



## Tahmina Hussain on the IBMS and Securing Placements

Tahmina Hussain

Tahmina shares her tips as a BMS Team Manager and Blood Sciences Training Officer at Christie Pathology Partnership, for securing IBMS placements and getting involved with the IBMS as a student.

### About me

I completed a degree in Applied Biomedical Science at Manchester Metropolitan University, which involved a 12-month sandwich placement in my third year which was an amazing opportunity to complete my IBMS Registration Portfolio to gain the IBMS Certificate of Competence and also opened up the pathway for me to secure a job. Since then, I have completed the IBMS Specialist Diploma in Haematology and Hospital Transfusion Practice and a Master's degree in Haematology and Transfusion Science. Completing these qualifications has enabled me to expand my skills, knowledge and experience and have contributed massively towards my professional development and career progression. I have also completed the IBMS Certificate of Expert Practice qualifications in Training and in Quality Management. My particular interest is within Training and Education and developing students, trainees and colleagues and help them to grow in confidence.

### Advice on placements

Based on my experience, the uptake of placements is highly competitive, therefore it is extremely important to apply for a placement if the opportunity is available. Without this, I would not have been able to complete my training and become a HCPC-registered Biomedical Scientist. The benefits of undertaking a placement are huge, as you will gain experience working in a laboratory while developing your knowledge and skills, as well as significantly improving your opportunities for employability. If you are unable to secure a placement via university, try and contact local laboratories to ask whether there are any work experience opportunities, connect with your local IBMS Branch and search for vacancies advertised for medical laboratory assistants or assistant practitioners.

When you are searching for a placement or applying for a position as a Biomedical Scientist, you should include key points in your CV that stand out to the employer. Your CV should be about selling yourself and increasing your chances at being shortlisted for an interview. Include your qualifications, how many years' experience you have, what skills you have developed and what training you have previously completed. Make sure you include your roles and responsibilities in a particular job and relate them to the position you are applying for. Employers will be looking for skills that relate to Biomedical Science so keep your CV clear and concise and make sure it flows well. If you have attended other courses such as mentorship or been involved in other extracurricular activities that add to your skills, make sure you include it in your CV. If you take part in or contribute to any conferences or events as a speaker or write articles, these are all valuable skills and experience to add.

If you have been shortlisted for an interview, make sure you prepare well. Remember to sell yourself with the qualities and skills that you have highlighted in your CV and relate it to how it would fit the job criteria. Think about your strengths and weaknesses and how these can be used to your advantage. Most importantly, employers will want to know why you want the job but also what benefits you will bring.

For Biomedical Scientist jobs, most employers will ask specific competency- based questions, so be prepared to answer using past experiences. Examples of questions can be talking about your biggest achievement and why you are proud of this or how you might have handled a difficult situation. You may also be asked questions that are very specific to the discipline. For example, you may be given a scenario where a sample has been processed and an abnormal result is detected, what might the cause of this be? What condition might it be related to and what would you do? By preparing well and researching the common tests performed in the laboratory you will have a better chance at answering the questions well.

Don't forget, although you may not have worked in a laboratory before, you can still demonstrate your knowledge in the interview, this will indicate your eagerness to learn. Take your time to answer the questions and don't be afraid to ask your own questions. Examples of questions might include shift patterns or opportunities for career progression.

When the interview has ended, thank the interviewers for their time, ask when you are likely to hear back from them and ask if they are prepared to provide feedback at the end of the process.

## **Advice on getting involved with the IBMS**

There are other ways of getting involved with the IBMS which will help you develop new skills. Biomedical Science Day (24th June 2021) is the IBMS annual celebration of biomedical science. This day celebrates our profession and the work we do. You can get involved by promoting Biomedical Science and raising awareness to the public of our role in healthcare.

Prior to COVID-19, many of us celebrated by hosting events and exhibitions so that patients and staff in the hospital were able to come and ask questions; we also gave a tour of the laboratories! However, since the global pandemic, we were not able to celebrate in the usual way. But that did not stop us! The social media platform has become increasingly popular for promoting our profession so there's always an opportunity to get involved and take part in increasing awareness.

National Pathology Week (4th - 9th November 2021) is also an annual celebration of pathology to highlight the important roles we play and the contributions we make to healthcare. Again, there's lot of ways to get involved! Public engagement activities such as delivering careers talks to schools and universities are great opportunities to engage people of all ages.

The IBMS Chats also take place on Twitter on the first Wednesday of every month at 8-9pm. You can join in the chat and ask questions and network with other professionals. The IBMS Support Hub also deliver free online sessions on various topics such as completing CPD, portfolios and professional development.

The IBMS mentoring program has been launched recently and is available for any IBMS member who would like some support in gaining skills and knowledge for career development.

If you are looking to connect with the IBMS, there are plenty of resources available on their website which are useful for obtaining information on the different qualifications, CPD and networking with other members.

For more information, visit: <https://www.ibms.org/home/>