

International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy (I.F.S.H.T.)

BYLAWS/CHARTER

ARTICLE I: NAME

- A. The name of the organization shall be “International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy” (IFSHT). Founded on December 6, 1985 in PARIS, and subsequently registered in Winterthur, Switzerland on the 12th June 2006, the IFSHT is governed by Swiss law. This Federation unites Societies interested in Hand Therapy. Each participating Society retains its own autonomy.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

- A. Mission – To provide global networking and educational opportunities to develop and enhance the practice of hand therapy.
1. To maintain a liaison with societies associated with the practice of hand therapy;
 2. To promote the exchange of information about the practice of hand therapy;
 3. To facilitate international hand therapy educational opportunities;
 4. To exchange knowledge through publications and scientific meetings;
 5. To further collaboration between hand therapists and hand surgeons;
 6. To foster mutual interests and communication between the International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy and the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 – CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

There shall be four (4) classes of membership in IFSHT. They are:

- A. Full Membership
- B. Associate Membership
- C. Corresponding Membership
- D. Commercial Membership

SECTION 2 – MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA AND PRIVILEGES

A. Full Membership

Membership Criteria: Full Membership of IFSHT is not limited to independent hand therapy organizations, but is also available to hand therapists' groups who are organized under the umbrella of a National Physical Therapy, National Occupational Therapy, or National Hand Surgeons' organization. Hand Therapy groups organized as a sub-group of a national society are eligible to apply for full membership of IFSHT on the condition that there is no established independent hand therapist member society in their country. All hand therapy groups applying for full membership must state in their bylaws that members from both the disciplines of occupational therapy and physical therapy are eligible for membership and that all therapist members shall be granted the same rights and privileges.

There shall be only one (1) Full Membership designation for any country. Full Membership societies are expected to maintain current payment of membership fees.

Membership Privileges: Each Full Membership society in good standing shall designate one (1) person to act as a voting-delegate to represent their society in the council. The delegate, or their designated alternate, each of whom, shall be a physical or occupational therapist, shall also act as the primary contact person between IFSHT and the representative society.

Full Membership societies are entitled to:

- a) Nominate physical or occupational therapists for election to hold IFSHT office and / or serve on and chair an IFSHT committee. The nominated individual(s) must be qualified candidates and from a Full Member society in good standing
- b) Apply to host the Triennial Scientific Meeting of IFSHT;
- c) List information about their society on the IFSHT website

B. Associate Membership

Membership Criteria: Associate Membership of IFSHT is intended for groups of therapists who are interested in developing a hand therapy society but are not yet organized as an independent hand therapy organization nor belong to a sub-group of a National Physical Therapy, National Occupational Therapy, or National Hand Surgeons' organization. The group is eligible to apply for Associate Membership in IFSHT ONLY if there is NOT an already established hand therapy member society from this country. There shall be only one (1) Associate Membership designation for any country. Associate Membership may not occur in any country already having Full Membership. If and when a national group or society is accepted for Full Membership, Associate Membership will be revoked. Associate Membership societies will be expected to maintain current payment of membership fees.

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Membership Privileges: Each Associate Membership group in good standing shall designate one (1) person to act as a non-voting delegate to represent their group in the council. The delegate, or their designated alternate, shall also act as the primary contact person between IFSHT and the Associate Member group. No member of the Associate Member group may run for office or be appointed as a committee chair.

Associate Membership societies are entitled to:

- a) Have physical or occupational therapists from within their society serve on an IFSHT committee.
- b) Apply to host the Triennial Scientific Meeting of IFSHT;
- c) List information about their society on the IFSHT website

C. Corresponding Membership.

Membership Criteria: Corresponding Membership is open to individual therapists (physical therapists and occupational therapists) working in a country without a group with Associate Membership or a Full Member Society, who are unable to form an organized group of regional or national therapists involved in hand therapy.

