



# **SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF HAND THERAPISTS: CONSTITUTION**

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## **1. NAME**

1.1 The name of the association is “South African Society of Hand Therapists” (the “Society”). The shortened name is “SASHT”.

1.2 The term “hand therapist” refers to occupational therapists and physiotherapists who are currently registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), with an interest in upper limb- and hand rehabilitation (“hand therapy”). This includes, but is not limited to, therapists with post-graduate qualifications in hand rehabilitation, such as Post-graduate Diploma and Masters in Hand Rehabilitation, Certification of Hand Therapy.

## **2. LEGAL STATUS**

2.1 The Society, as founded in Pretoria in 1988, is and shall be a separate legal entity and body corporate separately from its members, with the capacity to acquire rights and obligations and having perpetual succession.

2.2 All actions or suits, proceeding at law or any other arbitration shall be brought by or against the Society in the name of the Society and the Society’s Executive Committee (“Exco”) may authorize any person or persons to act on behalf of the Society, sign all documents and take all steps as may be necessary in connection with any such proceedings. The Society is able to sue and be sued in its own name.

2.3 All contracts concluded and documents signed by the society will be executed and signed by the president of the Society (the “President”) and the treasurer of the Society (the “Treasurer”), or a delegated authority in their absence.

2.4 The Society may not provide any of its money or property to its members or office bearers unless it is paying for work that a member or office bearer has done for the Society. Any such remuneration must be made according to market-related value and based on the financial position of the Society.

2.5 The Society shall be able to own property and other possessions.

2.6 The Society shall continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office bearers.

2.7 The Society shall be governed by South African law at all times.

2.8 The Society shall not maintain responsibility for academic training in the field of hand rehabilitation.

## **3. PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY**

### **3.1 Vision Statement**

For hand therapy in South Africa to be of high quality, rendered by skilled hand therapists who are well informed in the field of hand therapy.

### 3.2 Mission Statement

To represent and promote hand therapy in South Africa, and facilitate quality care and service delivery to clients requiring hand therapy through the development of the knowledge and skills of its members.

### 3.3 Aims

3.3.1 To promote current knowledge of the therapeutic assessment and management of all conditions involving the upper limb and hand, including injuries, impairments and disabilities, relevant to the specific disciplines of occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

3.3.2 To promote interdisciplinary education, understanding and co-operation between professionals involved in the treatment of upper limb and hand conditions and fostering appropriate referral.

3.3.3 To disseminate knowledge of, expertise in and ideas about hand rehabilitation to hand therapists and relevant training centres.

3.3.4 To stimulate research and its publication among hand therapists.

3.3.5 To maintain a link with the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa (OTASA), the South African Society of Physiotherapists (SASP), the South African Society for Surgery of the Hand (SASSH), the Orthopaedic Association of South Africa (OASA) and other professional bodies with an interest in the management of the upper limb and hand.

3.3.6 To maintain affiliation with the International Federation of Societies of Hand Therapists (IFSHT).

3.3.7 To promote national and international communication among hand therapists and other interested professions.

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

There shall be six categories of membership in the Society: full, student, international, other professions, commercial and honorary. Membership will run for a calendar year (January to December) and be renewable annually. Full and honorary members have voting rights.

### 4.1 Full membership

Full membership shall be open to any occupational therapist or physiotherapist currently registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) who has an interest in the management of hand conditions.

### 4.2 Student membership

Student membership shall be open to any undergraduate student studying for a degree in occupational therapy or physiotherapy currently registered with the HPCSA.

#### 4.4 International membership

International membership shall be open to South African therapists residing out of South Africa, but who are registered with HPCSA. Should the therapist be of other nationality, proof of nationality and registration from the respective institution must be provided to the SASHT executive committee and a formal application must be made.

#### 4.4 Other professions

Other professional membership shall be open to the multidisciplinary team members that share an interest with SASHT in Hand Rehabilitation. These include doctors (registrars, medical officers, specialists and general practitioners), occupational therapy and physiotherapy assistants/aides/technicians, nurses and orthotists. Each professional is governed by the scope of practice as stipulated by the HPCSA or their professional body. These professionals are not eligible for Continuing Education Units for SASHT courses and are not permitted to engage in practical sessions on courses and workshops.

#### 4.6 Commercial

Commercial memberships shall be open to any company with an interest in hand therapy.

