

Constitution for the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)

Article 1: Name and status of the Association

The name of this non-profit, International Non-Governmental Organisation is The Association of Language Testers in Europe (hereinafter referred to as "the Association" or "ALTE").

The Association is a not-for-profit INGO with *Participatory Status* in the Council of Europe, organised and operated under English Law as a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) whose Full Members shall consist of institutions within Europe, which produce examinations and certification for language learners as one of their primary activities. Each Member shall provide examinations of the official language or languages which is/are used in their own country or region.

Article 2: Principal Objectives

The Association shall seek to fulfil the following objectives:

- To promote and foster good practice in language learning and assessment
- To promote the transnational recognition of language certification in Europe with a view to sustaining language diversity and harmonious relationships between citizens;
- To establish and maintain common levels of language proficiency in Europe;
- To establish and maintain common standards for all stages of the language testing process;
- To collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and know-how;
- To seek and maintain recognition of its activities by national governments;
- To establish and maintain a code of practice for its Members.

Article 3: Principal office

The Association's principal office (hereinafter referred to as "the Secretariat") is determined by the Council of Members in accordance with ALTE's legal status. The Council of Members may from time to time determine a different location of the principal office.

Article 4: Membership

4.1 Categories of membership

There shall be Full Members and Associate Members as follows:

Full members: organisations based within the European Union (EU) or European

Economic Area (EEA) which have as a primary activity the production of examinations of the official language or languages which is/are used in their own country or region. As of 2008, following the introduction of the ALTE auditing system, all new Full and Associate Members are required to successfully complete the ALTE auditing procedures of at least one of their examinations. These procedures are overseen and regulated by the Association's Standing Committee on Code of Practice and Quality Management. Full members shall each appoint a designated voter who will be eligible to vote on behalf of the organisation or consortium they represent.

Associate members: organisations which fulfil the criteria for full membership but which have their legal place of establishment outside the EU/EEA. Associate members do not have voting rights but are entitled to send representatives to the Annual General Meeting and other meetings of the Council of Full Members.

4.2 Terms and conditions of membership

- Any organisation wishing to apply for Full or Associate Membership of ALTE shall first apply to become an ALTE Institutional Affiliate by submitting a completed application form to the ALTE Secretariat;
- All categories of Members shall pay an annual subscription;
- All categories of Members shall send delegates to attend ALTE meetings and conferences regularly and shall actively participate in all ALTE activities where appropriate;
- Full Members shall be entitled to vote;
- Associate Members shall not be entitled to vote.

4.3 Termination of membership

Subject to the terms of the Formation Agreement:

- A member wishing to leave ALTE must give at least three months' prior written notice of its intention to do so, so that there can be a suitable transition period before it leaves. No refunds of annual subscriptions paid shall be made, irrespective of when a member leaves ALTE;
- The Executive Committee may make a proposal to the Council of Members for a Member to be expelled from the Association in the event that the Member commits any breach of any of its obligations under the Formation Agreement, including financial obligations such as failure to pay the annual subscription and/or audit costs, and fails to remedy such breach (if capable of remedy) within 30 days after being given notice to do so;
- The Executive Committee may make a proposal to the Council of Members for a Member to be expelled from the Association in the event that the Member acts in a way which brings the Association into disrepute;
- The Executive Committee may make a proposal to the Council of Members for a Member to be expelled from the Association in the event that the Member fails to participate in ALTE activities, including attendance at biannual meetings, for a period of more than two years.

Article 5: Affiliate Status

5.1 Categories of affiliation

There shall be Institutional Affiliates and Individual Affiliates as follows:

Institutional affiliates: Institutions that are involved in language testing but which do not meet the criteria for ALTE membership because language testing is not one of the institution's primary activities and/or because the institution does not produce tests of the official language or languages used in the country or region in which it is based; or institutions that may intend to seek membership of ALTE at a later date, including those that may not currently have the expertise to do so.

Institutional Affiliate status with ALTE offers:

- Institutional profile on the ALTE website
- Access to the ALTE electronic discussion forum
- Regular communications from ALTE
- Invitation to attend ALTE meetings, conferences and other events organised for Members and Affiliates only
- Reduced delegate rates at specified ALTE events and training seminars
- The opportunity to build international links through the ALTE network.

Institutional affiliates are required to pay an annual subscription fee. Institutional affiliates are not Full Members of ALTE, may not represent themselves as such, and may not use the ALTE logo in any way. Institutional Affiliates do not have voting rights.

Individual affiliates: individuals who have an interest in the testing field and would like to receive some of the benefits that are available to ALTE Members such as attending ALTE conference days. Individual Affiliate status is open to any individual with an interest in language testing, and is free of charge.

Individual Affiliate status with ALTE offers:

- Access to the ALTE electronic discussion forum
- Regular communications from ALTE
- Invitation to attend ALTE conferences and other events organised for Members and Affiliates only
- Reduced delegate rates at specified ALTE events and training seminars
- The opportunity to build international links through the ALTE network.

Individual affiliation is open to members of staff of institutional members and affiliates of ALTE and is actively encouraged. Individual Affiliates do not have voting rights.

