

EChemTest⁺ BULLETIN n.10: LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

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SUMMARY

- 1) *EChemTest[®] sustainability established despite the pandemic*
 - 2) *The starting point: the acceptance of the amended MoU*
 - 3) *The key activities to take care of*
 - 4) *How the TCs/ATSs can get credits*
 - 5) *How gained resources can be used*
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1) EChemTest SUSTAINABILITY ESTABLISHED DESPITE THE PANDEMIC

On December 2019 the ECTN Administrative Council (AC) held in Rome, after 5 year of EChemTest⁺ special project, formally adopted the Producer-Consumer (Prosumer) model to run EchemTest[®] Self Evaluation Sessions (SES)s. Within it costs, benefits and tasks were distributed between the Test Centres (TC)s (and the Accredited Test Sites (ATS)s) of the Universities and ECTN (through its Virtual Education Community (VEC) committee and the managerial support of the Chem Learn portal of the Master-UP Agency). The Prosumer EchemTest[®] regime was planned to start at the April 2020 ECTN General Assembly (GA). The 2017-2019 delivery of about 2500 SESs per year based on the LibreEOL software of O. Gervasi had, in fact, proved the sustainability of the project.

Despite the fact that COVID 19 forced the ECTN GA activities to be postponed to October 2020, O. Gervasi and his collaborators enabled the LibreEOL software to run EchemTest[®] SESs **on line** too.

2) THE STARTING POINT: THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE AMENDED MoU ANNEX

Due to the controversial interpretation of the text of the ANNEX to the Budapest EchemTest[®]-TC MoU, long negotiations on the relevant 2017-2020 reports presented at the 2020 VEC meeting led to an amended version of the ANNEX to be implemented starting from January 2021. In order to start afresh the next year activities “any payments due to ECTN or to TCs from previous years” were annulled upon the recommendation of the ECTN Executive Board.

No TC/ATS refused the amended ANNEX. Actually most of them (Budapest, Genoa, Kazan, Krakow, La Paz, Ljubljana, Madrid, Milan, Naples and Perugia) explicitly confirmed its acceptance. In addition, the first MoU establishing a Local ECTN Advisor (LEA) for training school students to run on line SESs through TCs/ATSs was signed by a Technical Institute and is available for extension to other Schools.

3) THE KEY ACTIVITIES TO TAKE CARE OF

TCs/ATs, are the key players of the EchemTest® Prosumer model because they run SESs for their own students (in which case they accumulate debits as specified in the ANNEX) and for **ECTN, ECTN members and third parties** as well (in which case they accumulate credits as specified in the ANNEX). To this end they must fill the relevant Chem Learn e-form so as to book, through a **“purchase order”**, the planned number of SESs to be delivered during the solar year either for their own Institution (Q1 starting with the first one-hundred free ones) or for others (Q2-Q4) or even to be received (Q5). Using the same form they can commit themselves to provide voluntary work on Questions & Answers (Q&A)s (Q6,Q7) and for dissemination (Q8). TCs/ATs can start activities only after presenting their annual plan that can be modified along the year. The initial plan and its subsequent modifications of services requested/offered by TCs/ATs is subject to the evaluation and approval of the ECTN Virtual Education Community (VEC) committee. **TCs/ATs must close the report of all their annual activities and submit it to Chem Learn within the first month of the ended year.**

The Secretariat manages all Echemtest® financial matters (including those dealt before by the ECTN Agency Master-Up s.r.l.) with the support of the Chem Learn portal and the VEC committee. In particular the new duties of the Secretariat are: a) either approve (if needed by specifying some conditions) or not approve the financial aspects of the various plans; b) assign to the relevant entities the fraction of net gains associated with services provided; c) charge the relevant entities with the debit associated with services used.

LibreEOL provides the central service associated with the running of SESs on behalf of the TCs/ATs having purchased the necessary number of SESs and having checked with Chem Learn about the availability of sufficient credit. LibreEOL runs also specific activities for spotting and taking under control faulty and technical SESs.

The Chem Learn Portal handles SES purchase orders, provides the number of run SESs allowing so far to figure out how many among the purchased ones are still available, estimates the TCs/ATS credits/debits offsetting, deals with ECTN and third party service requests and provision (including training, SES offers, dissemination, etc.). It also deals with the purchases of Individual Proficiency Certificates (IPC)s, reports properly annual activities, etc..

