

International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IFBLS)

ANNUAL AND PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023 - 2024



IFBLS Board of Directors
Communications@ifbls.org

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Board of Directors

IFBLS is governed by a Board of Directors, comprising of the President, President-Elect and Past-President (Management Committee) and five Board Members, elected by IFBLS members at the biennial General Assembly of Delegates (GAD).

IFBLS Board of Directors 2022 - 2024 were elected at the virtual meeting of the General Assembly of Delegates in October 2022.

Marie Culliton, Ireland
Gabriella Lillsunde Larsson, Sweden
Alan Wainwright, United Kingdom
Hassan Aziz, United States
Maria Klement, Canada
Godswill Okara
Ki Jong Rhee, Korea
David Wells, United Kingdom

President
President-Elect
Past-President
Board Member
Board Member
Board Member
Board Member
Board Member

IFBLS Board of Directors 2022-2024



Executive Administrator

Ms. Janie Hames is the Executive Administrator for IFBLS and provides excellent support to the Management Committee, Board members, IFBLS Chief Delegates and the Association Members.

The IFBLS office organization, including bookkeeping, banking and financial reporting continues to be further developed by Janie, as well as the office's and Webinar use of digital communication platform Zoom. The organizational development that Janie has implemented and supported as well as the competencies, administrative and social, are essential to the smooth and efficient operation of the organisation.

Providing administrative support for the Britta Karlsson Webinar programme, working with the Awards Committee and acting as the anchor for arranging our meeting in Canada have all added significantly to the workload in the office.

The Management Committee are particularly appreciative of Janie's corporate knowledge and expertise she provides.

IFBLS wishes to extend our gratitude to CSMLS for hosting the office and for including Janie.



IFBLS Mission Statement

*To increase recognition and contributions
of Biomedical Laboratory Science to
improve global health.*

IFBLS Objectives

- To support, advance and promote good scientific laboratory practice through the development and adherence to high quality standards in diverse environments throughout the world;
- To support and promote education and advancement of science and technology in the professional development of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists;
- To support, advance and promote ethical and professional values in Biomedical Laboratory Science;
- To facilitate the exchange of ideas through development of partnerships within the global healthcare community.

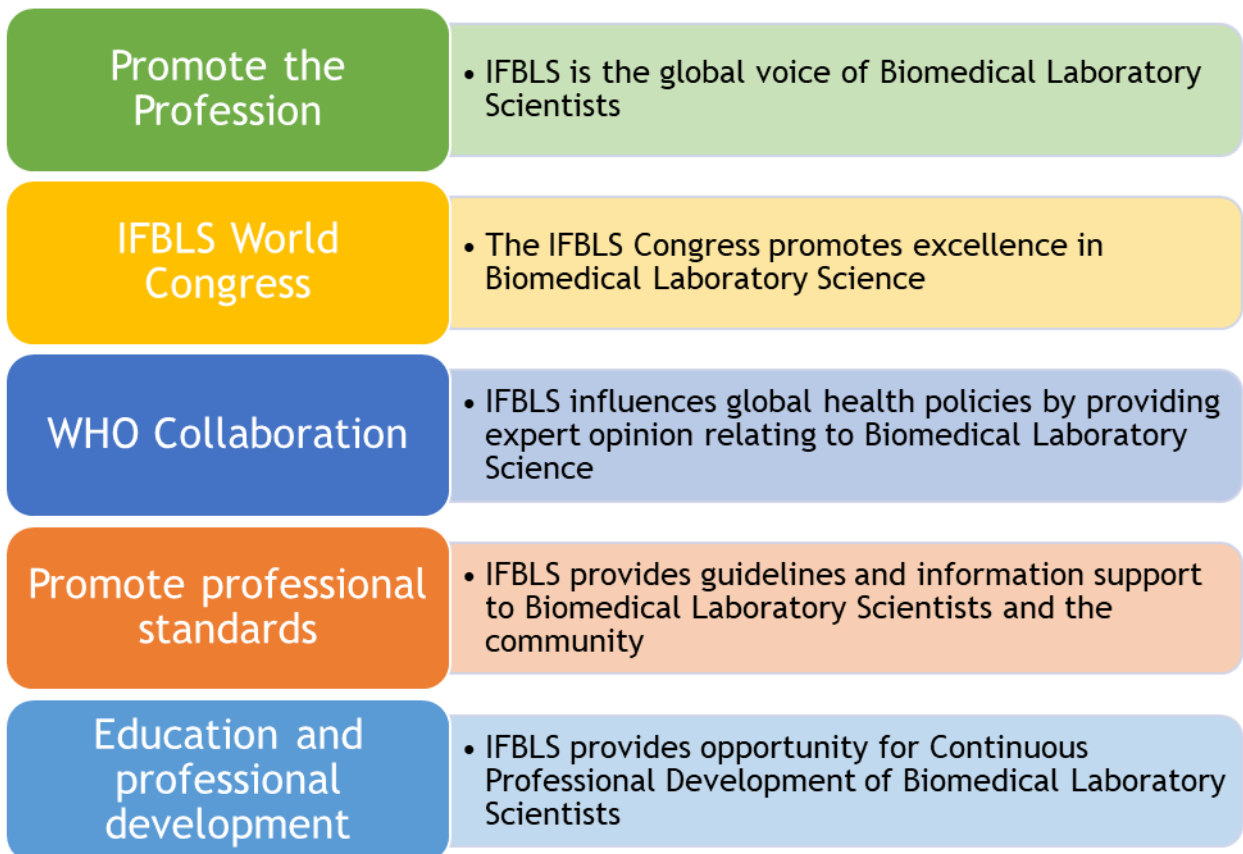
IFBLS Mission Statement and Objectives were revised and approved by the Board of Directors in March 2019.

