

Re-registration 2025

Welcome to this re-registration newsletter for 2025. The participation year will run from April 2025 until the end of March 2026. We need to confirm your requirements for UK NEQAS services in the coming year and confirm your contact details. As in previous years, we will email your laboratory's main contact with a link to the re-registration information, including our distribution schedules and price lists for the year. Re-registration is online only and will open on **February 19th** for individual participants and close approximately three weeks later. Participants who register through an agent or distributor do not need to complete a re-registration entry, as this will be confirmed by your agent. If you have any questions or concerns, contact our Administration team on +44 (0)1923 587111.

A new Director for UK NEQAS Haematology



We are delighted to announce the appointment of Bashori Rahman as the Director of UK NEQAS Haematology from February 1, 2025. Bashori replaces Barbara De la Salle, who is retiring after almost 25 years at UK NEQAS Haematology. Barbara will still be active within UK NEQAS, as she will be the President of the UK NEQAS charity for the next three years and will continue to undertake development work for the Haematology Scheme. Bashori will be familiar to participants as the former UK NEQAS Haemoglobinopathy Lead Scientist, a position that will be filled by Bianca Olivier.

Other changes in the team included the return of Nazia Hussain to the position of Business and Finance Manager. We said farewell to our colleagues Sally Burley, who was an associate practitioner and had worked for UK NEQAS Haematology for almost 30 years, to Isaac Barkah, Business and Finance Manager, and to Asmah Ahmed, senior administrative assistant. We welcome our new colleagues and thank the team members they have replaced for their support and hard work.

What's in a dashboard?

The performance dashboard is available to all participants and allows laboratory managers and quality managers to see a performance summary for all the automated counting instruments they are responsible for, regardless of their location. This means that you don't have to log in to each record separately. The dashboard will provide a summary of the participant's EQA status, allow the participant to drill down into the information to identify and troubleshoot issues, and provide reports for quality review. Eventually, participants will be able to provide performance feedback through an online CAPA form.

Live demonstrations of the dashboard have been scheduled for Friday 28 February 2025 and Thursday 20th March 2025. Further details can be obtained from <https://www.ukneqash.org/>

Could you be one of our scientific advisors?

UK NEQAS Haematology depends upon a Steering Committee and three Scientific Advisory Groups (or SAGs) for expert advice on clinical and laboratory haematology, and to represent the interests of participants. This support is essential to our operation and is highly valued, it is also a requirement for the Scheme's accreditation to ISO17043 and to comply with the UK NEQAS Charity's Code of Practice.

Our three SAGs cover the main areas of interest for the Scheme, which are automated counting and associated testing (the General SAG), morphology (the Morphology SAG) and the inherited red cell disorders (the Special SAG). Although our advisory groups are relatively well supported at the time of writing, we are keen to hear from any participant interested in joining us. We ask for a CV and a covering letter outlining what you consider you could contribute, which will be reviewed with the chairs of the Steering Committee and SAGs.

Scientific advisors may also contribute to the operation of the programmes by the provision of expert clinical and laboratory commentary to reports, e.g., in blood film morphology and molecular haemoglobinopathies programmes. We are particularly grateful to our expert commentators and markers, Professor Barbara Bain, Dr Peter Carey, Dr Chris MacNamara, Dr Mike Leach, Dr Mel Proven and Dr Kees Hartevelde, who support us in this way.

In the past year Dr Wayne Thomas has resigned as Chair of the Steering Committee and Dr Charlotte Washington resigned from the Special SAG. We thank them for their support and work and wish them well for the future. We are delighted to welcome Dr Ethan Troy-Barnes, Hannah Taylor, Dr Yvonne Daniel and Dr Chiara Vendramin to the Special SAG, Dr Tanya Freeman and Dr Yasharee Gupta to the Morphology SAG and Dr Tom Fail to the General SAG. We are also delighted to confirm Ketkee Kothadia as the chair of the General SAG.

Automated counting programmes

Return of EQA data through the Labgnostic NPex system, which many laboratories will use for the return of patients' results, is available to participants in the automated blood counting programmes. There remain technical challenges arising from the use alternative analysis modes for fixed EQA material but please contact haem@ukneqas.org.uk for further information.



The POCT Haematology programme, for new technologies in POCT full blood counting, has been launched for the Pixcell Hemoscreen. This programme will be submitted for addition to our schedule of accreditation to ISO 17043 in 2025. If you are interested, please contact haem@ukneqas.org.uk.

The Reticulocyte Haemoglobin pilot programme is available to participants in the UK with a schedule of two distributions per year. A small charge, to cover postage and packing, is applied. The programme will be made available outside the UK once we have established that the material remains stable during courier transportation.

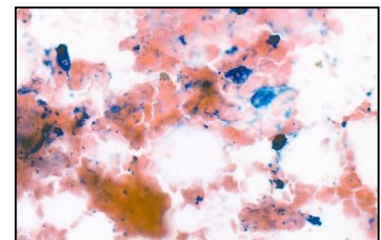
The ESR programme has been developed with a streamlining of the instrument grouping to just three groups: Westergren methods, modified Westergren methods and alternative methods. The alternative method group is subdivided where necessary. We have also worked closely with instrument and survey material manufacturers to include the new HORIBA Yumizen models that measure ESR, and the ALCOR iSED ESR analyser in the UK NEQAS Haematology ESR programme. Please contact us at haem@ukneqas.org.uk if you are interested in registering these instruments and we will update you on the progress of these modules.