4) HOW THE TCs/ATs CAN GET CREDITS AND EXTRA RESOURCES (see ANNEX)

As already said, a typical activity of a TC/ATS is the running of ECTN services. This creates debits (if run for the own University. This creates credits (if run for ECTN, other ECTN members and third parties). The most typical services are the running of SESs and the creation and maintenance of the Q&A Libraries together with taking part to ECTN dissemination activities. Credits are also generated by the incomes associated with the purchase of IPCs by the successful test takers. TCs/ATs debits/credits offsetting has to be checked (especially before starting SESs even though the balance could not be always the real time up to date one) when using Chem Learn.

5) HOW GAINED RESOURCES CAN BE USED

Gained credits in addition to offsetting debits can be spent to support any of the activities listed in the ANNEX. They can also be spent (after authorization by the VEC)

for reimbursing travel expenses met when attending meetings, initiatives and conferences relevant to EChemTest activities.

Copies of the ANNEX are available

Do you wish to start an EchemTest TC and provide presence and on line e-tests for your students and school leavers? To get started contact A. Laganà lagana05@gmail.com

AMENDED ANNEX: DEBITS AND CREDITS

◆ before beginning any activities every solar year each TC/ATS has to officially:

a) **purchase (subject to VEC approval)** on the ECHEMTEST database (accessible to the VEC Chair and LibreEOL in read) the number of planned (Q) SESs (**see Fig.1 as an example of the 2019 PLANNING TABLE**) using an ad hoc e-form (**see Fig.2 for the CHEM-LEARN e-FORM**) partitioned as:

Q1 = planned number of SESs to be carried out by itself for its own purpose

Q2 = planned number of SESs to be carried out by itself on behalf of a different ECTN member or associate (e.g. ATS)

Q3 = planned number of SESs to be carried out by itself on behalf of ECTN

Q4 = planned number of SESs to be carried out by itself on behalf of a third party

Q5 = planned number of SESs to be carried out on behalf of the considered TC by another TC

with $Q0 = Q1+Q2+Q3+Q4+Q5$ (partitioning of Q0 and its Q1 components need to be input into the ECHEMTEST database and **require approval by the VEC**);

b) **plan (subject to VEC approval)** on the ECHEMTEST database the number of (**see Fig. 1 and 2 as an example of the 2019 PLANNING TABLE and the CHEM-LEARN e-FORM**):

Q6 = Q&As to be created

Q7 = Q&As to be revised

Q8 = hours to be spent for dissemination activities.

◆ At the end of every solar year:

a) **LibreEOL automatically produces and inputs** into the ECHEMTEST database (with TC and ATS in read) the actual number A (**see Fig.3**) of the SESs carried out by each TC/ATS (with A1-A5 figures expected to little deviate from the planned Q1-Q5 ones);

b) **each TC/ATS has to input** in the ECHEMTEST database (with LibreEOL in read), using again the e-form of **Fig.2**, its estimated A1-A5 numbers of SES plus A6 the number of created new Q&As, A7 the number of corrected existing Q&As and the number of hours A8 spent for dissemination activities (with A6-A8 figures corresponding to (and expected to agree with) the planned Q6-Q8 ones);

◆ After the end of the solar year ECTN publishes the yearly balances based on the following credit and debit rules:

Q1: 3.5 euro are debited per SES (with the first 100 SESs being free for this specific item and applicable to unfinished/faulty sessions if any)

Q2: 3.5/3 euro are credited per SES (the requester incurs in a 3.5 debit per SES)

Q3: 3.5/3 euro are credited per SES (ECTN incurs in a 3.5 debit per SES)

Q4: 3.5/3 euro are credited per SES (the requester incurs in the debit set for third parties)

Q5: 3.5 euro are debited per SES (3.5/3 euro per SES are credited to the provider)

Q6: 3.5 euro are credited per created Q&A

Q7: 3.5/3 euro are credited per revised Q&A

Q8: 3.5 euro are credited per dissemination hour.

Corrections by the TCs, if any, need to be agreed with the VEC not later than one month after the data publication using again the e-forms. After the end of the month credits become available for use by the creditor while the debtor is invoiced for the amount due with the overall results showing up in **Fig. 4**.

◆ **The above given scheme allows the offsetting (within the same year) of debits with credits** which can be used (when available) to reimburse expenses met to carry VEC activities. In this case credits earned in one year can be spent during next year.

◆ **Credits are also earned by issuing paid Individual Proficiency Certificates (IPC)s.** As shown in **Fig. 5**, in fact, IPCs have been issued since 2017. In order to allow the test taker to consult in his/her personal Page the summary of the SESs carried out, related scores and the procedure for ordering an IPC and pay for it via bank transfer to ECTN, LibreEOL issues to him/her an automatic message. The net gain associated with the issued IPCs is allocated for 1/3 to the TC having managed the related SES and 1/3 to the ATS/Agency having procured it.