IFBLS Board of Directors are guided by the IFBLS By-Laws and Procedure Manual. As a registered non-profit organization in Canada, IFBLS is also mandated by *Canada's Not-for-Profit Corporation Act (CNCA)* to maintain our legal status.

The Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 outlining work areas and specific objectives with activities to be undertaken was presented and agreed in 2023.

The Strategic Plan is linked closely with the Mission and Objectives.

In addition to the work outlined in the Strategic Plan, IFBLS also follow up tasks outlined in our By-laws and as required by our members.



Management Committee

The Management Committee is comprised of the three officers of the Corporation. The Management Committee makes day-to-day decisions regarding the management and administration of IFBLS.

The Management Committee is led by the President Marie Culliton, with President-Elect Gabriella Lillsunde Larsson and Past-President Alan Wainwright.

Report

The Management Committee conducts most of the business of IFBLS by regular e-mail communication and Zoom digital meetings, on a weekly basis to keep up with day-to-day issues and other business.

Key areas of work since October 2023 have included:

- Transfer of accounts to Royal Bank of Canada
- Completing the 2022-2024 WHO workplan
- Participating in the triennial review of our status as Non-State Actors in Official Relations with the WHO and agreeing to a new collaboration plan for 2025-2027
- Engaging a Social Media moderator
- Preparing for the 70th Anniversary of IFBLS

Together with the Board

- Launching the Fellowship of IFBLS Award
- Relaunching the Britta Karlsson Advancement Programme
- Delivering the Britta Karlsson Webinar Series
- Review of membership application processes
- Membership recruitment.

Members of IFBLS are invited to submit a Chief Delegates Report annually. Reports are thoroughly analyzed in order for their contributions to inform the future work of IFBLS. Many of these provide input for the discussions and workshops held during CD meetings and Open Forums. In addition, they inform the strategic and operational plans.

President's Activities

The President is the public face of the IFBLS and its Board. Presidential activities promoting the IFBLS and the profession of Biomedical Laboratory Science included:

Invited Presentation

Presentation to the Congress of Italian Biomedical Laboratory Scientists held in honour of Alba Marzo on the work of IFBLS and the challenges for an International Association.

All the many associations representing Biomedical Laboratory Scientists in Italy have been brought together under the control of a new regulator. Discussions were commenced on Italian membership of IFBLS.

Recorded message for Biomedical Laboratory Science Day.
Greetings and messages of support to offered to member's conferences.

Contributions made to WHO's Essential Diagnostic List.

