



## HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 via Teams invitation.

**Present:** Dr Linda Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian), Professor Valerie Randall (Bradford), Professor Jacqueline McCormack (Sligo IT), Dr Esther Bell (KCL), Dr Sue Jones (York St John), Professor Hilary MacQueen (HUBS; Open), Dr Claire Pike (Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lynne Lawrance (UWE), Professor Victor Gault (Ulster), Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex), Professor Julie McLeod (Birmingham City), Dr Ian Locke (Honorary Treasurer, Westminster), Professor P Gerry McKenna (Hon Executive Secretary)

**Apologies:** Professor Yvonne Barnett (President, Anglia Ruskin), Dr Lowri Mainwaring (Cardiff Metropolitan), and Dr Selwa Alsam (Essex; attended 1<sup>st</sup> hour of meeting)

**In Attendance:** Mr Alan Wainwright (IBMS)

1. Due to the unavoidable absence of the President, Professor Barnett, the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, chaired the meeting.
2. **Minutes:**

The minutes (approved by previous circulation) of meeting on 21 April 2021 were noted.

### 3. HUCBMS 2021

Dr Pike informed the Committee that:

- Draft programme is now complete
- Booking arrangements and publicity are in hand (web entry, social media)

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) will host the conference and provide technical support. The suggested conference title is HUCBMS 2021 mini conference ***'Biomedical Sciences Education and Research – Life Beyond Covid'***

A draft programme has been agreed: keynote presentations, Dr Nigel Francis from Swansea University, and the HE Biosciences Teacher of the Year 2021 and Professor Luke O'Neill, Professor of Biochemistry, Trinity College Dublin

Booking will be via Eventbrite ( <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/heads-of-university-centres-of-biomedical-sciences-online-conference-2021-tickets-160181351735> ), and live stream format to be used for the keynote speakers. MS Teams format to be used for micro-presentations, AGM and quiz; maximum of 300 registrants can interact.

### 4. AGM and elections to Executive Committee:

Three members of the Executive Committee are coming to the end of their current membership terms. The election will take place electronically. (Professor McKenna will write to HUCBMS members informing them of the nomination process; Dr Pike will advise on a suitable system of electronic voting).

### 5. Covid-19 pandemic - To note planning for programme delivery in 2021-22:

The committee discussed next year's teaching arrangements. It was noted that most institutions are dealing with issues similarly. Blended learning approach will be followed, large lecture activities will be online, smaller groups and laboratory classes will be F2F on Campus. Timetable includes both approaches currently. Some institutions have reported a large increase in student numbers compared with last year, especially with international and Master students. Some have reported a decrease in number of biomedical science placements but the IBMS reported no major problems.

## **6. UK Government policy and other T&L developments:**

Professor McLeod updated the committee on the T&L Policy review:

- Skills White paper – going through the House of Lords. A lot of media and government narrative related to a move of funding away from creative arts and remaining with STEM in addition to a focus on FE College funding for technical qualifications.
- PROCEED metric – publication at subject level of a 'quality' metric involving continuation to degree and graduate outcomes. Subject groups (Biosciences and Medical Sciences) overall fall above the arbitrary 55% threshold.
- TEF – Consultation will report in late spring 2021. Anticipated TEF exercise likely Nov – Feb 2021/22
- NSS – publication 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Consultation on 5 possible models – should report late Spring 2021.

## **7. REF Update:**

It was noted that the REF assessment phase is underway.

## **8. Knowledge Exchange Framework (results <https://kef.ac.uk/dashboard>) and the KE Concordat Development Year:**

Dr MacQueen reported on KEF – Professor Barnett also submitted written information. Members of the KEF Concordat have been asked to submit their action plans by 31 July.

No further details have been released from Research England on the next KEF exercise. However, for those HEIs who have signed up to the Principles of the KE Concordat and who have indicated that they will participate in the 'Development Year', they are in the process to undertaking their Gap Analysis against the Principles and proposing an Action Plan for improvement. The outcomes of the 'Development Year' assessments will be used to refine the KE Concordat process for overall sector implementation from 2022.

## **9. Equality and Diversity to receive an update:**

Dr Jones provided an update on EDI matters.

The latest HUCBMS Executive Committee EDI survey data from February 2021 was discussed (this was circulated to all members after the meeting).

Dr Jones attended a RSB EDI Forum on 10th March and HCPC EDI Forum on 14th April to represent HUCBMS. She since asked for the information about the Reverse Mentoring EDI meeting to be circulated and this was circulated to the RSB, HUBS and HUCBMS email lists.

Dr Jones is liaising with Dr Pike about EDI questions to added into the registration form for HUCBMS 2021.

### **10. Brexit Update**

Professor McKenna updated the Committee on Brexit developments including Horizon Europe, ERASMUS+/Turing, and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

### **11. Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland matters:**

- a. Ireland. No new information to report.
- b. Professor Gault reported on issues relating to Northern Ireland. It was noted that NI students would be eligible for involvement in the Turing Scheme, and also continued inclusion in Erasmus+ through support from the Irish government.
- c. Dr Lowri Mainwaring provided a written report on issues relating to Wales:
  1. HEIW tender outcomes delayed. Outcomes were due end of May but have been put back to late June. This is causing some concern in terms of planning and scheduling of review events etc.
  2. Welsh Universities are cautiously planning for next academic year due to ongoing uncertainty re: Covid restrictions. Welsh Government is keeping a close eye on timelines and easing of restrictions. The 2m+ rule is still in place in Wales and if this remains teaching (for term 1 at least) will largely be remote with on-campus activities having to be repeated to allow for social distancing. There is optimism that there will be some easing of restrictions.
- d. Dr Linda Walsh reported on Scottish Matters including recent parliamentary elections – no change in Government.

