

Regular Inter-laboratory Counting Exchange (RICE) Scheme

This report is available to view on our website: <https://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes/rice-group-reports>

This report will be issued to all participating laboratories following the completion of each round of RICE.

Chart 1 shows the current number of laboratories participating in the RICE scheme for R121.

UK 166 (74%), Europe 47 (21%) and Rest Of World 12 (5%)

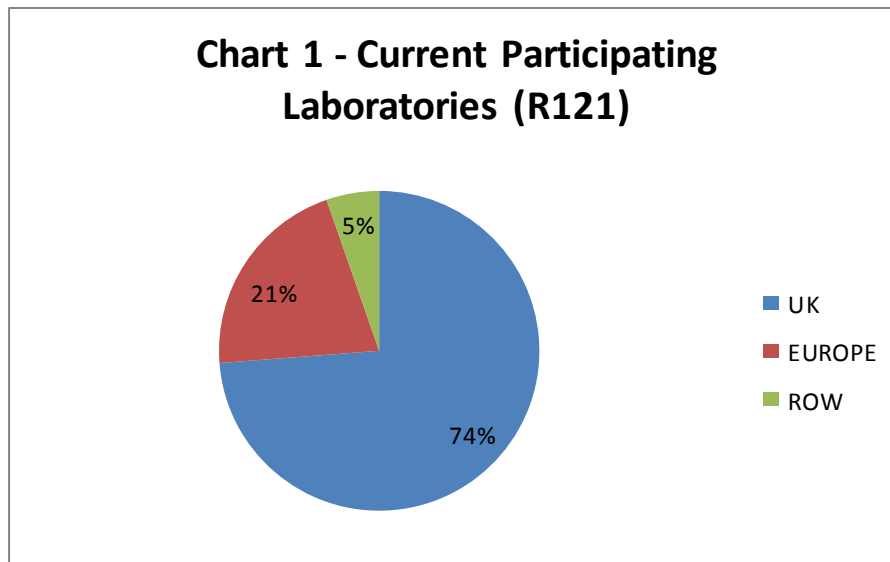
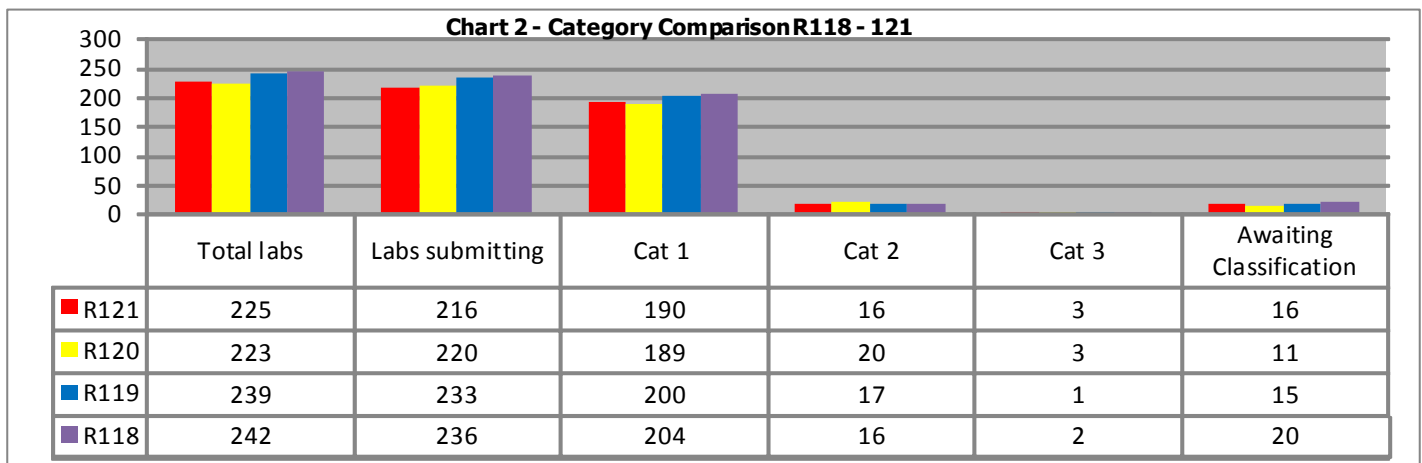


Chart 2 shows the comparison of categories from participating laboratories in R118 - 121





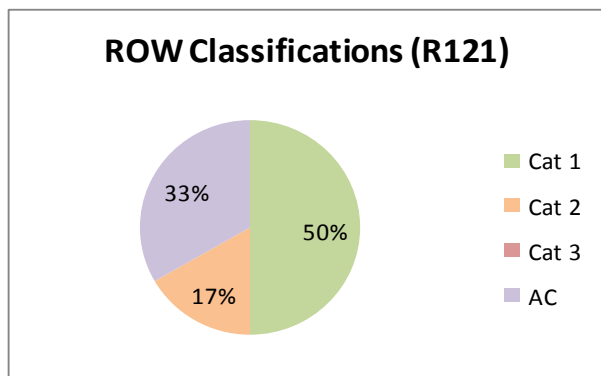
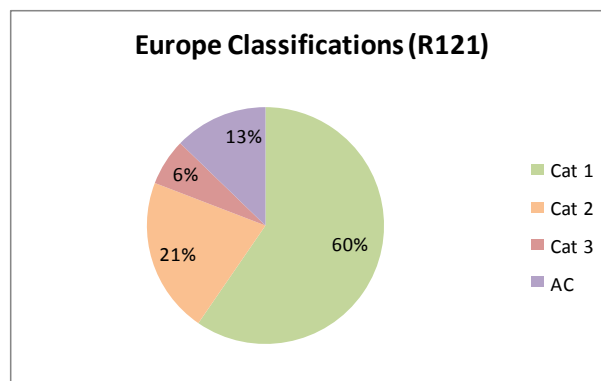
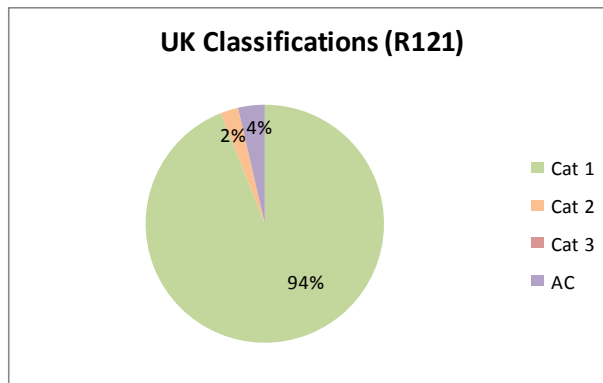
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Chart 3 represent the classifications of each group - UK, Europe & ROW.