#### 4.7 Honorary

Honorary membership shall be open to individuals whom the Society deems worthy of special honour because of notable contributions or because of long activity in the interest of the Society. A nominee may be nominated by full voting members and shall reach the Exco three months prior to the next Annual General Meeting (AGM).

#### 4.8 Suspension of membership

4.8.1 Members in all categories except honorary shall cease to be a member if he/she is in default for two months in the payment of the annual subscription (i.e. not paid by 28<sup>th</sup> of February of that year).

4.8.2 Student membership shall cease upon termination of student registration.

4.8.3 A full member shall cease to be a member as soon as they are no longer registered with the HPCSA.

4.8.5 Should the therapist be “retired” and is no longer registered with the HPCSA and is not clinically practicing in the field of hand rehabilitation, an application for SASHT membership must be made to the SASHT executive committee, with suitable proof of retirement

#### 4.9 Resignation

Members who wish to resign from the Society should do so in writing; no monies are refundable.

#### 4.10 Dismissal

Members or office bearers of the Society may be dismissed from membership or

office with a two-thirds vote of the SASHT Council (“Council”), just because having been established.

## **5. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND FUNCTIONS**

### **5.1 Executive officers**

5.1.1 The officers of the Society, who shall be elected from among its full members at the AGM, shall consist of the following: -

President

Treasurer

Marketing person

IFSHT delegate

One additional member as necessary.

5.1.2 Nominations made must be forwarded to Exco six weeks before AGM.

5.1.3 All officers will be chosen by ballot.

5.1.4 The term of office shall be 2 years, with the exception of the President and Treasurer.

5.1.5 The President’s term is 4 years: 2 years active and 2 additional years in a “mentoring” capacity (as past president) and “shadowing” capacity (as president elect).

5.1.6 The past president shall be required to attend all Exco meetings in the mentoring year.

5.1.7 The Treasurer’s term shall be 3 years (including one year of shadowing the incoming treasurer).

5.1.8 All officers may stand for re-election. No officers shall hold the same office for more than 2 consecutive terms

5.1.9 Nominee for office of President should preferably be one of the current Exco members.

5.1.10 If the office of the President falls vacant prematurely all members will be invited to submit nominations of a new President within 21 days. The new President, as elected by majority vote, will act as President for the remaining period of office of the outgoing President.

5.1.11 If a vacancy occurs prematurely for any office other than President, nominations shall be called for from an all-member mailing and a new officer elected by ballot of Council members.

5.2 Functions of the Exco and its members:

5.2.1 To maintain the purpose of the Society.

5.2.2 The President shall be Chairperson of Council and will preside at all Society meetings. (Except Regional meetings)

5.2.3 To meet or participate in a conference call at least five times per year (bimonthly) to deal with business matters as required.

5.2.4 To maintain the society as a reputable and professional organisation in all executive matters and will be held accountable should the Society be brought into disrepute through its actions. Individual Exco members found accountable of disrepute will be accountable to the rest of Exco and the members of the Society.

5.2.5 The Exco is not responsible for the individual actions of members.

5.3 Extra-ordinary executive meeting:

5.3.1 An extra-ordinary executive meeting may be called by a member of Exco or by written application of at least 10 members. At least 3 Exco members must be present and it is open to all members to attend.

5.3.2 Notice of such a meeting shall be received by all members in writing at least 14 days prior to the set date.

5.3.3 An agenda must accompany the notice of the meeting and only matters on the agenda may be discussed at the meeting.

## **6. LEGAL REPRESENTATION**

The President and Treasurer represent SASHT in its areas of justice and civil matters. The President and the Treasurer have the authority to receive charged mail and registered mail, collect total of the orders and manage the current account.

## **7. DELEGATE TO IFSHT**

7.1 A first and/or second delegate to IFSHT is voted for at the AGM or Special General Meeting (SGM). Such a nominee should have served on Exco or be a Regional Group member for at least 4 years.

7.2 The individual must be an active member of SASHT and have been so for the last 4 years.

7.3 The term of office will be 6 years, to enable delegates to attend two IFSHT meetings.

7.4 Duties and responsibilities are outlined in the protocol of IFSHT delegate.

## **8. FINANCE**

8.1 The financial year of the Society shall run from 1st January up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> December.

