



## **ORELAP Technical Advisory Committee**

### **Policy Statement Approved April 10, 2008**

#### **Mission Statement:**

The ORELAP Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC), mandated by National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Committee (NELAC), provides a forum for open discussions between the State and the environmental laboratory community. The Committee advises ORELAP on policies, procedures, implementation and interpretation of the NELAC Standards, and serves as a two-way conduit for information on environmental laboratory accreditation between Oregon laboratories and ORELAP.

#### **Committee Organization:**

The Committee is made up of eight nominated members representing the following groups:

- Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies
- Oregon Environmental Lab Association
- Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association (Water Quality Lab Analysts section)
- Large Drinking Water Agencies
- Small Drinking Water Agencies
- Large Wastewater labs
- Small Wastewater labs
- Large Private Labs
- Small Private Labs
- Education
- Consultants
- Industry, Industry Labs

Other members may be added with the approval of the ORELAP Executive Board.

#### **Nomination and Appointment of Members:**

The Advisory Committee solicits nominations prior to the end of member terms. It may solicit members not directly representing specific organizations.

- The tenure for OTAC membership is a three-year term. OTAC tenures are staggered so that one-third of the Committee's memberships (2 or 3 vacancies) expire at the end of October each year. New Committee members begin their tenure with the December Committee meeting (OTAC meetings are held every two months). Other Committee vacancies are filled as those openings occur.
- Current OTAC members work with ORELAP staff to determine the constituency and composition of the Committee that is advantageous to achieving current Committee objectives. Consideration is given to ensuring adequate and balanced Committee representation from across a variety of constituencies such as commercial labs, government labs, small labs, large labs, wastewater labs and other categories as appropriate to achieve current OTAC objectives.

- Individuals are welcome to bring their names forward for consideration in filling a vacancy on the ORELAP Technical Advisory Committee. Current OTAC membership and ORELAP staff also may bring names forward for consideration. In addition, current OTAC members may bring their names forward for consideration to serve successive terms.
- All nominations for Committee membership will be considered. However, it may not be possible for OTAC to recommend all persons whose names have submitted, given the considerations stated above and the number of names submitted.
- Current OTAC members review the names brought forward to fill Committee vacancies, and consider the current and desired composition of the Committee.
- OTAC submits recommendations to the ORELAP Executive Board on person(s) recommended to fill any Committee vacancy or vacancies.
- The ORELAP Executive Board votes and makes the final decision on each person recommended by OTAC for Committee membership.

**The Executive Board may deem a member inactive after three consecutive absences or three absences per calendar year from Committee Meetings and may terminate that inactive member's term. The Executive Board may terminate a represented organization's participation on the Committee following three absences of the member and alternate from the Committee meetings, or if the organization fails to nominate a member to the Committee.**

It is strongly suggested that committee members attend all meetings in person. If it is not possible to do so then that member may attend by conference call if available and it will not count towards the three absences policy. Committee members are still required to attend at least half of the meetings in person and if the committee feels that a member is excessively using the conference call policy then the committee may revoke (by vote) that option for that committee member. Substituting an alternate from the members represented organization when that member is unavailable is encouraged and will not count toward the absences policy.

#### **Responsibilities of Members:**

- Attend committee meetings. Arrange for coverage by an alternate when needed.
- Prepare for meetings by reviewing e-mailed meeting materials.
- Actively participate in meeting discussions.
- Represent their organization to the Committee and represent the Committee to their organization.
- Accept assignments of the Committee chair and complete them as directed.
- Treat other members and their viewpoints with respect.
- Maintain a current working knowledge of laboratory accreditation issues.
- Alternate refreshments between committee members.

## **OTAC Officer and Staff Responsibilities**

### **Chair:**

- ACTION ITEMS:
  1. Develop accurate list of action items from each OTAC meeting, incorporating new action items and modifying or carrying over action items that have not been completed.
  2. Track completion of all action items.
  3. Prior to each meeting, deliver electronic copies of action items to OTAC members.
  
