
Performance review process report

Institute of Biomedical Science, Review Period 2022-24

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS). This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future, and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have

- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against quality themes and found that we needed to undertake further exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Undertaken quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed
- Decided when the institution should next be reviewed

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - Horizon scanning – contingencies if funding for practice educators was withdrawn. We are satisfied that contingencies are in place following the withdrawal of NHS England (NHSE) funding and the Government's decision to abolish NHSE from 2027.
 - Service user and carer involvement – issues were highlighted, and changes were made to policies due to the recommendation / influences of the service user group.
 - The following are areas of best practice:
 - The education provider's funding of Practice Educator roles in the UK and Crown Dependencies to help communicate with and deliver professional development services to biomedical scientists in their area.
 - The IBMS Registration Training Portfolio via digital platform OneFile has improved consistency and allows greater quality assurance of all portfolios.
 - The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
 - The education provider is developing an online application system to integrate with their new CRM and digital portfolio platforms by 2025. We noted the new system is intended to ease administrative workload, improve applicant support, and enable better data collection for equitable access analysis. As it is still in the development stage, we have referred to the education provider's next performance review in the 2026/27 academic year.
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- The education provider noted that they will actively seek and systematically record feedback from individuals who have recently completed Routes 4 and 5 portfolio assessments. We understood this will help to identify any barriers to undertaking these routes and enhance the learner experience for colleagues already working in clinical pathology laboratories. As this is yet to take place, we have referred to the education provider's next performance review in 2026/27 academic year.
 - The provider must next engage with monitoring in two years, the 2026-27 academic year, because:
 - The education provider does not have established data points which continues to pose a risk and therefore means regular monitoring is required. They however continue to work with the HCPC to develop a regular supply of data in future submission. We are satisfied that the education provider continues to perform well across all other areas.
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Previous consideration	This is not applicable as the performance review was not referred from another process
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Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be • whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how
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Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year • Subject to the Panel's decision, we will [undertake further investigations as per section 5
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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:

- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support a review of this education provider:

Colin Jennnings	Lead visitor, Clinical Scientist, Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering
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Emmanuel Babafemi	Lead visitor, Biomedical Scientist
Prisha Shah	Service User Expert Advisor
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers five HCPC-approved programmes across two professions. It has been running HCPC biomedical science approved programmes since 2003. In addition, the education provider has been running a clinical science programme since 2018. The education provider is also the professional body for biomedical scientists in the UK. They are responsible for the accreditation of biomedical science programmes which are not HCPC approved but lead to entry to the education provider's HCPC approved programmes.

Across this report, the five programmes are being referred to as Routes. For reference, below is a list of the programmes and their corresponding routes:

Programme	Route
Certificate of Competence (Degree containing the Registration Training Portfolio)	Route 1
Certificate of Competence (Degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)	Route 2
Certificate of Competence (Non-accredited degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)	Route 3
Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)	Route 4
Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route)	Route 5

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 2](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	☒ Undergraduate	☐ Postgraduate	2003
	Clinical Scientist	☒ Undergraduate	☐ Postgraduate	2018

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes¹.

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Learner number capacity	1548	1218	March 2025	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure was presented by the education provider through this submission. The education provider is recruiting learners below the benchmark. We explored this by reviewing the data and narrative submitted. From our review, we are satisfied that the programmes continue to be sustainable and adequately resourced for the number of learners.
Learner non-continuation	7%	N/A	2021-22	There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data reporting for this and other data points through this performance review assessment. Further

¹ An explanation of the data we use, and how we use this data, is available [here](#)

				information about the outcome of establishing data reporting is available in the Data and reflections section.
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	92%	N/A	2021-22	There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data reporting for this and other data points through this performance review assessment, and they decided to establish this data point through the submission. Further information about the outcome of establishing data reporting is available in the Data and reflections section
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	N/A	N/A	There is no data available for this data point. Given the type of provider (professional body) and their model of programme delivery, the education provider is not expected to have this data.
Learner satisfaction	N/A	N/A	N/A	There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data reporting for this and other data points through this performance review assessment. Further information about the outcome of establishing data reporting is available in the Data and reflections section
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	N/A	2 years	At their last review, we established that the education provider was performing well across all themes and there were no areas referred to future reviews. However, due to the lack of comparable data points, and given the risks attached to this, a maximum

				of two years review period was given.
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Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the [thematic areas reviewed](#) section of this report.

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider was performing well against our standards.

Quality theme 1 – horizon scanning and the future of practice educator roles

Area for further exploration: We were aware that as a professional body, the education provider has representation at NHS England level and are involved in strategy and direction of the profession. We also noted the risk to the future of practice educator roles through changes in funding. It was unclear if there were any contingencies in place if funding for practice educators was withdrawn. Therefore, we requested more information on this to understand how the education provider ensures the future of practice educator roles are secured so they can continue to support learners in practice-based learning.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area through email clarification / further narrative. We were satisfied that this approach would address the issue raised by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider described how they value the role of practice educators. They noted senior education provider staff meet with practice educators, including those in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, monthly. This is even though practice educator roles are currently funded in England only, through NHS England (NHSE). The education provider noted that in February 2022, they had donated a one-off financial support towards the continuation of practice educator roles within England and to support the development of the roles in the other home nations. We understood the funding was in place until September

2025 and is being considered as part of the IBMS strategy 2022-2027. We are aware that this contingency will be a yearly donation to support the continuation of practice education roles.

