

## UK NEQAS Haematology Newsletter Re-registration 2021-2022

### RE-REGISTRATION 2020

UK NEQAS Haematology re-registration opens on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 for individual participants and will close on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Re-registration enables you to confirm your EQA requirements for the next participation year, update your contact details and provide us with a purchase order against which we can raise an invoice for the services provided. Re-registration is entirely online and all communications are sent by email. Even if you have no changes to make, please take a few moments to review the tests for which you are registered and your registered contact details. This re-registration newsletter is shorter than in previous years and we apologise for the reduction; this is the result of staff changes and shortages.

If you have re-registration queries, please contact:

Email: [gadmin@ukneqas.org.uk](mailto:gadmin@ukneqas.org.uk)

Telephone: +44 (0)1923 217878

### 2020: A CHALLENGING YEAR

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown a number of challenges in the path of the UK NEQAS Haematology Scheme, in the same way as we are aware it has for our participants. Early in the first period of lockdown, we amended some of our distribution schedules to ensure that we could maintain EQA services for those tests identified as a priority by the UK laboratory medicine professional bodies and because we experienced some survey material supply disruption. This entailed a small number of cancellations and deferment of some distributions. We also suspended non-participation penalties for April—July 2020, with the agreement of the National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel, as we were aware that some participants were experiencing difficulties in specimen delivery and others had staff redeployed or could not access instruments because of Covid restrictions. All services have now returned to their expected schedules and we do not plan any further amendments in response to the current national lockdown in the UK. Any service changes will be notified via the website ([www.ukneqas.org](http://www.ukneqas.org)). Brexit has caused disruption to some destinations and we are working with our courier and participants to make the changes to customs paperwork as needed. The good news is that just 7 packages to non-UK destinations failed to be delivered in January, for any reason.

### UK NEQAS SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUPS

UK NEQAS Haematology is seeking new members for the General or Automated Counting Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). We aim to have representation from all stakeholders in terms of instrumentation, type of laboratory and testing service, including Point of Care users, as well as recognized experts in their field. If you are interested, contact the Scheme Director ([barbara.delasalle@nhs.net](mailto:barbara.delasalle@nhs.net)) with your CV. All meetings are held by video call at the present time.

### **Morphology Champions 2020**

*West Middlesex  
University Hospital,  
Twickenham*

*Royal Victoria Infirmary,  
Newcastle*

*Borders General Hospital,  
Melrose*

*Charing Cross Hospital,  
London*

*Queen's Hospital,  
Woolwich*

*Manchester Royal  
Infirmary, Manchester*

*West Herts Hospitals  
NHS Trust, Watford*

### **Thank you!**

*If you have an interesting  
case that you think would  
be of use in the Blood  
Films programme, please  
contact us immediately*

*01923 217878*

### **COVID-19 EQA**

The UK NEQAS organisation is pleased to offer a comprehensive range of services to support laboratories testing samples from Covid-19 patients.

These include:

Diagnostic EQA programmes for SARS-CoV-2 antibody testing and SARS-Cov-2 molecular testing

Treatment and monitoring EQA programmes across all blood sciences disciplines

Educational and competency assessment modules for staff in laboratories and care homes

See [www.ukneqas.org.uk](http://www.ukneqas.org.uk)  
for further information

## A BRIEF SUMMARY OF SCHEME UPDATES

### Automated Counting:

- ◆ The nucleated red cell pilot will cease after April 2021 when the parameter is integrated into the ADLC programme.
- ◆ Manual reticulocyte counting will be withdrawn as an option from April 2021.
- ◆ The REX module in reticulocyte counting, for Beckman Coulter users, will be fully reinstated . The module was temporarily suspended due to a drop in numbers.
- ◆ Whole blood material for Alifax ESR users will be trialled in spring 2021.
- ◆ The infectious mononucleosis programme will move to 4 distributions/year and be submitted for accreditation to ISO17043.
- ◆ The use of NPex to notify participants and for the automatic return of results will be trialled for the Full Blood Count programme.

### Morphology Programmes:

- ◆ Scoring for the Blood Films for Morphology is agreed but awaiting development of the report format.
- ◆ Digital images presented on the EQATE platform will be trialled for use in the Haemosiderin programme.
- ◆ Expansion of the EQATE digital platform for use by consultant haematologists is under development.

### Red Cell Enzymopathies and Haemoglobinopathies:

- ◆ G6PD activity reported at 30° Celsius is converted to 37° for performance assessment, as too few laboratories report at 30° to make a robust statistical assessment.
- ◆ Two Pyruvate Kinase activity pilot exercises are planned in 2021.
- ◆ Cell line DNA will be trialled in the DNA Haemoglobinopathies programme, to increase material availability.

### **Steering Committee and SAG Membership**

*We bade farewell,  
with thanks, to  
Dr John Parker-  
Williams who left  
the Morphology  
SAG and Dr Josh  
Wright who left the  
Special SAG.*

*The Steering  
Committee chair is  
Dr Wayne Thomas,  
the General SAG  
chair is Alun  
Roderick, the  
Morphology SAG  
chair Dr John  
Burthem and the  
Special SAG chair  
Dr Steve Keeney.*

## EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS AND WEBINARS 2021

The Annual Participants' meeting 2020 was cancelled as a result of the national Covid-19 restrictions and we have taken the difficult decision not to hold a face-to-face meeting in 2021 because of continued uncertainty. We will hold three webinars free-of-charge for participants on March 9, 16 and 23 2021 and plan to offer further online or streamed educational activities in place of the Participants' Meeting in the Autumn of 2021. These will be advised to participants as soon as details are available and participants with pre-paid places from 2020 will be informed of their options. The UK NEQAS Parasitology Teaching Day will be offered this year using face-to-face or streamed teaching, as is appropriate to the national and local regulations.

## STAFF CHANGES

Jon Sims has retired from the majority of his responsibilities as Morphology Lead Scientist, working just one day a week on developing the EQATE online platform and the digital morphology services. The new Morphology Lead Scientist, Andrea Teuchert, will join us at the start of March 2021. Duljeet Chohan left UK NEQAS in June 2020 and we welcomed Bashori Rahman as Haemoglobinopathy Lead Scientist. We have new recruits to our administrative team, welcoming Lisa Watkins-Price and Klaudia Cskona.

## UPDATED PARTICIPANTS' MANUAL AVAILABLE ONLINE