

**Higher Specialist Diploma - Portfolio Essay Titles for Submission in 2025**

**Regulations**

* Two essays must be included in the portfolio as evidence of experiential learning. If, when you applied to undertake the HSD, you indicated you wanted to submit in 2025 you must choose any two essay titles from either the 2024 or 2025 list of essay titles. Both essays could come from the 2024 list or from the 205 list or you can do one essay from each list. If you had initially aimed to submit in 2024 but have had to defer one essay title can come from the 2023 list but the other essay must come from either the 2024 or 2025list.
* Essays should be 3000 words (±10%). Figures, tables and their respective legends and the reference list are **not** included in the word count of the essay.
* Candidates must use appropriate material from various sources within both essays and these must be referenced in either the Harvard **or** Vancouver format. Guidance on how to reference in either format can be found on the IBMS website [here.](https://www.ibms.org/education/ibms-qualifications-resources/)
* More information on writing these essays can be found in the article that appeared in the January 2024 edition of the Biomedical Scientist on ‘Writing at the Right Level’. This can be found [here](https://www.thebiomedicalscientist.net/resources/writing-right-level). In addition, a Support Hub session was held in March 2024 hosted by the IBMS Head of Examinations (Mr Chris Ward) and Head of Digital Education (Dr Jim Taylor). The recording of this session can be found on our website [here.](https://www.ibms.org/resources/webinars/ibms-support-hubs/)
* Candidates should note that the essays will be entered into the originality checking software system called Turnitin. This software produces a report that highlights not only how much text is similar to other sources but also where this material is located.

The similarity score that is produced as part of its Turnitin report requires the academic judgement of the examiners and the IBMS Head of Examinations to interpret whether this necessitates any action. Where plagiarism is detected, or if the similarity score is unacceptably high, it will be treated as academic malpractice and may have serious consequences. This could include the failure of the portfolio.

**Important Points to Remember**

The completion of the two essays forms parts of the portfolio requirements for the HSD. These essays help candidates to demonstrate to the examiners that they have a comprehensive understanding of a specific field of biomedical science and knowledge and understanding of current issues and developments which are key learning outcomes of the HSD. At this level, you should be able to demonstrate:

* a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems, much of which is at, or informed by, work at the forefront of the academic discipline
* a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research
* originality in the application of knowledge
* a conceptual understanding that enables critical evaluation of current research in their discipline

In constructing your essays you should:

* critically evaluate/discuss
* judge the relevance and significance of information
* evaluate claims, inferences, arguments and explanations
* construct clear and coherent arguments
* form well-reasoned judgements and decisions
* integrate and appraise reading and research
* be original in your application of knowledge

**HSD Essay Titles for 2025**

**Cellular Pathology**

Critically appraise the benefits of biomedical staff training in dissection to service delivery.

Discuss and debate the benefits and application of HPV screening within cellular pathology.

**Clinical Chemistry**

Critically review recent advancements in Clinical Biochemistry practice using specific examples from either technology and/or biomarker development.

Critically discuss the role of the Clinical Biochemistry laboratory in prenatal health and disease.

**Cytopathology**

Critically discuss the current and potential future use and impact of AI within the UK Cervical Screening Programmes.

Discuss the role of immunocytochemistry in the differential diagnosis of metastatic adenocarcinoma in serous effusions.

**Haematology**

Critically discuss the peripheral blood and bone marrow morphology, immunophenotyping and cytogenetics associated with BCR:ABL1 negative myeloproliferative neoplasms.

Critically discuss the diagnosis and classification of inherited platelet disorders.

**Immunology**

Critically describe the different complement pathways including regulatory mechanisms and associated defects.

Critically appraise assays available for the diagnosis of myeloma.

**Leadership and Management**

Critically evaluate the implications for a laboratory if staff request to work from home. Discuss the various issues and come to a conclusion about the feasibility of this, or not.

Contrast how would you manage the career development and progression of a highly motivated laboratory support worker and a long serving senior staff member who is having difficulty achieving competences and reluctant to take up any development opportunities

**Medical Microbiology**

Discuss a change in approach to Genital microbiology to include appropriate diagnosis for transgender patients.

The UKHSA pathogen genomics strategy was published in January 2024 in recognition of the important role that pathogen genomics has in modern infectious disease prevention and control and public health protection. Discuss the development and future scope of molecular testing within bacteriology.

**Transfusion Science**

Describe, in detail, the major antigens of the Rh blood group system (cCDEe) and the clinical significance of their corresponding antibodies in terms of haemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn. Include details surrounding the prevention of HDFN, and the management of HDFN affected pregnancies.

Critically discuss how you would plan to introduce a new blood grouping analyser into the laboratory with regards to current published guidance. Describe, in detail, the steps that must be taken before putting it into routine use and how its ongoing effectiveness would be monitored.

**Virology**

Discuss the current and potential future role for Point of Care Testing in clinical virology.

Critically analyse the re-emergence of measles in Europe, including factors driving it, possible consequences, and the impact on diagnostic services.