



## **HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on 12 February 2020 at IBMS, Coldbath Square, London.

**Present:** Professor Yvonne Barnett (President, and chair; Anglia Ruskin), Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Sligo IT), Dr Esther Bell (KCL), Dr Sue Jones (York St John), Dr Simon Fox (Plymouth), Professor Hilary MacQueen (HUBS; Open), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lowri Mainwaring (Cardiff Metropolitan), Dr Claire Wynne (TU Dublin), Professor Victor Gault (Ulster), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary).

**In Attendance:** Ms Jill Rodney (IBMS), Mr Alan Wainwright (IBMS).

**Apologies:** Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Mr Andrew Usher (IBMS), Professor Julie McLeod (Birmingham City), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster).

1. The minutes (approved by previous circulation) of the Executive Committee meeting on 13 November 2019 were noted with the insertion of Professor Gault as having been present.

2. The upgraded and refurbished facilities at IBMS, Coldbath Square, were noted approvingly.
3. **TEF.** It was noted that Professor McLeod had confirmed that there was little new to report from the previous meeting.
4. **REF Update.** Professor Barnett informed the meeting that Main Panel A and its sub-panels met on Monday 10th February 2020 to review UK HEI intentions to submit documentation and to agree the next steps in terms of ways of working and the recruitment of additional assessors with relevant expertise. Proposals for additional assessors from the sub-panels will be presented to Main Panel for consideration and then recommended to Research England. Research users will be required to support the assessment of Impact Case Studies.

Following confirmation of final panel membership and their roles in summer 2020, and the publication of this information, the sub-panels will meet towards end of 2020 to undertake preparatory work ahead of the REF 2020 assessment phase beginning in January 2021.

Research England will publish all HEI Codes of Practice in late Spring.

All HEIs wishing to make a case for output reductions on the basis of staff circumstances will need to do so by March 2020.

5. **KEF.** Professor MacQueen updated the Committee on the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF). The Report following the KEF consultation has now been published at <https://re.ukri.org/documents/2019/knowledge-exchange-framework-decisions-16-jan-2020/>.

The report notes the decisions taken for the first KEF iteration and confirms that it will go ahead in May this year. The metrics, largely derived from HEBCIs data, may be accompanied by an institutional narrative, all of which must be submitted by 15 May 2020. Results are planned to be announced in Summer 2020. KEF currently applies to English institutions only.

6. **Brexit Update.** The Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, informed the Committee that, despite some positive statements from Whitehall, great uncertainty remains as to the UK's likely participation in the next EU Framework Programme, Horizon Europe. This also applies to ERASMUS+, and the scale, priorities and distribution of a funding replacement for EU Structural Funds which remain essential for capacity building in Wales, Northern Ireland and deprived areas of Scotland and England. Such funds exceed EU Framework funding as a source of income for a number of HUCBMS institutions.
7. **Equality and Diversity.** Dr Jones updated the Committee on EDI issues including a Royal Society of Biology EDI event on 4th December at which the following was discussed:
- Highlights of MO diversity and inclusion activities held in 2019
  - Discussion of future DIWG activities
  - Development of DIWG Diversity and Inclusion 2020 event
  - Direction and chair selection of future DIWG meetings
  - Future MO diversity and inclusion activities to be held in 2020
  - Sharing of relevant diversity and inclusion resources
  - Update on STEMM-DAC and Athena Forum activities

Dr Jones agreed to send on the latest EDIS email to Professor McKenna for circulation to HUCBMS members and providing details of how to sign up for further information.

**8. Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland Matters.**

- i. Professor McCormack informed the Committee that proposed discussions with the Irish government on the issue of full recognition by CORU of equivalent non-Rol qualifications in BMS and other health professions have been postponed until a new government has been established following the general election.

- ii. Professor Gault reported on the restoration of NI Executive and its potential implications for HE.
- iii. Dr Walsh reported that the Scottish Government has committed to charging EU students Home fees (£1950) for session 2020/21. No information as yet as to 2021/22 onwards; the options include: Home fees equivalent, England equivalent (approx. £9000) or full international fees.
- iv. Dr Mainwaring informed the Committee that demand for BMS programmes in Wales remains buoyant.

9. **Apprenticeships update and Council for Healthcare Science Education.** Mr Wainwright reported on these matters but noted that he was not a member of the CHSE.

From an IBMS perspective, apprenticeship degrees continue to be accredited as integrated biomedical science degrees, requiring completion of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio to evidence eligibility to apply for HCPC registration as a biomedical scientist. It was noted that the standards for a level 7 apprenticeship have been finalised.

