



THE SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS



Statutes of the Swedish Association
of Occupational Therapists



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1. Composition and Objectives

1.1 Constitution

The Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists (henceforth the Association) is an association of occupational therapists who have been trained or are undergoing training by means of educational programmes approved by the Association and the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT). The Association is a non-political association. The Association is a member of the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco).

1.2 Common values

The Association's common values are based on the values that characterise a democratic state governed by law, as expressed in the Swedish Constitution, the UN General Declaration of Human Rights as well as the European Convention on the protection of human rights and personal liberties.

1.3 Objectives

The Association shall watch over and further the employment and vocational interests of its members. In particular, this means that the Association shall:

- seek to obtain good salaries and salary increments;
- seek to obtain sound conditions of employment, opportunities for employment, and suitable work organisations;
- seek to ensure sound educational opportunities for occupational therapists;
- seek to ensure sound opportunities for further education as well as training and research;
- develop the links between education and research and practical activities in order to ensure a sound vocational development for occupational therapists;
- develop close co-operation with Nordic and international associations of occupational therapists;
- disseminate information about occupational therapy and occupational therapists.

2. Membership

2.1 Membership

Membership of the Association is granted – after written application – by the Board of the Association. The following persons may be accepted as members:

1. Those having passed an examination following an education in occupational therapy in accordance with 1.1.
2. Those who, after review by the Board of the Association, are in specific cases are considered to have an equivalent education.
3. Those who are undergoing an educational programme as defined in 1.1.

Membership is considered to commence on the first day of the month in which an application has been received by the Association's secretariat.

Individuals who, upon review, could be expelled from the Association in accordance with 2.4, may be refused membership.

Information about members, over and above the fact of their membership, may only be used for the internal activities of the Association and should consequently be treated as confidential.

2.2 Obligations of members

Members are obliged:

1. To comply with these statutes and to act on the basis of approved decisions.
2. To respect negotiated agreements.
3. To conduct themselves loyally, on the labour market and in other contexts – as employees and in vocational terms - in relation to the Association.
4. In their vocational activities to use the Association's Code of Ethics as the basis of their work.

Actions which a member may take on account of employment duties shall not be regarded as lack of solidarity.

2.3 Resignation

Members are entitled to resign from the Association after submitting their written resignation. Resignation of membership shall be sent in writing to the secretariat of the Association and should be accompanied by information about the reason.

Membership is terminated at the end of the third month after receipt of resignation.

However, an application to resign from the Association shall remain pending from the day the Association, the central union organisation to which the

Association is affiliated, or its equivalent has given notice of industrial action until the day when peace has been restored on the labour market. This shall apply regardless of whether the Association is directly involved in the dispute or not. The period of resignation shall not infringe on the member's right to resign from an unemployment benefit fund.

2.4 Expulsion

The Board of the Association is entitled to decide to expel a member who:

1. Disregards the obligations stipulated in 2.2.
2. In words or deeds expresses values that contravenes the common values of the Association.
3. Has breached the Association's Code of Ethics.
4. Has not paid due fees, despite reminders.

Before the expulsion is implemented, a member is entitled to submit his/her views on the matter to the Board of the Association.

2.5 Re-entry

Persons who apply for re-entry to the Association shall have settled their liabilities to the Association, paid a re-entry charge the amount of which shall be established by the Board of the Association. Such charges can correspond to a maximum of one year's membership fees.

A person who has been expelled on the basis of 2.4 is not entitled to become a member again until one year has passed from the date membership terminated, except where otherwise decided by the Board of the Association.

2.6 Right to service

Members who have paid due fees and charges are entitled to service in accordance with 1.3.

Members are not entitled to request individual help with negotiations until they have been members for six months.

3. Organisation

3.1 Organisation

The Association's activities are conducted in accordance with these Statutes as follows:

1. General Assembly
2. Board of the Association
3. Executive Committee of the Board
4. Council of Local Branch Chairpersons
5. Local Branches
6. The Association student organisation (Sveriges Arbetsterapeutstudenter)
7. Delegations and Committees
8. Nominations' Committee
9. Secretariat

3.2 Minutes

Minutes shall be kept at meetings of the General Assembly, the Board, the Executive Committee, Annual Meetings of Regional associations, and permanent delegations.

3.3 Voting

In the event of voting at meetings of the General Assembly, the Board, the Executive Committee, Annual Meetings of Local Branches, and Delegations, the view which enjoys the support of the majority shall prevail, except where otherwise stipulated. In the event of equal votes being cast, the view having the support of the Chairperson of the meeting shall prevail.

