



UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Alan Wainwright, IBMS Executive Head of Education, explains why the Institute has launched a new experiential route to registration as a Clinical Scientist.

The Institute believes that professional progression should be built upon a meritocratic framework, whereby access to the highest levels of professional practice is enabled through the joint demonstration of qualifications and competence.

In December last year, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approved the IBMS as an education provider for the following route to registration as a clinical scientist: Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route), Institute of Biomedical Science, FLX (Flexible).

This is a new and distinct route to

registration as a Clinical Scientist delivered by the Institute, which will enable individuals who have advanced their scope of practice in biomedical science to demonstrate their eligibility to be registered with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist.

The programme is approved to deliver the following clinical scientist modalities:

- Clinical Biochemistry
- Clinical Immunology
- Haematology.

Applicants for the IBMS Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route) do not have to be members of the Institute, but are expected to be

experienced scientists with a high level of expertise and specialisation. The experiential route will require an applicant to satisfy the IBMS Assessment Panel in their portfolio of evidence that they meet the HCPC standards of proficiency for clinical scientists. This can be demonstrated through a combination of education, training and experience that has already been gained in their professional practice.

A new route

This is a significant step in the history of the Institute of Biomedical Science, which as a professional body for all those working in biomedical science, has

HCPC

The Institute is now able to recognise high-level practice at the scientific/clinical interface by offering an experiential route to HCPC registration as a clinical scientist that is in addition to the equivalence routes currently offered by the Academy of Healthcare Science and Association of Clinical Scientists.

primarily established itself as the main provider of routes to registration and further professional development as a biomedical scientist.

The Institute is now able to recognise high-level practice at the scientific/clinical interface by offering an experiential route to HCPC registration as a clinical scientist that is in addition to the equivalence routes currently offered by the Academy of Healthcare Science (AHCS) and Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS).

Furthermore, given that biomedical scientists are currently excluded from access to higher specialist scientific training (HSST) programmes by virtue of the fact that registration as a clinical scientist is a prerequisite, it will offer successful candidates the opportunity to progress further to this highest level of training and practice.

The Institute's Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route) meets the same HCPC standards of proficiency as other routes to registration as a clinical scientist, but is not limited by the curriculum of the Scientific Training Programme (STP) or STP equivalence routes offered by the AHCS, or the training requirements for the ACS Certificate of Attainment.

All of these routes differ slightly in entry requirements and scope of practise.

However, in common with the AHCS Certificate of Equivalence there is no formal requirement for length of experience and, like the ACS Certificate of Attainment, there is no requirement for applicants to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes listed in the AHCS Good Scientific Practice document, interpreted in the context of a current STP curriculum. Consistency between the routes is achieved through demonstration of knowledge and understanding of key concepts of the specific disciplines that are common to all these programmes, and by the quality assurance methods applied through the assessment panel, Service User Engagement Group and external examiner that enables candidates to demonstrate that they have met the HCPC standards of proficiency for clinical scientists.

IBMS PROGRAMMES

The Institute of Biomedical Science now offers the following HCPC approved programmes (all flexible delivery).

Undergraduate programmes for biomedical scientists

- ✓ Certificate of Competence (Degree containing the Registration Training Portfolio)
- ✓ Certificate of Competence (Degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)
- ✓ Certificate of Competence (Non-accredited degree followed by Registration Training Portfolio)
- ✓ Certificate of Competence by Equivalence (Biomedical Scientist)

Postgraduate programme for clinical scientists

- ✓ Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route)

Developing practice

Applicants who do not have the breadth of training described in the STP curricula and who cannot meet the requirements for ACS Route 2 by virtue of their biomedical scientist registration, but who do have the necessary skills and

experience equivalent to clinical scientists, may favour the IBMS Certificate of Attainment.

Applicants must ensure they have already received the appropriate training and assessment for the role they currently have, which must enable them to demonstrate they have the relevant practice in a speciality that equates to the HCPC standards of proficiency for clinical scientists in order to proceed to portfolio submission.

The candidate will be expected to show how they have developed their practice prior to application and had resources sufficient, appropriate and available to support their development and scope of practice to the threshold level of clinical scientist registration. Training is not provided as part of this programme. This programme is experiential and, as such, is dependent upon the retrospective demonstration of previously acquired knowledge and skills that are applied in a current scope of practice.

To successfully complete the programme, applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have met the threshold standards of knowledge and skills comparable to existing routes to registration as a Clinical Scientist that meet the HCPC standards of proficiency for clinical scientists (December, 2014).

IMAGES: ALAMY/ISTOCK

The new route to registration as a Clinical Scientist epitomises the Institute's success in opening doors

Key benefits

The subject-specific curriculum establishes the foundation for submitting evidence of knowledge and skills to demonstrate how the HCPC standards of proficiency in the IBMS Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment Experiential Portfolio have been met, as each HCPC standard of proficiency is mapped to one

or more learning outcomes that reflect the curriculum for the speciality and overall programme outcomes. Upon award of the IBMS Clinical Scientist Certificate of Attainment (Experiential Route), individuals will be eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration as a Clinical Scientist.

One of the key benefits of this programme is that it is flexible and assessment of the candidate reflects areas of practice in which the candidate has already achieved a high level of knowledge and experience, most likely, but not exclusively, in their role as a biomedical scientist.

It recognises that while common standards of education and training within healthcare science (biomedical science) are essential to professional practice and indeed statutory regulation, a "one-size-fits-all" approach ignores the potential for laboratories to "grow their own", or for individuals to have developed their careers in a more flexible manner.

In this context, the Institute's qualification framework offers more affordable and accessible qualifications to members to develop their careers and the new route to registration as a clinical scientist epitomises the Institute's success in opening doors and opportunities to enhance the career prospects of its members. 