

**CONSTITUTION**



# Union of Zimbabwean Educators - Western Cape (UZE-WC)

**...making a difference through education**

**Physical address:** 204 Lang Margo Court, 15 Station Road, Maitland, 7404

## **Vision**

To be the voice of our members on professional and labour-related issues and strive to cultivate best teaching practices among our members.

## **Mission**

We,

1. Advocate for unity and fraternity among Zimbabwean teachers working in Western Cape.
2. Share best teaching and other professional practices.
3. Co-operate with SACE, WCED, ISASA, Department of Higher Education and other teachers' unions in delivering quality, excellent education.
4. Advise members on labour-related issues (contract negotiation, remuneration and labour disputes).
5. Build collegiality with South African teachers' unions, government and other stakeholders in education within and without South Africa.
6. Link up with universities that offer opportunities for further professional development in education.
7. Organise educational and business training workshops for our members.
8. Offer free community service in education.
9. Help in the placement/employment of Zimbabwean teachers.
10. Lobby the South African government for work permits and permanent residence for our members.

## **Core Values**

**Professionalism:** we strive to maintain the highest professional standards and to serve all our stakeholders with the highest possible degree of excellence.

**Accountability:** we believe that all union members should take responsibility for their actions.

**Respect:** we expect Union members to respect themselves, others and their employers.

**Inclusivity:** we value cultural diversity and encourage union members to practise tolerance of cultural differences.

**Ubuntu:** we encourage union members to help the less fortunate by offering their services for free.

### **Membership**

Criteria for membership:

1. The teacher should be Zimbabwean citizen or a Zimbabwean by birth.
2. The teacher must provide proof of registration with South African Council of Educators (SACE)
3. Without SACE registration, the prospective member must provide proof of qualification as a teacher. Such a member will be granted **provisional membership** status.
4. Zimbabweans who have attained their teaching qualifications locally (in South Africa) shall be accepted by the Union provided they have produced proof (certificate/s) of their teaching qualification.

### **Membership Registration Procedure**

- One shall become a member after completing the union's registration form, paying the joining fee and having had provided the necessary documents.
- Online registration will take longer due to documents verification process.

### **Joining Fee and Subscriptions**

A member shall pay an amount of R100 as joining fee and then pay monthly subscriptions of R50.

Membership shall cease when a member's subscriptions are three (3) months in arrears..

### **Duties/Activities/Obligations/Core business**

1. The union shall protect the interests of its members.
2. The union lobby the government on the issues of work permits, permanent residence and naturalization.
3. The union shall liaise with the Department of Basic Education regarding coming up with an expatriate programme so that both the South African education system and Zimbabwean teachers mutually benefit.
4. The union shall keep a database of qualified employed and unemployed Zimbabwean teachers so that it can approach Western Cape Education Department and ISASA regarding the placement of teachers to alleviate the problem teacher shortages in schools.
5. The union shall, working with relevant stakeholders, provide staff development workshops.
6. The union shall hold executive meetings quarterly, and general meetings twice a year.
7. The union shall source bursaries and scholarships for members so that they may pursue further studies.
8. The union shall organise an annual end-of-the-year party.
9. When a paid-up member passes on, all members should contribute R100 towards funeral costs. NB: this is not a funeral policy. Members are encouraged to have their own funeral policies.

## **Officer-Bearers Election and Term of Office Elections**

- I. Elections for all positions shall be held bi-annually (every two years).
- II. Office-bearers to elected by secret ballot by paid-up members at an AGM.
- III. Canvassing for support shall be allowed.
- IV. The winner shall be the one with the majority votes.

## **Term of Office**

- I. 2- year tenure
- II. Office-bearers are allowed a maximum of 2 terms of office (four years).
- III. Former office-bearers shall revert to being ordinary union members.

## **Qualifications to be an Office-bearers**

All office-bearers should be:

1. Zimbabwean citizens
2. A qualified teacher
3. SACE-registered

## **Office-bearers and Their Duties**

**Chairperson:** shall be responsible for calling meetings and chairing them; shall be the union's ultimate spokesperson working in liaison with Information and Publicity secretary; shall represent the union in bargaining, lobbying and conflict resolution meetings. Chairperson shall delegate duties to other members.

**Vice-chairperson:** shall chair meetings in the absence of the chairperson; shall be responsible for membership discipline and shall lead a three-member ad hoc committee which shall preside over disciplinary hearings; shall train new members about the union's constitution

**Secretary:** shall record and keep minutes of meetings; shall be responsible for looking after party documents in a safe state; shall work with the chairperson in drawing up meetings agendas

**Treasurer:** shall be the union's finance officer (receive and record joining fee, subscriptions, donations); shall keep an updated company inventory; shall be a **co-signatory together with the chairperson and a committee member**; shall provide financial report at a general meeting and at an AGM.

**Information and Publicity Secretary:** shall issue press statements in liaison with the chairperson; shall be responsible for promoting the union in the media; shall recruit new members

**IT Secretary:** shall be responsible for designing and managing union website; shall be responsible for updating the website quarterly

## Meetings

Executive Meetings: shall be held once a school term and whenever there is need for one.

