

HERE TO HELP

TRAINEE AND TRAINER

Jocelyn Pryce, IBMS Head of Registration and Training, discusses the importance of relationships in training.

Having recently attended the IBMS Congress and given talks on a number of subjects, I thought I would use this column to answer some of the questions raised during the discussions that followed them. Although three of the four talks were very different in context, the questions raised by them have a theme. My talks included considerations when trying to train the untrainable, the ways in which training is a two-way partnership, and an update on Version 4 of the Registration Portfolio. Three very different aspects of training, but with a central core revolving around the relationship between the trainee and the trainer.

During my Trying to Train the Untrainable talk, we looked at reasons why a trainee may be struggling with the training and explored ways to ameliorate the problems. Training is a Two-Way Partnership explored what makes a



successful partnership and why that can sometimes break down. The situations discussed in these talks depended on the skills of the training officer to manage the relationships and bring the training period to a successful conclusion. What was apparent from the discussions that took place was that often training officers do not have the skills which allow them to do this, or feel they are not supported.

Version 4 portfolio, with its requirement for only 30 pieces of evidence, has highlighted the need for trainers to have the skills to manage these training situations. In the past, training officers felt it appropriate to pass the responsibility of making the decisions around whether a trainee has reached threshold level to become a practising biomedical scientist (or not) to the verifier. Nowadays, the onus is on the training officer to ensure that the trainee is ready and failure to do this, with subsequent failure on the part of the trainee, can reflect poorly on the lab involved. This has meant added pressure on the training team to have the difficult conversations with trainees who are not ready. Trainees should not be put forward for verification if the training officer has any doubts, for whatever reason, and their

management should support their decision based on the evidence the trainer officer has provided.

While it is the responsibility of the training team to ensure that their trainee is prepared for the verification and capable of practising at the threshold level of a registered biomedical scientist, one of the things that causes concern is whether they are then responsible for the good professional practice of that biomedical scientist once registered. There is an easy answer to this and it is “no”. We have to demonstrate that we are professional practitioners in order to be accepted onto the register and it is, therefore, our own responsibility to behave in such a way as to reinforce this. The training team are the facilitators for the training period, the verifier is the gatekeeper who satisfies themselves that the training experience has been robust, the IBMS is the professional body that awards a Certificate of Competence and the HCPC makes the decision to admit the individual to the register. Each biomedical scientist has been offered the opportunities necessary to allow them to train to the threshold level, but they are the professional practitioner and solely responsible for their behaviour. 