



This document summarises the most commonly asked questions about the external quality control (EQA), the answers and some possible solutions.

Surveys organisation

Questions	Answers and solutions
1. It is Tuesday and I have not yet received the samples send on Monday.	The samples are send per Mail. In case of non-reception, please wait until Wednesday before contacting the CSCQ.
2. Are the samples stable when carried at room temperature?	All our samples are stabilised. A delivery at room temperature within 72 hours has been validated.
3. My laboratory is closed the week the shipment is scheduled. What should I do?	The shipment can on this occasion be postponed for 1 or 2 weeks. The deadline for the results submission remain the same. Therefore, the samples have to be analysed immediately after reception.

Results and values

Questions	Answers and solutions
1. All the EQA results are too high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The calibration is not correct and must be repeated. The homogenisation was not complete. The control sample has been reconstituted with a too small amount of diluent. The pipette used for the reconstitution must be controlled.
2. All the EQA results are too low.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The calibration is not correct and must be repeated. The homogenisation was not complete. The control sample has been reconstituted with a too large amount of diluent. The pipette used for the reconstitution must be controlled.
3. The result is 10 times lower than the target value.	You used the decilitre (dL) as unit of volume. Use the litre (L), which is the recommended unit for the volume.
4. The value obtained for the S-Glucose is too low.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You used by mistake the blood sample (B) designed exclusively for the haematology. For the clinical chemistry, use only the serum sample (S). The sample was kept more than 72 hours at room temperature.
5. The value obtained for the S-Bilirubin is too low.	The sample was exposed too long to daylight. Keep the sample protected from light and do your analyses as soon as possible.
6. The value obtained for the enzymes is systematically too low.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are using a method operating at 25 or 30 °C although the one you declare operates at 37 °C. The measurement temperature of your instrument is too low.
7. The values obtained for transaminases are systematically too low.	You are using a method without pyridoxal phosphate although the recommended one foresees its utilisation.
8. The value obtained for all your controls are not always satisfactory.	Statistically you have, from time to time, a value which goes out of the tolerance range.
9. Two results are completely out of range.	You have inverted two results while transcribing them. Before transmission, check systematically all your results.
10. No result appears for the given survey.	You did not return your results or you sent them after the deadline. The CSCQ cannot postpone the time limit, which is clearly indicated on the result form or on the delivery form.

Survey reports

Questions	Answers and solutions
1. In which order must the graphical report be read?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The qualitative assessment : satisfactory or not satisfactory The FAC evaluation and the Z-score The position of your result on the graph The graph which shows the history of your FAC performances.
2. There is neither the FAC value nor the target value, what should I do? (participant number is too low or dispersion too high)	Observe the position of your result on the histogram and assess your performance in comparison to all other results taken together.
3. Why is the qualitative assessment of my result not satisfactory although I have absolutely no problems with my IQC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is specific to the external quality control. The reasons must be elucidated (units mistake, inversion of the samples to be analysed, wrong method codification, expired reagents or standards, etc.). The QUALAB tolerance interval does not match the interval of the IQC provider.
4. Why is there no graph for this parameter?	No result for this parameter was provided during this survey.
5. Why does the graph contain only two columns, each being located at the extreme values?	There are only two participants for this method.

EQAcom: the Internet application for electronic data entry and consultation of the EQC survey reports

