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Re-registration 2022/23

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 webpages 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 the address provided matches the delivery address. 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). Please ensure you inactivate contacts who no longer work for your organisation, otherwise they may still be able enter data and access your reports, especially as emails are now re-used at other NHS trusts.

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 2022/23 schedule, but all other contact detail changes will take effect immediately.

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, DAT, Red Cell Genotyping, and the pilot schemes for Extended Red Cell Phenotyping and Antenatal Titration, and also for TACT. This will give you a single quote and a single invoice. Refer to page 4 for further information regarding annual meeting pre-paid places.

There has been a small increase to the prices (around 4%) for 2022/23 for the full schemes to cover inflation and increasing overheads. The DAT scheme has seen a larger price increase which reflects an increase in the cost of the material we use to produce the samples.

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 587 111 or email using btlpadmin@ukneqas.org.uk.

Update on BTLP Location

In November 2021, together with UK NEQAS Haematology, we moved location from Watford General Hospital to a local Business Park in Watford. This was part of redevelopment of the Watford General site allowing our host Trust, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, to build a new hospital.



Our new site



BTLP office



UK NEQAS laboratory

Update on BTLP Schemes

UK NEQAS BTLP remains ISO/IEC 17043:2010 accredited for PTT, FMH, and ABOT schemes. In July 2021 the DAT scheme was accredited by UKAS. We had a successful virtual UKAS assessment in February 2021 with no findings.

Pre-transfusion Testing (PTT)

2021 saw no major changes to the PTT schemes.

We sent out a practice questionnaire for UK and ROI participants in October 2021; this will be reported in 2022.

Fetomaternal Haemorrhage (FMH)

2021 saw a return to normal functioning of the FMH schemes, with no further exercises needing distribution of an additional sample after March. We are issuing an FMH practice questionnaire in January and February 2022

ABO Titration (ABOT)

The ABOT Scheme continues to provide monitoring of ABO titration as part of supporting ABO incompatible renal transplants. The scheme is also used by other laboratories supporting other ABO mismatched transplant programmes (liver, haemopoietic stem cell transplants etc).

Direct Antiglobulin Test (DAT)

The DAT scheme exercises continue to be issued with the four PTT 'R' exercises.

Due to unprecedented demand for the DAT scheme, in April 2021 we separated the DAT into two parallel running schemes one for UK participants and one for non-UK participants, with exercises suffixed U and N respectively. This has allowed the number of DAT participants to rise to >400 as previously all participants received the same material and 400 was the maximum number of samples which could be made from each pool of material.

Red Cell Genotyping (RCG)

The RCG 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.

Point of Care Testing - D typing

UK NEQAS BTLTP runs a D typing scheme for users performing D typing in non-laboratory areas where the results are used to determine whether anti-D prophylaxis Ig is indicated. There are four exercises per year and each exercise includes three whole blood samples for D typing. For more information please contact the scheme.

BTLTP Pilot Schemes

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.

In 2022 we will be seeking approval from the National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel for Haematology for a proposed scoring system with a view to making it a full scheme prior to the 2023/24 cycle of exercises.

<https://www.ukneqasbtlp.org/btlp.php>

Antenatal Antibody Titration (ANT)

There are 4 exercises per year, distributed with 4 of the 6 PTT 'E' exercises. At least 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.

<https://www.ukneqasbtlp.org/btlp.php>

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.

Further developments originally scheduled for introduction in 2020 including introduction of plasma components, a group-check sample, crossmatching, and abbreviated blood grouping, had to be postponed as a result of the COVID pandemic. These should become available in 2022.

If you would like the fees for TACT membership to be added to your BTLTP 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.

There are 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!

Comprehensive user guide at:-
<http://www.ukneqasbtlp.org>

Subscribe at any time at:-
<http://tact.ukneqasbtlp.org.uk>

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 three years, and travel expenses are reimbursed by the UK NEQAS organisation where applicable. The Committee meets three times a year and helps to plan and organise the Annual Participants' Meeting. In 2021 all meetings were and continue to be held virtually via Zoom.

The Steering Committee has an overview of all the BTLP schemes and pilot schemes, but the main focus is on the PTT, DAT and ERP schemes, 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, Titration (ABOT / ANT) and RCG, 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 Richard Haggas (Scheme Director) or Katy Veale (Operational Manager) 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.

Annual Meetings 2021 and 2022

The 2021 meeting due held at the NEC in November was postponed to November 2022 following the COVID pandemic.

Following the successful webinar held in November 2020, we are planning to deliver two one-hour webinars in February and March 2022.

Date for the diary....

We are intending to hold an annual meeting with the BBTS Blood Bank Technology SIG in the West Midlands at the NEC Birmingham on 24 November - preliminary programme to follow.



UK laboratories that registered for the 2020 meeting will have their registrations transferred to the 2022 meeting. Those not currently registered will have the opportunity to register at reregistration or when the BBTS website is open for registration in July 2022.

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 or join you virtually depending on the circumstances.