



The Hong Kong Association of Speech Therapists

# Constitution

## **1. TITLE**

The name of the Association shall be "The Hong Kong Association of Speech Therapists", and is hereinafter referred to as "the Association". Its abbreviation shall be "HKAST".

## **2. ADDRESS**

The address shall be GPO Box 372, Central, Hong Kong, or such other places as may from time to time be decided by the Association.

## **3. OBJECTS**

The objects for which the Association is formed shall be:

- 1) To promote and safeguard the interests of members of the Association;
- 2) To maintain professional standards of speech therapy services in Hong Kong;
- 3) To promote understanding of speech therapy in the community;
- 4) To establish and maintain contact with other members of the speech therapy profession in Hong Kong;
- 5) To keep a current list of speech therapists in Hong Kong;
- 6) To establish and maintain communication with overseas speech therapy associations
- 7) To support professional and post-qualifying education in Hong Kong

## **4. APPLICATION OF FUNDS**

The application of funds at the disposal of the Association shall be decided by Committee of the Association. Such funds shall exclusively be used to carry out the objects of the Association, or any of them, set out in clause 3 hereof.



## **5. QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

5.1 There shall be the following four categories of membership and all decisions relating thereto shall be made by the Committee and shall be open to review at their discretion.

a) Full membership of the Association shall be open to those individuals who qualify as full members of the Association (refer to HKAST "Policy Statement of Qualifications Necessary for Membership").

b) Associate membership shall be open to i. speech therapists not eligible for full membership as mentioned in 5. 1)

a) and ii. those in related professionals.

c) Student membership shall be open to those students currently under training to become qualified as a speech therapist or those in related fields.

d) Overseas membership shall be open to speech therapists living overseas eligible for full membership.

For complete definition of membership categories refer to HKAST "Policy Statement of Qualifications necessary for Membership".

5.2 Any person who applies for membership shall submit an application form, a proof of qualification(s), and registration fee together with annual subscription to the Internal Secretary of the Association. Each application shall be considered by the Committee, which shall have full discretion for approval or rejection of membership application.

For those whose application is rejected by the Committee shall be refunded the registration fee together with annual subscription.

## **6. FEES**

6.1 All members (Full, Associate, Student and Overseas Members) shall pay an annual subscription fee.

6.2 In addition, all members except student members shall pay a registration fee on first joining the association.

6.3 All fees listed above shall be reviewed and decided when necessary by a simple majority of



vote made by full members and at a General Meeting.

6.4 Annual subscription is due on 31 July of each year. Members who fail to pay the annual subscription on or before 31 July of each year shall cease the membership. For those who renew the membership after 31 October of each year will be required to pay the registration fee on rejoining.

## **7. RIGHTS**

7.1 All full members who have paid the required fees shall be entitled to following rights:

- a) To nominate and vote for Committee Members of the Association.
- b) To attend meetings and vote for resolutions thereat.
- c) To be elected to the Committee.
- d) To appeal to the Association in General Meeting against a committee decision to terminate membership.

7.2 Other members shall be entitled to attend all general meetings but not to vote thereat.

## **8. OBLIGATIONS**

All members shall:

- 1) abide by the constitution and resolutions of the Association and
- 2) pay membership subscriptions.

## **9. MEETINGS**

### **9.1 Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting shall be held in September each year. The exact date and place shall be decided by the Committee. The following shall constitute ordinary business:

- a) To receive and confirm the minutes of the previous General Meeting(s).



- b) To receive from the Committee a report, balance sheet and statement of accounts for the preceding year.
- c) To elect committee members of the Association for the following year.
- d) To appoint an Honorary Auditor for the Association.
- e) The following business shall be special business, details of which must appear in the notices of the meeting:
  - i) Special resolutions
  - ii) Any other business.

## 9.2 Notices

Notice of general meetings shall be given to all members, specifying the time and place, at least 14 days before the meeting. A notice sent to the mailing address or email address specified in each member's prescribed application form shall be sufficient.

## 9.3 Proceedings

- a) A quorum shall be one-third of the full membership, and must include at least two committee members. If a quorum is not present within one hour after the time specified for the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned by the Chairman who will specify another time and place for the adjourned meeting and instruct the Secretary to give written notice thereof to all the members. If a quorum is not present within one hour after the time specified for the adjourned meeting, those present shall be deemed to be a quorum.
- b) Any member may suggest items for the agenda of a General Meeting. Suggested items should be put in writing to the Internal Secretary by the 1st August.
- c) Resolution shall, in order to be passed, required a majority of not less than three quarters of such full members as vote in person or by proxy.
- d) Resolutions shall be decided by a show of hands or by secret ballot.
- e) A full member unable to attend a General Meeting may appoint another member who attend and vote at the general meeting by using a prescribed proxy form.