Following the withdrawal of NHSE funding and the Government's decision to abolish NHSE from 2027, the education provider remains committed to working with networks of practice educators both in England and across the UK to ensure they continue to be supported by the government.

The visitors were satisfied with this response as it reassured them that the education provider recognises the potential issues faced by practice educators and they are putting contingency of yearly financial donations towards the continuation of practice educator roles in place to manage the issues. Following the quality activity, the visitors had no further concerns.

Quality theme 2 – service user and carer involvement

Area for further exploration: We noted several ways in which service users, patients, and carers are involved across all approved programmes. We noted all learners submit evidence of service user involvement as part of their portfolio. We were also aware that the education provider has a service user group, who met twice a year with a wide-ranging membership. However, there was no reflection on any issues highlighted or changes made to policies, due to the recommendation/ influences of the service users group (if any). Therefore, the visitors requested reflections about service user and carer involvement.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area through further narrative. We were satisfied that this approach would address the issue raised by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained how their Service User Group adds a valuable perspective to their provision as the group is comprised of colleagues who are service users of Pathology laboratories, colleagues from academia, practice, the armed forces and learners. Some of the examples of actions that have been taken in response to the Service User Group feedback during the review period include:

- Better advertisement and promotion of IBMS accredited degree programmes and inclusion of information on the IBMS for Biomedical Sciences
- More Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) support on IBMS web pages
- Information on opportunities to secure research funding
- Allocation of additional resources to the Education team to address delays in processing portfolio. This has addressed and reduced turnaround times for portfolio applications

The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's response as they considered the examples demonstrated the benefits of service users and their impact on the effective delivery of programmes. The visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns in this area.

Section 4: Findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Admissions procedures –**
 - The education provider delivers four routes to registration as a biomedical scientist and one route to registration as a clinical scientist. Clear information is provided in the guidance documents allowing applicants to make informed decision about the programmes.
 - Application forms were regularly updated to reflect changes in regulatory guidance. For example, the recent English Language requirement changes made by the HCPC. We understood these updates have been included in the guidance documents for learners starting their programmes from September 2025.
 - The education provider reflected on the risk identified in the submission of applications via email and attachments posing challenges in tracking volumes, prioritising assessments, and collecting data to uphold equality, diversity, and inclusion standards. To address this, the education provider noted they were developing an online application system to integrate with the new CRM and digital portfolio platforms by 2025. We understood this streamlined process will ease administrative workload, improve applicant support, and enable better data collection for equitable access analysis.
 - The visitors noted the education provider reflections that some areas could be improved, for example, the reliance on email applications, but were satisfied this is being considered and an online application process is in development. The visitors recommend the education provider reflects upon this through their next performance review in the 2026/27 academic year.
 - Overall, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area and as noted above, they have referred an area to their next performance review.
- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
 - The education provider noted they have a stable financial position, with their main income coming from membership fees, payment for their HCPC approved routes to registration as a biomedical scientist, plus post-registration qualifications. The education provider noted numbers of members have remained constant between 2022 and 2024.
 - In relation to staff resources, we understood a new chief Executive was appointed in 2021, who has been a HCPC registered biomedical

scientist for over 23 years and co-created the IBMS Strategy 2022 with the Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Team and IBMS Council.

- Programmes are managed by a team of six Education Officers and an Education Manager who reports to the Executive Head of Education. Despite previous staff turnover, we understood the team has now stabilised and become more effective following successful recruitment, added resources, and on-the-job training.
- The education provider reflected that the recruitment of multiple Executive and senior positions, alongside the growth of their Education Team has strengthened the delivery and development of their education services. They also noted the changes have enhanced their ability to provide qualifications through digital platforms, enabling a more flexible and responsive approach.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection, noting that the provider is aware of the threats to their financial stability and maintaining steps to achieving their budget from time to time.
- We were also satisfied that the staffing level provides for the effective delivery of the programme. Therefore, we determined that the education provider is performing well in this area.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - In relation to partnership with employers, the education provider noted they support practice partners, employers and trainers by producing and regularly updating guidance for colleagues who manage and deliver clinical pathology laboratory services. Their Clinical Laboratory Standards for IBMS Qualifications and Laboratory Training Approval Guidance for the Application Process documents demonstrated how they supported practice partners and employers to establish high standards of good professional practice.
 - Further guidance for clinical laboratory staff was provided by the education provider in the Good Professional Practice and Conduct (GPPC) in Biomedical Science document which was updated and published in 2023.
 - Assessors, trainers and candidates can contact the Education Team directly to give feedback or raise concerns or issues. Such issues were discussed and resolved in meetings with the Education Manager and the Executive Head of Education, as required.
 - The education provider also reflected on the impact the planned revision to the HCPC standards of education and training will have on their programmes and how they intend to review and incorporate the changes, as appropriate.
 - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider worked in partnership and cooperation with employers, colleagues and others for the benefit of service users.
 - Therefore, the visitors determined the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Staff development –**
 - Education Officers were appointed with a range of academic and administrative backgrounds. Education Officers undergo a probation period and are trained across various administrative processes, such as CPD qualifications, registration routes, and specialist diplomas.

