 FOOD and WATER MICROBIOLOGY PROFICIENCY TESTING SCHEMES
Terms and Conditions of Participation

1. Samples distributed as part of the Schemes may contain microbiological pathogens of Hazard Groups 1 and 2 as defined by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (2004) “The Approved List of biological agents”. Participants must ensure that their laboratory facilities and expertise are adequate to ensure the safe handling and disposal of these organisms during their participation in the Schemes.

2. Membership of the Schemes is on an annual basis commencing on 1 April each year and terminating on 31 March in the next year. A participant is required to renew its participation in the Scheme each year. If a participant fails to renew, its membership in the Scheme will be terminated automatically. If a participant joins part way through the annual period, a reduced fee is payable reflecting the number of samples to be supplied for that part year. A participant may withdraw from the schemes at any time on giving 30 days' written notice, but no refund will be given of fees paid.

3. Public Health England (PHE) reserves the right to decline renewal of participant's membership at the end of each annual period or to change the annual fee.

4. Process for re-registration of the Schemes starts in January every year. Participants must complete the re-registration process to continue participating and receiving the Schemes.

5. Membership of a Scheme is offered with the understanding that participants will process quality assessment samples in the same way as their routine samples. This is necessary to achieve the primary purpose of the schemes, which is to allow participants an insight into their levels of performance in routine work.

6. Each laboratory will be registered under a unique code number. This code number and the assessment of individual performance is confidential to the participant and will not be released by PHE to third parties other than under any written agreement. Participants are free to release information concerning their own individual performance to whoever they wish. The fact of actual participation in the Schemes is not regarded as confidential and may be revealed by PHE to those with legitimate reasons for knowing.

7. All reports, and the data they contain, issued by the Quality Assessment Schemes are Crown Copyright and may not be published in any form without permission of PHE.
8. Participants in the Schemes have entire responsibility for all samples distributed to them under the Schemes and all activities carried out by them or any third party in relation to the samples from the time of delivery of the samples.

9. The liability of PHE to the participant in any annual period resulting from or in connection with the provision of the Scheme by PHE to the participant shall under no circumstances exceed the amount of the annual fee paid by the participant in respect of that annual period.

10. In case of the transfer of all or a substantial part of PHE’s activities to another government body, PHE shall, notwithstanding any provisions to the contrary in this agreement, be entitled to transfer its rights and obligations hereunder to such other government body.

I understand that the Scheme samples are likely to contain virulent pathogenic organisms of ACDP categories 1 & 2 and confirm that my laboratory facilities and staff expertise are adequate for safe handling and disposal of these organisms. I understand also that the Scheme samples are supplied on the basis that they will not be re-sold or supplied to any organisation or individuals outside the purchasing authority.

Please note these food and water microbiology proficiency testing schemes terms and conditions of participation are in addition to Public Health England’s terms and conditions which can be viewed at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-terms-and-condition-of-business