

RCPATH/IBMS Histopathology Reporting Conjoint Board Meeting

A meeting of BMS Conjoint Board Meeting was held on Thursday 26 January 2023 at 10:30am via Teams.

Confirmed Minutes

Present:	Mr Andrew Usher (AU)	Histopathology Manager and Chair
	Dr Akhtar Husain (AH)	Consultant Histopathologist and Deputy Chair
	Ms Sarah May (SM)	Deputy Chief Executive, IBMS
	Ms Jo Brinklow (JB)	Director of Learning (RCPATH)
	Dr Bryan Green (BG)	Consultant Histopathologist
	Dr Jo Horne (JH)	Consultant Biomedical Scientist
	Dr Roger Hunt (RH)	Consultant Histopathologist
	Mr Patrick Kumah (PK)	Consultant Biomedical Scientist
	Dr Angus McGregor (McG)	Consultant Histopathologist
	Dr Gerry van Schalkwyk (GvS)	Consultant Histopathologist
	Mr Chris Ward (CW)	Head of Examinations, IBMS

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr Usher, who had taken the Chair at the end of Dr van Schalkwyk's turn, welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked Dr van Schalkwyk for his previous Chairmanship of the Board. It was noted that Dr Husain would be the Deputy Chair of the Board from January 2023.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Mr David Muskett and Dr Guy Orchard.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday 8 September 2022 and Action Arising

The minutes were accepted as a true record of meeting.

Training for those on Reporting Qualification

Dr Horne was reminded to send Mr Ward a copy of the toolkit that she had produced for the workshops that she had delivered to candidates preparing for their Stage A and Stage C examination that had enabled them to work with their supervisors to develop their own mock exam so that this toolkit could be published on the IBMS website.

ACTION: JH and CW

Scientist Reporting of Histopathology Samples: Proposed Joint Statement from the RCPATH and the IBMS

Ms Brinklow indicated that she had shared this proposed statement with Prof Osborn and that he had suggested some minor changes to the statement. She agreed to liaise with Ms May to finalise this statement. It was agreed that the finalised statement should be published on the RCPATH and IBMS websites. **ACTION: JB, SM and CW**

4. Follow-Up from Joint Meeting Held in November 2022

Competence Statement Relating to Stage D of Reporting Qualification

The Board were informed that the draft version of this Competence Statement had been sent to College. The statement clarifies that an individual place of work has the independent freedom to assess additional specimens beyond those which have been agreed as being part of the Stage D curriculum if local service need required this but that these additional areas of practice would fall outside the jurisdiction of the Conjoint Board.

Ms Brinklow informed this had also been shared with Prof Osborn who had suggested some changes and agreed to liaise with Ms May to finalise this statement. Once the statement had been finalised it would be published on the IBMS website alongside an updated version of the Stage D document, which would be amended to reference this competence statement so that the candidates undertaking this stage of the Reporting qualification had clarity on what would be assessed by the Conjoint Board and where that might differ from their locally agreed scope of reporting.

ACTION: JB, SM and CW

FAQ Document

Ms Brinklow informed board members that following the meeting held in November 2022 on Advanced Practice and Scientist Reporting a total of 199 questions had been submitted to the College. She added that she had nearly completed the work on this document. Board members provided their views on the question that had yet to be answered and Mr Ward agreed to send Ms Brinklow details of the eligibility criteria for the qualification so that information could be included in the FAQ document.

It was agreed that the final version of this document would be published on both the College and IBMS website and Ms Brinklow agreed to send Mr Ward the completed document. **ACTION: CW and JB**

Meeting with Candidates and Educational/Clinical Supervisors

Mr Ward stated that once the FAQ document had been published and promoted that he would arrange separate meetings with candidates on each of the three pathways and their educational and/or clinical supervisors. He confirmed that he would liaise with board members on potential dates for these meetings and that invitations would be extended to Prof Osborn and Mr Wells.

ACTION: CW

5. Conjoint Board Terms of Reference and Membership and Expansion of Examiner Pool

Dr McGregor reminded Board members that, in order to tighten the governance of the Board, he had previously suggested there should be four elected College representatives and the fifth College representative should be an ex-officio member of the board to act as the lead examiner for the Reporting exams. Dr McGregor agreed to liaise formally with Ms Brinklow on this matter and it was noted that if this agreed it would need to be reflected in a change to the constitution section of the Terms of Reference.

