

UK NEQAS for H&I Newsletter April 2022

CONTENTS

- 1 News
- 2 Scheme Updates for 2022-23
- 3 EFI Standards: Core and Supplemental Techniques
- 4 Participant Survey Responses

1. News

This Newsletter contains important information about registration and changes to schemes for 2022-23. Please make sure you make all staff involved in testing EQA samples aware of the changes. Full details of all schemes are available in the 2022-23 Participant Manual which is available to download from our website www.uknegashandi.org.uk.

Annual Re-Registration is Open

The registration process can now be completed online using the Participants' Portal. Please log on to the system and complete your registration for 2022-23 as soon as possible. The first distribution in 2022-23 will be Scheme 3, 4A1 and 4A1i on the 12th April 2022.

The distribution timetable for the 2022-23 cycle is now available on our website: <https://uknegas.org.uk/calendar>.

DISTRIBUTION TIMETABLE 2022-23

	Scheme 1A Scheme 2A	Scheme 1B	Scheme 2B	Scheme 3 Scheme 4A/4A1i	Scheme 4A2 Scheme 6	Scheme 5A Scheme 7 Scheme 8	Scheme 9 Scheme 10 Scheme 11	Educational Samples EDMM*	IID	SB
2022										
April				12-Apr						19-Apr
May	24-May	10-May	26-Apr		17-May					
June				28-Jun		07-Jun	21-Jan			31-May
July	26-Jul	12-Jul	05-Jul							
August					02-Aug			19-Jul*		
September	20-Sep	13-Sep	06-Sep	11-Oct						30-Aug
October						04-Oct				
November	08-Nov	01-Nov			29-Nov		15-Nov			
December										06-Dec
2023										
January	31-Jan		17-Jan			24-Jan				10-Jan
February		07-Feb							14-Feb	

*EDMM one distribution



UK NEQAS for H&I

Director: Dr Tracey Rees

Deputy Director: Deborah Pritchard

Operations Manager: Amy De'Ath

Deputy Manager: Melanie Bartley

Healthcare Scientist Practitioner: Geraint Clarke

QA Officer: Jack Jefferies

MLA: Owain Seldon



Pictured above taken prior to the pandemic (left to right): Geraint Clarke, Melanie Bartley, Amy De'Ath, and Deborah Pritchard

Email: uknegashandi@wales.nhs.uk

Website: www.uknegashandi.org.uk

Scheme Fees for 2022-23

The majority of Scheme fees have been held at 2021-22 prices. A slight increase in the fees for Schemes 1B, 10 and 11 has been made in line with an increase in operating costs for these schemes. We would like to reiterate to our customers that we operate on a not-for-profit basis and as such will always provide our services at the lowest price we can offer to maintain operations.

Please remember that all invoices must be paid in **UK STERLING (GBP - £) AND FREE OF ALL BANK CHARGES**. We are experiencing more invoices being paid in a foreign currency resulting in outstanding balances being left on accounts. Please also ensure that if your laboratory is not subject to UK VAT, that a valid VAT number is recorded during the registration process. Registrations without this information will be charged UK VAT as standard. An administration fee will be payable if invoices have to be re-issued. Outstanding balances will result in suspension from all services until your account balance is cleared.

Annual Participants' Meeting

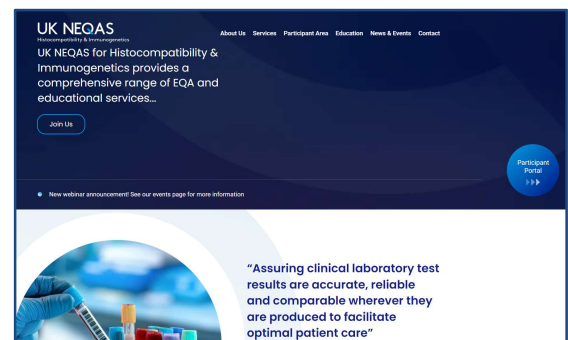
NEQAS host a participant meeting annually which allows us to feedback on performance over the previous year, highlight any issues or interesting trends and to inform participants of any changes for the upcoming distribution year. It also allows us to have open discussions on relevant topics and gives our participants a forum to raise concerns or ideas for improvements. We invite guest speakers to cover relevant scientific content and strive to make the day as interactive as possible.

In response to the feedback from last years' virtual meeting we are doing things a little differently this year. One meeting will be held on the **24th May 2022** at a conference venue in Birmingham, UK. However, we acknowledge this means it is difficult for our participants based in the rest of the world to attend. As such, we will also be providing a second meeting for rest of world based labs using an online format on the **26th May 2022**. This meeting will be recorded and made available on our website.



The NEQAS team will be attending the 35th EFI Conference from the 17th-20th May 2022. Deborah will be attending the EFI EPT Committee meeting and the team will be available to approach throughout the Conference. Please come and say hello!

New Website – <https://uknegashandi.org.uk>



Our new website launched on the 20th October 2021. It gives us improved flexibility and control over content so we can provide our participants, old and new, with the most up to date information about our services.

Webinars

In 2021 we introduced our first series of Webinars which have focused on the interpretative Educational Scenarios sent in the 2021-22 distribution cycle. The Webinars were composed of a presentation summarising the scenario, the responses submitted and then an open Q&A session with a group of panellists. The panellists included NEQAS Steering Committee members, NEQAS staff and Clinical experts.

100% of delegates rated the first webinar as either beneficial or extremely beneficial to them with 97% stating they would be interested in attending more NEQAS Webinars!