Participated in WHO virtual meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Culliton
President

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is led by Past-President Alan Wainwright, with Board Members Godswill Okara and David Wells.

Report

The Membership Committee activities were identified as areas of work in line with the Strategic Plan 2022- 2026 that fell under the remit of the Membership Committee:

- a) Review Membership Application Form
- b) Promote benefits of membership and opportunities for member engagement
- c) Develop and implement a membership satisfaction survey
- d) Identify potential new members

Membership Outreach

It was agreed to start the process of identifying potential member associations in Africa and Europe that met the criteria for IFBLS membership.

Godswill subsequently established on-line meetings with Togo, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ethiopia, Makawi and Zambia to discuss the work of the IFBLS and relevance to their organisations and their aspiration to join the IFBLS Membership.

Following submission of membership applications, scrutiny by the Membership Committee and subsequent recommendations to the Board, four new members were admitted this year: Burundi, Jordan, Tanzania, Togo. One member has renewed their membership: Sri Lanka.

Membership Renewals 2024

As of 1 July 2024, IFBLS has 40 paid member associations, in 37 countries, representing more than 236,000 Biomedical Laboratory Scientists worldwide. Please refer to the website for a list of current members. This represents an increase in membership and Biomedical Laboratory Scientists. Former members Uganda and Zambia have expressed interest in re-joining and will be encouraged to do.

Lapsed Members

Greece (PETIE) and Kenya (AKMLSO) are now designated as lapsed until such time as their membership fees are paid and are therefore ineligible to participate in any further 2024 activities (i.e. GAD 2024, the election, official communications, emails, etc.).

In line with membership renewals for 2025 lapsed members will be invoiced to encourage them to retain their membership to be eligible to engage fully with IFBLS activities.

The following areas of work are to be continued:

- a) Review of membership application form with respect to information required.
- b) Benefits of membership: IFBLS as the international platform for standards of professional training and standards of practice so how do they relate to Member Associations?
- c) Membership satisfaction survey. Linked to benefits for membership and bearing in mind we already ask for annual CD reports.
- d) ISCO and potential to recategorize biomedical laboratory scientist

Respectfully submitted,
Alan Wainwright
Chair, Membership Committee

Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee is led by Ki Jong Rhee, with Board Members President-Elect Gabriella Lillsunde Larsson and Hassan Aziz.

Report

Britta Karlsson Educational Webinar Series:

The successful webinar series continued, with two webinars held and two more scheduled for later in the year.

- 17 November 2023. Title: Recent Development of the Coronavirus - How Can We Keep Up When Producing New Vaccines
Speaker: Matti Sällberg, PhD, Professor of Biomedical Analysis.
Department of Laboratory Medicine. Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden
- 25 June 2024. Title: The Future of Diagnostics - POCT
Speaker: David Wells, Chief Executive, Institute of Biomedical Science.
UK

IFBLS and international collaboration were close to Britta's heart, and we are pleased to honour her legacy and deep connection to education through this webinar series.

70th Anniversary Symposium

As there is no World Congress in association with the GAD this year a symposium 'Strengthening Diagnostics' will be held following our meeting. The Scientific Committee prepared the programme for this symposium.

IJBLS Development:

Under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Dr. Patricia Tille and the IJBLS Editorial Advisory Board, the first issue of two issues in 2024 was published in April, and a second issue will be published in October.

Respectfully submitted,
Ki Jong Rhee
Chair, Scientific Committee

Development Committee

The Development Committee is led by Board Member Maria Klement, with Board Members Godswill Okara and Ki Jong Rhee.

Report

Britta Karlsson Advancement Program.

The program criteria for the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program was discussed at the Alternate GAD meeting in Ireland. The changes included: increase funds to \$3000 CD, no profit sharing, more flexibility of locations and involvement of the IFBLS, and funding provided after the event. There were two applications with one country meeting all criteria. Burundi was the first successful applicant for the Advancement Program.