ACTION: McG and JB

It was noted that the Terms of Reference state that the Board will 'Monitor the impact of the qualification on the histopathology workforce and service delivery and to respond accordingly.' It was commented that the development of the limited scope qualifications show, in part, that the Board is doing this but that it would be appropriate for the Board to do more around this Term of Reference to show the impact of the existing qualifications.

Mr Ward stated following the decision by Dr Green to step down from the Board by the end of March 2023 that he liaised with Ms Brinklow regarding the appointment of a new College member(s) to the Conjoint Board. She explained that an advert had been sent out by the College and that interested individuals have been asked to apply to Mr Ward by Friday 17 February. Mr Ward agreed to circulate the applications that are received to Board members so that they can make their recommendations to the College on who should be appointed.

ACTION: CW

Following the agreement at the last Board meeting to appoint additional IBMS members as examiners to assist in the marking of portfolios, candidates who have been awarded the Certificate of Completion were approached to see if they would be interested in undertaking this role. One person has submitted their CV and supporting letter and this had been circulated with the papers for the meeting, with the likelihood

that another individual may also submit their details. Board members were supportive of Miss Lisa Wheatley of being appointed as an additional portfolio examiner and Mr Ward agreed to inform her of this decision. **ACTION: CW**

6. Current Status of Candidates on Histopathology Reporting

Mr Ward explained that he had circulated a report with the papers for meeting that showed how many candidates were at each stage of the qualification. He highlighted the fact that there were currently two Stage D portfolios that were being marked by members of the Conjoint Board including the first one in the Dermatopathology pathway and that he hoped that this marking would be completed so that the recommendations on the award of the Certificate of Completion could go to the February College Council meeting.

7. Assessment Arrangements for 2023 and Flexibility in Assessment Deadline

It was confirmed that a Stage A exam had been arranged for March 2023 and that it was planned that there would be a second Stage A exam later in the year as well as a Stage C exam. The dates for these later exam series and relevant exam application windows had yet to be confirmed by the College. It had been stressed to Ms Brinklow and Dr McGregor that these exams should not take place in the last week of September as that was the week of the IBMS Congress event. Mr Ward agreed to liaise with them on the dates for the exams later in 2023. **ACTION: CW, McG and JB**

There was a discussion around how long it takes individuals to complete the qualification and whether there was anything more could be done to facilitate candidates finishing more readily. It was agreed that the Board should be cautious about changing the overall time that candidates are expected to be on the qualification, but it was agreed that potentially the Stage C exam could be run more often than the current once a year especially as more candidates are now at Stage C.

Mr Ward informed that he gives some flexibility to candidates by advising them rather than waiting for the outcomes of the assessment process that as soon as they submit a portfolio for one stage that they should start collecting evidence for the next stage. He stated this means that providing the candidate passes the requirements of the stage at they are then able to submit the portfolio for the next stage in twelve months and there is no gap in their training. He added that if a candidate at Stage A or C fails the end of stage exam, he advises them that they should continue to report but that the evidence for the portfolio can only be included from when the deadline for portfolios for the next

exam series. Board members agreed that this was a sensible approach that would bring the scientist curriculum in line with the new medic curriculum, and it was agreed that this should be taken forward. Mr Ward agreed to formalise this within the assessment guidance documentation. **ACTION: CW**

8. Full and Limited Scope Reporting Qualifications – Agreed Points and Next Steps

It was noted that the Board had received approval from Ms Karin Denton for the Cervical Biopsies and LLETZ qualification but that it was still awaiting approval from Dr Adrian Bateman for the Bowel Screening qualification. It was also confirmed that the College Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) for Cellular Pathology had approved the limited scope qualifications, but that Prof Osborn had suggested that this should also go to the February College Council for their approval. **ACTION: GvS**

It was noted that Mr Ward had circulated a paper that summarised the decisions that have been agreed by the Board in relation to the eligibility criteria, titles and portfolio requirements of the limited scope qualifications and how individuals could move between the full and limited scope qualifications. It was recognised that it had also been agreed that candidates undertaking either of these limited scope qualifications would need to undertake a preceptorship stage (it would not be Stage D as there is no Stage B or C for these qualifications). The details of that stage are still to be finalised.

