

# **IBMS Diploma of Specialist Practice**

## **Guidance to candidates on dissertation submission and assessment for the award of an IBMS Diploma of Specialist Practice**

Member is the corporate class of Institute membership through which individuals become eligible for Chartered Scientist status. The primary route to Membership is through the award of a Specialist Diploma, which is available in the key biomedical science subjects of cellular pathology, clinical chemistry, cytopathology, haematology, histocompatibility and immunogenetics, immunology, medical microbiology, transfusion science and virology.

Individuals for whom the completion of a Specialist Portfolio is not applicable to their workplace (ie they do not work in one of these disciplines and/or in an Institute approved training laboratory) an alternative and equivalent route to the class of Member is through the submission of a dissertation.

A candidate may not submit directly any material entered previously for examination by any other body or for any of the Institute's prizes. However, a summary dissertation of work undertaken previously by the candidate that has led to the award of a postgraduate research degree, (ie MPhil or PhD) may be considered acceptable.

Individuals, who achieved a Masters degree in a biomedical science subject and where the emphasis of the project/thesis is based on laboratory practice, must provide evidence of further work covering a new feature or a wider field of investigation. The standard of this work must be comparable to that of the Specialist Diploma and candidates must provide evidence that they meet the relevant threshold level (learning outcomes), as outlined in the Specialist Portfolio.

Each dissertation submitted for the award of a Diploma of Specialist Practice must be 8000 words ( $\pm 10\%$ ) and presented as a written essay or report describing an aspect of professional practice performed by the candidate, in the field of biomedical science.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Individuals wishing to submit a dissertation proposal for the award of a Diploma of Specialist Practice as a route to Membership must be in the class of Licentiate and should have specialist skills and theoretical knowledge in a defined field and/or be involved in research and development or teaching. Candidates must also maintain continuous membership of the Institute covering the period from the date of acceptance of the title and summary to the submission and assessment of the dissertation.

## **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL**

Candidates must first complete a dissertation proposal form and return it to the Examinations Officer, accompanied by a 300 word summary of the proposed area of study. Applications will be reviewed by the Chief Examiner in the subject area of the proposed dissertation, and candidates will be notified in writing whether or not their proposal has been accepted. Where a proposal is considered to be unacceptable or requiring modification, advice will be given in order to assist candidates in preparing a resubmission, should they wish to do so.

## **DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR**

If the title and summary are approved, candidates will be advised to seek a supervisor whom they should consult for advice and guidance on the dissertation, if necessary. The role of a supervisor is not that of a teacher, as the candidate must exhibit the ability to present their own views and work.

## **SUBMISSION OF A DISSERTATION FOR ASSESSMENT**

The dissertation must be submitted within two years of the date of approval of the title and summary. However, in exceptional circumstances, an application may be made for this period to be extended. Any such request should be submitted in writing to the Examinations Officer, stating reasons, for consideration by the Chief Examiner. The maximum permitted extension time is two years.

A copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the Institute with the appropriate examination fee. All dissertations must be presented according to the Institute's requirements (see *Appendix A*). The dissertation will be sent for examination to the Chief Examiner (or appointed nominee) responsible for approving the initial project proposal. This process usually takes about four weeks. Dissertations are categorised as passed, failed or referred.

If a dissertation is not of pass standard but requires partial revision, it may be referred for amendment, in which case only a referred examination fee will be payable on re-examination.

The Institute reserves the right to publish dissertation summaries in its Journal (*British Journal of Biomedical Science [BJBS]*), and any scientific papers resulting from dissertations must be submitted to *BJBS* in the first instance. Permission must be obtained from the Institute if a candidate wishes to publish the work prior to submission for assessment.

## **AWARD OF A DIPLOMA OF SPECIALIST PRACTICE**

Successful candidates will be awarded a Diploma of Specialist Practice. This entitles the recipient to apply for Membership of the Institute, provided that they satisfy all other eligibility criteria.

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## Instructions to Candidates on the Presentation of a Dissertation for the Award of a Diploma of Specialist Practice

1. All dissertations must be submitted spiral-bound for assessment and shall be presented in A4 format on white paper
2. The dissertation shall be printed double-spaced on one side of the paper only, and the size and font of character used in the main text, including illustrated matter and notes, shall normally be Times New Roman 12 point.
3. The margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page shall be not less than 40mm; the other margins shall be not less than 20mm.
4. Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text, with photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.
5. The reference list shall appear at the end of the dissertation, with the entries listed numerically and in the same order that they have been cited in the text in Vancouver style (see below).

The Vancouver system uses a number series to indicate references, and are listed in numerical order as they appear in the text. The advantage of the Vancouver style is that the main text reads more easily, and it is considered to be less obtrusive.

Examples of Vancouver style:

"The author has discussed the implications of these proposals on the National Health Service in another paper.<sup>1</sup> Other writers have commented on related issues, notably Lane<sup>2,3</sup> and Lewis.<sup>4</sup>"

References are then listed in the References section in numerical order, as below. Please make note of the limited punctuation and the fact that the Journal names are abbreviated. Where there are more than six authors' names, the first three should be included, followed by *et al.*

- 1 Annas GJ. New drugs for acute respiratory distress syndrome. *N Engl J Med* 1997; **337**: 435–9.
- 2 Lane K, Grinspoon L, Bakalar JB. *Marijuana: the forbidden medicine*. London: Yale University Press, 1993.
- 3 Lane K, Feinberg TE, Farah MJ eds. *Behavioural neurology and neuropsychology*. 2nd edn. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

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References that are only cited in tables or in legends to figures should be numbered in sequence according to the first mention of that table or figure in the text.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

[www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform\\_requirements.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html)

[www.icmje.org/](http://www.icmje.org/)

6. The title page shall give the following information:
  - a. the full title of the dissertation
  - b. the full name of the author
  - c. the award for which the dissertation is submitted – Diploma of Specialist Practice
  - d. the month and year of the submission
  
7. The contents page shall state
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Discussion
  - c. Conclusion
  - d. References
  - e. Acknowledgements