

Professional and Commercial Development for those working in the Biomedical Sector

About the project

From October 2009 we will be consulting employers in order to develop training/education courses which meet both:

- **the professional and commercial development needs of those working in the Biomedical sector**
and
- **the business needs of Biomedical sector companies**

This project is supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) through the Higher Level Skills Partnership initiative, co-ordinated by the North West Universities' Association and is endorsed and supported by all the major sector bodies, including Semta, Cogent and Bionow.

It is to be delivered by the Centre for Training and Development (CETAD) and the Division of Biomedical and Life Sciences (BLS) in the School of Health and Medicine at Lancaster University. BLS co-ordinates the biomedical teaching and research activities at the University and is a centre of research excellence: ranked joint 1st in the Allied Health Professions, RAE 2008. CETAD is a centre for excellence in work-based learning, which focuses on the practical use of learning in the workplace. These combined strengths make us ideally placed to deliver this project.

Why get involved?

This is a unique opportunity to influence the development of higher education courses to benefit you and your staff. Traditionally, universities have determined what they teach. This project seeks to utilize the synergy of academics and industry practitioners working together to develop the effectiveness of your people and your organisation. It asks you what skills and knowledge do you/your staff need in order to meet the needs and challenges of your business, whilst giving you the benefit of the latest thinking on the technical, commercial and managerial aspects of learning for success in the biomedical sector.

Aims

Our aim is to develop a range of courses (modules) in different subject areas, enabling individuals and their employer to choose those which meet their joint needs. We will develop modules in both scientific/technical subject areas as well as more generic ones such as team-working skills, leadership and management. The modules can be taken independently or count as building blocks towards a postgraduate qualification (Certificate, Diploma, Masters Degree). In addition to scientific projects, students will be able to undertake work-based projects, for example evaluating an aspect of the business or coming up with new ideas for working practices. So, rather than a prescribed postgraduate programme with a fixed set syllabus, we want to be able to offer you choices about which courses to take to build up your qualification.

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We aim to develop courses which are:

- **Highly relevant** (meeting the latent and emerging needs of a rapidly changing sector)
- **Useful and contextual** (applied to real work needs and issues)
- **Accessible** (delivery location, method, timing)
- **Beneficial** (return on the investment, both to the individual and to the business)

We also want to give credit for individuals' prior learning and experience, also taking account of courses previously undertaken, including in-company training. In order to achieve these aims, **we need input from employers.**

Target audience

We will develop courses to meet the needs of the following groups within the Biomedical sector workforce:

Anyone who is able to benefit from postgraduate level study: This can include graduates or non-graduates with appropriate experience, including those who have developed with the business; but have no or few formal educational qualifications. Within this wider arena, we are specifically going to address the needs of the following sub-group: **Graduates in their first year of employment.**

Course topics

Of course, the exact course topics need to be determined through consultation with employers! We anticipate that some courses may be specifically for graduates in their first year of employment, some will be relevant for the wider group, but this will be determined through the consultation. Based on the feedback to date, the following shows some of the potential areas, *for illustration*:

Leadership and management
Transferable skills such as team working, communication skills and personal effectiveness
Entrepreneurship, innovation and change
Laboratory practice: practical skills and techniques
Quality delivery and management
Finance for budget holders
Project management
Biochemistry
Electrochemical cell processes

Clinical/scientific research skills
The biomedical industry in context – trends, market factors and technology transfer
Bioscience and molecular biology
Biolaw and ethics – meeting the requirements of regulation and society
Biotechnology/bioprocessing/biopharmaceuticals
Data analysis tools and processes
Genomics/proteomics/metabolomics
Immunology including regulatory requirements
Mathematics and statistics

How to get involved

Of course it can be difficult to find the time to get involved as well as juggling the demands of a busy working life, but the more involvement you have, the more likely it is that the courses developed will meet **your** needs. The best way to achieve this is to be part of our **Advisory Group**. If you can't manage this, then we are setting up a wider **Consultation Forum** via a dedicated website and through email/letter, with a regular newsletter.

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