

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 R119.

UK 171 (71%), Europe 57 (24%) and ROW 11(5%)

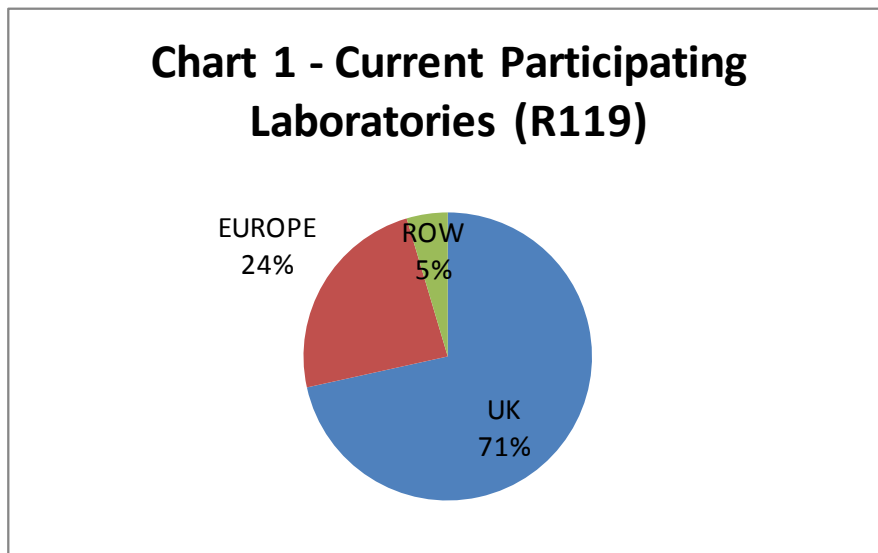
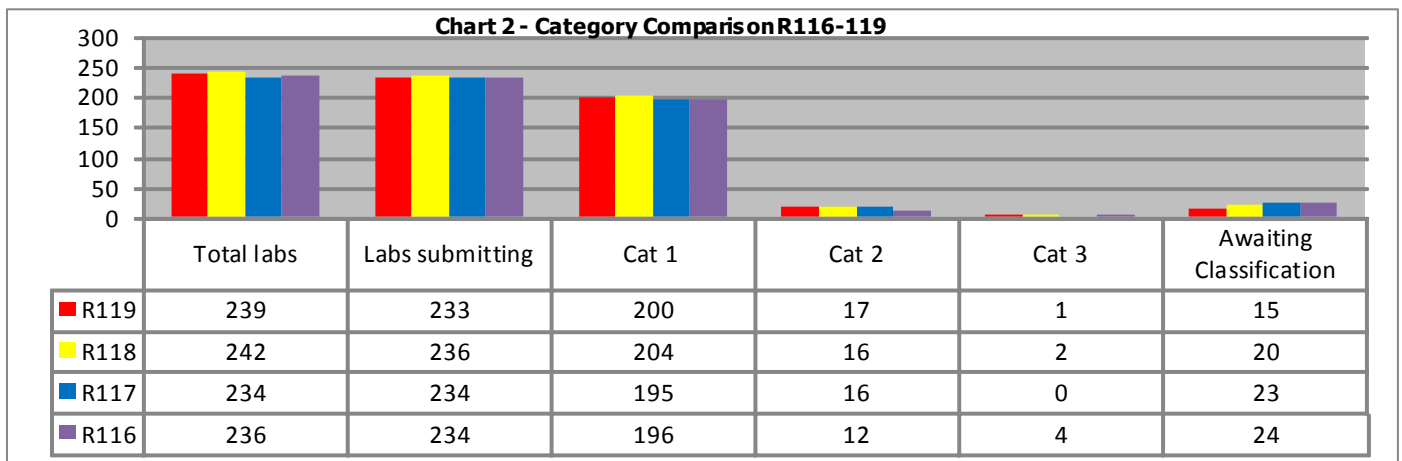


Chart 2 shows the comparison of categories from participating laboratories in R116-119





