

# **COFSE Bylaws**

**REVISED March 7, 2022**

## **ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES**

**SECTION 1 - NAME:** The name of this organization is the COUNCIL OF FORENSIC SCIENCE EDUCATORS, also known as COFSE, herein referred to as "Council." It is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Pennsylvania.

**SECTION 2 - LOCATION:** The corporate office of the Council shall be located in 2300 Stratford Ave. Willow Grove PA 19090 and/or such other locations as determined by the governing body of the council.

### **SECTION 3 - OBJECTIVES:**

- a. To encourage the exchange of ideas and information regarding academic programs in the laboratory based forensic sciences and the discussion of problems of common interest.
- b. To work collectively toward the coordination and upgrading of academic forensic science programs and education at all levels.
- c. To promote constructive integration of formal academic training with postgraduate preparation for continuing professional advancement.
- d. To foster friendship, cooperation and synergism among academic forensic scientists, practicing professionals, and laboratory management.
- e. To encourage research and the advancement of knowledge benefiting forensic science.
- f. To pursue other objectives appropriate to the advancement and advocacy of forensic science and forensic science education.

## **ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIPS**

**SECTION 1 - CLASSES OF MEMBERS:** There shall be five (5) classes of membership in the Council: a. FULL MEMBER, b. ASSOCIATE MEMBER, c. RETIRED MEMBER, d. HONORARY MEMBER, and e. SPONSORING MEMBER.

- a. **ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Council membership, in the various classes prescribed in Section 1, shall be available only to those persons of professional competence, integrity, and good moral character, who are actively engaged in or have a strong interest in forensic science education. All applications for membership must be submitted by February 1 of that year to be eligible.

b. **QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:** An applicant will be assessed by the Board on the basis of the qualifications prescribed below.

1. **FULL MEMBER:** The applicant must be a full-time undergraduate or graduate employee of a college or university teaching forensic science, or at least 12 credit hours per year in a forensic science teaching, research, or administration position. Only full members are eligible to vote and hold offices in the Council.

2. **ASSOCIATE MEMBER:** The applicant must be

(a) A part-time or adjunct undergraduate or graduate employee of a college or university teaching forensic science, or

(b) A full-time undergraduate or graduate employee of a college or university teaching courses directly related to a forensic science education program, or

(c) A certified high school teacher teaching forensic science courses, or

(d) An individual professionally engaged in forensic science education and training.

Associate members are not eligible to vote or hold offices in the Council.

3. **RETIRED MEMBER:** Members may apply to the Board to be classified as a Retired Member if they are retired from forensic science education and have taught for at least 5 years in a forensic science program. Such applications shall be forwarded to the Membership Committee for review.

4. **HONORARY MEMBER:** A person who has rendered significant service to the COUNCIL or who has made unique or exceptional contributions to forensic science education may be invited to become an Honorary Member. Such person shall be invited to honorary membership after unanimous approval by the Board.

5. **SPONSORING MEMBER:** A person or organization which has rendered significant support or service to the Council may be invited to become a Sponsoring Member. Such person or organization shall be recommended by the Membership Committee and approved by the Executive Board.

**SECTION 2 — APPLICATION:** Application for membership shall be submitted to the Secretary along with endorsements.

**SECTION 3 — ACCEPTANCE PROCESS:** Applications will be reviewed for eligibility by the Membership Committee. Qualified applicants will be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting of the Council. Election to membership requires approval by a majority vote of the members present.

**SECTION 4 - ELIGIBILITY TO HOLD OFFICE:** Only Full Members shall be eligible to hold any elected office.

**SECTION 5 - DUES OBLIGATION OF MEMBERS:** The annual dues period shall be the calendar year MARCH 1 to FEBRUARY 28 (or FEBRUARY 29 in leap years). Members whose dues are not paid prior to JULY 1 of each year may be dropped from the rolls for non-payment of dues. Dues are to be set by the Executive Board.

