



Biomanufacturing Market Engagement Summary

The Office for Life Sciences (OLS) conducted a consultation (31 January to 17 February 2023) on medicines manufacturing skills provision in the UK. It sought to gather views on the demand for and the effectiveness of medicines manufacturing (MM) training provision. This is a highly specialised sector and (from 842 views) the consultation received 10 responses including from pharmaceutical companies, the NHS, cell and gene therapy companies, a university and an MHRA-licensed manufacturing facility.

OLS prioritises protecting commercial or sensitive disclosures made during a market consultation. Therefore sensitive information has therefore not been disclosed.

Key findings

- Most respondents currently obtain or plan to obtain MM training.
- The current support and training offered through the Advanced Therapies Skills Training Network (ATSTN) and the Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community (ATAC) has been found to be greatly beneficial. At least half of the respondents who have obtained, or are considering obtaining, MM training reported contacting ATSTN or ATAC for support and advice.
- Other specific training initiatives, (reported as beneficial), included: grants, a focus on regionally focused course provision, and support and mentoring to develop capacity and capability.
- However, generally, an increase in the scope, provision, and coordination of training is thought to be needed to help fill the large number of vacancies in the MM industry. Many respondents noted a skills gap in the sector and a lack of relevant training of affordable quality. Suggestions for improvement included building technical capability in existing and new employees, a coordinated consistent local and national approach, and placement programmes.
- Respondents also felt that better-explained career pathways at schools, colleges and universities (including better information on apprenticeships) would help strengthen career pathways into MM. Suggestions for improvement included a career map to provide students/graduates with the pathways into the sector, funding to support placements, specialist training venues or a cheaper reality training programme alternative, and time allocated for senior staff to deliver high quality training.
- Half of all respondents currently offer or are planning to offer MM training to the marketplace. The types of training currently offered include apprenticeships, undergraduate and PHD schemes and placements, school engagements and other training. Most respondents are planning to offer other types of training including MSc level teaching, student placements, an online training platform for staff and students, a centre for doctoral training, and professional development courses.
- Most respondents were interested in submitting a grant application to establish a regional co-ordinating role, providing advice and support for MM training.

Next Steps and Note of Thanks

OLS would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank those respondents who participated in this consultation. The feedback obtained through the questionnaire has greatly informed our strategic approach to this important endeavour. We plan to communicate the next stage of this project in the coming months as we work to improve MM skills training provision and coordination in the UK.

Please contact jo.parkesnewton@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk with any questions or comments in respect of this summary.