Areas in Scotland with different Covid levels have their own restrictions, Central Belt being in the highest level.

HEIs in Scotland advised that there should be no face to face, large group (over 50) lectures in September but laboratory classes should run on a weekly basis with up to 50 students and 1 metre distancing. Tutorials can run on-campus with groups of no more than 30.

## **12. Joint HUBS/HUCBMS workshops – ‘Robust online assessments’:**

Two workshops are scheduled to run over the next few months (by OU and Derby, respectively). Reports to follow once programmes have been delivered.

## **13. Report from meetings of IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee:**

Professor Randall reported that the E&PS Committee met virtually on 15.4.21 via Teams with two observers, Drs Jennifer Hudson, PHE & Jo Foulkes, Lim University.

### **Items of interest to HUCBMS included:**

- a) Accreditation of 4 full-time BMS BSc programmes at University of Derby.
- b) Discussion & rejection of suggestion that portfolio assessors should receive payment.
- c) Progress on IBMS Specialist Portfolio review to make the qualification more flexible is slower than initially planned as become a major revision. After 3 meetings, agreed 4 areas (domains) Professionalism, Scientific & Clinical Practice, Leadership and Management & Innovation, Research & Development. Currently discussing levels as domains resemble Higher Specialist Diploma.
- d) Covid issues had seriously affected IBMS examinations last year. This year's will be held in candidate's own Trust, rather than centrally. Papers delivered via Teams to invigilators and hopefully also to Examiners.
- e) E-learning modules progressing, with 5 modules pilot tested favourably with members and further 5 in development. These may be of interest to HUCBMS members when released.
- f) A large increase in students from non-accredited degrees applying for top-up modules. Probably due to pandemic increasing understanding of

pathology careers. IBMS is raising awareness of accredited degrees & pathology careers by marketing directed at schools.

#### **14. Other IBMS matters:**

Mr Wainwright raised the issue of the pros and cons of increased on-line delivery and examinations and the potential to replace examinations by course-based authentic assessments.

An authentic assessment may be defined as *assessment* that requires students to use the same competencies, or combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they need to apply in the criterion situation in professional life.

Examples include case studies, blogs or journals, field reports, design and make activities, grant applications or presentations.

#### **Principles of good assessment design include the following:**

- A course wide approach to enhancing assessment. This will ensure that there is a balance of assessment tasks across the course.
- Varied assessment tasks, using a range of different types.
- Design that enables the best possible assessment to allow students to meet learning outcomes for modules, level and course.
- Assessments that are imaginative and inclusive as well as authentic.
- Assessments that reflect how students will use knowledge rather than factual recall. This will help design out opportunities for cheating.

#### **During discussion a number of points were raised:**

- A cautious approach should be taken to having no formal exams.
- Proctoring and integrity of the process could be an issue with on-line or remote assessments.
- There are systems for on-line proctoring but there are still problems with large numbers of students.
- Assessments should demonstrate all aspects of a student's ability, including experience of time constrained examinations.
- Senior managers in HEIs will accept a PRBS steer, i.e. to have a balanced diet of assessments.
- The aim should be to ensure students have met threshold standards for knowledge and understanding, and that academic misconduct is robustly detected and dealt with.
- There are a number of significant risks if the system adopted cannot guarantee robustness.

- It is important to have a mix. (There is nowhere to hide with vivas).
- Be aware of employer perspective and the need for embedded knowledge.

It was agreed to establish a small group to plan a workshop on this subject. Alan Wainwright to lead plus Ian Locke (UW), Simon Fox (Plymouth), Lynne Lawrence (UWE), Linda Walsh (GCU), Esther Bell (KCL) , plus two employers.

### **15. RSB Education Policy Advisory Committee**

There was nothing to report at the meeting.

### **16. HUBS Executive Committee.**

Professor MacQueen reported on the success of the recent online conference, which worked well with no technical issues. The presentations are now on the Advance HE Connect website. The only negative feedback received concerned the lack of a social programme and other opportunities for networking. It is hoped that this will be rectified at next year's conference (28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at the Crick Institute). HUBS are very keen to continue with joint HUBS-HUCBMS workshops, which have been well-attended and well received. (The HUCBMS Executive Committee is also supportive of continuing this valuable collaboration).

HUBS has two new special interest groups:

- Bridging the Awarding Gap
- Bioscience Educators Network

More information about these will be available once details have been worked out.

### **17. Social media strategy – to receive update:**

Professor McCormack forwarded reports on HUCBMS Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter analytics for recent months. It was agreed to keep this under review and to encourage more pro-activity by the Executive Committee and HUCBMS members.

It was agreed that the HUCBMS webpages require refreshing and updating. It was suggested that discussions should take place with IBMS to receive advice

and lessons learned from their experiences. Professors McKenna and Barnett will raise this at a forthcoming meeting with the new IBMS CEO, David Wells.

**18. HUCBMS 2022 and future conferences:**

The Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, will seek to confirm if Coventry University wishes to proceed with hosting HUCBMS 2022. He will also seek expressions of interest from HUCBMS members in hosting future conferences.

**19. Finances:**

The Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke, updated the Committee on HUCBMS' finances which remain healthy.

**20.** There was no other business.