Training follows detailed Standard Operating Procedures under supervision, with peer mentoring and rotational assignments to build proficiency across all areas.

- Staff development was supported through annual appraisals, conference attendance, and in-house training for managers. Where appropriate, the education provider funded professional memberships to promote continuous learning and access to CPD opportunities.
- The visitors were satisfied that there continues to be opportunity for staff development. The visitors therefore determined the education provider is performing well in this area.

- **Academic quality –**

- The education provider noted that all their HCPC approved programmes mapped to the HCPC SOPs which became implemented from 1 September 2023. We understood this exercise was undertaken by senior Education staff including the Chief Executive and the Executive Head of Education to ensure quality.
- The education provider also reflected on how they monitored their quality assurance processes and procedures to ensure they were robust. For example, updates were made to guidance documents, training for portfolio assessors and consideration and approval of assessor reports. Data for each qualification including the number of portfolios issued were regularly reported to the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee and any issues which could affect the quality of the programmes were reviewed and dealt with on a quarterly basis. Key performance indicator (KPI) data were collected and considered for all programmes and any serious concerns resulted in action plan with timescales and delegated responsibilities.
- The education provider reflected that they have significantly expanded their capacity to deliver and assess HCPC-approved registration routes by recruiting and training new assessors, whose performance will be regularly monitored to ensure consistency and quality. All assessors must complete refresher training every two years to support ongoing quality enhancement across all routes.
- As an example, the education provider reflected on how they ensured the academic quality of their Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route). We understood portfolios were assessed by a panel consisting of a lay person, biomedical scientist and clinical scientist (both from the required specialism). We understood the assessor panel reviewed the submitted portfolio evidence and agreed it was at the level required to meet the HCPC SOPs for clinical scientists. Outcomes of assessment were reviewed and agreed by the Education Manager and Executive Head of Education and then signed off by the Chair of the IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee. This reassured us that as the programmes are assessment based; there continues to be robust processes and procedures in place to ensure academic quality of all the programmes.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflections and determined that they are performing well in this area.

- **Quality of practice-based learning –**

- Practice-based learning quality is maintained through rigorous documentation and oversight. Practice-based learning must occur in IBMS-approved training laboratories and involve formal agreements between the education provider and practice providers. Evidence of collaboration, including audits, learner monitoring, and feedback mechanisms, was essential. Only laboratories with current IBMS Laboratory Training Approval could host learners completing the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio.
- Assessors (verifiers) of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio were required to meet strict criteria to ensure high training standards. They must be HCPC-registered biomedical scientists with at least three years of post-registration experience. They must be active in continuing professional development and have completed IBMS-approved training on assessment within the past three years. Refresher training is required every two years. Assessors play a key role in verifying that practice-based learning meets IBMS standards and contribute to the award of the Certificate of Competence. The education provider ensured quality assurance and enhancement of clinical laboratory practice-based learning by reviewing feedback from both the assessor and the training laboratory. Issues raised by the assessors about the standard of training were passed to the Education Manager and elevated as appropriate to be addressed.
- During the 2023/24 IBMS Training for Trainers online events, practitioners highlighted the value of networking while completing the Certificate in Expert Practice in Training. This feedback, echoed by employer members of the IBMS Service User, Patient/Carer Engagement Group, led to the creation of monthly “Training Officer Support Sessions” in 2024, offering informal, facilitated drop-ins for training officers across the UK.
- The visitors were satisfied that the education provider’s reflection reassured them that they have continued to ensure the quality of practice-based learning. The visitors also concluded that the education provider’s reflections demonstrated the delivery and audit of the Train the Trainers events for practice educators continue to be appropriate and that overall, the quality of practice-based learning is maintained or enhanced.
- The visitors therefore determined that the education provider is performing well in this area.
- **Learner support –**
 - For learners on routes 1-3, each section and module within the Registration Training Portfolio included detailed explanations of the mandatory evidence required, along with clear mapping to the HCPC Standards of Proficiency and a set of frequently asked questions. Additionally, a module descriptor guidance document outlined learner expectations, specifying what they should know and be able to do upon successful completion of each module.
 - For route 4, we understood bespoke launch events have been hosted by the Executive Head of Education for each cohort. The events provided information to both the learner and their mentors on the

specific route, responsibilities of the mentor and requirements of the evidence to be provided in their portfolio.