There shall be only one (1) Corresponding Member in a country. If an application for Associate or Full Membership is approved from the same country, Corresponding Membership will be revoked. Corresponding members will be expected to maintain current payment of membership fees, payable in advance and covering a one-time triennial (3 year) period. Consideration will be given to a one time renewal.

Membership Privileges: Corresponding Members will not be represented in council or run for office or participate in any committee within IFSHT. Corresponding Members may not apply to host the Triennial Scientific Meeting of IFSHT but may attend council meetings as a guest, with no voting rights. Corresponding members will act as the in-country contact for IFSHT inquiries / external inquiries about access to hand therapy services.

Corresponding Members are entitled to:

- a) Have their name and contact e-mail posted on the IFSHT web page under a Corresponding Member listing
- b) Receive all IFSHT correspondence related to ongoing IFHST activities.

D. Commercial Membership:

Membership Criteria: Commercial Membership is limited to companies whose business interests are related to the advancement of Hand Therapy. Commercial Members will be expected to maintain current payment of membership fees.

Membership Privileges: Commercial Memberships will not have a delegate in council, nor may an individual from the company run for office or participate in any committee within IFSHT as a representative of their business. A designated representative of a Commercial Member may attend council meetings as a guest, with no voting rights. Commercial Members may have access to IFSHT publications.

Commercial Membership societies are entitled to:

- a) List information about their company on the IFSHT website

SECTION 3 – APPLICATION

- A. A society, group or individual wishing to apply for any class of membership in IFSHT must apply to the Secretary General as chair of the Membership Committee. The Executive Committee will review each application and bring forward any recommendations for membership before the Council.
- B. The Society's bylaws (with an English translation) must be enclosed with the membership application form.

SECTION 4 – FEES

- A. The recommended annual fees for each class of membership will be determined and reviewed by the Council.
- B. The Executive Committee will, at its discretion consider any request for reduced fees from members with low financial means.
- C. Fees for all classes of membership are due in advance, and may be paid in either one (1) two (2) or three (3) year intervals. Fees due in advance to be paid by 31st December each year.
- D. Membership fees will be considered delinquent if the treasurer has not received full payment nine (9) months, prior to the beginning of the next financial year.
- E. The executive committee may confer a designation of 'membership not in good standing' for non-payment of delinquent membership fees of two (2) years duration. Members deemed 'not in good standing' will lose all membership privileges. Membership privileges will be re-instated at the time the Treasurer receives payment of delinquent fees.

ARTICLE 1V: REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LIAISONS

Organized societies or federations, whether regional or international, with an interest in hand therapy and/or hand surgery, shall be invited or may apply to the secretary-

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general of IFSHT to form a Regional/International Liaison with IFSHT. The goal of this liaison relationship shall be to support/facilitate ongoing communication and enhance the working relationship with IFSHT.

Liaison Criteria: Regional/International Liaison is limited to an organized regional or international group, society, or federation of societies whose interests are related to the advancement of Hand Therapy and/or Hand Surgery and which do not fulfill the criteria for any class of IFSHT Membership. Regional/International Liaison shall not incur fees.

Liaison Privileges: Each Regional/International Liaison group/federation shall be invited to designate one (1) person to attend council as a guest of IFSHT. This person, or their designated alternate, shall also act as the primary contact person between IFSHT and the representative group. Members of the representative group may not run for office or participate in any committee within IFSHT as a representative of their organisation.

Regional/International Liaison groups/federations are entitled to:

- a) List information about their organisation on the IFSHT website

ARTICLE V: COUNCIL

A. The IFSHT council shall consist of the Executive Committee, one (1) voting-delegate who shall be a physical or occupational therapist from each Full Member society, and one (1) non-voting delegate from each of the Associate Member groups. All Committee Chairs and a representative from each Commercial Member, Corresponding Member and Regional/International Liaison group/federation are welcome to attend all Council meetings as guests.

