



# Glossary of EQA terms

<b>Title</b>	Glossary of EQA terms
<b>Policy number</b>	WS20202
<b>Authors</b>	EQA Quality Improvement Workstream 2 Lead author: Dr Barbara De la Salle Co-authors: Dr Ros Hastings, Andrew Dodson, Dina Patel, Finlay MacKenzie and Liam Whitby
<b>Approved by</b>	EQA Oversight Board
<b>Issued date</b>	September 2023
<b>Review date</b>	September 2028



# 1. Introduction and purpose

To provide an overarching guidance document that defines the terms used in Workstreams 1 and 2.

## 2. Glossary

**Analyte:** a substance whose chemical constituents are being identified and measured.

Synonyms: object of analysis, analytical sample, substance, agent, measurand.

**Analytical:** examination of a substance, usually a patient-derived sample using a scientific method.

**Escalated error:** that which breaches the external quality assessment (EQA) provider's acceptable performance criteria and is therefore required to be reported to the oversight body. Synonyms: reportable error, clinically significant error, critical error, serious adverse event, hazardous performance.

**External quality assessment (EQA):** inspection of a test result by a body outside the institute conducting the test, for the purposes of ascertaining its quality and the quality of the underlying test procedure. Synonym: proficiency testing.

**External quality assurance:** the framework for the governance and oversight of the standards and performance of all EQA schemes regardless of provider.

**Method:** an instrument/analyser/technology/series of reagents/calibrators/algorithm software that together produce a 'test result'.

**National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel (NQAAP):** professional body recognised to have responsibility for ensuring consistent and uniform standards among reporting EQA schemes.

**Non-escalated error:** an error deemed to be actionable by the EQA provider but is not escalated to the relevant oversight body in isolation. Multiple or recurrent non-escalated errors may breach the agreed performance criteria and be escalated as persistent poor



performance, as indicative of systematic failure. Synonyms: event, non-reportable, unsatisfactory performance, poor performance.

**Opportunity to fail (OtF):** the smallest unit of participation, for example, a single analyte, for which a participant is performance assessed.

**Oversight body:** professional body recognised to have responsibility for ensuring consistent and uniform standards among reporting EQA schemes.

**Participant:** the smallest or individual unit that is performance assessed. This may be a laboratory, a testing site, a method or an analyser, depending on the scheme or programme design.

**Patient safety event (PSE):** an unintended or unexpected incident which could have, or did, lead to harm for one or more patients receiving healthcare. In EQA, a PSE is always an escalated error. Synonyms: reportable error, clinically significant error, critical error, hazardous performance.

**Persistent poor performance (PPP):** poor performance at a level agreed to require escalation to the oversight body. Synonym: persistent unsatisfactory performance (PUP).

**Post-analytical:** those steps or procedures applied after the act of analysis of a patient sample.

**Pre-analytical:** those steps or procedures applied before the act of analysis of a patient sample.

**Qualitative:** a result or description derived as a subjective view or opinion. Synonyms: non-parametric, categorical, ordinal.

**Quantitative:** having the property of being able to ascribe a numerical value. Synonyms: calculable, parametric, quantifiable.

**Quality assessment:** the collection and analysis of data through which the degree of conformity to predetermined standards and criteria is established and monitored. See extension in EQA, above.



**Quality assurance:** a continuous process for the identification and implementation of best practice (in laboratory medicine) and the determination of effective governance and sharing of information in relation to this.

**Quality Assurance in Pathology Committee (QAPC):** a multidisciplinary group accountable to the Royal College of Pathologists for the oversight of performance in EQA schemes and monitoring of the EQA performance of clinical laboratories in the UK.

**SBAR report:** the Situation Background Assessment Recommendation (SBAR) technique for communication between members of a team.

**Scheme:** an organised and established programme conducting scheduled EQA surveys. Synonym: programme.

**Scheme hopping:** where a laboratory purposefully changes EQA provider with the intention of avoiding or delaying a persistent poor performance designation.

**Scheme organiser:** person responsible for the design, delivery and direction of an EQA scheme. Synonyms: programme organiser, programme director, scheme director.

**Stakeholder:** any individual or group of individuals who are responsible for provision or use of EQA services. These include EQA oversight bodies, EQA providers and participating laboratories.

**Survey:** a single EQA round, in a single module or programme, which presents an opportunity, or in cases where multiple analytes are examined, multiple opportunities to fail. Synonyms: exercise, cycle, distribution.