General Meetings: shall be held on the first Friday of the April and September school holidays.

Annual General Meeting shall be held in November every year.

## Meetings Procedure

1. A meeting notice will be sent out a month before the meeting date.
2. An agenda shall be compiled a week before the meeting date.
3. A quorum for any meeting shall be half of the registered members.
  - A. Chairperson's opening remarks
  - B. Minutes reading, confirmation and matters arising
  - C. Financial report
  - D. Information report
  - E. IT report
  - F. Chairman's address
  - G. Business of the day
4. An issue shall be put to vote for it to be binding.

## Grievance Procedure

1. A written complaint shall be sent by the aggrieved to the vice-chairperson.
2. Vice-chairperson shall notify the executive which shall help him or her to form a three-member ad hoc committee. The other two members shall be chosen from the union's ordinary members.
3. The executive shall make a decision. A grievance can be solved at this level. If not solved, then Step 4 kicks in.
4. Vice-chairperson shall call for a conflict resolution meeting with the aggrieved parties.

## Code of Conduct

The Code of Professional Conduct specifies minimum standards of professional conduct of teachers and is not a thorough list of such standards. Any member of UZE-WC, who is alleged to have violated the standards of the profession and the provisions of the Code, may be subject to disciplinary action by the Union.

In relation to pupils:

1. The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age ancestry of place of origin.
2. The teacher is responsible for diagnosing educational needs, prescribing and implementing instructional programmes, and evaluating progress of pupils.
3. The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.
4. The teacher may not divulge information about a pupil received in confidence or in the course of professional duties, except as required by law or where, in the judgement of the teacher, to do so is in the best interest of the pupil.

5. The teacher may not take advantage of his/her professional position to benefit from the sale of goods or services to, or for, pupils in the teacher's charge.
6. The teacher may not accept pay for tutoring a pupil in any subjects in which a teacher is responsible for giving classroom instruction to that pupil.
7. The growth of a friendly relationship between teacher and pupil which is based on mutual respect and appreciation of the role that each plays in the learning situation, is desirable.
8. It is, however, an abuse of this professional relationship for the teacher to:
  - Enter into improper association with a pupil
  - Show undue personal favour or disfavour towards a pupil
  - Commit such acts against a child which are illegal; and
  - Endeavour to exert an undue influence with regard to personal attitudes, opinion and behaviour, which are in no way connected with the work of the school.
- A. The teacher shall to the best of their abilities work to promote the qualities of enterprise, self-reliance and independence in their pupils. In so doing they shall recognize the human right to self-determination and strive to endow pupils with the confidence necessary to become agents of their own learning and discovery.
- B. The teacher, in discharging his/her duties in relation to the pupils, shall be punctual, prompt and prepared, and shall recognize his/her responsibility with regard to the academic and personal development of the pupil.

In relation to school authorities/administration:

1. The teacher protests the assignment of duties for which the teacher is not qualified, or conditions which make it difficult to offer professional service.
2. The teacher fulfills contractual obligations to the employer until released by mutual consent or according to law.
3. The teacher provides as much notice as possible of a decision to terminate employment.
4. The teacher adheres to agreements negotiated on his/her behalf by the Union.
5. The teacher shall act responsibly in the discharge of professional, organizational and administrative duties.

In relation to colleagues:

1. The teacher does not dent the confidence of other teachers.
2. The teacher criticizes the professional competence or professional reputation of another teacher only in confidence to proper officials and after the other teacher has been informed of the criticism.
3. The teacher, when making a report on the professional performance of another teacher, does so in good faith and, prior to submitting the report, provides the teacher with a copy of the report.
4. The teacher does not take, because of hatred or personal advantage, any steps to secure dismissal of another teacher.
5. If a teacher experiences any concern or displeasure in relation to a colleague's conduct or standard of work, the teacher should discuss the issue informally and in confidence with the colleague concerned. Where the issue is not resolved informally,

the teacher should take no further action without informing the colleague. Should the teacher have reason to believe that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the school or to individual pupils, then there is a clear duty to make a report to the head teacher.

6. The teacher recognizes the duty to protest, where possible through proper channels, administrative policies and practices, which the teacher cannot accept.
7. The teacher, as an administrator, provides opportunities for staff members to express their opinions and to initiate and develop democratic processes in the administration of the school.

In relation to the profession:

1. The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.
2. The teacher should not denigrate their colleagues in the presence of other parties nor should a teacher adversely criticize a colleague in the presence of others, save in the context of appropriate procedure.
3. The teacher does not engage in activities which adversely affect the quality of the teacher's professional service.
4. The teacher submits to the disputes arising from professional relationships with other teachers which cannot be resolved by personal discussion.
5. The teacher makes representation on behalf of the Union or members thereof only when authorized to do so.
6. The teacher accepts that service to the Union is a professional responsibility.

#### **Management of the Union**

1. Shall be the responsibility of the executive.
2. Members shall be engaged on a voluntary basis to run the office in the first 2 years of the existence of this union.

#### **Union Property**

The treasurer shall be accountable for all union properties (fixed and movable).

#### **Amendments**

This constitution shall be amended at the end of each term (2 years).