

UK NEQAS for Leucocyte Immunophenotyping Policy for Appeals

Policy Statement

To outline how UK NEQAS LI will identify, process and investigate appeals

This document applies to the following staff groups

Be aware of – All staff

Work to- All staff

Scope

The aims of the policy are to ensure that all appeals are captured, dealt with promptly and outline the route taken for resolution. The UKNEQAS LI shall be responsible for all decisions during the process for handling appeals

Key definitions

Appeal: If a laboratory disagrees with their performance score on a trial, then they have the right to appeal.

Note: 'Disagrees' refers to how the scoring systems function/s is/are applied and/or how the exercise operates.

Policy Specifics

Note: An appeal is not possible with respect to a nil return or of participant making a clerical error on their return.

All appeals must be submitted within three weeks of the date of issue shown on the individual participant report issued by UK NEQAS LI. For the avoidance of doubt the date of issue is shown on the report. Any appeal made must include any evidence and documentation that the participant feels supports reason for the appeal. Any appeal made without any supporting evidence may be rejected.

Even if an appeal does not fit the criteria for an appeal, it can still be recorded in the iPassport non-compliance module by selecting 'Appeal – does not fit criteria' as it may still warrant an investigation and improvement actions.

It is essential that an appeal is lodged in writing and that the participant states in their appeal communication:

1. That they wish to appeal
2. Their participant number
3. The programme name and trial number of the report they wish to appeal against

UKNEQASLI shall be responsible for gathering all necessary information to determine whether the appeal is valid. Participants may be contacted for further information and evidence to substantiate the appeal prior to investigation if not included in the initial communication.

Failure to supply all this information will result in the appeal being delayed until it is provided. Please note: All appeals are logged, and the action taken recorded may be used in future for audit.

Following the submission of an appeal, the participant will be contacted by the Quality Manager within 3 working days to acknowledge the appeal has been received and that further contact will be made by UK NEQAS LI management within 2 months with an outcome.

The decision on the appeal shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, persons not involved in the decision that is the subject of the appeal in question and Investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions

The appeal and all associated documentation will then be forwarded to the Chair of the UK NEQAS LI Steering Committee and/or designated representatives, such as the specialist advisory group Chair.

The Chair of the UK NEQAS LI Steering Committee (and/or designated representatives) will review any appeals and will make a final decision on the appeal. This process can take up to two months. Following the appeal decision, the Director or designated representative will write directly to the participant concerned with details of the appeal outcome.

Please note:

1. A limit of one appeal per participant per issue is applied and repeated appeals on the same issue from the same participant will only be accepted if the Director feels that sufficient extra information has been provided as to likely alter the outcome of the appeal process. If it is felt that the outcome would be unchanged the Director may reject the repeat appeal without further consultation
2. A repeat appeal based on dissatisfaction with the initial findings will not be accepted or pursued.
3. Where an appeal is made regarding classification as a persistent unsatisfactory performer (PUP) this does not exclude referral of the laboratory (UK participants only) to the relevant National Quality Assessment Advisory Panel (NQAAP) based on the PUP classification under appeal or any episodes of unsatisfactory performance in any other programme

N.B. This document is paired with (Administration 10, Administration 49507 and Quality Management 133) and should be reviewed simultaneously with those documents by the same UK NEQAS LI staff member.