

**CONSTITUTION OF
THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEANS**

Adopted as amended in Pretoria on the 4th day of March 2009 at a meeting of Deans/Deputy Deans (or equivalent)/representatives of Deans of Health Sciences Faculties at South African Universities

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CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF HEALTH SCIENCES DEANS

1. PREAMBLE

We, the South African Committee of Health Sciences Deans acknowledge that health sciences education in the Republic of South Africa takes place within the following strategic and legislative frameworks:

- The Higher Education Act which inter alia provides for the regulation of higher education, provides for the establishment, governance and funding of higher education institutions and provides for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education,
- The National Health Act which redresses the inequities of the past in the distribution of healthcare and seeks to create a national health system that is patient-centered and for the benefit of all.
- The Health Charter which seeks to engender the transformation of the health sector addressing access, equity and quality in health services together with broad based black economic empowerment.
- The Strategic Framework for the Human Resources for Health Plan which promotes access to health services by the equitable distribution and use of skilled healthcare professionals and which seeks to render accessible, appropriate, high quality healthcare at all levels by healthcare professionals equipped with the appropriate capacity and skills.
- The National Human Resources Plan for Health which implements a national guideline for human resources policy and planning to ensure that the entire health system obtains the quality and quantity of staff required, makes optimum use of its human resources, anticipates and manages changes in staffing and develops a multi-skilled, representative and flexible workforce to meet the healthcare needs of its diverse communities experiencing several and diverse disease burdens.

2. NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization shall be The South African Committee of Health Sciences Deans.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Constitution shall mean the constitution of the SA Committee of Health Sciences Deans.
- 3.2 Higher Education Institutions include all public and private Universities in the Republic of South Africa.
- 3.3 Health Sciences shall mean any discipline offering programmes at higher education institutions which requires registration of graduates with the following statutory professional councils: the Allied Health Professions Council of SA (AHPCSA), Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA), the SA Nursing Council (SANC), the Dental

Technicians' Council (DTC), the SA Pharmacy Council (SAPC) and the South African Council of Social Services Professions (SACSSP)..

- 3.4 Dean shall mean the person appointed to an academic leadership and management position in Health Sciences by each higher education institution.
- 3.5 Committee shall mean the SA Committee of Health Sciences Deans.

4. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Committee is to facilitate the optimization and transformation of academic activities in Health Sciences faculties in order to meet the healthcare, research and social imperatives of the country.

5. **OBJECTIVES**

The Committee aims to:

- 5.1 Serve as an advocacy group for all matters related to high quality academic activities (teaching, learning, research and service) in Health Sciences faculties.
- 5.2 Represent faculties training healthcare professionals with authority and credibility.
- 5.3 Promote the integrity and image of all health professions and health professional education in South Africa.
- 5.4 Develop coordinated responses to national and international health and education issues.
- 5.5 Develop and coordinate responses to influence policy drafts and legislation.
- 5.6 Facilitate human resource for health planning with regard to the needs of South Africa, in partnership with the Department of Health and relevant authorities.
- 5.7 Foster national and international collaboration and partnerships between similar bodies for best practice in higher education, research and academic leadership.
- 5.8 Promote a viable and competitive academic career for health professionals in South Africa.
- 5.9 Interact with the Department of Health, the Department of Higher Education and Training, The Joint Health Sciences Education Committee (JHSEC), professional councils, other organizations and national and international funding agencies on issues of mutual interest.

Commented [A1]: We were asked to expand this but I didn't take notes. Please suggest who else should be added.

6. **MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1 All Deans are permanent members
- 6.2 Deputy Deans (or equivalent) ¹ associated with the Health Sciences at South African higher education institutions.
- 6.3 Where Health Sciences disciplines are not located within Health Sciences Faculties, application can be made to the Committee for admission of a representative of such disciplines.
- 6.4 Membership is annually renewed by the payment of a fee determined by the EXCO.

¹ The Dean may, on a reasonably continuous basis, designate a representative such as a Head/Director of a cognate School to attend meetings as his/her *secundus*.

7. THE EXECUTIVE

7.1 Office bearers:

The following office bearers shall be elected to form the Executive of the Committee:

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Co-opted member according to need

7.2 Eligibility and Election:

- 7.2.1 A call for nominations will go out at the penultimate meeting of every second year and the new office bearers will be voted in at the last meeting of that year.
Only paid up members are eligible for nomination and voting.
- 7.2.2 Elections will be conducted by secret ballot with the incumbent elected by simple majority.
- 7.2.3 No institution shall have more than one member elected onto the Executive Committee.