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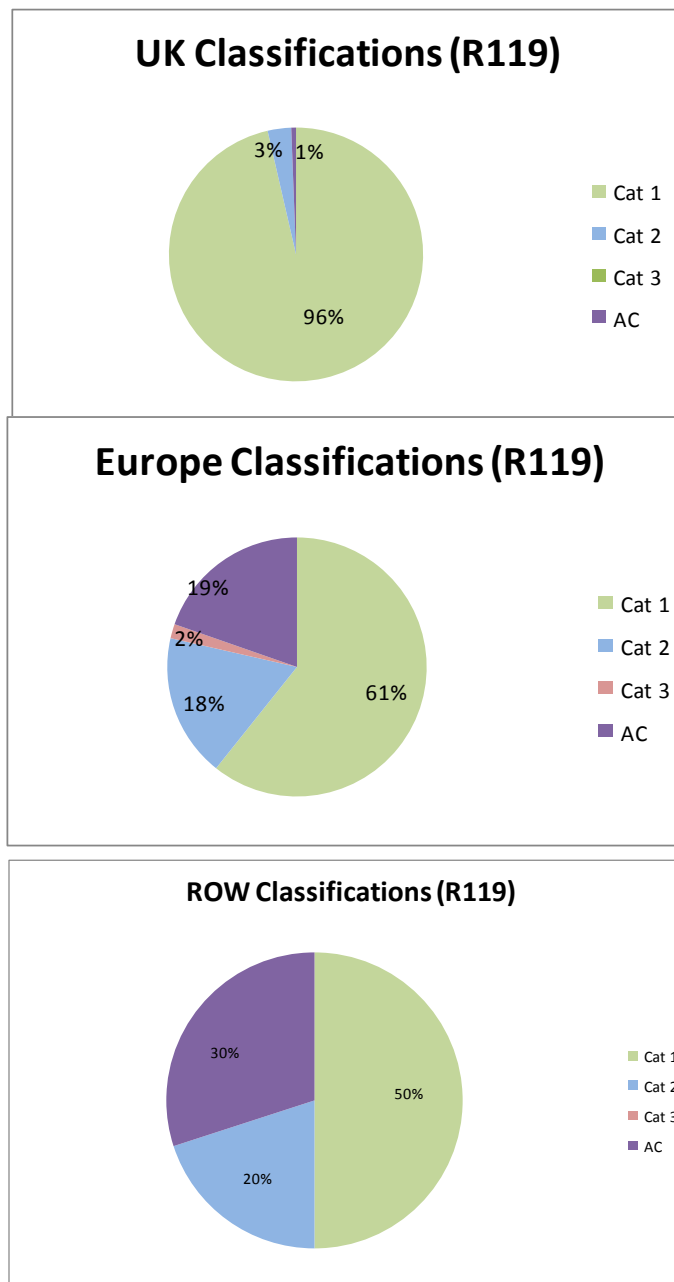
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Chart 3 represent the classifications of each group - UK, Europe & ROW.

UK - 161 (96%) are category 1, 5 (3%) are category 2 and 1 (1%) are awaiting classification.

Europe - 34 (61%) are category 1, 10 (18%) are category 2, 1 (2%) are category 3 and 11 (19%) are awaiting classification.

ROW - 5 (50%) are category 1, 2 (20%) are category 2, and 3 (30%) are awaiting classification.





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Slide Queries

Following R119, 71 slide investigations were undertaken. Twenty-one of these were following participant queries and the remainder were highlighted by the PT (Proficiency Testing) team. Twelve slides were withdrawn in total - all were reference slides.

Round	No. of Queries	Withdrawn Reference Slides	Withdrawn Candidate Slides
116	56	9	3
117	56	10	0
118	49	8	1
119	71	12	0

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 R119, eight slides were withdrawn due to damage/ loss, two received minor damage.

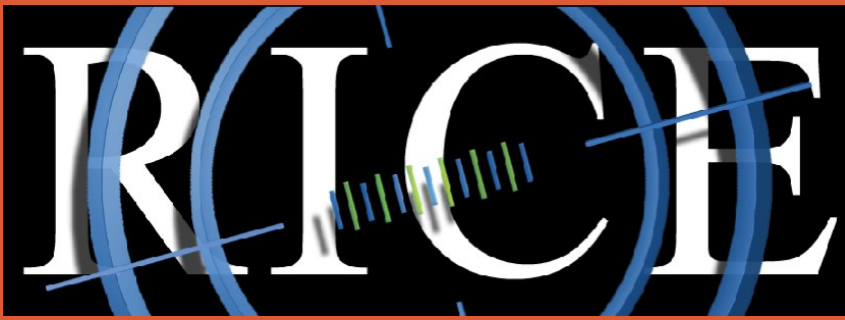
Round	Total Damaged	Minor Damage	Withdrawn
116	8	2	6
117	18	6	12
118	11	3	8
119	10	2	8

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

One of our aims for RICE is to have one lab per group. In order to achieve this, we must generate and promote enough candidate slides to produce the required number of batches. When we manage to achieve our goal there will be one despatch date, one deadline date and it will allow laboratories a longer period of time to count the slides and submit their results. Following R119, 39 candidate slides were promoted to reference slides.

With the introduction of the new software it has been possible to identify chrysotile slides within each batch. We are now working towards making the selection of slides more consistent across the batches.



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R119 Certificates

If you're not able to view your RICE R119 Certificate on the Online Data Entry System, it may be that we've not received payment for either a damaged slide or additional counters. R119 certificates and slides for R120 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 (R116-119) 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.

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 was conducted in December 2021 - the summary is now available on our website page: <https://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes/participant-feedback>

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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