

Special Advisory Committee on Clinical Biochemistry

A meeting of the Clinical Biochemistry SAC was held on Tuesday 19 November 2024
at 10:00am – 12:00pm via Microsoft Teams conferencing

Professor Sarah Coupland
Registrar

Minutes

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| Present: | Dr Ian Godber Ms Sarah Cleary Dr Bernie Croal Dr Kevin Deans Prof Dimitris Grammatopoulos Dr Katharine Hayden Dr Agnieszka Jakubowska Dr Monika Jankute Dr Vinita Mishra Dr Martin Myers Dr W S Wassif | Chair Academic Activities, e-learning President, RCPATH Chair, Panel of Examiners Genomics and Reproductive Science SAC ALM President RCPATH Trainee Representative Chair, ALM Trainee Committee Chair, Chemical Pathology CSTC Get it Right First Time (GIRFT) representative Chair, ALM National Audit Committee |
| In attendance | Ms Lindsay Robinson Katherine Kean | Senior Committees Officer (<i>minutes</i>) RCPATH Workforce Administrator |
| Apologies: | Dr Claire Meek | Chair, ACP Chemical Pathology Committee |
| Absent: | Dr Christopher Chaloner | Prenatal, Perinatal & Paediatric Pathology representative |

- CB.13/24**
- 1. Welcome, declaration of conflict of interests and apologies for absence**
 - 1.1 The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting and brief introductions took place.
 - 1.2 Apologies for absence had been noted and listed above.
 - 1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

- CB.14/24**
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting**
 - 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.
 - 2.2 There were no matters arising not already covered on the agenda.
 - 2.3 The action log had been reviewed and the following updates were noted:

CB.01/24: The Chair welcomed Dr Agnieszka Jakubowska, the newly appointed College trainee representative to the Committee. The Chair noted that Sarah Cleary would soon step down from the SAC, as would Chris Chaloner who has now retired, with replacements to be sought. The Chair reminded the SAC that he would demit in



June 2024 due to taking up the Presidency of the Association for Laboratory Medicine, and recruitment was in process for a replacement. **Action to remain in progress.**

CB.06/24: Covered under item 6.2 **Action closed.**

CB.9/24: Professor Grammatopoulou.16/2s and the Chair would discuss plans to highlight biochemistry in the Genomics Training Academy (GTAC). **Action to remain in progress.**

CB.15/24 3. Learning Updates

3.1 Training

Dr Mishra provided the following report:

- The curriculum name change would be announced in January.
- An Adult Inborn Error Metabolic Task and Finish group had been set up, involving IEM leads and trainees, with the aim of improving training experiences. The group would recommend core competencies to be provided in the first three years, and was working on block training/post CCT fellowship opportunities for trainees.
- Professor Andrew Krentz had set up a cardiometabolic medicine collaboration at the RCP, with which the College should be involved. A first meeting with Professor Krentz had been arranged, and a 4-day clinical summit in collaboration with the British Heart Foundation was also in the planning stages.
- The CSTC had been exploring the use of the Pathology Portal as an online learning platform, and had invited a College representative to a future meeting to discuss.

3.2 Examinations

Dr Deans provided the following report:

- The Autumn examination results were due to be ratified on Friday 22 November, and would be reported upon at the next SAC meeting.
- Dr Deans had been grateful for the opportunity to speak to trainees at the LabMed/Freddie Flynn Day and aimed to demystify the exam process as much as possible by continuing to regularly add to the specimen questions on the College website.
- Dr Deans' slides from the LabMed/Freddie Flynn day would be made available to all trainees, and the same information was available on the College website.

CB.16/24 4. Trainees' update

4.1 ALM Trainees' report

Dr Jankute provided the following report:

- The recent LabMed Trainees/Freddie Flynn Day held at the College on 14 November 2024, had been very successful. Dr Deans' presentation on the RCPPath exam received excellent feedback, indicating the value of greater transparency around the examination process. Katherine Hayden noted that LabMed is collecting formal feedback on the event from attendees.

- Dr Jankute would step down from the LabMed Trainee Committee in May 2025, and a replacement would be sought.
- Complaints had been reported over the removal of the written project from Module 3, which trainees felt had not been well-communicated.

Dr Deans to further investigate the complaint and liaise with Examinations over communication changes as needed.

4.1 RCPATH Trainees' report

Dr Jakubowska provided the following report:

- Very positive feedback had been received on the wealth of training days and teaching available to trainees.
- ST3 trainees starting in August had not been aware of the upcoming trainee day, highlighting an opportunity to improve communication with incoming trainees.

Action: Dr Mishra to discuss communications to incoming trainees with College staff.

CB.17/24 5. Best practice recommendations

5.1 The Chair noted that three Best Practice Recommendations currently sat with the SAC:

G047 Guidance on handling medicolegal samples and preserving the chain of evidence

This guideline is currently co-badged with the IBMS, with whom the Chair consulted on suggested authors. The document has been circulated to Laura Hikin and Joanne Rogers of the UK Clinical Toxicology Group for review.

G158 The communication of critical and unexpected pathology results

Comments from the SACs has been collated into a single document by the Chair, and Dr Croal to review.

G027 Code of practice for clinical biochemists/chemical pathologists and clinical biochemistry services

Professor Grammatopolous had met with Neil Anderson to identify areas of progress and would liaise with Dr Myers to take this forward.