2. Scheme Updates for 2022-23

Sample Distribution Frequency

The frequency of sample distribution for **Scheme 3** – HLA Antibody Specificity Analysis, **Scheme 6** – HLA Antibody Detection, **Scheme 4A1** – HLA Typing at 1st Field Resolution, **Scheme 4A1i** – Interpretative HLA Genotype and **Scheme 4A2** – HLA Typing to 2nd and 3rd Field Resolution will be changing.

Samples for these schemes will now be distributed for assessment three times a year. The first distribution for Scheme 3, 4A1, 4A1i and 4A2 will contain three samples, the second distribution will contain four samples and the final distribution will contain three samples. Each of the three distributions for Scheme 6 will contain four samples. This is to ensure EQA samples are more representative of laboratory performance by testing regularly throughout the year. This should also decrease the burden of testing and reporting multiple samples at once.

3. EFI Standards: Core & Supplemental Techniques

Core Techniques are used individually or in combination to provide a final result

Supplemental Techniques are used only for rare cases in combination with core techniques to refine final result.

A reminder for EFI accredited laboratories that all 'core' laboratory techniques must be tested in accordance with minimum EPT sample numbers (e.g. 10 samples for HLA typing). Therefore, if you use multiple techniques for HLA typing, e.g. PCR-SSO & qPCR all EQA samples must be tested by both techniques. Only one result submission should be made to UK NEQAS, but relevant paperwork retained for inspections. Laboratories must document their approach for EQA testing using supplementary techniques, but the EFI EPT committee would recommend testing at least 2 EQA samples per year.

4. Participant Survey Responses

UK NEQAS for UK&I asked for your feedback on our services over the last two years. We would like to thank all those that generously gave their time to complete the survey. We use the responses to inform our service development. 87% of respondents rated our service as good or excellent and 90% of respondents rated our communication as good or excellent.

The survey highlighted a number of areas for improvement including:

- **Accessibility of the Participants' Manual** – key information has been placed on our website where we hope you will find it easier to engage with <https://uknegashandi.org.uk/participant-area/>.
- **Ease of use of the Participants' Portal** – there are a number of user guides to assist you <https://uknegashandi.org.uk/portal-help/> we are also planning a series of instructional videos to clarify key functions which will be available on our website.
- **Value for money** – although there was a significant improvement in the number of users rating us as good/excellent for value for money this is an area we would like to improve on. We would like to reiterate that we operate on a not for profit basis and any savings are always passed on to our participants.
- **Awareness of our Steering Committee** – many of you commented you were unaware of the role of our Steering Committee. We hope you will see them more during our Webinar series and there is also information on our website <https://uknegashandi.org.uk/steering-committee/>.
- **Sample delivery delays** – a number of labs have experienced delays in getting samples after the changes imposed after Brexit. We have invested a lot of time trying to remedy any issues by working with our courier and the relevant customs departments. Delays can affect the quality of our isolated cells, we are currently performing a study to maximise the stability of our prepared lymphocytes to make them more resilient.

Participant Survey Responses Q&A

Q: Can you change Scheme 3 data entry to allow the download of data files directly from analysis software?

A: Scheme 3 requires an overall interpretation of the HLA antibodies present in a sample. We do not specify what method you should test by. The Steering Committee does not feel that taking an approach whereby labs could download results from programmes such as Fusion or MatchIT fits with the ethos of the Scheme as labs may test by multiple techniques to reach a final result.

Q: Can you provide more sample volume for Scheme 11?

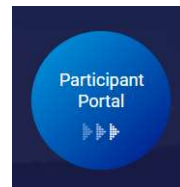
A: Following this request NEQAS will be increasing the volume of serum received for each serum sample in Scheme 11 from 1ml to 1.5ml.



Q: Can you provide guidance on what testing strategy and methodology we should utilise for Scheme 11?

A: Testing strategy should be based on the clinical requirements of the services your lab supports. You need to have a level of detection available by whatever platform(s) you deem meets your throughput, budget and clinical requirements. NEQAS assess the interpreted result rather than specifically asking for the output from one type of test. We would also remind participants that there is methodology information available for each Scheme within the Portal which would allow you to assess various testing strategies and results submitted.

Portal Functionality – Did you know!?

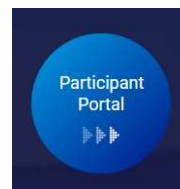


Did you know you can print a summary of the results you entered and who entered/submitted them for all samples in a distribution:

- Select **Results** from the main menu and **Pending Results** or **All Results**.
- Click the drop down arrow at the end of the row and select "Summary"

Scheme	Sample	Dist date	Date received	Date tested	Status	Submitted	Attachment
Scheme 28 - Crossmatching by Flow Cytometry	01/2019	12-Apr-2019	03-Apr-2019	03-Apr-2019	Reports Published		
Scheme 28 - Crossmatching by Flow Cytometry	02/2019	13-Apr-2019	03-Apr-2019	04-Apr-2019	Reports Published		Summary

This will take you to a summary of entered results which you can view or download as a PDF. The report can then be saved to your computer or printed.



Did you know you can add and amend laboratory staff?

The 'Staff' page allows you to manage staff as users of the UK NEQAS for H&I Participant System. Click on Staff in the top menu bar. Click on the Add button in the top right corner of the 'Lab Staff' homepage to enter the details of new staff. You can also edit and remove staff here using the drop arrows:

Note: Only 'primary' users of the system can add new users/remove users in the system.

First name	Last name	Email	Phone	Role	HCO
Test	Example	test@example@hqs.com	0123 456789	Primary User	☑
Tom	Jerry	tom@hqs.com		Scheme User	☐
Mickey	Moose	mim@hqs.com		Report Recipient	☐

