



THE BIG QUESTION

THIS MONTH WE ASK

“What is the most vital skill or attribute for a newly qualified biomedical scientist to possess”



Bamidele Farinre

Lead Biomedical Scientist
Halogene, I-HUB

“Congratulations you’ve passed, welcome to the world of endless possibilities”. I remember something along those lines when I passed my IBMS Certificate of Competence. One thing that kept me going was the confidence in my new title. After qualifications, it’s easy to mount pressure on oneself, but it’s okay to know that one is just beginning. Be open-minded about your competence limit and be willing to learn more from the qualified experts. New registrants must be able to make and maintain strong relationships with their colleagues, stakeholders and hospital staff.

Communication is one of the most important professional skills for scientists. Individuals should feel comfortable explaining complex biomedical theories in written and oral communication to a range of audiences. Outside the laboratory setting, biomedical scientists may be called upon to deliver lectures or presentations about their work to industry stakeholders and students. Flexibility is also an important biomedical science skill because it allows individuals to balance the fast pace at which science advances with the meticulous approach of research. Success requires an eye for detail, a willingness to ask clear questions and follow-up, and organisational skills so that research findings and other appropriate materials are in order. A sense of curiosity and persistence goes hand in hand with motivation.



Dylan Jones

Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences
(Haematology & Human Physiology)
Bangor University

Don’t be afraid to ask questions! During your studies no doubt you will have spent many an hour working on your own in a library, sat by your computer or even within an exam hall. It can develop you into a strong, independent practitioner but it’s important to remember that biomedical scientists work as part of a team.

The shared knowledge and experiences of your colleagues will be phenomenal, and they will be more than happy to share them and aid in your development as a scientist.

Given the importance of continual professional development, which can come in the form of formal training events, journal clubs or post-graduate education, it can also be incredibly valuable to learn in a more informal way from your colleagues.

If you see a technique new to you being performed, ask if you can shadow. If you see an interesting result, ask the more experienced scientist what the significance of the result is. These conversations can form an invaluable developmental opportunity for you and allow you to identify avenues for you to develop as a scientist.

Whilst it may be intimidating to find yourself in a new environment, just remember that everybody you work with started in the same place and they will be happy to answer any questions you may have. You never know, they may have had the same questions as you do!



Cherie Beckett

Acting Senior Biomedical Scientist
(Microbiology)
The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

The HCPC has set out 15 standards of proficiency that an individual must meet in order to register (and stay registered) as a biomedical scientist. As described by the HCPC, these are threshold standards that are considered necessary to protect members of the public alongside keeping to the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

The most vital attribute that I believe a newly qualified biomedical scientist should possess is that of holding the patient at the heart of everything. Within this, if one truly does hold the patient at the heart of all that they do, I feel there is a direct link with the adherence of the aforementioned standards.

Putting the patient first lends itself to staying within one’s own scope of practice, understanding the necessary requirements of training, expertise and experience and practising safely and effectively. In the basic sense, this means a newly qualified biomedical scientist should simply be honest: to be able to raise their hand when they don’t know what to do, or if they are unsure, and not to perform a task in which they are not competent. Furthermore, to be able to say when things may have gone wrong or if something is not quite right.

As biomedical scientists often work behind closed doors, it can be easy to lose sight of the patient that we seldom meet, but every sample represents a patient, and every patient matters. Plus – without patients, we would all be out of a job!