

Education and Training Committee – 25 March 2009

Biomedical Scientists – Reconfirmation of approval of routes to registration

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

As part of the Education Department Workplan 2008-2009, the Education and Training Committee agreed that an adapted model of the approval process would be proposed to the Committee to reconfirm ongoing approval of the Biomedical Scientist routes to registration. This paper asks the Committee to make a decision on whether or not to accept the proposed model for the amended approval process.

The Committee received a paper to note at the meeting held on Tuesday 2 December 2008 stating the current routes to registration for Biomedical Scientists. This paper has been provided as appendix one. Following a preliminary meeting with the Institute of Biomedical Scientists (IBMS) on Wednesday 4 March 2009, slight changes are required to this information. Where necessary, the changes have been incorporated into this paper.

This paper will consider the following areas related to the approval and monitoring processes to illustrate the reasons for the proposed model:

- The standards of education and training and standards of proficiency
- The approval process
- The monitoring processes
- The timeline for activity

Considerations for the standards of education and training and standards of proficiency

The IBMS route to registration will be expected to continue to meet all the standards of education and training and continue to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register. The complexity of the ways in which an individual can obtain the Certificate of Competence and therefore become eligible to apply for registration will necessitate interpretation of the standards of education and training.

The IBMS accredit co-terminus degrees which combine a programme of study with a period of work based laboratory training in an IBMS approved laboratory. The IBMS Registration Training Portfolio is completed as part of the programme.

Successful completion of a co-terminus degree results in the award of the degree and the Certificate of Competence.

The IBMS also accredit non co-terminus degrees (traditional route) which are purely academic qualifications. Following their degree, students undertake work based training in an IBMS approved laboratory and complete the Registration Training Portfolio. External verifiers appointed by the IBMS assess the Registration Training Portfolio to ensure that the student has met the appropriate standards. This can be classed as the 'gateway assessment' as until the student has successfully completed the Registration Training Portfolio they can not be awarded the Certificate of Competence. The IBMS have confirmed that there are no longer any students eligible to complete the log book as possibly indicated in the December 2008 paper to note.

The IBMS also assess non accredited degrees to determine whether a student needs to obtain any supplementary education to satisfy the appropriate educational standards. Students are required to gain any supplementary education from an IBMS accredited degree. Following their degree, students undertake work based training in an IBMS approved laboratory and complete the Registration Training Portfolio. The same process as outlined for the traditional route above is then followed. The supplementary education route was identified in the December 2008 paper to note as top-up courses.

A student can not be awarded the Certificate of Competence without successfully completing an IBMS accredited degree (or part there of) and a period of work based learning in an IBMS approved laboratory, which includes the completion of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio.

The standards of education and training require education providers to take responsibility for all areas of the programme. The IBMS will therefore be required to illustrate their management processes across all three elements of the programme (academic, clinical and the gateway assessment).

Some of the standards of education and training and standards of proficiency will need to be considered across the three elements of the programme. For example, assessment standards will need to be directly reviewed for the Registration Training Portfolio. However, visitors will also need to receive information which shows how management processes extend from the IBMS into the academic and clinical environments to ensure that assessments in these areas are also appropriate.

Considerations for the approval process

The first consideration for the approval process is the method through which we communicate with the IBMS. There will be no change to the formal publications relating to the standards of education and training or the supplementary information documents. However, correspondence and key operational documents, such as the "visit request form" will be amended to ensure that the language is appropriate.

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Given the policies and processes which the IBMS use to accredit the academic and clinical components of the programme and assess the Registration Training Portfolio, the documentation submitted prior to the visit will vary from the usual requirements for the approval process. For example, module descriptors are a normal requirement of the approval process; however, there will be no equivalent available from the IBMS. Instead, the IBMS ensure that modules are reviewed as part of their accreditation process for co-terminus and traditional route degrees. Therefore, the IBMS will most likely submit information which demonstrates how the accreditation mechanisms used are appropriate to the standards of education and training. Some documentation will be submitted specifically in reference to the Registration Training Portfolio and associated assessment processes and this should include information relating to entry requirements, programme management, curriculum, clinical experience and assessment.

The HPC Panel which conducts the visit will be made up of two profession specific visitors and an Education Executive. Depending on the experience of the visitors, it may be appropriate to also invite a visitor from another profession who has experience of enacting the approval process to support the profession specific visitors. It is likely that the majority of the profession specific visitors will be associated with IBMS accredited degrees or laboratories or be IBMS external verifiers. This may result in perceived conflicts of interest similar to those in small professions. It may be necessary to clarify in advance which kinds of relationships we class as conflicts of interest, such as membership of IBMS committees.

The visitors are likely to require a briefing before the visit on the interpretation of the standards of education and training to take into account the extended management processes for the academic and clinical components of the programme as well as the gateway assessment.