7.3 Term of office and meetings:

- 7.3.1 The officers shall serve for a period of two years.
- 7.3.2 The officers must be rotated so that all member institutions are represented
- 7.3.3 An office bearer may be re-elected, but may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.
- 7.3.4 Terms must be staggered so that all officers do not end their terms at the same time.
- 7.3.5 The Executive will meet at least three times per year and have additional meetings as and when needed.

7.4 Exceptions:

- 7.4.1 An officer may be removed from office by a vote of two out of three Executive members, and 75% of members present at a quorate meeting if actions are deemed inappropriate by the membership.
- 7.4.2 Normal appeal procedures will apply in such cases.
- 7.4.3 Vacancies in the Executive will be filled by the prescribed nomination and voting procedure for the remainder of the term of office at the next meeting of the Committee.

7.5 Functions:

The Executive shall have oversight, advisory and decision-making responsibilities and provide strategic direction to the Committee.

7.5.1 The Chair shall:

- Preside over all meetings of the Committee;
- Represent the Committee in all matters relevant to internal and external stakeholders;
- Ensure that the Committee operates in conformity with the constitution;
- Maintain communication with members.

- 7.5.2 The Deputy will support the Chair and assume the role of the Chair in his/her absence
- 7.5.3 The Secretary shall:
- be responsible for the agenda and minutes of each meeting of the Executive;
 - maintain the membership directory and contact details;
 - correspond as needed with all stakeholders.
- 7.5.4 The treasurer shall:
- Maintain accurate records of the Committee's transactions;
 - Collect dues as required;
 - Develop a budget and submit it to the Committee once a year;
 - Arrange for signing power of cheques and for approval of auditors;
 - Present an annual financial report to the Committee at the last meeting of each year.

8. MEETINGS

- 8.1 The full membership of the Committee will have at least three meetings a year, dates of which will be determined at the last meeting of the preceding year.
- 8.2 One of the Committee meetings must be held jointly with the Medical Deans Committee and the Dental Deans Committee.
- 8.3 Meetings will be convened by the Executive at the campus of each member higher education institution on a rotational basis.
- 8.4 A quorum of 50% plus one will apply.
- 8.5 A call for items for the agenda will be issued by the secretary 30 days before the date of each meeting.
- 8.6 The agenda shall close 15 days prior to meeting and the agenda and supporting documents shall be distributed electronically 10 days prior to the meeting.
- 8.7 Items for the agenda shall be submitted in electronic format to the Secretary.
- 8.8 Urgent items may be added to the agenda up to 3 days before a meeting. The member concerned shall be responsible for circulating any documentation to all members.
- 8.9 Decisions shall be taken by consensus. Should it be necessary to vote, decisions shall be taken on simple majority with the Chairperson having the casting vote should the vote be equal.
- 8.10 Apologies for absence shall be submitted electronically to the Secretary.
- 8.11 Emergency decisions shall be taken by the Executive. The full committee shall be informed by circulation/round-robin and will ratify these decisions at its next meeting.
- 8.12 All meetings shall be minuted.
- 8.13 Minutes shall be distributed to all members by the Secretary no later than 30 days after the meeting.
- 8.14 The Committee may invite representatives from other organizations or groups to discuss matters of mutual interest.

9. SUB-COMMITTEES AND AFFILIATION

- 9.1 Sub-committees, task teams or working groups may be set up to deal with specific issues or needs from time to time.
- 9.2 The terms of reference of such sub-committees, task teams or working groups shall be determined by the Committee (or delegated to EXCO) specifying the name,

membership, purpose, duration of operation, delegated authority and reporting procedures.

- 9.3 The Committee may affiliate with and accept affiliation of such organizations), associations or societies with common goals. To qualify for affiliation, the applicant must adhere to and sign the membership agreement and fulfil the requirements of the Committee, which may vary from time to time. All affiliate organisations must be committed to promoting the goals of the organisation. The Committee (or as delegated to EXCO) shall approve such affiliation.

10. FINANCES

- 10.1 Membership fees will be determined by the Committee on an annual basis at the last meeting of the year.
- 10.2 Membership fees have to be paid before the 30th March annually.
- 10.3 All monies belonging to this organization shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for this Committee.
- 10.4 The financial year of the Committee ends on the 30th September every year.

11. AMENDMENTS

- 11.1 This Constitution may be amended only at a full meeting of members, after at least 3 day's notice of such a motion.
- 11.2 A two thirds (2/3) majority of all members is required to move a motion to amend the constitution.

12. DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE

- 12.1 Dissolution of the Committee can take place only with the mandate of three quarters (3/4) of all members after six (6) months notice of such a motion.
- 12.2 Any monies in the bank account at dissolution will be disbursed equally amongst the higher education institutions represented by members at the time.