Social Media

Social media was discussed at the alternate GAD in Ireland. The Chief Delegates supported promoting the profession. The Board of Directors supported hiring a part time individual to post information on these platforms: Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn. As of July 2024, the platforms current followers are:

- Facebook - 4,900
- X - 531
- LinkedIn - 152
- Instagram - 19

International Directory of Biomedical Laboratory Science Education (IDBLSE)

An online IDBLSE was launched in 2022 with an aim of building an international database of Biomedical Laboratory Science education by country. Many of the members of IFBLS have sent in updates to their information and those changes have been posted. New members have been added to the database. Members of IFBLS are invited to visit the website (<http://idblse.editme.com>) and submit updates for their country.

Communication between members-CD reports

Chief Delegates Reports from 2023 and 2024 have been collected from member countries. A summarized spreadsheet of issues for discussion at future IFBLS meetings and suggestions for future IFBLS activities was developed.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Klement
Chair, Development Committee

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee is led by Hassan Aziz, with Board Members Maria Klement and David Wells.

Report

Fellowship Award

Following discussions at the Alt GAD in Dublin in October 2023 the Fellowship Award was launched in June 2024. Candidates were nominated by members, the Board of Directors and the President. All applications were reviewed by the Awards Committee and presented to the Board for decision. The inaugural Fellowship Awards will be presented at the GAD.

Elisabeth Pletscher Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize an IFBLS Associate member for their continuous support of Biomedical Laboratory Science through continuing education and other activities and to promote the objectives of IFBLS. The IFBLS Associate member may be either an individual or an Association.

The recipient in 2024 is Dr Patricia Tille, Editor of the International Journal of Biomedical Laboratory Science.

Past President's Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize an individual who has provided outstanding service to the profession of Biomedical Laboratory Science in the field of international exchange with IFBLS in the promotion of the Goals and Objectives of IFBLS. The award is not given to current Board Members. The recipient need not be a Biomedical Laboratory Scientist.

The recipient in 2024, recommended by the current Past President and two previous Past Presidents, is Tom Stowe.

Sponsored Awards

The poster awards sponsored by KAMT, JAMT, ASCLS and JHST are all associated with attendance and presentation at Congress. They will not be awarded in 2024.

Tsukuba Medical Laboratory of Education and Research (TMER)

Tsukuba Medical Laboratory of Education and Research (TMER) in cooperation with IFBLS, selects through an application process, one international Biomedical Laboratory Scientist to attend a week of practical training in Japan. The training program in December 2024 is in the field of Haematology.

IFBLS thrilled to have received more than 40 applications for this prestigious award, and welcomes the continuation of this generous training opportunity supported by the Tsukuba Medical Laboratory of Education and Research (TMER).

The Nordic Award

The aim of this award is to enable an IFBLS Chief Delegate with restricted financial resources to attend the General Assembly of Delegates and to promote the objectives of IFBLS.

In 2024 the NML group generously selected two recipients from Burundi (ANTEBBU) and India (ICMLS).

Respectfully submitted,
Hassan Aziz
Chair, Awards Committee

WHO Collaboration

IFBLS is a Non-State Actor (NSA) in official relations with WHO. We fully support the ongoing work of WHO in this area and the huge challenges that are being faced. In our own areas of Biomedical Laboratory Science, the impact on clinical service laboratories and staff have been monumental and we have highlighted the importance of having sufficient numbers of trained, qualified staff to carry out Covid-19 testing to appropriate standards that ensure accuracy of the results. As the world readjusts post the pandemic and the 'New Normal' becomes established the importance of our profession in diagnosis, prognosis and monitoring disease along with contribution to public health must not be ignored.



We have a Designated Technical Officer and to maintain our status we had a three-year workplan for 2022-2024 that included provision of:

- technical input to inform WHO's work towards the development of the forthcoming versions of WHO Essential in vitro diagnostics list (EDL), promoting its implementation among members
- provision of webinars available to low-income countries in order to complement WHO's efforts to improve access to professional development of essential staff delivering of diagnostic laboratory testing for infectious disease, anaemia, pre-eclampsia and ascending infection

- disseminating and promotion of WHO's approach to combat infectious disease, to reduce maternal morbidity and its contributions to support the diagnosis, treatment and control of pregnancy-related disease and its contributions to support biomedical laboratory science, and ultimately global healthcare, through agreed communication channels in accordance with WHO's rules and policies
- provision of a resource document describing the laboratory scientist and technician activities for clinical laboratories, so as to inform WHO's work on health workforce planning for Universal Health Coverage

Attendance at WHO meetings is key and whilst this has not been possible in person, we have accessed the special sessions of the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly, and sessions specific to developing relations with Non-State Actors. We very much appreciate the opportunities to engage with these activities, recognizing there are technical challenges and differences in time zones that must be overcome.

