

# **Trinidad and Tobago Optometrists Association**

## **Constitution**

1. Definition: The World Council of Optometry defines the concept of optometry as follows:  
"Optometry is a healthcare profession that is autonomous, educated, and regulated (licensed/registered), and optometrists are the primary healthcare practitioners of the eye and visual system, who provide comprehensive eye and vision care, which includes refraction and dispensing, detection/diagnosis and management of disease in the eye, and the rehabilitation of conditions of the visual system" Adopted 25 April 1997, Kyongju, Korea
2. Name:  
The Name of the Association shall be:  
"The Trinidad and Tobago Optometrists Association" Hereby denoted as the TTOA in this document.
3. Mission:  
The TTOA is dedicated to excellence in every way- in the services we provide and in our relationships with our members and the general public.
4. Vision:  
Many challenging opportunities within the current healthcare environment are presenting themselves to the Trinidad and Tobago Optometric Profession. The TTOA intends using these to:
  - Become a key role player in the healthcare environment.
  - Be recognised and accepted for its continuous support in enhancing the professional image of its members.
5. Objectives:  
The primary object of the TTOA is to protect and promote the interests of the optometric profession as well as the public. These objectives include:
  - Representing optometrists with authority and credibility in all matters concerning their interests within the healthcare environment.
  - Promoting the integrity and image of the optometric profession.
  - Promoting education, research and academic excellence.
  - Influencing the eye care environment to meet the needs and expectations of the wider community by promoting improvements to healthcare policy and legislation.
  - Promoting trust, integrity, professional conduct, efficiency and goodwill within the profession.
  - To facilitate in the maintenance of the standard's of practice by members to the public via continuing professional education.
  - To judiciously use all subscriptions, entrance fees, levies and donations for the pursuance of aims and objectives of the Association.
  - To strive to assist members in their ability to provide their professional services to the public by way of projects and initiatives that are co-ordinated and marketed nationally via the Association.
  - To disseminate information to members to keep them up to date with the latest developments in our industry.
  - To act in an advisory capacity regarding members concerns and requests where possible.

## 6. Qualification for Membership

### Ordinary Membership

All registered optometrists shall be eligible for membership.

Ordinary Members are eligible to:

- Attend
- Speak
- Be nominated for elections
- Vote
- Pay annual subscription fees.

### Associate Members

All registered persons, qualified within the optical industry, but not eligible for ordinary membership, shall qualify for election as an associate member of the TTOA.

Associate Members are eligible to:

- Attend meetings
- Speak but not vote
- Pay annual subscription fees.

### Student Membership

A student of optometry in a school or college accredited or pre-accredited by the TTORC or a resident or intern in any program accredited or pre-accredited by the TTORC, shall be a student member of this association. Such student membership may continue until the end of the same calendar year in which the student has graduated and been licensed to practice. Student members are eligible to:

- Attend meetings
- Speak but not vote
- Pay annual subscription fees.

### Ceasing to be a member

A person may cease to be a member of the TTOA if:

- a) He/She fails to pay his dues. However, as a registered Optometrist with the Trinidad and Tobago Optical Registration Council, would be eligible to:
  - Attend meetings
  - Speak but not vote
  - Unable to accept nominations for elections
- b) By written notice signed by him/her and delivered to the Secretariat, for the attention of the Executive Committee. Resignations become effective only at the end of each financial year. The membership dues shall be payable in accordance with the period of membership.
- c) Violates the Code of Ethics
- d) He/She passes away.

## 7. Officers

- The officers shall be a President, President-Elect, and the Treasurer.
- The term of office of the President and the President-Elect, the Treasurer and Executive Committee members shall be two (2) years subject to:
  - The President and the President-Elect shall be limited to one term of office in each function.
  - The other persons should have not more than three terms of office. This provision is subject to special circumstances, such as election as President-Elect or Treasurer.

## 8. Duties of the officers

### a) The President

- a. The President shall have general supervision over the association affairs and shall preside at all meetings of the association and the executive committee.
  - i. The Past-President shall become a member of the Executive Committee, without special election, for one further year after the end of his presidential term.

- ii. The person who was previously President-Elect shall, without special election, become President. If the President-Elect declines the office of President, the President shall be elected at the AGM.
  
- b) The President-Elect
  - a. The President-Elect shall assist the President in the general supervision of the affairs of the Association and shall act for him/her in his/her absence.
  
- c) The Treasurer
  - a. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Executive Committee for all financial matters of the Association and shall prepare a financial statement for presentation at each AGM. He/She shall pay all accounts which receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee.
  
- d) The Executive Committee
  - a. This committee comprises seven(7) members:
    - 1. The President, President-Elect, Treasurer, the Immediate Past-President, and three (3) elected members, who shall be elected at the AGM.
  - b. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the Executive Committee and they shall meet at least once every three (3) months.
  - c. The association shall be legally bound by the signature of the President together with that of the Treasurer.
  - d. The Executive Committee shall appoint an Executive Director:
    - i. Please refer to the most recent edition of the TTOA bylaws for the description of the job description of the Executive Director
  - e. Three (3) members and two (2) officers shall comprise a quorum for these meetings.
  - f. A member of the Executive Committee shall automatically cease to hold office if:
    - i. He/She ceases to be a member of the Association
    - ii. He/She is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without an excuse in writing acceptable to the Committee.
    - iii. He/She resigns office
    - iv. He/She passes away
  - g. In the event of a vacancy on the Executive Committee, the Committee is empowered to select a member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the current year.
  
