

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS (A.C.O.T.) **CONSTITUTION**

ARTICLE 1 NAME

This organization shall be called the Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists (herein called The Association). The Association is also known as ACOT.

ARTICLE 2 PURPOSE

The objectives of this Association shall be:

- 2.1 to act as the official organization for the promotion of Occupational Therapy in the Caribbean Basin Region (herein called the Caribbean).
- 2.2 to promote co-operation among Occupational Therapists, and between them and other allied professional groups in the Caribbean.
- 2.3 to maintain the ethics of the profession and to advance the practice and standards of Occupational Therapy in the Caribbean.
- 2.4 to establish and promote Occupational Therapy training programmes in the Caribbean at assistant, basic, and post-graduate levels, and to provide continuing education.
- 2.5 to maintain a registry of members.
- 2.6 to publish a journal and other literature for the dissemination of knowledge of Occupational Therapy, and to facilitate the exchange of information and publications and to promote research.
- 2.7 to be involved in matters where Occupational Therapy expertise can contribute to policy making in general preventative, curative and rehabilitative health matters at local, governmental and regional levels.
- 2.8 to raise funds through legal means to further the development of the profession.

ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Membership of the Association will include the following classes:

3.1.1 Ordinary Membership -

Occupational Therapists who are qualified professional members of a World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) member country national association, or who have graduated from a WFOT-recognized Occupational Therapy education programme and completed field work approved by WFOT and who are

employed within the legal requirements of the Laws of the region are eligible to become ordinary members.

3.1.2 Honourary Membership -

The Executive Council may appoint by two thirds of the votes at a general meeting or by mail ballot any person or persons who have rendered outstanding service to the Association or to Occupational Therapy in the Caribbean; or who have made some notable contribution to the health or welfare of humanity. Persons consenting to be Honourary members shall not participate in the administration of the Association.

3.1.3 Associate Membership –

Students and other persons interested in Occupational Therapy are eligible to be Associate members.

3.2 All members are entitled to attend open meetings of the Association and to receive Association reports.

3.3 Ordinary members are eligible for election to executive offices and for appointment to committees of the Association.

ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS

4.1 The Association will have the following officers:

- A President
- A Vice-President
- An Honourary Secretary
- An Honourary Treasurer
- A Floor Member
- A President-Elect

4.2 All officers of the Association will be elected members in good standing of the Association.

4.3 All officers will serve for a term of two years and will be eligible for immediate re-election in the same position for a further two year term.

4.4 Officers whose terms of office expire prior to the election of a successor shall continue to hold office until the termination of the next Executive Meeting.

ARTICLE 5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5.1 The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice-President, the Honourary Secretary, and the Honourary Treasurer, the Floor Member, the President-Elect, and the Past-President in an advisory capacity. Any three (excluding Past-President) shall constitute a quorum.

- 5.2 The Executive Committee shall direct the affairs of the Association.
- 5.3 The Executive Committee shall act as the Finance Committee and Membership Committee until such time as members are appointed to these committees.
- 5.4 When a vacancy in office occurs, other than by expiry of time, the Executive Committee shall nominate and the members by mail vote shall select a member to hold that office until the next Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE 6 FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICERS

- 6.1 The President, who shall be Chairman of the Executive Committee shall preside at all meetings and shall be an ex-officio member of all subcommittees.
- 6.2 The Vice-President shall assist the President in the performance of his/her duties and shall preside in the absence or at the request of the President. In the absence of the Vice President, the Honourary Secretary shall preside.
- 6.3 The Honourary Secretary and Honourary Treasurer shall be responsible for carrying out duties delegated to them by the President.
- 6.4 The Floor Member shall be responsible for carrying out duties delegated by the President.

ARTICLE 7 COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Executive Committee may from time to time by Standing Order establish standing committees as it deems advisable and may in the same way define the powers and duties of such committees. Any such committees may be abolished by resolution of the Executive Committee at any time.
- 7.2 The Executive Committee shall appoint a Chairman of standing committees. Each Chairman of a standing committee shall appoint the members of that committee from time to time.
- 7.3 The Chairman of each standing committee shall make a report at every meeting of the Executive Committee and also at any other time at the request of the President.
- 7.4 The Executive Committee may from time to time establish special committees and define the powers and duties of each such committee.
- 7.5 The Executive Committee shall name the Chairman and members of any special committee.

