

ACTS

ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TERTIARY STUDENTS

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

- ❖ **Affiliated to IMCS - International Movement of Catholic Students**
- ❖ **Under the auspices of the SACBC - Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference**
- ❖ **To Be Approved By The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference**

IMCS SOUTH AFRICA

International Movement of Catholic Students

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SECTION ONE: PREAMBLE

We, the Association of Catholic Tertiary Students, realising the past of our organisation, recognising our historic internal tension between movement and federation. We are youth united in Catholic faith who are ecumenical and guided by the principles of non-sexism and non-racism. We commit ourselves to enriching and empowering the youth spiritually towards the development of the local Church within the context of South Africa.

MOTTO: FAITH IN ACTION

SECTION TWO: NAME

2.1 The name of the organisation shall be the Association of Catholic Tertiary Students, herein after referred to as ACTS.

2.2 EMBLEM

2.2.1 The emblem of ACTS shall be a Rosary shaped like a map of Africa, with the South African flag placed in South Africa. The cross shall form the "T" letter of the acronym ACTS, which will be in bold letters, with the national colour being grey.

2.2.2 The Rosary shall be black stringed with red beads. There shall be a yellow circle placed in the middle of the cross.

SECTION THREE: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 ACTS aims to be Christ centred.
- 3.2 To provide a strong Catholic community for all students at tertiary institutions.
- 3.3 To create an understanding of and foster non-sexism, non-racism as well as any other form of non-discrimination and democracy in all areas of our lives.
- 3.4 To develop the vision of a united people's Church and actively participate in this transformation.
- 3.5 To encourage the integration of faith in the lives of our members.
- 3.6 To challenge and deepen our faith and develop our understanding of theology.
- 3.7 To develop among our members and others an awareness of our context and to educate them on the importance of social transformation, in line with gospel values.
- 3.8 To encourage the integration of Catholic Students at branch, provincial, national, continental and international level and the sharing of resources at these levels.
- 3.9 To take a prophetic stance in the Church, campus and society.
- 3.10 To work with other Christian, religious and secular groups on issues of common concern. Also to promote inter-religious dialogue.
- 3.11 To develop effective leadership and share skills among our members for the good of the society and Church.
- 3.12 To strive for an economically and socially liberating national education system.
- 3.13 To be a non-profit organisation.
- 3.14 To unite all students at Tertiary level around issues of common concern.
- 3.15 To address the transformation of all sectors of South African society and to engage in programmes to empower the poor and the oppressed with skills.

- 3.16 To promote cultural exchange with a view of building a dynamic African personality in ACTS.
- 3.17 To help address the academic and social needs of students.
- 3.18 To constantly seek to contextualise our faith.
- 3.19 Through our activities to promote an awareness on issues of concern in the Church and at all levels of society.
- 3.20 To encourage discussion among our membership at a branch, provincial and national level on both the Church and social issues, to encourage social awareness and responsibility among membership.

SECTION FOUR: MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 ACTS shall be opened to all students at tertiary institutions who support the aims of ACTS and will be subject to the discipline of the organisation.
- 4.2 Members shall be full time students.
- 4.3 A branch may affiliate to ACTS and shall be deemed a branch provided it has ten members or more, or is recognised by the SRC of the respective tertiary institution. If not, the branch may participate in national activities but forfeit its voting rights.
- 4.4 Associate membership shall be granted to part-time students and former members of ACTS and they shall be called upon to help the organisation.
- 4.5 Associate members shall not play a role in leadership of the day to day running of ACTS.
- 4.6 Associate membership should be decided at branch, provincial and national levels.
- 4.7 A branch will be affiliated to ACTS National by paying an annual affiliation fee of R3.00 per member or 15% of SRC allowance or fixed amount as decided by the NEC in line with the above-mentioned.
- 4.8 RIGHTS OF MEMBERS
 - 4.8.1 All members of affiliated branches are eligible to stand for elections to the executive committee.
 - 4.8.2 All members shall have a right to policy formulation and decision making.
 - 4.8.3 All members shall have the right to access of resources and information.
 - 4.8.4 Every member shall have the right to be protected from any kind of harassment and/or discrimination.
- 4.9 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP
 - 4.9.1 Should a person cease to be a student or fail to meet any requirements of being a member, that person ceases to be a member.