- Learners on Route 5 also received information on how to complete their Registration Training Portfolio and guidance on the mapping of the HCPC SOPs to their portfolio.
- We understood learners also received bespoke training on how to use the digital platform OneFile to record their portfolio evidence and map the HCPC SOPs to each piece of evidence prior to portfolio submission. The education provider reflected that the OneFile platform had been helpful as they were able to adjust it suit learner's preference in how the content was displayed. For example, learners were able to change the fonts, colour overlays and the size of the text. They also reflected that the systematic collection of data using the digital application form has allowed them to be able to ask each learner their preference at entry point and support them better.
- Learners using OneFile were also able to embed their feedback and flag any issues or concerns which were then followed up by the Education Manager or Executive Head of Education.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection in this area. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider has continued to use effective mechanisms to support learners in the review period for example, through discussions with learners on their education and training at their practice education providers and the OneFile system. The visitors also noted engagement through the student voice, student attainment, retention and satisfaction, plus quality assurance and enhancement processes. We are also satisfied that the different mechanisms in place continue to help to manage potential risks.
- Therefore, the visitors determined that the education provider continues to perform well in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
 - The education provider reflected that the completion of each of their programmes involves learning experience that has developed each learner's ability to communicate and work with others outside of their profession. There were specific modules on Communication and Professional Relationships that have helped all learners to have a consistent approach to building and maintaining positive working relationships both as a biomedical scientist and as a clinical scientist to achieve the best results for service users. For example, as part of their Registration Training Portfolio, learners were required to recognise and value the contributions of other team members and show their own ability to work effectively with others through productive working relationships.
 - We also noted completion of all routes have required learners to have professional interactions with apprentices, placement students, experienced biomedical scientists and clinical scientists, training officers, training managers and mentors. We understood this has helped to foster positive relationships in the workplace and build confidence.

- Additionally, the education provider reflected on their Support Hub session held in November 2024, where they promoted best practice in delivering inter-professional education.
- The education provider reflected that they have also updated their Registration Training Portfolio to state that learners must have the opportunity to learn with and from, learners and other professions and provide evidence for this in their registration training portfolio.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection, noting that learners have continued to learn with and from other learners and professional for the benefit of the service users and how this has continued to influence their future practice.
- Therefore, the visitors determined that the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - The education provider highlighted various ways in which service users, patients, and carers are involved across their programmes. The service users are members of a Service User and Patient/Carer Engagement Group who meet twice a year with a wide-ranging membership. This covers the scope and role of members, eligibility and membership, recruitment of members, principles of engagement, and training and support provision. All learners are required to submit evidence of service user involvement as part of their portfolio.
 - We understood service users met regularly during the review period and directly informed the education provider's approaches by providing feedback on a variety of their activities. Service users and carers input supported future developments and innovations in the delivery of programmes.
 - The education provider reflected that during the review period, the Executive Head of Education was able to identify and appoint new members to the IBMS Service User, Patient and Carer Engagement Group to reinvigorate the membership. We understood members of the group have provided detailed feedback on all programmes and the education provider noted the feedback was generally positive and suggestions for future considerations were welcomed by the education provider. For example, we understood the academic members provided valuable insights based on their experience on both the education and training, and practice-based learning. In addition, some feedback from the group has also led to the consideration of face-to-face training events for training officers and verifiers using existing IBMS Regions and Branches structures. We understood the training would improve engagement with their local IBMS Branch and facilitate closer working relationships with IBMS Council members.
 - As noted through [quality theme 2](#), further reflections were provided on changes made to policies due to the recommendation /influences of the service users group.
 - Through the initial portfolio and the quality activity, the visitors were satisfied that the education provider is performing well in this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - All learners are required to submit evidence of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for their Registration Training Portfolio and Clinical

Scientists portfolio to demonstrate how they integrate EDI in their practice and behaviours.

- Following the integration of the revised SOPs, learners undertaking final assessments through verification for Routes 1-3 and viva voce for Route 4 are asked series of questions around EDI to demonstrate their understanding and the ability to apply EDI principles.
- All learners are now required to submit pieces of evidence that demonstrate all SOPs including those focused on EDI. The education provider also reflected on how they align with the Good Professional Practice and Conduct in Biomedical Science (2023) by demonstrating a good understanding of equality legislation and applying them to practice. They noted this has enabled learners to be able to:
 - recognise the potential impact of their own values, beliefs and personal biases (which may be unconscious) on practice;
 - ensure all service users and carers are treated with appropriate dignity and respect;
 - be able to make and support reasonable adjustments in their and others' practice; and
 - recognise the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion and actively challenge these barriers.
- The education provider noted they will continue to grow the EDI resources section on their website to help colleagues meet EDI-focused SOPs for biomedical and clinical scientists. They noted these open-access materials will support those in academia, clinical labs, and candidates across all five registration routes.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined that they continue to perform well in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - As the education provider is also the professional body for biomedical scientists in the UK, the education provider has representation at NHS England level and are involved in strategy and direction of the profession.
 - The education provider is aware of the issues or threats to financial stability through a steep decline in membership numbers and their fees. To manage this, the education provider holds regular monthly meetings between the Chief Executive and National Pathology Network Workforce and Education Collaboration (NPNWEC) to discuss and monitor all issues related to training. This is specifically in relation to registration and pre-registration training.
 - The education provider reflected on their contribution, as a key stakeholder, to promoting the biomedical science profession, its practitioners, and the routes to HCPC registration. For example, through their established regular monthly meetings with the National Pathology Network Workforce and Education Collaboration and senior executive staff at the IBMS, they noted they have been able to discuss issues related to registration and pre-registration training. We understood this has been beneficial to both learners and registrants and reduced turnaround times for laboratory approvals and the verification process prior to the award of a Certificate of Competence.

