

BTLP Newsletter 2019

Re-registration 2019/20

It's time to re-register so that we can make sure that you receive the EQA services you require without interruption and that the invoice for our services is accurate.

All documents relating to re-registration have been distributed electronically, so the only notification you will receive is the email with instructions for logging-in and details for re-registering.

The web-pages will allow you to create, deactivate, or change details for key contacts. It is essential that we have a single main contact and an invoice contact; a consultant contact is also required for clinical laboratories in the UK. The main contact address is used for delivery of samples so please ensure this is correct. You can also add other contacts so that lab staff receive notification emails when samples are despatched (trial contact) or when reports are issued (report contact).

Even if there are no changes, please take a few moments to check that your details are correct. A change to the delivery (main contact) address will be applied from the first distribution of the 2019/20 schedule, but all other contact detail changes will take effect immediately.

You will need to check that you are registered for the appropriate tests, and contact the scheme by email if you require any changes to be made.

You can register on the same page for all BTLP schemes for which you are the main contact, including Pre-transfusion Testing (E and R exercises), FMH, ABO Titration, and the pilot schemes for DAT, Red Cell Genotyping (RCG), Extended Red Cell Phenotyping (ERP) and Antenatal Titration (ANT), and also for TACT and annual meeting places. This will give you a single quote and a single invoice.

There has been a small increase to the prices (around 2%) for 2019/20 for the full schemes to cover inflation and increasing overheads, whilst the cost of the pilot schemes remains at that for 2018/19.

We appreciate your participation in our schemes, and if you need any assistance with the re-registration process or information on our services, please contact our Administration Team by phone on +44 1923 217933 or email using btlpadmin@ukneqas.org.uk.

Contents

- Re-registration 2019/20
- Update on BTLP Schemes
- Pre-Transfusion Testing
- FMH
- ABO Titration
- Pilot Schemes:
DAT, RCG, ERP, ANT
- TACT
- BTLP Steering Committee
and Scientific Advisory
Groups
- Annual meetings 2018
and 2019

Update on BTLP Schemes

We are currently writing the 2018 annual report with a review of the 2018 exercises, summarising trends and learning points - this will be published on the website in the next few months

BTLP successfully maintained ISO 17043 accreditation at our UKAS surveillance visit in August 2018 and we look forward to our full UKAS accreditation visit in summer 2019!

FMH has now been fully integrated into the BTLP Scheme and our website updated to reflect this change.

Pre-transfusion Testing (PTT)

The phenotyping element of the PTT 'R' exercises (one blood group system with each exercise) is changing to assess Rh+K each time, with extended phenotyping now available through the ERP pilot scheme. This has been agreed at the steering committee and will be implemented during 2019/20.

In response to a participant's request, we have added a free text box on the data entry page to record the identity of the analyser used for each exercise; this will appear on the summary. This will not be assessed / monitored by UK NEQAS, but should be useful to enable laboratories to track of EQA testing on their analysers where they have more than one.

The data pages have been updated so that UI submissions can be made through the website making it easier to submit 'UI' paperwork and creating a better audit trail at our end... this was thoroughly tested when we had over 60 UI submissions for an anti-c+M in exercise 18E9! (all of which were agreed).

Fetomaternal Haemorrhage (FMH)

The redesigned version of the FMH scheme went live in May 2018 with 1803F, as planned. The main changes were the options of two new types of registration; acid elution screening and flow cytometry quantification combined into one registration allowing reflection of the flow of a sample through a laboratory, and the flow cytometry screen and quantification registration which was requested by NHSBT. The latter will allow laboratories to have accreditation for the flow cytometry screen element of testing when it is put into practice.

The main differences that you may have noticed are modifications to the data entry webpage, and tweaks to the report, including a summary of scoring table at the top of the first page. The change process went smoothly with no major difficulties. The changes to the scheme were driven by requests by participants, and comments on any aspect of this (or any) scheme are welcome.

A 1mL bleed was sent out for the first time in 2018 allowing referral practices to be observed. The data was presented at BBTS as a poster which can be found [here](#).