- MEETING AGENDAS:
  1. Develop written agendas for each OTAC meeting based on standing agenda items, current issues under discussion, open action items, unclosed agenda items from previous meeting(s), issues of Committee interest, and filling of Committee vacancies or annual ORELAP financial reports, if applicable.
  2. Plan future agendas so that adequate time is provided to fill Committee vacancies elected Committee positions, etc.
  3. Two weeks (suggested) prior to each meeting, deliver electronic copies of meeting agenda to OTAC members.
  
- E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION:
  1. Maintain the OTAC e-mail distribution list of OTAC members, ORELAP staff, guests, and others who want to receive information and meeting materials.
  2. Prior to each meeting, submit electronic copies of meeting summaries to OTAC e-mail list.
  3. Distribute direction on what written materials Committee members are expected to bring with them to the meeting.
  4. Provide any necessary maps or directions to meeting locations.
  5. Distribute electronic copies of OTAC policies, or other items to OTAC e-mail list as needed.
  
- FACILITATE MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:
  1. During meetings, keep the Committee discussions on task and related to the agreed upon agenda.
  2. Work with the Committee to rearrange or adapt agendas as needed.
  3. Manage the meeting so that the agenda is covered as much as possible during the two hour meeting time.
  4. Use issues discussed to guide the group to proactively identify informational items that are of use to all environmental laboratories, such as for newsletters, Q&A material for the website, workshop topics, needed training courses, etc. Ensure that the group follows through on these items.
  5. Keep track of longer-range issues, and Committee objectives and goals. Ensure that these items are discussed periodically and that progress is made.
  
- FILLING OTAC VACANCIES AND ELECTED POSITIONS:
  1. Facilitate the group to periodically discuss and assess Committee demographics, and make any necessary changes as Committee issues evolve.
  2. Coordinate receipt and distribution of names of interested candidates.
  3. Coordinate discussion of candidates' merits and representation, including current and desired committee demographics.

4. Forward Committee's recommendations for OTAC members to ORELAP Executive Board for approval.
  5. Receive and distribute approvals of OTAC members from the ORELAP Executive Board.
- OFFICIAL OTAC RECOMMENDATIONS (WITH SECRETARY):
    1. Develop and coordinate comprehensive review of any needed official OTAC recommendations as needed, e.g. recommendations for changes in ORELAP Oregon Revised Statutes, guidance manuals, etc.
    2. Officially submit recommendations to ORELAP Executive Board for their consideration.
  - OMBUDSMAN SERVICES (AS PER THE OTAC OMBUDSMAN PROTOCOLS):
    1. Receive, process, and distribute any officially received issues or concerns to OTAC members via e-mail. Do this anonymously unless the lab requests otherwise.
    2. Gather feedback from OTAC members via e-mail on the merit of the issues raised and the need to address them.
    3. Compile the feedback and make a determination on the merit of the issues raised and the need to address them.
    4. If the issues are found to not have merit, communicate with the laboratory as per the protocols.
    5. If the issues are found to have merit, designate the issue as a priority agenda item for the next OTAC meeting.
    6. Ensure that the issues are discussed openly at the meeting and that plans are in place to resolve the issues in a timely manner.
    7. Ensure that the development of official, written responses is assigned appropriately to ORELAP staff, the ORELAP Executive Board, and/or OTAC member(s) as appropriate, per ORELAP policy.
    8. Coordinate and ensure development and review of official, written response via e-mail in a timely manner.
    9. Send the official, written response to the person or laboratory that submitted the issues or concerns, including a copy of the ORELAP Appeals Process.
    10. Where appropriate and beneficial to laboratories, facilitate the publishing of a generic response to issues in a newsletter or Q&A section of the ORELAP/PHL website.

