Criteria and Requirements for the Accreditation and Re-accreditation of BSc (Hons) degrees in Biomedical Science
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INTRODUCTION: CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BSc (Hons) DEGREES IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

The Institute of Biomedical Science (henceforth referred to as ‘The Institute’) is the professional body for biomedical scientists and has been accrediting biomedical science programmes for over thirty years. Accreditation is a process of peer review and recognition by the profession of the achievement of quality standards for delivering BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programmes which conform to the QAA subject benchmark statement for biomedical sciences (November 2015).

Reasons for Institute Accreditation

The following is not an exhaustive list but is designed to highlight the key benefits of IBMS accreditation.

1. Advances professional practice to benefit healthcare services and professions related to biomedical science.

2. Develops specific knowledge and competence that underpins biomedical science.

3. Provides expertise to support development of appropriate education and training.

4. Ensures curriculum content is both current and anticipatory of future change.

5. Ensures research is embedded in academic teaching and student development.


7. Ensures qualification is fit for purpose for those seeking careers in biomedical science.

8. Recognises the achievement of a benchmark standard of education suitable for statutory regulation.

9. The degree award provides access to professional body membership.

10. Strengthens links between the professional body, education provider, employer and student.

Types of Degrees Programmes

1. Full-time or part-time degree with optional placement(s) in an Institute approved NHS laboratory, research or industrial laboratory.
2. Integrated degree where work-based learning in an Institute approved laboratory is delivered as part of a full-time or part-time programme to enable completion of the Institute’s Registration Training Portfolio. These may also be approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

*Please note this model includes Healthcare Science (Life Science) degrees where students follow discipline specific pathways in their final year. For these degrees the subject benchmark statement must still be met by all students is therefore reliant on being demonstrated as achievable through modules that are core to all students, irrespective of the degree pathway.*

**QAA Subject Benchmark Statement**

The benchmark statement defines the subject area of biomedical science relating to BSc Honours degrees, incorporating this title, offered by UK Universities.

**Institute Membership and Registration with the Health and Care Professions Council**

An honours degree in Biomedical Science accredited by the Institute is acceptable as a preliminary academic qualification for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (henceforth referred to as HCPC). By undertaking a period of laboratory training and completion of the Institute’s Registration Training Portfolio for the award of a Certificate of Competence, individuals are able to demonstrate they meet the fitness to practice standards (HCPC Standards of Proficiency) required for registration as a biomedical scientist. The degree gives eligibility for Licentiate membership of the Institute.

The aim of professional body accreditation (and thereby suitability as a qualification requirement for statutory registration as a biomedical scientist with the HCPC), is to ensure that, through a spirit of partnership between the Institute and Higher Education Institutions (henceforth referred to as HEIs), a good quality degree is achieved that prepares the student for suitable employment in the field of biomedical science.

Some HEIs, in collaboration with local employers, may be able to offer an integrated degree, whereby a concurrent education and training programme leads to the award of the Certificate of Competence as well as the award of the degree. These programmes are structured to facilitate completion of the registration training portfolio during the degree, thus enabling the student to be eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration upon award of their degree. These degrees may also be approved by the HCPC through a similar process of review against the HCPC standards of education and training (SETS).
Institute Accreditation

While it is acknowledged that student choice in a modular degree programme should be maximised, the Institute will only accredit or re-accredit a specific named pathway (full-time, part-time, sandwich or integrated) that incorporates the specific and vocational requirements detailed in the QAA Subject Benchmarking for Biomedical Sciences (November 2015) with specific reference to the subject specific knowledge of biomedical science in Section 6.


These QAA requirements inform the core and key subject areas of the accredited degree and in the context of accreditation are equally applicable to non-UK degrees.

Accreditation is normally awarded for a period of five student cohorts. During the final year of intake the HEI will be notified that re-accreditation documentation will need to be submitted for review and whether or not a visit is required for accreditation of further student cohorts. This is conducted in accordance with the specific and general guidelines appropriate to initial accreditation, with additional requirements and can be regarded as a process of periodic review and a quality enhancement opportunity.

A database of accredited programmes is held by the Institute and updated as contact details of accreditation status changes. It is a condition of accreditation that the HEI notifies the Institute of any changes that are significantly different from the programme at the time the current period of accreditation was conferred. For example, changes that might affect the delivery and outcomes of the programme, course title, new pathway, overall aims or changes to teaching staff. The HEI is also required to provide programme information as an annual report to the Institute and may from time to time be expected to provide other information when requested. All information will be treated as confidential.

