IBMS CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE
BY EQUIVALENCE
(BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST)

The Role of Mentors:
Guidance for Candidates and
Mentors
IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)

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Forward

Producing the evidence required to meet the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency can be quite challenging for some candidates and it is important to ensure that you fully appreciate what will be involved.

I would like to draw your attention to the importance of having a mentor who is experienced in the preparation of evidence for the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) Registration Training Portfolio for Biomedical Scientists as well as a supportive environment for training. Your mentor must have experience of producing evidence for the Registration Training Portfolio as a candidate when they were training, through supervising other candidates/trainees to successful completion.

Before application, candidates should consider the standards of proficiency and discuss with their mentor how easily they can be evidenced by them. The Portfolio Development Plan, which must be submitted with the application, will assist with this. It may be that additional training time in a routine clinical pathology diagnostic laboratory, which already has IBMS approval for pre-registration training, is required in order to be able to demonstrate that all of the standards can be evidenced. If an applicant does not have access to a suitable 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.

Alan Wainwright

Programme Leader
IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)

The Role of Mentors: Guidance for Candidates and Mentors

1. Programme Requirements

1.1. Applicants admitted onto the programme must have additional support from a named mentor who is HCPC registered as a biomedical scientist. Their mentor must also have experience of producing evidence for the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio. This can be achieved either by completion as part of their registration process, by their supervision of another candidate/trainee to successful completion or as an IBMS External Verifier.

1.2. Mentors should be identified by the applicant before they complete the 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.

2. Programme Information

2.1. General Information

- Programme Specification for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
- Programme Handbook for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
- Curriculum Handbook for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
- Role of the Mentor: Guidance for Candidates and Mentors

2.2. 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
- IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Portfolio Development Plan
- Candidate Monitoring Feedback Form for IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
- IBMS Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) Candidate Final Feedback Form
2.3. Specific to the Mentor

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

3. Purpose of the Mentor

3.1. Mentors must have experience of producing evidence for the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio. This can be achieved either by completion as part of their registration process, by their supervision of another candidate/trainee to successful completion.

3.2. The mentor should be able to provide professional support and guidance for individuals applying for admittance to the programme (the applicant) and, if accepted, (the candidate) submission of evidence against the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists. They should be able to help resolve any issues that might occur during the application process or submission of evidence if the applicant is accepted onto the programme.

3.3. The mentor is expected to have an understanding of the programme and the ability to support the candidate. Specifically this is in terms of guiding the applicant to provide relevant information in the description of the applicant’s role and the environment in which they have gained experience, in order to satisfy the IBMS criteria for entry to the programme and establish relevance to HCPC registration. If accepted onto the programme, they will be expected to support the candidate in obtaining any additional practical training and experience to facilitate the production of appropriate evidence.

3.4. The mentoring role is primarily an advisory one and specifically requires the mentor to offer advice on the following:

a. To be eligible for the Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist) an applicant must demonstrate there has been 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*. Applicants are required to submit, as part of their application, a summary of their professional experience (around 1000 words) which contains a description of 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.

*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. Mentors should be able to advise the applicant on key points to include in the statement to show that their experience and role is commensurate with that of a biomedical scientist. For instance, the focus should be on the detailed knowledge and ability listed in section 5 of the Programme Handbook. Similarly, based on their own training experience, mentors should be able to help identify areas of the applicant’s
development that mirror standards of training for biomedical scientists on other HCPC approved programmes.

c. Mentors should familiarise themselves with the curriculum and programme outcomes and the requirements for the provision of evidence to demonstrate how the candidate meets the HCPC standards of proficiency. As it is expected that the candidate can achieve this based on their qualifications, professional experience and current role without further training, the mentor guides them in the preparation of suitable evidence to demonstrate how the standards of proficiency have been met.

d. 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.

e. Mentors should be readily available to support the candidate and offer advice as required. If required mentors are able to contact the IBMS to assist them in the provision of guidance.

3.5. Mentors (and candidates) are asked to complete a feedback report after three months in order to monitor progress and provide an opportunity for any problems to be highlighted and resolved in a timely manner. The 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) 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. Final feedback reports are also to be submitted at the end of the programme.

3.6. Mentors should be willing to provide counselling or support for candidates during periods of sick leave and if necessary liaise with the candidate’s employer and/or IBMS in order 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. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by IBMS senior education staff and an extension may be granted. 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. Para 10.2.7 in the Programme Handbook states that “Once accepted onto the programme applicants expected to comply with the HCPC standards of conduct, performance, and ethics (2016) as these are reflected in the standards of proficiency against which the candidate will be providing evidence from their prior learning and development. Their understanding of the implications of the standards of performance and ethics to their professional practice must be confirmed in the application form. If during the programme the employer or mentor has any issues or concerns about a candidate’s profession-related conduct this should be reported to the IBMS. Failure to comply with these
standards of conduct, performance, and ethics could lead to withdrawal from the programme”.

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 this. Mentors are advised to discuss any concerns with the employer and reach agreement on the 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 learners to recognize situations where service users may be at risk, how to raise concerns and ensure action has been taken in response to the concerns.