The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure

NATIONAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT ADVISORY PANEL (NQAAP)
Immunology

Terms of Reference

1. **Remit**

The Immunology NQAAP is responsible for monitoring participant performance in UK External Quality Assessment schemes in all National External Quality Assessment Schemes in Immunology and Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (IH&I).

This remit is based on the joint working group terms of reference and conditions of participation for EQA Schemes and should be read in conjunction with those documents. The IH&I panel fulfils its remit by:-

The NQAAP is responsible for promoting, coordinating and protecting high professional standards in EQA and encouraging the development of clinically relevant and appropriate EQA schemes.

The panel fulfils its remit by:-

(i) Reviewing and approving all UK EQA Schemes relating to the practice of IH&I. This will include agreed criteria for performance standards and the management of persistent substandard performance in these schemes.

(ii) Receiving information on persistently poorly performing laboratories from EQA Scheme organisers (within two weeks of a laboratory being identified as a persistent poor performer) and managing the referrals within an appropriate time scale.

(iii) Agreeing with scheme organisers' mechanisms for resolution of persistent poor performance. Generally the scheme organiser will make contact with the laboratory in accordance with the scheme standard operating procedure and inform the Chair of the panel with the proposed remedial action to be taken including the timescale. If this does not lead to a resolution the Chair of the panel will offer advice to the laboratory and, if appropriate, will arrange a visit to the laboratory by a panel member or an agreed expert. If persistent poor performance remains unresolved the panel Chair will submit a report to the Chair of the Joint Working Group for Quality Assessment in Pathology

(iv) Receiving and resolving complaints from scheme participants where these have not been resolved by the scheme organisers or steering committees.

(v) Producing an Annual report of its activities for the Royal College of Pathologists and the Joint Working Group on Quality Assessment in Pathology.

2. Accountability

The panel is accountable to the Joint Working Group for Quality Assessment in Pathology, which in turn is accountable to the Royal College of Pathologists through the Professional Standards Unit.

3. Membership

The membership comprises: -

- A Chair appointed by the Royal College of Pathologists
- A nominee of the British Society for Immunology (BSI)
- A nominee of the Association of Clinical Pathologists (ACP)
- A nominee of the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)
- Representatives from the relevant NEQAS committee

Members are required to attend or contribute via email.
One of the nominated members of the panel will be designated as Deputy Chair.

All members normally serve a three-year term of office and are eligible for one further term (with the exception of the Chair and Deputy Chair who may serve a maximum of three terms on the panel).

4. Operation

The panel will convene an annual meeting to receive and discuss reports from EQA schemes. Where it is necessary this will be bi-annual. Reports will be submitted bi-annually and sooner in the event of persistent poor performance. This is normally at a location to be arranged by the panel Chair. At the Chair's discretion it is possible to hold a virtual meeting. The Chair will produce written Minutes of these meetings, which will be distributed to panel members and scheme organisers.

Meetings of the panel will be quorate when more than 30% of the nominated members are present.

The panel will produce an annual report, which will be submitted to the Royal College of Pathologists.

It is expected that a member of the Panel should be present at EQA Scheme Provider Steering Group meetings, at least annually.

Expenses of the panel will be claimed from the Royal College of Pathologists (from a fund created by a levy on EQA providers).