

General Terms and Conditions of Scheme Participation

This is a summary of participants' responsibilities which are detailed throughout the Schemes' Manuals. Separate terms and conditions covering NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion Digital Services can be found at: <https://www.ukneqasbtlp.org> or <https://www.ukneqash.org>.

Particular attention is drawn to the following:

1. Registration

Participation in the UK NEQAS Haematology and UK NEQAS Blood Transfusion Laboratory Practice (BTLP) Schemes may begin at any time during the year with fees charged on a pro rata basis. Subscription charges include postage within the UK. Additional carriage costs will be charged by arrangement where applicable and for laboratories outside of the UK.

Participation will commence following the return of completed registration documents. A participant reference number (PRN) will be issued on completion of registration. If the participant's finance department require a purchase order to be stated on the invoice document, a purchase order number must be provided. The Schemes reserve the right to delay participation until payment has been made.

Participation will commence with the next scheduled distribution provided that documents are received at least three weeks prior to the date of the next distribution, subject to the availability of survey material.

Annual re-registration takes place within the first 3 months of the calendar year. Participants are required to confirm their registration details by the registration deadline and to provide a purchase order number for the following year. Where re-registration forms are not completed, registration will continue unchanged, unless a request to deregister is received in writing*. Any material sent in the meantime will be charged for.

Participants wishing to amend their participation or test methodology outside the re-registration period are required to notify the Scheme in writing. Changes will commence with the next scheduled distribution provided that documents are received at least three weeks prior to the date of the next distribution. It is the participant's responsibility to maintain accurate contact details on the UK NEQAS Haematology and Blood Transfusion website, www.ukneqash.org

The Scheme operates a website data entry facility. Once registration is complete identity codes (IDs) and passwords will be issued to participants via a system generated email. It is the participants' responsibility to maintain internal security of login details.

E-mail addresses supplied by the participating laboratories will be used for contacting the participants about matters relating to the operations of UK NEQAS, UK NEQAS related questionnaires and annual meetings or training courses.

Email addresses may also be used for contacting participants on national pathology or blood transfusion related matters. If you do not wish for your e-mail address to be used for these purposes, please check the 'No' box on the registration form.

Contact details provided to the Scheme will not be shared with other registered participants without prior consent. Where a request arises to facilitate the sharing of information relating to techniques or equipment, UK NEQAS will seek explicit permission from the participating laboratory before any details are disclosed.

2. Payment

Participation in the UK NEQAS Haematology and BTLP Schemes is deemed to be continuous for each NHS financial year (1st April to 31st March). Cancellation is required in writing and annual subscription fees will only be refunded pro rata if the participation period remaining is more than three months. Failure to pay the subscription charge within the payment terms (as stated on the invoice) may result in suspension of all services for the hospital/ organisation, although access to previous results entered via the Scheme website will be available. Subsequent re-instatement will incur a £50 fee. Any amendments made to invoices after they have been issued will also incur a £50 administration fee unless the amendment is the result of a fault of the Schemes. Any requests for refunds due to a payment made in error will incur a £20 fee to cover administration and bank charges for international payments. Any bank charges incurred in the payment of invoices must be settled by participants.

Effective 08 December 2025, foreign currency cheque payments will no longer be accepted.

3. Sample Delivery and Distribution

UK NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion courier service (where subscribed) operates on a DAP (Delivered at Place) basis. Participants are responsible for the payment of any VAT, duty, or customs charges applied upon receipt of samples. From time-to-time courier companies may contact the Main Contact for information to support delivery of samples. Where this is the case, participants are asked to respond directly to such queries to avoid delays in receiving samples.

Standard service charges will apply where delivery of specimen samples cannot be arranged due to circumstances beyond our control, including but not limited to acts of nature, fire, acts of government or state, civil commotion, insurrection, embargoes, or labour disputes.

Charges for repeat or additional material requested outside of routine deliveries may be applied at the discretion of UK NEQAS.

4. Return of results

The Scheme will despatch the packages on the date published in the annual schedule, unless unforeseen circumstances require a change to the date; in this case, participants will be notified by email and/or by a message posted on the website. If material is not received within the timeframe specified in the Participants' Manual, it is the responsibility of the participant to contact the Scheme so that repeat material can be despatched. UK NEQAS does not take any responsibility for delays or losses due to the postal or courier service.

Results saved to the website but not submitted, will be gathered by the scheme on the closing date, and analysed as if they had been submitted by the participant.

5. Data Security

For non-NHS and non-UK participants, invoicing and administration is undertaken by QED Haematology Ltd and QED Blood Transfusion Ltd on behalf of UK NEQAS Haematology and UK NEQAS BTLP. Performance details remain confidential within UK NEQAS Haematology and UK NEQAS BTLP.

Data consent preferences for the main contact will be recorded during registration or as part of the annual re-registration process and will remain valid for the current cycle year. Changes can be made at any time during the year upon receipt of written notification. Data consent will be assumed where there is no response to this request.

6. Oversight of the scheme and performance monitoring of unsatisfactory performance (applicable to UK participants only)

In registering for participation in UK NEQAS, a UK participating laboratory providing a direct or indirect clinical service agrees to abide by/uphold the conditions of EQA scheme participation of the Quality Assurance in Pathology Committee (QAPC). These can be found at:

<https://www.rcpath.org/resourceLibrary/joint-working-group-on-quality-assurance-conditions-of-eqa-scheme-participation.html> 'Conditions of EQA Scheme Participation' accessed as a pdf from this page.

Where performance concerns are identified, the Scheme Organiser may refer the laboratory to the UK NEQAS Steering Committee and/or an external governance body or advisory group where appropriate. In such cases, the laboratory will be informed in advance of any intended referral.

***Note: For clarity, "in writing" includes email or letter throughout the document**