



HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on 13 November 2019,
University of Westminster.

Present: Professor Yvonne Barnett (President, and chair; Anglia Ruskin), Professor Julie McLeod (Birmingham City), 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), Dr Sandra Kirk (HUBS; for Professor Hilary MacQueen), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary).

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

Apologies: Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lowri Mainwaring (Cardiff Metropolitan), Dr Claire Wynne (TU Dublin), Professor Hilary MacQueen (HUBS), Mr Andrew Usher (IBMS).

1. The minutes (approved by previous circulation) of the Executive Committee meeting on 8 May 2019 and of the HUCBMS 2019 AGM were noted.

2. The President, Professor Barnett, noted the election of Dr Simon Fox and Professor Victor Gault to the Executive Committee. It was also noted that Dr Esther Bell and Dr Lowri Mainwaring had been co-opted to the Committee. Dr Fox, Professor Gault and Dr Bell were welcomed warmly to the meeting. Professor McLeod was congratulated on her appointment to Birmingham City University.
3. **QAA Benchmark Statement.** Professor Barnett informed the Committee that following consultation with the relevant subject areas within Biomedical Sciences and with the chair of the Biosciences panel, the revised QAA Benchmark Statement for Biomedical Sciences would be published shortly.
4. **Augar Review.** The Committee noted that there had been little further development in respect of implementation of the Augar Review Group's recommendations.
5. **TEF.** Professor McLeod reported that the outcomes of the subject level TEF pilot and the independent consultation, both of which were due in the summer, are still awaited. The year 2 subject level pilot had concluded that separating subjects allied to health into two groups; Medical Science and Allied Health had provided benefits in benchmarking for biomedical science submissions. The Secretary of State for Education noted in September that he was supportive of TEF, however there have been no further indications from any Party of whether the TEF will feature in future government plans.
6. **REF 2021.** Professor Barnett and the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, updated the Committee on REF 2021 developments. HUCBMS had co-joined in the submission to the REF Team by HUBS expressing concern that pedagogical research in the biosciences (UoA 5) would be referred for assessment by the REF Education sub-panel rather than the parent scientific panel as is the case for the other main sciences. This decision was deemed by HUBS and HUCBMS to be inequitable and potentially unsound.

It was noted that some institutions plan to submit biomedical sciences research under UoA 3 (Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy) while others will be submitting under UoA 5 (Biological Sciences).

7. **Knowledge Exchange Framework.** Professor Barnett informed the meeting that she had attended an event in London in November on the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) where Hamish McAlpine from Research England gave a keynote on the work which he has been leading to further guide the sector for the first KEF submissions in May 2020. He informed the attendees that guidance on KEF will appear very early in the New Year and then several weeks later further guidance will be published on how HEIs should approach the updates of their KE strategies. He intends to launch a sector side consultation on HEIF etc, with a view ultimately, to implementing changes to the current system, informed by the consultation in about 3 years. Of interest, he emphasised that HEIF is a joint-funding stream linking UKRI with OfS and he emphasised that students should be at the heart of KE activities within HEIs.
8. **Equality and Diversity.** Dr Jones updated the Committee on equality and diversity issues. A questionnaire had been completed by Executive Committee members and the results were noted. A similar questionnaire would be circulated shortly to all HUCBMS institutional representatives.

Dr Jones also reported on RSB EDI meetings and commended the EDI website (<https://www.rsb.org.uk/policy/policy-issues/equality-diversity>).
9. **Social Media Strategy.** Professor McCormack outlined the proposed social media strategy for HUCBMS including a twitter account which she will coordinate and a Facebook page which will be overseen by Dr Jones. The draft strategy would be circulated to Executive Committee members for comment. It was agreed that the proposed strategy and its implementation should enhance communication with and within member institutions. It was agreed

that the social media vehicles should not be used as competitive marketing outlets for member institutions.

10. **Brexit.** Professor McKenna reported on the continuing uncertainty concerning the implications of Brexit for higher education and research. The major decline in both UK-led applications and successful outcomes in respect of Horizon 2020 was noted.

11. **Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland matters.** It was noted that henceforth the Committee would receive updates on relevant matters specific to Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

a. Professor Gault and Professor McCormack highlighted the continued problem of the relevant regulatory body, CORU, in the Irish Republic not agreeing to programme (as opposed to individual) approvals for BMS and other allied health degrees undertaken in Northern Ireland or other UK regions. This was causing difficulties for the many RoI students who study outside the jurisdiction and acting as a deterrent to their return to their home state. Professor McKenna agreed to continue to pursue a solution through various available channels.

b. Dr Walsh reported that she had been appointed to a Scottish Government Working Group, looking at Remote and Rural training and education of Specialist Biomedical Scientists. Allan Wilson, IBMS President Elect is also part of the Group alongside the Scottish Government Healthcare Science Officer and a representative from NHS Education for Scotland.

