



The Association for Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine

The Association for Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine Strategic Plan

Background

The ACB has been in existence for 60 years. During that time, laboratory medicine has changed in a way that must have been unimaginable to our founder members. In the same way as our specialities have evolved, so too must the ACB in order to remain relevant to members, patients and the healthcare community.

The need for developing a strategy now is especially important given the changing way in which laboratory services are being delivered as well as the recognition that the time laboratory professionals have available to devote to ACB activities is likely to be at even more of a premium in the future. This means it is necessary to be clear about what our core values are and use these to focus on what we perceive should be our key activities and priority tasks. Also, as persons holding office in the ACB change over time, it is hoped that the strategy will help provide continuity between predecessors and successors with what was planned for the Association, and will form the basis for future strategy changes.

Consultation

The entire ACB membership was asked to provide their views on the direction they felt the Association should take in forthcoming years, to include what they felt should be the guiding principles of the Association as well as specific objectives which should be prioritised.

Formulation of ideas

The ACB Executive spent time distilling members' and their own suggestions to create a hierarchy starting with the Mission Statement followed by Aims, Objectives and Tasks.

The Mission Statement attempts to succinctly communicate what the core function and main essence of the ACB is to both members and those outside. It should also be a touchstone to help inform direction when difficult decisions require to be made.

The Aims are the goals we would wish the Association to achieve in forthcoming years. These Aims are sought to be met through the activities that form the Objectives. The activities are those felt to be the highest priority to the ACB. Some Objectives may be relevant to more than one Aim. Finally, Tasks will need to be carried out as part of the Objectives activities. These Tasks are current, being those planned to be pursued or completed in the next year or more. As such, Tasks are unlike the Aims and Objectives in that they reflect more immediate actions planned by the Association, are not all-encompassing and will likely change frequently. Hence, this should be a living document which evolves over time and so no fixed period for the strategy has been stipulated.

Drafts of the document at various stages have been distributed to ACB Executive and to ACB Council and following suggested amendments the current plan has been agreed by both.

Mission Statement

To ensure laboratory medicine serves patients effectively through the development and sharing of knowledge, expertise, innovation and best practice.

Strapline

- Better science, better testing, better care

Aims of the Association

- To strive to be the pre-eminent clinical organisation for laboratory medicine in the UK.
- To ensure we meet the educational and professional needs of our membership.
- To promote patient-focused best practice in laboratory medicine through encouraging research and innovation as well as the implementation of existing evidence-based practice.
- To further develop local, national and international relationships with other professional, healthcare, science and government organisations in order to facilitate improvements to the service we provide for patients.
- To promote the importance of laboratory medicine to the wider community.
- To sustain a financially healthy organisation, ensuring efficient use of resources.

Objectives mapped to meet the 6 Aims and current associated Tasks

To have a structure within the ACB which supports all its Aims

(maps to Aims 1-6, in order of bullet points)

- Consider review of current Regional boundaries where it will help the membership interact
- Strengthen links between Region, Council and Executive through Regional Chairs and Secretaries
- Support Immunology and Microbiology members in applying for senior roles within the ACB
- Promote the development of ACB junior members in order to help plan succession
- Consider greater involvement of retired ACB members within the structure

To communicate with the membership, other professional bodies and the public (1,2,3,5)

- Appoint a webmaster for the new ACB website
- Continue to support development of a Pathology Alliance and actively pursue more effective working together with allied organisations, to our mutual benefit and to the overall benefit of laboratory medicine
- Determine how the ACB, including Lab Tests Online UK, could help if/when test results are given directly to patients
- Review and relaunch the ACB Expert Panel, possibly in conjunction with Sense about Science 'Ask for Evidence' campaign
- Consider how retired members can more effectively contribute to the work of the Association, possibly (though not only) through the establishment of an alumni group
- Identify a lay person to contribute to the work of the Association

To publish journals, books, educational material and newsletters in print and/or electronic format (1-4)

- Advertise for a Deputy Editor of the Annals
- Encourage non-Clinical Biochemistry disciplines to submit to the journal
- Decide on a strategy for Venture Publications
- Establish a task and finish group to plan succession for ACB News

To have Regional, National and International scientific meetings (1-5)

- Continue discussion around optimal structure and numbers of regional meetings, coordinated with other regional and national meetings
- Apply to host Worldlab 2020 in Glasgow
- Investigate new formats for the national meeting, for example using a smaller venue or running meetings in collaboration with other organisations

To support the training and continuing education of personnel in all disciplines related to laboratory medicine, beyond scientific meetings (1-3)

- Understand the training needs and delivery following changes in the training programmes and to consider the place of National training courses in this light
- Offer a means of validating, recording and auditing CPD to members who cannot, or choose not to, use other systems
- Consider how needs of medical trainees can be more closely met, perhaps through the Clinical Practice section, Education Committee and the Scientific Committee
- Engage with representatives of haematology clinical scientists and immunology medics to explore possible support that the ACB could offer
- Meet with the National School for Healthcare Science to influence its policy direction

To support and encourage research and audit in laboratory medicine specialities, beyond the Association journal (1-4)

- Complete the portfolio of the Analyte Monographs Alongside the National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue (AMALCs) for core biochemistry tests within two years and establish a secure mechanism for their regular review and updating
- Inspire scientific research and innovation through the provision of expert advice and the awarding of ACB scholarships and ACB Medals
- Hold a National Audit Meeting

To promote the formulation and dissemination of best-practice (1,2,3,5)

- Continue to communicate relevant guidelines to the membership and participate in their development where possible
- Support continued quality developments, including Lab Tests Online, AKI guidance and Demand Optimisation
- Respond and, where appropriate, implement the findings of the QA Review and Atlas of Variation
- Look at ways in which the ACB can influence the post-translational phase in the development of candidate tests

To help inform and shape national and international policy on laboratory medicine service delivery (1,3,4,5)

- Continue to have regular meetings with National Clinical Director for Pathology, Academy for Health Care Science, Chief Scientific Officer, Royal College of Pathologists, IBMS, BIVDA, UKAS and other individuals/organisations
- Continue to provide responses to consultations in Laboratory Medicine related matters in a timely fashion
- Continue to participate in MHRA discussions and consultations on the review to the EU IVD Directive
- Liaise with regulatory bodies, including the CQC, NICE, CPA/UKAS, HCPC and the MHRA to promote science

- Promote the ACB internationally through supporting members who wish to take up positions with EFLM, IFCC etc
- Continue to work with sister national professional organisations such as the AACC and AACB as well as developing closer links with others

To engage with other organisations within our healthcare sector (1,4)

- Continue to advance closer relations with all organisations mentioned previously, particularly with Pathology Alliance members such as the Royal College of Pathologists, IBMS and ACP
- Further develop our relationship with diagnostic companies and their trade organisations for patient and mutual benefit
- Establish contact with healthcare delivery sectors other than those within the NHS

To support members with employment issues (1,2)

- Promote the role of the Federation of Clinical Scientists to scientist and medical members and develop a benefits package
- Attempt to ensure suitable standards are in place for the appointment of clinical posts in laboratories
- Recruit and train FCS representatives

To maintain the financial health of the organisation (1,6)

- Investigate the financial implications of a proportion of the membership receiving publications in an electronic format
- Explore additional sources of income, including a marketing plan for ACB meeting room rental
- Review the economic benefits and incentives for the membership
- Establish a maintenance budget for premises
- Maximise return from investments

To support ACB Office staff in performing their work (1,6)

- Develop appropriate budget for Office staff support and training
- Task and finish group to do option appraisal for replacement IT systems
- Install air conditioning and improve interior decoration in ACB Offices and meeting rooms