

**O**ur President and other IBMS Council members worked hard to raise the profile of the organisation during the pandemic. To avoid losing momentum and the inroads made, Council prioritised the need to establish a policy unit. Therefore, we interviewed several public affairs agencies and appointed PMLR, an award-winning company of experts in public affairs and public relations. With their knowledge in this area, they will support us to raise our profile with politicians and governments in the four home nations.

As a result of our work so far with PMLR, we were able to increase our reach to more political stakeholders during Biomedical Science Day, as well as respond promptly to the recent Queen's speech, highlighting the impact to our members.

### Member engagement survey

The IBMS Strategy also sets out an ambition to progress the numbers and range of members that the IBMS attracts, within the UK and globally.

To grow and develop our membership, we first need to get a better understanding of how well our members feel supported and what more we could do to retain and attract new members. To develop our future plans, we have appointed Research by Design, who have supported the IBMS with previous surveys, to undertake qualitative and quantitative research (see page 48). Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far, we look forward to sharing the results with you at the end of the summer.

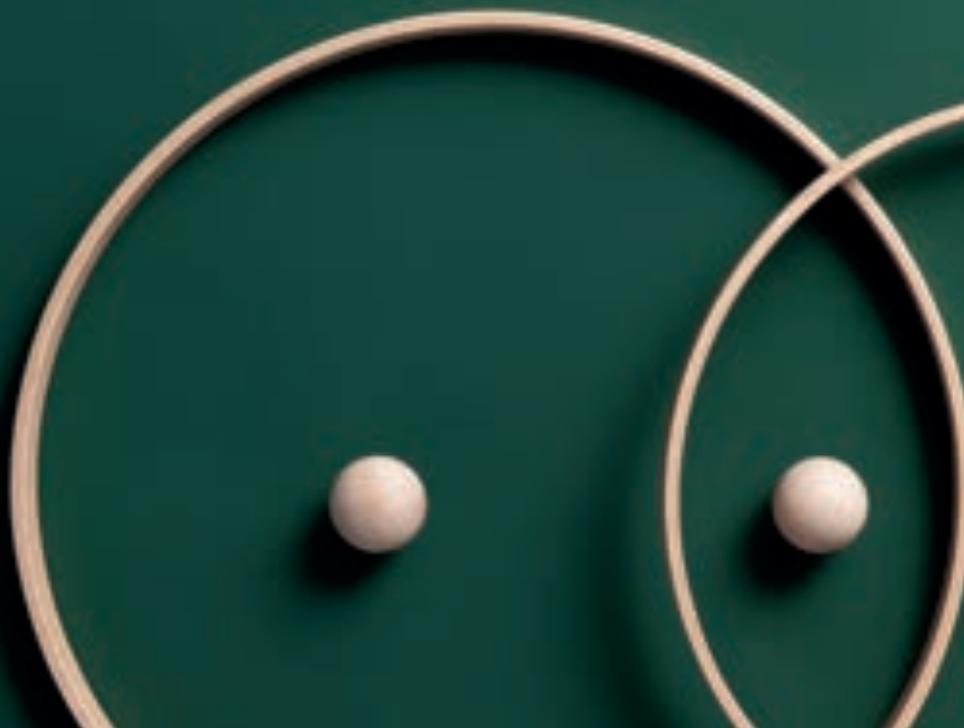
We have also been working to grow our membership overseas and recently welcomed almost 50 new members from Mauritius.

Our workplan for 2022 considers how regions and branches and public engagement – including philanthropic activities – can be used to better support members. We will be able to share more on these exciting workstreams in the next update – so watch this space!

# THE IBMS STRATEGY: AN UPDATE



The bold new IBMS Strategy was launched in February this year. It set out our vision, mission and values, the key themes we will be focusing on, and our core aims over the next five years. Here **Lynda Rigby, Sue Jones and Sarah May** from the IBMS outline the work being undertaken to deliver this new strategy.



## Routes to HCPC registration

The IBMS Strategy sets out our commitment to ensure that access to all routes to registration are clear and fit for purpose. We need to raise awareness for a variety of stakeholders, including primary, secondary and tertiary educators and students, employers, academic staff and lay people. The Institute is developing a range of bespoke activities and resources to promote the role of biomedical scientists and the career pathways available.

Clear information on the apprenticeships and IBMS-accredited degree programmes that provide the most efficient route to registration will be shared on a variety of platforms, including the new website and social media. We are focusing on demystifying the specific roles of the HCPC and IBMS, alongside the importance of IBMS-accredited undergraduate degree programmes.

Equivalence routes to registration, non-accredited degree assessments and the requirement for top-up modules will be clarified and communication to both non-members and members of the Institute prioritised.

## Championing the role of trainers

A central pillar of our Strategy is to sustain and retain a well-trained workforce that will secure the future of the profession. The knowledge and expertise of our members underpin the training and assessment of support workers, trainees, apprentices, placement students and graduates.

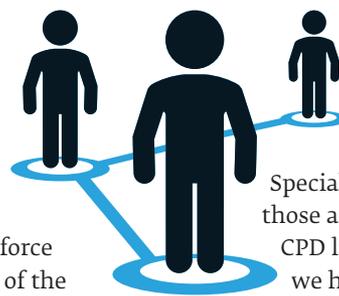
To highlight and celebrate the crucial role of training, the Institute is organising a series of regular events. These include training events on supporting successful completion and verification of the registration training portfolio, specialist portfolio training and examination and how to gain laboratory training approval.

We are also developing resources and exemplars of evidence for registration and specialist portfolios, what to do about issues or concerns, verifier and/or examiner report writing and a series of “how to” guides for both trainers and trainees.

Additionally, IBMS Chat and IBMS Support Hub events will be used to connect trainers and promote discussions around training. Finally, a peer network for training officers will be created to promote the role of training, provide mentoring and raise the profile of this essential role.

## Progressing careers

Our professional qualifications exist to support our members in their career aspirations and development. Part of our new strategy is to ensure all our members have access to qualifications that are relevant to their scope of practice and that reflect the diversity of laboratories and workloads. To this end, we are embarking of a review of our Specialist Portfolios that will result in them being broken into their composite modules in order for members to be offered a flexible choice to select those that best reflect their scope of practice – of course our uni-discipline portfolios will continue to remain an option.



To support those working on their Specialist Portfolios, and also those at any level looking for new CPD learning opportunities, we have now purchased a powerful e-learning platform

that will eventually contain all of the Specialist Portfolio modules available as individual learning exercises with accompanying assessment tools – but that is for later. Candidates compiling their Registration and Specialist Portfolios will be able to upload their work onto the system and our verifiers, and similarly our examiners, will be able to access and mark the submissions through the system. Over the next 12 months there will be some big changes.

## Advanced and consultant-level practice

Our expert and advanced qualifications have gained considerable traction since they were first launched and form a major part of our strategy. We are working closely with the Royal College of Pathologists, the National School for Healthcare Science, Health Education England and the devolved administration equivalents to support the opening of new opportunities and the uptake of these qualifications. We are developing two narrow curriculum reporting qualifications aligned to the cervical and bowel screening programmes that will enable scientists to become competent to report these sample types in a shorter length of time than having to complete the whole gastro-intestinal or gynae pathology reporting pathways. It is hoped these will be available later this year. Our objective is to offer choice and opportunities for all of our members. 

**Lynda Rigby** is the IBMS Executive Head of Marketing and Membership, **Sue Jones** is the IBMS Executive Head of Education and **Sarah May** is the IBMS Deputy Chief Executive.