Normally, an approval visit takes place at the site of delivery for the programme. However due to the nature of the programme the visit will take place at the IBMS offices. The visit will not be comprised of all the meetings in a standard agenda. For example, the tour of facilities will not need to be conducted as these will be reviewed via documentation relating to the IBMS accreditation of the academic and clinical components of the programme. However, meetings with individuals in senior positions at the IBMS; individuals conducting assessments and supporting clinical experience; and individuals currently engaged in completing the Registration Training Portfolio will all be required.

Considerations for the monitoring processes

Upon reconfirmation of ongoing approval, the IBMS route to registration will move into open-ended approval and be subject to the two monitoring processes. Therefore the programme will need to submit an annual submission (declaration or audit) to confirm continued adherence to the standards of education and training and report any significant changes to us via the Major Change process.

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Amended timeline for activity

- December 2008 – paper to note to Education and Training Committee
- March 2009 – decision paper to Education and Training Committee to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the IBMS and the Certificate of Competence to meet HPC standards.
- August 2009 – briefing for visitors.
- October/November 2009 – to conduct an approval visit we require at least six months notice and this will be the earliest possible time that we could conduct a visit. The IBMS have requested that the visit is held in November due to extensive prior commitments in September 2009.
- January/February 2010 – because we estimate the post-visit process to take three months, this is the earliest possible time to conclude the approval process.

Summary

In summary, the following areas of the approval process are recommended for amendment in order to reconfirm ongoing approval of the IBMS Certificate of Competence.

- All standards of education and training must be met, but interpretation of the standards will be required to take into account the extended management processes for academic and clinical components of the programme as well as the gateway assessment itself.
- Visitors may require a briefing to prepare them for the approval visit.
- The Biomedical Scientist visitors will be supported by a visitor from another profession who has significant relevant experience of the approval process.
- Additional guidance will be provided to the Biomedical Scientist visitors surrounding actual and perceived conflicts of interest.
- Formal HPC publications will not be amended but correspondence and operational documents will be amended to facilitate the approval process through the use of appropriate terminology related to the IBMS Certificate of Competence.
- The documentary evidence required prior to the visit will be reviewed to take into account the extended management processes for the academic and clinical components of the programme as well as the gateway assessment itself.
- The visit will take place at the IBMS offices rather than at a delivery site for academic or clinical education.
- The approval visit agenda will be reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate to the particular demands of this type of qualification.

Decision

The Committee is asked to agree the following:

- To accept the proposed model for reconfirmation of ongoing approval and the amended timeline for activity.

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- To amend the proposed model for reconfirmation of ongoing approval or the timeline for activity.

Background information

- Education Department Workplan 2008-2009
- Draft Education Department Workplan 2009-2010

Resource implications

Resource implications in terms of staff time have been accounted for in the Draft Education Department Workplan 2009-2010. Resource requirements include: time to brief Biomedical Scientist visitors, specific amendment of key operational documents and negotiation with the IBMS regarding the visit date and agenda.

Financial implications

Financial implications for this work have been accounted for in the Education Department Budget 2009-2010. Areas of expenditure will include: the briefing for visitors' prior to the approval visit; visitor attendance fees for the visit and any travel and accommodation related to the visit.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – “Information Paper - Routes to registration for Biomedical Science”, Education and Training Paper, December 2008, enclosure 16.

Date of paper

13 March 2009

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
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Appendix One

Education and Training Committee – 2 December 2008

Paper to note – Routes to registration for Biomedical Scientists

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

As part of the Education Department's 2008 – 2009 work plan, information has been sought to outline the routes to registration for Biomedical Scientists. This paper provides a summary and analysis of the routes to registration as information for the Committee.

The Committee is asked to review the information and note that at the March 2009 Education and Training Committee a decision will be sought to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the biomedical science routes to registration to meet the relevant standards.

Summary of the routes to registration

There are two ways in which an individual can complete an HPC approved programme in Biomedical Science. The first is that HPC approves programmes that upon completion lead directly to eligibility to apply for registration. These are sometimes referred to as integrated programmes.

The other approved programme route is to complete the training associated with and obtain the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) Certificate of Competence. We therefore regard the IBMS as an education provider/validating body. The IBMS Certificate of Competence was transferred to the HPC as an approved programme when the Council was established and it has not been subject to an approval visit or monitoring processes.

Graduates who have completed a course at an education provider outside of the UK and who wish to become established in the UK must apply for registration through HPC's international route.

The information in this paper focuses on the IBMS Certificate of Competence and has been taken from the education and training pages of the IBMS website. There are three ways in which an individual can obtain the Certificate of Competence and this depends upon the degree which an individual has obtained.

