OPCW Technical Secretariat

S/2501/2026
9 March 2026
ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR A COURSE FOR ANALYTICAL CHEMISTS FROM LABORATORIES SUPPORTING CUSTOMS SERVICES, OPCW CENTRE FOR CHEMISTRY AND TECHNOLOGY, THE NETHERLANDS 10 – 13 NOVEMBER 2026

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) wishes to inform Member States that the Secretariat, in collaboration with China, will hold a course on the development of analytical skills for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services. The course is scheduled to be held at the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) in Pijnacker-Nootdorp, the Netherlands, from 10 to 13 November 2026. The aim of the course is to assist qualified analytical chemists from laboratories that support, or plan to support, customs services or offices in acquiring further experience and practical knowledge of the analysis of chemicals relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention). In addition, the course will facilitate the adoption of good laboratory practices for the implementation of the Convention.

COURSE CONTENT

2. The course will include a variety of lectures and laboratory work. The lectures will cover general aspects of the OPCW, the Convention, and the Verification Annex to the Convention. It will also cover the chemical structure and properties of scheduled chemicals, the methods of separation and structure elucidation, and the detection and analysis of scheduled chemicals at various concentration levels. The role of customs service laboratories in promoting chemical safety will also be discussed.

3. Practical laboratory work will include:

   (a) gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and analyte identification using the Automated Mass Spectral Deconvolution and Identification System (AMDIS) and the OPCW Central Analytical Database (OCAD);

   (b) sampling and sample preparation methods for GC-MS analysis;

   (c) handheld Fourier transform infrared and Raman spectroscopy for rapid identification; and

   (d) a visit to the Dutch Customs Laboratory.

SPONSORSHIP

4. The cost of the course and of accommodation for all participants will be covered by the Secretariat. In addition, the Secretariat will pay for international travel, lunch, coffee breaks, and medical and travel insurance for all participants while the course is being conducted, in accordance with OPCW rules. The Secretariat will select the participants based on their qualifications and experience.

5. The Secretariat will not pay for medical assistance. Therefore, participants should be fit to travel. All participants taking prescribed medication should arrive with supplies sufficient for the duration of the course.

6. Participants are requested to obtain any necessary visas, including Schengen Area travel visas, before travelling to the Netherlands. The Secretariat will cover the costs of these visas by reimbursing participants upon production of the original receipts to representatives of the Secretariat.

7. When making travel arrangements for sponsored participants, the Secretariat will seek the most economical options. The Secretariat will purchase tickets and send them to the participants. Participants must keep their boarding passes and hand them to Secretariat representatives.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

8. The analytical skills development courses offered by the OPCW are aimed at building analytical skills with regard to chemicals relevant to the Convention.

9. The course is open to those who:

   (a) are citizens of OPCW Member States whose economies are developing or in transition;

   (b) have a minimum of a first degree (BSc or equivalent) in chemistry or analytical chemistry from a recognised university or institution, with relevant practical and theoretical experience in analytical chemistry, specifically the use of GC and GC-MS; and

   (c) have at least three years of experience in an analytical laboratory and currently work in a chemical laboratory providing support or planning to support customs services in an OPCW Member State with an economy that is developing or in transition.

10. The course will be conducted in English. Candidates must therefore have a good command of both written and spoken English. Any candidate who, upon arrival, is found not to meet this requirement will not be allowed to continue with the course.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

11. Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications online via Eventus, the OPCW event management system (https://eventus.opcw.org). Applicants must first create an account and then register for the event. Each application must be accompanied by a curriculum vitae or a short abstract describing the applicant's work experience and the analytical techniques they are familiar with. A photocopy of the personal identification page of the applicant's passport is mandatory.

12. Each application must be endorsed digitally on the Eventus platform by the nominee's respective National Authority or Permanent Representation. Only nominations endorsed by the National Authority or Permanent Representation of the candidate's country to the OPCW will be considered, and only selected candidates will be notified by the Secretariat.

13. The Secretariat strongly encourages States Parties and National Authorities to seek, support, and endorse applications from qualified women candidates.

14. All applications must be received by the Secretariat **no later than 16 April 2026**. Candidates who have not been contacted by the OPCW by 30 May 2026 should consider that their application has been unsuccessful.

15. Personal information provided in the application must match the details as shown in the passport, as this information will be used for the issuance of flight tickets should an application be successful. Participants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of their personal information. Any inaccuracies may result in exclusion from the course or additional charges that will need to be borne by the participants.

16. Additional information may be obtained from the International Cooperation Branch of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division. The contact persons are Mr Farid Tata, Senior Project Assistant (Email: farid.tata@opcw.org), and Mr Massimo de Rienzo, Senior Programme Officer (Email: massimo.derienzo@opcw.org).

Annex: Provisional Programme

Annex

**COURSE FOR ANALYTICAL CHEMISTS
FROM LABORATORIES SUPPORTING CUSTOMS SERVICES
OPCW CENTRE FOR CHEMISTRY AND TECHNOLOGY, THE NETHERLANDS
10 – 13 NOVEMBER 2026**

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Time	Activity
Tuesday, 10 November 2026	
09:30 – 13:00 (11:00 – 11:15 *coffee break*)	• Opening session: Welcome addresses and group photo • Introduction to the OPCW, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Verification Annex to the Convention • Overview of International Cooperation Branch capacity-building programmes • Introduction to the ChemTech Centre • Tour of the ChemTech Centre
13:00 – 13:45	*Lunch*
13:45 – 16:30 (15:00 – 15:15 *coffee break*)	• Designated laboratories and proficiency testing • Introduction to scheduled chemicals and their chemistry • Analysis strategy • Element-specific GC detectors • Use of GC-MS, quality checks, and contamination control
Wednesday, 11 November 2026	
09:30 – 13:00 (11:00 – 11:15 *coffee break*)	• Sample collection • Handling of toxic samples, chain of custody, and security • Sample preparation: ▪ Solid phase extraction ▪ Hydrocarbon clean-up • Laboratory practical session: Sample clean-up and GC-MS analysis before and after clean-up
13:00 – 13:45	*Lunch*
13:45 – 16:30 (15:00 – 15:15 *coffee break*)	• Derivatisation • Laboratory practical session: Sample derivatisation and GC-MS analysis
Thursday, 12 November 2026	
09:30 – 16:30	Visit to the Dutch Customs Laboratory in Amsterdam
Friday, 13 November 2026	
09:30 – 13:00 (11:00 – 11:15 *coffee break*)	• Retention indices • AMDIS and the National Institute of Standards and Technology • The OCAD • Practical exercise with AMDIS/OCAD
13:00 – 13:45	*Lunch*
13:45 – 16:30 (15:00 – 15:15 *coffee break*)	• Introduction to handheld devices for chemical warfare agent detection • Discussion: Analysis strategies and unknowns • Evaluation session, collection of questionnaires, and discussion • Presentation of certificates

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