

OLA provides definition and revised criteria for increased surveillance of participation and performance in PT/EQA

By Linda Crawford and Carol Turner

In November 2008, QMP-LS hosted three live Webinars to introduce and explain a new QView™ application for the monitoring of participation and performance in formal inter-laboratory comparison programs in addition to those operated by QMP-LS (see box).

The purpose of this increased surveillance is to monitor ongoing competence in accredited laboratories using formal inter-laboratory comparison (e.g. proficiency testing or external quality assessment) as an indicator. Much constructive feedback was received from the approximately 100 laboratories, which had staff members participate in the Webinars. Two key issues were identified:

1. A definition of formal inter-laboratory comparison (proficiency testing or external quality assessment) – including what sets it apart from external quality control programs – was needed. The following definition has been approved:

Inter-laboratory comparison programs (proficiency testing/external quality assessment) must provide challenges of undisclosed assay value or content, and also provide evaluation of the laboratory performance based on submitted results, e.g. provide comparison of results for like methods and different methods with a score and/or judgment of performance.

2. The proposed acceptance criteria for external programs needed revision. This revised acceptance criteria has been approved:

Formal inter-laboratory comparison programs shall provide a minimum of four sample challenges in a 12-month period. It is the responsibility of the laboratory director to ensure that the testing schedule adequately challenges test performance.

Webcast about new QView™ application for the monitoring of PT/EQA participation and performance

Log into QView™ with your username and password to view the Webcast at the following location:

General - QMP-LS – QMP-LS Webcasts – OLA External PT/EQA Data Entry



Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.

~ William A. Foster

Surveys BACT-0904 and BACT-0906-PP Cancelled

These surveys have been cancelled. NOTE: BACT-0904-CD will continue as planned. For more information, please contact Christine Fleming at 416-323-9540 ext. 238 or e-mail fleming@qmpls.org.

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Accredited laboratories are required to participate in PT or EQA for all tests included within accreditation. The applicable requirement is VII.9.1: "The laboratory shall participate in interlaboratory comparisons such as those organized by external quality assessment schemes for all tests included within accreditation. When a formal interlaboratory program is not available or feasible, see VII.10." Laboratories are expected to use the Web-based data entry system through QView™ to record participation and performance in formal interlaboratory comparison programs not operated by QMP-LS. This data will be reviewed during assessment visits and reviews of self-assessments. For more information on the Web-based data entry system available through QView™, see the box (on page 1) for information on how to access an informational Webcast.

This information is now available in the OLA Program Information on the QMP-LS Web site. Revised criteria for acceptable PT/EQA programs can be found on the OLA Web page (<http://www.qmpls.org/ola/Master%20-%20OLA%20Program%20Information.pdf>).

OLA participants provide positive feedback

By Julie Coffey

A milestone was achieved in September 2008 when QMP-LS' Ontario Laboratory Accreditation (OLA) program completed its assessment of all 229 licensed medical laboratories in Ontario. This accomplishment presented an opportunity to canvas our participants on the perceived success of the program. An electronic survey was conducted in October 2008 to allow participants to comment on their experience with the OLA accreditation process. The full results of the survey can be viewed at <http://www.qmpls.org/ola/OLA%20Participant%20Satisfaction%20Survey%20Results%20-%20Final.pdf>. The following is a brief summary.

In all, 303 individuals responded to the survey. The first question consisted of five statements as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant Agreement to Value Statements

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Rating Average	N
The assessment team based its decisions on factual evidence.	2.0	3.6	67.0	27.4	3.20	303
The team kept us informed throughout the visit process.	2.0	6.9	59.1	32.0	3.21	303
The team understood our laboratory's unique needs and considered those in its decisions.	3.0	9.0	65.4	22.6	3.08	301
The OLA Program Requirements and Guidance Information as written, are clear enough to facilitate consistent application. Your expectations were consistent with that of the OLA team.	3.3	20.5	64.7	11.6	2.84	303
Meeting the accreditation requirements enhances our laboratory service.	2.3	3.3	49.3	45.0	3.37	303

Question 2 of the survey asked participants, "If you could describe the accreditation experience in one word or phrase, what would it be and why?" This question drew responses from 283 participants (see Top Ten Words box on page 3).