UK - 156 (94%) are category 1, 4 (2%) are category 2 and 6 (4%) are awaiting classification.

Europe - 28 (60%) are category 1, 10 (21%) are category 2, 3 (6%) are category 3 and 6 (13%) are awaiting classification.

ROW - 6 (50%) are category 1, 2 (17%) are category 2, and 4 (33%) are awaiting classification.





Report

Round 121

November 2022



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Slide Queries

Following R121, Forty-seven slide investigations were undertaken. Four of these were following participant queries on receipt of their provisional report - the remainder were highlighted by the PT (Proficiency Testing) team. Eleven slides have been withdrawn so far, however, HSE are still awaiting the return of some batches to complete their investigations.

Round	No. of Queries	Withdrawn Reference Slides	Withdrawn Candidate Slides
118	49	8	1
119	71	12	0
120	62	9	0
121	47	10	1

The PT team would like to remind participants that they are able to keep their slides until their group deadline date. If results are submitted prior to the deadline, the provisional report can be issued within a few working days, therefore giving time for the laboratory to take another look at the batch, if required. This could help with training or to confirm a potential slide issue. To query a slide, please either note this on your RICE submissions or send an email to the PT team with your HSE PT Lab number and the slide details. All investigations are carried out once the slides have been returned, so this may be at the end of the round.

Slide Damage/ Withdrawal

Following R121, five slides were withdrawn due to damage/ loss, two received minor damage.

Round	Total Damaged	Minor Damage	Withdrawn
118	11	3	8
119	10	2	8
120	5	2	3
121	7	2	5

Please may we draw your attention to the Slide Responsibility information (despatched with the slides, available in the Information Book for Participants and in the Useful Links on our website - <https://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes/rice>). Laboratories should open and check their slides within 24 hours of receipt - failure to do so may result in your laboratory being responsible for any damage.

RICE Batches

When your RICE slides are despatched, you receive labels with your paperwork to let you know where you need to send the slides onto following your deadline. This will either be the 2nd laboratory in your group or returned to HSE. If you're unsure where to send the slides, please send an email to the PT Team with your HSE PT Lab number.

RICE slides should be despatched on your results deadline date to ensure they are received by the 2nd laboratory or HSE in a timely manner. Failure to return the slides may result in a loss slide fee and / or a delay in sending slides for future rounds.



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R121 Certificates

If you're not able to view your RICE R121 Certificate on the Online Data Entry System, it may be that we've not received your slides back or payment for either a damaged slide or additional counters. R121 certificates and slides for R122 will not be despatched until full payment has been received.

If payment has been made, please contact the PT team with the following information so that we can verify the details. Without this information we may not be able to locate your payment efficiently.

- ◆ your PT Lab number
- ◆ your company name
- ◆ transaction date
- ◆ transaction reference/ description quoted on the bank transfer

Provision of confirmation paperwork i.e. remittance advice, bank transfer evidence may also be useful.

Classification Reports

Classification Reports for UK & Republic of Ireland (R118-121) are now available on the website.

RICE QC

RICE QC slides, additional counter fee and damaged slide fees can now be paid for on the PT Online Data Entry System. If you require assistance ordering/ paying for these, please email the PT Team. If you need to replace one of the last four consecutive rounds of RICE due to a poor score, you can purchase a replacement round. Please contact the PT Team for further information.

Feedback & Further Information on the Addition of Rogue Slides

Rogue slides have been introduced into the scheme from R117. These slides are designed to test participants' ability to apply the sample rejection criteria correctly (i.e. quality of slide, dust obscuration etc.).

There has been a mixed response - some laboratories have counted the slides and submitted a result, others have highlighted non-rogue slides as possible rogue slides. HSE have checked all slides that were incorrectly reported as rogues and all were deemed suitable for the scheme. HSE also recognise that participants may be concerned that if they count/ don't submit a count then a score may be applied.

The counting/ rejection criteria HSG248; The Analysts Guide (section A1.38, A1.39 & A1.40) should be followed. A free copy of the guide is available to download on the HSE website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg248.htm>

Two different rogue slides have been photographed, as an example - these have previously been sent to all participants by email. If you would like a copy, please email the PT Team with your HSE PT Lab number.

Feedback

The annual feedback questionnaire will be available on the PT Online Data Entry System during December 2022 - an email will be sent to all participants when open.

Feedback can be provided at any time, please email any constructive comments/ suggestions to the PT team on the email address below.

Contacting the PT Team: We are mainly working from home, so please contact us by email and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

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