8.2 An annual subscription shall be payable before 31<sup>st</sup> March of each year.

8.3 The amount of the annual subscription shall be recommended by the Treasurer to the Council and approved by the Council. The adoption of such changes is subject to a majority vote (50% +1) at Council.

8.4 Different subscriptions may be set for the various categories of membership.

8.5 Honorary members shall be excluded from paying fees.

8.6 Contributions, donations and all other monies received may be banked, invested and used for the purpose of the Society as determined by the Council.

8.7 The Society is entitled to:-

- open bank accounts and operate them
- invest monies of the Society not required for immediate use. in recognized banking institutions and government or municipal stocks, as long as suitable financial guidance is obtained in such matters
- make money available for fellowship, study grants, travel allowances or awards of a similar nature, to members of the Society as Council may decide

8.8 The Society will be responsible for a portion of the travelling expenses (as determined by the Council) for its delegates attending Council, national and international meetings, on the condition that the financial position of the Society is strong enough to bear the expenses. Preference is given to the financing of delegates to Council and national meetings before international meetings. The Society may raise funds as deemed necessary from time to time.

8.9 The Society will be required to maintain audited books according to protocols of finance and Treasurer.

8.10 All financial decisions and actions should be in accordance with the protocols of finance and Treasurer, and legislative requirements that support sound financial policy as governed by South African law.

## **9. MEETINGS**

### **9.1 Quorum**

At the AGM, SGM, Bi-annual General Meeting (BGM) or Extra-ordinary meeting, a quorum shall consist of 25% of the society's members including the Executive Officers

present.

## 9.2 AGM

An AGM will be held every year.

9.2.1 Election of the Exco members and IFSHT first and second delegate will be held during the AGM

9.2.2 Annual financial statements should be prepared within 3 months of the end of the financial year and should be tabled at the AGM and made available to members.

9.2.3 The AGM should be held between 10 and 14 months of the previous AGM.

## 9.3 Council Meetings

9.3.1 Council shall consist of Exco, the Chair of each Regional Group, members of the hosting Regional Group and the IFSHT Delegate.

9.3.2 Council meetings will be held once a year, with the date to be determined by Exco but preferably in the first quarter of the year.

9.3.3 General SASHT members must apply 1 month prior to council meeting to attend and be liable to expenses (catering). Agenda items must be sent to president. General SASHT members attending are only allowed to observe and not participate.

## 9.4 Special General Meetings:

9.4.1 An SGM shall be any meeting other than an AGM, BGM, Council meeting or Extra-ordinary meeting.

9.4.2 A quorum of members shall be required at an SGM, for decisions to be taken. Decisions will be by majority vote.

9.4.3 Notice of an SGM shall be received by members in writing at least 14 days prior to the date.

## 9.5 Executive Committee (Exco) meetings

9.5.1 The Exco shall hold a minimum of 6 ordinary meetings each year.

9.5.2 The President shall act as the chairperson of the Exco. Should the chairperson not be present, those Exco members present will select a chairperson, for that meeting at the start of the meeting. .

9.5.3 There shall be a quorum of 25% of Exco members whenever such a meeting is held.

9.5.4 The President, or two members of Exco, may call a special Exco meeting should they wish. They must let the other Exco members know the date and agenda of the proposed meeting not less than 21 days before it is due to take

place, unless the matter pertains to the appointment of a new Exco member in which case there must be not less than 30 days' notice.

9.5.5 If Exco deems it necessary, a sub-committee may be set up to deal with a specific task or project related to the business of the Society. There must be at least 3 people on a sub-committee, who may be SASHT members or an outsourced 'expert' in the field or according to the task. The sub-committee must report back to Exco on its activities within identified timeframes.

9.6 Minutes of all meetings must be kept safely and be readily available for members to consult.

## **10. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

10.1 Amendments to the Constitution shall receive the assent of two-thirds of the voting members present, at an AGM or an SGM.

10.2 Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Society. These must be in writing and reach the Administrator at least 6 weeks prior to an AGM. The proposed amendments are to be circulated to all members for review, 4 weeks prior to the AGM.

## **11. VOTING RIGHTS AND PROCEDURES**

11.1 At meetings of the Society, full members shall be entitled to one (1) vote each.

The President will have a casting vote in addition to his/her deliberate vote. Voting shall be by a show of hands except when unresolved by a majority vote, in which case it shall be by ballot. In the case of election of office bearers, voting shall be by ballot. A record of all voting shall be kept in the Society's archives.