Voting shall be secret should this be so requested. In the event of equal votes, the issue shall be decided by casting lots.

4. General Assembly

4.1 Authority

The General Assembly is the supreme decision-making organ of the Association.

4.2 General Assembly

A General Assembly is to be held every third year during the period 1 October to 30 November. The Board of the Association decides the date and venue of the General Assembly.

4.3 Extraordinary meeting of general assembly

The Board of the Association may convene an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly should specific circumstances make it necessary. An extra-ordinary meeting of the General Assembly shall be convened if so requested by at least one-third of the number of Delegates, by the Association's auditors, or upon the written request of at least one-tenth of the Association's members. When an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly is called for it shall be held within 30 days from the date when the request reached the Association.

4.4 Delegates

Delegates are elected by the local branches of the Association and by student members at each educational establishment during the period 1 February 1–March 31 immediately prior to a General Assembly. If special circumstances exist, local branches may appoint delegates no later than seven days before a meeting of the General Assembly. Each local branch has the right to elect two delegates as well as two personal deputies at the Annual General Meeting of the branch held prior to a General Assembly.

Student members at each educational establishment elect their delegates at a special meeting. Branches/student bodies with more than 250 members are entitled to elect an additional delegate together with a with personal deputy. Furthermore local branches/student bodies at educational establishments may elect one additional delegate together with a personal deputy for every additional 200 members.

Mandates to a General Assembly are allocated on the basis of the number of members of each local branch/the number of student members on December 31 of the year prior to election.

Election of delegates to a General Assembly is for the period July 1 of the first year until June 30 of the fourth year. Student members at educational establishments elect delegates prior to each General Assembly.

Student members at educational establishments are to elect delegates no later than seven days before a meeting of the General Assembly.

Should a delegate or deputy resign during the mandate period it is incumbent on the local branch to appoint a replacement.

4.5 Notice of meetings, agenda, documents

Notice of ordinary General Assemblies and any proposals for amendments to the statutes shall be sent out no later than 10 weeks in advance. The agenda and other documents shall be sent out no later than four weeks before the meeting of the General Assembly.

Notice convening an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly shall be sent out no later than 10 days in advance.

Ordinary delegates to General Assemblies and deputies shall be sent all documents.

4.6 Agenda

At a General Assembly the following points are to be included :

1. Approval of list of voters.
2. Consideration of the Board's Annual Report as well as the auditors' report concerning the activities and finances of the Association together with resolution concerning discharge from liability for the Board and Scholarship Fund's Board.
3. Decision concerning objectives and fees for the coming term of office.
4. Election of Chairperson, 1st and 2nd Vice-Chairperson and other members of the Board of the Association.
5. Election of auditors and deputy auditors for the coming term of office.
6. Election of Chairperson and other members of the Ethics Council.
7. Election of Chairperson and other members of the Advanced Clinical Competence Board.
8. Election of members of the Nomination Committee .

Other matters of business shall also be dealt with, which is included on the agenda for the meeting of the General Assembly.

The agenda shall include matters of business (motions), which the Local Branches, the Association's student organisation or its members have submitted in writing to the Board by no later than September 1 in the year of the General Assembly. The Board shall state its views on such motions. If a motion is put forward at a General Assembly, which was not included on the agenda, the matters of business may be dealt with if at least three-quarters of the delegates present decide in favour thereof. Notice of such matters of business shall be given at the opening of the meeting.

Only matters of business which have been included in the notice convening the meeting may be dealt with at extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly.

4.7 Right to attend meetings

Delegates to the General Assembly are entitled to attend, speak, make proposals and vote at meetings of the General Assembly.

Members of the Board who are not delegates, and auditors elected by the General Assembly, are entitled to attend, speak and make proposals at meetings of the General Assembly.

The Chairpersons of Local Branches who are not delegates, staff employed at the secretariat that serves the Association and any other person who after a special decision by the General Assembly is given the right to attend and speak may do so.

All members of the Association are entitled to attend, as are specially invited guests of the General Assembly, except when the General Assembly decides otherwise for the consideration of specific items on the agenda.

5. Board

5.1 Authority

The Board of the Association has immediate responsibility for managing the activities of the Association; it also serves as the supreme decision-making organ of the Association between meetings of the General Assembly.

5.2 Membership of the Board

The Board consists of a Chairperson, 1st and 2nd Vice-Chairperson and nine other members. The Board is elected by the General Assembly from among the members of the Association. One of the members is to represent the Association's student organisation. This member is elected following nomination by the Association's student organisation. If the representative of the Association's student organisation resigns during a term of office, the student organisation is entitled to appoint a new member for the remainder of the term of office.