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The open-ended comments submitted by participants yielded considerable information regarding participant perception of assessor objectivity, transparency, open-mindedness, consistency, stress, resulting laboratory services' outcomes and the resources required to achieve accreditation.

QMP-LS staff and the OLA Advisory Panel members thank all respondents for participating in this survey. According to the survey, 94.3 per cent of Ontario medical laboratories participating in QMP-LS' Ontario Laboratory Accreditation (OLA) program agreed that meeting accreditation requirements enhanced their laboratory service. Effective April 1, 2009, similar questions will be asked through an evaluation of every OLA assessment visit.

Top Ten Words	
Word	Number
Stressful	42
Educational	18
Positive	15
Fair	12
Learning	10
Rewarding	9
Nerve-wracking	8
Worthwhile	8
Helpful	7
Professional	7

Call for EQA committee nominations — 2009-10

By Jane Gun-Munro

QMP-LS is seeking committee member nominations for three positions on one of its External Quality Assessment (EQA) scientific committees. Members are appointed for a three-year term of office, renewable once, following which there must be a break in membership of at least one term. Please nominate individuals that you believe will make a valuable contribution to QMP-LS by serving on an EQA scientific committee. All nominations must be received by March 31, 2009. The nomination form is available on QView™ at the following location: General - EQA — Scientific Committee Nominations — 2009 Nomination forms.

The positions listed below must be filled as of May 1, 2009.

Scientific Committee	Member	Facility Type	Additional Information
Endocrinology, Immunology and Maternal Serum Screening (MSS)	Clinical scientist or physician (1)	Hospital or Community Laboratory	Expertise in Endocrinology and/or Immunology
	Medical Laboratory Technologist (2)		

QMP-LS considers the following criteria for membership:

- Membership will reflect the distribution of laboratory professionals — technologists, scientists and physicians
- Membership will reflect the geography of the province and the laboratory community; including hospital and community-based representation and Ontario's urban/rural mix
- Members shall be laboratory professionals of stature who have a broad knowledge of laboratory operations, quality assurance practices and their chosen laboratory medicine discipline

Scientific Committees provide clinical and technical advice to the program in the following areas:

- Design of the EQA survey models
- Selection of testing material

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- Criteria for performance assessment
- Educational committee comments and feedback to participants on each EQA survey, including a review of the medical and scientific literature, commentary on discordant results, and recommendations for improved practice
- Standards of practice in laboratory medicine and guidelines to the Ontario Laboratory Accreditation program

Expectations of committee members are that they are able to:

- Regularly attend committee meetings and important related activities
- Make a serious commitment to participate actively in committee work
- Volunteer for and willingly accept assignments and complete them thoroughly and on time
- Stay informed about committee matters, prepare themselves well for meetings and review and comment on minutes and reports
- Build a collegial working relationship with other committee members that contributes to consensus
- Be active participants in the committees' annual evaluation and planning efforts

For more information about nominations, please contact Jane Gun-Munro at gunmunro@qmpls.org regarding EQA scientific committee nominations. Nomination forms can be sent to the address below:

Quality Management Program—Laboratory Services
1510-250 Bloor Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 1E6

QMP-LS commences biennial review of OLA Requirements and Guidance Information

The current version of the OLA Requirements and Guidance Information (Version 4.1, July 2008) is due for a review to ensure continued suitability in light of changes to the referenced documents and current methodologies.



All laboratory professionals in Ontario are invited to review the current requirements, discuss their impact and provide input to OLA. Your comments will be tabulated and presented to our Stakeholders, Scientific Committees and Advisory Panel members as part of an extensive consultation process that may culminate in the release of Version 5 of the requirements.

Send your submission by fax, e-mail or mail to:

Linda Crawford
Fax: 416-323-9324, crawford@qmpls.org

We would appreciate receiving your comments by *April 30, 2009.*