1. Voting Delegate: Each full member society in IFSHT will be represented by a voting delegate, who is designated by his/her society and who is a physical or occupational therapist. The voting delegate of each full member society in good standing will have only one (1) vote in Council.
2. Non-voting Delegate: A non-voting delegate, who is designated by his/her group, will represent each Associate Member group in IFSHT. Each non-voting delegate in good standing shall be encouraged to participate in all council discussions, but shall not have a vote in the Council.
3. Executive Committee: The Executive Committee of the Council shall be composed of all current IFSHT officers, with the exception of any Under-Secretaries. Officers shall be physical or occupational therapists from a full member society in good standing. Each officer shall have only one (1) vote in Council.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

SECTION 1 – OFFICERS

- A. The officers of IFSHT shall be Immediate Past-President, President, President – Elect, Secretary General, Historian and Treasurer. All officers shall serve on the Executive Committee of the Council.
- B. All officers shall serve one three-year term, and continue in their office until their successor has been duly elected and assumes office. Officers may stand for re-election in the same post but may not stand for more than two consecutive terms of office.

SECTION 2 – OFFICERS’ EXPENSES

- A. Officers shall be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses for telephone, fax, stationery and other office expenses related to IFSHT business.
- B. With Council approval of the triennial IFSHT budget, the treasurer shall have the authority to approve payment of travel, housing and other meeting expenses of the IFSHT President, or an Executive Committee alternate. This shall include attendance at the IFSHT Triennial Congress and any other meeting deemed to be of essential value to IFSHT. Reimbursements for travel expenses shall not exceed the amount designated within the President’s expense budget. The President, or the Executive Committee alternate, will provide a report of all meetings attended to the IFSHT Executive Committee and to the Council.
- C. With Council approval of the triennial IFSHT budget, the treasurer shall have the authority to approve payment of travel, housing and other meetings expenses for all other Executive Committee members, to attend the IFSHT Triennial Congress or any other interim Executive Committee meetings deemed to be of essential value to IFSHT. Reimbursements for travel expenses shall not exceed the amount designated within the Executive Committee expense budget.

SECTION 3 – TERMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. President
 - 1. Shall assume this office at the completion of his / her three (3) year term of office as President Elect.
 - 2. Shall serve in this office for three (3) years. The term shall begin at the close of the Triennial Scientific Meeting;
 - 3. Shall preside at meetings of the Society, Council and Executive Committee;

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4. Shall make, with the consent of the Council, all appointments to committees, except the Membership and Nominating Committees;
5. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and fill all vacancies between the three (3) year IFSHT meetings unless otherwise provided for in the bylaws. Such interim committee appointments must be done in consultation with the Executive Committee, and with the consent of the affected membership group.
6. Shall deliver an address at the Triennial Scientific Meeting.

B. President-Elect

1. Shall be elected by the Council for three (3) years. The term shall begin at the close of the Triennial Scientific Meeting;
2. Shall assume the office of President in the event of resignation or incapacitation of the current president;
3. Shall assume the office of President at the close of a three (3) year term as President-Elect.
4. This officer may hold concurrently the office of Secretary General, Historian or Treasurer.

C. Immediate Past-President

1. Shall remain on the IFSHT Council for the three (3) year term following their term as President.
2. Shall have the right to vote at all Council Meetings.
3. Shall act as chair of the Nominating Committee.

D. Secretary General

1. Shall be elected by the Council for three (3) years. The term shall begin at the close of the Triennial Scientific Meeting;
2. Shall preside at the meetings of the Society, Council, or Executive Committee in absence of or at the request of the President;
3. Shall keep a record of proceedings of all Society and Council meetings;
4. Shall send out notices of meetings;
5. Shall act as chair of the Membership Committee;
6. Shall coordinate the activities of the standing, special and ad hoc committees;
7. Shall receive and review all committee reports and distribute to member group delegates no later than sixty (60) days prior to Council Meetings;
8. Shall send minutes of IFSHT Council Meetings to all officers and member group delegates no later than sixty (60) days following a Council Meeting.

