

Department of Education & Policy

Approval of Biomedical Science Programmes

Executive Summary and Recommendations

1. Introduction

Over the last month the Director has met with a number of people regarding educational developments in Biomedical Science. These have included the Industrial Liaison Group at Kingston University; Alan Wainwright, Director of Education for the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS); and Sue Hill, the Chief Scientific Officer of the Department of Health. The meetings have been very helpful in clarifying current issues.

1.1 Integrated Programme Approvals

Following the meeting at Kingston University the Director has now contacted four institutions (one English and three Scottish) and has still to contact a fourth from Scotland, who have requested Approvals visits for co-terminous programmes, and most have agreed to move directly to integrated programme Approval where the institution becomes wholly responsible for the placement element and no Certificate of Competence is required from the IBMS for regulatory purposes. The Director will be attending a meeting at the University of Essex to explain to the Biomedical Science Programme Team and the University Quality Assurance Team the implications for the University of moving to an integrated programme.

1.2 Funding of Educational Programmes for Biomedical Science

Funding for integrated programmes is a current issue, which the Scottish Executive is in the process of addressing. The Director will be meeting with NHS Education, Scotland and the Scottish Executive to discuss the situation. All Scottish institutions requesting Approvals visits for co-terminous programmes are keen to move to the integrated approach, although it is recognised that clarity around funding is still required regarding numbers, amounts and a start date.

The situation in England is different in that each Strategic Health Authority (SHA) is responsible for the distribution of funding for education across their areas. Some SHAs are responsive to the funding of co-terminous/integrated programmes whilst others are not. Each institution in England has to negotiate with its own SHA regarding moving this forward.

The Director has yet to contact the necessary bodies in Wales and Northern Ireland to discuss this issue and has this on her forward programme to arrange. However, the Welsh Council members informed the Approvals Committee at its last meeting that co-terminous programmes were already being funded by the Executive.

1.3 Institute of Biomedical Science

The Director had a successful meeting with Alan Wainwright, the Director of Education for the IBMS. This clarified a number of issues for both parties and an agreement to work together to inform the education providers of the new arrangements regarding regulation and the roles of the HPC and the IBMS going forward. Alan is arranging for the Director to

speak at the next meeting of the Heads of University Centres for Biomedical Science (HUCBMS) meeting where it will be possible to address all heads of programmes with respect to the new arrangements. This will include informing the 33 institutions offering traditional routes to Biomedical Science (which may or may not lead to a graduate practising where patient protection is an issue) that HPC will require to approve their programmes as part of approving the IBMS, which issues the Certificate of Competence for the training year following graduation. Both aspects make up the training of registered Biomedical Scientists as the institution quality assures the academic content and the IBMS the placement aspect. Discussion will take place on whether these institutions could and should move to integrated degree status, but as a number of their graduates go on to work in areas where patients are not involved and hence do not require to register with the HPC then this area will have to be explored further. There are currently 9 institutions offering co-terminous programmes approved by the IBMS, of which, as stated above, we are in discussion with five regarding moving to integrated status.

1.4 *Department of Health*

The Director recently met with Sue Hill, Chief Scientific Officer at the Department of Health. At the meeting Sue outlined the thinking behind the Pre-Registration Modernisation Project, which is dealing with future developments regarding modernisation of pre-registration education and training of, initially, all healthcare scientists (both clinical and biomedical) including competency mapping to the National Occupational Standards (including the Knowledge and Skills Framework), rolling out the mapping exercise to other healthcare professions, and a modular framework for education leading to advanced practitioner stage.

At the meeting the Director was informed that responsibility for the implementation of the Careers Framework was being contracted to Skills for Health and would therefore become a UK and sector-wide initiative and not just be restricted to the NHS as an employer nor specifically to England.

The future developments being outlined by Sue Hill might have some serious repercussions for the HPC as the regulator, including being asked to mark the Register for advanced practitioners. Due to this it was agreed that Sue would make a similar presentation to a wider group of the HPC comprising both Executive Officers and Council members. This is being arranged for a date in March and will include, for the HPC, the President, Chief Executive, Chair of the Education & Training Committee, Chair of the Approvals Committee and Director of Education & Policy. A report of the meeting will be prepared for the next appropriate meeting of the Education & Training Committee.

The Director has been asked to join the Delivery Board of the Pre-Registration Modernisation Project.

2. Decision

The Committee is asked **to note** the contents of the paper. No decision is required. :

3. Background information

None

4. Resource implications

There are no resource implications at present.

5. Financial implications

There are no financial implications at present.

6. Background papers

None

7. Appendices

None

Fiona Nixon
5 February 2005