



# **ASSOCIATION OF REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES**

## **CONSTITUTION**

# **Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries Constitution**

## Article I — Name

The name of this organization shall be the “Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries” (ARTS).

## Article II — About ARTS

### Section 1: Mission

The mission of the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS) is to preserve and advance the academic quality, accountability, and improvement of seminaries committed to educating students in the tenets of Reformed Theology.

### Section 2: History

Created in 1999 to meet the need for a professional and accrediting organization dedicated to Reformed theological education, ARTS, through its independent standing committee - the ARTS Commission on Accreditation accredits institutions, which satisfy the Commission’s eligibility requirements and academic standards.

ARTS is incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of South Carolina.

### Section 3: Core Values

ARTS is committed to bringing glory to God by contributing to the building of the Church, the progress of God’s Kingdom, and the preservation and advancement of the Reformed tradition by providing a context in which the Association, the Commission on Accreditation, and member institutions can hold one another accountable for fulfilling their individual purposes and commitments.

### Section 4: Tenets of Faith

Each affiliate, applicant, candidate, and accredited member institution must profess adherence to one or more of the historic creeds of the Reformed tradition: the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, the First and Second Helvetic Confessions, or the Second London Confession of 1689.

### Article III — Membership

Membership in ARTS is open to educational institutions which meet the eligibility requirements and academic standards of the ARTS Commission on Accreditation. Institutions which have been accredited by the ARTS Commission on Accreditation (ARTS-COA) are classified as full association/or accredited members, can advertise that they have achieved ARTS-COA accreditation, and are eligible to participate in ARTS association governance and its professional society.

Institutions that are applying, but have not yet been accredited by the ARTS-COA, are classified as having obtained either applicant or candidate status and are not considered ARTS association members. Applicant and Candidate institutions may not claim ARTS-COA accreditation and are not eligible to participate in ARTS's association governance.

### Article IV — Governance

Overall governance of ARTS is executed by the Association's Board of Directors (BOD or ARTS-BOD). The board shall exercise legal, strategic, and leadership responsibilities in pursuit of the Association's mission, and establish plans to which the Association's Executive Committee (EC) and the Executive Director for ARTS-COA are accountable. The ARTS-COA is an independent standing committee, with its independent board of commissioners, assisted by the Executive Director for ARTS-COA, having full fiduciary and oversight authority regarding all matters of accreditation.

#### Section 1: ARTS Board of Directors

Each institution accredited by the ARTS-COA is admitted as a member of the Association and is entitled to one seat on the Association's BOD. Each member institution shall choose its ARTS-BOD representative, who shall serve at the pleasure of the member institution without any remuneration from the Association. The Bylaws stipulate member institution representation criteria. The Executive Director for ARTS-COA is a non-voting, *ex officio* member of the ARTS BOD.

#### Section 2: Regular Meetings

The ARTS-BOD shall hold an annual meeting on the third Tuesday of October each year unless a different date and time are set by the Association's Executive Committee (EC) at least 60 days prior to October 1.

The ARTS-COA shall hold an annual meeting on the third Monday of October each year unless a different data and time are set by the Executive Director at least 60 days prior to October 1.

#### Section 3: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the ARTS-BOD may be called by the EC upon ten days notice. The ARTS-BOD shall also call a special meeting no later than ten days after receiving a written request from two or more of the Directors.

Special meetings of the ARTS-COA may be called by the Executive Director upon ten days notice. The ARTS-COA shall also call a special meeting no later than ten days after receiving a written request from two or more of the Commissioners.

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#### Section 4: Conduct of Meetings

ARTS-BOD and ARTS-COA meetings may be held by telephone conference call or such other means whereby the participants are clearly able to hear one another. Decisions of the ARTS-BOD and ARTS-COA shall be made by a simple majority vote of a quorum, except where stated otherwise or required by law. Each member of the ARTS-BOD or ARTS-COA is entitled to one vote. In the absence of a quorum, the ARTS-BOD or ARTS-COA shall take no formal action except to adjourn the meeting to a subsequent date.

#### Section 5: Public Notification

Public notification of the annual ARTS-BOD and ARTS-COA meeting shall be made by announcement at least 60 days prior and posted on the Association's website in advance of the meeting.