- 7.6 A special committee shall exist for the period mentioned in the resolution establishing it provided, however, that such period may be extended by the Executive Committee from time to time.

ARTICLE 8 GENERAL MEETING

- 8.1 A General Meeting of the Association shall be held if possible once every year and at least every two years, and all members and any other qualified occupational therapists shall be entitled to attend.
- 8.2 The general meeting will:
- 8.2.1 Receive a report from the Executive Committee.
 - 8.2.2 Receive a report from the Honourary Treasurer with the latest audited financial statement available.
 - 8.2.3 Discuss any other business.
- 8.3 A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall be one third of members or not less than three country representatives.
- 8.4 Voting at a General Meeting shall be by simple majority by a show of hands except when voting for officers of the Association, which shall be done by secret ballot.

ARTICLE 9 FINANCES

- 9.1 The amount of the dues shall be established by the Executive Committee.
- 9.2 Dues shall be payable in advance of the date of the fiscal year.
- 9.3 Ordinary Members who have not paid their dues shall receive a second notice after two months and may be dropped from membership after a further 3 months if dues are not paid.
- 9.4 Contributions, grants, bequests and endowments or their proceeds may be received, held and used for the purposes of the Association or such Foundation as may be created in the future as determined by the Executive Committee.
- 9.5 The Association is in no way financially responsible for the expenses of individual officers. The Association shall make such contribution to meet the expenses of the President, Honourary Secretary, Honourary Treasurer for the Annual General Meeting, as may be determined by the Executive Committee. The Association may make such contribution to the expenses of other persons as may be determined from time to time by the Standing Orders of the Association.

ARTICLE 10 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 10.1 A Member suspected of unethical action or of failing to maintain professional standards, or convicted by any Court of Law of a criminal offence, may be required to explain his/her action to the Membership Committee and, after investigating, if warranted, the Executive Committee may terminate the membership.
- 10.2 A Member who fails to pay annual dues or any special assessment within the time limit set by the Executive Committee may have membership terminated by the Executive Committee.
- 10.3 Any Member has the right to withdraw from membership of the Association. Upon receipt of a written and signed submission from the member, the Honourary Secretary shall remove the member's name from the current membership list of the Association.
- 10.4 In cases of withdrawal of membership, there shall be no refund of fees paid for the current year either whole or in part.

ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENTS

- 3.1 The Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a resolution of the Executive Committee confirmed by a majority vote of the membership present at any constituted meeting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment has been received in writing by members at least four weeks prior to the meeting at which the resolution is to be proposed.

ARTICLE 12 DISSOLUTION

- 12.1 The Association shall be dissolved on a resolution of the Executive Committee confirmed by a majority vote of the members present at a General Meeting, provided that notice of the proposed dissolution has been received in writing by members at least three months prior to the meeting at which the resolution for dissolution is to be proposed.
- 12.2 In the case of dissolution, all the Association's assets shall be transferred to a similar organization or a charity, as determined by the Association.
- 12.3 The Association's liabilities are not the personal responsibility of individual members or officers.

BY-LAWS OF THE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Membership in the Association shall include the following classes of members:

- Ordinary Member
- Honourary Member
- Associate Member

1.2.1 Membership is not transferable from one person to another.

1.2.2 Ordinary and Associate Membership in the Association is renewable annually.

1.2.3 There shall be two classes of Honourary Membership:

- One Year
- Life Time

1.3 ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP:

1.3.1 Criteria for Ordinary Membership:

1.3.1.1 Ordinary Membership may be granted to a person who is practising full-time, part-time, or not currently practising and who meets the following criteria:

- i) graduation from an occupational therapy education programme approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT).
- ii) successful completion of required fieldwork for registration in a WFOT-recognized country.
- iii) working within the legal requirements of the laws of the country where employed.

1.3.2 Conditions of Ordinary Membership:

1.3.2.1 All applicants for membership, or renewal of membership, in the Association, shall sign a declaration stating they shall familiarize themselves with and abide by the By-laws and the Code of Ethics of the Association.