For further information about accreditation please contact education@ibms.org.
For information about the Institute visit www.ibms.org
A. PROGRAMME SUBMISSION

A1 It is preferred that programmes are submitted for accreditation/re-accreditation visits between October and the end of June, to allow for appropriate processes to be completed for student admissions in September. It is recognised that it may be preferable to coincide accreditation visits with the HEI’s internal validation review and/or approval visits by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). However, accreditation for undergraduate events must be confined to biomedical science programmes unless agreed by prior arrangement with the Institute. The Institute may also consider applications for accreditation/re-accreditation of Masters programmes in biomedical science at the same event (see separate document for Criteria and Requirements for Accreditation and Reaccreditation of MSc degrees in Biomedical Science).

A2 Confirmation of the date must be made to the Institute three months prior to the proposed accreditation/re-accreditation event.

A3 HEIs applying for Institute accreditation or re-accreditation of degree programmes are required to supply detailed submission documents according to the guidelines in sections D and E of this document.

A4 Documents must be submitted for consideration by the Institute and its representatives a minimum of six weeks before the scheduled accreditation event. Documents should be focussed and must be relevant to the programme.

A5 A fee of £1500 is payable to the ‘Institute of Biomedical Science’ on application for accreditation/re-accreditation. This will cover administration costs, standard travel, overnight accommodation and reasonable subsistence expenses for the panel for UK accreditation events.

A6 E-Learning programmes must meet the same criteria and requirements as other accredited degree programmes. On-line access must be made available to the Institute’s representatives. In addition, details about student/tutor and student/student contact time must be clearly defined, together with any specific requirements relating to employer support and the use of multimedia communications.
B. PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

B1 The Institute will normally appoint a panel of at least one academic representative and one practitioner representative, in addition to an IBMS education officer to review the submitted documentation and visit the HEI to discuss the proposed programme. The Institute may also appoint additional members of the panel for the purpose of training or quality assurance.

B2 Discussions will take place with senior management staff of the university, programme leaders and their team, external lecturers, placement providers, members of the employer liaison group and students.

B3 An independent panel Chair is appointed by the HEI (usually Head of a different school).

B3 Secretarial support for the Chair and panel must be provided to record deliberations and findings of the day.

B4 At the end of the visit the panel members of the Institute will indicate the outcome of the visit to the programme leaders. This will be one of the following:

- Accreditation without conditions
- Accreditation with conditions
- Accreditation declined

Recommendations for consideration by the HEI when further developing the programme may also be made and the panel may also wish to make commendations regarding exemplary practice.

B5 A draft report of the visit is prepared by the secretarial support provided by the university and a final version should be agreed with the Institute’s representatives. A copy of the final report must be submitted to the Institute’s Education Officer within one month of the visit.

B6 A report of the visit is made to the Institute’s Education & Professional Standards Committee with a recommendation to accredit or not accredit the programme, whether this is subject to any conditions, and if any recommendations and commendations were also made. Accreditation is usually awarded for five student intakes, subject to the HEI meeting any conditions of accreditation within the designated timeframe (usually 3 months).

B7 The HEI is notified in writing of the Committee’s decision. Any appeals to the outcome must be made in writing within one month of notification of the Committee’s decision.
Accredited programmes will be advertised on the Institute’s website and the HEI will receive an accreditation certificate for the period of accreditation and permission to use the Institute’s Accredited University logo. Only programmes that have current accreditation will be advertised on the Institute’s website.

Failure of the HEI to maintain compliance with the criteria for accreditation will trigger a review by the Institute that may result in accreditation status of the programme or programmes being withdrawn.
Accreditation Request
1. Receive communication that university wishes course to be accredited or re-accredited.
2. IBMS advises university that re-accreditation is due.

Agree Date
Agree date and format of the visit. (This may coincide with HCPC visit or internal validation).

University Sends Key Documents to include:
- programme specification;
- module descriptors;
- placement handbook;
- student handbook
- Employers handbook
- Curriculum vitae for relevant staff; and
- External examiners' reports for the last three years if available.
- Internal monitoring reports.
- Minutes of employer liaison meetings.

Administrative Process
1. Acknowledge request and send appropriate criteria and requirements document; or
2. Send personalised standard letter ACS1 with appropriate criteria and requirements document.

Administrative Process
1. Identify Institute panel.
2. Send letter Confirming accreditation date and panel details to university. Letter ACS2.
4. Record accreditation information on the current Accreditation Events Schedule.
5. Update University Accreditation Events Schedule.
6. Submit to next meeting of the E&PS Committee.
C. ACCREDITATION VISIT

C1 Members of the Institute’s panel may be invited to act as external assessors at the HEIs internal validation process as full members of the validation team. It must be recognised that while it is possible for a programme to be successfully validated by the HEI, it might not satisfy Institute requirements for accreditation.

