



**NATIONAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT ADVISORY PANEL (NQAAP)
Cellular Pathology**

Terms of Reference

1. Remit

The Cellular Pathology NQAAP is responsible for monitoring participant performance in interpretative and technical External Quality Assessment schemes in Cellular Pathology. This remit is based on the Joint Working Group for Quality Assessment in Pathology terms of reference and conditions of participation for EQA Schemes and should be read in conjunction with those documents.

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

The panel fulfils its remit by:

- (i) Reviewing and approving all interpretive EQA Schemes in Cellular Pathology. This will include agreeing criteria for performance standards and the management of persistent substandard performance in these schemes
- (ii) Reviewing and approving all technical EQA Schemes in Cellular Pathology. This will include agreeing criteria for performance standards and the management of persistent substandard performance in these schemes
- (iii) Receiving information on persistently poorly performing laboratories in technical EQA schemes from EQA Scheme organisers (within two weeks of a laboratory being identified as a persistently poor performer)
- (iv) Receiving information on persistently poorly performing individuals in interpretive EQA schemes from EQA Scheme organisers (within two weeks of the individual being identified as a persistently poor performer) and managing the referrals within an appropriate time scale.
- (v) 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 / individual 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
- (vi) Receiving and resolving complaints from scheme participants where these have not been resolved by the scheme organisers or steering committees
- (vii) Holding an annual plenary session to promote the development of interpretative cellular pathology EQA Schemes. All Interpretative EQA Scheme Organisers will be invited to this session.
- (viii) Producing an annual report of its activities for the Royal College of Pathologists and the Joint Working Group for 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, Professional Performance Panel.

3. Membership

The membership comprises:

- a chair appointed by the Royal College of Pathologists
 - a nominee of the British Society for Clinical Cytology
 - a nominee of the Association of Clinical Pathologists
 - a nominee of the British Division of the International Academy of Pathology
 - a nominee of the Pathological Society
 - a nominee of the Institute of Biomedical Science
 - a representative of Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA).
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- In addition, one specialist interpretative EQA scheme organiser and one general cellular pathology interpretative EQA scheme organiser who will be identified by the Panel.

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 meets twice yearly, usually in May and November. Minutes of the meetings are produced and distributed to panel members.

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

Annual reports from all schemes are reviewed.

The Panel produces an annual report which is submitted to the Royal College of Pathologists.

Expenses of the Panel are claimed from the Royal College of Pathologists (from a fund created by a levy on EQA providers).