Scotland and Northern Ireland EQA Scheme in General Histopathology

EQAO03

OBTAINING AND SELECTING CASE MATERIAL AND INITIATING A CIRCULATION

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Review and Amendment History			
Date Reviewed / Amended	**Version Replaces**	**Pages Changed**	**Details of review/Amendment**
Feb 2021	3.4	2 Pages (Front & 4)	Updated: location of copies (front pg), scheme secretary email details and quality manager details (pg4)

Obtaining Case Material

Cases for circulation in the EQA Scheme are provided by Scheme participants in rotation as they become members of the Management Committee. While a member of the Management Committee, a Scheme participant, in order to maintain credible participation in the relevant circulations, will have his/her diagnosis submitted for the assessment slides carried forward as answers to the final selected slide circulation. The Chairman and Scheme Administrator must also participate in the Scheme on these terms.

The cases are representative of the routine general histopathology workload and do not include bizarre or controversial cases. There is an audit trail to identify the cases should this be required at a later date. **Case material must be prepared in a laboratory accredited to ISO 15189.** The laboratory must also have been participating satisfactorily in an approved technical EQA Scheme in Cellular Pathology Technique over the last 12 months, i.e. no poor performance issues.

The new management team member will be asked to return a completed consent form included in **EQA Letter 13**. Evidence will be recorded on **EQA Form 25**. Failure to provide a statement in support of these requirements by the new member will be followed up by the scheme secretary within 4 weeks. The four cases of special educational interest are identified separately.

All relevant clinical information which was available at the time the original report was dictated is made available to the EQA participants. The contributing pathologist is asked to check that the material submitted is of adequate quality and that all slides contain the diagnostic features. A single H and E stained section should be representative of the lesion and permit diagnosis. A copy of the instructions to the contributing pathologists, including the criteria for slide preparation is appended to this document.

Two members of the Management Committee each provide ten cases for assessment, and send the slides with relevant clinical information, including departmental reference number, to the Scheme Secretary. Slides are sent both to and from the Secretary in suitably protective packaging **and by recorded delivery**. A sufficient number of each slide (currently 30) is sent to cover the numbers that will be required if the slide is selected for circulation to participants.

The Scheme Secretary sends one copy of each of the 20 cases to all current consultant pathologist members of the Management Committee. Double checking of this procedure should take place whenever possible. These slides are then assessed by the entire Committee prior to selection of the definitive set of ten cases for a circulation, by agreement at the relevant Management Committee Meeting.

Initiating a Circulation

Participating centres are grouped into clusters and sufficient slides have been provided by the Committee members in order to provide one set for most clusters, (but also more than one set for larger clusters, and one set for clusters of two or three smaller centres).

Four Special Educational cases, which are not used for scoring, are identified separately by two further Management Committee members and a sufficient number of sets sent to the Scheme Secretary.

The Quality Manager will review the slides prior to dispatch and will check for quality of staining and microtomy. This will be recorded as an Examination audit.

The Scheme Secretary arranges for labelling of the 10 selected slides and the special educational slides. Slides are labelled clearly with their case identifying letter or number, the circulation number and the Cluster Number. These labels are produced by specific software situated in the Histology Lab, ref-NLHL 019.

The Scheme Secretary also creates a response sheet, with case histories and a space for inserting a diagnosis for both the 10 assessable slides and the four special educational slides. Again double checking of these procedures should take place whenever possible.

The Scheme Secretary posts the slides (boxed and bubble wrapped) to each cluster recorded delivery and records the Royal Mail reference number on the form available at:

G:\PATHDATA\EQApathscheme\EQA Scheme forms\Circulation Recorded delivery Slips.

The cluster contacts are notified of dispatch by e-mail with an attached letter – **EQA Letter 16** and asked to notify the scheme secretary of their safe receipt. All participants are also e-mailed to notify of the dispatch of slides, with the following attachments:

- A covering letter from the Scheme Chairman providing the closing date for receipt of responses – **EQA Letter 06**.
- The blank test circulation and special education pro-formas with slide details (Available at: G:\PATHDATA\EQApathscheme\EQA Scheme forms).

A distribution list of participants in the relevant department is attached to each cluster box and participants are asked to initial the list once they have looked at the slides, and pass on to the next participant.

The date of dispatch of material is logged in the Scheme Secretary's file.

The Scheme Secretary should be contacted if slides are damaged in transit. Normally slides will be dispatched to each centre to allow a period of about 12 weeks between receipt of the circulation and the final date for submission of response forms.

Prior to circulation deadline date all participants are given two reminders of this via email/phone calls. These reminders are recorded by the Scheme Secretary. Participants can submit their responses via post/fax or email. Slides should be retained at each centre to allow review for the purpose of revision for a period of up to one month after the appropriate Association of Clinical Pathologists Meeting prior to return to Scheme Secretary.

Guidance on the Provision of Cases for EQA Assessment

1. A definite diagnosis should be possible on the basis of a single H&E section and the accompanying information submitted on the request form.

2. Cases in which only a differential diagnosis can be offered should not in general be used.

3. Cases submitted should not be entirely of the simple banal type nor should they be abstruse rarities for use in Slide Clubs.

4. Cases of conditions in which there is evidence-based literature showing poor inter-observer agreement e.g. CIN 1, should not be used.

5. The salient diagnostic features must be present in a well stained H&E section, no more than 4 microns thick, submitted for assessment and possible EQA circulation. The salient features must be present in all 30 slides of each case.

6. All departmental guidelines and ethical considerations must be met before submission of the case.

7. Please supply 30 copies of each of your 10 slides, ideally marked 1-30 in order of cutting, along with case histories, histopathological diagnoses and Laboratory Numbers for each case. These should be sent to the EQA Office by **Registered Mail**.

8. A copy of the case presentations of the cases chosen for the next circulation should be sent to the Scheme Secretary or the Scheme Quality Manager *as PowerPoint* presentations, as soon as they are available, to allow upload to the EQA website as soon as possible after the participants meeting.

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