C2 The agenda for the visit will include:

i) A tour of the teaching laboratory facilities (research laboratories optional).

ii) A private meeting with representative students from different biomedical science programmes and from each academic year (or in the event of first time accreditation other science students).

iii) A meeting with the programme team (including key subject specific part time lecturers) to discuss details of the programme and research activities.

iv) A meeting with placement providers and employer members of the Employer Liaison Group, to discuss their input to the delivery and future development of the programme(s).

v) Meetings with senior management staff with responsibility for relevant resources and research (with reference to RAE).

vi) If required, a final meeting with HEI representatives to clarify other issues.

vii) Private meeting of the panel.

viii) Verbal feedback report of outcomes to university staff.

The final agenda must be agreed the Institute’s Education Officer prior to the visit.

NB: See Sections D and E for further requirements and guidelines for accreditation and submitted documentation. Section F has a document checklist and Section G has guidance on university-employer liaison committees.
Accreditation Visit

Meeting of IBMS Panel, Chairperson, and Secretary.

IBMS panel tour facilities.

IBMS panel members meet with representative students from the programme.

IBMS panel meet with the programme team to discuss details of the programme and research activities.

Meeting with placement providers (if applicable) or employers liaison representatives.

Private meeting of Panel and Chair

Meeting with Senior Management to discuss relevant resources and research.

Private meeting of Panel.

Summary meeting with Chair and Secretary.

Final feedback and verbal report is given.
D. ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for accreditation are stated below with respect to accreditation (Section D1) or re-accreditation (Section D1 and Section D2) and type of programme.

Section D1. Accreditation BSc (Hons) Degrees in Biomedical Science

Biomedical science is concerned with the integration of a wide range of subjects to understand the science of causes, diagnosis and treatment of disease (pathobiology or biology of disease). Accreditation is specific to the programme description, which must clearly demonstrate the modules/units contributing to the degree award and mode of delivery.

D1.1 Specific Requirements of Programme Content

Fundamental to the rationale of the course is the integration of the basic knowledge and clinical pathology specialist subject areas through a study of a pathobiology component which must consider human disorders and disease processes together with their investigation. It is essential that this material should be included throughout the programme. Discrete modules would be preferred but an integrated approach is acceptable, providing its existence is adequately demonstrated.

The programme must include the subject areas indicated in (a) – (d) below. The headings are not intended to imply module titles and the subject matter is not intended to constrain module content.

(a) Basic Knowledge

Human anatomy and physiology
The structure, function, neurological and hormonal control of the human body, its component parts and major systems (musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, renal, urogenital, nervous, endocrine) and their relationship to each other.

Cell biology
The structure and function of prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells; the cell as the fundamental unit of life; cell division, cell cycle, stem cells, cell specialisation and cooperation.

Biochemistry
Key chemical principles relevant to biological systems, the structure and function of biological molecules and the biochemistry of processes which support life including cellular metabolism and its control.

Genetics and molecular biology
Genetics, genomics and human variation: the structure and function of genes, the principles of their inheritance, genetic disorders with particular biomedical significance, evolution and population biology. Molecular biology: the structure and function of biologically important molecules including DNA, RNA and proteins and
the molecular events that govern cell function. Molecular biology overlaps with biochemistry, genetics and cell biology. Key methods, such as bioinformatics, used to interpret the data from these studies.

**Immunology**

Immunology: acute and chronic inflammation, structure, function and mechanisms of the components of the immune system; innate and acquired immunity.

**Microbiology**

The structure, physiology, biochemistry, identification, classification and control of micro-organisms, including the roles of normal flora.

**(b) Clinical laboratory specialities**

The traditional disciplines of cellular pathology, clinical biochemistry, clinical immunology, haematology, transfusion science, clinical genetics and medical microbiology are increasingly being reconfigured into Blood Science, Cellular Science, Tissue Pathology, Infections and Molecular Science in major pathology service units in the NHS.

However, the subjects below specifically address the knowledge and understanding of disease processes in the context of laboratory investigation:

**i. Cellular pathology**

Cellular pathology is the microscopic examination of normal and abnormal cells (cytopathology), and tissues (histopathology) for indicators of disease. A biomedical science graduate will have a knowledge of:

- the gross structure and ultrastructure of normal cells and tissues and the structural changes which may occur during disease;
- reproductive science, including infertility and embryology;
- the preparation of cells and tissues for microscopic examination;
- the principles and applications of visualisation and imaging techniques, including microscopy, to aid diagnosis and treatment selection.