Many thanks to those of you who completed our questionnaire on doses of anti-D Ig used in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The results have reflected changes in practice in recent years and will be useful when reviewing the BSH guideline on anti-D Ig dosing. A brief summary of the results was included with the 1901F reports.

Perhaps the most interesting FMH sample in 2018 was 1804F Patient 1 which contained cord material from a D variant. This resulted in a wide spread of results from flow cytometry participants using an anti-D marker. The results received highlighted the importance of examining plots, and of having a back-up plan for anti-D Ig dosing when results cannot be obtained. A detailed supplementary report is available with the 1805F reports; the results were also presented at our Annual Meeting

ABO Titration (ABOT)

ABOT is now a full UK NEQAS scheme, which has been accredited to ISO17043 by UKAS.

The reporting software continues to be developed and we have been able to present overall results in histograms. The main focus of the scheme is to support ABO incompatible solid organ transplant programmes, but we welcome registrations from laboratories undertaking ABO titrations for other clinical applications too.

BTLP Pilot Schemes

Data entry and issue of reports for all BTLP pilot schemes is now via our website.

All reports include overall and individual results, and where appropriate further analysis and comment.

Direct Antiglobulin Test (DAT)

Each exercise comprises two samples of red cells suspended in Alsever's solution.

Participants are requested to investigate the samples in the same way as clinical samples where a DAT is requested.

Red Cell Genotyping (RCG)

The RCG pilot scheme assesses genotype and predicted phenotype for a range of blood groups four times a year. Two 'patient' whole blood samples are provided for D C,c,E,e, Kk, Fy^a Fy^b, Fy Jk^a Jk^b, MN, Ss, Do^a, Do^b typing.

Antenatal Antibody Titration (ANT)

There are 4 exercises per year, distributed with 4 of the 6 PTT 'E' exercises. One 'patient' plasma sample is provided for titration each time, and extra information collected on the follow-up undertaken if similar result were to be obtained in clinical practice.

[ANT leaflet](#)

Extended Red Cell Phenotyping (ERP)

The ERP pilot scheme assesses phenotyping for a range of common antigens four times a year. Two 'patient' red cell samples (in Alsever's) are provided for D C,c,E,e, Kk, Fy^a Fy^b, Jk^a Jk^b, MN, Ss phenotyping.

[ERP leaflet](#)

All pilot schemes are open to UK and non-UK laboratories; it is easy to join during on-line re-registration.

For more details of these pilots, go to www.ukneqasbtlp.org or contact us via btlp@ukneqas.org.uk

Training Assessment and Competency Tool (TACT)

The continuing aim of this system is to provide laboratory staff and managers with an interactive knowledge-based training and competency assessment tool; helping to monitor theoretical knowledge of Biomedical Scientists working in blood transfusion laboratories. Currently, TACT features a single scenario, based on routine request handling, representing a typical request received in a hospital blood transfusion laboratory, but we have plans to expand upon the current system iteration to bring you a second scenario type.

In the last year, following useful feedback from subscribers, we have delivered exciting updates to TACT including:

- Creation of a username 'alias', to make your usernames a little more user-friendly
- Modifications to the managers review feature – common primary reasons for outcome amendment in a drop-down list
- Deselect components – returning selected components to the stock fridge
- Direct, automatic and configurable email function for managers to be notified of 'red' outcomes
- Feature to allow filing of completed requests where there is more than one in a participation

The most significant development in 2018 happened 'behind the scenes' with the re-engineering of the system to automate logic for scenario generation. Each element within the system is assigned attributes, and the relationship between these is defined by permissions and constraints that ensure that realistic and assessable scenarios are generated. This will allow more complex and rapid expansion of the TACT system as it removes the need for descriptive coding and simplifies testing and validation, as the effect of new functionality can be predicted by the logic maps and some testing can be automated.

**There is a comprehensive
user guide at:-
<http://www.ukneqasbtlp.org>**

**You can subscribe at any time
at:-
<http://tact.ukneqasbtlp.org.uk>**

The new financial year will see more features introduced, including selecting plasma components, a group-check sample, crossmatching, and abbreviated blood grouping.