E. Treasurer

1. Shall be elected by the Council for three (3) years. The term shall begin at the close of the Triennial Scientific Meeting;
2. Shall act as Treasurer, receiving all funds, and depositing them in a bank designated by Council;

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3. Shall pay all bills of the Society and keep an itemized account of receipts and expenditures;
4. Shall keep a record of all member groups paying dues;
5. Shall prepare a triennial budget for approval by Council. The term of the budget shall be 36 months, commencing January 1st of the year immediately following the closure of the Triennial Council Meeting;
6. Shall prepare an annual financial report to be distributed to the Council;
7. Shall have the account reviewed by the IFSHT Financial Review Committee prior to the Triennial Meeting.

F. Historian

1. Shall be elected by the Council for three (3) years. The term shall begin at the close of the Triennial Scientific Meeting;
2. Shall maintain the history of the Federation.

ARTICLE VII: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

SECTION 1 – PROCEDURE

- A. Officers are elected by a majority of vote of the sitting or electronically voting Council.
- B. Candidates for officers of IFSHT shall be presented to the Council for vote by the Nominating Committee.
- C. Wherever possible, the nomination slate of qualified individuals put to the Council for election to office shall have a regional representation of the full member societies of ISFHT.

SECTION 2 – REMOVAL / RESIGNATION

- A. Officers of IFSHT may be removed from office with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the council, just cause having been established. Any officer may resign at any time upon written notification to the executive committee.
- B. In the case of removal or resignation of an officer of IFSHT other than the President (whose duties will be assumed by the President-Elect), the duties of the resigned / removed officer will be absorbed by the remaining Executive Committee members until such time as the new officer has been elected by the Council.
- C. In the event of an IFSHT officer's removal or resignation, the IFSHT Nominating Committee shall put forth a nominee to fill the remainder of the term of that office. Such nominee shall be elected by a majority of vote of the Council.

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ARTICLE V111: VOTING / NON-VOTING DELEGATES**SECTION 1 – ROLE**

- A. The primary role of the IFSHT Voting and Non-voting Delegate is to enhance communication and to disseminate information between IFSHT and their respective member organization.
- B. Voting and Non-voting delegates shall also represent their member organization on Council (ARTICLE V. A-B).

SECTION 2 - APPOINTMENT BY MEMBER ORGANIZATION

- A. Each Full-Member organization will be responsible for appointing one voting delegate from their membership to represent their organizations interests within IFSHT.
- B. Each Associate and Corresponding Member will be responsible for appointing one non-voting delegate from their membership to represent their organizations interests within IFSHT
- C. Each Full, Associate and Corresponding Member must have a person appointed as a voting or non-voting delegate at all times. Failure to do so will result in the member organization losing their good standing status within IFSHT.

SECTION 3 – TERM OF APPOINTMENT

- A. Each Full and Associate Member organization will define the term for their voting or non-voting delegate position.
- B. Each Full Associate and Corresponding Member organization is responsible for insuring that the IFSHT secretary is duly informed of any changes in the name and full contact information for the appointed voting / non-voting delegate within thirty (30) days of any change. Failure to do so will result in the member organization losing their good standing status within IFSHT.
- C. All voting and non-voting delegates shall serve in their position until their successor has been duly appointed by their member organization.

SECTION 4 – RESPONSIBILITIES**A. COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES:**

- 1. Shall represent their member organization on the Council, and if unable to personally attend the Council Meetings or participate in any electronic ballot of the Council, is responsible for ensuring that their member organization has

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duly appointed and informed the IFSHT secretary of the name and contact information for an alternate Council voting / non-voting delegate no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Council Meeting or electronic ballot.

