

## MY LAB

# HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

This month's article is a little bit different. Instead of writing about helping you, **Jocelyn Pryce**, IBMS Deputy Executive Head of Education, would like to invite you to help her team.

**T**he Education Team receives a large number of grumbles about the time it takes to allocate a verifier or examiner. The delay is not, for the most part, due to delays in the internal office processes but instead is caused by us waiting for examiners and verifiers volunteering to undertake the assessments and this part of the process is out of our control.

Despite recruiting large numbers of new verifiers and examiners through recent training days, we are still struggling to find volunteers to undertake verifications, even in areas where there should be a high number, such as around London.

We have been working hard to streamline our internal processes, and our turnaround times for internal parts of the process are, in most cases, less than a week. But the length of time it is taking for verifiers and examiners to volunteer is increasing the overall total turnaround times.

We are often contacted by trainers or candidates, sometimes rather aggressively "blaming" us for the protracted timeframes in organising their assessments but, as we point out, we are entirely reliant on volunteers. We are very aware of the time constraints within



laboratories these days and we are indebted to those of you who offer your services to undertake the various assessments. I would ask that active verifiers or examiners encourage their colleagues to express their interest and volunteer if they are in a position to do so.

I am often asked how many assessments we expect verifiers and examiners to undertake each year and the answer is simple – there's no expectation, although we do suggest at least two a year to maintain currency.

In some areas, where the training ethos is strong, there have been dialogues with managers around a quid pro quo relationship where managers release staff

to undertake assessments equivalent to the number of live portfolios that will require assessing in their laboratory. This has been a successful tactic in areas where there is a good relationship between laboratories.

We have also been told that the expenses policy can be a barrier to volunteering so, as a response to this, we will include an area within the verification and examination emails where you can easily identify the assessment that you are volunteering for and also add a rough estimation of your expected expenses. This should reduce the protracted email conversation where the team follows up potential costs and

seeks agreement for any expenses outside of the policy. In many cases, where a need is identified, expenses above the upper limit can be agreed on a case-by-case basis and an initial estimation can guide early checks for this.

Please also contact us or encourage colleagues to, if you feel that the expenses may be an issue and a barrier to stepping up. We would rather know that you are interested and enter into a dialogue about how we could manage the expenses than for you to feel that we would not sanction your expenses or take advantage of your interest.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support. 