



**THE INTERNATIONAL
VETERINARY
STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION (IVSA)
CONSTITUTION**



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1. Name

The name of the organisation is 'International Veterinary Students' Association', abbreviated as 'IVSA' and hereinafter referred to as 'IVSA'.¹

2. Registered Office

IVSA is founded as an association according to the laws of Belgium with a registered address in Brussels, Belgium.²

3. Principles

IVSA is an international, non-partisan, volunteer, not-for-profit, democratic organisation of veterinary students. IVSA pursues its aims without discrimination in any of its activities or membership on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital or parental status or disability. IVSA respects the autonomy of its members.³

4. Language

The official language of IVSA is English.⁴

¹ Hereinafter means "after now".

² **Legal Information about the Association:** The Registered Office of the Association is IVSA Information Office, Avenue de Tervueren 12, B-1040, Brussels, Belgium, <http://www.ivsa.org>, info@ivsa.org Registration number: 0678547860

The Association was established as an international non-profit organization under the Belgium Law. Legal status was granted to the Association by the Belgium Government on the 31st of May 2017.

³ Non-partisan means "Not based on, influenced by, affiliated with, or supporting the interests or policies of any single political party".

Autonomy means "The right to act independently and freely".

⁴ **IVSA Corporate Identity Manual:** The official colour of IVSA is Royal blue. The official font of IVSA is Gill sans.

In the event of a discrepancy between English spelling variations the variant used by IVSA is British English.

The Member Organizations may modify the logo of IVSA as long as the modified version is approved by the ExCo and is different enough compared to the official logo, while still resembling the official logo.



5. Objectives

IVSA exists to benefit the animals and humans of the world by harnessing the potential and dedication of veterinary students to promote the international application of veterinary skills, education and knowledge.

IVSA aims to:

1. A) Encourage veterinary students to use their knowledge and abilities for the benefit of both animals and humans.
2. B) Raise the overall standard of veterinary education worldwide.
3. C) Actively support measures to improve the standard of animal welfare worldwide.
4. D) Provide opportunities for veterinary students to undertake education in important areas outside traditional veterinary training.
5. E) Encourage cooperation between members, veterinary student associations and international organizations.

6. Main Activities

IVSA addresses its aims with the following specific activities:

1. A) Promoting and facilitating professional and scientific exchanges as well as projects and extracurricular training for veterinary students.
2. B) Arranging international Congresses and Symposia to promote international understanding, exchange of ideas and best practices, and appreciation of animal health issues in different environments.
3. C) Supporting veterinary education, particularly in disadvantaged countries.
4. D) Representing the professional interest of veterinary students by collaborating with various professional bodies and organisations in the fields of veterinary care and public health.



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7. Governance

The governing entities of IVSA are:⁵

1. General Assembly
2. Executive Committee
3. Secretariat

7.1 General Assembly

1. A) The General Assembly of IVSA is the supreme decision-making body of IVSA.
2. B) The General Assembly is assembled biannually, during Congress and Symposium.
3. C) The General Assembly elects the members of the Executive Committee.
4. D) Unless stated otherwise by the Constitution or Bylaws of IVSA, the General Assembly is run according to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.⁶

7.2 Executive Committee

1. A) The Executive Committee is the supreme administrative body of IVSA.
2. B) The Executive Committee and its President are the official representatives of IVSA.
3. C) Members of the Executive Committee are elected by the General Assembly.
4. D) The Executive Committee shall consist of six to eight (6–8) members, including the President.

7.3 Secretariat

The Secretariat is an administrative body of IVSA subsidiary to the Executive Committee.⁷

⁵ The Trust is not included here as it has an advisory and overseeing, not governing, role.

⁶ Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) are the most widely used guide to running meetings and conferences effectively and fairly.

⁷ "Subsidiary to" means, in this case, "assisting with the work of"



8. Members

IVSA is composed of:

1. Member Organizations
2. Individual Supportive Members
3. Honorary Life Members

The General Assembly decides on the awarding and revoking of membership. All Members must abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of IVSA.

