

**PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CONSTITUTION**

1. The name of the Association is the Public Relations Association of Trinidad and Tobago, referred to in this constitution as “The Association”.

2. Interpretation

“Financial year” means the 12-month period from June to May

“Financial member” means someone who is up to date in terms of payment of dues

- a. The Executive Committee shall have the sole authority for the interpretation of this constitution and of any rules and regulations made from time to time hereunder, and the decision of the executive committee upon any question of interpretation shall be final and binding on the members.
- b. Words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa.
- c. Words importing the masculine shall include the feminine and vice versa
- d. Words importing persons shall include incorporated bodies and unincorporated associations.

3. Objective

The objectives and powers of the association are:

1. To promote the profession of Public Relations in Trinidad and Tobago.
2. To unite all persons and organisations whose interest is in the promotion of public relations.
3. To protect and advance the interest of practitioners, individuals or organisations engaged in Public Relations.
4. To improve the standards of practice and to safeguard the status of the profession of Public Relations.

4. Membership

- a. Categories

There shall be three categories of membership: Ordinary Membership, Associate Membership and Corporate Membership.

- (i) Ordinary Membership shall be open to persons active in the full-time practice of Public Relations or whose job includes a substantial proportion of public relations activities. An ordinary member has a voice and a vote at General Meetings of the Association. **Group Corporate Membership** – Where five or more persons come from the same organisation, they can opt for group membership at a special rate to be determined by the Executive.
- (ii) Associate Membership shall be open to persons who are not active in the full-time practice of Public Relations, but who hold qualifications, or are experienced

in Public Relations, or who hold temporary or undefined positions which necessitates the practice of Public Relations. An Associate Member has a voice but no vote at General Meetings of the Association. Associate Membership shall not exceed 25% of the total membership.

(iii) Corporate Membership shall be open to Public Relations Companies engaged in the full-time practice of Public Relations. A Corporate Member shall be limited to five (5) representatives who each have a voice and a vote at General Meetings of the Association.

b. Admission

Any person may submit to the Executive Committee an application for membership in the prescribed form. Admission of Full, Associate and Corporate Members shall be at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee. A candidate for admission who receives the votes of the majority of the Executive Committee shall be declared admitted. Every application for admission as a Full, Associate or Corporate member shall be proposed by one member and seconded by another member, both of whom shall vouch from their personal knowledge of the fitness of the candidate, and shall be signed by the applicant.

c. Notice

Immediately upon the election of a candidate, notice thereof shall be given to him, and he shall be furnished with a copy of the Constitution and Rules, and a request to remit to the treasurer of the Association within fourteen (14) days from the date of such request, the amount of this Membership fee. Upon payment of this Membership fee he shall become a member of the Association and be entitled to all the benefits and privileges of such membership, and be bound by this Constitution and the Rules of the Association. The Membership fee will serve as the member's first annual subscription fee.

Option 1: Fees will be pro-rated for the following year if joined within 3 months of the commencement of the financial year.

5. DUES

- a. The annual subscription fee is the amount determined from time to time by a resolution at a general meeting.
- b. Each member must pay the annual subscription fee to the Treasurer within fourteen (14) days of the commencement of the financial year.
- c. A member whose annual subscription fee is not paid within three month of the time stipulated in 5 (b) ceases to be a member unless the Executive Committee deems otherwise.

6. Non-Financial Members

- (i) A person who has ceased to be a member pursuant to Clause 5 (c) above, may be reinstated on payment of the Membership Fee.

Suspension or expulsion of members

If the Committee considers that a member should be suspended or expelled because his or her conduct is detrimental to the interests of the Association, the Committee must give notice of the proposed suspension or expulsion to the member.

The notice must:

- (a) be in writing and include:

- (i) the time, date and place of the committee meeting at which the question of that suspension or expulsion will be decided; and
- (ii) the particulars of the conduct; and

- (b) be given to the member not less than 30 days before the date of the committee meeting referred to in paragraph (a)(i).

At the meeting, the Committee must afford the member a reasonable opportunity to be heard or to make representations in writing.