- As noted through [quality theme 1](#), we are satisfied that the risks to the future of practice educator roles as a result of changes in funding, are being adequately managed. We also considered the one-off financial support towards the continuation of practice educator roles good practice.
- The visitors are therefore satisfied that the education provider continues to perform well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: The education provider reflected on the risk identified in the submission of applications via email and attachments posing challenges in tracking volumes, prioritising assessments, and collecting data to uphold equality, diversity, and inclusion standards. To address this, the education provider noted they were developing an online application system to integrate with the new CRM and digital portfolio platforms by 2025. We understood this streamlined process will ease administrative workload, improve applicant support, and enable better data collection for equitable access analysis.

As the online system is still in the development stage, the visitors have referred this to the education provider's next performance review in the 2026/27 academic year. The visitors considered this would give the education provider sufficient time to have reflected on any impact the new system has had in addressing the issues / risks identified.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: The visitors considered the IBMS Funding of Practice Educator Roles in the UK and Crown Dependencies to help communicate with and deliver professional development services to Biomedical Scientists in their area good practice.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics across professions –**
 - To integrate the revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) across their HCPC provision, the education provider undertook a review of the portfolio against the revisions to the standards. They noted from this, that, the portfolio, already required, and assessed, the revised standards. This meant that learners would be able to meet the revised SCPEs as part of their HCPC approved programme.
 - Changes required were disseminated at several events to education providers. For example, information was sent out to all IBMS members and the revised SCPEs were first discussed at their online accreditation update event in September 2024. Information about the change was also presented at the annual Heads of University Centres for Biomedical Sciences (HUCBMS) Conference in September 2024. Key changes were clearly highlighted to learners and their training officers or mentors. For example, we understood 'good' pieces of

evidence from portfolios will be shared with training officers and mentors as part of the planned Train the Trainers events in 2025.

- The changes were also updated on their website in addition to organising training for practice education providers, and other professional colleagues.
- Further guidance on emphasising HCPC SCPEs for all registration routes will be developed and shared via the new IBMS VLE platform in 2025. The education provider also noted they will continue to promote HCPC webinars on updated standards and other key topics for their members.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflections and determined that the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Impact of workforce planning –**
 - The education provider reflected on their regular engagement with NHS workforce leads across the UK, who also report similar challenges such as vacancies and high sickness absence, alongside commitments to grow the Biomedical Science workforce. They explained that despite its importance in addressing medical workforce gaps, there was no central planning or funding for biomedical scientist placements, with decisions made locally.
 - We understood applications to registration routes have increased since 2020, likely due to COVID-19 demands, although the education provider anticipates a slight decline in the coming years.
 - We noted the publish of their Biomedical Science Long Term Workforce Plan 2023 where they highlighted their commitment to continue to support the workforce planning for the profession by developing suitable education programmes for the profession.
 - The education provider also noted their commitment to continue to engage closely with national bodies, workforce leads and members. They will continue to seek funding to support education and development of trainee biomedical scientists in services as well as clear funds to support the development of the existing workforce.
 - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's reflection demonstrated that they are performing well in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - We noted how the education provider used technology to overcome the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and how assessments have now returned to face-to-face. The education provider acknowledged the flexibility offered by online oral assessments and how it has reduced the turnaround times for assessment for all routes to registration. This was because assessments could be conducted anywhere in the UK and required less time commitment per assessment for the assessor.
 - We noted simulation was still being used to support practice-based learning. The introduction of electronic workbook and later OneFile for the delivery and assessment of Registration Training Portfolios has helped to improve consistency and allowed greater quality assurance. The visitors considered this good practice.
 - Other technologies deployed includes Generative tools in learning and teaching. The education provider continues to monitor developments

and deliver and evolve Artificial Intelligence (AI) training / guidance to colleagues and learners to ensure it is being used ethically and responsibly.

- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflections and determined they continue to perform well in this area.
- **Apprenticeships in England –**
 - The visitors recognised the education provider does not currently deliver any HCPC approved degree apprenticeship programmes. The education provider will continue to monitor the growth of apprenticeship provision across the profession and any unintended consequences on the provision of practice-based learning. Due to the model of delivery and the dual role of the education provider (also the professional body), the visitors did not identify any concerns in this area and were satisfied.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Office for Students (OfS) –**
 - Given the type of education provider, it was not appropriate for the education provider to submit reflections in this area. This is because they are a professional body and do not deliver higher education, so they are not a registered OfS provider.
 - The visitors did not identify any concerns in this area and were satisfied.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - As a professional body, the education provider described how their partnership with other professional bodies has evolved and improved over time.
 - They noted they have worked with the Association of Anatomical Pathology Technology (AAPT) - the professional body for anatomical pathology technologists employed in hospital and public mortuaries across the UK. They have also worked with the British Association of Cytopathology (BAC), amongst several others. As a licensed member of the Science Council, the education provider was supported to raise and reinforce professional standards and support the development of knowledge within the pathology workforce.
 - For their clinical science provision, the education provider noted they worked with the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) in developing the curricula for the Scientist Training Programme for clinical science learners.
 - The education provider reflected on their collaboration with the HCPC to co-create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2022 and have since continued to work together in the quality assurance of programmes leading to eligibility for registration as biomedical scientist.
 - The education provider noted their ongoing work with NHS England on developing Return to Practice eLearning resources, offering feedback

and guidance specific to biomedical scientists. These resources aimed to provide accurate, up-to-date information and support for individuals re-entering the profession, and was intended to launch in late 2025.

- The visitors were satisfied with these reflections and determined that they demonstrate that the education provider continues to perform well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - The education provider reflected on their integration of the updated QAA Subject Benchmark for Biomedical Science and Biomedical Sciences that was released in 2023. They reflected substantially on the mechanisms for continuing curriculum development and how these align with the processes advised by external stakeholders (HCPC) SOPs and QAA for Biomedical Science.
 - The education provider noted their continued work with the National Pathology Network Workforce and Education Collaboration, IBMS Service User, Patient and Carer Engagement Group, IBMS Specialist Advisory Panels. In addition, they continue to work with HCPC registered clinical scientists who work up to consultant level to ensure the curricular underpins all four clinical science modalities offered by the education provider so that they remain relevant and current.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined they continue to perform well in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**
 - We noted that the education provider does not organise practice-based learning directly.
 - The education provider reflected that all five routes to registration require significant practice-based learning, though routes 4 and 5 have the lowest number of learners since their commencement.
 - The education provider reflected on the lack of funding or bursary to support learners undertaking a placement year in an IBMS approved training laboratory. We understood the Executive Head of Education has been in discussions with colleagues across the UK nations about the creation and implementation of Training Academies. We understood these academies will collaborate closely with IBMS-approved training laboratories to help learners to complete parts of the Registration Training Portfolio before or alongside their lab-based training. This approach aims to reduce the training burden on laboratories while ensuring consistency and high standards.
 - The OneFile digital platform would also continue to enable the education provider to accurately track practice-based learning capacity across the UK, with data visualised via Power BI to highlight training hotspots and gaps. The education provider explained that this data-

driven approach supports better analysis and evaluation of pre-registration training activity.

- The education provider also noted their continued monitoring of the impact of expanding apprenticeships on the availability of practice-based learning and acknowledged the value of diverse registration routes. However, they noted the lack of funding for practice-based learning years remains a concern, and they will continue to lobby for equitable practice-based learning support across all UK nations.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and approach to ensuring capacity of practice-based learning. Therefore, they determined the education provider has continued to perform well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Strategic approach to feedback –**
 - The education provider is aware of the importance of feedback and gathered feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including learners, their training officers or mentors, and assessors involved in each route. Additionally, feedback was collected from external groups such as the National Pathology Network Workforce and Education Collaboration, the IBMS Service User, Patient and Carer Engagement Group, IBMS Specialist Advisory Panels, and academic institutions.
 - Feedback was gathered on all their HCPC approved provision and contributed to improvements on the programmes as detailed in the sections below. Further detail was received on how feedback was gathered from service users to ensure the mechanism of feedback collection was appropriate. We understood feedback was gathered from training officers, verifiers and learners through report forms.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection. Therefore, they determined the education provider has continued to perform well in this area.
- **Learners –**
 - Feedback from learners in practice-based learning is collated through the Clinical Placement Tutor. Learners give feedback to the education provider through module evaluation, National Student Survey (NSS) and live in-person discussions.
 - A Learner feedback form was introduced for Routes 1-3 in 2025. The education provider noted no formal complaints relating to practice-based learning were received during the review period. In 2023, feedback relating to delays in assessment were managed by the Executive Head of Education who helped to ensure learners affected were expedited and all portfolio reviews and final assessments were completed in 2023/24.