**SECTION 6 - LEAVE OF ABSENCE:** Members in good standing may request leaves of absence from the Council for just cause. The Board will approve any leave of absence. If approved, the Member is excused from the payment of dues while on leave and is not entitled to receive any membership benefits during that period.

**SECTION 7 — TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:**

a. Self-Initiated.

Any member may terminate his/her membership in the Council by written request to the Secretary, but such termination shall not relieve the member of the payment of any dues, assessment, or other damages theretofore accrued and unpaid.

b. Failure to pay dues.

Any member, who fails to pay his/her annual dues, shall be dropped automatically from the membership. Any member dropped for the non-payment of dues may be readmitted only upon the filing of a new application and payment of any outstanding dues.

c. Termination for Cause.

Any member may be expelled from the Council pursuant to motion of the Executive Board as determined in Article VI.

**ARTICLE III. OFFICERS AND MANAGEMENT**

**SECTION 1 — OFFICERS AND TERMS**

a. ELECTED OFFICERS AND TERMS: The elected officers of the Council shall be the President, President-Elect, the Immediate Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council, except that the office of President shall be automatically assumed by the Member elected President-Elect the previous year and the office of Immediate Past President shall be automatically assumed by the outgoing President. The President, President-Elect, the Immediate Past President shall hold office for two years and until that officer's successor has been elected and qualified. The Secretary shall hold office for two years and until that officer's successor has been elected and qualified. The Secretary's term shall be renewable. The Treasurer shall hold office for three years and until that officer's successor has been elected and qualified. The Treasurer's term shall be renewable. The term of office for each officer shall begin at the conclusion of the annual meeting at which the officer is elected. The President, President-Elect, the Immediate Past President may not succeed themselves in the office in which they served a term and the Secretary and the Treasurer are limited to four successive terms in office. No more than two (2) elected officers shall be from the same academic institution at any given time.

## **SECTION 2 - EXECUTIVE BOARD**

- a. **CONSTITUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:** The Executive Board, hereinafter referred to as the Board, shall consist of the Council Officers: President, President-Elect, the Immediate Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The general management of the Council, including the acquisition of funds by which to operate the Council, shall be the responsibility of the Board. No more than two (2) Executive Board members shall be from the same academic institution.
- b. **GENERAL POWERS:** The Board shall manage the affairs of the Council. To facilitate operations of the Council, the Board may issue and/or change Administrative Rules governing the actions of the Council or members on behalf of the Council. Such rules shall not be in conflict with these Bylaws.
- c. **CONTRACTS:** The Board may authorize any officer(s) or agent(s) of the Council to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of the Council and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.
- d. **BOOKS AND RECORDS:** The Council shall keep or cause to be kept correct and complete books and records of account. It shall keep minutes of the proceedings of meetings and its members, Board, and committees having any of the authority of the Board and shall keep at the registered or principal office a record of the names and addresses of voting members. All books and records of the Council may be inspected by any member or his agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.
- e. **PUBLIC STATEMENTS:** The President or designee shall speak on behalf of the organization. Written communications shall be approved by the Board.
- f. **GIFTS:** The Board may accept on behalf of the Council any contribution, gift, bequest, or device for the general or any special purposes of the Council.

**SECTION 3 - DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT:** Presides at Council and Board meetings; conducts the business of the Council and promotes the fulfillment of its objectives. To accomplish these duties, the President may issue and/or change operational guidelines relating to committee and/or other operations providing such guidelines are not in conflict with these Bylaws, the Administrative Rules, or other items controlling the actions of the Council. Appoints committee members, creates ad hoc committees, and tasks committees with assignments. Officially speaks for the organization or appoints a designee to do so for specific issues or timeframes.

**SECTION 4 - DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT:** Chairs the Membership and Outreach Committee. Performs general assistance to the President in management and administration of the organization. Fulfills the President's duties should the President be absent, leave office or become incapacitated. If both the President and the President-Elect are absent from a business meeting, the Immediate Past President will preside.

**SECTION 5 - DUTIES OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:** Chairs the Nominating Committee. The Immediate Past President shall be a member of the Board for two years immediately following his or her term of office as President. The past-president will be responsible for reviewing nominations for COFSE annual awards. The Immediate Past President shall undertake such other duties or tasks as may be assigned by the President or Board.

