

On-Site Assessment Committee Minutes
May 21, 2008
1:00 PM – 2:25 PM EST

Attendance

Don Cassano
Nilda Cox
Margo Hunt
Mark Mensik
Faust Parker
Denise Rice
Betsy Ziomek

Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the March 12, 2008 meeting were approved with one typo corrected. Ms. Rice will have them posted to the website.

Updates

Ms. Rice informed the committee that she received an e-mail from Kenneth Jackson which contained a report of the Uniformity of Standards Committee. There was only one comment on the OSA module but it is non-editorial. Because our standard is final we will not take action at this time. It will be saved for consideration when the standard needs to be revised.

The comment made is: *Sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.8: Both sections have a long note about unannounced assessments, but the notes are identical. Consider deleting the second copy and replacing with “For unannounced assessments, see the note at Section 6.3.3” (JE).*

Ms. Hunt asked when the next revision would be. The chairs discussed this and decided the next revision would be after the standard had been in use for a year or two and we received feedback. We don't want to give the appearance of releasing a standard that already has issues.

At the March Board Chairs meeting Ms. Rice explained how we the OSA Committee had stated implementation of the decision making rules SOP. During her recitation it was pointed out that the committee did not have the authority to decide how a standard would be approved by the committee. The committee had decided we would use the Enthusiastic Support with no vetos. However, the TNI policies state that a standard is passed by a two-thirds vote of the committee. Section 5.3.6 of SOP 2-100, Procedures Governing Standard Development states: *In order for the Voting Draft Standard to pass, an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Committee Members is required, and all written comments accompanying votes cast by Committee Members, Affiliates and Associate Committee Members must be considered and brought to resolution as described below (Sections 5.3.7, 5.3.8 and 5.3.9). Ballot items returned as negative*

without comment shall be recorded as negative without comment. Ballot items returned unmarked shall be considered as unreturned ballots.

New Committee Members

Jerry Parr passed onto us the names of people who were interested in joining committees. Ms. Rice explained that she was definitely losing Ms. Hunt at the end of September and probably Ms. Ziomek by the end of the year. Since the committee is not at the maximum participation we could add a couple of members now who will be up to speed by the time those to members retire. The committee thought this was a good idea. Ms. Rice will review the list for interested people and request additional information. The nominees will be discussed at the next meeting.

Consideration of Comments on the Technical Course Criteria Guidance

For several months the Technical course criteria guidance was on the TNI website for the solicitation of comments. At the August Cambridge meeting the committee also solicited comments about the document. The following are the comments and the discussion of them. Please note, some of the comments received from the website were truncated. The Committee has done the best we can to address the spirit of the comments.

Comment	Disposition and Rationale
<i>From the Cambridge meeting:</i>	
The organic outline should allow time to discuss biological tissue	The committee agrees. This will be added to the outline
For organics should add a topic on specific instrumentation and software reporting systems	The committee agrees. Will add instrumentation to VII, 5 and will add limitations of software to VIII, 4
A straw vote was taken and the courses should be at least three days	The recommended number of course days will be changed to three.
For metals, program specific criteria should not be included	The committee partially agrees. CLP and Superfund will be dropped from outlines since these do not have any bearing on NELAC. The committee thinks it is necessary to cover the other program criteria listed.
The microbiology course should include a section on calculations	The committee agrees. This will be added to section VII and VIII
Add a section to the radiochemistry course on radioactive materials license requirements	The committee feels this is already covered in Section VII, 6
<i>From the TNI Website</i>	
For all the outlines, "Recommended should be dropped from Recommended Prerequisites". By definition, if it's a prerequisite it is necessary, not optional.	The committee agrees. Since this is a guidance document all statements therein are recommendations. The word recommended will be deleted from the prerequisites phrase.
Section VII of the Organic outline should also include qualitative interpretation (e.g. confirmation). Second column confirmation practices should be assessed since they have a direct impact on the quality of the reported results.	The committee agrees. Qualitative interpretation will be added to Section VII, 10 of the Organic outline.
It would be important to elaborate more on the sample preparation portion of Section VII of the Organic outline. Using correct and specific	The committee disagrees. Some coverage of sample preparation is recommended in Section IV of the outline. The committee thinks that anything more than this would

sample preparation procedures is very important in generating data of known and documented quality (e.g. subsampling, concentration, etc.)	be too prescriptive and goes against the spirit of a guidance document.
For Microbiology, safety is included but is not part of the TNI standard. If items outside the standard are required by the committee, then these must be cited as to the criteria for assessment such as 29 CFR Part 1910 or DHS requirements. This may be applicable to other outlines. Remove safety from the course curricula unless specifically cited by the standards.	The committee partially disagrees. While TNI has made the decision to not cover safety in its standards, the committee put this in the outlines two reasons. 1) The inspector should know certain things for their own safety and 2) some safety requirements involve not spreading contamination which would also affect the quality of the analysis. Since this is a guidance document, covering safety is <i>not required</i> and the training provider can decide if this area is appropriate to cover based on the needs of their students.
All courses are not equally weighted to address improper practices. Asbestos has several paragraphs, yet inorganics none. It is not clear what the extent of coverage should be for all classes. These outlines appear to be weighted to method assessments.	The committee disagrees. All courses purposely have a different weight given to improper practices. Some areas or technologies are more prone to improper practices than others. The emphasis was placed on certain items in their respective outlines based on the experience of the committee. In addition, while some analyses have ways of readily detecting improper practices while others do not. For example, for many general chemistry analyses, the paper trail is handwritten and lends itself to manipulation but cannot often be challenged whereas organics has a paper trail that can show where when and how the manipulation was done. As the topics are covered, the TNI standard would be included, see section V of the outlines.
The length of time of three days for Asbestos is not consistent with the other classes. Three technologies should not require three days since inorganics is only two days with many technologies.	This topic was discussed at the Cambridge meeting (see above) and a vote of the membership present was taken. Three days will be used as the recommended amount of time for all courses. The course provider is free to adjust this timeframe based on the needs of their class (see introduction to the course guidance)
A more detailed document is required to provide the guidance necessary to assess laboratories in a uniform manner. There should be a section that teaches how to assess to the TNI standard. Prepare a more detailed document with lesson plans.	The committee disagrees. Some training on assessing to the TNI standard is in Section V of the outlines as well as in the Basic Assessor Course. Providing lesson plans would be too prescriptive and the Committee wants to allow flexibility.
The document purports to be a living document. Provide a forum on the TNI website and an e-mail address for feedback and questions. Often these documents exist for years without a revision. Establish an entity to be responsible for revising the document.	The Committee is taking this under advisement. At this time the Committee wishes to issue the guidance to accompany the new TNI standard, let the guidance be used for awhile and then entertain comments on revisions. The exact mechanism for that will be worked out at a later date.
Some classes indicate a detailed view for improper practices while others do not. For example, asbestos has a Section IV while inorganics does not.	The committee disagrees. See comment above on weighting of classes.
Some classes do not indicate a need to perform data review for statistical matters.	The Committee agrees. This will be added to the data review section of the outlines.

Other Business

Mr. Cassano asked about the surveys. Ms. Rice has not had a chance to check on the surveys.

Ms. Hunt asked what the next step is for the guidance documents. Ms. Rice said she will add the examination guidance. It will then be submitted to the TNI Board for approval. She will also remove the pictures from the guidance as this is making the file too large to be handled easily electronically. She will see if there is a standard format for guidance documents.

Mr. Mensik was elected to the Board of Directors but explained why he is not currently on the Board: This is due to his change in job and participant category.