If you would like the fees for TACT membership to be added to your BTLP re-registration fees, the re-registration website has a field for you to enter how many staff TACT memberships and how many managerial memberships you would like for the next financial year. For the system to work fully, you will need browser version of at least IEv11, Google Chrome v28 or Firefox v22. The minimum screen resolution to achieve optimal screen display is 1024 x 768, to allow all of the user interface elements to be visible at once. If you have any questions, contact UK NEQAS BTLP on 01923 217933, email tactsupport@ukneqasbtlp.org.uk

There will be regular updates, announcements and requests for feedback on TACT by email and on our Facebook page and Twitter feed, so please make sure you 'like' and follow!

www.facebook.com/btlp.tact



Twitter: @btlp_tact



Scheme committees and meetings

BTLP Steering Committee

The UK NEQAS Steering Committee for BTLP is a professional group that advises the schemes, and operates according to guidelines and terms of reference produced by the UK NEQAS organisation. The composition of this committee reflects the different professional groups and national organisations involved in delivering blood transfusion services to patients in the UK.

Members serve for 3 years and travel expenses are reimbursed by the UK NEQAS organisation. The Committee meets 3 times a year usually in London, and the committee helps to plan and organise the annual participants' meeting.

The Steering Committee has an overview of all the BTLP schemes and pilot schemes, but the main focus is on the PTT scheme as the other schemes and pilots have scientific advisory groups. Issues such as supply of material for EQA, the relevance and design of the schemes in the context of new national initiatives / guidelines are covered, and proposed new developments are reviewed. Changes in local practice that committee members may be aware of are discussed, and the committee advises the scheme on issues raised by participants.

Scientific Advisory Groups

Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs) are in place to monitor and advise the other BTLP schemes. There are three SAGs overseeing FMH, ABOT / ANT and RCG / ERP, and all report to the BTLP Steering Committee, so if you have expertise and a special interest in any of these areas...

Getting involved....

We really appreciate the work of our committee members, and it is a great way to get involved, so if you are interested in joining the Steering Committee or SAGs please contact either Jenny White (Scheme Manager) or Megan Rowley (Scheme Director) to discuss informally.

If you do decide to apply we'll need a CV, a supporting letter from a professional referee and a supporting statement from the employer agreeing to release the applicant to attend meetings.

Replacement of Steering Committee and SAG members is a continuous but informal process and a vacancy that matches the expertise, professional group and UK region may not be immediately available, but we will keep all applications on record.

Any questions?

Please contact us if you have any questions on the BTLP schemes or any suggestions for improvement
btlp@ukneqas.org.uk

Annual Meetings 2018 and 2019

The 2018 meeting was held at the National Motorcycle Museum in November and attended by 300 delegates.

The five sessions were based on current hot topics and requests from previous attendees: IT and networking across sites, Blood supply and demand, Testing in pregnancy – balancing the risks, Auto-immune haemolytic anaemia – providing effective transfusion support, as well as the usual UK NEQAS updates.

A meeting report will be appearing in the next issue (131) of BBTS Bloodlines in the Spring.

The presentations from the 2018 meeting are available on our website <https://www.ukneqash.org/documents.php>

Date for the diary....

We will be holding an annual meeting with the BBTS BBT SIG in the West Midlands again in 2019; this time at the NEC Birmingham on 26 November - preliminary programme to follow.



UK laboratories can register one or two delegates at a discounted rate as part of the UK NEQAS subscription for BTLP and the fees will be added to the annual invoice for EQA subscription. However, please note that if you take up this option but are unable to send any delegates we regret that we will be unable to offer a refund once the full price has been set and the BBTS website is open for registration in July 2019.

We realise that not everyone has the opportunity to attend the meeting due to cost and work pressures, and if you would like us to take part in a local 'technical discussion group' meeting to give a presentation or just be there to answer questions related to the BTLP EQA schemes and issues highlighted by the exercises, please contact us and we will do our best to be there.

2019 sees the UK NEQAS organisation celebrating 50 years as leaders in the provision of EQA worldwide, and to mark the occasion UK NEQAS is organising a multi-disciplinary meeting in Ireland on 5th November.