



WASLI is committed to the development of the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide

THE WASLI GOVERNING DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

This document is the Governing Document of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI), adopted at the first WASLI Conference on 2 November 2005 in Worcester, South Africa.

The document uses British English because this is the most widely used and understood form of English.

This Governing Document includes the aim and objectives of WASLI and the general principles of the Association. The Executive Board will be responsible for developing and maintaining 'Internal Rules'. The Internal Rules will give the detail of how the aim, objectives and general principles of the Association will be achieved.

References in this document to 'Sign Language Interpreter' - refers to both Deaf interpreters and Hearing interpreters

References in this document to 'National Association' - refers to any interpreter association which has similar goals to WASLI and represents the views and interests of interpreters in:

- (1) a single country, e.g. RID in the US. This does not preclude some countries which have more than one interpreter association e.g. Italy*
- (2) a number of countries, e.g. ASLI for England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or*
- (3) countries where there is more than one official language and there are interpreter associations representing each, e.g. ARILS (French speaking Switzerland), BGD (German speaking Switzerland, ILISSI (Italian speaking Switzerland)*

References in this document to 'Regional Association' - refers to any interpreter association which has similar goals to WASLI and represents the views and interests of interpreters in:

- (1) a region that spans more than 4 countries, e.g. efsli in the Europe.*

1. Organisation

- 1.1. **NAME** - The name of the association is the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI).
- 1.2. **LOCATION** - WASLI is an international association with its headquarters at a place determined by the Executive Board.
- 1.3. **LANGUAGE** - English is the official language for WASLI documents. English and International Sign are the official languages of WASLI meetings. The translation of documentation into local languages is encouraged

2. Aim

The aim of WASLI is to advance the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide.

3. Objectives

In pursuit of the aim we will:

- 3.1. Encourage the establishment of national associations of sign language interpreters in countries that do not have them
- 3.2. Be a support network for existing national associations of sign language interpreters
- 3.3. Share information and be a reference point for interpreting issues, using the World Wide Web and other internationally accessible ways
- 3.4. Support the work of sign language interpreters working at international events, e.g. conferences, sporting events
- 3.5. Work in partnership with Deaf and Deafblind associations on sign language interpreting issues
- 3.6. Encourage research
- 3.7. Develop and promote standards for high quality training, education and assessment of sign language interpreters
- 3.8. Host conferences and seminars
- 3.9. Liaise with spoken language interpreter organisations and other organisations having common interests

4. POWERS AND LIMITATIONS

- 4.1. The supreme decision-making body of WASLI is the National Members. Only National Members may vote. Provisional, Sponsoring and Honorary Members are non-voting members
- 4.2. The Executive Board will manage WASLI between General Meetings
- 4.3. No WASLI officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind WASLI by any contract or commitment or pledge or to make WASLI liable financially for any purpose or in any amount unless authorised by the Executive Board
- 4.4. The signature of the President or the Vice President plus 1 additional member of the Executive Board is required on contracts and other agreements approved by the Executive Board
- 4.5. All members, both voting and non-voting members, have the right to contribute at WASLI meetings
- 4.6. The Executive Board will, on behalf of the membership, consider all applications for membership

5. Membership

- WASLI has the following categories of members: National Members, Provisional Members, Sponsoring Members, and Honorary Members
- 5.1. **NATIONAL MEMBERS** are national associations of sign language interpreters with goals similar to WASLI.
 - 5.2. **PROVISIONAL MEMBERS** are groups of interpreters from countries where there is no national association of sign language interpreters.
 - 5.2.1. The Provisional Member must provide a working plan toward the development of a national association. This plan must be received

and accepted by the WASLI Executive Board before being allowed to join as a Provisional Member

- 5.3. **SPONSORING MEMBERS** are individuals, businesses, agencies, institutions, or others who support WASLI through payment of the appropriate membership fee or by making a donation.
- 5.4. **HONORARY MEMBERS** are individuals given special recognition because of their significant international contribution to the profession.
 - 5.4.1. Honorary membership is for life.
 - 5.4.2. The Executive Board select recipients for Honorary Membership from nominations by NATIONAL members

6. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership of WASLI may be terminated for one of the following reasons:

- 6.1. For non-payment of fees
- 6.2. By resignation, or
- 6.3. For serious misconduct, which includes violating WASLI's rules or working against WASLI's objectives both of which are set out in the Governing Document, Internal Rules and Guidance.