2. Shall inform the IFSHT secretary thirty (30) days prior to a Council Meeting or electronic ballot if their member organization is unable to be represented at the Council Meeting or participate in the electronic ballot. In this instance, member organizations are encouraged to submit comments or questions related to IFSHT business for review by the IFSHT Executive Committee and presentation to the Council as indicated.
3. Failure of the member organization to inform IFSHT of any changes in council delegate representation will result in the delegate losing their voting status on Council. Delegates will be welcome to attend the Council Meeting as guests.
4. Are encouraged to participate in IFSHT committees or projects as able and interested.
5. Are encouraged to establish ongoing contact with other member organization delegates.

ARTICLE 1X: MEETINGS

SECTION 1 – COUNCIL MEETINGS

- A. The Council will meet at least once every three years at such place and time, as it shall decide. Whenever possible, this meeting will occur at the same time as the Triennial Scientific Meeting.
- B. The President and the Secretary General under particular circumstances can call a special Council Meeting or electronic ballot of the Council. Notice of the meeting or ballot shall be distributed to each Executive Committee member and all voting and non-voting delegates at least sixty (60) days preceding the meeting or ballot.

SECTION 2 - TRIENNIAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

- A. An international scientific meeting will be held every three (3) years. All member groups will be encouraged to participate in the meeting. Participation of non-members groups or individuals who are interested in Hand Therapy will also be encouraged.
- B. Any Full or Associate member group in IFSHT may be considered as a possible host for the IFSHT Triennial Scientific Meeting.
- C. All proposals to host the IFSHT Triennial Scientific Meeting shall be made according to the current IFSHT “Call for Proposal” document.

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- D. The Executive Committee of IFSHT will review the proposed organizational committee's ability to host the Scientific Meeting and bring forward their recommendations for meeting location to the Council for review and ratification.
- E. Profits from the IFSHT Triennial Scientific Meeting shall be equitably shared between the hosting society and IFSHT. There shall be an official signed document reflecting this agreed profit share prior to approval being given to host the IFSHT Triennial Scientific Meeting

ARTICLE X: VOTING

SECTION 1 – QUORUM

- A. At the Triennial Council Meeting or any special meeting of the Council or any electronic ballot, a quorum consisting of more than half of all full member society voting-delegates and Executive Committee members shall be required for transaction of business.

SECTION 2 – PROCEDURE

- A. IFSHT bylaws amendments and voting for removal of an officer require a two-thirds (2/3) vote for ratification. All other matters coming before the IFSHT Council shall require a majority vote of the sitting or electronically voting Council.
- B. Voting for Officers shall be by a closed ballot.
- C. Voting on any other item of business shall be by closed ballot upon the request of any delegate.
- D. Between IFSHT Triennial Council Meetings the President or Secretary General may request an electronic ballot of Council on procedural matters. Voting members will be notified about any such ballot no later than 60 days before the ballot and shall have access to information pertaining to the matter and be provided an opportunity to submit questions prior to the date of voting.

SECTION 3 - ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

- A. The meeting and proceedings of the IFSHT shall be regulated and controlled according to the most current *Robert's Rules of Order* for parliamentary procedure, except as may be otherwise provided by the Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI: BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

- A. The Bylaws/Charter may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the sitting or electronically voting members of the Council. Suggested amendments shall be submitted at least sixty (60) days in advance of the Council Meeting or electronic ballot.
- B. With unanimous consent of Council, the Bylaws/Charter may be amended without a sixty (60) day notification at any regular or special Council Meeting, or electronic ballot

ARTICLE XII: FINANCES

SECTION 1 - SOCIETY EXPENSES

- A. Expenses of the IFSHT shall be shared equally by the constituent member groups. Each organization will be responsible for the expenses of its own delegate.
- B. All the members of the Council shall serve without pay.

SECTION 2 – AUTHORITY

- A. The President and Treasurer hold the signature of the IFSHT cheque book.
- B. The Council shall have the authority to accept on behalf of the IFSHT donations of funds from various sources.
- C. In the event that the IFSHT ceases to function, all funds remaining in the Treasury shall be donated to the World Health Organization.