1. Co-terminus degrees

The IBMS accredits co-terminus degrees. A co-terminus degree combines a programme of study with the work based laboratory training. This enables a student to complete the IBMS Registration Portfolio as part of the programme. The Registration Portfolio is assessed by an IBMS approved external assessor in partnership with the institution running the programme. Successful completion of the co-terminus degree results in the award of the degree and the Certificate of Competence.

For the IBMS to accredit a co-terminus degree the work based laboratory training must take place in an IBMS approved laboratory. Co-terminus degrees may also be approved by the HPC. However, the requirement for the work based learning to be obtained in an IBMS approved laboratory is not a requirement for HPC approval.

2. Non co-terminus degrees (sometimes referred to as the Traditional route)

The IBMS also accredits non co-terminus degrees. Non co-terminus degrees do not incorporate work based laboratory training into their programme of study; they are purely academic.

Prior to 9 July 2003

Students who received a letter from the CPSM/HPC/IBMS confirming the acceptability of their qualifications are required to undertake a period of work based training in a laboratory. They are required to complete a training log book and upon completion of the log book, undergo an oral examination. The IBMS will appoint an appropriate external examiner to undertake the oral examination in conjunction with an internal examiner from the laboratory. The Certificate of Competence can only be awarded once the IBMS are satisfied that the log book and oral examination have been successfully completed.

The letters issued by the CPSM/HPC/IBMS are valid for five years. This could mean that some students are just starting their training and would therefore still be completing the log book and expecting to undergo an oral examination at the end. It is unclear how many students are in this situation.

Post 9 July 2003

Once a student has successfully completed an IBMS accredited non co-terminus degree, they are required to undertake a period of training within an IBMS approved laboratory. While undertaking this training, students must complete the IBMS Registration Portfolio. The students' training officer will assess the portfolio to ensure that evidence of competence is being collected. However, upon completion, the portfolio is assessed by an IBMS appointed external verifier to ensure that it meets the appropriate standards. A visit to the laboratory is conducted and the student and training officer may be asked to provide points of clarification. The Certificate of Competence can only be awarded once the IBMS are satisfied the Registration Portfolio has been successfully completed.

3. Top-up course

Graduates who have completed a degree which has not been accredited by the IBMS can submit their qualification to the IBMS for assessment. They are

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required to submit a copy of their certificate, the entire course syllabus and degree transcript among other things. The Institute will determine, on a case by case basis, whether candidates need to undertake any supplementary education from an IBMS accredited undergraduate degree to satisfy the appropriate educational standards.

Once graduates have made up any shortfall they are required to obtain a place within an IBMS approved laboratory and complete the Registration Portfolio in order to apply for the Certificate of Competence. This is the same process as outlined above for non co-terminus degrees post 9 July 2003.

Analysis of the routes to registration

A student can not be awarded the Certificate of Competence without having completed an IBMS accredited degree or having had their qualifications assessed by the IBMS. The qualification undertaken by the student therefore plays an important role in the award of the Certificate of Competence.

The policies and procedures which the IBMS has in place enable it to accredit/verify programmes of study; accredit placement providers and assess placement experience for all three routes to the award of the Certificate of Competence.

As the IBMS are acting in the capacity of an education provider/validating body they are required to meet all the standards of education and training and the standards of proficiency.

Operational considerations

Given the complexity of the landscape of pre-registration education and training for biomedical scientists, it will take time and a period of transition before the HPC approval or monitoring processes can be applied. The summary below provides an indication of timeframes.

- December 2008 – paper to note to Education and Training Committee.
- March 2009 – decision paper to Education and Training Committee to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the IBMS and the Certificate of Competence to meet the HPC standards.
- October 2009 – if it is decided to conduct an approval visit we will require six months notice and this will be the earliest possible time that we could conduct a visit.
- January 2010 – if a visit is selected and because we estimate the post-visit process to take three months, this is the earliest possible time to conclude the approval process.

The Committee is minded that the approval and monitoring processes are normally applied to schemes of training and education. The IBMS methodology may require adaptations to the approach taken in applying the approval or monitoring processes.

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It is apparent that the members of the Education Department will require a briefing on the differences between this model of approved qualification and the other qualifications approved by HPC for biomedical science. The same will also be true for visitor partners.

There may also be changes required to elements of the processes. Most predictable of these changes are to the required documents requested before a visit and to the agenda as some new meetings may need to be added and others removed to collect all the relevant evidence from the education provider.

There may be other impacts on the processes of approval or monitoring and it may be prudent to conduct a preliminary meeting with representatives of the IBMS to determine how best to conduct the processes.

Decision

This paper is for information only and therefore no decision is required.

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

20 November 2009

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2008-11-20	a	APV	APV	Routes to registration Biomedical Science - paper to note	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None