COTEC
Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries

RULES OF PROCEDURES
of the Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries

The Rules of Procedures are the guidelines of the Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC) and express the method by which COTEC may achieve its objectives.

1. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1.1. The General Assembly (GA) is the highest authority of COTEC and meets yearly.

1.1.1. Each Member Association has one Representative and one vote at the GA. Each Member Association can send one observer in addition to the official representative.

1.1.2. Fifty percent of the Members have to be represented to have the quorum in the GA.

1.1.3. The GA needs a single majority to make a decision except in the cases described in the Constitution.

1.1.4. The Agenda and the documents must be circulated two months before the meeting and include the items for voting.

1.1.5. Extraordinary General Assembly: The Executive Committee or at least half of Members can call the GA within three weeks when a very important situation or matter occurs and demands a GA decision.

1.2. The mandate of the GA

1.2.1. Approve the Strategic Plan every four years.

1.2.2. Approve the COTEC annual report and the financial report prepared by the Executive Committee

1.2.3. Approve the annual action plan and the annual budget for the following year.

1.2.4. Approve changes in the constitution.

1.2.5. Approve new members of COTEC and terminate membership if a member fails to fulfil their tasks.

1.2.6. Elect persons to the positions in the COTEC Executive Committee based on nominations made and endorsed by Member Associations.

1.2.7. Elect the Auditing Committee and the Electoral Committee based on expressed interest during the GA.

1.3. Elections to the COTEC Executive Committee Positions

1.3.1. The members of the Executive Committee are elected for an initial term of four years or a continual term of four years, see point 3.1.4

1.3.2. Two members and a deputy member of the Auditing Committee are elected annually.

1.3.3. Three members of the Electoral Committee are elected annually.

1.3.4. GA can expel elected members of the Executive Committee, the Auditing Committee and the Electoral Committee if they misuse their position or in the case of failure to fulfil the given task.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Full Members

2.1. To pay the annual membership fees in accordance with the Constitution as requested by the Vice President Finance.

2.2. To appoint or elect and send a representative to represent the Member Association at COTEC GA.

2.2.1. The representative must have mandate to take decisions on behalf of the Member Association within the limits defined by the Board, the annual meeting/General Assembly of the Member Association and the national law.

The representative should preferably be the President or a member of the board of the Member Association.

2.2.2. The representative must have a deep knowledge and understanding of the policies and priorities of the Member Association.

2.2.3. The representative must have knowledge and understanding of the policies and priorities of COTEC.

2.2.4. The representative should discuss the agenda for the GA with the Member Association to be able to express the opinion of the association.

2.2.5. The representative must be able to take strategic and organisational decisions and vote in the GA on behalf of the Member Association.

2.2.6. The working language of COTEC is English, if translation is needed it is the responsibility of the Member Association to provide this. Should any official COTEC documents be translated into other languages, the translations should be sent to COTEC Vice President Administration for archiving.

2.2.7. If the Member Association is unable to attend a meeting a proxy can be given to another Member.

2.3. To participate in the work of COTEC through the democratic decision-making processes in the organization such as responding to and approving position statement.

2.3.1. The Member Association may put forward motions for the GA. COTEC Vice President Administration should receive the motion three months before the meeting at which it will be handled so that it may be added to the GA agenda.

2.4. To take responsibility for the policies of COTEC and the development of a professional position of Occupational Therapists in the European countries.

2.5. To contribute to the work of COTEC by promoting the COTEC policies to national authorities and representatives of the national authorities in the European health and social affairs organisations.

2.6. To inform COTEC of political changes at National level that affect the status of Occupational Therapy in that country.

2.7. To support recruitment to the Occupational Therapy Europe Register of Experts.

2.8. To disseminate relevant information about the activities of COTEC to their Member Association.

2.9. To report to COTEC on activities of the Member Association and send national news to be published on COTEC website and/or COTEC newsletter.

2.10. To provide that all changes regarding names of representative(s), addresses and other contact information etc. are sent without delay to COTEC Office.

2.11. To provide COTEC Office with the correct data for the Summary of the Profession each year by the 31st of January.

Associate Members

2.12. The COTEC General Assembly on recommendation of the Executive Committee can grant National Occupational Therapy Member organisations, not represented within the Council of Europe, COTEC Associate Membership. National Occupational Therapy Organisations that are eligible for Full Membership are ineligible for Associate Membership.