**Chair Elect:**

- POLICIES:
  1. Develop and coordinate comprehensive review of policies and procedures as needed, e.g. membership, guests at meetings, ombudsman services.
  2. Deliver electronic copies of OTAC policies to Secretary for e-mail distribution to OTAC members, and to OTAC Administrative Support Staff for posting on the PHL/ORELAP website.
- NEWSLETTER AND Q&A MATERIAL FOR ALL ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES:
  1. As needed, develop and coordinate comprehensive review of material on specific topics for publishing in newsletters or on websites.

**Secretary:**

- PRODUCE MEETING SUMMARIES (WITH OTAC ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF):
  1. Record notes during meetings that accurately describe the discussions held, decisions made, action items identified, etc.
  2. Translate notes into accurate, complete written summaries. Review and merge with draft meeting summaries received from OTAC Administrative Support Staff.
  3. Coordinate review of meeting summaries during OTAC meetings.
  4. Incorporate any needed changes and finalize meeting summaries.
  
- E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST:
  6. Maintain the OTAC e-mail distribution list of OTAC members, ORELAP staff, guests, and others who want to receive information and meeting materials.
  7. Prior to each meeting, submit electronic copies of meeting summaries to Chair for distribution to committee members.
  
- OTAC MEMBERSHIP CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENTS:
  1. Ensure that new OTAC members sign Conflict of Interest Statements upon confirmation of membership.
  2. Keep on file all signed Conflict of Interest Statements for all members.
  
- OFFICIAL OTAC RECOMMENDATIONS (WITH CHAIR):
  1. Develop and coordinate comprehensive review of any needed official OTAC recommendations as needed, e.g. recommendations for changes in ORELAP Oregon Revised Statutes, guidance manuals, etc.
  
- ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:
  1. Maintain and distribute OTAC Contact List of OTAC members and ORELAP staff, including name, affiliation, e-mail, phone, fax, mailing address, and end of term.
  2. Provide a sign-up sheet at each meeting to obtain accurate list of all persons, including guests, in attendance. Add new guests to the OTAC e-mail distribution list.
  3. Maintain annual meeting schedule, with meeting dates, times, and locations.
  4. Maintain electronic archives of all meeting summaries, agendas, action items, recommendations made, ombudsman services provided, policies, procedures, issues for future discussion, mission statements, templates for documents, and any other materials that document and facilitate the work of OTAC.

**Meetings:**

The Committee meets six times a year on the second Thursday of even numbered months. The Committee may alter its schedule based on volume and timing of its business. Meeting locations are alternated between Portland and Salem. Other locations may be chosen at the Committees discretion.

**Quorum:**

One-half of the members plus one (currently this would be five active members) shall constitute a quorum for transaction of Committee business. Either the Chair or Chair-Elect must be present.

**Decision Making:**

The Committee may deliberate on and make formal recommendations to the ORELAP Executive Board on policy matters. Formal recommendations shall be made by motion, second and a positive vote by majority of active appointed members present at the meeting, and are recorded in the Committee meeting summary.

**Subcommittees:**

Subcommittees may be designated by vote of the Committee. A subcommittee may contain both OTAC members and nonmembers.

**Committee Support:**

The ORELAP Executive Board provides staff support to the Committee, including clerical support, website support, as explained in the section on Responsibilities of Members.

**Public Participation:**

The Committee welcomes attendance at meetings by the public and includes time on meeting agendas for public input. The Committee publicizes meeting dates and agendas, maintains an interested parties mailing and email list, and distributes meeting agendas, minutes and other materials as appropriate.

**Guests at ORELAP Technical Advisory Committee meetings:**

- Persons who are not members of the ORELAP Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC) and who are not ORELAP program staff are welcome to attend OTAC meetings as guests.
- Guests are welcome to participate in OTAC meetings, identify issues, and provide comments and feedback during the Committee's discussions and deliberations.
- Guests cannot participate in any official votes of the ORELAP Technical Advisory Committee.

Guests may contact the current OTAC Chair for information on Committee meeting schedules and agendas.

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