SECTION FIVE: STRUCTURE

- 5.1 ACTS shall operate at branch, provincial and national level.
- 5.2 ACTS shall be affiliated to the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS).
- 5.3 ACTS shall be under the auspices of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC).

5.4 NATIONAL LEVEL

- 5.4.1 Nationally the organisation shall consist of the National Executive Committee (NEC) which is the President, General Secretary, Treasurer and Secretary for Media and Publicity who shall be elected at Annual National Conference.
- 5.4.2 Provincial Coordinators who shall be elected at the Annual Provincial Conference, prior to the Annual National Provincial Conference.
- 5.4.3 ACTS may have full time workers. These will be paid positions.

5.5 COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The NEC shall consist of:

- 5.5.1 All Provincial Coordinators, who have voting rights and an extra representative where the province(s) circumstances demand this, but this representative has no voting rights.
- 5.5.2 The President
- 5.5.3 The General Secretary
- 5.5.4 The Treasurer
- 5.5.5 The Secretary for Media and Publicity
- 5.5.6 The National Workers (Ex Officio)
- 5.5.7 The National Chaplain (Ex Officio)

5.6 Duties of the National Executive Committee: The NEC shall:

- 5.6.1 Be responsible for the daily administration of ACTS.
- 5.6.2 Be responsible for the implementation of the programmes of ACTS.
- 5.6.3 Evaluate the progress of ACTS.
- 5.6.4 Convene the Annual National Conference.
- 5.6.5 Hold office for a period of one year.
- 5.6.6 Not hold office in branch executives.
- 5.6.7 Shall have authority to dismiss any member of the NEC who flouts protocol and absconds from his or her duties as set out in the code of conduct.
- 5.6.8 Have the authority to co-opt someone to replace the dismissed member.

5.7 The President shall:

- 5.7.1 Be a confirmed Catholic.
- 5.7.2 Be a Chief Executive Officer of ACTS
- 5.7.3 Be a full-time student.
- 5.7.4 Represent ACTS in external affairs, where this is not possible the NEC will decide who will represent ACTS.
- 5.7.5 Maintain regular contact with other executive members, in particular the national office in order to ensure that constant, effective reflection takes place.
- 5.7.6 Deliver the presidential speech as a way of opening conference.
- 5.7.7 In consultation with the National Chaplain have powers to take emergency decisions which are in the interest of ACTS and have to be ratified by the rest of the NEC.
- 5.7.8 Be responsible for the application of principles, policies and goals of ACTS.
- 5.7.9 Preside over all meetings of the NEC and chair the Annual National Conference.

5.8 The General Secretary shall:

- 5.8.1 Be a confirmed Catholic.
- 5.8.2 Be a Chief Administrative Officer of ACTS.
- 5.8.3 Keep all records of ACTS.

- 5.8.4 With the President be the custodians of all assets of ACTS
- 5.8.5 Together with the President convene NEC meetings and set the agenda thereof.
- 5.8.6 Co-ordinate the activities of NEC members at all levels.
- 5.8.7 Head the policy formulation department of ACTS.
- 5.8.8 Present a secretariat report on the activities of ACTS at the Annual National Conference.
- 5.8.9 In an event of the President not being there, be the Acting President.
- 5.8.10 Ensure a smooth transfer of all the records of ACTS to the next NEC.

- 5.9 The Treasurer shall:
 - 5.9.1 Be a confirmed Catholic.
 - 5.9.2 Be responsible for the initiation and coordination of fund raising activities of ACTS with the Projects Officer and the National Workers.
 - 5.9.3 Ensure a smooth transfer of all financial records to the next NEC.
 - 5.9.4 Present a budget annually in consultation with the NEC that is to be sent to the SACBC.
 - 5.9.5 Should present audited financial statements of the Annual National Conference.

