

15th EALTA Annual General Meeting Held on Saturday 26th May 2018, 14:30 at the Ruhr-Universität, Bochum

Present: Conference participants; only those who are members of EALTA – European Association for Language Testing and Assessment have voting rights.

AGENDA

Part 1.

1. Approval of agenda and minutes from the 2017 AGM (Appendix 1)
2. Membership Survey (Appendix 2)
 - a) Report of the findings
 - b) Proposal: Finance strategy
 - c) Discussion of emerging issues
3. EALTA Logo Policy (Appendix 3)
4. Constitution (Appendix 4)
 - a) Proposed Changes to the EALTA Constitution (in Constitution 3.e, 3f, 3h, 3j)
 - b) Proposal to nominate a Member at Large
 - c) Proposal to change the time period within which candidates for the Executive Committee can be nominated (in Constitution 3.i)

Part 2.

5. Reports on EALTA activities since the last AGM including:
 - a) Activities and Events,
 - b) Membership,
 - c) Finances
 - d) Registration as charity in the UK
6. Appointment of the auditor for 2019
7. Election of the Upcoming President, Secretary and Treasurer
8. 2019 Summer School venue and date
9. 2019 Conference venue and date
10. Date of the next AGM
11. AOB

The meeting was called to order by Claudia Harsch (CH), President of EALTA, who welcomed all participants.

1. Approval of agenda and minutes from the 2017 AGM

Since no changes were requested, the agenda and minutes from the Annual General Meeting 2017 were approved.

2. Membership survey

a) CH presented the results of the membership survey (see Appendix 2)

b) Jamie Dunlea (JD) presented a proposal for the finance strategy. The proposal included the following:

- EALTA has contributed to a large degree to the professionalization of language testing in Europe and internationally through its conference, conference workshops, summer schools, website, and other activities.
- EALTA has a very robust financial reserve, and we have embarked on widening EALTA support for its core mission through supporting events organized by members and SIGs and webinars.
- It is also important that in order to ensure our status as a not-for-profit organization, we re-invest in activities relevant to our mission (while maintaining a robust surplus).

KEY POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The actual amount invested is less than the maximum amount possible.
- The actual expense amount is approximately equivalent to the maximum surplus generated by conferences (the surplus can fluctuate widely by conference).
- The maximum possible expense amount would exceed the normal surplus from annual conference.
- We will monitor expense and income and adjust expenses according to priorities.
- EALTA FINANCIAL RESERVES RED LINE
 - The Euro account (€ 41,426.60) will remain untouched as our core financial reserve
- The GBP account, which we use for ongoing income and expenses, will have a bottom line of 25,000 GBP. Annual expenses will be reviewed and reduced if we run a deficit in continuous years to ensure that we do not fall below this red line in our operational account
- Barry O'Sullivan pointed out that there was a discrepancy between the actual amount spent in 2017 in the Financial Strategy and the expenditure for 2017 in the Treasurer's report. JD confirmed that the audited treasurer's report was correct and that the discrepancy in the Financial Plan would be corrected before circulating again with the minutes

c) The membership survey and the finance strategy were then discussed by the membership. The focus was on the following points:

- Discuss and vote on suggested Finance Strategy:

-> Does the membership accept the financial strategy? Results of the vote

abstain = 0
no = 0
yes = 79

-> The Finance Strategy was accepted by the membership

- Explore ways to engage with other organizations, with local organizations – invited symposium

- ➔ Should EALTA introduce the category of an affiliate sister organisation? Results of the vote:
 - abstain = 1
 - no = 0
 - yes = 78

-> The category of an affiliate sister organisation will be introduced

Norman Verhelst reminded the AGM that the decision means a change of the constitution to integrate the new membership type. CH said that the Exec will draft a text and send it around and then the change will be approved in the next AGM.