There is a quorum at meetings of the Board when seven members are present. The Board shall meet at least four times per year.

5.3 Function of the board

The functions of the board are:

1. To administer the Association's activities in accordance with the statutes of the Association and on the basis of decisions made in accordance with the statutes.
2. To ensure that the interests of members are safeguarded in the best manner.
3. To prepare business for consideration by the General Assembly.
4. To draw up the agenda for meetings of the General Assembly.
5. To implement decisions made by the General Assembly.
6. To make decisions on matters of great importance or involving important principles, in those cases where the decision making power does not rest on the General Assembly.
7. To accept responsibility for the management of the Association's assets.
8. To accept responsibility for publishing the journal *Arbetsterapeuten*.
9. To appoint representatives to WFOT and other international activities.
10. To delegate authority to one or more individuals to sign documents, etc. in the name of the Association.
11. To appoint representatives to various Saco organs.
12. To appoint the necessary committees and delegations.

5.4 Executive committee

The Executive Committee consists of the Chairperson of the Association together with the 1st and 2nd Vice-Chairpersons. The Committee performs functions delegated by

6. Council of Local Branch Chairpersons

The Council of Local Chairpersons consists of the Chairpersons or deputy Chairpersons of the local branches. Meetings of the Council are convened by the Board at least once annually. The Council is an advisory body to the Board of the Association.

7. Local Branches

7.1 Authority

The regional/local activities of the Association are conducted through Regions. Each Local Branch is responsible for the activities, relating specifically to members.

It is assumed that the Local Branches will conduct their activities in close co-operation with the Board of the Association. The general Assembly shall establish standard statutes for the Local Branches.

7.2 Membership

A Local Branch is instituted for each county. Local Branches may be instituted for health care authorities. If appropriate, Local Branches may be instituted or districts within a county. A Local Branch may opt to operate through a Sub-region.

7.3 Working practices

The activities of the Local Branch are administered by a Board having at least three members, one of whom shall be Chairperson and one being responsible for its finances. The Board is appointed at the annual meeting of the Local Branch, which is held each year between February 1 and March 31. At the annual meeting of the Local Branch delegates are elected to attend meetings of the General Assembly of the Association.

A Local Branch shall have statutes, which are established by the annual meeting and require the approval of the Board of the Association.

Student members who are undergoing education on a course in occupational therapy within the county covered by the Local Branch are entitled to attend, speak and vote at annual meetings of the Local Branch and at other meetings of members, except on matters concerning the General Assembly. Student members receiving an education in occupational therapy within the area of activity of the Local Branch are entitled to appoint one member to the Local Board.

8. The Association's student organisation (Sveriges Arbetsterapeutstudenter)

Members of the Association who are receiving an education in occupational therapy should belong to the Student Organisation of the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists, known as Sveriges Arbetsterapeutstudenter. The objectives, activities, etc. of Sveriges Arbetsterapeutstudenter are regulated by means of statutes adopted by the student organisation. In order to be valid these statutes require the approval of the Board of the Association.

9. Delegations and Committees

The Board of the Association is entitled to appoint delegations for special tasks. Delegation may be permanent or ad hoc. The Board of the Association is to appoint a delegation for matters concerning scholarship. This delegation shall consist of five members. The aforementioned delegations are to be appointed for the period between meetings of the General Assembly. The Board of the Association may also appoint a committee to address, review and take initiative in matters of vocational interest.

10. Ethical Council

10.1 Authority

The Ethical Council is the Board of the Association's planning organ for dealing with matters of professional ethics.

The Ethical Council shall:

- support the Association's members in connection with matters relating to professional ethics and keep itself informed about current ethical issues of importance to occupational therapists.
- stimulate an active discussion on ethical matters.
- regularly review and update the Code of Ethics and when it is considered appropriate recommend to the Board of the Association that proposals on ethical matters be submitted to the General Assembly.

10.2 Membership

The Ethical Council consists of six members with a particular interest in and knowledge of ethical questions. Five of the members shall be appointed from among the members of the Association. They shall not simultaneously have appointments as members of the Board of the Association, as members of a board of a Region, or as a local union representative.

One member shall have professional qualifications in ethics with an interest in matters relating to health care ethics.

The members of the Ethical Council are appointed by the General Assembly, which shall also appoint the Chairperson.

10.3 Working practices

The members of the Ethical Council are expected not to disclose anything about what they have discovered in their work about occupational therapists and their activities.

The Ethical Council shall submit a report on its activities during the period between meetings of the General Assembly to the General Assembly.

