

IBMS Statement on Apprenticeship Degrees September 2017

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) recognises that employers are anxious to recoup the apprenticeship levy that has been top-sliced from training budgets and as a result they are asking universities to develop new apprenticeship degrees, or modify existing biomedical degrees to meet the apprenticeship standards and include an integrated End-Point Assessment (EPA).

It has been documented (Degree Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment Plan for Healthcare Science Practitioners [Level 6] ST0413/AP01) that: *“Any Honours Degree that has been accredited by the National School of HCS or Biomedical Science (BMS) degree that has been approved by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) or Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) are acceptable for this higher degree apprenticeship”*.

It is important to note that, in the context of healthcare (biomedical) science apprenticeship degrees, **ONLY** programmes accredited by the IBMS and HCPC that have **integral placements** that include the completion of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio (i.e. Applied Biomedical Science or Healthcare Science degrees in Life Sciences) are suitable for adaptation to an apprenticeship degree, i.e. which meets level 6 apprenticeship standards with an integrated EPA.

IBMS accreditation is based on the content of biomedical science degrees (including HCS degrees in life sciences) conforming to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) 2015 benchmark statement for biomedical sciences. Specifically, in combination with the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio, they enable graduates to demonstrate they have met all of the HCPC standards of proficiency for registration as a biomedical scientist working in clinical pathology laboratories. The IBMS has **four programmes** that have been approved by the HCPC as routes to registration as a biomedical scientist and whilst we acknowledge an aim of *Modernising Scientific Careers* was to streamline routes into the profession, the increased flexibility provided by the IBMS routes enables employers to have a greater choice in the graduates they employ as trainees or registered biomedical scientists.

We recognise that the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio could be used as part of the EPA but currently there is no intention of modifying the content of the portfolio or end-point verification process to meet apprenticeship requirements as the portfolio is designed specifically to demonstrate eligibility to apply for registration as a biomedical scientist. Any modification to meet apprenticeship standards is deemed unnecessary in terms of statutory regulation, and it is felt that the additional requirements for the EPA would either create a two-tier system or place an extra burden on students, trainees and trainers.

The IBMS is committed to working with higher education institutions and employers who are considering the future provision of apprenticeship degrees. We advocate early engagement in the process in order to guide HEIs on how best to meet our requirements for degree accreditation. As IBMS accreditation is against specific criteria approved by the HCPC, any changes arising from adaptations of existing IBMS accredited degrees must be formally submitted to the IBMS Education Department (by email education@ibms.org or using the HCPC major change form which is a requirement for HCPC approval of the degree) for assessment against our accreditation criteria. The IBMS assessment will consider the impact of the changes suggested to meet the apprenticeship standards and EPA on the delivery of the degree and associated processes, including laboratory training and support for students.

If you are planning to make these changes please contact Alan Wainwright, Executive Head of Education in order to initiate a dialogue on this matter as failure to inform the IBMS of changes to your programme could lead to withdrawal of accreditation, including the use of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio.

HCPC approved programmes provided by the IBMS:

1. Certificate of Competence (accredited degree containing the Registration Training Portfolio) - approved March 2010
2. Certificate of Competence (accredited degree followed by the Registration Training Portfolio) - approved March 2010
3. Certificate of Competence (Non -accredited degree followed by the Registration Training Portfolio) - approved March 2010
4. Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) - approved August 2015.