She also reported that the IBMS in Scotland AGM meeting was taking place in Glasgow on the following day, 14 November, and including a very diverse scientific meeting.

c. In the absence of Dr Mainwaring discussion of Welsh matters was deferred until the next meeting.

12. **Apprenticeships.** Mr Wainwright provided a brief update on apprenticeships. There is some confusion concerning the accreditation of Level 7 qualifications and the

professions/professional areas to be included. It was suggested that HUCBMS should write to the CHSE suggesting that it provide regular updates for consideration by the Executive Committee.

13. **HUBS/HUCBMS workshops.** It was noted that the joint HUBS/HUCBMS

workshop on 'Overcoming barriers in chemistry teaching within the biosciences' took place on 1 July 2019 at the University of Bradford.

A further joint workshop on options for the delivery of appropriate learning outcomes traditionally associated with final year undergraduate honours programmes, in the context of increasing student numbers and accreditation requirements of IBMS and RSB, is being planned for 2020. It was suggested that the IBMS should participate and that the workshop could also usefully address similar issues arising in taught Masters' programmes.

14. **IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee.** Professor Randall

and Mr Wainwright updated the Committee on recent activities of the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee. These included: a number of BSc and MSc degree programmes having been re-accredited; modifications to requirements for President's Prize presentations ceremonies/events; updating of professional doctorate portfolio regulations in association with Ulster University; enhancement of information regarding IBMS Advanced Practice Awards as part of a review of qualifications; and the potential development of an e-learning platform to support IBMS programmes (a consultant has been appointed).

15. **Other IBMS Matters.** Ms Rodney outlined other IBMS matters including: the

inauguration of the new IBMS President, Mr Allan Wilson, in January; the co-option of Victoria Bradley from Cardiff Metropolitan University to the IBMS Council; proposals for projects to examine the possibility of Biomedical Scientists and Clinical Scientists prescribing medicines having gone to consultation; and shortages in histopathology staff being addressed through a joint programme with the Royal College of Pathologists.

Ms Rodney enquired as to the perceived value of membership of the Association for Advanced Practice Educators. It was agreed to consult HUCBMS members and invite opinions based on experience.

16. **RSB Education Policy Advisory Committee.** In the absence of Dr Pike, input relating to the RSB Education Policy Advisory Committee was deferred.
17. **Report from HUBS.** Dr Kirk updated the Committee on HUBS matters including: the HUBS annual conference to be held at the Francis Crick Institute, London on 20-21 April; a proposed grant application to Advance HE to develop an education platform; Diversity in Science grants available from the Biochemical Society; and the Early Careers Lecturers' Forum.
18. **HUCBMS 2019.** Members noted the excellent academic and social programme of HUCBMS 2019 at Technological University Dublin. Congratulations were expressed to Dr Wynne and her colleagues for their preparation and hard work. It was noted that the conference had yielded a small surplus.
19. **HUCBMS 2020.** The Committee discussed the development of the academic and social programme for HUCBMS 2020 which will take place at York St John University on 2-3 September 2020. Dr Jones indicated that the conference dinner will be held in Merchant Taylors' Hall, York and music will be provided by David Holmes and his group.

It was agreed that groups of members would plan the academic programme under the general themes of Teaching and Learning (JMcl [lead], CW, EB, SA,SF, SJ); Research and Innovation (VG[lead], YAB, IL, VR); and International (JMcc [lead], GMck, CP, LW). Each group should plan to have an outline programme in place before the next meeting of the Executive Committee.
20. **Future HUCBMS Conferences.** It was noted that HUCBMS 2021 is scheduled to take place at Coventry University. Professor McKenna agreed to seek confirmation of this before the next meeting of the Executive Committee. He

also agreed to write to member institutions seeking offers to host the conference in 2022 and 2023.

21. **Finance.** The Hon Treasurer updated the Committee on financial matters. It was noted that most outstanding membership subscriptions had been received. However, he noted that due to HUCBMS' involvement in a number of ongoing policy-related activities, expenditure was beginning to exceed income. It was agreed to encourage restraint in expenditure claims but also that an increase in subscriptions should be proposed at the next AGM. Dr Locke will bring a proposal to the next meeting of the Executive Committee for consideration.
22. It was noted that the next meeting of the Executive Committee would take place at 11.00 on Wednesday 12 February 2020 at IBMS.