- 5.10 The secretary for Media and Publicity shall:
 - 5.10.1 Be a confirmed Catholic.
 - 5.10.2 Be the Chief Information Officer and be responsible for promoting ACTS in media related activities internally and externally.
 - 5.10.3 See to the publication of ACTION S.
 - 5.10.4 Ensure that the positions, policies and principles of ACTS are well reflected in the press and public.

- 5.11 The National Workers shall:
 - 5.11.1 Be full time paid positions.
 - 5.11.2 Be jointly responsible for maintaining contact with all members, liaise closely with Provincial.
 - 5.11.3 Be a confirmed Catholic.
 - 5.11.4 Ensure that effective leadership skills are built within ACTS by means of regular formation events at branch, provincial and national levels.
 - 5.11.5 Visit institutions to assist with formation, promoting and reviving ACTS.
 - 5.11.6 Be responsible for all administrative work of ACTS and the National Office.

- 5.12 Provincial Level
 - 5.12.1 Branches shall elect one representative to form provincial committees.
 - 5.12.2 The Annual Provincial Conference shall elect the Provincial Coordinator.
 - 5.12.3 The Provincial of each province shall represent the province at National level and be a full NEC member.

- 5.13 The Provincial Coordinator shall:
 - 5.13.1 Be a confirmed Catholic.
 - 5.13.2 Be a full-time student.
 - 5.13.3 Convene regular provincial meetings.
 - 5.13.4 Ensure that the province is adequately represented at national gatherings.
 - 5.13.5 Ensure that the National Programme of Action is taken up at Provincial level.
 - 5.13.6 Maintain a regular contact with the rest of the NEC.
 - 5.13.7 Submit reports on the activities of the province to the General Secretary.

- 5.13.8 Ensure that effective leadership is built in the province through effective formation events.
- 5.13.9 Be elected to offices created by the NEC or National Conference.
- 5.13.10 Share in the collective responsibility of the NEC.

5.14 Branch level shall:

- 5.14.1 Be the primary organ of ACTS.
- 5.14.2 Elect one member to form the provincial committee.
- 5.14.3 Be constituted of ten or more members.
- 5.14.4 Have its own constitution which is in line with the National Constitution.
- 5.14.5 All branches must send Constitutions to the National Office to be approved by the NEC.

5.15 Duties of the Branch Executive Committee: The BEC shall:

- 5.15.1 Be responsible for the implementation of the policies and programmes of ACTS.
- 5.15.2 Be responsible for organising and expanding ACTS.
- 5.15.3 Represent ACTS in all fora on campus that require student inputs.
- 5.15.4 Represent ACTS in civil and educational fora in the immediate area of their campus.
- 5.15.5 Maintain regular contact with the Provincial Coordinator, General Secretary and national workers.
- 5.15.6 Send a quarterly report to the Provincial Coordinator on the activities of the branch.

5.16 Vacation of seats: A member of the NEC shall vacate his or her seat if he/she

- 5.16.1 Ceases to be a student.
- 5.16.2 Ceases to be a member of the branch and province that nominated him or her as a Provincial Coordinator.
- 5.16.3 Resigns from his or her seat in writing to the President or NEC one month before such resignation is due.
- 5.16.4 Absents himself/herself voluntarily from two consecutive meetings of the NEC without having obtained leave to do so.

SECTION SIX: CHAPLAINS

6.1 Chaplains shall be drawn from among clergy, religious or other lay people, men or women.

6.2 Role of Branch Chaplain:

- 6.2.1 To nurture links between ACTS and the Universal Church.
- 6.2.2 To provide spiritual guidance.
- 6.2.3 To update membership about new Church developments.
- 6.2.4 To help in the accomplishment of the aims and objectives of ACTS.
- 6.2.5 To be pro-active animator of the student community.
- 6.2.6 Chaplains shall have speaking but not voting rights in all forums of ACTS.
- 6.2.7 Chaplains shall act as electoral officers.
- 6.2.8 Local Chaplains in consultation with the students shall decide who sits on the provincial committee.

