

## Approved education provider monitoring process report

Education provider	Institute of Biomedical Science
Name of programme(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate of Competence (Non-accredited degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio), Flexible</li> <li>• Certificate of Competence (Degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio), Flexible</li> <li>• Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist), Flexible</li> <li>• Certificate of Competence (Degree containing the Registration Training Portfolio), Flexible</li> <li>• Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route), Flexible</li> </ul>
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Executive summary.....	1
Our standards .....	2
Our regulatory approach .....	2
The approved education provider monitoring process .....	2
Provider context.....	3
Institution performance scoring information .....	3
Quality assurance assessment .....	5
Quality summary.....	6
Decisions .....	10
How we make our decisions.....	10
Decision on approval .....	10

### Executive summary

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 approved education provider monitoring process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programmes detailed in this report continue to meet our Standards of Education and Training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding Institute of Biomedical Science and its programmes' 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
- 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 approved education provider monitoring process

Once a programme cluster 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
- 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.

## Provider context

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) is a professional body in the field of biomedical science. It currently delivers five HCPC-approved programmes across two professions, as listed below.

There are several routes to registration at the provider:

- The provider accredits programmes against its own standards, and then the graduates of these programmes are taken through a portfolio exercise with the IBMS to gain practical experience to meet proficiency standards
- Applicants who have not undertaken an IBMS-accredited degree engage with a portfolio exercise to have their learning and practical considered against proficiency standards
- Attainment and equivalence routes, where applicants demonstrate how skills, knowledge and experience they have undertaken mean they meet proficiency standards

## Institution performance scoring information

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Score	Executive Comments
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	810	780	-0.01	
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	N/A	N/A	N/A	We collect this data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The IBMS is not a Higher Education Institution, and therefore does not provide data to HESA, so these data points are not available.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	N/A	N/A	The IBMS is not a Higher Education Institution, and therefore the TEF award does not apply.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	N/A	N/A	N/A	We collect this data from the Office for Students (OfS), who run a survey for learners and graduates of undergraduate Higher Education. The IBMS is not a Higher Education Institution, and therefore these data points are not available.
HCPC AEPM cycle length	N/A	N/A	N/A	This data point is not currently available, as will be decided

				through this performance review exercise.
<b>Overall score</b>	N/A	N/A	Not available	<p>When working with the education provider through the assessment, we attempted to gain the non-available data points directly from the provider, but due to the model of learning, they were not able to supply relevant data points in these areas.</p> <p>From the data sourced and supplied, we are unable to calculate an overall performance score, as the majority of the data points are not available for this education provider.</p>

### The programmes considered

Programme name	Certificate of Competence (Non-accredited degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
First intake	01 July 2003
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 150
Intakes per year	1

Programme name	Certificate of Competence (Degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
First intake	01 July 2003
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 250
Intakes per year	1

Programme name	Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
First intake	01 September 2015
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 100
Intakes per year	1

Programme name	Certificate of Competence (Degree containing the Registration Training Portfolio)
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Biomedical scientist

First intake	01 July 2003
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 300
Intakes per year	1

Programme name	Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route)
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Clinical scientist
First intake	01 July 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 10
Intakes per year	1

## Quality assurance assessment

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the following broad topics:

Broad portfolio area	Specific area addressed
Institution self-reflection	Partnership arrangements
	Resourcing, including financial stability
	Academic and placement quality
	Interprofessional education
	Equality and diversity
	Horizon scanning
Thematic reflection	Impact of COVID-19
	Apprenticeships in England (if applicable)
	Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods
Sector body assessment reflection	Reflection of how the IBMS uses the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
	External assessment of practice education providers (for relevant programmes only)
	National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes – how the provider use this metric to inform development
Profession specific reflection	Curriculum development
	Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance
Stakeholder feedback and actions	Service users and carers
	Learners (those engaging with an approved programme)
	Practice placement educators
	External examiners

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

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information:

Mary Hannon-Fletcher	Biomedical Scientist
David Houlston	Biomedical Scientist
Ian Hughes	Service User Expert Advisor
Rabie Sultan	Education Officer

We undertook thematic performance review of 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 to take assurance that the education provider is performing well against our standards:

#### Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted and provided their feedback.
- Within their review, visitors did not identify any major risks. However, they had some questions to check for clarification. Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors decided to ask further clarification questions in a written form, requesting responses from the provider

#### Quality activity: Written questions

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary.

The main theme explored by visitors as part of the quality activity was how the IBMS assures itself of the quality of the programmes it accredits, in the following areas:

- Resourcing of degree provision by HEIs
- Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), specifically how the IBMS and providers co-ordinate and communicate on important areas related to EDI
- Apprenticeships in England, specifically how the IBMS worked with education providers implementing the newly introduced level 6 apprenticeship route
- Quality assessment and monitoring of practice education providers
- National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes – the visitors explored what action the IBMS would take if any accredited programmes received a poor NSS score

Additionally, we explored the following themes

- Practice-based learning monitoring and quality, specifically around IBMS practices to ensure the quality of practice, including that properly trained practice educators are in place
- Learners, specifically how the IBMS monitors learner experience and the governance process of utilising their feedback
- External examiners – the visitors explored how the IBMS liaises with external examiners, and how they act on external examiner reports

