



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

Guidance for Mentors

Version 4

IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)

The Role of Mentors: Guidance for Mentors

Foreword

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

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

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

During the application, each applicant for the equivalence route should consider the HCPC standards of proficiency and discuss with you as their mentor how easily they can provide suitable evidence against them. We require a Portfolio Development Plan to be submitted with the initial application, to assist with mapping current experience, knowledge, understanding, skills and competency against all HCPC standards of proficiency. It may be that additional training time in a routine clinical pathology diagnostic laboratory (that has IBMS approval for pre-registration training) is required for the candidate to be able to provide current evidence against some of the HCPC standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists but it is expected that the applicant can already demonstrate most of the standards at the point of application.

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

Dr Sue Jones

Executive Head of Education

Institute of Biomedical Science, 12 Coldbath Square, London, EC1R 5HL

Tel: 020 7713 0214 E-mail: equivalence@ibms.org Website: www.ibms.org

Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Guidance for Mentors

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Guidance for Mentors

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

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

2. Programme Information

- 2.1. Further information on the IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) award can be found in the following documents:
 - *Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio Guidance*
 - *Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Module Descriptors*
 - *Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Guidance for Candidates*
 - *Frequently Asked Questions*
- 2.2. Documentation specific to the Candidate
 - *IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Guidance for Candidates*
 - *Application Form*
 - *IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio (digital portfolio on the OneFile platform)*
 - *IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio Development Plan*
 - *IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Candidate Feedback Form*

2.3. Documentation specific to the Mentor

- *IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Mentor Final Feedback Form*

3. Purpose of the Mentor

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

- d. Mentors should familiarise themselves with the Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) portfolio sections and modules, learning outcomes and the requirements for the provision of evidence to demonstrate how the candidate meets the HCPC standards of proficiency. It is expected that the candidate can achieve equivalence based on their existing qualifications, professional experience and current role without significant further training. The mentor will guide them in preparing suitable evidence to demonstrate how the standards of proficiency have been met.
- e. Mentors should understand what constitutes good evidence and be able to offer advice on the appropriateness of evidence for different standards of proficiency. Examples of evidence are set out in the IBMS Registration Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio Guidance document and the Module Descriptors.
- f. Mentors should note that there are no mandatory pieces of evidence required in the Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) portfolio. All pieces of evidence are the candidate's choice, in agreement with their mentor.
- g. It is expected that candidates will be able to effectively demonstrate all HCPC standards of proficiency within each module of the portfolio with 3-5 pieces of evidence. Additional documentation / pieces of evidence should not be added to the portfolio.
- h. Mentors (and any additional trainers who support the candidate to create pieces of evidence) should ensure that all evidence included in the portfolio is signed and dated by both parties, using the OneFile system. The evidence should contain reflection, analysis and evaluation of how the evidence has supported the candidate to improve their practice and meets the required standards of proficiency. Each piece of evidence should clearly state which HCPC standards of proficiency are being demonstrated.
- i. Each piece of evidence should have a clear justification that explains why the piece of evidence has been chosen and how it demonstrates the selected HCPC standards of proficiency within the module (see the Portfolio Guidance document for further information).
- j. Mentors should ensure that the candidate is making good progress in completing the portfolio evidence through regular meetings, to ensure the candidate is on track to meet the agreed 12 month submission date.
- k. Mentors should be readily available to support the candidate and offer advice as required. If required, mentors can contact the IBMS to assist them in the provision of guidance via the dedicated inbox equivalence@ibms.org

