

HERE TO HELP

APPRENTICESHIPS – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

IBMS Executive Head of Education **Alan Wainwright** reports on apprenticeships, after attending a number of events for the IBMS.

Barts Health NHS Trust held a launch event in May and outlined key aspects of level 2, 4 and 6 apprenticeships. Highlighting the new levy on employers that was replacing government funding, pressure was clearly on to use the levy. Key points to emerge were:

- Apprenticeships must be employed (12 months minimum, 30 hours a week)
- 20% of the job must be training
- Apprenticeship standards define the job role at the end of the apprenticeship
- AHPs and nurses are not ready to go in September 2017
- For biomedical scientists, current IBMS-accredited degrees and completion of the IBMS registration training portfolio could be used in conjunction with the End-Point Assessment (EPA) to demonstrate achievement of the level 6 standard
- The EPA would introduce another layer of training and assessment, which is an additional cost to the employer and as it is an “add-on” there is a risk to recovering the levy if the student fails to complete it
- Apprenticeship standards are not automatically recognised by the HCPC as giving eligibility for statutory registration.

A meeting of AHP Education Leads in June explored aspects of degree apprenticeships, not least the role of the HCPC and the need for any new apprenticeship programme to be approved and major changes to existing programmes to be assessed before apprenticeships can start their training.



From an HCPC perspective, standards of education and training (SETs) are designed to be flexible and can be applied to a variety of training models. Education providers will need to demonstrate how their apprenticeship programme meets the SETs. Standards affected may be:

- Admission standards, especially those around professional entry, accreditation of prior (experiential) learning, and equality and diversity – impacted by changes to admissions for widening access to the programme
- Assessment and management standards – likely to be impacted as the EPA for apprenticeships is embedded within the programme (in the case of integrated apprenticeship degrees)
- Curriculum and assessment, programme management and practice placement standards – impacted by changes to teaching and assessment methods.

The discussion was wide-ranging and a number of concerns were raised demonstrating the high degree of uncertainty and concern for maintaining

professional standards.

Outcomes for the meeting identified the need to:

- Pursue HCPC engagement
- Assert the importance of professional body accreditation (or equivalent) role
- Ensure a level 6 degree qualification is embedded within all entry route apprenticeship standards for the professions
- Consider the merits of the EPA being integrated into degree apprenticeships and promoting this, including as a way of

ensuring that the apprenticeship degree can be considered as a complete package and as a way of achieving alignment between graduation, certification of successful completion and registration

- Explore further how our respective established approaches to accreditation form the starting point for considering degree apprenticeships, and what additional facets would need to be included to capture key aspects of employer with a view to identifying an outline model/key principles.

The Institute will continue to engage with employers, HEIs and other professional bodies to seek greater clarity on the apprenticeship schemes offered at levels 2, 4 and 6 but also recognises that its strength lies in the variety of routes available to HCPC registration (integrated and non-integrated degrees) and its established standards for laboratory approval for pre-registration training which could form the basis for delivering apprenticeship degrees if these are a viable option. 