

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q: How do I know when to expect the survey material?

A: You should have received a scheme leaflet that contains a schedule at registration or re-registration. A schedule can also be found on the website: <https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/reproductive-medicine/ukneqasreproductive-science/>

Q: What do I do if my specimens don't arrive when expected?

A: If they haven't arrived within 5 working days (UK Labs) after the published distribution date, you should contact the Scheme for advice. For overseas participants it is difficult to predict how long it will take to arrive by post. If overseas labs have difficulties it may be worth considering using a courier service.

Q: What do I do if I miss the closing date?

A: Unfortunately we are unable to accept late results. Please email the scheme at repscience@ukneqas.org.uk giving an explanation as to why the materials were not processed in time (please quote your UK NEQAS ID number).

Q: What do I do if the sample quality is unsatisfactory or if I break the samples?

A: Contact the Scheme on repscience@ukneqas.org.uk or +44 (0) 161 276 6437 to request a repeat sample. You will need to give for your ID number and the reason for your request.

Q: What do I do if I cannot find or have forgotten my UK NEQAS ID or password?

A: Email the Scheme at repscience@ukneqas.org.uk. If you are not the main contact, your email request will need to be copied to the main contact, in order for us to release an ID or password.

Q: What do I do if I cannot find or have forgotten my gamete-expert.com password?

A: Go to the <http://gamete-expert.com/morphology/login-password-forgotten.html> and enter your email address. If you do not receive contact within 24 hours email repscience@ukneqas.org.uk.

Q: Can I change my password details?

A: You are supplied with a randomly generated password; you may change this on request, however there are some restrictions, e.g. the password must be at least 7 characters long and contain a mixture of alpha and numeric characters.

Q: Other EQA schemes are available. Why should I participate in UK NEQAS?

A: UK NEQAS has over 50 years of experience in offering EQA schemes. Our Semen analysis and Embryology schemes are accredited by UKAS to ISO 17043 standards.

Q: The method/sub method I am using for concentration/morphology is not on the list on the 'results and reports' website. What do I do?

A: Contact us at repscience@ukneqas.org.uk and give us the details of the method. We can then update our lists.

Q: Why do we have two morphology schemes?

A: The 'practical' morphology scheme mimics the processing, analysing and reporting for morphology that you do in the laboratory. The interpretive morphology scheme compliments this by asking participants to assess the same images of sperm. Over time this should make morphology reporting more consistent.

Q: We do not report morphology, can we opt out of this analyte?

A: No. The WHO guidelines define Semen Analysis as including concentration, motility and morphology so it is an important part of the test. UK NEQAS cannot give an 'opt out'. If you do not return results you will become an unsatisfactory performer which you will have to justify to your institution and regulatory body (e.g. UKAS, HFEA)

Q: At what stage of the time lapse should I grade my blastocyst?

A: During the time lapse video the required Day and hours required for assessment will be displayed on screen.

Q: What support is available if results fall below expected values?

A: Scheme staff can offer advice on all aspects of the schemes. Please read the below section on troubleshooting and if you can't find an answer email repscience@ukneqas.org.uk or phone +44 (0) 161 276 6437 quoting your lab ID number.

Q: There is aggregation in my UK NEQAS semen sample, will it affect my results?

A: All UK NEQAS samples should be mixed on a vortex mixer for up to a minute before analysing. If aggregation persists it should be ignored and testing performed as normal. Ongoing studies show that it is an artefact and does not adversely affect results. Repeat sets are available if participants are concerned.

Performance troubleshooting:

Q: My performance in Semen concentration is unsatisfactory, what can I do?

A: First you need to establish if this is a one off event or an ongoing problem. To do this you need to look at your 'rolling time window' results. It would then be worth considering:

- Were unsatisfactory results due to non-analytical problems (e.g. non return of results, input error, dilution error)?
- Were the samples mixed thoroughly using a vortex mixer (recommended)?
- Were the samples stored at 2-8°C when not in use?
- Were the counting chambers calibrated recently (where applicable)?
- Were the dilution pipettes calibrated recently (where applicable)?
- Were positive displacement pipettes used (where applicable)?

If further assistance is required, contact repscience@ukneqas.org.uk quoting your UK NEQAS ID number.

Q: My performance in practical morphology is unsatisfactory, what can I do?

A: First you need to establish if this is a one off event or an ongoing problem. To do this you need to look at your 'rolling time window' results. It would then be worth considering:

- Were unsatisfactory results due to non-analytical problems (e.g. non return of results, input error, reporting of 'Abnormal' forms)?
- Were the samples mixed thoroughly using a vortex mixer (recommended)?
- Were the slides stained using a recognised staining method for morphology?
- Were the slides assessed using a recognised method (e.g. WHO fifth edition)?
- Did the microscope have an integral graticule for measuring sperm?
- Were 'interpretive morphology' results also unsatisfactory (this may pinpoint a problem in assessment)?

If further assistance required contact repscience@ukneqas.org.uk quoting your ID number

Q: My performance in Sperm motility is unsatisfactory, what can I do?

A: First you need to establish if this is a one off event or an ongoing problem. To do this you need to look at your 'rolling time window' results. It would then be worth considering:

- Were unsatisfactory results due to non-analytical problems (e.g. non return of results, input error)?
- Were videos assessed using WHO criteria?

If further assistance required contact repscience@ukneqas.org.uk quoting your ID number

Q: My performance in Interpretive morphology is unsatisfactory, what can I do?

A: First you need to establish if this is a one off event or an ongoing problem. To do this you need to look at your 'rolling time window' results. It would then be worth considering:

- Were unsatisfactory results due to non-analytical problems (e.g. non return of results, input error)?
- Were 'practical' morphology results also unsatisfactory (this may pinpoint a problem in assessment)?

If further assistance required contact repscience@ukneqas.org.uk quoting your ID number

Q: My performance in Embryology is unsatisfactory, what can I do?

A: First you need to establish if this is a one off event or an ongoing problem. To do this you need to look at your 'rolling time window' results. It would then be worth considering:

- Were unsatisfactory results due to non-analytical problems (e.g. non return of results, input error)?
- Were embryos assessed using the recognised UK NEQAS/ACE criteria (see appendix 3)?

If further assistance required contact repscience@ukneqas.org.uk quoting your ID number