

**The Constitution of
The Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa
(HELTASA)**

Preamble

WHEREAS WE, members of the HELTASA are committed to:

- **the support of teaching and learning scholarship and practices in higher education**
- **the strengthening of collegial and professional relationships across the sector**
- **the building of an inclusive and diverse association that prioritizes the upliftment of professional development of the sector**

1. NAME of the Association

1.1 The organisation hereby constituted will be called The Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa

1.2 Its shortened name will be HELTASA (Hereinafter referred to as The Association).

2. OBJECTIVES and PURPOSE

2.1 The association is a non-profit organisation and the main objectives are to:

- To create, support and sustain an enabling and synergistic network of higher education practitioners in Southern Africa, facilitating and encouraging collaborative conversations and ventures concerning policy, developmental practice and educational research in Higher Education Training (HET) across the various specialised fields.
- To facilitate the professionalisation of higher education practitioners in their educator roles, particularly those pertaining to the improvement of tertiary-level teaching and learning and educational research in South Africa.
- To promote networking between staff in central units responsible for enhancing educational quality and faculty-based academic staff with a scholarly interest in teaching and learning.
- To promote the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; the dissemination and sharing of which shall be enabled through an annual conference, among other modes.

2.2 The association's secondary objectives are to:

- To act as a linking organisation for other professional associations and organisations in higher education through networking and promoting the establishment of professionals networks.
- To interact with the Department of Education, Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) on matters pertaining to teaching and learning, quality, capacity-building and professional recognition of educators and trainers in HET.
- To interact on educational matters with relevant statutory bodies in HET.
- To promote peer review as a means of recognising quality in Higher Education practice.
- The activities of the association will include *inter alia* an annual conference.

3. LEGAL STATUS

The association shall:

- 3.1. Exist in its own right, separately from its office bearers and members.
- 3.2. Continue to exist even when its membership changes and or different office bearers are elected.
- 3.3. Be able to own property and other assets.
- 3.4. Be able to sue and be sued in its own name.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Categories of membership.

4.1.1 Ordinary membership - may be granted by the Executive Committee to educators in higher education who are actively involved in education, training and development, social responsiveness, and engaged scholarship activities.

4.1.2 Institutional membership - may be granted by the Executive Committee to:

- Institutions of higher and further education and training,
- Research institutions concerned with tertiary educational development, and
- Organisations, centres or institutes concerned with tertiary education development.

4.1.3 Foreign membership - may be granted by the Executive Committee to persons domiciled outside the SADC region and may be admitted as associate members by the Executive Committee. Associate members will not be entitled to voting rights at the Association meetings.

4.1.4 Student membership - may be granted by the Executive Committee to registered members of national or institutional higher education student organisations. They shall have the same rights as ordinary individual members.

4.1.5 Honorary membership - may be conferred by the Executive Committee, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, on persons who have made a significant and meaningful contribution to tertiary educational development but are no longer active in the field.

4.2 Ordinary, student and honorary members shall have the right to vote at meetings of the members of the Association provided they are personally present.

4.3 An institutional member, provided it has paid membership fees in full, has two votes at meetings of the Association. These institutional members shall duly nominate, in writing, two persons who will represent the institution and vote on its behalf.

5. GOVERNING STRUCTURE AND MECHANISM OF GOVERNANCE

5.1 The Executive

5.1.1 Management of the Association shall be vested in the Executive which consists of elected members of the Association in the following capacities: Chairperson, Vice-chairperson; Secretary, Treasurer and up to a minimum of three additional elected members and up to three co-opted members of the Association, one of whom is a representative of the hosting university for the annual conference

5.1.2 The Executive shall be elected by at a general meeting of the Association, and shall hold office for two consecutive years.

5.1.3 Retiring members from the association shall be eligible for re-election to the executive for two terms.

5.1.4 The Chairperson is eligible for two successive terms of office and can again become available for election after another two terms have lapsed in the capacity as chair or any other position.

5.1.5 Succession Planning

A three-tiered system is advanced to strengthen continuity of the work of the executive and the succession planning of key portfolios and members. The three tiers would be:

- the current chairperson
- a chairperson elect and
- a mentor chairperson.

The *chairperson elect* would shadow the *current chairperson* for a period of a year (in the chair's second year) with the commitment to take over the duties the following year.

The *current chairperson* would perform the duties for one term (i.e. a period of two years). In the *current chairperson's* second year of office, s/he will be shadowed by the *chairperson elect*. There will be a further one-year period in which the *current chairperson* remains as an executive member in a *mentorship* role.

This proposal has implications for the number of years of service to the Executive Committee of members elected to a chairperson's role. Potentially this means a commitment of six years.

5.1.6 The quorum to constitute an Executive meeting shall be 50% of the total number of Executive members.

5.1.7 The Executive shall have the power to identify, liaise and confirm the potential host university and conference convenor for each annual conference. All conference management and work shall be under the guidance of the executive with direct links established between the conference convenor and his/ her teams and the executive. The conference convenor will keep the executive updated on all progress regarding the annual conference from inception to end of conference.

5.1.8 The Executive shall have the power to delegate its work to Task Teams. These Task Teams or special interest groups are appointed from amongst the members of the Association who are not necessarily on the executive committee. This includes but is not limited to conference convenors and special interest group convenors.