**ii. Clinical biochemistry**

Clinical biochemistry is the investigation of the function and dysfunction of systems, organs and tissues by the measurement of biochemical markers. A biomedical science graduate will have knowledge of:

- the range, and methods used for the collection of, clinical samples that may be subjected to biochemical analysis;
- the principles and applications of biochemical investigations used for screening, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of disease;
- therapeutic drug monitoring and investigation of substance abuse.
iii. Clinical immunology

Clinical immunology is the study of immunopathological conditions and abnormal immune function. A biomedical science graduate will have a knowledge of:

- the principles of the function and measurement of effectors of the immune response;
- the causes and consequences of diseases associated with abnormal immune function, neoplastic diseases and transplantation reactions together with their diagnosis, treatment and monitoring;
- immunological techniques used in clinical and research laboratories;
- prophylaxis and immunotherapy.

iv. Haematology

Haematology is the study and investigation of the different elements that constitute blood in normal and diseased states. A biomedical science graduate will have a knowledge of:

- the regulation of normal haemostasis;
- nature and diagnosis of anaemias, haematological malignancies, haemorrhagic and thrombotic diseases;
- techniques for their investigation.

v. Transfusion science

Transfusion science is the identification of blood group antigens and antibodies which ensures a safe supply of blood and blood components. A biomedical science graduate will have knowledge of:

- the genetics, inheritance, structure and role of red cell antigens;
- immune mediated destruction of blood cells;
- the preparation, storage and use of blood components;
- the selection of appropriate blood components for transfusion and possible adverse effects.

vi. Clinical genetics

Clinical genetics is the identification of genetic mutations and polymorphisms and their influence on disease processes. A biomedical science graduate will have knowledge of:

- genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic methods used to analyse and study human chromosomes and DNA;
- the application of molecular biology and Bioinformatics in medicine;
- pharmacogenetics and personalised medicine;
- genetic testing and associated ethical issues.
vii. Medical microbiology

Medical microbiology is the study and investigation of pathogenic microorganisms. A biomedical science graduate will have a knowledge of:

- public health microbiology;
- the laboratory investigation of a range of infectious diseases, including isolation and identification of microorganisms;
- anti-microbial and anti-viral therapy (including drug resistance);
- infection control.

(c) Integrated studies

Programmes should contain a reflective, integrated component (pathobiology) in which these clinical laboratory specialities are represented in a system-led approach to the study of disease and its treatment.

(d) Subject-specific and generic skills

A biomedical science graduate will be aware of the need for compliance with health and safety policies, good laboratory practice, risk and COSHH assessments, the Human Tissue Act and the importance of quality control and quality assurance.

There are a range of skills which a biomedical science graduate will be expected to acquire during the programme of study. These include:

- discipline and subject-specific skills associated with laboratory practice;
- research skills, including ethics, governance, audit, experimental design, statistical analysis, literature searching, scientific communication;
- key transferable skills, including communication, IT, numeracy, data analysis.

An honours level project based in biomedical science is an essential component of an Institute accredited degree programme. In accordance with the QAA Benchmarking criteria this must be an independent research based project centred on data generation and interpretation. Submissions from the HEI must provide detail of the arrangements for the performance and assessment of the project, together with examples of proposed project titles.

Students who graduate from integrated programmes have the opportunity to demonstrate competence in these and other skills in a clinical laboratory environment.
D1.2 General Requirements for Programme Delivery

(a) Management and Resources

i. Details of the infrastructure of teaching and research of biomedical science within the HEI should be stated.

ii. The programme should clearly be an integral part of the faculty/school with requisite support and resources, which should be sufficient for the projected number of students (i.e. demonstrated as Business Case). In addition there should be an infrastructure to support the research and teaching for these students, such as student-staff consultation committees, employers’ liaison committees and to support placements, if applicable.

iii. The HEI should have a clear strategy to provide adequate physical resources to mount or sustain the programme; including computing, information technology, audio-visual equipment, library and laboratory facilities for research and practical classes.

iv. There must be an appropriate balance between biomedical scientists, visiting lecturers and academic staff to ensure that there is a contribution from the profession to the delivery of the key laboratory specialties and the knowledge is current to the needs of professional practice.

v. The relationship of teaching staff to the delivery of modules and research interests should be evidenced in brief summary CVs.

vi. There should be a strategy for supporting on-going research relevant to the programme and development of the students in biomedical science.

(b) Programme Delivery

This section may in part be articulated through the programme specification document.

i. The programme specification must highlight the distinct features of the biomedical science honours degree courses, including overall learning outcomes.

ii. There must be clear descriptions of the modular content and mode of delivery (lectures, practicals, tutorials, flexible learning), including the level and credit points of each component, with learning outcomes and methods of assessment. The delivery of subject specific, transferable and key skills should be evident.
iii. The contents of each individual module must have sufficient detail to indicate the depth and breadth of its contents. Reading lists and other resources for each module must be current.

iv. Assessment regulations must require a pass standard to be achieved for the project at honours level. The project must have been executed successfully through independent research, centred on data generation, critical analysis and application of results. It is recommended that a minimum of 20% of final year credits are allocated to this project.

v. Assessment methods should be clearly related to the aims and objectives of the overall programme and its specific components and related learning outcomes. These should be clearly described with examples in the submission, together with the HEI’s policy on assessment.