Triennial Review and Workplan

In our Triennial Review with WHO the plan for collaboration between WHO and IFBLS aims at supporting WHO's efforts with Member States towards achieving the WHO Strategic Priorities as set in its Fourteenth General Programme of Work (GPW14) and the WHA resolution 76.5 on Strengthening Diagnostics Capacity, with special attention on issues related to laboratory medicine. A draft workplan has been developed and submitted for review in January. Its acceptance will continue our status as a Non-State Actor in Official Relations with the WHO.

Finances

The annual membership fees and biennial World Congress fee traditionally fund IFBLS's activities.

The financial situation is stable, but even though restrictions for traveling due to the pandemic during 2021 and 2022 have reduced expenditures, increasing costs are anticipated for coming years. The Board of Directors will continue to monitor this. In order to minimise expenses there was one 'in person' meeting of the Management Committee. Last year the AltGAD was held 'in person' with attendant additional costs. This year the GAD is not associated with a World Congress and this too will lead to increased expenditure

During 2023 the investment portfolios were consolidated, and this work has continued ensuring IFBLS gets best returns on investment to fund activities.

Financial modelling based on the changing operational model is under way. This will include a review of the fee structure to support activities.

Britta Karlsson Legacy

In 2017, IFBLS received a donation from the estate of Britta Karlsson, a former IFBLS member. Ms. Karlsson was a long-time supporter of IFBLS, education and internationalization for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists. The donation has been invested as the Britta Karlsson Legacy.

Britta Karlsson Advancement Program

The annual profit from the Britta Karlsson Legacy will finance the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program.

The program is aimed for IFBLS member associations, primarily from Low- and Middle-Income Economy Countries (LMICs), to sponsor an international lecturer to travel and share their knowledge in a local workshop, or lead a similar event such as an online webinar.

The purpose is to promote the education and professional advancement of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists (BLS), and to provide updated information for BLS in specialized fields (e.g. clinical chemistry, clinical microbiology, clinical hematology, clinical immunology, etc.).

The programme was refined and relaunched in 2024 with applications received from 2 members. The programme is supporting one of these applications from Burundi.

Britta Karlsson Educational Webinar Series

The successful webinar series, first launched in 2022 and continued in 2023 and 2024, has now held 9 webinars. These webinars are a great opportunity for members from around the world to learn from our international colleagues. IFBLS is deeply grateful to our speakers for sharing their knowledge and expertise. The next webinar is planned for November 2024.

BLS Day 2023 - 2024

International BLS Day celebrated on the 15th of April each year provides an opportunity for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists across the globe to contribute to the mission and objectives of IFBLS.

This year the IFBLS Board chose the theme *Guardians of Quality and Patient Safety: Biomedical Laboratory Scientists*.

This theme is central to everything we do in our work



We are committed to having Biomedical Laboratory Scientists who are highly educated and trained to deliver a clinical laboratory diagnostic service for our people. Each of us knows that behind every sample we analyse is a person who must be cherished.

Our poster celebrates Biomedical Laboratory Science Day. It encompasses the entire spectrum of a sample journey from the patient through the laboratory where it is the Biomedical Laboratory.

Scientific Network of Experts

The Scientific Network of Experts was set up in 2018.

The Scientific Committee has reviewed the use of the Network of Experts and the Advisory Groups. Following discussion in Dublin in 2023 the structure and function will be reconfigured.

IJBLS Journal

The International Journal of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IJBLS) is an on-line peer-reviewed journal published bi-annually by International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Sciences (IFBLS).

The journal is intended to disseminate information and knowledge to the international laboratory community by accepting a variety of manuscripts for publication. Those manuscripts should be original research articles, literature or mini-reviews, case studies, brief communications and letters to the editor describing original investigations in all fields of biomedical laboratory sciences.