2.13. An Associate Member will pay a reduced annual membership fee calculated at 50% of the lowest band.

2.14. An Associate Member will nominate a General Assembly representative who can attend meetings as an observer - thus does not hold a vote and may intervene in discussions on invitation by the chair of the meeting.

2.15. An Associate Member can also host an Interim Meeting for the Executive Committee or a General Assembly, provided that such meeting would have an importance to the development of Occupational Therapy in that location.

2.16. An Associate Member will also carry responsibilities listed in points 2.8-2.11 where appropriate.

3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

3.1. Executive Committee

3.1.1. The Executive Committee consists of up to 6 members. At the most 2 members are from the same Member Association.

3.1.2. On election to the Executive Committee, the members will cease to represent the Member Associations.

3.1.3. The President shall be elected from a Member Association other than that of the outgoing President.

3.1.4. The term of office for the Executive Committee members is four years. They can be re-elected in the same or a different position once for another 4-year term of office. Hence, the maximum an individual can serve on the COTEC Executive Committee is 8 years.

3.1.5. If a member of the Executive Committee has to leave office mid-term, the Executive Committee may appoint a successor until the next GA. The GA will then elect a member to this position with term of 4 years.

3.2. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee

3.2.1. To ensure the smooth running of COTEC's day to day business.

3.2.2. To prepare the agenda for the GA.

3.2.3. To prepare a COTEC strategic plan to be adopted at the GA every four years; the annual action plan and budget; and the annual report including financial report.

3.2.4. To follow up the strategic plan and the action plan and ensure progress is made.

3.3. Responsibilities of the President

3.3.1. To lead the organisation and be responsible for the work in COTEC.

3.3.2. The President may chair the GA meetings.

3.3.3. To submit the annual report of COTEC.

3.3.4. To submit proposals for the future work of COTEC, the strategic plan every four years, the annual action plans and political statements.

3.3.4.1. In preparation of these documents the President and the Executive Committee may invite or present a discussion paper for the Members.

3.3.5. To represent COTEC at meetings of external stakeholders as appropriate.

3.3.6. To represent COTEC at WFOT Council meetings as approved by the Executive Committee.

3.3.7. To deal with correspondence on behalf of COTEC in conjunction with other members of the Executive Committee.

3.3.8. To form part of the Occupational Therapy Europe Executive

3.4. Responsibilities of the Vice-President

3.4.1. To assist and support the President in the work of COTEC and undertake tasks delegated by the President as required.

3.4.2. To represent the President at any event where the President is unable to attend.

3.4.3. To deputise for the President as mutually arranged in agreement with the Executive Committee where possible.

3.4.4. To represent COTEC at meetings of external stakeholders as appropriate.

3.4.5. To form part of the Occupational Therapy Europe Executive.

3.4.6. To carry out the tasks of the President until the end of the designated term of office if the President has to leave office mid-term. In this case a new Vice President will be elected.

3.5. Responsibilities of the Vice President Administration

3.5.1. To oversee COTEC office functions

3.5.2. To circulate the agenda for the GA to all representatives two months in advance.

3.5.3. To circulate prior to each GA as much relevant documentation as necessary to enable decision making during the meeting. Documents related to voting at the coming GA should be circulated with the agenda.

3.5.4. To oversee the recording of the minutes of the GA and circulate them as soon as possible after the meeting.

3.5.5. In discussion with the Executive Committee deal with correspondence on behalf of COTEC.

3.5.6. To deal membership issues such as membership applications, contact information and regular communication with the Members.

3.5.7. To oversee the data collection for the Summary of Profession annually.

3.5.8. To represent COTEC at meetings of external stakeholders as appropriate.

3.6. Responsibilities of the Vice President Finance

3.6.1. To submit an annual financial report of the financial status of COTEC and submit the books for audition during the GA.

3.6.2. To submit the annual budget for the following year at the GA.

3.6.3. To bill the Member Associations for the annual membership fee.

3.6.4. To establish and maintain bank accounts.

3.6.5. To pay expenses of COTEC as required. Sums above 2000 Euros require the approval of the Vice President Finance and one other member of the Executive Committee.

3.6.6. To send the call for financial assistance in due course prior the GA and oversee the application and reimbursement process.

