

# WE HEAR YOU

## MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

In September last year, we gave every member the chance to feed back into IBMS policies and processes via a member-wide survey. Here we report back on the action being taken by the IBMS.

**T**he data have now come back from Research by Design – an independent research company – and our Membership Committee and Council are busy analysing the findings and strategising how we as an organisation can turn the most widespread member concerns into actions.

As we had anticipated, the results show that it is a difficult time for our members. The pandemic has taken its toll, the cost-of-living crisis is biting, and the NHS backlog is weighing heavy on our workforce, which is stretched and struggling to retain our experts and find the capacity for training. We are already working on the key issues that were identified but we are now doubling down on those you find most pressing and looking for new methodologies through your suggestions. In the short term, we have frozen the membership fees again to help with your costs.

### Limited support for career progression

Helping our members to progress in their careers is always our utmost priority and we are working hard to

make sure that there are more opportunities to progress at all levels of the profession. We are bringing opportunities to our members from the ground up and from the outside in – including lobbying on behalf of members at the government level to secure more funding and training provision in the workplace and developing new qualifications in emerging fields to bring into the laboratory through your training officers. We have already gained traction in England with



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Practice Educators and secured funding for some of the IBMS qualifications – taking the burden off our members – and we want to expand on this and ensure that all four home nations benefit from these successes, making sure that workplaces across the UK are empowered to offer our members the advancement they deserve. More investment and funding has the knock-on effect of easing work/life balance and ensuring better staff retention – so it is our highest priority. We want our members to have happier and healthier working lives.

### Access to development opportunities

Our new Executive Head of Education Dr Sue Jones and Head of Learning and Development Donna Torrance are

adapting and progressing the qualifications that we offer – and also providing more online courses and training than ever before. We are set to expand on this in the coming years by bringing in a new Head of Digital Learning for 2023. In 2022, we provided Training Officer Support Hubs, Successful Laboratory Training sessions, Train the Trainer online seminars, The Biomedical Scientist Live event and we hope to offer more of this sort of digital CPD as part of our everyday membership service. This will include recorded sessions at IBMS Congress 2023 for every member to access.

We will also be looking to bring all of our specialist qualifications online – and providing new ways of completing and combining modules so that you get the best qualification that best fits your laboratory’s services.

### Qualification paths that are clear and accessible to all

It is essential that more people understand the HCPC requirements for registration as a biomedical scientist and that fewer people make the wrong choice for their career before they have even taken their first steps. This is why we are currently undertaking a “Route to Registration” project that will see us spread clear and accessible information about routes into the profession to three key audiences: 16-18-year-olds and their careers advisors, 18-21-year-old students and 21+ graduates across the

UK. The project aims to utilise digital, video and print to reach everybody who is interested in joining the profession to inform them about the quickest and easiest route for them. This will help the profession in recruiting skilled and qualified staff at the required levels.

### More community support

Our Membership Committee is looking at ways in which we can provide more support for our members – and opportunities to engage where engagement is desired. Part of this is about having accessible events – online, hybrid and locally – where members with shared interests can come together to learn and develop, or just talk and reflect. We will be looking at new ways to give our members places to congregate, build groups and improve networks.

### Going forward

The profession is at a crossroads, emerging from a pandemic with increased public awareness of how testing impacts health but in danger of losing the recognition of how vital the broader range of diagnostic services are. We have been busy lobbying for policies that benefit the profession – contributing at All-Party Parliamentary Groups, speaking with MPs and Parliamentarians, feeding into consultations with the Select Committees, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the UK Health Security Agency, and ensuring that our voice is heard in the COVID Inquiry to name but a few – and we will continue on this path: keeping the profession’s concerns in the public focus and securing the path to better investment in the workforce. As our healthcare services evolve with new technologies and expertise, it is indisputable that our work will keep growing in importance. As your professional body, we will work hard to make sure that your value is recognised and that your workplace is supported to enable you to progress. 

