



**Kathryn
McClelland**

**Senior Biomedical
Scientist Training in
Dermatopathology
Reporting**

Can you give us a brief outline of your work history?

September 2010 - August 2011 – Placement student in Cellular Pathology Lab, CAH
May 2012 – Obtained a Band 5 Biomedical Scientist job in Cellular Pathology Lab, CAH
August 2013 – Obtained a Band 6 specialist Biomedical Scientist post in the same lab
June 2019 - Obtained a Band 7 Senior Section Lead Biomedical Scientist post
March 2022 – Began training in the IBMS Advanced Specialist Diploma in Histopathology Reporting

What made you decide this career path?

I had A-Levels in chemistry, maths, and biology and was originally planning to study structural and civil engineering at university. However, I didn't achieve the grades required and didn't receive my offer. My dad then found the Biomedical Science course on the UCAS website and thank goodness he did! I would have been a terrible engineer.

How did you train for this role/educational route?

August 2008 – Obtained three A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, and Maths
July 2012 - BSc Hons Biomedical Science with Diploma in Professional Practice (Ulster University)
November 2015 – MSc Biomedical Science (Ulster University distance learning, part-time)
February 2021 – Institute of Biomedical Scientist Higher Specialist Diploma in Cellular Pathology (IBMS HSD)
March 2022 – Began training in IBMS Advanced Specialist Diploma in Reporting Dermatopathology (training a minimum of four years)
February 2023 – Sat Stage A exam for ASD reporting (results expected in May 2023)

I should add that there are now many ways to enter Biomedical Science, including a foundation degree course in further education centres.

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

The core qualities would be excellent communication skills, an ability to manage your time effectively, and being able to deal with regular change, including changes to your work structure. You must be a good team player and able to work with a wide range of people across different job roles and professions. Remain open and approachable with other staff; take feedback on board and clarify with more senior staff anything you are unsure of or don't understand. In any lab, being able to work methodically and identify areas for improvement are skills that will stand by you as you move through your career.

What does a typical day involve?

I begin my day dissecting specimens for a couple of hours in the histology lab. I then take time to do some staff training, perform quality tasks, and supervise staff where necessary. The other half of my day is dedicated to my training in dermatopathology reporting, where I preview around five skin pathology cases, draft a report, and then review these cases with a Consultant Pathologist. I also attend the Skin Multidisciplinary Meeting once per week and attend various other training and laboratory courses and meetings.

What do you like best about your job?

I like the variability in that no two days are the same. Every day brings new challenges and opportunities within the lab and allows you as a scientist to be constantly evolving and improving your practice. I also like working with a highly skilled team of staff, working together to ensure every patient's samples are processed with the best quality end-to-end. I am lucky in that I work in my local hospital, and so I know I am directly benefiting my local community.

What advice would you give anyone thinking of doing your job?

There are many development opportunities for a biomedical scientist within an accredited NHS lab in all disciplines. There is a clear educational pathway through IBMS qualifications, and great support from the trust when undertaking these qualifications. Personally, my greatest boost was doing an IBMS-accredited degree with an NHS lab placement as this allowed me to be employed as a state-registered biomedical scientist as soon as I completed university, and so I could begin my specialist training immediately.