**David Green – Lead Laboratory Physiologist EIS.**

**What were your reasons for applying for BASES Laboratory Accreditation?**

At the English Institute of Sport, we have three high performance BASES accredited laboratories that have been supporting Olympic and Paralympic athletes for numerous Olympic cycles. The BASES Laboratory Accreditation process was a chance to have our practices quality assured by an external, independent, organisation with significant expertise and experience in the area of laboratory management. As a group of laboratories, we already had rigorous internal measures in place to check, challenge, and optimise our procedures but the BASES process provided us with the opportunity to gain a different perspective from outside our immediate working circle. A physiology laboratory is a complex environment with a huge quantity of possible processes, protocols, and procedures and the BASES accreditation process was a chance for us to gather information from a variety of experts in laboratory management.

**Were there any barriers you faced in applying for Laboratory Accreditation?**

Pre-application, we had concerns that some of our laboratories might not fit the correct “blueprint” for accreditation. Two of our laboratories are shared facilities with other organisations and at one of our sites some of the facilities (altitude chamber) are located away from the main laboratory area. However, after speaking to the accreditation team we quickly discovered our application could be tailored to our specific situation and that it wouldn’t be prohibitive in applying for accreditation so long as we met the required level of competency. Beyond that no obvious barriers were apparent. The submission for accreditation did involve a comprehensive document outlining our laboratory practices but for a well-functioning laboratory it is likely to be a case of collating existing practices rather than a time-consuming process of generating new material from scratch.

**What are the benefits of achieving BASES lab accreditation?**

In order to achieve BASES laboratory accreditation, we had to reflect in detail on our current laboratory practice. This is something we have continued to do since accreditation, assessing and questioning our practice on a more regular basis. As a result, even after the accreditation process was finished, we have made significant changes to our laboratory practice that benefit our practitioners and the work they do with athletes. Another significant advantage to achieving BASES laboratory accreditation has been the increase in size of our wider laboratory network. Not only the BASES laboratory review panel, but other accredited laboratories and laboratories who are thinking about the accreditation process, each with their own area of expertise and experiences. The advancement of our laboratory practices has, and is, unquestionably improving as a result of access to this network.

**What advice would you offer to any Sport and Exercise Science Technician considering applying for Laboratory Accreditation?**

Use the BASES lab accreditation team and talk to technicians of other laboratories. There is a wealth of laboratory management knowledge out there and it is not necessary to re-invent the wheel on your own. Sharing best practice between laboratories benefits everyone involved and saves time. I’m sure anyone who’s been involved in laboratory practice can attest to a time when a seemingly simple and innocuous question has taken up a disproportionate amount of time to answer when you have no access to pre-existing knowledge.

**Kerry McGawley (KM) (Associate Professor), Hampus Lindblom (HL) and Helen Hanstock (HH) - Mid Sweden University.**

**What were your reasons for applying for BASES Laboratory Accreditation?**

**KG** To learn, improve our protocols/practices (health & safety, calibration/validation, etc.), get input/feedback from experienced overseas experts, “quality control” …

**HL** It’s also been discussed in Swedish lab meetings for a long time as an objective quality control and we decided to take the first step to get the “ball rolling” which I think has led to more Swedish labs starting up the process.

**Were there any barriers you faced in applying for Laboratory Accreditation?**

**KG** I’m sure there were many, but I didn’t really have to deal with them. I know my team had trouble matching Swedish policy/practice to the BASES requirements, as well as providing everything in English when much of our documentation is in Swedish. In many cases, Sweden doesn’t have many of the processes in place that BASES required.

**HL** There were a lot of discussions on how to follow British recommendations and Swedish guidelines/laws at the same time but in the end, we got a lot of support and managed to balance the two.

**What difference have you seen since becoming accredited?**

**KG** I feel that we have better health and safety routines in place, and greater confidence in what we are doing. We are also seen as an excellent example for the other testing labs in Sweden.

**HL** We’re definitely more confident since before we were mostly comparing ourselves to other labs in the area and now, we can see that we do a good job also with international eyes upon us. We also practically changed some routines and took steps forward in our work on quality control which can be seen in our daily work.

**HH** I would definitely agree that as a result I have more confidence in our health and safety routines, both in knowing that the lab has accreditation, and by being involved the process of becoming accredited itself.

**What are the benefits of achieving BASES lab accreditation?**

**KG** Better awareness, knowledge and networks within our team. Quality control and official recognition (a stamp of approval, which can set a new national standard).

**HL** Refreshed and refined manuals, risk assessments and documentations which we can have as a written support in all lab work.

**HH** I do remember the process made us do a lot of checking up on the Swedish laws/regulations for certain lab procedures and activities, such as hazardous substances (particularly with regard to sterilisation of mouthpieces), and also whether or not there was an equivalent of COSHH for dietary supplements, which was in itself a good process to go through.

**What advice would you offer to any Sport and Exercise Science Technician considering applying for Laboratory Accreditation?**

**KG** To use the process as an opportunity to learn, develop, network and improve lab practice and routines. Don’t do it simply as a box-ticking exercise. Make sure you have plenty of time to reflect over and change your practices throughout the accreditation process. And commit to keeping up-to-date and driving future development after the assessment.

**HL** Time is of the essence and it’s good to get the process done as a team so everyone feels involved and therefore automatically will be better at keeping routines up. With that said it’s also good to have one person responsible for summarizing data and delegating specific documentations needing to be made.