#### **Quality summary**

<b>Portfolio area</b>	<b>How was this area met?</b>
Partnership arrangements	Information provided through the portfolio showed the IBMS has effective partnerships with all education providers delivering IBMS accredited programmes. These partnership arrangements are crucial to the effective management of quality across the provider's accreditation portfolio, so the visitors are satisfied that the provider is able to ensure the quality of provision linked to this portfolio area.
Resourcing, including financial stability	It was noted within the portfolio that IBMS' regular monitoring and reporting to relevant committees and councils demonstrated sustainability of HCPC approved programmes, which was appropriate and rigorous. Therefore, we were satisfied that the provider is appropriately resourced and is financially stable to deliver / accredit HCPC-approved education provision.
Academic and placement quality	Annual reports from educators, employer's liaison committee reports and external examiners report submitted within the portfolio showed that the IBMS managed this area successfully. The visitors noted the providers approach in this area shows the provider is performing well in this portfolio area.
Interprofessional education	The evidence submitted demonstrated clearly that learners are able to learn with and from other professions. Therefore, the provider has maintained this portfolio area to deliver benefits to learners as intended by HCPC standards.
Equality and diversity	It was noted through the portfolio that IBMS accredited programmes will manage their own equality and diversity policies, which will be managed by the relevant Education provider. Due to the provider's model, the visitors considered this arrangement appropriate, and that it was working well, so there were no risks identified in this area.
Horizon scanning	In their portfolio, the education provider referenced list of their accredited courses along with details on IBMS' mission and values. They also referenced their strategy statement in relation to this area. In reviewing this information, the visitors considered there was clear evidence which demonstrates the provider is able to effectively horizon scan. This is demonstrated by the education provider being successful in extending their delivery over the years.
Impact of COVID-19	The evidence submitted identified how the education provider has successfully adapted using innovative methods to ensure needs of the profession were met, along with maintaining standards successfully. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with the provider's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Apprenticeships in England (if applicable)	It was clear from the portfolio submission and quality activity responses that the same standards were being applied consistently across education providers, to the recently introduced Level 6 pathway apprenticeships pathway.

	Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with how the provider has considered and aligns to the apprenticeship initiative.
Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods	The evidence submitted clearly showed how the IBMS and academic teaching has evolved by using greater use of blended learning and digital technology. The visitors were also satisfied that there were no risks with the provider's approach in this area. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied with this portfolio area.
Reflection of how the IBMS uses the UK Quality Code for Higher Education	The documentation submitted made it clear where and how the provider's assessment portfolio is mapped to the UK quality code for Higher Education, including how assessments are designed and marked with suitable feedback. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied with the provider's consideration of external sources of guidance in programme delivery.
External assessment of practice education providers (for relevant programmes only)	The portfolio submission clearly identified how the IBMS effectively manages and implements several checkpoints to assess and monitor practice education providers via regular meeting with practice educators and learners. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied that the provider is performing well in this portfolio area.
National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes – how the provider use this metric to inform development	As a professional body the IBMS is not part of the NSS data collection directly. However, they collect and monitor this data from education providers who deliver IBMS programmes. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's use of this data, and therefore with their approach in this portfolio area.
Curriculum development	The IBMS is involved in curriculum development within the profession, and they noted that curriculum development is mapped to changes in the Quality Assurance Agency's benchmark standards for Biomedical Sciences. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with provider's approach in this area.
Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance	It was noted within the portfolio submission that IBMS are up to date with recent changes and have a thorough review process that reflects their development. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with provider's approach in this area.
Service users and carers	It was clear from the submission that the level of service user and carer engagement is adequate, to confirm that their involvement contributes to the overall quality and effectiveness of the IBMS programmes. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with provider's approach in this area.
Practice placement educators	Information through the portfolio confirmed practice educators training is done by the IBMS and updates are conveyed in a timely manner when new standards are introduced. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with provider's approach in this area.
External examiners	Information through the portfolio confirmed external examiner reports has been extremely useful in the past to monitor the effectiveness and quality of the various IBMS



	programmes. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that they are able to use the views of outside experts to contribute to the quality of their provision.
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## Risks

### Lack of ongoing data points

- Due to the type of provider, the data points relevant to HEIs are not available.
- This presents a risk, as we rely on an understanding of performance from ongoing data points to be confident in the interim period between portfolio submissions
- This risk is further compounded as the education provider is also the professional body for this profession, which potentially means we will not have the less quantifiable intelligence about the quality of provision passed to us (as we would do for many of the other professions we regulate)
- This risk can be mitigated in several ways:
  - Ensuring the provider is clear on its responsibilities to report any significant issues to the HCPC which can be considered through our focused review process. Historically we have worked well with the education provider on matters of programme quality, and therefore we expect that this relationship will continue within the new Education QA model
  - Establishing bespoke performance data points with the provider, which they can supply on a regular (annual) basis. These data points should be mapped to the data points normally expected in the performance scoring model wherever possible
  - The establishment of the HCPC New Graduate Survey, which will include quality indicators of those who have completed IBMS training

## Best practice

The visitors identified the following areas of good practice:

- The education provider's proactiveness in terms of horizon scanning, given the range of accredited programmes on offer within their portfolio which have successfully been extended across different education providers over the years
- Effectiveness of partnership and collaboration between the IBMS and their approved education providers
- The IBMS has made significant changes such as use of technology to meet their requirements whilst also dealing with COVID-19, this has ensured the training and assessment of learners continues to be able to continue to supply the workforce

## Recommendation

The visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

- The institution and its programmes should remain approved

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in five years (the 2025-26 academic year)

From their detailed documentary review and considering the responses to quality activity, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's approaches in all areas reflected upon within the portfolio submission. The visitors identified no major risks in the provider's approach to meeting the standards, and considered that they are performing well. This demonstrates clear adherence to standards and performance above our regulatory threshold.

The visitors consider that if the mitigations above are put in place, and that through those mitigations no drop in provider performance is identified, there is no reason to require a portfolio submission earlier than 2025-26.

## Decisions

### **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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### **Decision on approval**

- What the ETC decision was and how it was made