The European Molecular Genetics Quality Network

UKAS Accredited Proficiency Testing Provider

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EMQN Statutes

1. The European Molecular Genetics Quality Network (EMQN) is a scientific non-profit organization promoting professional quality in molecular genetic testing and appropriate examination and result interpretation with emphasis on appropriate clinical applicability of the results. This is done via provision of external quality assessment (EQA) and establishing, harmonizing and disseminating best practice.

2. The aims of EMQN are:

   - To help to measure, improve and maintain the standards of clinical diagnostic molecular testing in the fields of genetics and pathology.
   - To develop and promote best practice through organization of meetings and publication of guidelines.
   - To be a global authority in quality assessment and quality assurance.
   - To undertake and promote educational activities in pursuance of these aims.
   - To design and provide the best possible quality assessment materials and data management.
   - To design and provide quality assessment reports that are timely and valid.
   - To provide professional support and consultation in pursuance of these aims.
   - To develop new EQA schemes as required.
   - To maintain United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation to the ISO170431 standard.
   - To strive for continual improvement of our own services and quality system.

3. EMQN was established as an independent organization in 1998 with grant funding from the European Commission (Framework 4: Standards, Measurement and Testing Programme[2]). The organization is based within the Manchester Centre for Genomic Medicine, St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, and The United Kingdom. Our Host organization is Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) and the legal entity is Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust operating the European Molecular Genetics Quality Network (EMQN).

4. EMQN is managed by a Board constituted by twelve or more senior scientists[3] from the fields of genetics and pathology, and an additional representative from one of the founding organizations (UK NEQAS for Molecular Genetics). The Board makes decisions by majority concerning all activities of EMQN, including working principles, projects, economy, and replacement of its members. The Board may by consensus change the present statutes and may abolish the organization according to United Kingdom laws.

5. The Board appoints a chairman from amongst its members, along with new Board Members. None of the Board members receives a financial reward for their work with EMQN. The Board also appoints a salaried Operational Director who is responsible to the Board. Appointments can be denounced by Board members with twelve months' notice. The Operational Director role requires a minimum of three months' notice.

6. The EMQN is administered from an operations centre based in its host organization, in which the Operational Director is employed, along with a team of scientists and administrative staff under his or her direction. The operations centre takes care of all practical handling of EQA materials, distribution and scheme management. The Operational Director is responsible for all economic dispositions according to the decisions of the Board. All

[1] The international standard for EQA providers
[2] Contract number SMT4-CT98-7515
[3] From different countries

payments go through an account established at the host organization. The chartered accountants of the hospital are accountants of EMQN. EMQN employs external auditors to oversee the accounts.

7. The costs of EMQN's activities are covered by contributions from and fees paid by the participating laboratories. All income must be used for the work of EMQN. The practice and economic management of EMQN is separated from the other business and activities of the host organization.

8. Laboratories undertaking molecular testing in the fields of genetics and pathology are all invited and eligible to participate. There are no restrictions on participation within the defined EQA scheme capacity (except for pilot schemes). Registration to participate is made using our website (www.emqn.org).

9. EMQN is independent of commercial concerns. Sponsors have no influence on working methods, results or conclusions.

10. The work of EMQN is based on the provision of fully interpretative external quality assessment schemes which include the molecular characterization of clinical samples and artificial reference materials. The format is dependent on the scheme and materials distributed include DNA (extracted from lymphoblastoid cell lines or whole blood), as well as formalin fixed paraffin embedded (FFPE) samples (real tissue and/or lymphoblastoid cell lines), and cell free DNAs in plasma. All clinical material used for the work of EMQN is anonymised and comes from different laboratories, reference material providers, or clinical cell bank repositories.

11. Most schemes also include an assessment of the biological and clinical interpretation of the analytical test result. The assessment of participant laboratory results is performed by teams of assessors made up from professional scientists with recognized expertise in the disease being assessed. All results are independently reviewed by two or more assessment team members. All schemes provide a comprehensive report summarizing the results of the scheme which can be used by participant laboratories to help educate their staff and drive continual quality improvement. Laboratory confidentiality is maintained at all times.

CROSS REFERENCES

- DOC982 Procedures for the election, appointment and removal of Board members
- DOC1593 Procedure for the election of the EMQN Chair and Vice-Chair person.
- DOC1594 EMQN Board Governance Disclosures form
- DOC1597 Job description for EMQN Chairperson
- DOC2001 EMQN Participant's manual
- DOC2645 Job description for EMQN Vice-Chairperson
- DOC2648 EMQN Statement of Fiduciary Responsibility