6.3 Role of Provincial Chaplains:

- 6.3.1 To liaise with Provincial committee.
 - 6.3.2 To liaise with all other chaplains in the Province.
 - 6.3.3 Be a member of the Provincial committee and assist in such meetings.
 - 6.3.4 May address Provincial meetings and Provincial conference.
 - 6.3.5 Accept the oath of the Provincial Chairperson and his/her Executive Committee.
- 6.4 Role of the National Chaplain:
 - 6.4.1 He should be based near the national office.
 - 6.4.2 He shall liaise with Branch and Provincial Chaplains.
 - 6.4.3 He shall be appointed by the SACBC in consultation with ACTS nationally.
 - 6.4.4 He shall be a member of the NEC meetings and assist in such meetings.
 - 6.4.5 He may address NEC meetings and National Conference.
 - 6.4.6 He shall take the oath of the President, General Secretary, Treasurer and Media and Publicity Secretary.
- 6.5 The Patron:
 - 6.5.1 The Bishop responsible for Youth in the SACBC shall be the Honorary Chaplain.
 - 6.5.2 He shall give advice to ACTS on matters relating to Church doctrine.
 - 6.5.3 He shall have the right to suspend or dismiss any member of the NEC in consultation with the National Chaplain.
 - 6.5.4 He shall have the right to dissolve ACTS in consultation with the National Chaplain and President.
 - 6.5.5 He shall be accorded a special status in all gathering of ACTS.
 - 6.5.6 He will be granted associate membership by the NEC and / or National Conference.

SECTION SEVEN: CONFERENCES

- 7.1 Annual National Conferences
 - 7.1.1 The Annual National Conference shall consist of the NEC, all Provincial Committees and at least five delegates from each branch.
 - 7.1.2 The Annual National Conference shall be held in the winter vacation.
- 7.2 Duties of the Annual National Conference
 - 7.2.1 Is the highest decision making organ of ACTS.
 - 7.2.2 Is the forum where policy decisions are taken or ratified, these being binding on each campus. However, localities can decide how these are implemented in a manner that fits their context.
 - 7.2.3 Decide on a National Programme of Action.
 - 7.2.4 Must reflect on the past and represent programmes of ACTS.
 - 7.2.5 Shall elect the President, General Secretary, Treasurer and Secretary for Media and Publicity.
 - 7.2.6 Officially recognise Provincial Representatives as NEC members.
- 7.3 The Annual Leadership Conference
 - 7.3.1 The Annual Leadership Conference shall be composed of the NEC, PEC and BEC and invited persons.
 - 7.3.2 Will be held during the summer vacation.
- 7.4 Duties of the Leadership Conference

- 7.4.1 To have formation events.
- 7.4.2 To have reports on programmes of branches.
- 7.4.3 To evaluate the progress of the NEC.
- 7.4.4 To adopt the co-opted member of the NEC or elect such a member.

- 7.5 Annual Provincial Conference
 - 7.5.1 The Annual Provincial Conference shall consist of the PEC, BEC and all the member of ACTS in the Province.
 - 7.5.2 The Annual Provincial Conference shall be held not more than a month before the Annual National Conference.

- 7.6 Duties of the Annual Provincial Conference
 - 7.6.1 It shall be the highest decision making body in the Province.
 - 7.6.2 Shall elect the Provincial committee.
 - 7.6.3 Reflect on the policies of ACTS.
 - 7.6.4 Make recommendation on issues of importance that need to be discussed at National Conference.
 - 7.6.5 Derive a Programme of Action for the Province which shall not conflict the National Programme.

- 7.7 The Annual General Meeting
 - 7.7.1 The AGM shall be the highest decision making body of a branch but the lowest in ACTS.
 - 7.7.2 It shall be held by all branches no later that three weeks after the inauguration of the SRC of the respective tertiary institution.

- 7.8 Duties of the AGM
 - 7.8.1 To elect branch leadership.
 - 7.8.2 Reflect on progress of the branch.
 - 7.8.3 To formulate programmes and projects for the branch.