7. FEES

- 7.1. The Membership Fee Structure of WASLI shall be set by the Executive Board and approved by National Members
- 7.2. Members must pay their annual membership fee by the first day of January each year
- 7.3. The Executive Board may also ask for the payment of a reasonable late fee and/or reinstatement fee to join again.
- 7.4. Notification of membership fee changes must be announced to WASLI members at least 1 year before the change.

8. VOTING

- 8.1. The nominated delegate of the National or Regional Member will exercise the National or Regional Member's one vote in the business of WASLI.
- 8.2. National and Regional Members must have their membership fee paid in full to be able to vote.
- 8.3. All proposals brought to WASLI General Meetings will be decided by a 51% majority of those National Members in attendance and including proxy votes.
- 8.4. All proposals brought to the WASLI Executive Meeting will be decided by a 51% majority of Executive Board Members in attendance
- 8.5. Proposals to make amendments to the Governing Document or to dissolve WASLI will be decided by a 2/3 majority vote of those members in attendance and including proxy votes.
- 8.6. Mail voting will be allowed, including by email. The majorities needed are the same as for General Meetings
- 8.7. Proxy voting will be allowed.

9. GENERAL MEETINGS

- 9.1. General Meetings must be held at least once every 4 years.
- 9.2. General meetings must be announced at least 6 months in advance. The announcement of the meeting must include an agenda or purpose for the meeting.
- 9.3. The quorum for General Meetings is 25% of the number of National Members
- 9.4. General Meetings may be attended by all members: National, Provisional, Sponsoring and Honorary, but only National Members may vote.
- 9.5. **FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL MEETING** are to:
 - 9.5.1. Review and approve reports on activities of WASLI during the previous period
 - 9.5.2. Review and approve financial documents
 - 9.5.3. Approve membership fees
 - 9.5.4. Elect members of the Executive Board
 - 9.5.5. Consider and decide upon proposals submitted by a National Member or Regional Member or the Executive Board (or committee)

10. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

- 10.1. The Executive Board consists of four Officers (the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) and a number of Regional Representatives.
- 10.2. The Executive Board is elected for a 4-year period by the National Members at a General Meeting.
- 10.3. **Executive Board Meetings**
 - 10.3.1. The quorum for Executive Board meetings is 51%
 - 10.3.2. Face-to-face meetings must be announced at least 3 months in advance.
 - 10.3.3. There must be at least one face-to-face meeting of the Executive Board every year.
 - 10.3.4. An Executive Board meeting shall be held immediately before or after and at the same place as any General Meeting. Other annual meetings of the Executive Board may happen wherever and however possible.
 - 10.3.5. Online meetings may be held if a majority of the membership is able to connect. The Executive Board, and its committees, are encouraged to make full use of technology in the sharing of information and as part of the decision-making process.
- 10.4. **Executive Board duties** –
The Executive Board is responsible to:

- 10.4.1. Maintain membership of WASLI
- 10.4.2. Develop and follow an action plan
- 10.4.3. Provide an annual activity report by 1 April each year
- 10.4.4. Provide a financial report by 1 April each year
 - 10.4.4.1. The period of reporting and accounting is the 1 January to 31 December
- 10.4.5. Approve an annual budget
- 10.4.6. Appoint committees
- 10.4.7. Employ and supervise staff and agents
- 10.4.8. Prepare documents to be discussed at the General Meeting
- 10.4.9. Supervise fund raising, accounting and other WASLI business
- 10.4.10. Any decision of the Executive Board may be reversed by a majority vote of National Members.
- 10.4.11. To determine WASLI regions, subject to the approval of the National Members.