The journal covers several major disciplines: clinical chemistry, molecular diagnostics, clinical serology and immunology, hematology, transfusion medicine, clinical virology, clinical bacteriology and mycology, clinical microscopy, histopathology, cytology, quality control and quality management, laboratory management, education and ethics, laboratory safety and any important topics or issue related to the biomedical laboratory science.

IFBLS looks forward to receiving continuous scientific contributions from Biomedical Laboratory Scientists of the world.

Website

The IFBLS website is updated regularly in order to provide relevant information and news, supported by a newsletter to member associations four times per year.

Social Media

The IFBLS Facebook page keeps increasing its number of followers, being the communication channel that reaches the largest number of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists. The Facebook page is IFBLS's platform for interactions of both formal and informal aspects, sharing information but also creating interest in IFBLS and the profession we represent, as well as inspiration to become involved in the associations, globally or nationally.

This year IFBLS has engaged a social media moderator on a part time basis.

Newsletter

The web page and the regular member emails are supported by a newsletter to member associations four times per year. This is short information on news and upcoming events in a format that can be shared.

IFBLS World Congress is the biennial event where Biomedical Laboratory Scientists worldwide meet, present our scientific work and learn more about Biomedical Laboratory Science globally. This is an opportunity to find out about our cultural differences and professional contexts and realize that our similarities are stronger than differences

The World Congresses are organized by IFBLS member associations. This contributes to the variations between the congresses, which are also part of the charm. All input from congress participants is taken to heart, documented and discussed by the Board of Directors. Important issues and aspects are forwarded to the organizer of the upcoming congress, in order to assure continuous improvements. The Congress Guidelines will be revised if experiences from the Congress demonstrate a need to make clarifications.

Bids for future congresses are welcomed at any time. It takes member association support for the congresses to continue being the global meeting point for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists where scientific work is shared, networking done and inspiration for the future is generated.

We are delighted to confirm that the next World Congress will take place in Chiba, Japan in 2026.

IFBLS collaborates with numerous organizations for mutual benefits.



World Health Organization (WHO). The World Health Organization (WHO) is the global guardian of public health. The goal at the World Health Organization (WHO) is to build a better, healthier future for people all over the world. Working through offices in more than 150 countries, WHO Secretariat staff work side by side with governments and other partners to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all people. IFBLS is a Non-State Actor (NSA) in official relations with the WHO.



Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI). IFBLS has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CLSI for many years.

This agreement is used to build collaborative endeavours based on mutual interests. The main goal is to use each other's strengths to further promote the development and dissemination of globally applicable consensus standards and guidelines to further education of Biomedical Science and healthcare professionals.



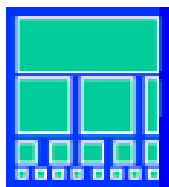
European Association for Professions in Biomedical Science (EPBS).

IFBLS has had a MOU with EPBS since 2012. We recognize that IFBLS has a global focus, while EPBS has a European focus. Both organizations prepare various policy documents; this is an area we will work together, when appropriate. Both organizations promote each other.



International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA). IFBLS has

had a MOU with IFBA since 2014. Each organization will promote the activities of the other when appropriate. Policy documents can be shared, when applicable. At conferences, we could utilize the expertise from each organization for educational purposes. We may collaborate on projects of mutual interest.



International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is an international classification for which the International Labour Organization (ILO) is responsible. ISCO is a tool for organizing jobs into a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job. IFBLS will continue with the aim to achieve correct classification for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists, in ISCO Group 2 professionals.



International Organization for Standardization (ISO). ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 162 national standards bodies. Through its members, ISO brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges. IFBLS is a Category A liaison to ISO/TC 212 - Clinical laboratory testing and in vitro diagnostic test systems.

IFBLS wishes to extend our gratitude to

- The speakers for our Britta Karlsson Educational Webinar Series
- The IJBLs Editorial Board
- All IFBLS member associations and Chief Delegates for your trust and support.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Culliton
IFBLS President 2022 - 2024



The International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IFBLS) is an independent non-governmental association of national societies in 37 countries, representing more than 236,000 Biomedical