

## **Annual Report for the NQAAP for Histopathology incorporating the Steering Committee for Interpretive EQA**

The past year has seen 2 meetings of the committee. We continue to consider annual reports from many individual EQA schemes and we review new and changing standard operating protocols of those schemes. We have overview of all the interpretive schemes, in which participants are individual histopathologists or cytologists. A further area of responsibility is the Cellular Pathology Techniques and the Immunocytochemistry schemes in which the participants are laboratories.

One of the pressing concerns for the committee has been the impending obsolescence of the computer software, originally written by Professor Peter Furness over 15 years ago. Most schemes use this software, and with each new upgrade of the Windows software it has become apparent that the life of the program is not indefinite. Thus we were heartened by the rapid progress of development of a new, web based, software programme by the urology EQA scheme. This has been demonstrated to the committee and there is now the prospect of its use by other schemes.

The committee has investigated 3 episodes of poor performance of individual histologists or cytopathologists. We have clarified with schemes the ways in which persistent poor performance is identified. We have also clarified with schemes the funding of EQA participation and its role in study leave.

A recent issue has been the approach to participants who, whilst not performing poorly as defined by an EQA scheme, may still not be providing an optimal service to patients. This has been highlighted by a laboratory participating in the immunocytochemistry scheme, but is relevant the interpretative schemes as well. The committee is thus in the process of auditing the frequency of episodes of poor performance in the various EQA schemes.

Dr. N. Mapstone 28/1/13