10. **Update on joint HUBS/HUCBMS workshop on 'alternatives to laboratory projects'.** Two submissions were received – both met the criteria.

The joint submission from Leeds/York St John was supported. The workshop will run prior to HUCBMS conference and a presentation on its outcomes will be included in the programme.

11. **Report from IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee.** Dr Walsh reported on this agenda item as Professor Randall had been unable to attend the meeting.

Discussions with Scottish Government regarding Remote and Rural Specialist BMS training and education are progressing. The next meeting is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> February. At this meeting, information will be gathered around how many labs come under this heading and their requirements/scope will be presented. This will allow the group to see where the priorities are and the scale of the issue. IBMS will be kept fully informed and involved in discussions and suggestions as to the next steps.

A review of the IBMS Higher Specialist Diploma is underway.

A Working Group has been established to review IT in pathology.

Five BMS programmes have been accredited/re-accredited including new programmes in Suffolk and Sussex.

12. **Other IBMS Matters.** Ms Rodney outlined other IBMS matters including: the election of the new IBMS President, Mr Allan Wilson, and his inauguration in January; the call to members to stand for election to Council and encouraged HUCBMS colleagues to consider standing; the expected public consultation on biomedical scientists being able to supply and/or administer medicines; the launch of an e-learning pilot within the Institute in response to members' requests; and feedback on a recent Council discussion on how to support members into employment. Ms Rodney agreed to circulate the key topics identified from the feedback.

13. **Royal Society of Biology Education Policy Advisory Group.** Dr Pike reported on recent activities:

- The RSB has created a searchable, digital library of more than 800 statements, comments, briefings and other policy resources published by the RSB and our Member Organisations (MOs) across the biosciences. This collection is freely and openly accessible to everyone, including members and non-members. The resource brings together information on relevant, published policy documents produced from September 2011 to present.

Outputs published earlier than this have also been collected, where available. All RSB MOs have been contacted, resulting in a collection of over 800 resources from over 25 MOs. The associated data collection includes the type of the publication (including but not limited to consultation responses, briefing papers, letters and position statements), a web link to each publication (URL), keywords relating to each publication (up to 7 from a list of 140), and the date of publication for each item. A search will provide a list of resources (available via their URL), relevant to the search terms and keywords used. MOs will be encouraged to update the RSB on any new published policy resources and RSB will put out a formal call for updates on a regular basis. The RSB aims for the policy work of all of their MOs to be featured, subject to their preferences.

- Applications are open for Big Biology Day grants, until 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. (10 grants of £500 each are available, to fund community outreach projects in the biosciences).

Dr Pike submitted a contribution on behalf of HUCBMS to the 'PISA Curriculum Review for STEM Education: A Vision for the Future' – a consultation on how pre-University education should prepare young people for the degrees and careers of the future.

14. **HUBS.** Professor MacQueen reported that most activities have focussed on the forthcoming conference at the Francis Crick Institute on the 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> April. The Open Educational Resource is being refreshed by our Early Career lecturers. This group is flourishing and is starting to produce outputs such as a recent article in The Biologist.

15. **Social Media.** The Committee supported the social media strategy and its proposed implementation plan which had been produced by Professor McCormack. It was agreed to circulate the document to all HUCBMS members. It was noted that Professor McCormack would oversee the

HUCBMS twitter account and Dr Jones would take charge of the Facebook account.

16. **Finance.** It was noted that the Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke had indicated that while HUCBMS finances remain relatively sound, it would be appropriate for the annual fee to rise in 2021. It was agreed that the Committee should receive and endorse an appropriate fee increase proposal at its next meeting and bring the proposal to the AGM for full membership approval.

17. **HUCBMS 2019.** Dr Wynne informed the Committee that HUCBMS 2019 had yielded a small surplus which would be shared equally between HUCBMS and TU Dublin.

### **18. HUCBMS 2020 at York St John University**

The meeting noted that HUCBMS 2020 will take place at York St John University on 2-3 September.

Dr Jones informed the Committee of the proposed social programme, facilities for the academic programme and commercial displays, and the proposed conference attendance and accommodation fees for delegates. This was approved. Details will be posted on the conference website shortly.

The Committee discussed the academic programme and identified potential speakers. Professor McKenna agreed to liaise with Executive Committee members with a view to having the programme finalised by the end of March.

19. **Future Conferences.** It was noted that HUCBMS 2021 is scheduled to be held at Coventry University. Professor McKenna will write to member institutions inviting bids to host future conferences.

20. **Next meeting.** The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for 11.00 on Tuesday 26 May at IBMS, London.