

UK NEQAS for H&I Newsletter March 2023

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1. News

This Newsletter contains important information about registration and changes to schemes for 2023-24. 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 2023-24 Participant Manual which is available to download from our website www.ukneqashandi.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 2023-24 as soon as possible. The first distribution in 2023-24 will be Scheme 2B on the 4th April 2023.

The distribution timetable for the 2023-24 cycle is now available on our website: <https://ukneqas.org.uk/calendar>.



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: Nicola Davies



Pictured above (left to right): Geraint Clarke, Melanie Bartley, Amy De’Ath, and Deborah Pritchard

DISTRIBUTION TIMETABLE 2023-24

	Scheme 1A Scheme 2A	Scheme 1B	Scheme 2B	Scheme 3 Scheme 4A/4B/4C	Scheme 4B2 Scheme 5	Scheme 5A Scheme 7 Scheme 8	Scheme 9 Scheme 10 Scheme 11	Educational Samples (EDM)*	ED	SB
2023	April	23-May	23-Apr	04-Apr	18-Apr	16-May	06-Jun	27-Jun	18-Jul*	29-Aug
	May		13-Jun	20-Jun						
	June									
	July	25-Jul	04-Jul		01-Aug					
	August		19-Sep	05-Sep						
	September		31-Oct	12-Oct	10-Oct					
	October									
	November	07-Nov			28-Nov	09-Oct		14-Nov		
	December									
2024	January	30-Jan		16-Jan		23-Jan				05-Dec
	February		06-Feb					13-Feb		

Scheme 1A – rHLA Phenotyping
Scheme 1B – rHLA-B*27 Testing
Scheme 2A – C-Donor Crossmatching
Scheme 2B – Crossmatching by Flow Cytometry
Scheme 3 – rHLA Antibody Specificity Analysis
Scheme 4A1 – rHLA Typing at 1st Field Resolution
Scheme 4A2 – rHLA Typing at 2nd Field Resolution
Scheme 4B – rHLA Typing
Scheme 5A – rHLA Genotyping
Scheme 5B – rHLA Genotyping and rHLA Typing
Scheme 6 – rHLA Antibody Detection
Scheme 7 – rHLA-DP/DQ Typing for Drug hypersensitivity
Scheme 8 – rHLA Genotyping for Coeliac and other rHLA associated disease
Scheme 9 – rHLA Genotyping
Scheme 10 – rHLA Genotyping
Scheme 11 – rHLA Antibody Detection/Specification
ED – Educational Scheme Samples
EDM – Interpretive Clinical Sciences
SB – Interpretive: SBE Genotype and rHLA
EDM* – Educational Combined Chromatography/HLA Typing/Antibody analysis

Email: ukneqashandi@wales.nhs.uk

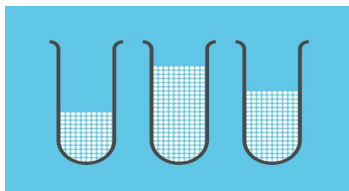
Website: www.ukneqashandi.org.uk

Scheme Fees for 2023-24

There will be an increase in fees for this distribution cycle. We are facing higher inflation and increased costs. We strive to provide a high quality service with additional benefits that participant's value, including free educational schemes, webinars and access to experts in the field whilst operating in economically challenging conditions.

UK NEQAS for H&I has been able to maintain scheme fees at the same level for a number of years by absorbing increasing costs by making savings elsewhere using various improvement initiatives, sourcing competitive pricing for consumables as well as through increases in participant numbers. This has meant UK NEQAS for H&I has not had to significantly alter participant fees for a number of years. However, this prudence has been exhausted and we have had to make the difficult decision to increase our fees for 2023.

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. 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.



The UK NEQAS for H&I team will be attending the 36th EFI Conference from the 26th-29th April 2023 in Nantes, France as exhibitors. The theme for the conference is Big Data In Immunogenetics At The Crossroad Of Care, Tools, And Research.

The team will be available throughout the Conference at Booth 23. Deborah will be also be attending the EFI EPT Committee meeting. Please come and say hello!

Annual Participants' Meeting

UK NEQAS for H&I 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 make the day as interactive as possible.

Join us on the **10th May 2023** at Aston Conference Centre in Birmingham, UK.

We will also be providing a second meeting for rest of world-based labs using an online format (date to be confirmed). This meeting will be recorded and made available on our website.

2. Scheme Updates for 2023-24

Please refer to the Participant Manual for full scheme information. It is available to download from our website www.uknegashandi.org.uk.

New for 2023-24

In **Scheme 8** – HLA Genotyping for Coeliac and other HLA Associated Diseases we have added the option to report HLA genotypes for two additional pharmacogenetic reactions. Firstly, for the drug Phenytoin which can lead to Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS) and toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN) in individuals with HLA-B*15:02 or B*13:01. Secondly, participants may also opt to report HLA genotypes in relation to HLA-B*15:02 and HLA-A*31:01 and carbamazepine- and oxcarbazepine-induced SJS and TEN

In **Scheme 9** – KIR Genotyping, following a request from a participant you will now have the option to be formally assessed at reporting the KIR haplotype.



3. Scheme 8: Coeliac Disease

Participants of Scheme 8 Coeliac Disease currently have the option to record interpretative comments alongside the HLA Genotype. These comments are not currently assessed. UK NEQAS for H&I would like to introduce formal assessment of these interpretative comments to increase the clinical impact of the scheme.

UK NEQAS for H&I will be publishing a set of guidelines ratified by BSHI on Laboratory Testing and Clinical Interpretation of HLA Genotyping Results in the Diagnosis of Coeliac Disease.

These guidelines were created in response to issues with poor performance in Scheme 8 Coeliac Disease.



If you are interested in joining a panel incorporating members of the UK NEQAS for H&I Steering Committee, Clinicians and volunteers dedicated to developing proposed assessment criteria for interpretative comments relating to Coeliac Disease please contact Amy.De-Ath@wales.nhs.uk.

3. Pre and Post Analytical Quality Monitoring Service (PrepQ)

The control of pre and post-analytical errors in diagnostic testing is recognised as a major contributor to the improvement in laboratory quality. Although the cause of many errors may be outside the laboratory, they waste resources and impair effective patient care.

UK NEQAS has developed a web-based **pre** and **post**-analytical quality monitoring service (PrepQ), as an external comparison tool. Participants submit the number of quality failures compared to the number of opportunities for failure in a given time period.

This tool gives the laboratory the opportunity to collate and monitor the incidence of errors beyond the analytical phase allowing benchmarking against their peers.

If you would like to know more about the PrepQ service, which is provided as a benefit of UK NEQAS membership, and how it could help your laboratory, contact UK NEQAS on: prepq@ukneqas.org.uk or for more details see the UK NEQAS website at: <https://ukneqas.org.uk/pre-and-post-analytical-quality-monitoring-service/>