#### 9.4 Extraordinary General Meeting

Upon receiving the written request and verbal notification to any of the committee members of at least one tenth of total number of full members of the Association, the Chairman must convene an Extraordinary General Meeting within 30 days of the receipt of the request. The discussions and matter raised in the request, the nature of which shall be notified to all members with the notices of the meeting. Notices shall be in accordance with 9.2) hereof.

#### 9.5 Election of the Committee

##### a) Eligibility of Committee Members

A member is eligible to be elected to the Committee only when the individual has fulfilled all of the following criteria:

i) The individual is a full member of the Association.

ii) The individual should be willing to abide the constitution.

b) At the AGM, members shall, by a show of hands or by secret ballot, elect seven Committee Members or such other number as may from time to time be decided by the association. A second election shall then be conducted to elect a Chairman from among the newly elected Committee Members. At the first Committee Meeting, the Committee Members shall elect among themselves one Vice-chairman, one Internal Secretary, one External Secretary and one Treasurer.

c) No members shall be nominated or elected for office without his/her knowledge and consent.

d) The term of office shall be until next Annual General Meeting where upon all Committee Members shall retire. All Committee Members shall be eligible for re-election.

e) An officer may be removed by special resolution of the Association in General Meeting.

f) All officers shall serve in an honorary capacity.

g) Scrutineers shall be elected at the General Meeting from among the voting members. They shall be responsible to the Committee or the Sub-Committee for collecting the ballot box and counting and checking the vote.



## 10. ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMITTEE

### 10.1 Powers of the Committee

- a) The Committee shall conduct all business in accordance with the Constitution and shall take decisions by majority vote at Committee meeting.
- b) The Committee shall protect its funds against extravagance or misappropriation.
- c) The Committee shall have the power to appoint Sub- Committees where necessary to carry out the business of the Association and may delegate any of its power to such Sub-Committees.
- d) The Committee shall appoint the Honorary Auditor.
- e) The Committee shall appoint the legal advisor and honorary advisors as it may consider necessary.
- f) The Committee shall have power to approve or reject membership application according to the constitutions.
- g) The Committee shall have power to terminate any person's membership if he/ she violated the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice of the Association, and subject to Clause 7. 1) d) hereof.

### 10.2 Duties of the Committee

- a) the Chairman, who shall represent the Association, conduct the affairs of the Association in accordance with the decisions of the Committee and the resolutions of the Association in General Meeting. The Chairman shall preside over all meetings and have a casting vote.
- b) the Vice-chairman, who shall assist the Chairman to conduct the business of the Association and assume all the responsibilities of the Chairman in the absence or disability of the Chairman.
- c) the Internal Secretary, who shall attend to all internal correspondence and secretarial work of the Association, be responsible for minutes of all meetings, and maintain the membership register;
- d) the External Secretary, who shall attend to all external secretarial affairs;
- e) the Treasurer, who shall attend to all financial matter, receipts and payments of the Association,



prepare for the Annual General Meeting an annual statement of accounts, which after being audited by the Honorary Auditor of the Association, shall be submitted to the Annual General Meeting for adoption; and

f) Whenever there is a change of officers in the Committee, arrangements for handing/taking over of duties and documents shall be made within one month of the change. A certificate to this effect shall be signed by the out-going and the in-coming officers for the record of the Committee.

g) In the event of resignation of the Committee Members, the Committee shall notify members within 14 days.

### 10.3 Proceedings of Committee Meetings

a) The Committee shall meet at least once a month. The Chairman may summon a meeting of the Committee at any time by notice served upon the Committee Members.

b) Over half of the total number of members of the Committee shall form a quorum

c) If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to such time within a week. If a quorum is not present within half an hour after the time specified for the adjourned meeting, those present shall be deemed to be a quorum.

d) In the event of absence of the Chairman at a meeting, the Committee shall elect a Chairman for the meeting from amongst themselves.

### 10.4 Vacation of Office by Committee Members

The office of a member of the Committee shall be vacated if such member:

a) ceases to be a full member of the Association; or

b) resigns by notice in writing; or

c) is dismissed from office by an ordinary resolution at a general meeting; or

d) absence from three consecutive committee meetings without prior notification to the Committee;  
or



e) unavoidable absence from Hong Kong and such absence is likely to be permanent or unduly prolonged.