vi. Where deemed appropriate, the programme team may wish to designate “core or critical” modules, where compensation within or between modules is not appropriate. This also applies to situations where averaging between assessment components is normally allowed by university regulations. Programme teams may wish to stipulate specific attainment standards in such modules (e.g. achievement of a minimum 35% work in examinations) before compensation is allowed. In this context it is important to recognise that students must achieve the threshold level for the benchmark descriptors as this directly reflects competency to practice as a Biomedical Scientist (i.e. those within the broad remit of clinical laboratory sciences: Haematology, Blood Transfusion Science, Medical Biochemistry, Cellular Pathology, Cytopathology, Medical Microbiology, Clinical Immunology). Criteria should be clearly identified within relevant documents such as student handbooks, module descriptors, programme specifications, modules handbooks etc.

vii. Central to the process of assessment is the involvement of external examiners with responsibility to ensure that standards are comparable with other HEIs who are offering accredited biomedical science degree programmes. If not already done, the appointment of at least one External Examiner from the programme team of an IBMS accredited degree must be made at the first opportunity.

viii. Where e-learning forms part of the degree, details will be required on course delivery and modules. Student/tutor and student/student contact time must be clearly defined together with any specific requirements relating to employer support and the use of multimedia communications.
ix. Students who successfully complete the programme must be able to meet the English language requirements of the HCPC standards of proficiency. Therefore if the degree is obtained outside of the UK and the student’s first language is not English the university will also need to provide evidence that graduates meet the International English Language Testing System¹ (IELTS) standard level 7 or equivalent.

¹ The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests competence in spoken and written English. Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA), have to provide evidence that they have reached the necessary standard. The HCPC accept a number of other tests as equivalent to the IELTS examination. Please visit their website (www.hcpc-uk.org) for more information.

(c) Staff/Employer Specific

i. There should be staff development arrangements for all staff involved in delivering the programme.

ii. Satisfactory liaison must be arranged with local employers and the HEI to inform the content and development of the programme. This should include a formal mechanism (i.e. Employer Liaison Committee²) for the views of employers and local Institute members to contribute to the design of the programme.

iii. Liaison with the Institute must include dissemination of Institute information for students and submission of relevant student information produced by the HEI, minutes of employer liaison committee meetings (minimum one per academic year) and the internal annual monitoring report produced for the university.

² A group which advises on matters relating to the education requirements of the profession: advice on course developments, marketing, perceived profile, reviewing and refining module profiles and syllabus composition to reflect the requirements of the profession and employers. Members of the group usually include the Head of Biomedical Science, Course Leader, Year Leaders, employers and an external Institute appointed nominee. Please refer to Institute guidelines in Section G for further information.

(d) Student Specific

i. Entry requirements, together with the selection criteria used for interviews and possible exemption arrangements, should be specified, and evidence the requirement for a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

ii. Where there is direct entry above year one there must be a clear policy for assessing students by APL to ensure they are able to meet all the learning outcomes of the programme.
iii. Admission procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether or not to take up the offer of a place on the accredited programme.

iv. There must be evidence of policies for equal opportunities and anti-discrimination in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

v. The student handbook must provide adequate information regarding relevant regulations, programme contents, project arrangements, pastoral care arrangements, student support mechanisms, career opportunities and role of professional and regulatory bodies.

vi. There should be early awareness of the IBMS, HCPC and career opportunities in the NHS in year 1 of the programme (or as appropriate for students admitted to the course with APL) and sufficient links with local employers to provide professional advice to students.

(e) Placement Specific

i. Where the placement is in an Institute approved training laboratory there must be clear instructions in the Training Manual for completing elements of the Institute’s Registration Portfolio.

ii. For students undertaking clinical or industrial placements there must be a formal agreement (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding) between the HEI and placement provider underlying the commitment to the placement, and if appropriate its contribution to the award.

iii. There must be appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver student placement education and training.

iv. Students and practice placement educators are fully prepared for placement with particular regard to:

- timings and the duration of any placement experience and intended learning outcomes
- expectations of professional behaviour
- communication and lines of responsibility

iv. The education provider maintains a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.
D1.3 Additional Requirements Specific for Integrated Degrees

(a) Curriculum

i. It is expected that the programme takes cognisance of other external reference frameworks such as the HCPC standards of education and training (SETS).

ii. A mapping document must be provided to demonstrate that those who successfully complete the programme meet all of the HCPC standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists through completion of the Institute’s registration training portfolio.