1.3.2.2 Ordinary Members shall pay membership fees as prescribed by the Executive Committee.

1.3.3 Rights of Ordinary Membership:

1.3.3.1 Ordinary Members have a single vote at any meeting, election, or write-in vote of the Association.

1.3.3.2 Ordinary Members will receive the publications of the Association.

1.4 HONOURARY MEMBERSHIP

1.4.1 Procedure for Nomination:

1.4.1.1 The Executive Committee may appoint by two thirds of the votes at Annual General Meeting or an extra-ordinary meeting, any person to Honourary Membership who meets the criteria for Honourary Membership as codified in the By-laws.

1.4.2 Criteria for Honourary Membership:

1.4.2.1 The Honourary (One Year) Member shall have rendered significant short term contributions to the Association.

1.4.2.2 The Honourary Life Member shall have rendered outstanding service to the Association or the profession of Occupational Therapy in the Caribbean over an extended period of time.

1.4.3 Conditions of Honourary Membership:

1.4.3.1 Honourary (One Year) Membership shall continue for one year from the date of conference.

1.4.3.2 Honourary Life Membership shall continue for the life of the person so-named, unless revoked for cause.

1.4.3.3 At no time shall the number of Honourary Members exceed ten (10).

1.4.3.4 Honourary Members shall not pay any membership fees.

1.4.3.5 Honourary Members may not hold office or vote on any matter affecting the Association.

1.4.4 Rights of Honourary Membership:

1.4.4.1 Honourary Members shall receive the publication of the Association.

1.5 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

1.5.1 Criteria for Associate Membership:

1.5.1.1 Associate Membership may be granted to a person who is not a registered Occupational Therapist but who may be a student, an Occupational Therapy Assistant, Orthotist, or other health professional interested in supporting the Association.

1.5.2 Conditions for Associate Membership:

1.5.2.1 All applicants for Associate membership, or renewal of Associate membership, in the Association, shall sign a declaration stating they shall familiarize themselves with and abide by the By-laws and the Code of Ethics of the Association.

1.5.2.2 Associate members shall pay membership fees as prescribed by the Executive Committee.

1.5.3 Rights of Associate Membership:

1.5.3.1 An Associate Member will receive the publications of the Association.

1.5.3.2 An Associate Member is not a voting member of the Association.

1.5.3.3 An Associate Member may not hold office in the Association.

ARTICLE 2 OFFICERS

2.1 Conditions of election and voting shall be as follows:

2.1.1 President-elect shall be elected at the commencement of the Annual General Meeting at which the outgoing President retires.

2.1.2 Each successive President shall be elected from a country other than that of the outgoing President.

2.1.3 The President and the Honourary Secretary shall reside in the same country.

2.1.4 The Vice-President maintains a voting rights if a duly accredited member of the Association.

2.1.5 When the Honourary Secretary and the Honourary Treasurer are duly accredited members of the Association they may retain their voting rights.

2.1.6 The President shall have a casting vote but not a primary vote on all questions considered by the Executive Committee.

2.1.7 Each Executive Committee member will serve for not less than two years and for no more than four consecutive years in the same office.

2.1.8 The elections for President and Honourary Secretary will take place in alternate years from the elections for Vice-President and Honourary Treasurer to maintain continuity of the Association's business.

2.2 Functions of the Officers:

2.2.1 The President shall submit a report of the state of the Association to each meeting of the Executive Committee. Administrative and financial reports shall be submitted by the appropriate officials.

ARTICLE 3 COMMITTEES

3.1 The Executive Committee may establish and may dissolve the following standing committees and such other standing committees as may be deemed advisable:

- Conference Committee
- Education Committee
- Publications Committee
- International Relations Committee
- Ethics Committee
- Legislation Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Professional Practice Committee

3.2 The Executive Committee may create and dissolve special ad hoc committees from time to time.

ARTICLE 4 FINANCE

4.1 Banking accounts shall be established as deemed advisable by the Executive Committee.

4.2 The collection of all Organizational Membership dues shall be the responsibility of the Honourary Secretary or Honourary Treasurer of the Association.