CB.18/24 6. Activities

6.1 Academic Activities

The Committee discussed the recent success of the LabMed Trainees/Freddie Flynn day and agreed to explore repeating the event on an annual basis, if funding allowed. Dr Hayden noted that scheduling the event the day prior to the National Audit meeting was very convenient and may have increased attendance.

6.2 E-Learning – Pathology Portal

Ms Cleary reported that recent efforts, led by Nathan Cantley, to increase the biochemistry content on the Portal were showing some results, and that it would be beneficial for more people to be involved.

Dr Mishra suggested that, in order to reduce potential duplication of effort, the College Technology group could collaborate over updates to the Portal.

Ms Cleary to put Dr Mishra in touch with Nathan Cantley regarding updates to the Pathology Portal.

6.3 Specialty specific webinars

Ms Cleary had spoken to the College Events team, who would welcome topic and speaker suggestions to organise short lunchtime webinars. Dr Croal noted that webinars were excellent opportunities to collaborate with industry partners, and that Penny Fletcher could assist in making these links.

CB.19/24 7. External representative update

7.1 Association for Laboratory Medicine

Dr Hayden provided the following updates:

- Significant work had been undertaken in collaboration with the Pathology Alliance and IBMS around a response to the NHS 10 Year Plan consultation. The response would emphasise the need for an appropriate workforce, and to identify and anticipate skill gaps, particularly around new technologies (such as AI).
- The response would also highlight issues in funding tests or patient pathways recommended by NICE, which contributed to the 'postcode lottery' of diagnosis and treatment.
- A patient-centric Sampling Symposium would be held 11 February in Liverpool, bringing together patient groups, clinical teams, and regulatory representatives.
- LabMed UK 25 was planned for 9-11 June 2025 in Manchester.
- The response to the National School of Healthcare Science review had included recommendations on incorporating sustainability into training and education.

7.2 Association for Laboratory Medicine (ALM) Audits

Dr Wassif provided the following report:

- Feedback on the National Audit Day, which brought together speakers on diabetes, Wilson Disease, and MASLD was very positive.
- Plans were underway for the next audit and Conference, on PSA testing, in collaboration with Prostate Cancer UK.
- Audits in 2025 would be on topics not previously covered, such as minimum retesting intervals, the poisoned patient, and tumour markers.
- The recent audit had highlighted great variation in practices, emphasising the importance of writing and publishing guidance where audits indicated a clear need.

- Professor Grammatopoulos noted that he was in discussion with external parties on publishing recommendations to benefit primary and secondary care colleagues, as well as those in laboratory medicine.
- Dr Wassif asked that a College representative attend National Audit Committee meetings.

Dr Wassif to ensure that Dr Godber (and future Clinical Biochemistry SAC Chairs) are invited to NAC meetings.

7.3 Association of Clinical Pathologists (ACP)

No update received.

7.4 Get it Right First Time (GIRFT)

Dr Myers provided the following report:

- A draft template to guide the development of new pathology facilities would soon be circulated.
- A College representative would soon be sought to join the MHRA IVD Expert Advisory Group, of which Dr Myers is Chair.
- A draft guideline on the laboratory handling of insulin pathways would soon be circulated for comment.
- Dr Myers had been exploring, with the National Point of Care Group, the reintroduction of a system to verify point of care devices.

The committee discussed links between GIRFT and the College, and the need to ensure that any co-badging requests received the appropriate scrutiny from relevant committees, and that any guidelines represented both laboratory and clinical perspectives.

CB.20/24 8. Professionalism

8.1 Workforce & Recruitment

The Chair advised that, due to the short timescale, he had submitted feedback to the College 10 Year Plan response on behalf of the SAC without further consultation. The Chair shared details of the response with the Committee for information.

The Chair reported that he was representing the College on the oversight group of the Review of the National School for Healthcare Science and the Genomics Education programme, and had nominated various individuals to sit on those bodies and to ensure appropriate circulation of material.

Dr Myers asked if the College had a position on non-medical prescribing, noting the potential importance of this issue to the College's clinical scientist members, and to workforce planning. The Chair recommended that any work undertaken on this matter by related bodies such as IBMS and ALM should be shared with the College for its potential endorsement.

CB.21/24 9. Representation from other College Committees

9.1 Update from Genomics and Reproductive Science SAC

Professor Grammatopoulos reported that the SAC had made a contribution to the College's 10 Year Plan response, emphasising the need to better integrate blood sciences, biochemistry and genomics.

9.2 Update from Prenatal, Perinatal and Paediatric Pathology SAC

No update received.

9.3 College Council

Dr Croal highlighted challenges facing the college, including the need to recruit volunteers to key committee and governance roles, and to encourage members to progress to fellowship. Efforts to showcase the benefits of continued engagement with and membership of the College, and to increase income by improving links with industry, were ongoing.

CB.22/24 10. Regional update reports

10.1 Scotland

None – no representative.

10.2 Northern Ireland

None – no representative.

10.3 Wales

None – no representative.

CB.23/24 11. Any other business

11.1 Freddie Flynn Award Lecture 2025

The proposal to invite Dr Wiebke Arlt, Imperial College London, to deliver the Flynn Award Lecture 2025 at LabmedUK in Manchester was approved.

CB.24/24 12. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 8 May 2025 at 10am for a duration of 2 hours.