The Committee may suspend or expel or decline to suspend or expel the member from the Association and must give written notice of the decision and the reason for it to the member.

Subject to clause 22, the decision to suspend or expel a member takes effect 14 days after the day on which notice of the decision is given to the member.

Appeals against suspension or expulsion

A member who is suspended or expelled under clause 21 may appeal against that suspension or expulsion by giving notice to the Secretary within 14 days after receipt of the Committee's decision.

The appeal must be considered at a general meeting of the Association and the member must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard at the meeting or to make representations in writing prior to the meeting for circulation at the meeting.

The members present at the general meeting must, by resolution, either confirm or set aside the decision of the Committee to suspend or expel the member.

The member is not suspended or does not cease to be a member until the decision of the Committee to suspend or expel him or her is confirmed by a resolution of the members.

7. The Executive Committee

- a. The management of the Association [except as otherwise provided by this Constitution] shall be deputed to an Executive Committee of not more than (8) members, who shall be elected at the annual general meeting.
- b. The Executive Committee shall comprise:
 - President – who has been a member of the Association for at least 2 years
 - Vice President – who has been a member of the Association for at least 2 years
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Four (4) Directors, each responsible for one of the following areas: Professional Development; Membership; Digital Communications; and Events, Conferences/Seminars (or other area as determined necessary by the Executive)
- c. The Executive Committee shall serve for a period of two years.
- d. Only fully paid-up ordinary members are eligible to hold office in the Executive Committee of the Association.
- e. At the annual general meeting all the members of the Executive Committee shall retire, but shall be eligible for re-election, save that no member may serve on the Executive Committee for more than two full consecutive years. Any two financial members may propose any candidate or candidates who is a financial member by notice in writing to the Secretary signed by the proposed candidate, seven days at least before the meeting. Balloting lists shall be printed containing, in alphabetical order, all the names thus obtained, showing the names of the proposers. Every ordinary member of the Association shall be entitled to vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled and no more. The candidates who shall receive most votes, in the respective vacancies, shall be declared elected, and in the case of two or more candidates receiving equal number of votes, the chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- f. The Executive Committee shall have power to appoint a member to fill any casual vacancy on the Executive Committee until the next annual general meeting. Any member so appointed shall retire at the next annual general meeting, but shall be eligible for election as a member of the Executive Committee at such meeting.
- g. With regards to voting at meetings of the Executive Committee, in the event of a tie, the President shall have the deciding vote

8. Meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once every month to examine the accounts and arrange the affairs of the Association. Four members of the Executive Committee shall form a quorum. Minutes shall be taken of all the proceedings of the Executive Committee, and shall be open to the inspection of any member of the Association applying to the Secretary thereof.

9. Rules and Regulations

The Executive Committee may from time to time make, repeal and amend all such rules and regulations [not inconsistent with this Constitution] as they think expedient for the management and well being of the Association. All rules and regulations made by the Executive Committee under this clause shall be binding upon the members until repealed by the Executive Committee, or set aside by a resolution of a general meeting of the Association.

10. Secretary and Other Officers

The Executive Committee shall have the power to appoint other officers as they may deem necessary.

11. Borrowing Powers

If at any time the Association in a general meeting shall pass a resolution authorising the Executive Committee to borrow money, the Executive Committee shall thereupon be empowered to borrow for the purpose of the Association such amount of money, either at one time or from time to time and at such rate of interest and in such form and manner and upon such security as shall be specified in such resolution. Thereupon the Executive Committee shall make all such dispositions of the Association's property or any part thereof and enter into such agreements in relation thereto as it may deem proper for giving security for such loans and interest. All members of the Association, whether voting on such resolution or not, and all persons becoming members of the Association after passing of such resolution shall be deemed to have assented to the same as if they had voted in favour of such resolution.

12. Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held in the first four months of each year upon a date and at a time to be fixed by the Executive Committee for the following purposes:

- a. To receive from the Executive Committee a report, balance sheet and statement of accounts for the preceding financial year, and an estimate of the receipts and expenditure for the current financial years.
- b. To fill the vacancies in the Executive Committee and to appoint an auditor for the ensuing term if applicable.
- c. To decide on any resolution which may be duly submitted to the meeting as hereinafter provided. Any member desirous of moving a resolution at the Annual General Meeting shall give notice thereof in writing to the Honorary Secretary not less than fourteen (14) days before the date of such meeting.

