

HERE TO HELP

IBMS SUPPORT HUBS

As a follow-up to “Assessing Employability Skills” in September’s *Biomedical Scientist*, IBMS Council member **Tahmina Hussain** discusses how the IBMS is supporting some of the next steps from the study.

As outlined in my article with Martyn Hicks, our educational and employment research study investigated the perceived skills gap for new graduates prior to employment compared with employers’ requirements and expectations of graduates in a pathology laboratory. The article has been well received by all stakeholders and feedback has been positive. Martyn and I have received contact from higher education institutions and employers as well as undergraduates and graduates asking for advice and career options. The responses highlighted an overlooked area that needs improvement – the gaps in skills and knowledge of new graduates and the impact this has on the workforce and service delivery. From the feedback, we identified a number of ways to address these issues and I have been working with IBMS Executive Head of Education Sue Jones to find ways that we can help current students and recent graduates. One such initiative I am pleased to


announce is that the IBMS Support Hubs will be returning this year with a new series of topics to cover some of the skills gaps identified in the survey. The lunchtime webinars will cover a variety of areas for members, from students and graduates through to fully qualified and practising professionals. For graduates, the first Support Hub will begin on Wednesday 25 January and will include advice on placements, job applications and CV writing.

In the study, employers also fed back that they expected graduates to have more knowledge of quality management, UKAS and the role of pathology in patient care. So, we will be running Support Hub sessions to cover these topics in more depth as well.

To sign up for the sessions, or for further information on when they will take place and the topics covered, please visit www.ibms.org/supporthubs. Details will also be communicated in future IBMS newsletters and social media posts. If there are topics that you would like to see covered in future

Support Hubs then you can contact me via communications@ibms.org.

Another way to support students and graduates entering the workforce that was highlighted by employers was through mentoring. As a benefit of their membership, all members have access to the IBMS online mentoring scheme. IBMS Mentoring makes creating and mentoring relationships easy as it pairs mentees based on what they need with mentors based on what they can offer.

As a two-way process the mentoring scheme enables mentors and mentees to work together to set and determine goals and objectives, identify skill shortfalls and how to address them. Mentoring can also improve employability skills, as mentors offer guidance on writing CVs, covering letters and application forms as well as how to find laboratory placements and voluntary positions. 

Further information on how you can sign up to the mentoring scheme, as a mentee or mentor, can be found at the website www.ibms.org/mentoring.