- e) The Secretariat
  - a. A Secretariat will be appointed by the Executive Committee, which would handle various administrative tasks on behalf of the TTOA.
    - These tasks may include:
      - i. Attending and organising the AGM, including typing and faxing agendas and notes. Typing and distributing minutes
      - ii. Arranging Teleconferencing
      - iii. Preparing audit, agendas, annual report, typing and distributing minutes for Annual General Meeting
      - iv. New membership registration, banking and distribution of member's accounts and statements.
      - v. Follow up non-renewals and membership register maintenance.
      - vi. Liaise re copy and distribute newsletter
      - vii. Maintaining accounts during year and preparing Bank reconciliation for each Board Meeting
      - viii. Preparing annual accounts and budget

- ix. Attending to day to day enquires
- x. Liaise with Executive Director

9. Annual General Meeting

- a) The AGM shall be held in January.
- b) The date to be determined by the Executive Committee and notice thereof shall be given to the members thirty (30) days before the appointed date.
- c) Any member who is unable to attend an AGM may designate another member to act as their proxy. The notice of proxy shall be in writing to the Treasurer for approval.
- d) The President, Secretary and Treasurer shall each present to the meeting a report of the proceedings of the Association for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> Day of December preceding. These reports shall be approved by the Executive Committee and signed by the President and Treasurer.
- e) A quarter (25%) of the membership and two (2) officers shall comprise a quorum for these meetings. If a quorum is not achieved, the President shall postpone the meeting for 24 hours. If still no quorum is achieved, the meeting shall be cancelled.
- f) A ballot system of voting shall be adopted at the AGM
- g) With the exception of the expulsion of a member, the amendment of the constitution and the dissolution of the organisation, resolutions shall be adopted by simple majority of votes present. In the event of a tie, the President, or in his absence the President-Elect shall have the casting vote.
- h) An extraordinary AGM shall take place when the Executive Committee so decides, or upon written petition of at least one fifth of the voting members. The petition is to be addressed to the Secretariat and shall state the reasons why an extraordinary AGM is required. It must be convened by the Executive Committee within two (2) months of the decision of the Executive Committee or the submission of the petition. The written invitation to the members must be sent at least one month in advance of the date of the meeting.
- i) The Executive Committee or the President or, in his absence, the President-Elect, shall convene the ordinary or extraordinary AGM by written invitation to the members.
- j) The invitations to the members for ordinary AGM shall be sent at least two (2) months in advance. The provisional agenda shall be notified in writing with the invitation. Motions for the attention of the AGM shall be submitted to the secretariat at least two and a half months (2 1/2) before the date of the meeting.

10. Expenditure

- Any mention involving the expenditure of money which would be binding on the Association must receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes of the Executive Committee.

11. Amendment to the Constitution

- The Constitution may be amended at an AGM on a two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast.
- Any member wishing to propose any alteration or addition, shall forward to the Secretariat a draft of said proposed alteration/addition at least one (1) month before the date of the meeting.

12. Issuing and Amendment of Bylaws

- Bylaws are regulations of secondary importance which augment and clarify the constitution, specifically in the area of the association's rules of procedure.
- The AGM may issue or amend by-laws by a simple majority of members present and voting. Members shall be advised of the proposals and proposed amendments at least one month prior to an AGM.

13. Committees

- A representation of three (3) members may be elected by the Executive Committee to present the views and wishes of the members as the need may arise.
- From time to time, a sub-committee may be formed to deal with any problems that may arise, this would include the formation of a Disciplinary Committee.

14. Dues

- The funds to pursue the Associations objectives may derive from any or all of the following:
  - Membership Fees

- Income from campaigns and events
  - Donations of all kinds
- The Associations financial year shall run from 1 January to 30 December.
- An annual membership fee shall be payable on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December each year and no later than the date of the AGM. Any payment received after the date of the AGM would be deemed late. If said payment is not received by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March of each year, the member would be removed from the membership roll. To be re-instated, the member would be required to pay the annual fee together with a re-activation fee. This fee would be determined by the Executive Committee and published together with the schedule of fees each year.
- A schedule of fees will be published together with the notice of the annual AGM, with a review done on an annual basis.
- Members, who have not paid their dues by this date, shall lose their right to participate, that is speak, unless by special invitation of the President, vote or be nominated for the duration of their failure to pay.
- In cases where legal advice has to be solicited, an ExAGM shall be called to discuss the cost of said legal advice and how this would impact the Association and the financial members of the TTOA.

15. Dissolution of the Organization

- The organization shall only be dissolved by resolution. An extraordinary AGM, with three months notice, shall be called for this purpose. The majority required for the passage of such a resolution shall be three quarters (3/4) of those present and voting.
- After the dissolution and liquidation of the organization, the organizations assets devolve upon one or more institutions which pursue aims similar to those of the TTOA.
- The donee and the procedure shall be determined by the AGM.

16. Coming into Effect

- Upon the acceptance of this constitution the existing Association shall be formally dissolved as it existed prior to the coming into effect of this constitution. It shall be re-formed in accordance with the provisions of this constitution. All assets and rights belonging to the existing TTOA shall be transferred to the new Association. The members of the existing TTOA shall automatically become members of the new Association.
- This constitution shall come into effect upon the resolution of the AGM on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of January 2009 at the Kapok Hotel, in Port of Spain, Trinidad.