5.1.9 The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) shall be constituted as a task team/ group but different to the Task Team. The governance of the SIGs shall be managed by the SIG convenor and SIG committee, under the guidance of an executive committee member holding this portfolio.

5.1.10 The executive may co-opt members to the Executive in the event of a vacancy occurring during its term of office.

5.1.11 The responsibilities of the Executive shall be to:

- Ensure that the objectives of the Association are actively pursued.
- Execute tasks as mandated at the Annual General Meeting
- Be accountable for and to manage opening of such bank accounts as shall be considered necessary, the keeping of proper books of accounts, and the presentation of independently audited accounts.
- Determine the fees payable by members.
- Supervise the publishing activities of the Association and for that purpose appoint the editorial staff.
- Encourage and support the formation of branches, interest groups or other organs of the association.
- Undertake fund-raising on behalf of the Association and to oversee any fund-raising activities and accounts that fall under the auspices of the Association.
- Commission research or consultancy services on behalf of the Association.
- Facilitate liaison with the media.
- Formulate any necessary regulations within the framework of this constitution.
- Oversee and provide support for the organising of the annual conference of the Association in line with the aims as set out in this constitution.

5.1.12 Any complaint against a member of the Executive shall be investigated by the other members as per the disciplinary policy of the association.

5.1.13 Resignation: An Office Bearer may resign from office by giving 30 days' written notice to the Executive Committee.

5.2 Executive Committee Meetings

5.2.1 An ordinary executive committee meeting will be held at a date, time and place as frequently as determined by the executive committee. No further notice of these ordinary meetings needs to be given.

5.2.2 The agenda of an ordinary meeting will be circulated at least one week prior to such an ordinary meeting.

5.2.3 The quorum of an executive meeting is 50% of its members as per article 5.1.6 above. If within thirty minutes of time fixed or said meeting a quorum is not present the meeting must stand adjourned to a date, time and place determined by the chairperson. The agenda should be dealt with at the next ordinary executive meeting where a quorum is present.

5.2.4. Minutes of said ordinary meetings must be recorded in writing by the Secretary, read by the Secretary at the next ordinary meeting and signed by the Chairperson after confirmation by the meeting. The minutes will be regarded as read if circulated forty eight (48) hours or more before the time of the next scheduled meeting.

5.2.5 A special meeting of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairperson whenever she or he deems it advisable or upon a requisition by not fewer than four executive members of the executive committee, provided that such requisition specifies the purpose of special meeting.

5.3 General meetings

5.3.1 The Association will hold a general meeting each year at its annual conference.

5.3.2 The Executive Committee shall be responsible for preparing for and reporting on general meetings.

5.3.3 The members present at a general meeting shall constitute a quorum.

5.3.4 Functions of a general meeting

- A general meeting may take binding decisions, subject to the rules of procedure of the Association, and shall accept responsibility for them.
- It shall elect from amongst the Association's members the Executive Committee to the portfolios designated in 5.1.
- It may evaluate the work of the Executive Committee.
- The general meeting may approve or disallow agreements or association with national or international bodies
- It may in accordance with the constitution of the Association amend the constitution.
- All motions (seconded) are decided by a majority vote (method to be determined by the executive) of those present and voting.

7. CONFERENCES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- Conferences of the Association shall be rotated, where possible, amongst different geographical regions in Southern Africa and South Africa in particular.
- A proposal regarding the future hosting of a conference should be put forward at the Annual General Meeting of the Association on the understanding that the Association will not be liable for any of the costs of hosting or running the conference.
- The hosting institution/s will be entitled to charge an attendance fee to cover the costs.
- Any surplus generated by the conference should be used to fulfill the aims of the Association, on the understanding that the hosting institution is entitled to charge a reasonable administration fee for the running of the conference account.
- The host institution shall present a conference account at the first Executive Meeting after the conference.

8. FINANCES AND REPORTS

8.1 The Association shall establish a bank account in which all monies especially annual subscriptions will be deposited. This account will be used to meet the expenses of the Association, and to contribute towards achieving the aims of the association.

8.3 This account and all the financial transaction of the Association will be audited by a company identified by the executive.

8.3 The Association is not permitted to distribute any of the profits or gains to any person and is required to use its funds solely to achieve the aims for which it has been established.

8.4 Funds may be raised from external sources to fulfill the aims of the association.

8.5 The treasurer will present the audited financial statement for the previous financial year at the Annual General Meeting.

8.6 The Executive will decide where the Association's account will be held.

8.7 The Executive will decide on membership fees and payment processes by its members.

9. CHANGE OR AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

9.1 Any proposal to change or amend the constitution shall be in writing and signed by the proposer, who shall be a member or institutional representative. Said proposal shall be seconded and signed by another member, two weeks in advance of secretary's notice. Full notice of proposed amendments shall be provided by the Secretary of the Association to all members at least one month before the meeting where the proposed amendments will be discussed.

9.2 The constitution may be changed or amended by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members present at an AGM.

10. DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

10.1 The Association may be dissolved at a special general meeting called specifically for this purpose.

10.2 The members present will form a quorum and the association may be dissolved by a three-quarters majority of the members present voting in favour thereof at said meeting.

10.3 Upon the dissolution of the Association, its assets will be donated or transferred by the outgoing Executive to another organisation with aims similar to those of the Association.