The Ethical Council shall submit an annual report on its activities to the Board of the Association. This report shall reflect current issues and may also deal with problems, which have arisen as a result of complaints, which have been rejected.

The Ethical Council shall meet twice a year and otherwise at the discretion of the Chairperson.

There shall be a quorum at meetings of the Ethical Council when at least four members are present; decisions are made by simple majority.

11. Advanced Clinical Competence Board

11.1 Authority

The Advanced Clinical Competence Board is a body within the Association for the approval of individual educational programmes for specialist training and the awarding of special qualifications to occupational therapists who have completed courses of study that are included in the individual educational programmes. Appeal against a decision by the Special Council may be made to the Board of the Association.

11.2 Members of the Advanced Clinical Competence Board

The Advanced Clinical Competence Board consists of a Chairperson and six other members. They are appointed by the General Assembly. Members of the Council should represent every single specialist field. The members of the Council must have PhD degree or be Council Certified Specialist in Occupational Therapy. Also, they should have a connection with clinical practice and work in their specialist field.

11.3 Working practice

- The Board is to approve the individual educational programmes for specialist training.
- The Board is to decide on equivalency, if required.
- The Board is to hold responsibility for seminars that are to be conducted for those who are undergoing specialist training.
- The Board is to decide upon and award specialist qualifications.

12. Nominations Committee

The Association shall have a Nominations Committee. This shall consist of three individuals who are not members of the Board of the Association. The Nominations Committee is elected by the ordinary General Assembly. One of the three members shall convene meetings. The Nominations Committee shall prepare the elections, which are incumbent on the General Assembly.

13. Arbetsterapeuten (the Occupational Therapist)

The Association publishes the journal *Arbetsterapeuten*, which is distributed to the members of the Association at no extra charge.

14. Honorary Membership

The General Assembly may decide to grant honorary membership following a recommendation from the Board of the Association.

Honorary Membership may be granted to a member of the Association who has worked perseveringly over a considerable period of time to develop occupational therapy and/or to clarify the importance of efforts made by occupational therapists, i.e. to realise the goals of the Association. Honorary membership may also be granted to a person who is not an occupational therapist but who, in a similar manner, has worked over a considerable period of time to develop and clarify the importance of occupational therapy.

15. Scholarship fund

the Association's Scholarship fund is administrated in accordance with special fund statutes by a delegation appointed by the Board of the Association.

16. Finances

16.1 Membership fees

The Association's membership fees are decided by the General Assembly.

Members are obliged to pay their membership fees in accordance with the regulations concerning methods of payment, which are announced by the Board of the Association.

The Board of the Association may grant a temporary reduction in/or waiver of membership fees. Information concerning the applicant's employment conditions during the period in question shall be attached to the application for a reduction or waiver.

Members shall inform the secretariat of the Association without being so requested of changes in name, address and employer, and, after being requested, shall provide information about his/her salary and conditions of employment.

Fees shall be paid in the manner prescribed by the Board of the Association.

16.2 Dispute fund

The Association shall have a dispute fund. This dispute fund shall be regulated by statutes, which have been approved by the General Assembly.

16.3 Additional charges

The Board of the Association may, if it considers it necessary, levy additional charges on members in order to defray costs in connection with current or expected industrial disputes. Should the central organisation request funds from the Association in connection with a potential or current industrial dispute, the Board of the Association is also empowered to levy additional charges on the members for such purposes, even if the Association is not involved in the dispute in question.

Additional charges in connection with disputes may not be levied on student members or members who enjoy an equivalent reduction in membership dues.

In the case of members who are also affiliated to other Saco unions, the Board of the Association shall determine the additional charge on the basis of the reduction, which the member enjoys in accordance with 16.1.

16.4 Unemployed fund

Members may join the recognised Unemployment Office of the Professional Associations (AEA) if they are entitled to do so in accordance with the statutes.

16.5 Auditors

The administration of the Association shall be scrutinised by two auditors, each of whom shall have an alternate. One auditor and one alternate shall be authorised public accountants.

17. Amendment of Statutes

Decisions to amend these statutes shall be made by the General Assembly. Proposals to amend the statutes are sent out together with the notice convening meetings of the General Assembly. If an amendment is to come into effect, the decision requires the support of at least two-thirds of the delegates present. The statutes may also be amended by a simple majority at two successive ordinary meetings of the General Assembly.

18. Dissolution

A decision to dissolve the Association shall be made by means of a decision at a General Assembly, which has the support of at least a four-fifths majority. Any assets remaining shall be used for purposes decided upon in connection with the decision to dissolve the Association.



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