10.5. **DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

- 10.5.1. The **President** shall:
 - 10.5.1.1. Chair General Meetings and meetings of the Executive Board
 - 10.5.1.2. Represent WASLI as appropriate
 - 10.5.1.3. Have the power to co-sign cheques
 - 10.5.1.4. Provide an annual President's report to the membership
- 10.5.2. The **Vice President** shall:
 - 10.5.2.1. Assume all duties of the President if the President is absent or unable to complete their duties
 - 10.5.2.2. Liaise with the General Meeting planning committee
 - 10.5.2.3. Carry out other duties as requested by the Board
 - 10.5.2.4. Provide an annual Vice President's report to the membership
- 10.5.3. The **Secretary** shall:
 - 10.5.3.1. Keep complete and accurate records of the proceedings of the Executive Board and the General Membership Meeting
 - 10.5.3.2. Supervise the keeping of all WASLI records
 - 10.5.3.3. Have the power to co-sign cheques
 - 10.5.3.4. Provide an annual Secretary's report to the membership
- 10.5.4. The **Treasurer** shall:
 - 10.5.4.1. Supervise the receipt and safekeeping of all WASLI funds and financial records
 - 10.5.4.2. Have the power to co-sign cheques
 - 10.5.4.3. Liaise with the external auditor
 - 10.5.4.4. Lead on the preparation of an annual budget
 - 10.5.4.5. Monitor the annual budget
 - 10.5.4.6. Lead on the preparation of a financial report by 1 April each year

- 10.6. Duties of the Regional Representatives** shall:
- 10.6.1. Chair regional conferences
 - 10.6.2. Facilitate the development of regional activities
 - 10.6.3. Provide quarterly reports of their region's activities and concerns to the Executive Board and to the members of the region they represent
 - 10.6.4. Serve as a resource to the members within their region
 - 10.6.5. Communicate regularly with the members in their region

10.7. Eligibility for Executive Board

- 10.7.1. All candidates for Executive Board positions shall have been members of their national association for at least 3 consecutive years immediately prior to candidacy. Furthermore, all candidates for Regional Representative shall have been a resident of their region for at least 2 consecutive years immediately prior to candidacy

10.8. Terms of office

- 10.8.1. Officers and Regional Representatives shall serve until the next WASLI Conference
- 10.8.2. Officers may stand for election to the same portfolio for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- 10.8.3. Officers may stand for election to different office at the next conference.

10.9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- 10.9.1. Executive Board candidates must be nominated by a National Member and will be elected by the National and Regional Members
- 10.9.2. Regional Representative candidates must be nominated by a National Member from that region and will be elected by the National Members of that region

10.10. VACANCIES & EXCLUSIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

- 10.10.1. Vacancies on the Executive Board which cannot be filled by election will be filled at the Board's discretion
- 10.10.2. If any Officer of the Executive Board violates WASLI's rules, works against WASLI's objectives or neglects the duties of office, all of which are set out in the Governing Document, Internal Rules and Guidelines, that Officer may be removed from the Executive Board.
To formalise the removal, the Executive Board will notify the Officer in question and will subsequently inform the membership of this action within one month.
The Executive Board will then send out a call for nominations to fill the resulting vacancy.
- 10.10.3. If any Regional Representative of the Executive Board violates WASLI's rules, works against WASLI's objectives or

neglects the duties of office, all of which are set out in the Governing Document, Internal Rules and Guidelines, that Representative may be removed from the Executive Board. To formalise the removal, the Executive Board will notify the Regional Representative in question and will subsequently inform the membership of this action within one month. The Executive Board will then send out a call for nominations to fill the resulting vacancy.

10.11. COMMITTEES AND STAFF

- 10.11.1. The Executive Board may appoint committees. These may include permanent or special committees, or individual members with particular expertise to carry out specific functions of WASLI
- 10.11.2. Committees and individuals serve as directed by the Executive Board. A member of the Executive Board will liaise with each committee.
- 10.11.3. The Executive Board is responsible for employing staff

11. INSPECTION RIGHTS AND CORPORATE SEAL

- 11.1. A copy of the WASLI Governing Document shall be available on the Internet and sent to anyone requesting it
- 11.2. The WASLI name and the WASLI logo shall be used by WASLI and its members for official and/or approved purposes only
- 11.3. WASLI's corporate seal shall only be used by approval of the Executive Board

12. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

- 12.1. WASLI does not discriminate because of age, colour, creed, disability, ethnicity, hearing or vision status, national origin, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

13. AMENDMENTS AND DISSOLUTION

- 13.1. A proposal for amendment of the Governing Document must be submitted to the Executive Board at least 1 year before a General Meeting. Amendments to this Governing Document require a 2/3 majority vote at the General Meeting or through a special mail ballot vote
- 13.2. The Executive Board or a 51% majority of National Members may propose that WASLI dissolve. Approval for dissolution requires a 2/3 majority vote
- 13.3. If WASLI dissolves all the funds and assets of WASLI shall be used to benefit sign language interpreters in accordance with the aims of WASLI.