3.6.7. To represent COTEC at meetings of external stakeholders as appropriate.

3.7. Responsibilities of Members of the Executive Committee without Portfolio

3.7.1. To undertake tasks as agreed and determined by the action plan.

3.7.2. To support the other Executive Committee members and contribute to the delivery of the strategic aims of COTEC.

4. AUDITING COMMITTEE

4.1. The Auditing Committee consists of two members and one deputy member.

4.2. The GA elects the members annually from the GA Representatives.

4.3. The Auditing Committee inspects the financial records and reports back to the GA.

5. ELECTORAL COMMITTEE

5.1. The Electoral Committee consists of three members

5.2. The GA elects the members for the following year based on nominations from the GA Representatives

5.3. The Electoral Committee ensures that a call for nominations will be sent out preferably as early as 6 months but at least 4 months before the GA where a ballot will take place

5.4. The nominations will be published two months before the GA

5.5. Members of the Electoral Committee may not be nominated to any COTEC Executive Committee positions

5.6. A member of the Electoral Committee chairs the Elections item at the GA where elections take place.

6. COTEC OFFICE

6.1. The official address of COTEC is the COTEC office in Germany, however a virtual office will exist wherever the administrative hub is.

6.2. The COTEC Virtual Office is run by a freelance Office Administrator who monitors a generic electronic mailbox and replies or refers requests as appropriate.

6.3. Ensures the archiving of COTEC original Documents

6.4. Stores COTEC promotion materials.

6.5. Sends out material when requested.

7. FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

7.1. All membership fees are due as invoiced by the Vice President Finance, but at 31st of March the earliest. Failure to pay may result in membership lapsing.

7.2. Fees shall be paid in Euros. All bank charges must be carried by the Member Association.

7.3. Bank Transfers or Paypal are the preferred payment methods for settlement of fees. However, the fees may also be paid in cash at the GA if agreed with the Vice-President Finance.

7.4. The annual fee is calculated on the basis of the number of practicing members of the Member Association. The number as given in the most recent Summary of the Profession shall be used for this calculation. Where a current figure is not available a membership augmentation of 10 % shall be assumed.

7.5. The fees are set according to an agreed fee banding system based on the number of practising occupational therapists within the association. There is both a minimum and a maximum fee. The fees will also be included in the proposed budget for the following year and voted for at the GA.

7.6. The financial records shall be inspected annually by the Auditing Committee who will report back to the GA.

7.7. Member Associations are responsible for the expenses of their Representative to attend the GA meetings.

7.8. Member Associations which have limited financial resources may apply for financial assistance to send a representative to the GA (Guidelines, see Appendix I).

8. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

8.1. Occupational Therapy Europe

8.1.1. Together with ENOTHE and ROTOS, work to further the development of the profession in Europe through Occupational Therapy Europe initiatives, including the contribution to jointly agreed projects.

8.1.2. COTEC Executive Committee Members communicate with their ENOTHE and ROTOS counterparts on areas of common importance and formally report on the work undertaken with OT-Europe to Member Associations at the General Assembly.

8.1.3. As part of OT-Europe, COTEC collaborates and contributes to matters of common interest, for example the OT-Europe Congress every 4 years.

8.2. Cooperation with WFOT

8.2.1. COTEC is a Regional Member of WFOT, the Word Federation of Occupational Therapists.

8.2.2. The two organisations work together to further the development of occupational therapy in Europe and joint projects and actions are carried as agreed.

8.2.3. The President of COTEC will attend the WFOT Council meetings whenever possible and a member of the WFOT Executive Management Team is invited to attend COTEC GA meetings as an observer.

8.3. Other Bodies and Organisations

8.3.1. Alliances with other relevant bodies, institutions and organisations will be agreed according to their fit with the COTEC Strategic Plan and Action Plan.

9. DOCUMENTATION

9.1. Constitution

9.1.1. The Constitution must be approved by the GA and can only be changed in accordance with the regulations it contains. A German Language version of the Constitution is the official document. An English language version is the working document of COTEC.

9.1.2. Each language group within the Council of Europe may arrange for the translation of the Constitution into their language and copies of all translations are deposited at COTEC office.

9.2. Rules of Procedure

9.2.1. These will be reviewed by the GA at regular intervals and where appropriate changes will be made

9.3. Agendas and Minutes of GA meetings

9.3.1. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to prepare agendas for the GA. They are circulated to the representatives and to the Member Associations two months before the meetings.

9.3.2. A call for agenda items is sent to GA Representatives no later than four months before the meeting.

9.3.3. The minutes of the GA will be circulated by the Vice President Administration as soon as possible but no later than two months after the meeting.

9.4. Summary of the Occupational Therapy Profession in Europe

9.4.1. The Summary is collated in table form with each Member Association giving information about the profession and association.