(b) Practice Placements Standards

i. Completion of the IBMS registration training portfolio must take place in IBMS approved training laboratories (evidence of compliance with IBMS training approval standards may be requested).

ii. Learning, teaching and supervision must be designed to encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional behaviour.

iii. Students and practice placement trainers must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the following:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved
- evidence required for the IBMS registration training portfolio to demonstrate the HCPC standards of proficiency
- procedures for verifying the portfolio has been completed and standards met role of the placement facilitator if appointed

iv. Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement trainers:

- are registered on the appropriate part of the HCPC register
- have relevant post-registration experience
- undertake appropriate training in teaching and learning techniques

v. There must be clear evidence of the collaboration and partnership arrangements between the HEI and practice placement providers, including audit of training standards, monitoring of students and feedback arrangements.

vi. The HEI must ensure necessary documentation and information is supplied to practice placement providers.
vii. Practice placement providers must ensure necessary information is available at the appropriate time for both the HEI and students.

viii. Throughout the placement a range of learning and teaching methods are employed that respect the needs of patients/clients and colleagues.

(c) Assessment Standards

i. The assessment design and procedures assure that the student can demonstrate fitness for practice.

ii. A range of assessment methods is employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practise competently and safely.

iii. There should be formal shared assessment between the HEI and laboratory supervisor. The laboratory supervisor must be a biomedical scientist.

iv. All assessments provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with the requirements for completion of the Institute’s registration training portfolio for the Certificate of Competence can be measured.

v. The measurement of student performance and progression is an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation, and use criteria that ensure fairness for all students.

vi. Professional aspects of practice are integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement.

(d) Verification of Completed Registration Training Portfolio

Assessment of student portfolios and verification that the HCPC standards of proficiency have been met must be conducted in accordance with Institute requirements and by Institute approved external verifiers in partnership with the HEI. Successful completion of the portfolio and accredited degree will be recognised with the award of the Institute’s Certificate of Competence.
Section D2. Re-accreditation BSc (Hons) Degrees in Biomedical Science

As a requirement of re-accreditation, there must be a review of the existing programme. *(Note: This is an opportunity to critically reflect on course developments, review the accumulation of minor changes and quality enhancements, external drivers (e.g. changes in subject areas), and ensure the course is still academically valid with the learning outcomes/aims appropriate to the profession).*

The review will cover all aspects of the programme relating to the specific and general requirements in section D1 in addition to the requirements of section D2. Particular attention will be paid to the following areas.

(a) Programme Delivery

i. Clear indication of any changes made to the course since the date of accreditation and the rationale underlying these changes must be included.

ii. External Examiner’s reports from previous 3 years with responses and action taken.

iii. Internal annual monitoring reports for previous 3 years.

iv. Critical evaluation and programme development, including input from employers.

(b) Staff/Employer Specific

i. Notes of the meetings of an employer liaison committee for last 3 years

(c) Student Specific

i. Student progression and class of degree awards (5 years).

ii. Student feedback. Student representatives from each year (including sandwich students) must attend the re-accreditation meeting. Representative past students should also be invited to attend.
E. GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS AND PANEL VISIT

Please note that accreditation will be based on submitted documents, which must be received, by the Institute a minimum of six weeks before the visit. All documents must be relevant to the programme, page-numbered and have a contents list. Tabled documents will not usually be accepted unless for a point of clarification.

(a) Documentation for Initial Accreditation

i. Detailed submission documents must clearly state the title and mode of delivery of the programme or programmes for which accreditation is being sought.

ii. Documentation must be specific to the programme or programmes to be accredited.

iii. There must be clear descriptions of the modular content and mode of delivery (lectures, practicals, tutorials, flexible learning), including the level and credit points of each component with learning outcomes and methods of assessment. The delivery of subject specific, transferable and key skills should be evident.

iv. The contents of each individual module must have sufficient detail to indicate the depth and breadth of its contents. Reading lists and other resources for each module must be current and appropriate.

v. Documentation must cover the following areas:

- **Programme specification**
  In line with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) published revised guidelines for preparing programme specifications (2006)
  A Programme Specification is a course synopsis presented as a short extract of the Course Handbook for each qualification conferred by the HEI. The primary users of these documents will be current students and applicants, external examiners, Professional and/or Statutory Body (PSBs) and other external agencies, potential employers of graduates and placement students, professional, commercial and industrial advisory groups, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) for training and skills surveys, British Council, and other national agencies and QAA Teams.

- **Course Handbook**
  This document will serve as the main reference for students, academic staff, University Office staff and external examiners.
  It must include the following information:
General information: Course title, duration, modes and all named award titles; course aims and learning outcomes; rationale for the course; links with professional or external validating bodies, if any.

Philosophy/learning outcomes: A clear statement of the philosophy of the course scheme and its relationship with cognate courses, and a summary of the learning outcomes for students completing the course at each stage.

Admissions requirements: Knowledge and skills; access arrangements; credit transfer; APL/APEL; selection procedures; student induction; equal opportunities.

