

Terms and Conditions of Scheme Participation

1. Registration

Participation in the UKNEQAS Schemes for General Haematology and Blood Transfusion Laboratory Practice may begin at any time during the year with pro rata charges being made. Subscription charges include postage within the UK although additional carriage will be charged by arrangement where applicable and for laboratories outside of the UK.

Participation will commence following the return of completed registration documents, and for UK laboratories, a participation number will be issued on completion of registration. If participant's finance department require a purchase order to be stated on the invoice document, a purchase order number must be forwarded to UK Neqas. The Scheme reserves 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.

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

Certificates of registration will be issued upon request.

Requests for changes in participation and test methodology should be notified to the Scheme in writing as required.

2. Payment

Participation in the above schemes is deemed to be continuous for each NHS financial year (1st April to 31st March). Cancellation is required in writing and subscription fees will only be refunded pro rata if the participation period is less than six months. Failure to pay the subscription charge will result in suspension of registration, although access to previous results entered via the Scheme website will be available. Subsequent re-instatement will incur a £50.00 fee. Any amendments made to invoices after they have been processed will also incur a £50.00 administration fee.

3. Data Security

The Scheme operates a website data entry facility. Once received, the security of identity codes (IDs) and passwords issued by the Scheme to individuals by email is the responsibility of the participating laboratory. It is also the responsibility of the participating laboratory to inform the Scheme, in writing, of changes in staff with authorised access. The Scheme does not take responsibility for the misuse of confidential results.

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.

UK NEQAS performance related issues will only be discussed by e-mail if instigated by the participant.

Email addresses may also be used for contacting participants on national pathology or blood transfusion related matters and questionnaires. If you do not wish for your e-mail address to be used for these purposes, please uncheck the opt-in box on the registration form.

Contact details supplied to the scheme may be passed onto other registered participants for the purposes of sharing information relating to the use of techniques or equipment. If you do not wish this data to be shared with other registered participants, please uncheck the opt-in box on the registration form.

4. Return of results

The Scheme will despatch the exercise material 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/Handbook, 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 service.

Unless otherwise agreed by the Scheme, participants who fail to return results or return results after the distribution closing date will incur a penalty. Late results will only be analysed where they have been tested before or on the closing date, unless agreed otherwise, and where received before the reports have been distributed.

The Scheme will contact the Head of Department of any laboratory with persistent non-return or late return of results, in writing. Participating laboratories should respond in writing within one month of receipt of the non-return/late letter.

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

In registering for participation in UK NEQAS, a UK participant laboratory providing a direct or indirect clinical service agrees to abide by/uphold the conditions of EQA scheme participation of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Quality Assurance. 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.

The Scheme Organiser will only identify laboratories to the Chair and members of the appropriate National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel when there are unresolved performance concerns. In this event we will inform you of our intent to do so.