 44 (0)20 7837 9658

E: mail@ibms.org

General Enquiries

All general enquiries including membership application forms as well as leaflet and publication requests:
mail@ibms.org

IBMS Chief Executive

Alan R Potter MBE MPhil DSc(Hon) CSci FIBMS: mail@ibms.org

Department contact information

To contact departments by telephone please use the general number + 44 (0)20 7713 0214 and then follow further instructions.

Subscriptions and membership accounts

Changes to personal details, enquiries about membership accounts, subscription information
subscriptions@ibms.org

Membership applications

Membership applications, membership qualifications and application queries
mc@ibms.org

Registration Department

Registration, certificates of competence, external verifiers, laboratory training, assessments.
By fax: 020 7837 3286, marked for the attention of the Registration Unit.
registration@ibms.org

Education and workforce development

University liaison, accredited degree courses, clinical laboratory training policies, Free Student Member scheme, QAA benchmarking, national occupational standards, HPC registration issues and policy development for workforce planning issues.
education@ibms.org

Continuing Professional Development

Enquiries about joining the CPD scheme, registering events, validation, CPD advice, contacting local CPD officers
cpd@ibms.org

Professional qualifications and exams

Enquiries about the Institute's Higher Specialist Diplomas, Diplomas of Expert and Extended Practice and the Advanced Specialist Diplomas.
qualifications@ibms.org

Specific contact information

Advisory panels: mc@ibms.org
Chartered scientists: chartered@ibms.org
College of Biomedical Science: qualifications@ibms.org
Company members: hedleyglencross@ibms.org
Congress: congress@ibms.org
History: mc@ibms.org
IBMS Council: mail@ibms.org
Publicity, media and marketing: mc@ibms.org
Regions and branches: mc@ibms.org
Research grants, prizes and awards: qualifications@ibms.org
Scientific and discipline specific queries (for Institute Advisory Panels): mc@ibms.org
The Biomedical Scientist and *British Journal for Biomedical Science* editor: briannation@ibms.org
Website: jamieansell@ibms.org
IBMS standing committees
Information on the work of the standing committees can be found on the IBMS Council page.
Education and Development Committee (EDC): education@ibms.org
Membership Committee: mc@ibms.org
Operational Committee: mail@ @ibms.org
Professional Examinations and Awards Committee (PEAC): qualifications@ibms.org

About the Institute's crest and coat of arms

The Institute's crest and coat of arms was established in 1960.

Historically a coat of arms provided the means by which a heavily armoured knight could be identified in medieval times. The shield denotes ancestry or a connection with a particular craft or place, the helmet supports a wreath and mantling in the wearer's colours surmounted by a crest.

The shield and crest must confirm to accepted rules of heraldry and must be symbolic in depiction, for the Institute the microscope is symbolised by a shaft of light diverging to obtain infinite magnification.

The shield incorporates the red cross that is universally recognised as the symbol of assistance to the sick. This is further charged with the serpent and staff of Aesculapius to show the connection with medicine. The lamp of learning tells of the constant need for further study.

The helmet is that of an Esquire (the rank to which a professional body is entitled) while the wreath and mantling are shown in the Institute's colours of black, red and silver.

The crest takes the form of a cormorant which, as the Lyver bird, is symbolic of the city of Liverpool where the Institute was first founded in 1912 as the Pathological and Bacteriological Laboratory Assistants Association. The Lyver bird holds a Norman sword in appreciation of Albert Norman's foundation of the Association.

Finally, the wings are charged with the qualifying diplomas for which the IBMS is responsible.

The Institute's motto 'Disce ut proficias' translates as 'Learn, that you may improve'.

About this document

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About IBMS Publications

The Institute publishes a wide range of professional and scientific publications and guidance. Further information and downloadable publications: www.ibms.org/publications