Assessment: Details of assessment strategies and rationale; schedule of assessment; Assessment Board arrangements; details of penalties for late submission of coursework; approaches to preventing plagiarism.

Module descriptors

Placement arrangements (where applicable): This should include information to students and employers regarding preparation for placements, support and expected outcomes. For students completing the current IBMS registration training portfolio a list of IBMS approved training laboratories and their individual training programmes for completion of the portfolio must be included.

• A mapping document to demonstrate where the subject and discipline specific elements of the QAA subject benchmark statement are covered in individual modules.

• Employer liaison meeting minutes (with indicative membership)

• Staff CVs (normally no more than two A4 pages) that include a maximum of five most recent appropriate publications.

The relevant information required is:

Name and title:

Present post:

Main teaching activities:

Other duties:

Academic qualifications:

Professional qualifications:
Research interests/profile (last 3 years only):

Publications (last 3 years only):

Professional membership/involvement (last 3 years only):

External professional activities (last 3 years only):

Additional documentation for Re-accreditation

- **Self-Evaluation Document**
  
The self-evaluation presents the aims and objectives of the course and provides an evaluation of the student learning experience and student achievement. A self-evaluation should discuss both strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Where weaknesses are acknowledged, the HEI is encouraged to discuss the issues and the steps taken to improve quality.

  The evaluation should be organised within the below recommended headings and should be supported by evidence.

  - *Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation*
  - *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*
  - *Student Progression and Achievement*
  - *Student Support and Guidance*
  - *Learning Resources*
  - *Research*
  - *Quality Management and Enhancement.*

Some of the supporting material may be required for panel members to view at the meeting.
(b) IBMS Panel Visit to the Institution

i. The date of the accreditation/re-accreditation event must be agreed with the Institute three months prior to the visit.

ii. The Institute will normally nominate two representatives to participate in the event (one academic and one professional), in addition to an education executive officer. The Institute may wish to appoint an additional member for training or quality assurance purposes.

iii. A copy of the submission documents must be sent to the Institute’s representatives as notified to the university a minimum of six weeks before the event.

iv. Suggested agenda (variations must be agreed with the Institute’s Education Officer prior to the event).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00 - 09.30</td>
<td>Meeting of accreditation panel (Chair, Secretary and Institute representatives) to set areas for discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.30 - 10.00</td>
<td>Tour of laboratory facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00 - 10.45</td>
<td>Meeting with representative students</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45 - 11.00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 - 12.30</td>
<td>Meeting with programme team, including external practitioner lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30 - 13.00</td>
<td>Meeting with placement providers or employers liaison committee representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.00 - 13.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.30 – 13.45</td>
<td>Private meeting of panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.45 - 14.15</td>
<td>Meeting with senior management team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.15 – 14.30</td>
<td>Private meeting with Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.30 – 14.45</td>
<td>Summary meeting with Chair and secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.45 – 15.00</td>
<td>Final feedback and verbal report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note:

a) Secretarial support from the HEI is required for the visit, in order to report the deliberations and findings of the panel.
b) The HEI is required to nominate a Chairman who is independent to the programme team. The specific role of the independent chair is generally to:

- Manage the event and ensure that it is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the panel;
- Encourage an ‘inclusive approach’ (with an emphasis on dialogue, as opposed to a cross-questioning or adversarial approach;
- Ensure appropriate introductions;
- Guide discussion;
- Arbitrate on disagreements;
- Direct questioning in line with the requirements of the panel;
- Ensure all parties at joint visits have sufficient time to engage in discussions;
- Keep the joint panel to time; and
- Summarise and present the conclusions of the joint panel to the programme team.

c) It is helpful if a list of attendees for each meeting is provided.

In the event which includes an HCPC approval visit the Institute will consider revised agenda to take into consideration the requirements of the HCPC.

(c) Post Panel Visit Procedures

i. A copy of the draft accreditation event report must be circulated to the panel within two weeks following the event.

ii. A copy of the confirmed report must be sent to the panel and the Institute within four weeks following the event.

iii. The final report with panel representation will be made to the Institute’s Education and Professional Standards Committee prior to the next scheduled meeting.

iv. The Institute will normally accredit or re-accredit a programme for a maximum of five student intakes subject to the conditions set by the panel being met by the HEI.

v. Supporting documentation for demonstrating the conditions have been met must be submitted to the Institute by the deadline stated in the conditions.

vi. Please contact the IBMS Office (Education) if you have any queries or concerns about the criteria, requirements or guidelines
Post Event

BMS Panel Complete their Report

• Details of outcomes mapped to accreditation criteria document.
• Commendations made if appropriate.
• Conditions set if needed and date agreed for conditions to be met.
• Copy of report is sent to the university and to the Education and Professional Standards Committee (E&PSC).

Accreditation Approved?