- The education provider noted they will actively seek and systematically record feedback from individuals who have recently completed Routes 4 and 5 portfolio assessments. This will help to identify any barriers to undertaking these routes and enhance the learner experience for colleagues already working in clinical pathology laboratories.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection. Therefore, they determined the education provider has continued to perform well in this area.
- **Practice educators –**
 - A National Pathology Network Workforce and Education Collaboration monthly meeting for practice educators, was introduced in 2020. They met with senior members of the IBMS Education network team. These meetings have helped to create strong working relationships with the education provider and a better understanding of “on the ground” issues in clinical laboratories. There is a dedicated email box for trainers. Digital OneFile system is used to collate feedback and survey results.
 - Following eight sessions of Training for Trainer events in 2022/23 and 2023/24, the education provider has used the outcome from these events to inform an online resource centre that is being planned for delivery in 2025 for Training Officers and assessors.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection. Therefore, they determined the education provider has continued to perform well in this area.
- **External examiners –**
 - The education provider appoints its own External Examiner who produces an annual report on all their HCPC approved provision. The External Examiner reports for 2022/23 and 2023/24 were submitted as part of this review.
 - The education provider reflected on some concerns raised by the External Examiner in 2021/22 and the actions that were taken subsequently to address the issues in 2022/23. We also noted recommendations from External Examiners for 2022/23 and 2023/24. For example, both External Examiners made a recommendation around encouraging consistency of verification reports. In response, the education provider noted their plans for additional online support sessions in 2025 to showcase examples of high-quality verifier reports for selected portfolios. They noted the sessions would support verifiers and improve the overall consistency and standard of reporting.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection. Therefore, they determined the education provider has continued to perform well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: the education provider noted that they will actively seek and systematically record feedback from individuals who have recently completed Routes 4 and 5 portfolio assessments. We understood this will help to identify any barriers to undertaking these routes and enhance the learner experience for colleagues already working in clinical pathology laboratories. As this is yet to take

place, we have referred to the education provider's next performance review in 2026/27 academic year.

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learner non continuation:**
 - As a professional body, the education provider does not directly monitor learner non continuation due to the model of delivery of their programmes. However, we are aware that all education providers who deliver IBMS accredited Biomedical Science programmes are required to gather and collate this data as part of the Annual Monitoring process. The education provider suggested other ways of supplying this data to the HCPC, as noted in the Proposal for supplying data points to the HCPC section below.
 - The visitors acknowledged the education provider's explanation and the data points submitted but noted a regular supply of externally verified data, specifically related to the HCPC approved programmes, is required to manage any risks.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
 - As a non-HEI, the education provider does not have HESA data. Although they submitted the data for those who completed each of their HCPC approved routes to registration as a biomedical scientist or clinical scientist in 2022/23 and 2023/24. However, this data had not been externally verified and as such, we cannot accept the data. We will continue to work with the education provider to determine how externally verified data, relating to the HCPC approved programmes, can be provided.
- **Learner satisfaction**
 - As a professional body, the education provider does not have NSS data, and they did not submit any data points for learner satisfaction. This is because they do not deliver higher education and are not a registered Office for Students (OfS) provider. We will continue to work with the education provider to determine how externally verified data, relating to the HCPC approved programmes, can be provided.
- **Proposal for supplying data points to the HCPC:**
 - The education provider acknowledged that they are unable to directly record continuation and non-continuation data similar to HESA data for any of their programmes given their model of delivery.
 - The education provider noted completion rates for Route 1 are routinely 95-100% as learners on this route are competitively selected to complete the programme. They also noted the possibility of monitoring completion rates and requests for extensions for Route 4 and Route 5 going forward as both routes are one-year programmes, with the submission of the portfolio 12 months after issue.
 - The education provider has given completion rates as the number of learners that completed each programme in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. The education provider noted they will continue to monitor the uptake and completion of all their HCPC approved provision using their OneFile digital portfolio platform.

- We will continue to work with the education provider to determine how externally verified data, relating to the HCPC approved programmes, can be provided.
- **Programme level data:**
 - Programme level data was provided for all programmes which the visitors considered indicated sufficient staff resources for all learners.
 - We noted it took approximately 18 months for learners to complete their registration training portfolio and learner numbers have continued to increase across many of the routes.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: The education provider acknowledged they were unable to provide the standard data points required, given the nature of their provision and their model of delivery. Although two out of the three data points required were provided in the portfolio, these have not been externally verified and there continues to be a risk around the regular supply of comparable data points. The education provider is aware of this risk and its impact on the maximum review period they can have.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval or focused review process).

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

The development of a new online application system

Summary of issue: The education provider reflected on the risk identified in the submission of applications via email and attachments posing challenges in tracking volumes, prioritising assessments, and collecting data to uphold equality, diversity, and inclusion standards. To address this, the education provider noted they were developing an online application system to integrate with the new CRM and digital portfolio platforms by 2025. We understood this streamlined process will ease administrative workload, improve applicant support, and enable better data collection for equitable access analysis.

As the online system is still in the development stage, the visitors have referred this to the education provider's next performance review in the 2026/27 academic year. The visitors considered this would give the education provider sufficient time to have reflected on any impact the new system has had in addressing the issues / risks identified.

