

Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC) Meeting Summary

May 14, 2024

I Welcome and Roll Call:

Cody, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:33pm Eastern on May 14, 2024, by teleconference. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A – there were 12 members present. Associates present: Nigel Allison, Jennifer Best, Debbie Bond, Dwayne Burkholder, Antoine Chamsi, Jody Frymire, Joe Guzman, Deanna Kiska, Morgan Koelliker (1:45), and Christabel Monteiro. Paul Junio attended in the absence of Ilona Taunton as the scribe for minutes.

II Approval of Agenda

Cody asked for approval of the Agenda. Hearing no objections, she declared the agenda approved.

III Approval of April Meeting minutes

The Meeting minutes from the April 9, 2024 were emailed to all members along with the announcement for this meeting. Cody asked if there were any comments or corrections needed for the minutes. Hearing none, she accepted a motion from Patsy Root and a second from Robin Cook to approve the minutes. Voting to approve were: Tina Shidel, Robin Cook, Cody Danielson, Maria Fayard, Liz Lesold, Brian Mercer, Patsy Root, Bob Royce, and Elisa Snyder.

IV Technical Specialist Discussion

Cody shared her screen, where she had gathered assorted sources of information on the Technical Specialist discussion. These include Module 2, the DOE/DoD Quality Management System, and from feedback provided to the Microbiology Committee.

The discussion is leaning toward a simplification of the requirements with a generalized/baseline requirement for what is needed, including editing the qualifications portion of the requirements. Cody has confirmed outside of these discussions the difficulty of finding qualified TS candidates. Dwayne indicated that he has had many emails with similar feedback. Robin asked how the Accreditation Council feels about this? Debbie said that she spoke with them last week. They enjoy the simplicity of this. The old process was difficult for 1 person to meet all of the requirements, especially for a small lab due to the experience requirements. They like the analytical disciplines over relevant experience, and that it's tough to determine 'relevant' experience. 2 years of an analytical discipline could be difficult if it is two years of EACH discipline and not 2 years TOTAL. There is still work to be done. The takeaway is to think about what you really need, maybe 1 class or other item so that it isn't (or shouldn't be) a difficult feat to attain. Robin said that the expectation is that we keep additions to a minimum, but if what is found in Module 2 isn't sufficient, we add it to Module 5. Debbie loved the idea of all

of the requirements being found in 1 place, but a more complete list of requirements is tough to justify to the AC. Robin asked if there was a preference for where this would be – she thought it ought to be in the same section of each Technical Module, if that's where it ends up. Paul said that this was the intent, and part of what CSDP EC would need to assure in its review. Robin thought that Module 2 could be referenced and then put the Module 5 requirements in a specific place. Cody asked if there is anything that Module 5 needs over and above the Module 2 draft language, and asked if the exceptions were staying? Debbie said that the exceptions may go in the general requirements, and the AC asked for the ability to include the ability for 'extraordinary' approval. Cody asked if we need the stated requirements for the exceptions as listed. Robin asked about (1) a college level micro course, or a two-tiered approach. Maria Fayard asked if 3 credits would cover it. Robin asked if we needed to be concerned about the disciplines of testing. Jennifer asked what the TS does. The person in charge of Microbiology ought to have taken a Micro course as they need to understand the basic theories/principles/procedures. Patsy agreed. Bob stated that a 4-credit course is required by NJ. Jennifer was offering her perspective from grading courses at the Certification Officers course from non-micro people. Maria Friedman asked if it was a certain number of hours of credit? Antoine thought that it ought to be an upper level micro course. Jennifer said it ought to include a lab portion. Tina said that college level course with a lab like Bob had said, as well. There was general agreement on that. Cody stated that an upper level course would be more micro than we require, as you would have to build to that level. Jennifer asked what you would do if there were none offered locally (given remoteness is already a recognized issue for some labs). Cody asked if we could accept an online component that is assessable/flexible/risk-based. Bob said that they have seen courses online offered by Phoenix at 4 credits – he isn't sure how effective the lab portion is. Robin offered '1 college level microbiology course' as that seems to be the direction we are agreeing on. Cody stated that the Credentialling group is moving toward Analytical Disciplines. Would that be something we could reference? Paul commented that others have said that's a problem if referencing something that doesn't exist yet. Jennifer said that we could look at course descriptions once the content is available. Cody thought that if it works the way we expect, it should be good meet the requirements of the TS. Robin asked if we could wait for the Credentialling requirement, or maybe submit an SIR about it. Paul reminded everyone that an SIR can't add a new requirement, so that's out. Maria Friedman pointed out that we don't want to require JUST the TNI credentialling effort, as that might put us in a bad place eventually. Cody saw how that could end up with someone with no experience and no degree who was able to pass a course, and we don't want that. Liz agreed in that we want the course to be good and a possible aid, but not 'just the course' as you need the micro course discussed earlier. Debbie is looking for one person per Technical Module to join a workgroup on this subject of credentialing and TS. Email feedback would also be welcome. Cody said if there is additional feedback, please send it to her and she will forward it to Debbie. If interested in serving on the workgroup, contact Cody and Debbie. Debbie is hoping for 6-8 people and currently has 5. The starting meeting is next week, and are hoping for a 1 hour commitment every 2 weeks. This is the hold-up for Module 2. Cody expressed a concern over the lack of a requirement for education and experience. Debbie said we need that feedback on Module 2, but are only interested in the technical modules (not trying to be the decider in those cases). Cody said that 4 years of experience is more than the current requirement, but that there are more options than education alone. Maria Friedman offered that a higher

degree makes up for experience. Should it be in the related discipline, or is it any doctorate degree? Cody said that substitution would be built into Module 2. Debbie said it wouldn't be relevant to the discipline. An MD or PhD means that they can learn. Hearing nothing else on TS, Cody ended that discussion.

