

## Results of the December 2019 Participant Feedback Survey

### Background

To maintain accreditation to ISO17043, it is important that we continue to improve the service that we offer to participants. A way of recording participant satisfaction is to carry out feedback gathering exercises. This is the seventh survey that we have conducted. Details of the previous surveys are available on the PT section of the website (<http://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes/participant-feedback>).

### Survey

The survey was emailed to all asbestos Proficiency Testing participants, including (AIMS), Asbestos in Soils Scheme (AISS), Low Asbestos Content Scheme (LACS), Regular Inter-laboratory Counting Exchange (RICE) and Scanning Electron Microscopy Fibre Counting Scheme (SEMS). In total 587 participants were emailed the survey and 97 responded (16.5% response rate).

### Results

Q1. From the 97 responses – 40% participate in AIMS, 8% in AISS, 13% in LACS, 25% in RICE, 14% in SEMS.

Q2. 37% of the responses were from the UK, 55% from Europe and 8% from ROW.

Q3. 97% of participants find their samples/ slides to be of a suitable standard.

Q4. 99% of participants receive their samples in a timely manner.

Q5. 100% of participants find our answers to queries useful & informative.

Q6. 97% of participants are aware that they can find our scheme schedule, information books & FAQ's on our website.

Q7. 99% of participants are happy with the timescales for submitting results.

Q8. 97% of participants that receive a group report find them informative.

Q9. Participants were given the opportunity to make suggestions for improvements to the PT Online Data Entry System.

Q10. Participants were given the opportunity to comment/make suggestions for the schemes.

### Customer Comments

Participants were given the opportunity to comment further on a few of the questions. Below are a few examples of the responses:

Q8. If you receive a group report for your scheme, do you find this informative?

- Most participants are happy with the reports they receive for the schemes. A few comments have been made requesting further information which we will investigate further.

Q8. The Proficiency Testing Online Data Entry System is constantly being reviewed and updated. We are currently working on updating the look of the website, making the subscription process easier and adding Quality Control samples to online ordering. If you have any other suggestions for improvements, please comment.

- Online ordering - *participants will continue to subscribe to schemes via the PT Online Data System, QC materials will be available to order online in the near future. Our invoice procedure is quite lengthy so in order to reduce timescales, payment should be made by Worldpay (credit/ debit card) and a full VAT receipt will be issued. Full payment is required before any samples can be despatched. If a laboratory has any issues with this payment option they should notify the PT Team with their PT Lab number.*
- RICE - *the calculation of the slide density will not be implemented as this is deemed part of the test to determine competency.*

- RICE - *the submission of results can be time consuming and the system can time out, especially at busy periods such as deadline day. The csv upload is a much more efficient way of submitting your counts, if you have any problems let me know and we can guide you through the process. Ideally results should be submitted before the results deadline date so that you're able to receive your provisional report and check any slides before sending them to the next lab/ returning them to HSE.*

Q10. Comments/ Suggestions regarding the Schemes.

- AIMS
  - *Suggestions for new PT schemes have been made. The PT Team will investigate further and inform all participants of any progress.*
  - *The size of samples has been questioned - the samples supplied should be of suitable size to carry out analysis effectively.*
- AISS
  - *Suggestions for making the scheme more challenging have been made. The PT Team will look further into these.*
- RICE
  - *The software can be slow and timeout when entering results. These issues mainly arise at busy periods such as deadline day. If participants submit before the deadline date, the provisional report would be issued within a couple of working days and the analysts would have the opportunity to check any slides again. Using the csv method to upload results should be an easier process and prevent timeout issues.*
- General
  - *Participants would like an easier way to order online. We are currently updating our system to allow participants to quality control samples order online and pay directly using Worldpay (credit/ debit card).*
  - *Email contact for multiple laboratories receiving generic emails which do not identify the laboratory in question. Currently the emails are sent out manually and can be quite difficult for the PT team to identify individual laboratories with this potential issue. Future improvements to the software may see emails sent directly from there, which would include the PT Lab No in correspondence. This is not a priority at the moment but every effort to ensure useful information is emailed to participants will be made by the PT team in the meantime.*

## **Discussion**

This is the seventh feedback gathering exercise and the response rate remains high. The main aim of this survey was to determine if the schemes, and the process, are of an acceptable standard for our participants.

Participants have made very positive comments regarding the quality of the schemes and how they are administered. They have also provided valuable constructive feedback where they feel improvement could be made. Although not all answers to comments/ suggestions has been provided in this report, the survey has been collated and distributed within the team so that we're all aware of where we are doing well and where we could improve.

If anyone has raised a concern/ query on the questionnaire which hasn't been answered, please email the PT team who will be happy to provide further feedback.

We are continually striving to improve the quality of the schemes so this exercise will be carried out annually. Participants are reminded that they are welcome to provide constructive feedback at any time by emailing the PT administration team.

**Outcome**

The results, comments and feedback have been passed to the HSE PT team, PT Management Team and findings will be discussed at the next FPTSC meeting in June 2020.