Yes

No

Recommendation to E&PSC

Recommendation for (re-)accreditation considered by E&PSC

Recommendation to E&PSC

Recommendation for non-approval or withdrawal plus any observations considered by E&PSC

University replies to conditions and sends evidence that conditions have been met to the panel within the agreed time-frame.

Have the conditions been met?

Yes

No

Administrative Process

University formally advised of non-approval/withdrawal of accreditation.

Update Guide to Accredited Degrees.

Send updated Guide to website manager.

Update University Accreditation Events Schedule.

University formally advised of non-approval/withdrawal of accreditation.

Update Guide to Accredited Degrees.

Send updated Guide to website manager.

Update University Accreditation Events Schedule.

2. Send updated Guide to website manager.
3. Prepare accreditation diploma certificate ACS5.
4. Formally advise university of approval (letter ACS6) and send certificate.
5. Update University Accreditation Events Schedule.
F. DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

Please copy this page and complete for circulation with the submission documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information required</th>
<th>Source of information in documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Details of infrastructure of teaching and research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Faculty/school support and resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Lecturers details and CVs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Programme aims and objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Entry requirements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Student progression (if applicable)</td>
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<td>7 Assessment methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Quality assurance</td>
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<td>9 Programme regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Programme content, mode of delivery, levels and credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Description of modules, including reading lists</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Mapping of QAA subjects to curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Programme management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Staff development arrangements, including arrangements for external lectures.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Liaison arrangements with employers and the Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Pastoral care for students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17  Student handbook

18  Project arrangements

19  Student placement arrangements (where appropriate)  
    To include a list of laboratories where placements are made, main contact  
    person and a copy of the individual laboratory’s training programme detailing  
    the arrangements for the placement period(s).

20  Student/tutor and student/student contact time  
    (applicable to distance learning courses only)

Re-accreditation specific requirements in addition to the above

1. Self-Evaluation document to include comments on:

   Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation including any changes since  
   previous accreditation

   Teaching, Learning and Assessment

   Student Progression and Achievement

   Student Support and Guidance

   Learning Resources

   Research

   Quality Management and Enhancement (including audit of placement  
   arrangement if applicable)

2. Copies of External Examiners’ reports action taken

3. Minutes of employer liaison meetings

4. A list of verifiers (name and employer address) – with an indication if they are  
   university only or also for IBMS pool

5. Training programmes that have taken place since last accreditation and which  
   have been attended by verifiers named.
G. UNIVERSITY/EMPLOYER LIAISON

One of the requirements for all HEIs seeking accreditation or re-accreditation of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes is that there are satisfactory liaison with local employers and local Region or Branch of the IBMS as a formal mechanism for the views of employers and local Institute members to be taken into consideration in the design etc of the course. This will also provide a means of enhancing communication between universities, employers and the Institute.

It is important to distinguish between university liaison officers, who are a point of contact between the university and the Institute, and professional advisors who are experienced practitioners capable of inputting to the development and improvement of courses. Some of these advisors may have a teaching role on the course on a part time or visiting basis.

Role of Committee

The role of the committee should be to:

- Offer expert advice to the university Head of Biomedical Science on the applicability and effectiveness of its awards
- Contribute to the periodic review of IBMS accredited awards
- Advise on new opportunities in biomedical science education that the HEI could explore
- Inform the HEI of changing needs relating to employment

There should be clear Terms of Reference that cover the remit of the group to:

1. Ensure content of the degree is current and relevant to clinical laboratory practice
2. Ensure that the delivery and structure of the programmes takes into account the realities within the laboratory

Specific to programmes with integral clinical placement:

3. Ensure the students are trained in a supportive environment and fit to practice on graduation
4. Ensure that the quality of training is provided by reviewing student experience and making recommendations to enhance the quality of this experience.

Membership

The membership of the group should be:

- Chairman (IBMS member)
- Head of Biomedical Science
• 2-3 academic representatives from the programme team for biomedical sciences
• Professional representatives from local employers
• Local IBMS member representative approved by the Institute

Benefits

The benefits of university/employer liaison committees are to:

• Ensure biomedical science practitioners can input to the design of the programmes;
• Ensure the programmes reflect the professional ethos of biomedical science;
• Ensure the programme are current to the requirements of biomedical science and its practitioners;
• Ensure the programmes meet the needs of local employers;
• Provide useful advice/feedback from prospective employers;
• Provide laboratory placement and employment opportunities for students and graduates;
• Enable research strategy to include potential partnerships with employers
About this version

Document title: Criteria and Requirements for the Accreditation and Re-accreditation of BSc (Hons) degrees in Biomedical Science

Produced by: Education and Professional Standards Committee

Contact: Education Department

T: + 44 (0)20 7713 0214, E: education@ibms.org

Version: 2.3

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