9.4.2. The Summary is updated at the beginning of each year and circulated to all Member Associations by the Vice President Administration. Changes for the update must be submitted by 31st January each year.

9.4.3. The Member Associations shall circulate copies of the summary in their countries to all relevant ministries and government organisations as well as to members of the profession and other interested parties.

9.4.4. The Summary may be used in discussions with government or non-government organisations on policy matters and work force issues concerning the profession. It may also be used for research purposes and to trace the development of the profession in the different countries.

9.4.5. Past copies are archived at the Wellcome Trust in London.

9.4.6. COTEC is the publisher of the Summary of the Profession.

9.5. Archiving of documents

9.5.1. To ensure the work of COTEC is stored for future use in research or for other suitable purposes the documents are appropriately archived and stored at The Wellcome Trust (www.library.wellcome.ac.uk)

9.5.2. The documents are archived at: Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE

9.5.3. The following documents since 1986 are at the library

9.5.3.1. Agendas and minutes of the Council meetings and the General Assemblies.

9.5.3.2. Strategic plans and action plans

9.5.3.3. Newsletters

9.5.3.4. Codes of Ethics and practice

9.5.3.5. Constitution and Standing Orders

9.5.3.6. Summaries of the Profession

9.5.4. The Financial documents are stored according to the German laws at COTEC office

APPENDIX I: PROCEDURES FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS

1. The business of the General Assembly shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution.

1.1. English is the official language of the meeting.

1.2. General Assembly must meet at least once a year.

1.3. Member Associations and their GA Representatives will be sent written notice at least four months before an ordinary meeting with a call for agenda items and call for nominations for COTEC offices as they fall vacant.

1.4. In the case of an extraordinary meeting a shorter notice of at least 3 weeks will apply.

1.5. The GA agenda will be circulated two months before the meeting. It will be sent by email to the Member Associations and GA Representatives.

2. Procedures for General Assembly

2.1. The President will open the GA and invites the GA to appoint a Chair for the GA

2.2. The Chair will call for proxies and announce the number of Members represented.

2.3. The Vice President Finance will confirm that all Members present in person or by proxy have paid their fees. Any Member which has not paid is not eligible to vote.

2.4. The COTEC President will present the annual report

2.5. The Vice President Finance will present the financial report

2.6. The Chair will invite discussion of the reports and a proposal for the adoption of the reports. The proposals must be seconded by another Representative. After the discussion the proposals to adopt the reports may be put to the vote.

2.7. Once approved the reports will be adopted and auctioned.

2.8. (At the GA every 4th year) The President presents the Strategic Plan for the coming four-year period and the Chair invites discussion after which the proposal to adopt the Strategic Plan may be put to the vote. Once adopted the Strategic Plan will be signed and dated by the Chair.

2.9. The President presents the annual action plan for the following year and the Chair invites discussion, after which the proposal to adopt the action plan may be put to the vote. Once adopted the annual plan will be signed and dated by the Chair.

2.10. The Vice President Finance presents the budget for the following year and the Chair invites discussion, after which the proposal to adopt the budget may be put to the vote. Once adopted the budget will be signed and dated by the Chair.

2.11. Election of members of the Executive Committee will be by secret ballot. Nominations should be made in advance in writing at the request of the Electoral Committee. The chair should be taken by a member of the Electoral Committee who is not standing for election to any office.

2.12. The date and location of the GA is decided by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will inform Members of the meeting 12 months prior where possible to enable Members to plan and ensure a good attendance.

2.13. Where the President fails to call a meeting, or an extraordinary meeting is needed the meeting may be called when three Representatives request it and give at least two months' notice in writing to the Vice President Administration.

2.14. Amendments to the Constitution can take place at a properly convened meeting when the proposed changes have been mailed to the Members for their consideration before the meeting. A two thirds majority is required to pass the amendment(s).

2.15. Voting on motions may be by a show of hands or by secret ballot. The Chair will decide on which method is justified and when it will take place. The number of votes for and against the motion as well as the abstentions should be recorded in the minutes.

2.16. In case of absence a Member Association must notify the Vice President Administration in writing prior to the meeting and identify the name of another Member association, which is to carry the vote of the absent Member by proxy. This must be signed and dated by the President or the Representative of the absent Association.

3. Observers at the GA meeting

3.1. Representatives of WFOT and OT-Europe will be invited to the GA as observers, may be invited to speak by the Chair but will not be eligible to vote.

3.2. The National Association in the country where the GA is being held may request to have observers to the meeting.