**SECTION 6 - DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY:** Records the minutes of Board and Council business meetings, maintains the Council's record book and membership list, documents officer and committee member term dates, and serves on the Membership Committee. In the absence of the Secretary from a business meeting, the presiding officer shall appoint a temporary secretary. The Secretary shall perform or supervise the execution of such additional tasks as assigned by the Board.

**SECTION 7 - DUTIES OF THE TREASURER:** The Treasurer shall be responsible for proposing an annual budget to the Board, shall keep account of, make periodic reports on and safeguard the funds of the Council as provided by the Board in accordance with accepted accounting methods and procedures. The Treasurer shall annually cause to be prepared an audit of the Council financial records. The Treasurer serves on the DDE Committee and shall perform or supervise the execution of such additional tasks as assigned by the Board.

**SECTION 6 - VACANCY IN OFFICE:** Any vacancy in an elected Council office, except that of President, shall be filled by the Board for the remainder of the term. Voting of the Board on such replacement may be conducted by telephone or email and confirmed by letter from each member of the Board. The record of such voting shall be kept by the Secretary.

**SECTION 7 - RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL:**

- a. RESIGNATION: Any elected Council officer or member of the Board may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President or Secretary.
- b. REMOVAL: Any elected officer or member of the Board may be removed from office, after due process, by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Council membership.

**SECTION 8 - REMUNERATION:** No elected officer of the Council or member of the Board shall, directly or indirectly, receive any salary or compensation for his or her services as such officer or Board.

**ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS**

**SECTION 1 - ANNUAL MEETING** An annual meeting of the membership will be held in conjunction with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (hereafter AAFS) annual meeting. Other meetings may be called with dates and locations to be selected by the Board.

- a. QUORUM: A meeting at which ten (10) members are present shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting or other business meeting.

b. **VOTING:** Only Full Members and Retired Members in attendance shall be eligible to vote; no proxy voting shall be allowed for any purpose. Approval of motions shall generally be by a majority in favor of the motion except as otherwise specified by the Rules of Order, involving a sanction specified as Article VII, or amending the Bylaws as specified in Article VIII.

**SECTION 2 — EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS:** Meetings of the Board shall be held twice a year; prior to the Annual Meeting and midyear. Special meetings of the Board may be called at any time by the President or by a majority of the Board members upon notification to the Secretary of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Meetings of the Board may be held by telephone or other electronic means.

a. **QUORUM:** A meeting at which three (3) Board members, to include the President or President-Elect, shall constitute a quorum.

b. **VOTING:** At all Board meetings, each Board member shall be entitled to one (1) vote. Voting by mail or email shall be permitted. Voting by proxy shall be permitted, but may be objected to by the party represented within two (2) weeks or shall be presumed in concurrence. A majority vote of the Board shall be required to take action. Any action required to be, or any other action which may be, taken at a meeting of the members of the Council may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing setting forth the action to be taken shall be signed by a majority of the membership.

**SECTION 3 - RULES OF ORDER:** "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised in Brief" shall determine parliamentary practice and procedure in all cases to which they apply except where inconsistent with these Bylaws or the laws of the State of incorporation.

## **ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES**

**SECTION 1 - STANDING COMMITTEES:** For all committees, the Chair will be appointed by the President, and members will be nominated by the Committee Chair and approved by the President. Members can serve on more than one committee; however, a member can serve as chair of only one committee at a time. In addition to the Board, the Council shall have standing committees as listed below:

a. **MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE:** Chaired by the President-Elect and comprised of the Secretary and two additional members appointed by the President in staggered two year terms. Shall review all membership applications and recommend honorary and sponsoring memberships. Shall be responsible for recruiting forensic science educators as COFSE members. Shall oversee all external communications including the Website, newsletters, and any other appropriate communications with Council members, educators, and the general public. Shall prepare a written report of committee activities annually and present report at the annual meeting of COFSE.

b. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Chaired by the Immediate Past President, and constituted of the Higher Education Committee Chair, and two (2) at-large members appointed by the President. This committee shall annually recommend a slate of Members for the elected offices of the Council. The Nominating Committee shall submit its nominations at the Annual meeting. Nominations for any elective office may be made from the floor during the Council's annual business meeting.

c. **HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Appointed Chair and three additional members appointed by the Council President in staggered two year terms. The Higher Education Committee will conduct studies on and provide pertinent information on undergraduate and graduate forensic science education, research, and training. This information will include institutions offering forensic science degrees, degrees offered, degree requirements, forensic science courses offered, faculty, and affiliations with forensic science laboratories. The committee shall prepare a written report of committee activities annually and present report at the annual meeting of COFSE.

d. **K-12 FORENSIC SCIENCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Appointed Chair and three additional members appointed by the Council President in staggered two year terms. The K-12 Forensic Science Education Committee will connect K-12 educators with other educators as well as experts in the field and provide pertinent information on K-12 forensic science education, research, and training. The Chair will be responsible for establishing connections to various forensic science professionals, publications, universities, and websites; collaborate with the committee members; and, uphold the objectives as set in the Bylaws at the K-12 level. Two members, preferably K-12 Educators, will be responsible for recruiting new members, updating the K-12 Educator's contact information, maintaining the committee's website, and also maintaining any other type of social networking as developed by the committee. The other two members, preferably collegiate level, will act as consultants or advisors for the committee. These members will also provide any support or advice on curriculum, training, conferences, and research pertaining to forensic science education. The committee shall prepare a written report of committee activities annually and present report at the annual meeting of COFSE.

e. **DELTA DELTA EPSILON COMMITTEE:** Appointed Chair and comprised of the Treasurer and two additional members (DDE Vice Chair and DDE Secretary) appointed by the Council President in staggered two year terms. The Delta Delta Epsilon (DDE) Committee will establish guidelines for chartering Delta Delta Epsilon forensic honor society chapters at colleges and universities and will act to approve the establishment of such chapters. The Delta Delta Epsilon Committee will also conduct periodic reviews of the status of Delta Delta Epsilon chapters and report on same at the annual meeting of the Council. The Delta Delta Epsilon Committee will have the power to revoke charters of DDE chapters. The mission of the Delta Delta Epsilon Society is to function as an honor society for students and professionals of forensic science. The activities of the Society shall be designed to stimulate academic achievement, promote community understanding, and advance the fields of forensic science. The committee shall prepare a written report of committee activities annually and present report at the annual meeting of COFSE.

f. **RESEARCH COMMITTEE:** Appointed Chair and three additional members appointed by the Council President in staggered two year terms, one of whom is also an editor in chief for the Journal of Forensic Science Education, the official publication of COFSE. The Research Committee shall be responsible for identifying needs in the forensic science community, encouraging active collaboration between forensic educators and practitioners, facilitating research opportunities between academic institutions, crime laboratories and industry, and promoting efforts to support the dissemination of research in the areas of forensic science and forensic education. The committee shall prepare a written report of committee activities annually and present the report at the annual meeting of COFSE.

**SECTION 2 - OTHER COMMITTEES:** The President and/or the Board may appoint such ad hoc committees, from time to time, as may be necessary.

**SECTION 3 — LIAISONS:** The President shall appoint Liaisons to represent the Council to other organizations as appropriate. Any reimbursement for such activity must be approved by the Board. The President shall recognize Liaisons from other organizations to sit in discussions and meetings as appropriate. Reciprocity of Liaisons shall be encouraged where possible.

## **ARTICLE VI. GRIEVANCES, DISPUTES, AND ETHICAL CONCERNS**

**SECTION 1 — NOTICE:** Grievances, disputes, or ethical concerns may be brought to the attention of the Council by written communication or in person or Member proxy during an Annual Meeting of the membership or meeting of the Board.

