

HERE TO HELP

THE IBMS SUPPORT HUB

Tahmina Hussain and Jocelyn Pryce outline the launch of support resources to help members in these challenging times.

Since the start of the pandemic the IBMS has been asking members to share their experiences through a regular survey. Members have been able to identify the areas they find challenging and suggest ways in which the IBMS could provide focused support for them. Many indicated that more virtual networking and, in particular, support with Continued Professional Development (CPD) and training would be helpful.

It was clear from the feedback that many misconceptions about undertaking CPD continue to exist. In order to offer supportive solutions to this and other challenges, we have introduced the IBMS Support Hub – a series of free online sessions to help support professional development. This regular forum, delivered via Zoom or MSTeams, will be covering areas that members find challenging. The hosting panel will be able to guide and offer solutions and members will be encouraged to engage in discussion and networking.

A very enthusiastic response for the first interactive session, “Barriers to CPD” resulted in all places being booked up within the first 24 hours. The session involved asking members how they were finding CPD and what they thought the barriers were, with



time being the most common when it comes to performing CPD. Jocelyn and Tahmina held discussions around how to break down some of the barriers relating to performing and documenting CPD. Some examples of CPD taken from the laboratory showed how CPD is not always about attending formal courses, but is everywhere and can be any activity from which individuals can learn, reflect and develop. Examples included work-based learning, such as errors and incidents, EQA exercises, audits, validation and verification of assays, competency assessments, writing new SOPs, as well as verification and examination of registration and specialist portfolios.

The session also included discussions around CPD for members in managerial roles, where their daily activities may not always be related to the laboratory. Suggestions included having difficult conversations, people management and completing appraisals. Time may be one of the

factors that makes it difficult to perform CPD and we found out that it may be useful to keep a small notebook/diary to record notes of a CPD activity that you would like to write up at a later date.

The session then went on to discuss how to reflect on an activity and included thinking about writing up a reflective statement detailing a description of the event, feelings during the event, evaluation, analysis, conclusions, action plan, improvement plan and how it may benefit the service user. It is this ability to reflect that elevates any activity into CPD.

The final part of the session gave members an overview of the IBMS CPD Scheme and how to log activities, gaining a CPD diploma once 24 activities across a minimum of three categories were recorded. The feedback received for the first session has been very positive and we hope there will be many more to come.

If you have any suggestions for further sessions that the IBMS Support Hub can provide help with, please email registration@ibms.org. 