There was a discussion around the External Quality Assurance (EQA) schemes for both qualifications as historically the screening programmes have insisted that there should be specific EQA schemes. Dr van Schalkwyk informed that if you want to report cervical histology individuals have to do an e-learning cervical module that has to be repeated every few years. It was commented that whilst there is a general GI EQA scheme, as far as he is aware there is not a specific EQA scheme for those doing bowel cancer screening. It was suggested to Dr van Schalkwyk that this was raised with Dr Bateman, which he agreed to do. **ACTION: GvS**

The Board reaffirmed its belief in the necessity for an end of stage exam for these candidates and that this exam must be run through the College exam team. It was noted that there needed to be a discussion with the College exam team around the administration, format, setting, running, and marking of these exams but that they would probably run in a similar way and style to the existing scientist exams at a single venue on a frequency that would need to be determined. **ACTION: McG and JB**

It was suggested, subject to confirmation of approval of the College Council, a formal launch of 1st April for the new qualifications. The Chair stated that the Board needed to ascertain how many people would like to do these new qualifications and to start the recruitment process for them.

Individuals enquiring about joining the ‘full’ qualifications had been made aware of the ‘limited scope’ qualifications, which may be of greater relevance to them. He also agreed to contact all those already registered on the ‘full’ qualifications to ask them whether they wanted to change to the limited scope qualifications and if they had any colleagues who would be interested in undertaking these new qualifications. Mr Ward agreed to write an article for a future edition of the Biomedical Scientist to promote the new qualifications which would ask for expressions of interest to be sent to the IBMS.

ACTION: CW

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that this was the last meeting of the Conjoint Board that Dr Bryan Green would be attending. Board members expressed their sincere thanks for all the work that he had done whilst he had been on the Board and wished him well for the future.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Mr Ward agreed to do a Doodle Poll to set a date for the next meeting of the Conjoint Board in the spring and would ensure the meetings did not clash with College or Institute Council and Committee meetings.

ACTION: CW

Action Log

ACTION	WHO	DATE
Toolkit delivered by Dr Horne for reporting examinations to be sent to Mr Ward so that it is published on IBMS website	JH and CW	ASAP
Ms Brinklow and Ms May to liaise with each other to finalise to the joint statements on Scientist Reporting of Histopathology Samples: Practice and Competencies and on the Assessment of Competence and for finalised versions of the documents to be published on the RCPATH and IBMS websites.	JB, SM and CW	ASAP
FAQ document to be circulated to Board members for review and comment before finalised document is published on the RCPATH and IBMS websites.	JB, SM and CW	ASAP

Set dates for meetings with members of the Conjoint Board and candidates and their educational/clinical supervisors for candidates on the three pathways	CW and GvS	Summer 2023 – after FAQ document published
Dr McGregor to liaise with Ms Brinklow regarding RCPATH ex-officio member on the Conjoint Board	McG and JB	
Mr Ward to circulate to Board the applications from College members for review and recommendations on appointment	CW	After 17 February 2023
Mr Ward to inform Ms Wheatley of her appointment as a portfolio examiner for the Conjoint Board	CW	By 17 February 2023
Mr Ward and Dr McGregor to liaise with the College exam team for dates for the Stage A and Stage C exams in late 2023 so that the assessment arrangements document can be updated and circulated to candidates.	CW, McG and JB	
Assessment guidance to be updated to reflect flexibility in candidates moving from one stage to the next	CW	End of April
Dr van Schalkwyk to confirm the support of Bowel Screening Programme by liaising with Dr Bateman	GvS	
Mr Ward to contact candidates registered on existing qualifications and write article for May edition of the Biomedical Scientist to ascertain potential interest for limited scope qualifications	CW	31 March 2023
Date for next Conjoint Board Meeting to be agreed via a Doodle Poll	CW	
On-Going Actions		
Mr Usher or Dr Husain to highlight key issues from Board meetings to the Cellular Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC)	AU or AH	
Board members to inform Mr Ward of training courses/events that would be of benefit to those on Reporting qualification	ALL	