Membership as a Member Organization or an Individual Supportive Member is obtained by application. Membership as an Honorary Life Member is obtained by nomination.

Membership is resigned by written notice.

All Members have the right to

- participate in the activities of IVSA,
- receive information about and have access to the publications of IVSA,
- speak at the General Assembly.

Only Member Organizations have the right to vote.

A country is defined as an entity which is a state according to article one (1) of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States and is in addition acknowledged by at least one United Nations member state.⁸

Each country shall be allocated an equal number of votes which the delegates of each Member Organization within the country may jointly cast.

The Members are not liable for the debts of IVSA.

⁸ The designations and denominations employed and the presentation of the material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IVSA concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

When choosing a definition for a country, the Constitution Committee wanted to allow all “countries” that were represented in IVSA to continue to be represented, as they saw no need for a change. IVSA needs to take some sort of a stand (at least in part to stop several vet schools in one country from claiming to be different countries, which would give their country more votes and an unfairly large representation at IVSA Congresses and Symposia, at which IVSA is trying to ensure global diversity). Hence a broad definition of country has been chosen, to wilfully exclude as few “countries” as possible, and hopefully not a single “country” which actually has a vet school. IVSA is not making a political statement on country recognition – we are only defining an entity for the purposes of voting, so we are not concerned with how politically viable a country might be.

The issue has been raised of whether requiring acknowledgement by the majority of UN member states would be preferable. For the reasons described above, the Constitution Committee did not think this to be the case. Plus, IVSA is actually already imposing an additional requirement on “countries” on top of the Convention, as the Convention states in article 3: “The political existence of the state is independent of recognition by other states”. The Constitution Committee felt that, while trying to be as apolitical as possible, there should be at least the most basic level of international recognition (acknowledged by at least one UN member), as this avoids having to determine which potential “countries” with no international recognition might or might not fulfil the criteria of article 1 of the Convention, which could be a highly complex matter.



9. Finances

The income of IVSA is generated from membership fees, subsidies, donations, legacies and other contributions. IVSA may establish funds for special purposes.⁹

1. A) The membership fees shall be fixed annually at Congress by the General Assembly.
2. B) The financial year of IVSA runs from September 1st to August 31st of the following year.
3. C) The Executive Committee is, during its administration, liable for all financial actions of IVSA.
4. D) The Financial Report shall be composed in accordance with generally recognized accounting principles.
5. E) The Financial Report shall be audited by two (2) Auditors appointed by the General Assembly.¹⁰
6. F) The Executive Committee shall report to the General Assembly about the developments and the pursued financial policy of IVSA.
7. G) The Executive Committee shall submit the accounts and the statements of assets and liabilities for approval to the General Assembly at the Symposium following the end of the financial year.¹¹
8. H) Approval by the General Assembly of the documents as referred to in this paragraph, discharges the Executive Committee for its management, unless the General Assembly makes a reservation.¹²

⁹ Subsidy means, in this case, "money granted by another organization to support IVSA".

Legacy means, in this case, "money left to IVSA in a will".

¹⁰ Auditors independently examine the Financial Report, to check that everything is correct

¹¹ "assets and liabilities" mean "items of positive and negative monetary value"

¹² "discharges the Executive Committee for its management" means "If the GA approves the Financial Report, they have approved the financial management of the ExCo that was in office for that Financial year, indicating that everything was managed properly."