Article 6: Governance

6.1 The organs of the Association

The organs of the Association shall be as follows:

- The Council of Members

- The ALTE Secretary-General
- The Executive Committee
- The Standing Committee on Code of Practice and Quality Management
- The Ombudsman
- The Secretariat

6.2 Council of Members

The management and administration of the Association shall be vested in a Council of Members (the Council) which shall consist of one representative of each Member and the ALTE Manager. Each member shall be free to appoint and dismiss their representative as they see fit.

6.3 ALTE Secretary-General

The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the Council. The Secretary-General shall remain in this position for five years unless the position is reviewed by the Council of Members. The Council of Members may (by simple majority vote) dismiss the Secretary-General if he or she shall fail to comply with any of his or her obligations.

The term of office for the elected Secretary-General is five years. The Secretary-General shall automatically be eligible to remain in office for a second term unless he/she resigns. After the second term, he/she shall have to be re-nominated and re-elected if he/she wishes to continue in office.

The duties of the Secretary-General shall be:

- Ensure the day to day administration of the Association
- Ensure that all meetings of the Association are properly held and minutes promptly circulated
- Ensure that the financial contribution system is operated properly and promptly
- Sign contracts on behalf of the Association
- Carry out such duties that the members and/or the Council may delegate to him from time to time

The Secretary-General shall, with the consent of the Council, be permitted to delegate any of his or her duties as set out above.

6.4 The Executive Committee

The ALTE **Executive Committee** shall be the highest elected body constituted by the General Assembly of the Council of Full Members of ALTE which represents the membership of the Association. The Executive Committee shall make day-to-day decisions on behalf of the Council of Members and the agreement of this body shall be required for any change in the ALTE Constitution.

The remit of the Executive Committee shall cover at least the following areas:

- Approval of annual accounts
- Approval of subscription levels

- Approval of new members and affiliates
- Amendments to categories of members
- Amendments to constitution
- Supporting the ALTE Secretariat in its activities as required

6.5 The Standing Committee

The Standing Committee on Code of Practice and Quality Management (hereinafter referred to as the “Standing Committee”) shall be elected by the Council of Full Members of ALTE and shall act to ensure the quality and fairness of the ALTE Quality Management System.

The Standing Committee on Code of Practice and Quality Management shall

- Review each audit and request further evidence and information from an auditee or auditor where this is deemed necessary in order to conclude final outcomes
- Identify issues which need further action and communicate them to the auditee so that an action plan can be drawn up
- Adjudicate in disputes between auditees and auditors
- Present a summary of the committee’s work to ALTE members on appropriate occasions
- Oversee auditor and auditee orientation, training and standardisation
- Advise on other Quality Assurance issues, as appropriate.

6.6 The Ombudsman

The General Assembly of the Council of Full Members of ALTE shall appoint, by simple majority vote, an Ombudsman as an independent arbiter in cases of disagreement between members, or between the ALTE Secretariat and a member (or members). The appointment will be ad-hoc when and if required. Candidates for the position of ombudsman shall be persons who have had an active involvement in the work of ALTE but who no longer represent the organisation or any of its members.

Article 7: Annual General Meeting of the Association

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association shall ordinarily take place at one of the ALTE Meeting and Conferences during the course of a calendar year. The Executive Committee may from time to time propose a different time for the meeting. Representatives of all Full Members are entitled to attend the AGM and vote; Associate Members do not have voting rights but are entitled to send representatives to the AGM.

The AGM shall cover at least the following areas:

- A report from the Secretariat on recent ALTE activities and other matters of interest
- A report from the Chair of the Executive Committee and a vote on any issues requiring one
- Reports from sub-groups and special interest groups

- Other project reports
- Agreement on proposed locations for upcoming meetings and other ALTE activities.

Article 8: Resources

8.1 Subscriptions

Full and Associate Members as well as Institutional Affiliates shall pay an annual subscription. The fee shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

8.2 Other resources

The Association shall also receive income from the professional development courses it runs for teaching, testing and other professionals. The Association may also charge for the operational costs of consultancy services provided by the Association to private or public persons or organisations, whether Members, Affiliates or neither, with all monies received being reinvested exclusively in the work of the Association.

8.3 Accounting

The financial year of the Association shall run from 1st January to 31st December in each year. Auditors shall be appointed to audit the accounts of the Association on an annual basis and the annual accounts shall be approved by the Executive Committee and presented to a meeting of all the Members for approval at the Annual General Meeting following the receipt of the audited accounts.

Article 9: ALTE Meetings and Conferences

In making the decision regarding locations for ALTE Meetings and Conferences, the Membership shall take into account the following factors:

- **Geographical location**, to ensure that meeting locations move around Europe as widely as possible and that they are easily accessible so that all member organisations can participate
- The **suitability of premises** offered for the meeting, given the number of participants to be catered for
- Representatives of ALTE Members and Affiliates shall be required to pay a registration fee to attend ALTE meetings and conferences. The fee shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

Notes

1. An official language is a language that has legal status in a legally constituted state or part of a state and which is prescribed by law for official or public purposes such as government activity, administration and education.