Morphology programmes

Performance scoring for Blood Film Morphology has been developed to include an indication of the reasons for the selection of the 'expert' flags and a consideration of possible alternative, equivalent flags. The next is to provide an annual summary of performance to each participant, which will allow an overall assessment of the laboratory's performance. The programme continues to provide an assessment of the laboratory's reported comments against the consensus of all participants.

Automated Cell Identification Systems (e.g., CellaVision and Scpio) data can be accommodated in the manual differential module. We have noted participants' comments on the direction of slide spreading (apologies!) and the type of slide used. This may improve the success rate in obtaining data from our slides. If you are interested in learning more or taking part, please contact haem@ukneqas.org.uk. We also urge those who are registered to return data!

Bone marrow haemosiderin assessment using virtual images continues to develop, alternated with peripheral blood films with Pappenheimer bodies for the assessment of iron staining techniques. Participants are reminded that these slides are peripheral blood and not aparticulate bone marrow, which has caused some confusion. The instruction sheet describes the material used and participants are encouraged to read the instruction sheet for each distribution. We are also investigating the use of full slide images for the haemosiderin assessment, for use on the EQATE platform.

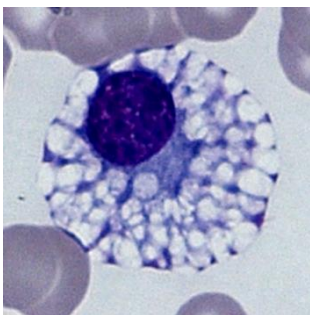


The **Case Interpretation** module for medical and advanced practitioners has been tested with a group of participants and we are currently developing case content. The cases will include the interpretation of morphology and other laboratory results and will be suitable for practitioners who are responsible for reporting haematology results.

Digital morphology for Continuing Professional Development

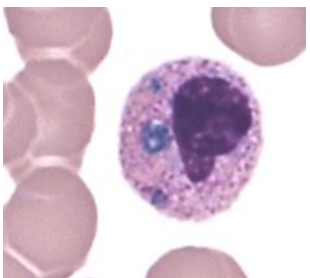
The Digital Morphology for CPD programme continues to be a huge success with more than 4,000 individual registrations. The programme is open to laboratory scientists worldwide and is wholly educational. We thank Dr John Burthem and Dr Michelle Brereton for their support of this programme. Work on the cell identification module has progressed well and should be available to participants this year.

Morphology champions



We could not operate without the Morphology Champions, who supply specimens for the Blood Films for Morphology programme. This year thanks go to Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Woolwich), Kingston Hospital, Whittington Hospital, Royal London Hospital (Whitechapel), Royal Free Hospital, and Royal Stoke University Hospital. Thank you for your support this past year and we hope we can continue to work together to create wonderful Morphology cases in 2025.

Call for Blood Film Morphology cases



We are interested in any cases that offer educational interest in blood film morphology and we keep a wishlist. These do not have to be rare conditions and cases that are seen regularly in the lab are *always* needed. Contact us (haem@ukneqas.org.uk) if you would like to know more. Like everything else, the rewards are small but you will be contributing to the service, and we send chocolates!

Haemoglobinopathy programmes

UK NEQAS Haematology provides a comprehensive range of programmes for haemoglobinopathy EQA, including adult antenatal screening, newborn screening and a molecular genetic programme, as well as red cell enzymopathy EQA for G6PD screening and quantitative assay.

The main areas of development have been the transfer of the molecular DNA Diagnostics for Haemoglobinopathies to online operation, the establishment of DNA from cultured cell lines as survey material in the same programme, and a plan to trial scoring interpretation in the adult haemoglobinopathy programme.

Annual meeting and webinars



We held our 25th Annual Participants' Meeting at the Birmingham Conference and Event Centre in October 2024, with an audience of approximately 250 laboratory managers, scientists and clinicians. The programme included an extended session on UK NEQAS operational developments, as requested by delegates in 2023, case presentations on haematological emergencies and talks from Professor Barbara Bain on macrocytosis and Dr Sebastian Francis on essential thrombocythaemia.

The 26th Annual Participants' Meeting will be held on 7th October 2025 in Manchester and the programme will be published in the next couple of months. You can book places at the 2025 meeting via your re-registration, and we look forward to seeing you at this leading national meeting for haematology laboratory scientists.

UK NEQAS Haematology offered four successful webinars in 2024, focused on the operation of the Scheme. These included understanding your EQA reports, instrument grouping, blood film morphology scoring and developments in the DNA Diagnostics for Haemoglobinopathies programme. In the coming months, we will offer webinars on how to use the performance dashboard, amongst other topics, and these will be advertised on our website.

ISO17043 accreditation

The UK NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion scope of accreditation is available for review at <https://www.ukas.com/> under centre number 7805.

Contact us if you have any questions about re-registration or if you would like any further information about our services

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