

RCPA QAP Performance Monitoring Project

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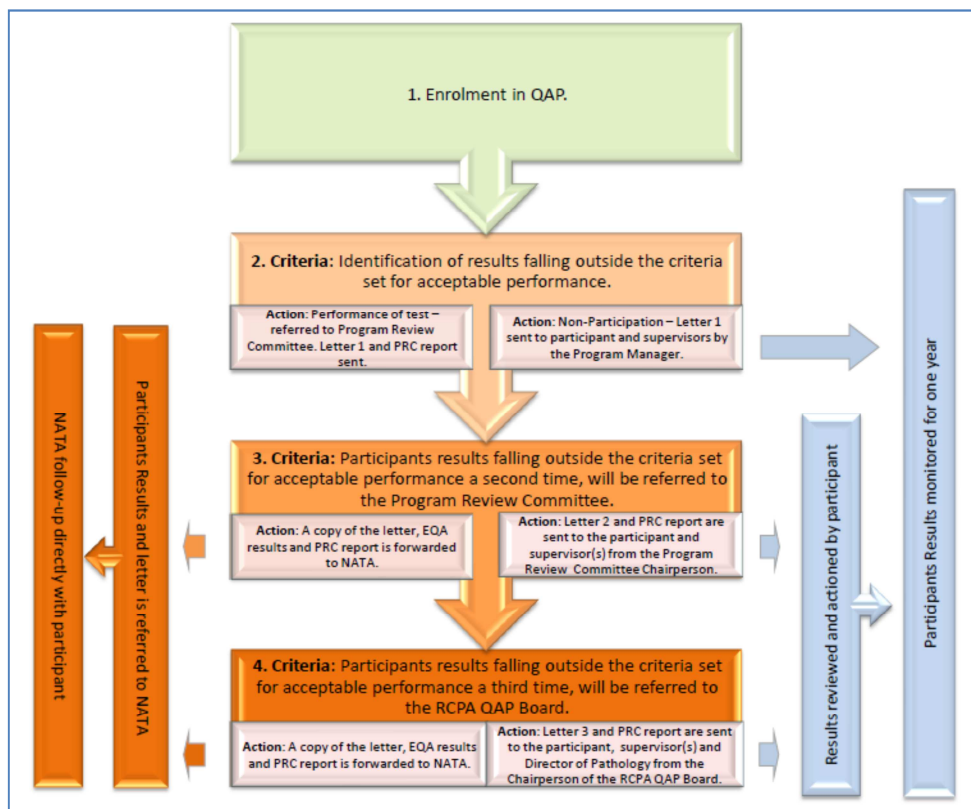
The RCPA Quality Assurance Programs (RCPA QAP) received a QUPP grant from the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) in 2010 to investigate if External Quality Assurance (EQA) could be used to identify suboptimal laboratory performance. The project is investigating if an early warning system can be established to help minimise risk to patients and assist laboratories in addressing EQA concerns early. This project follows on from the first Key Performance Indicator project in 2004, also funded by DoHA.

Criteria for unacceptable laboratory performance have now been established for:

- Anatomical Pathology (General and Breast Diagnostic modules)
- Cytopathology (Conventional Gynaecological module)
- Transfusion (AG module)

In the future criteria for unacceptable laboratory performance will be developed by all Quality Assurance Programs.

The RCPA QAP has developed a framework that includes actions to be taken by the company when results fall outside acceptable levels of performance.



Earlier this year the Cytopathology QAP Peer Review Committee was convened and the following criteria for unacceptable performance were developed by the committee. Letters relating to results outside the criteria may be sent to the nominated laboratory contact and supervisors according to the project framework:

- One Performance Measure outside the National Standard set by NPAAC
- Non submission of results for Performance Measures
- One major error in a GYN survey
- Three unacceptable responses in any GYN survey in a twelve month period
- Non submission of results for any GYN survey

The committee agree that performance Measure 2b has greater importance than other criteria. Where a laboratory does not meet this result and following review by the PRC, a letter will be sent to the laboratory concerned as well as to NATA as per step 3 of the framework guidelines.

Participants should be aware that the Cytopathology QAP conducts regular slide reviews of slides contained in the QAP slide library as part of its own internal quality management system. Furthermore, the QAP welcomes feedback from participants relating to slide quality and diagnosis. For cases where a laboratory disagrees with the expected response stated in the interim result, slides will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee if requested. A written request from the laboratory must be submitted to the Program Chair or Manager and it is useful if slides are appropriately marked or coordinates are quoted. The Program Chair will respond in writing advising of the outcome of the review.

It is hoped the outcomes of the pilot phase of the Cytopathology Performance Monitoring Project will assist in evaluating criteria for unacceptable performance in Cytopathology. The QAP will endeavour to keep participants informed as to the outcome of this pilot study and about future directions of the project.