

## Modernisation and Quality in the Clinical Laboratory

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Laboratory Medicine in the United Kingdom in keeping with many European Countries has and continues to undergo a modernisation program of working practices and an increasing strive for improved quality. This has permeated all levels of the laboratory services including the education of undergraduate and postgraduate personnel, competency levels and laboratory performance standards.

There are a number of bodies that collectively have contributed to developing this program.

There has been a measurable increase in quality and harmonization of the curricula of the University degree courses in Biomedical Science with a larger number of Universities offering courses. This has been led by the formation of the Heads of University Centers of Biomedical Science (HUCBMS) group and their work with the professional body and the Government.

To practice as a Biomedical Scientist in the UK you must register with the Health Professions Council (HPC). This requires that you must undergo post-graduate training to the required competency level set by the HPC. These competencies have been developed from the Department of Health's (DoH) project on Occupational Standards. The standards were developed from a three-year project, which

was headed by the DoH's Chief Scientist working together with the professional bodies. Many of the competency standards are generic to all the professions who have to register with the HPC.

The laboratories themselves having to reach and continue to perform to the standards of competency set out in the handbook of Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd.

These standards are based on the ISO Standards: ISO 15189:2003, EN 17025.1999 ISO 9000.2000 and EC4 Essential Criteria.

The UK Department of Health's Modernisation Review of the laboratory services has resulted in the amalgamation of laboratories into larger groups serving a population of up to million. This has resulted in the major rethinking by Health Boards within the National Health Service of the most efficient way to deliver the clinical laboratory service. Certainly in the inner city hospitals this has resulted in the amalgamation of adjacent of hospital laboratories.

These developments collectively have modernised and changed the way the staff and the laboratories deliver their service to the benefit of the patient population.