11.2 All those who are entitled to vote at the AGM may exercise their vote in person or by an email, postal or faxed vote. Email, faxed and postal votes shall be sent out 21 days before the AGM and should be returned to the Administrator not later than 3 days prior to the meeting.

11.3 Non-attendees may give their proxy to another attending member of the Society.

11.4 During postal, fax or e-mailed votes if no answer is received it will be counted as a 'yes' vote or as approval.

## **12. REGIONAL GROUPS**

### 12.1 Formation of Regional Groups

SASHT shall be divided into Regional Groups named according to the majority Of members within that geographical region.

### 12.2 Structure of Regional Groups

All members of the Society, who live in a defined area, as well as student members will belong to a Regional Group, which will have its own Regional committee. The minimum number of committee members in any Regional Group shall be three. Should there be less than three members, other regions may be required to assist that region, to ensure continuity of that Region.

#### 12.3 Inauguration of the Regional Groups

The Council may nominate a member who is resident within a defined area to convene the inaugural meeting of a new Regional Group.

#### 12.4 Officers

The officers of a Regional Group are the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer plus one or more additional members. The maximum number of Regional Group officers allowed is five.

12.5 The Regional Group may elect its officers at their BGM. The term of office is two years and the officer may be re-elected for two consecutive terms. The Regional Group shall endeavour to retain one outgoing member on the new committee to ensure continuity.

#### 12.6 Representation on Council:

Each Regional Group shall be represented on the Council by one delegate.

Additional delegates from the hosting region are encouraged to attend Council.

#### 12.7 Regional Group Bi-annual General Meeting (BGM):

12.7.1 Every Regional Group shall hold a BGM not less than 14 days, or more than three months before the date of the BGM of the Society. Office bearers will be elected at this meeting.

12.7.2 Any member may vote by post, email or fax to reach the Regional Group secretary not later than 24 hours before the BGM.

12.7.3 The chairperson will submit an annual report on the activities and financial status of the Regional Group at the Council Meeting. The various Regional Groups will report back at the BGM of the Society.

12.7.4 The Chairperson and additional members will be appointed by the Regional Group Executive committee.

12.7.5 All other meetings, apart from the BGM, shall be called Special Meetings.

The Chairperson may call a Special meeting if he/she sees fit to do so, or upon receipt of a request signed by not less than one-third of the members of the Regional Group, which specifies the business for which a Special Meeting is required.

12.7.6 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of a branch unless 10% of all full members are present. If there is no quorum, the items for discussion may be referred for decision to a special meeting, or tabled for the next Exco, AGM or Council meetings

#### 12.8 Functions of the Regional Group

12.8.1 Regional Groups will carry out the work of the Society within the area of the Region, both on behalf of the local members and as requested by SASHT Exco and Council.

12.8.2 Regional Groups may raise funds as deemed necessary from time to time, according to the Society's Financial Policy.

12.8.3 Regional Groups will make recommendations to Council regarding the advancement of the Society as a whole

12.8.4 Regional Groups will actively recruit students and other prospective members.

12.8.5 Regional Groups will promote the educational development of all members by offering courses, workshops and seminars and will liaise actively with training institutions.

#### 12.9 Liaison between Exco and Regional Groups:

The President will promote communication and networking between Exco and Regional Groups.

#### 12.10 Dissolution of a Regional Group:

Should a Regional Group decide that they can no longer operate in terms of the Constitution, they may apply to Council for dissolution of their Regional Group. Upon dissolution of a Regional Group any funds pertaining to that Regional Group must be transferred to the Society.

### **13. DISSOLUTION**

The Society shall be dissolved by a resolution passed by two-thirds of those present and voting at an SGM convened for that purpose of which 21 days notice shall be given to members.

### **14. ASSETS**

14.1 Any assets remaining on dissolution after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be distributed to an appropriate educational, scientific or philanthropic organisation selected at an SGM.

14.2 Members or office bearers of the organisation do not have rights over assets that belong to the society.

14.3 Should the organisation close down all liabilities must be settled. Should there be property or money left over, it should be donated to a non-profit organisation with similar objectives, the nature of which can be decided on at the SGM.

14.4 In the event of bankruptcy, the Society should seek legal and/or financial advice on a plan of intervention to settle debts and liabilities.

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President

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Treasurer

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