SECTION 3 – FEES

- A. Each constituent member group shall be expected to pay fees as designated by the Council.
- B. The Council may forgive delinquent fees, as it deems appropriate.

SECTION 4 – FINANCIAL YEAR

- A. The financial year for the IFSHT runs from 1st January up to and including 31st December.

ARTICLE XI11: LEGAL REPRESENTATION

- A. The President and the Secretary General represent the IFSHT in areas of justice and civil matters. The one and the other have the whole power to receive charged mail and registered mail and to collect the total of the orders and to manage the current account.

ARTICLE X1V: COMMITTEES

SECTION 1 – STANDING COMMITTEES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Unless otherwise stated in the bylaws, each standing committee will have a chair and any additional members as deemed necessary by the Council. Once appointed to committee, each committee chair and member shall serve a three (3) year term, commencing at the closing of each Triennial Scientific Meeting. All standing committees shall submit a written report to the Secretary General for review and distribution to member group delegates no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Triennial Council Meeting.
- B. Therapist members from all Full and Associate member groups may serve on the standing committees.
- C. Chairs of the standing committees will be encouraged to attend and participate in Council Meetings as guests, but will not have a vote in council.
- D. There shall be the following Standing Committees in IFSHT:
1. Nominating
 - a) The Chair shall be the Past-President;
 - b) The Council shall elect three (3) additional Nominating Committee members;
 - c) Shall prepare a slate of nominees and submit to the Executive Committee for review and approval at least six (6) months prior to the Triennial Council Meeting or electronic ballot of council;
 - d) Shall present to the Council the approved slate of nominees.
 - e) Shall oversee the Council Meeting election or electronic ballot proceedings.
 2. Membership
 - a) The chair shall be the Secretary General;
 - b) Additional members may be appointed by the Executive Committee as necessary
 - c) Shall review all applications for membership

- d) Shall forward all completed applications to the Executive Committee for review prior to presentation at a Council Meeting for ratification.

3. Bylaws/Charter

- a) The chair shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and appointed by vote at the Triennial Council Meeting. Additional members may be appointed by the Executive Committee as required.
- b) Shall review current Bylaws/Charter, including any suggested changes from the Council or constituent member groups.
- c) Shall submit all suggested amendments to the Executive Committee for review prior to submission to the Council for ratification (see ARTICLE XI-A)

4. Education:

- a) The Chair shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and appointed by vote at the Triennial Council Meeting. Additional members can be appointed by the Executive Committee as required.
- b) Shall further the educational purposes of the IFSHT as directed by the Executive Committee

5. Financial Review Committee:

- a) The Chair shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and appointed by vote at the Triennial Council meeting. Additional members may be appointed by the Executive Committee as required. The Immediate Past Treasurer, or a designated Executive Committee alternate, shall sit as an ex-officio, non-voting, member of this committee.
- b) This committee shall review the full IFSHT financial accounts and supporting documentation in consultation with the Treasurer, prior to the Triennial Council Meeting.
- c) Following review of the accounts, the Financial Review Committee shall either recommend to the Council that the accounts as presented be accepted, or shall recommend that the accounts be officially reviewed by an accredited accountant and a full report forwarded to the Executive Committee and the Council within 90 days of the close of the Triennial Council Meeting.

SECTION 2 – SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND AD HOC COMMITTEES

- A. Special Committees and Ad Hoc Committees may be appointed by the Executive Committee with the approval of the Council, which will determine the committee composition, responsibilities and terms of office.
- B. The Secretary General will oversee all ongoing activities of these committees.

- C. Each committee will be expected to submit a written report to the Secretary General for review and distribution to member group delegates, no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Triennial Council Meeting.
- D. Chairs of these committees may be invited to attend and participate in Council Meetings as guests, but will not have a vote in Council.