#### Section 6: Purposes and Prerogatives

1. **Budget Adoption.** The ARTS-BOD shall adopt the annual ARTS-BOD budget. The ARTS-COA shall adopt the annual Commission budget. These two budgets combine to determine Association membership dues and fees. The Association's fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
2. **ARTS-BOD Executive Committee (EC) Representation.** The ARTS-BOD EC shall consist of three members (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary/Treasurer). Each year, at its annual meeting, the ARTS-BOD shall elect three of its members to these EC positions, EC officer terms and positions shall commence on January 1 following the annual meeting. Appointment to the EC shall be by a two-thirds vote of an ARTS-BOD quorum.
3. **Commission on Accreditation.** For the five-person commission, the ARTS-BOD, choosing from a slate of nominees offered by the ARTS-COA, shall elect three persons from its member institutions and two individuals from the public to serve as members of the ARTS-COA. ARTS-COA members' terms are for three years, which shall coincide with the calendar year. ARTS-COA members may serve for two consecutive three-year terms and then must retire for three years before standing again as a commissioner. Once elected, the ARTS-BOD has no jurisdiction or authority to oversee or influence the activities of ARTS-COA commissioners.
4. **Accreditation Standards.** The ARTS-COA shall be entirely responsible for approving changes to its policies and procedures and accreditation standards, which may be proposed by any of its Commissioners or the Executive Director for ARTS-COA. The ARTS-COA is solely responsible for establishing and amending accreditation standards and related policies and procedures, in accordance with corresponding Bylaws.

## Article V — ARTS-BOD Executive Committee

In selecting the ARTS-BOD EC, the ARTS-BOD shall take care to provide for the continuity and stability of the Board and the Association. EC members serve without remuneration and are the designated officers of the Association. The EC is authorized to take actions on behalf of the Association necessary for the ordinary operation of the Association, including supervising the activities of Association staff and volunteers and approving payments and expenditures of the ARTS-BOD budget.

### Section 1: Officers of the Board of Directors

The ARTS-BOD EC shall consist of three officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary/Treasurer whose duties are described in the Association's Bylaws.

### Section 2: Terms of Office

Each member of the EC shall serve a six-year term, occupying each of the three EC offices for a maximum of two years. After serving all or any part of their term, an EC member is deemed to have served their term and may not be reelected for another two years. EC members and their offices shall be voted upon, depending on vacancies or rotation of offices, every year at the annual meeting.

### Section 3: EC Vacancies

Any vacancies that occur on the EC will be filled by the ARTS-BOD at a special meeting.

### Section 4: Qualifications

All members of the EC shall be officially and actively connected with an Association member institution, as stipulated by the Bylaws. EC members whose official connection with an Association member institution is severed will be deemed to have vacated their office. The procedures stipulated in Article V Section 3 regarding EC vacancies are then initiated.

## Article VI — Commission on Accreditation

### Section 1: Nature and Function

The ARTS-COA is separate and independent from the Association's BOD. It exercises authority over accreditation decisions, academic standards, policies and procedures, and site review processes. Through its Policies and Procedures, Standards of Accreditation, and site review accreditation process, the ARTS-COA is responsible for ensuring institutional quality and integrity and serves as a catalyst for excellence among institutions in accord with the Association's and Commission's educational distinctives. The ARTS-COA is responsible for its budget and has the permanent delegation of authority from the ARTS-BOD to approve payments and expenditures required to complete its function. The ARTS-COA also has the authority to supervise the activities of any staff or volunteers working on ARTS-COA tasks.

## Section 2: Commission on Accreditation Goals

To implement its purpose of accreditation, the Commission seeks to fulfill the following goals:

1. Establish policies and procedures that promote the integrity and external recognition of the ARTS-COA quality assurance processes.
2. Ensure each accredited member institution achieves the following objectives:
  - a. Provide evidence it has a soundly conceived educational mission that is clearly understood and supported, serves the cause of Christ and is in accord with the distinctives of the Association and ARTS-COA;
  - b. Provide evidence it has the structures and procedures for governance and administration to achieve its mission;
  - c. Provide evidence its faculty, instructional, and facility resources are effective in achieving the institutional mission and producing student learning and development;
  - d. Provide evidence it has appropriate and increasingly effective curricular content and structures that are in accord with its mission and corresponding student learning goals;
  - e. Provide evidence it has appropriate and increasingly effective programs for student admissions, development, and services consistent with its mission and corresponding student learning goals.
3. Develop a program and supporting resources for orienting and training ARTS-COA accredited members and site evaluators in the implementation of the Commission's accreditation Standards and Policies and Procedures.

## Article VII — Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be made only at a meeting of and by the Association's BOD, provided that the proposed amendment(s) have been disseminated among the accredited membership prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered. A two-thirds vote of a quorum of ARTS-BOD members present shall be necessary for adoption of constitutional amendments.