Questions	Answers while starting
1. Is the EQAcom application difficult to use?	The EQAcom application is very user-friendly, intuitive, efficient and fast. You can introduce your results at any time before the deadline indicated on your delivery form and you can make sure that your results are registered at the CSCQ. Your results and the survey reports can easily be archived.
2. How do I install the EQAcom application?	The EQAcom application doesn't need any installation, only a connection to Internet is necessary and the use of a recent navigator.
3. I sent my email address to the CSCQ. Why should I ask for a registration?	For security reasons, the access to the EQAcom application is regulated. The connection is set up with a login and a password. To open an account, the CSCQ needs various information on the laboratory, in particular the name of the person responsible for the account. Furthermore, the registration involves the acceptance of the EQAcom user's conditions by this person.
4. I asked for an online registration on the CSCQ web site, but I have neither received a confirmation nor a login and password.	It is probable that the email address you gave is wrong. Please verify this address on your EQAcom confirmation for registration that you printed. If this is the case, contact the CSCQ and give your exact email address.
5. How do I know if I am connected to the EQAcom application?	Observe the blue band on which the title of the EQAcom application appears. If, on the right hand side of this band, the message <u>connected to</u> appears, together with the date and the time, then you are connected. If no message appears, you are not connected.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers on the data entry</i>
6. Only part of the survey results is available. Can I begin with the data entry?	It is possible to fill in the data in several occasions, as long as the closing day is not reached. The status of the data entry process indicates <u>Partial</u> to point out that some results are missing.
7. I cannot measure one parameter because the reagent is missing. Nevertheless can I transcribe my results?	The entry of the survey results can be done partially. If a result is missing for one parameter, you have to leave the result box with the ***** or the mention <u>Unentered</u> (for the non-quantitative results). The data entry status will mention <u>Partial</u> .
8. The survey for which I should proceed the data entry doesn't appear when the option <i>Entry</i> in the menu <i>Result</i> is activated. Why?	The data entry for a given survey is no longer possible when the deadline is reached. After this date, the survey code doesn't appear anymore on the list of the surveys to be completed. By activating the option <u>Viewing</u> in the menu <u>Result</u> you can control the progress of the survey. The active window lists all the surveys for which you are concerned. If the mention <u>Closed</u> appears, then the closing date has been passed.
9. The unit I use does not appear in the list of the drop-down menu. What should I do?	Standardisation of laboratory results is essential, so the use of SI units is recommended. We advise you to convert your result in SI units. If you do not find the unit you are using in the drop-down menu, you can send an email to the CSCQ with your lab number, the survey code, the parameter involved and the used unit. You will be informed by email if the unit you use will be taken into account.
10. I have sent modifications for a survey but these are not included in the data entry form. Why?	The modifications sent by email are not automatically reported in the data entry form. However they are treated by the CSCQ and taken into account in the survey reports. This allows their validation by the CSCQ.
11. How can I be sure that my results are registered by the CSCQ?	After you entered all the results for one survey (eg. Clinical chemistry), click on the Transmit to CSCQ button. A window appears on the screen indicating the number of results entered and transmitted to the CSCQ. This confirms that your results are registered by the CSCQ. You do not need to send back the result form to the CSCQ. If you wish to view and verify the results you entered: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> connect yourself to the EQAcom application with your login and password, click on Display in the menu on the left hand side, then, in the central page, click on the survey code for which you would like to verify the submitted results, a new window appears with the results saved in the CSCQ data bank for the given survey, verify the results, logout after the verification.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answer on the consultation and the downloads</i>
12. My computer cannot open the archive files of the survey reports. Why?	In order to read and unzip archive files, you must use the appropriate software. Most compressing/decompressing software are able to open the archive files. The software « opensource » 7-Zip can be downloaded free of charge from: http://www.7-zip.org .

Questions	<i>Risposte in merito alla visualizzazione</i>
13. Some functions are inactivated, even after clicking on them. Why?	Some functions open a new window to show various information and forms. If the window doesn't appear after activating the function, it is probable that it is already open and that it stays in the background, i.e. it is hidden by another window. To put it in the foreground, click on the corresponding button on the taskbar in the lower part of your screen.
14. Although marked as available, I cannot display my survey reports. Why?	<p>When I want to display one of my survey report (options <u>Report</u> + <u>Viewing</u> in the left hand menu), a window opens but the report does not (window empty or full of various characters). The solutions are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Download the latest Acrobat Reader version. A direct link is given in the main EQAcom page (options <u>Links</u> + <u>Acrobat Reader</u> in the left hand menu) b. Download the latest version of your navigator. It is available on the page of your provider. c. At last, get into contact with your computer service department.

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