

Case for Direct Award to Institute of Biomedical Science:

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) is the leading professional body for scientists, support staff and students in the field of biomedical science. This professional body supports the upskilling of healthcare scientists in histopathology through the Diploma of Expert Practice in dissection and the Advanced Specialist Diploma in reporting qualifications. The reporting qualification is in conjunction with the Royal College of Pathologists. IBMS are the only providers of these training programmes in England. As HEE does not currently fund training of scientists in histopathology, the IBMS in conjunction with the Royal College of Pathologists developed in-service modular histopathology training courses for scientists to undertake and these are the only pathways currently recognised in the NHS to train biomedical and clinical scientists in these advanced dissection and reporting skills.

Historically, these programmes have no funding attached to them. Instead, histopathology scientists wishing to improve their skills and practice at a more advanced level have chosen to undertake and pay for these courses themselves. This has proved unsustainable and there is a high attrition rate on these training programmes.

It is proposed to fund the IBMS to offer training grants to current students and fund course fees for new students recruited through the pathology networks. The rationale for this decision is to ensure that we are able to support the histopathology workforce to realise the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan and People Plan.

The justification for considering IBMS to be the sole supplier for this project is:

1. IBMS is the leading expert body for this workforce.
2. IBMS is the only organisation able to identify and contact all trainees on the Diploma of Expert Practice in dissection and the Advanced Specialist Diploma in reporting programmes.
3. IBMS is the only organisation who can adequately target the training grants at the appropriate trainees and Trusts in a relevant, timely and equitable way, which reduces attrition on, and maximises completion of, the Diploma of Expert Practice in dissection and the Advanced Specialist Diploma in reporting programmes.
4. IBMS is the only organisation that can start to provide these training grants immediately.

If the IBMS cannot provide this service to HEE, it is believed that the impact on the service will be detrimental for a number of reasons:

1. Histopathology departments within NHS organisations will be unable to deliver the service required as the attrition rate on these training courses will remain at a high level or potentially increase, resulting in insufficient senior histopathology scientists across the NHS.
2. Much needed support for histopathology scientists will not materialise or at best will be significantly delayed.
3. Key healthcare strategic targets including early diagnosis of cancers (NHS Long Term Plan) cannot be achieved impacting adversely on patient care.

During this contract period, HEE believes it is extremely unlikely for any other supplier to be able to fund these trainees from 28 September 2020.