- 3.5. Mentors are asked to hold regular feedback meetings with the candidate to monitor progress and provide an opportunity for any problems to be highlighted and resolved in a timely manner. The application forms also ask for confirmation there are processes in place to:
- a) Support and enable the candidate to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users and
 - b) Determine the ongoing suitability of candidate's conduct, character and health and their understanding of the application of the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics to their professional practice.
 - c) Final feedback reports are also to be submitted at the end of the programme.
- 3.6. Mentors should be willing to provide support for candidates during periods of sick leave and if necessary, liaise with the candidate's employer and / or IBMS to support the welfare and wellbeing of candidates once they have been admitted onto the programme.
- 3.7. Mentors should note that candidates can apply for extensions to periods of evidence collection and portfolio completion by writing to the IBMS Education Department and formally setting out extenuating circumstances for the extension using the equivalence@ibms.org email address. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the IBMS Executive Head of Education and Education Manager and an extension may be granted. The extension will be agreed in consultation with both the candidate and mentor. All information is treated in the strictest confidence.
- 3.8. Mentors may become directly or indirectly (from the employer) aware of fitness to practice issues with the candidate. Our guidance documents state that candidates must abide by the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2024) as this relates to standards of proficiency in Section 1 Module 1 (Professional Responsibility and Development) of the portfolio. Evidence in this module must demonstrate that the individual seeking registration understands the implication of these standards to their practice. Monitoring during the collation of the portfolio evidence must confirm that the candidate applies them to their practice.
- 3.9. As a HCPC registrant, mentors should understand the implications of the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics and be able to recognise behaviour that does not comply with these. Mentors are advised to discuss any concerns with the employer and reach agreement on any action that needs to be taken.
- 3.10. Mentors should support and be able to advise candidates if they wish to raise concerns about any aspect of their work. They should be able to provide support to the candidate to recognise situations where service users may be at risk, how to raise concerns and ensure action has been taken in response to the concerns.

4. Additional Resources and Reference Documents available on the Institute of Biomedical Science Website www.ibms.org

The IBMS is committed to supporting mentors and candidates once they have been admitted to the programme and to ensuring candidates feel enabled to raise concerns about themselves, their workplace laboratory or the safety and wellbeing of service users. This includes support to recognise where there may be a risk and ensuring action is taken in response to concerns that have been raised. The following resources are available from the IBMS and may be used in addition to the usual employment policies.

4.5. Provided directly by the IBMS Education Team:

- IBMS Education Manager or Education Team Leader: telephone contact 020 7713 0214 and via designated email address equivalence@ibms.org
- IBMS Education Officers: telephone contact 020 7713 0214 and via email address equivalence@ibms.org
- IBMS Executive Head of Education via email: suejones@ibms.org
- IBMS Council (some of whom are members of the Education and Professional Standards Committee – contact details on the IBMS website: [Council](#))

The IBMS Education Manager and Executive Head of Education can offer advice on all aspects related to completion of evidence for the HCPC approved routes to registration offered by the IBMS.

All details of extenuating circumstances (including periods of sickness) submitted by a candidate for an extension to periods of evidence collation and portfolio submission will be dealt with in confidence. Candidates and mentors should also note that advice on further training to produce appropriate portfolio evidence will only be provided **prior to the application**. As this is an experiential route, all training must be completed before the application, as evidence must be based on retrospective learning and practice only. Advice on further training **will not be provided** once the candidate had been admitted to the programme.

4.6. Documentation for this route is accessible to all candidates on the IBMS website: [Certificate of Competence by Equivalence](#)

4.7. The following information may be helpful to potential candidates:

[Become a biomedical scientist](#)

Details of all the IBMS routes and processes, supporting individuals seeking HCPC registration.

Good Professional Practice Guide for Biomedical Scientists

This guidance document summarises current regulations and guidance relating to laboratory medicine, provides information on generic requirements set by the Institute and HCPC and clarifies how these relate to biomedical science [IBMS Good Professional Practice in biomedical science](#)

IBMS Code of Conduct

The Code consists of principles, which IBMS members are expected to observe in the interests of patient care and in order to promote confidence in the profession of biomedical science [Code of conduct](#)

Laboratory Training Approval for IBMS qualifications

The IBMS approves laboratories for training of its portfolio based qualifications. These standards look at laboratory training and standards of good practice.

[Laboratory Training Approval](#)

Complaints Handling Process

[Contact us](#)

About this document

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