



CONSTITUTION

Article 1: Name and scope

EQALM, European Organisation for External Quality Assurance Providers in Laboratory Medicine, provides a forum for co-operation and exchange of knowledge on quality-related matters especially with regard to external quality assessment / assurance programmes in Europe.

Article 2: Domicile

The bank account of EQALM is situated in Geneva, Switzerland.

Article 3: Activities

EQALM promotes activities that may contribute to the exchange of knowledge on quality-related matters especially with regard to external quality assessment / assurance programmes. Examples of activities, but not limited to, are:

- Organising meetings with scientific or practical themes for members and other interested parties.
- Issuing scientific publications, including books.
- Publishing EQA News.
- Developing EQA projects.
- Maintaining the EQALM website.
- Representing Laboratory Medicine EQA activities within other organisations, networks, etc.

Article 4: Working Groups

To support the above mentioned activities, the General Assembly may establishing working groups to address quality related scientific matters.

The regulation and function of the working group is covered in a specific guideline (see annex 1).

Article 5: Members

EQALM has five types of membership: full members, individual members, associate members, non-European members and honorary members.

Full member: Impartial and non-profit providers of External Quality Assurance/Assessment (see Note 1) which organises national, regional or international EQA programmes in laboratory medicine in European countries (as defined by WHO).

Individual member: Individuals with an interest in external quality assessment/assurance in laboratory medicine.

Associate member: Commercial providers of external quality assessment/assurance in laboratory medicine or other commercial companies with an interest in this field.

None-European member: Impartial and non-profit providers of External Quality Assurance/Assessment (see Note 1) from outside Europe.

Honorary member: Individuals, invited by the Board, in recognition of their contribution to the field of EQA or service to EQALM.

Article 6: Membership Fee

All members, apart from honorary members, pay an annual membership fee. The fee for the coming year is approved at the annual General Assembly. The annual membership fee must be paid within the calendar year January to December.

Article 7: Termination of membership

Termination of membership can only be done in written form, either by letter or e-mail, to the secretary of the board by the end of October of each year.

If a member does not fulfill its duty to pay the annual membership fee within the required timescales, the board has authority to cancel its membership. Termination of membership will be confirmed in writing by the board.

Article 8: Board

The EQALM board consists of five full member of EQALM. Each board member must be from different EQA organisations and reflect the overall membership of the organisation.

Board members are elected for a three-year period of office by the full members of EQALM through a simple majority of votes. The mandate is renewable for a maximum of one new period.

The voting procedure is described in annex 2.

EQALM appoints a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer at its General Assembly through a simple majority of votes amongst the full members.

Article 9: Remits of the Board

The remits of the board are:

- To improve EQA issues amongst its members.
- To ensure that the working groups are functioning according to agreed guidelines (annex 1).
- To organise EQALM meetings and the scientific programmes.
- To organise the annual General Assembly.
- To maintain a register of existing members and to approve new members,
- To encourage professional activities amongst the members by generating working groups and initiating projects.
- To inform the membership of its activities and provide an annual report at the General Assembly.
- To maintain the EQALM budget and provide financial transparency to the members.

Article 10: Meetings

EQALM members will meet as a minimum once a year. One of these meetings will serve as a General Assembly and shall be convened by mail three months in advance.

The General Assembly is open to all individuals interested in the activities of EQALM. Only Full Members have voting rights at the general Assembly.

Article 11: Suspension of EQALM

In the event that EQALM is suspended, its assets will be employed to realize the same goals as set out in these statutes.

Article 12: Revision of the Constitution

Revised statutes must be submitted to and approved by the General Assembly by at least two-thirds of the full members present at the General Assembly. The board must inform its members about the proposed revised constitution along with the invitation for the General Assembly.

Notes

Note 1.

EQAssurance is an EQA activity (Proficiency testing) conducted by an impartial and non-profit provider. A typical feature of EQA programmes is to provide education to participants and promote quality improvement.

- Influence laboratories by demonstrating poor results due to other sources of error than measurement uncertainty, e.g. inappropriate measurement units, inappropriate reference interval, and inappropriate statistics.
- Influence laboratories through the provision of advice, training courses, development and production of selected calibrators etc.
- Support for internal quality control.

** Note that the terms 'Proficiency Testing' and 'External Quality Assessment' are often used synonymously especially in the laboratory medicine.*

The provider should not be involved in the preparation, distribution or sale of reagents or analytical systems.

Note 2.

Regional EQA provider with more than 100 participants may become a Full Member of EQALM

Explanation of terms used in Note 1.

Proficiency testing

evaluation of participant performance against pre-established criteria by means of interlaboratory comparisons (ISO 17043, 3.7; 2010).

Proficiency testing provider

organisation which takes responsibility for all tasks in development and operation of a proficiency testing scheme (ISO 17043, 3.9; 2010).

Inter-laboratory comparison

organisation, performance and evaluation of measurements or tests on the same or similar items by two or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions (ISO 17043, 3.4; 2010)

Educational laboratory performance study

Problem-related external quality assessment assisting participants to gain information on the origin of aberrant results and determine appropriate remedial procedures.

External quality improvement activities

- Influence laboratories by demonstrating poor results due to other sources of error than measurement uncertainty, e.g. inappropriate measurement units, inappropriate reference interval, and inappropriate statistics.
- Influence laboratories through the provision of advice, training courses, development and production of selected calibrators etc.
- Support for internal quality control.

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<p style="text-align: center;">GUIDELINE FOR EQALM WORKING GROUPS</p>
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EQALM may establish working groups to address scientific or educational EQA issues.

The working group may focus on a particular specialty (e.g. hematology), or a specific topic (e.g. nomenclature).

To facilitate the function of these working groups guidelines have been established and confirmed by the General Assembly of the EQALM.

Guidelines

1. The working group must clearly define the area of interest, their aims and objectives.
2. Members of a working group must be a member of EQALM. All grades of EQALM membership are eligible to register as a member of a working group, i.e. individual, organisation or associate membership. Membership is voluntary and not appointed.
3. The working group must be lead by a chairperson. The chair is elected by the working group members and should fulfil this role for the duration of the working group. A change of chairperson must be agreed by a majority vote of the members.
4. The working group meets at least once a year during the annual EQALM symposium.
5. At this meeting the activities and progress over the last year are discussed.
6. At this meeting a work plan for the preceding year should be established.
7. The recommended output must be in the form of a scientific publication or report to the members.
8. Activities and the work plan must be reported to and approved by the General Assembly.
9. All activities / reports must be published on the EQALM website.
10. Reimbursement costs for the working group meetings will not be provided by EQALM.

<p>VOTING PROCEDURE FOR BOARD MEMBERS</p>
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Procedure

1. The board calls for candidate board members from its full members.
2. The board prepares a list of potential candidates based on the proposals received.
3. The list of candidates is distributed to the full members of EQALM
4. The voting procedure can be done by distributing a voting form, electronic ballot or at the General Assembly.
5. Board members are elected by a majority of votes. If no majority is obtained a second round is organised with the two candidates with the most votes from the first round. per vacancy
6. The votes are counted by an independent person / committee
7. The results of the election are presented at the General Assembly

(If more than one board member is required to be elected, full members will be asked to vote for two names on the voting form.)