Feedback from learners on routes 4 and 5

Summary of issue: In their reflection around strategic approach to feedback from learners, the education provider noted that they will actively seek and systematically

record feedback from individuals who have recently completed Routes 4 and 5 portfolio assessments. We understood this will help to identify any barriers to undertaking these routes and enhance the learner experience for colleagues already working in clinical pathology laboratories. As this is yet to take place, we have referred to the education provider's next performance review in 2026/27 academic year.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year.

Reason for next engagement recommendation

- Internal stakeholder engagement
 - The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider were learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations, and external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
 - The education provider engaged with several other professional bodies. As a professional body, they noted they engaged with other professional bodies such as the Royal College of Pathologists. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision. For example, the education provider worked with the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) in developing the curricula for the Scientist Training Programme for clinical science learners.
 - The education provider engaged with the HCPC. They considered the findings of the HCPC in improving their provision.
 - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply
 - Through this review, the education provider has not established how they will supply quality and performance data points which are equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations. Where data is not regularly supplied, we need to understand risks by engaging with the education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years).
- What the data is telling us:
 - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.
- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a two-year monitoring period is:
 - The education provider does not have established data points which continues to pose a risk and therefore means regular monitoring is required. They however continue to work with the HCPC to develop a

regular supply of data points in future submission. We are satisfied that the education provider continues to perform well across all other areas.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026/27 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out as detailed in section 5 above.

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report.

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on the next steps for the provider. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation (including their reasons) and any referrals.

Education provider	Institute of Biomedical Science		
Case reference	CAS-01548-Q2D3Q8	Lead visitors	Colin Jennings, Emmanuel Babafemi
Review period recommended	Two years		
Reason for recommendation			
Through this assessment, we have noted:			
• The areas we explored focused on: ○ Horizon scanning – contingencies if funding for practice educators was withdrawn. We are satisfied that contingencies are in place following the withdrawal of NHSE funding and the Government’s decision to abolish NHSE from 2027. ○ Service user and carer involvement –issues were highlighted, and changes were made to policies due to the recommendation / influences of the service user group • The following are areas of best practice: ○ The IBMS Funding of Practice Educator Roles in the UK and Crown Dependencies to help communicate with and deliver professional development services to Biomedical Scientists in their area. ○ The IBMS Registration Portfolio via digital platform OneFile has improved consistency and allows greater quality assurance of all portfolios. • The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment: ○ The education provider is developing an online application system to integrate with their new CRM and digital portfolio platforms by 2025. We noted the new system is intended to ease administrative workload, improve applicant support, and enable better data collection for equitable access analysis. As it is still in the development stage, we have referred to the education provider’s next performance review in the 2026/27 academic year. ○ The education provider noted that they will actively seek and systematically record feedback from individuals who have recently completed Routes 4 and 5 portfolio assessments. We understood this will help to identify any barriers to undertaking these routes and enhance the learner experience for colleagues already working in clinical pathology laboratories. As this is yet to take place, we have referred to the education provider’s next performance review in 2026/27 academic year.			

- The provider should next engage with monitoring in two years, the 2026-27 academic year, because:
 - The education provider does not have established data points which continues to pose a risk and therefore means regular monitoring is required. They however continue to work with the HCPC to develop a regular supply of data in future submission. We are satisfied that the education provider continues to perform well across all other areas.

Referrals

The development of a new online application system

Summary of issue: The education provider reflected on the risk identified in the submission of applications via email and attachments posing challenges in tracking volumes, prioritising assessments, and collecting data to uphold equality, diversity, and inclusion standards. To address this, the education provider noted they were developing an online application system to integrate with the new CRM and digital portfolio platforms by 2025. We understood this streamlined process will ease administrative workload, improve applicant support, and enable better data collection for equitable access analysis.

As the online system is still in the development stage, the visitors have referred this to the education provider's next performance review in the 2026/27 academic year. The visitors considered this would give the education provider sufficient time to have reflected on any impact the new system has had in addressing the issues / risks identified.

Feedback from learners on routes 4 and 5

Summary of issue: In their reflection around strategic approach to feedback from learners, the education provider noted that they will actively seek and systematically record feedback from individuals who have recently completed Routes 4 and 5 portfolio assessments. We understood this will help to identify any barriers to undertaking these routes and enhance the learner experience for colleagues already working in clinical pathology laboratories. As this is yet to take place, we have referred to the education provider's next performance review in 2026/27 academic year.

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Certificate of Competence (Degree containing the Registration Training Portfolio)	FLX (Flexible)	Biomedical scientist			01/07/2003
Certificate of Competence (Degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)	FLX (Flexible)	Biomedical scientist			01/07/2003
Certificate of Competence (Non-accredited degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)	FLX (Flexible)	Biomedical scientist			01/07/2003
Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)	FLX (Flexible)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2015
Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route)	FLX (Flexible)	Clinical scientist			01/01/2018