#### 10.5 Re-election for Vacancy of Committee Member

a) In the event of resignation of the Chairman, the Vicechairman shall become the acting Chairman. The Committee shall initiate to call for an Extraordinary General Meeting (according to 9.4) within one month to elect a new Chairman among full members.

b) The vacancy in case of an office-bearer other than the Chairman shall be filled by the Committee Members who secured the next highest number of votes at the last election.

c) The vacancy in case of a Committee Member shall be filled by the full member who secured the next highest number of votes at the last election.

d) If there is no such candidate available, the Committee shall have the power to co-opt a full member to the office provided that the remaining period of office is six months or less, otherwise an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called to elect a new officer or Committee Member.

e) At the Extraordinary General Meeting, should the number of members in the Committee fall short of seven after the re-election, the existing Committee members shall be empowered to conduct the business of the Association until the next Annual General Meeting.

## 11. FINANCE

11.1 The financial year of the Association shall start on the 1st August and end on the 31st July in the next year.

11.2 The Association shall maintain a current account and/or a savings account with a bank to be specified by the Committee.

11.3 The account shall be in the name of the Association with authority given to any two of the Chairman, Secretaries and Treasurer signing jointly to operate each account.

## 12. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF LIABILITY OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

If the Association incurs liabilities, the sum of which exceeds the funds at the disposal of the Committee, it shall be the responsibility of all full members to meet the excess, in equal shares. The Association shall not assume any liability whatsoever for debts incurred by any member of the





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Association unless such member was a full member acting with the express authority of the Committee, and incurred the debt or debts in the name of the Association.

### **13. METHOD OF DISSOLVING THE ASSOCIATION**

If it is proposed that the Association shall be dissolved the decision shall be made by special resolution of the Association in the General Meeting. If there remains a surplus in the Association's funds after dissolution, this will be donated to an approved charity or a similar organization to be agreed upon by the members.

### **14. THE CONSTITUTION**

14.1 The constitution shall take effect upon its adoption by special resolution at the first General Meeting of the Association and approval by the Registrar of Societies, whichever occurs the later.

14.2 The 14.1 may be amended only by special resolution passed at a General Meeting, notice of which has included the text of the resolution.



## **POLICY STATEMENT ON QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY FOR MEMBERSHIP**

### **1. MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

a) The Hong Kong Association of Speech Therapists (HKAST) has four membership categories: Full member, overseas member, associate member and student member.

b) The categories are as follows:

i) *Full member* This category is for speech therapists who qualify as a practising member of the Association. As practising members, they receive the Newsletter and all other mailings of the Association, they are invited to attend all HKAST functions, and are entitled to vote or to be elected for service at the Annual General Meeting or on other occasions.

iii) *Associate member* This category is for professionals of fields related to speech therapy (for example, audiologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, TASTs, linguists). It also includes speech therapists who do not meet the qualifications for full membership. Associate members receive the Newsletter, are invited to attend all professional meetings and receive most mailings from the Association. They are not entitled to vote and to be elected as Committee Member at the AGM or on other occasions.

iv) *Overseas member* This category is for former HKAST members who have left Hong Kong but wish to maintain contact with the Association. It also includes speech therapists who live overseas and wish to have contact with HKAST. Overseas members receive the Newsletter but are not normally sent other mailings. They can attend but not entitled to vote or to be elected as Committee Members at the AGM or on other occasions.

v) *Student member* This category is for any full-time student who has an interest in speech therapy, regardless of their course of study. They may be studying in Hong Kong or overseas. Student members receive the Newsletter and receive most mailings from the Association. They can attend but are not entitled to vote and to be elected as Committee Members at AGM or on other occasions.

### **2. QUALIFICATIONS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP**

a) *Persons who were trained in Hong Kong*

Persons who were trained in Hong Kong must (i) hold a Bachelor degree or above in speech



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therapy in a recognized tertiary institution, and (ii) demonstrate competency as specified in CBOS 2011 with reference to the supplementary document by HKAST

*b) Persons who were trained in other countries*

Persons who were trained in other countries must (i) hold a speech therapy degree recognized by a recognized tertiary institution; (ii) demonstrate that they can practice in their own country; (iii) be a member of their local speech therapy association; (iv) and meet CBOS 2011 with reference to the supplementary document by HKAST.

Factors to be taken into account will include:

- i) Language proficiency of intended language of practice in Hong Kong