

CPD INNOVATION



Biomedical engineers Michael Mohally (left) and Sean O'Leary with some of the specialised test equipment used during the validation of decontamination equipment in the hospital sterile services department (HSSD) at Cork University Hospital.

CORK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL EMBRACES CHANGE THROUGH CPD

The biomedical engineering department at Cork University Hospital (CUH) provides technical, clinical, and managerial expertise in the identification, acquisition and support of safe, effective, and economical medical device technology. Since gaining CPD accreditation in 2007 the department has continually appraised its internal structures and processes to ensure efficient learning and transfer of information and experience

As the criteria for Engineers Ireland Best-in-Class CPD structures evolved, the biomedical engineering department at CUH established an internal CPD committee to drive change and evaluate current practice. One of the changes implemented was the development of a skills matrix to highlight areas of strength and areas of development and opportunity. This feeds directly into individual performance management and goal setting which are aligned with the department's service plan. Future training plans can be based on the needs of both the department and the individual through utilisation of the department's skills matrix. One of the most effective ways for up-skilling engineers is through specialised accredited training courses which are followed up with knowledge sharing from experts on the subject matter and on-the-job 'shadowing'. A good example of this approach was the recent expansion of the validation service provided by the department. The validation service is provided by the biomedical engineering department to the decontamination and sterilisation departments in the acute and general hospitals to ensure that the equipment that is used meets the published standards and guidelines. This has proven to be a major cost saving for the hospital. These cost savings, and the possibility of further cost savings, coupled with the up-skilling of a second engineer, has proved beneficial. Benefits included the continued expansion

of the new service along with the personal development and professional satisfaction of both engineers. Flexibility coupled with good communications skills, and openness are some of the key requisites for an effective shadowing programme.

With such a diverse range of disciplines and technologies in a hospital, the requirements and challenges placed on a biomedical engineering department can be effectively met by continuing to invest in updating the skills, knowledge and competencies of the individual engineers.

With the ongoing support of hospital management, the biomedical engineering department in Cork utilises opportunities to encourage the personal and professional development of its members. This is an ongoing cycle where regular departmental and inter-departmental meetings help keep CPD goals correctly focused.

Biomedical and clinical engineering is a constantly changing dynamic sector with new technologies arriving every day. Using the Engineers Ireland accreditation process as a guiding influence for continuous professional development has given a solid framework to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Next issue: CPD insights from Abbott Ireland Pharmaceutical Operations, Sligo.