4.3 Dues of Ordinary Members should be forwarded to the Honourary Treasurer of the Association.

4.4 Dues shall be paid at the beginning of the fiscal year (May 1).

4.5 The expenses covering travel and subsistence for a Delegate appointed by the Executive Committee as official representative of the Association to an international meeting may be provided if, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, the Association funds are sufficient to do so.

4.6 Members of committees who incur, in connection with their assignments, expenses such as postage, stationary or other similar items may submit bills with requests for expenses through their committee Chairman. The Association shall meet approved expenses.

4.7 The Executive Committee is empowered to appoint auditors in the country where the Honourary Treasurer resides.

ARTICLE 5 PERMANENT PRESERVATION OF MINUTES

- 5.1 The Minutes shall be in duplicate, recorded on suitably durable paper.
- 5.2 Each page shall be identified stating title, date and number. The duplicate copy shall be marked as such.
- 5.3 Place of keeping for both original and duplicate copies shall be with the current Honourary Secretary. The original copy shall be placed in a place of safe keeping.
- 5.4 Upon completion of the Honourary Secretary's term of office the original book of minutes shall be transferred to the in-coming Honourary Secretary. The duplicate book shall be retained by the retiring Honourary Secretary until safe arrival of the original. In the event of loss of either set of minutes, total or partial, these shall be replaced.
- 5.5 In addition to the minutes there shall be compiled a loose-leaf thumb index in which shall be recorded all resolutions (motions passed) passed by the Executive Committee. This shall be in suitable format and shall accompany the Honourary Secretary at meetings to provide ready reference.

THE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THIS DOCUMENT AS THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS WAS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF A.C.O.T. IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA, APRIL 11, 1992.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The following amendments were proposed, discussed, voted on, accepted and ratified into the constitution at the Biennial General Meeting of the stated years by active members of the Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists:

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- 1) That the WFOT delegate be a part of the executive
- 2) That there be appointed Alternate 1 and Alternate 2 to assist the WFOT Delegate
- 3) That the immediate past president remains as part of the executive to be available for continuity of the Association's business
- 4) That the President and Secretary do not need to reside in the same country
- 5) That the requirement for an interim meeting of the executive be discontinued and replaced by a minimum of quarterly meetings to be held by the executive with Minuted documentation.

Article 3 Membership

3.1.1 Ordinary Membership – Occupational therapists who are qualified professional members of a World Federation of Occupational Therapists member country national association or who have graduated from a WFOT recognized Occupational Therapy education programme and completed fieldwork approved by WFOT and who are resident and employed within the legal requirements of the laws of the region are eligible to become ordinary members. Ordinary members must be members of their national associations where they exist in their country of practice/ residence.

3.1.3 Associate Membership-

Students, qualified occupational therapists or occupational therapy assistants not resident in the region and other persons interested in Occupational therapy are eligible to be Associate members

Article 4 Officers

4.1 The Association will have the following officers:

- A President
- A Vice-President (President-Elect)
- An Honourary Secretary
- An Honourary Treasurer
- WFOT Delegate

Article 5 Executive Committee

5.1 Amend to delete the Past-President, President Elect. Add the WFOT Delegate

Article 8 General Meeting

8.2.2 Amend to delete latest audited financial statement available.

BY-LAWS OF THE CONSTITUTION

1.3.1.1

(iii) working within the legal requirements of the laws of the country within the region where reside

1.5 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

1.5.1.1 Add or a qualified occupational therapist not resident or employed in the region

1.5.2.1. All applicants for Associate membership, or renewal of Association membership in the Association, shall sign a declaration stating that they shall familiarize themselves with and abide by the BY-Laws and Code of Ethics of the Association be deletd

ARTICLE 2 OFFICERS

2.1.1 Vice President shall be elected at the at the commencement of the Biennial General Meeting at which the outgoing President retires.

2.1.3 That the President and Secretary shall reside in the same country be deleted

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Article 4

4.5 The composition of the executive should include members from as many Caribbean countries as possible

Article 8

8.5 Electronic meetings of the Executive shall be held bimontly. The President may invite The Country Representatives to attend and present their country report.

8.2.2 The BGM will receive a report from the Honourary Treasurer with a current financial statement which should be audited where possible