13. Special General Meeting

The Executive Committee may at any time for any special purpose call a special general meeting, and shall do so forthwith upon the requisition in writing of any eight members stating the purposes for which the meeting is required.

14. Convening General Meetings

Fourteen (14) days at least before the Annual General Meeting or any special general meeting, a notice of such meeting and of the business to be transacted thereat shall be sent to each member and no business other than that of which notice has been so given shall be brought forward at such meeting. The report of the Executive Committee, balance sheet, statement of accounts and estimate shall also be sent along with such notice.

15. Proceedings at General Meetings

At all general meetings of the Association the President, and in his absence, the Vice President and in their absences, a member selected by the members present: shall take the chair. Every member present **who is entitled to vote under this Constitution** shall be entitled to one vote upon every motion, and in the case of an equality of votes, the chairman shall have a second or casting vote. The Executive Committee shall be empowered, if they think fit, to make regulations for enabling members to be present to vote by proxy or in writing.

Resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority. For motions proposing any repeal, addition to or amendment of this Constitution – two-thirds of members; for repeal of any rules or regulations two-thirds of members; for motions relating to the expulsion of any member – two-thirds of members; for all other business – majority vote.

16. Quorum

The quorum at all general meetings shall **be one third of ordinary members.**

If there is no quorum then the secretary will adjourn the meeting for one week at which adjourned meeting the numbers present shall constitute a quorum.

17. Amendments

A financial member may propose an amendment to any resolution proposed at any Annual General Meeting by sending written notice thereof to the Secretary not less than seven (7) days previous to the meeting. Whenever any such notice shall be given the same shall be forthwith sent to the members. **Amendments can also be moved from the floor.**

18. Finance

- a. The Treasurer shall maintain up-to-date and accurate records of funds and accounts of the Association, shall be responsible for the paying of all bills and issuing of all receipts in the name of the Association.
- b. All monies, including Membership fees, due and owing to the Association shall be payable to the Treasurer of the Association for the account of the Association.
- c. **The financial year shall begin on June 1 and end on May 31.**
- d. The funds of the Association shall be deposited in the name of the Association with a bank designated by the Executive Committee.
- e. The Executive Committee may authorise the Treasurer to retain in hand, a sum to be specified for the use as Petty Cash.
- f. Only upon the authority of the Executive Committee may funds be withdrawn, and against joint signatories of the Treasurer and one other officer.

19. Audit of Accounts

The accounts shall as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year, be audited by the auditor, who shall be appointed at each Annual General Meeting. A vacancy occurring in the office of auditor during the year shall be filled by the Executive Committee.

20. Members' Addresses

The Secretary shall maintain a current list of the street addresses and email addresses of every member. Members shall notify the Secretary of any change in address as soon as is reasonably practicable. All notices posted or emailed to the members' addresses on the list shall be considered as having been duly given seven (7) days following the date of posting or one day after the day of emailing such notice.

21. Amendment of Constitution

This Constitution may be added to, repealed or amended by resolution at any Annual or Special General Meeting, provided that no such resolution shall be deemed to have been passed unless it is carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members voting thereon.

22. Dissolution of Association

If at any general meeting a resolution for the dissolution of the Association shall be passed by a majority of the members present and at a special meeting held not less than four (4) weeks thereafter [of which not less than two (2) weeks written notice shall have been given to each member], and at which not less than one half of the members shall be present, that resolution shall be confirmed by a resolution passed by a majority of two-thirds of the members voting thereon, the Executive Committee shall thereupon, or at any such future date as shall be specified in such resolution, proceed to realise the property of the Association and after the discharge of all liabilities, shall divide the same equally or rateably in proportion to the amount each member has paid in entrance fee and subscriptions among all the ordinary, associated and institutional members, and upon the completion of such division the Association shall be dissolved.