**SECTION 2 — ETHICAL CONCERNS:** Ethical concerns include, but are not limited to, false credentialing, criminal conduct, behavior that calls into question the standing of a member in the community of forensic science educators, behavior that causes public embarrassment to the forensic science profession, or conduct that is detrimental to the Council or its interests.

**SECTION 3 — INVESTIGATION:** The President or designee may make inquiry or may create an ad hoc committee to investigate, assess, or consider a grievance, dispute, or ethical concern. Information on matters considered may be brought to the attention of any Board Member.

**SECTION 4 — CONSIDERATION AND PROCESS:** The Board will consider and discuss grievances, disputes, or ethical concerns brought to the attention of the Council. When a sanction is being considered for imposition upon a member, the member shall first be given notice and an opportunity to respond. Once notice has been given, the member will have a time period of 14 days but not more than 28 days to respond.

**SECTION 5 — RESOLUTION:** In the case of a grievance or dispute, the Board may take any appropriate action to resolve the issue, to include delegation to a member to take charge of handling the issue or referral to the Membership at a business meeting. In the case of an ethical concern, the Board may decide to take no action or may impose a sanction upon a member, to



include an informal reprimand, censure, suspension, or termination of membership and expulsion from the organization. A vote to sanction a member shall require a two thirds (2/3) vote.

## **ARTICLE VII. FUNDS AND EXPENDITURES**

**SECTION 1 - INCOME AND EXPENDITURES:** Funds for meeting the expenses of the Council shall be raised by annual dues, assessments, voluntary contributions, and such income as may come to the Council through the collective efforts of its members. No financial obligations of the Council may be incurred by anyone or any group of members, except upon the prior authorization of or allocation of funds by the Board. All disbursements shall be made by the Treasurer. Expenditures less than \$250.00 may be made at the discretion of the President. Expenditures between \$250 and \$1000 require the approval of the President and Treasurer, and expenditures exceeding \$1000.00 requires the approval of the Board.

**SECTION 2 - ANNUAL AUDIT:** Under the direction of the Treasurer, an annual audit of the Council financial records shall be made by a committee designated by the President.

**SECTION 3 - FISCAL YEAR:** The fiscal year shall be from the first day of July to the thirtieth day of June of each and every year.

**SECTION 4 - DISSOLUTION:** Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, give of all the remaining assets to the Forensic Science Foundation.

**SECTION 5 - INDEMNIFICATION:** Each present and future board member and elective officer, whether or not then in office, shall be indemnified by the Council against expenses actually and necessarily incurred by or imposed upon him or her (including, but not without being limited to, judgments, costs, and counsel fees) in connection with the defense of the action, suit or proceeding in which he or she is made a party by reason of being or having been a director or elective officer of the Council except in relation to matters as to which he or she shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty for the Council. Such indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of other rights to which such director or officer may be entitled, under any other bylaws, agreement, a vote of the members, or as a matter of law, or otherwise.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION 1 - REPEAL OR AMENDMENT OF PREVIOUS BYLAWS:** These bylaws shall become effective at the close of the meeting at which they are approved by the voting members and the previous bylaws heretofore adopted or passed by the Board, or by voting members of the Council, as well as all previous resolutions, rules and regulations which are in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 2 - AMENDMENT PROCEDURE:** Any part of these bylaws may be amended at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

a. **DEADLINE:** Proposed amendment(s) shall be submitted in writing to the President by October 1 for consideration at the annual meeting held in conjunction with the AAFS meeting.

b. **PUBLICATION:** Proposed amendments) shall be delivered to the members at least two (2) weeks in advance of the vote on the amendment(s).

c. **APPROVAL:** Amendments to the Bylaws shall require approval by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present and voting at a regular Annual Meeting of the general Council membership.

d. **CHANGES:** After a proposed amendment has been published, changes that alter the substance of the amendment may be made only by unanimous vote of those present and voting.

e. **IMPLEMENTATION:** Required implementation instructions shall be part of the motion presenting the amendment, but shall not become part of the Bylaws.

These bylaws were enacted at the Meeting of the Council on March 7, 2022.