SECTION EIGHT: MEETINGS

NEC MEETINGS

- 8.1 The President shall convene a meeting within two months of the Conference.
- 8.2 There shall be four NEC meetings in a year unless business dictates otherwise.
- 8.3 Sittings shall preferably be during weekends and/or holidays.
- 8.4 There should be punctual attendance at meetings which should be made known in good time to all concerned members:
- 8.5 Clear decisions with no equivocation must be taken and be practicable within the scope of ACTS.
- 8.6 All the above will be applicable in all structures of ACTS.

SECTION NINE: QUORUM

- 9.1 One third of the membership will constitute a quorum of any meeting of the structures in ACTS.
- 9.2 The Annual Conference shall be constituted by a two thirds majority. Failing

- which, the conference will be adjourned for twenty-four hours and be reconstituted. Otherwise a special conference will have to be called.
- 9.3 Required votes shall be two thirds majority and all question and decisions shall be decided by a simple majority.

SECTION TEN: DURATION AND DISSOLUTION

- 10.1 Terms of office
- 10.1.1 National Executive Committee:
The NEC shall be elected annually at the Annual National Conference.
- 10.1.2 Provincial Executive Committee:
The PEC shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting
- 10.1.3 Branch Executive Committee:
The BEC shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting.
- 10.1.4 The National Chaplain:
NEC will send a nominee to the SACBC after three years.

SECTION ELEVEN: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ACTS MEMBERS

This section is a set of rules to help ensure that the Constitution is adhered to and that the member of ACTS are accountable and responsible for fulfilling all their functions. All members should at all times strive to be sensitive to each other and to the functioning of the committee as a collective.

- 11.1 Violation of the Code of Conduct
- 11.1.1 Misconduct or any behaviour that is judged to be in disrepute with ACTS.
Any person guilty of misconduct shall be judged to have committed a violation of code of conduct.
- 11.1.2 Violation of code of conduct includes:
- 11.1.3 Behaviour which is judged to be a violation of non-sexism, non-racism and democracy.
- 11.1.4 Substance abuse which impinges on the functioning of the committee.
- 11.1.5 Negligent handling of official documents.
- 11.1.6 Any unauthorised use of ACTS property, funds and equipment for personal advantage.
- 11.1.7 Malicious disruption of meetings that undermines the integrity of an individual member or of the association as a whole.

- 11.1.8 Malicious disruption of meetings and malicious interference with orderly functioning of the committee.
- 11.1.9 Blatant and disruptive contravention of the decision collectively made by the committee.
- 11.1.10 Deliberate misrepresentation of an NEC decision or position.
- 11.1.11 Neglect of official responsibility including:
 - 11.1.12 Non-attendance of one or more NEC meetings without due apology.
 - 11.1.13 Failure to perform delegated tasks on time without good reasons.
 - 11.1.14 Arriving late for a meeting without an apology.
- 11.2 Disciplinary Procedures
 - 11.2.1 The NEC can motivate for actuation of a disciplinary committee if it is felt that there is violation of code of conduct.
 - 11.2.2 The disciplinary Committee shall consist of three nominated NEC members and the National Chaplain for each case.
 - 11.2.3 In nomination of the Disciplinary Committee one should be sensitive to gender and race issues and should endeavour to incorporate the diversities of views prevalent on an issue.
- 11.3 Procedure for the Disciplinary Committee
 - 11.3.1 Clarity should be reached as to the aspect of conduct that the accused is perceived to have violated.
 - 11.3.2 The accused should offer some defence.
 - 11.3.3 The decision should be reached on the degree of violation and an appropriate sentence should be recommended.
 - 11.3.4 The disciplinary committee should motivate for its decisions and make recommendation for the appropriate sentence.
- 11.4 Disciplinary measures that can be taken in appropriate circumstances
 - 11.4.1 Performing tasks.
 - 11.4.2 Reprimand.
 - 11.4.3 Strong reprimand with public apology.
 - 11.4.4 Expulsion- after suspension or in very serious circumstances.
 - 11.4.5 Any combination of the above.