Extra info regarding making a reservation: The GA can approve the Financial report with an exception, for example "approved, with the reservation that the reimbursement given for item X will be returned unless a valid receipt is produced"

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10. Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution must be both voted on and confirmed before the Constitution is amended. Amendments may not be passed if less than half (1/2) of the votes of IVSA are represented at the General Assembly in which the amendments to the Constitution are to be considered.¹³

1. A) With prior notice
 1. The Constitution may be amended by the General Assembly, provided that written notice of the amendment has been circulated to all Member Organisations not less than 60 days prior to the opening meeting of the General Assembly at which the amendment is to be considered.
2. B) Without prior notice
 1. The Constitution may not be amended without prior notice.
3. C) Voting on the amendment
 1. Amendment of the Constitution may be agreed only by the General Assembly with a three quarters (3/4) majority of those present and voting.
4. D) Confirming the amendment
 1. Amendment of the Constitution may be confirmed only by the General Assembly with a three quarters (3/4) majority of those present and voting at a General Assembly held no less than 90 days after the General Assembly at which the amendment was voted on first, without any changes to the amendment.

¹³ Extra info regarding voting and confirmation: This means that any proposed change to the Constitution takes time, and is thus given due consideration. The Constitution has been written to last, not to be changed every year.



11. Bylaws

To regulate matters not described in this Constitution IVSA has Bylaws. The Bylaws have to comply with this Constitution. In case of disagreement, that stated in the Constitution shall override the Bylaws. ¹⁴

12. Amendments to the Bylaws¹⁵

- A) With prior notice
 - The Bylaws may be amended by the General Assembly, provided that written notice of the amendment has been circulated to all Member Organisations not less than 30 days prior to the opening meeting of the General Assembly at which the amendment is to be considered.
- B) Without prior notice
 - The Bylaws may also be amended without prior notice, provided that the General Assembly unanimously resolves to entertain a motion for the amendment.
 - The vote to entertain the motion will be by written ballot.
- C) Voting on the amendment
 - Amendment of the Bylaws may only be made by the General Assembly with a three quarters (3/4) majority of those present and voting.

¹⁴ The Constitution is more important than the Bylaws. The Constitution cannot be disobeyed, and is harder to change than the Bylaws

The Bylaws supplement the Constitution and give more detailed rules for governing IVSA. Some Bylaws (those that are in the nature of “rules of order”) can be suspended with a 2/3 vote. The Bylaws are easier to change than the Constitution.

The IVSA also has Manuals. These are not binding in the same way as the Constitution or Bylaws, but are more detailed guidelines on the procedures IVSA normally follows and the best ways of doing things.

¹⁵ **Extra info regarding amending the Bylaws without prior notice:** This is possible, but it can be difficult to get unanimous approval by written ballot, so such changes should only be attempted if urgent, to avoid wasting the time of the General Assembly.

A motion is a procedure to bring something before the GA for decision

GA Manual for the Members – Making Amendments to the Bylaws or the Constitution: Bylaws are substantially easier to change than the Constitution. However, they are made so that they should hopefully need to be amended only every few years. Only things that really need to be in the Bylaws should go there. No new titles should be added to the bylaws, if in any way possible. For example all guidelines about local events, how specific ExCo work is done in detail, how to do group exchanges and so on should always stay in the Manuals. So should the actual figures of the congress fees and membership fees.

Before proposing amendments to the Bylaws please read them through carefully and think whether or not the change you are going to be making could stay there for the next 5 years.



13. Dissolution

1. A) Dissolution of IVSA must be both voted on and confirmed by the General Assembly with a three quarters (3/4) majority in two (2) consecutive General Assemblies held no less than 90 days apart.¹⁶
2. B) Dissolution of IVSA may not be passed if less than half (1/2) of the votes of IVSA are represented at both General Assemblies in which dissolution is considered.
3. C) Dissolution of IVSA may not be passed in a special session of the General Assembly.
4. D) Voting by registered mail or equivalent method is possible.
5. E) A proposal for dissolution shall be sent out to all Member Organizations at least six (6) months before the beginning of the first General Assembly in which dissolution will be addressed. The proposal shall be sent out by registered mail or equivalent method.
6. F) Any funds remaining at the time of dissolution will be used to further the aims of IVSA according to this Constitution and the decision of the final General Assembly.

¹⁶ "two consecutive General Assemblies" means "one GA, and then the next one".