

## Education and Training Committee – 2 December 2008

### Routes to registration for Biomedical Scientists

#### Executive summary and recommendations

#### **Introduction**

As part of the Education Department's 2008 – 2009 work plan, information has been sought to outline the routes to registration for Biomedical Scientists. This paper provides a summary and analysis of the routes to registration as information for the Committee.

The Committee is asked to review the information and note that at the March 2009 Education and Training Committee a decision will be sought to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the biomedical science routes to registration to meet the relevant standards.

#### **Summary of the routes to registration**

There are two ways in which an individual can complete an HPC approved programme in Biomedical Science. The first is that HPC approves programmes that upon completion lead directly to eligibility to apply for registration. These are sometimes referred to as integrated programmes.

The other approved programme route is to complete the training associated with and obtain the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) Certificate of Competence. We therefore regard the IBMS as an education provider/validating body. The IBMS Certificate of Competence was transferred to the HPC as an approved programme when the Council was established and it has not been subject to an approval visit or monitoring processes.

Graduates who have completed a course at an education provider outside of the UK and who wish to become established in the UK must apply for registration through HPC's international route.

The information in this paper focuses on the IBMS Certificate of Competence and has been taken from the education and training pages of the IBMS website. There are three ways in which an individual can obtain the Certificate of Competence and this depends upon the degree which an individual has obtained.

#### **1. Co-terminus degrees**

The IBMS accredits co-terminus degrees. A co-terminus degree combines a programme of study with the work based laboratory training. This enables a student to complete the IBMS Registration Portfolio as part of the programme.

The Registration Portfolio is assessed by an IBMS approved external assessor in partnership with the institution running the programme. Successful completion of the co-terminus degree results in the award of the degree and the Certificate of Competence.

For the IBMS to accredit a co-terminus degree the work based laboratory training must take place in an IBMS approved laboratory. Co-terminus degrees may also be approved by the HPC. However, the requirement for the work based learning to be obtained in an IBMS approved laboratory is not a requirement for HPC approval.

## **2. Non co-terminus degrees (sometimes referred to as the Traditional route)**

The IBMS also accredits non co-terminus degrees. Non co-terminus degrees do not incorporate work based laboratory training into their programme of study; they are purely academic.

### Prior to 9 July 2003

Students who received a letter from the CPSM/HPC/IBMS confirming the acceptability of their qualifications are required to undertake a period of work based training in a laboratory. They are required to complete a training log book and upon completion of the log book, undergo an oral examination. The IBMS will appoint an appropriate external examiner to undertake the oral examination in conjunction with an internal examiner from the laboratory. The Certificate of Competence can only be awarded once the IBMS are satisfied that the log book and oral examination have been successfully completed.

The letters issued by the CPSM/HPC/IBMS are valid for five years. This could mean that some students are just starting their training and would therefore still be completing the log book and expecting to undergo an oral examination at the end. It is unclear how many students are in this situation.

### Post 9 July 2003

Once a student has successfully completed an IBMS accredited non co-terminus degree, they are required to undertake a period of training within an IBMS approved laboratory. While undertaking this training, students must complete the IBMS Registration Portfolio. The students' training officer will assess the portfolio to ensure that evidence of competence is being collected. However, upon completion, the portfolio is assessed by an IBMS appointed external verifier to ensure that it meets the appropriate standards. A visit to the laboratory is conducted and the student and training officer may be asked to provide points of clarification. The Certificate of Competence can only be awarded once the IBMS are satisfied the Registration Portfolio has been successfully completed.

## **3. Top-up course**

Graduates who have completed a degree which has not been accredited by the IBMS can submit their qualification to the IBMS for assessment. They are required to submit a copy of their certificate, the entire course syllabus and degree transcript among other things. The Institute will determine, on a case by case basis, whether candidates need to undertake any supplementary education

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from an IBMS accredited undergraduate degree to satisfy the appropriate educational standards.

Once graduates have made up any shortfall they are required to obtain a place within an IBMS approved laboratory and complete the Registration Portfolio in order to apply for the Certificate of Competence. This is the same process as outlined above for non co-terminus degrees post 9 July 2003.

### **Analysis of the routes to registration**

A student can not be awarded the Certificate of Competence without having completed an IBMS accredited degree or having had their qualifications assessed by the IBMS. The qualification undertaken by the student therefore plays an important role in the award of the Certificate of Competence.

The policies and procedures which the IBMS has in place enable it to accredit/verify programmes of study; accredit placement providers and assess placement experience for all three routes to the award of the Certificate of Competence.

As the IBMS are acting in the capacity of an education provider/validating body they are required to meet all the standards of education and training and the standards of proficiency.

### **Operational considerations**

Given the complexity of the landscape of pre-registration education and training for biomedical scientists, it will take time and a period of transition before the HPC approval or monitoring processes can be applied. The summary below provides an indication of timeframes.

- December 2008 – paper to note to Education and Training Committee.
- March 2009 – decision paper to Education and Training Committee to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the IBMS and the Certificate of Competence to meet the HPC standards.
- October 2009 – if it is decided to conduct an approval visit we will require six months notice and this will be the earliest possible time that we could conduct a visit.
- January 2010 – if a visit is selected and because we estimate the post-visit process to take three months, this is the earliest possible time to conclude the approval process.

The Committee is minded that the approval and monitoring processes are normally applied to schemes of training and education. The IBMS methodology may require adaptations to the approach taken in applying the approval or monitoring processes.

It is apparent that the members of the Education Department will require a briefing on the differences between this model of approved qualification and the

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other qualifications approved by HPC for biomedical science. The same will also be true for visitor partners.

There may also be changes required to elements of the processes. Most predictable of these changes are to the required documents requested before a visit and to the agenda as some new meetings may need to be added and others removed to collect all the relevant evidence from the education provider.

There may be other impacts on the processes of approval or monitoring and it may be prudent to conduct a preliminary meeting with representatives of the IBMS to determine how best to conduct the processes.

**Decision**

This paper is for information only and therefore no decision is required.

**Resource implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Appendices**

None

**Date of paper**

20 November 2009

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