

Education

In order to become a member of the British Institute of Embalmers (BIE) you, the applicant must successfully complete an approved training course recognised by the BIE and then apply for membership. Training is provided by a number of accredited tutors who teach an approved syllabus and are regulated by the Institute. The tutors are not employed by the Institute and any fees, except those paid for examinations and membership, are paid directly to the tutor or school.

Student Membership

Initial membership of the BIE is gained by becoming a student member. To become a student member you will need to enrol with an accredited tutor and they will log your details with both the BIE and the International Examinations board of Embalmers (IEBE). Once you have passed the Foundation examination you can apply to be a student member of the BIE.

Types of Course

There are many types of course available to people wishing to study the theory and practice of embalming.

Classroom Based

A classroom based course will generally consist of structured courses over a period of time, to which the student is expected to attend. Generally the study time will comprise of both theory and practical tuition and a higher level of supervision than may be found on a correspondence course. Classroom based courses usually last for around 2.5 – 3 years attending on a part-time basis.

Correspondence

A correspondence course allows a student to work at their own pace, usually involving literature being sent to the student to complete in their own time. Contact with the tutor will be less than with a classroom based course but there will be less travelling involved. The duration of the course very much depends on the individual student and their work ethic.

Practical tuition

Both classroom and correspondence courses will contain practical tuition that will take place in an embalming theatre. It is advised that you discuss the following with your choice of tutor/school before you commence the course.

- Availability of venue
- Availability of cases
- Extra transport costs
- Facilitation costs
- Provision of PPE

Fees

Course fees are not controlled by the BIE but are set by the individual tutors and their schools. It is worth remembering that different training providers will include the teaching of both the theoretical and practical parts of the course but there may be additional fees payable.

It is for the student to ensure that they are clear as to what the training provider will include within the cost of the course.

Examinations

The IEBE is the examination provider for the BIE and the course comprises of 6 theory modules, the Foundation module and then, Modules A, B, C, D, and E. At the end of each module there is a written examination, which takes 1 hour for the foundation and 2.5 hours for modules A-E.

Once all the theoretical modules have been completed successfully there are two practical examinations. The practical examinations involve embalming two deceased, one who has been subject to an autopsy and one which has not. Your embalming skills must be assessed by your accredited tutor in person and they must sign a document to say that you meet the required level of ability before your tutor applies for practical examinations to take place.

Full Membership

Once all exams have been completed successfully you will receive a form which will enable you to apply for full membership of the BIE. Membership is awarded by members of the National Council. This decision is made by the members of The National Council of the Institute and full membership is not automatic upon successful completion of the exams. Once you are given full membership status you will be issued with a membership number.

Accredited Tutors

All accredited tutors are regulated by the B.I.E must abide by a strict code of practice set out by the BIE. One of the clauses in the code of practice is that a teaching/learning contract of a set minimum standard exists between your chosen accredited tutor and yourself. A signed copy of the contract will be held at the BIE national office for the duration of the learning agreement. A copy of the minimum standard contract set by the BIE is available by following the link and it is recommended that you check your contract against it.

Arbitration

If a student is dissatisfied with their tuition they can contact the Student Liaison Officer, Elizabeth C. Bollington-Kinch, MBIE, through the International Office. The Student Liaison Officer is a member of the Institute who will liaise with the student and the school to try to reach an amicable solution to most problems.

If you wish to make a formal complaint against a tutor your complaint must to be sent in writing to the National General Secretary of the BIE, 21c Station Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 0HL. This position is held by Karen Caney.

Previous Qualifications.

If you already have a qualification in the theory and practice of embalming it may be possible for you to apply for membership of the BIE without taking part in a BIE course. You will need to contact BIE National Office with details of your qualification and your request will be passed to the Examinations Authority who will assess each case individually.