V. Continued Discussion over Autoclaves (Section 1.7.3.7.b.ii.a)

Cody asked if there were any comments. Robin suggested that we decide on this one way or the other. Cody summarized the discussions with 'that's the way it's always been' and 'if it's gone they won't be missed' aren't good reasons. What's the decision on monthly biologic indicators. Bob said that from the AB perspective, what's the justification to remove the requirement? It's found in the Drinking Water Manual, Standard Methods, and in wastewater requirements. How do we write it up if it is taken out of the Standard? Maria Fayard stated that the DW Manual is guidance. Wastewater allows for method modifications. If it is in the Standard, we can write a finding. Presentations won't help – it's neater and cleaner if in the Standard. Maria Friedman pointed out that the TNI Standard doesn't supersede method requirements. Robin added that Module 2 requires that you follow the method – that could be the citation to use. Cody said that if the AB makes it easy to cite, should this be a baseline expectation? Dwayne said it is needed in the Standard, and Pennsylvania would have a problem with it if it weren't there. He would like as robust a standard as possible. Elisa likes having it in the Standard. Maria Friedman has no objection to retaining it, but it is in the methods. We shouldn't have to rely on it just being in the Standard on that basis. Dwayne said it should also be in other methods. Cody said that not all states need to be as prescriptive, but it isn't a hill she chooses to die on. Bob said that states CAN be more prescriptive and need to do so because it isn't found in the TNI Standard. It's good to have it in the Standard. Cody asked for a straw poll to draw this to a conclusion. Voting in favor of leaving the requirement of a monthly verification of sterility via biological indicators in the Standard were: Maria Fayard, Maria Friedman, Ashley Larssen, Liz Lesold, Patsy Root, Bob Royce, Elisa Snyder. Voting against leaving this in the Standard were Tina Shidel, Robin Cook, Cody Danielson, and Brian Mercer. *[EDITOR'S NOTE – Jessica Hoch was not at the meeting, but was at the same conference as Paul Junio during this meeting. Paul asked Jessica for her position on this statement and she also would have voted for leaving this in.]*

Cody asked that all members read the Standard in total to look for any redundancies. Having reached the end of the scheduled time, the meeting adjourned at 15:01 Eastern. The next meeting of the Microbiology Expert Committee will be Tuesday, June 11 at 1:30PM Eastern.

A summary of action items and backburner/reminder items can be found in Attachment B.

Attachment A - Participants

Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC)

Members	Affiliation	Balance	Contact Information
Hunter Adams 2026 Absent	City of Wichita Falls	Lab	hunter.adams@wichitafallstx.gov
Tina Buttermore 2027* Present	Pace Analytical	Lab	tina.buttermore@pacelabs.com
Robin Cook (Vice Chair) 2024* Present	City of Daytona Beach	Lab	cookr@codb.us
Cody Danielson (Chair) 2025 Present	Oklahoma DEQ	Lab	Cody.Danielson@deq.ok.gov
Maria Fayard 2026* Present	ORELAP	AB	maria.j.fayard@oha.oregon.gov
Maria Friedman 2025* Present (1:40PM)	California ELAP	AB	qamfriedman@gmail.com
Matt Graves 2025* Present (left 2:50PM)	ERA	Other	matt_graves@waters.com
Jessica Hoch 2025 Absent	Texas Comm. on Env. Quality	Other	jessica.hoch@tceq.texas.gov
Silky Labie 2026* Absent	ELCAT, LLC	Other	elcatllc@centurylink.net
Ashley Larssen 2024* Present (1:40PM)	KC Water	Lab	ashley.larssen@kcmo.org
Elizabeth Lesold 2027* Present	NYSDOH ELAP	AB	elizabeth.lesold@health.ny.gov
Brian Mercer 2027* Present	City of Plantation	Lab	bmercerc@plantation.org
Patsy Root 2027* Present	IDEXX	Other	Patsy-Root@IDEXX.com
Bob Royce 2025* Present	New Jersey DEP	AB	Robert.Royce@dep.nj.gov
Elisa Snyder 2026 Present	City of Austin - Austin Water	Lab	elisa.snyder@austintexas.gov
Ilona Taunton Program Administrator Absent	The NELAC Institute	NA	ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org
Paul Junio TNI Scribe Present	The NELAC Institute	NA	paul.junio@nelac-institute.org

* - eligible to serve another term

**Attachment B
Action Items – MEC**

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Actual Completion
104	Implementation Guidance for Temperature Distribution and Equilibrium.	Committee	TBD	See note in 5/11/21 minutes. 4/11/23: Working on Temperature Distribution. 7/11/23: Working on Equilibrium; Anticipated January 2024
113	Complete Response to Draft Comments Process	All	Voting is complete.	5/10/22: Voted on Comments: 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10 6/14/22: Voted on Comments 5 and 6. 2/14/23: Final vote on 1, 4 and 11. 4/11/23: Need to post the document.
114	Work on Questions for the Credentialing Exam	Cody		Get to Jerry as soon as possible.
115	Committee motions, minutes, and votes as needed	Cody	Ongoing	Captured in meeting minutes whether in meeting or via email

Attachment C

Backburner / Reminders – MEC

	Item	Meeting Reference	Comments
1	Update charter (if needed) every 5 years.	n/a	Ongoing
2	Review Method codes and send comments to Robin for Paul Junio.		Moved to back-burner on 6/9/20.
3	Provide an update on what has been done with the method codes and database after Jennifer's review and internal EPA meetings.		This was moved from the Action Items table. Notes: 6/9/20: Ask Jennifer for a follow-up. 11/9/20 – Not available for a follow-up.