- Online journal, open access; practitioner journal/case studies + peer-reviewed research journal with impact factor
 - Barry O’Sullivan, Benjamin Kremmel, + 3 other volunteers (Elisabeth Guerin and Martina Hulešová) will send an email to the executive committee to confirm that they want to include the working group to explore what it costs to get an open access publication. JD concluded the discussion in saying that there seems to be agreement on setting up a working group, which would look for implications and make suggestions (5 volunteers, they send the Exec an e-mail).

- Searchable data base – action group?
 - Neus Figueras suggested that here again an action group sees what can be done, what costs would be involved, and reports to the next AGM. Thomas Koidl is looking into how the EALTA website could be turned into a real database where keyword searches are possible.

- Should we introduce a communications officer who could develop the different communication forms further?
 - CH suggested that another action group is needed for this too. The group would design a task description for the communication officer and the result would be presented in the next AGM. The Exec writes first the communication strategy in a separate meeting. Mina volunteered and will write up a preliminary paper by February 2019.

- Do we want a professional account on twitter / facebook?
 - Discussion of this would come after EALTA has decided on the communication strategy.

- Explore ways to participate in public discussion and widening discussion in society (media training?)

- Luke Harding suggested that we should invite the media to the conferences to widen the discussions. Sonja Zimmermann had tried to do this by contacting newspapers, universities etc. but no one was interested.

3. EALTA Logo Policy (Appendix 3)

Policy at present:

The Executive Committee of EALTA considers it essential that proper caution is exercised in using the EALTA logo. Only the Executive Committee is entitled, in its pursuit of EALTA's mission, to use the logo in its own communications and publications.

The use of logo is permitted only within the organisation of EALTA events and activities such as SIG events, EALTA summer school, joint events etc.

Issue:

- Our policy results in institutional members making up a logo for expressing their membership in EALTA - all other associations allow that kind of usage
- Policy at present: The use of logo is permitted only within the organisation of EALTA events and activities such as SIG events, EALTA summer school, joint events etc.
- Suggestion to add the following:

Institutional members may use the EALTA logo solely for the purpose of stating their institutional membership. It is prohibited to use the EALTA logo for any other purposes; the use of the EALTA logo is particularly prohibited for evoking the impression that EALTA would endorse the institution's activities, materials or tests.

Institutional members please contact the EALTA secretary to obtain the approved EALTA logo. Other versions are not allowed to be used.

- Two points were discussed regarding the logo policy: (a) whether institutional members should be allowed to use the logo to show their membership and (b) the term "joint event" should be clearly defined as EALTA sponsors workshops. During the discussion, proposals for introducing a special EALTA logo for the use of institutions came up.

→ Should institutional members be allowed to use the EALTA logo to state their institutional membership?

abstain = 21
no = 30
yes = 11

-> Ealta will define "joint events", and there will be no change to the logo policy

4. Constitution (Appendix 4)

a) Proposed Changes to the EALTA Constitution

1. Committee for Conference Organisation
2. Members at Large
3. Membership Committee

Constitution 3e

The Executive of the Association will be a Committee normally consisting of: a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, the Chair of the Membership Committee, and one or more Conference Representatives. The Conference Representatives will represent institutions hosting the current and forthcoming EALTA conferences.

Issue with 3e

- Conference representatives are not democratically elected
- A lot of the Exec Committee's work is dedicated to organising the conference

SUGGESTION: Committee for Conference Organisation (CCO)

Chair (nominated by the executive committee, has experience in conference organisation, ideally has organised a past EALTA conference); nominated for three years; liaison person, regularly reports to the exec; responsible for close communication with the exec committee, for data collection from conferences over the past years, for chairing the organisation of the annual conferences

Organizer of the immediate past/current conference (i.e. conference of the AGM we are looking at)

Organizer of the upcoming conference (+ a local organising team)

The two organizers are on the committee for two years

Tasks of the Exec Committee

- Decision on conference proposals and locations.
- Based on suggestions by the CCO:
decision on theme, invited keynotes and symposia, PCWs.
- In a joint meeting (CCO and Exec): based on vetting results, final abstract decision and programme compilation.

Duties of the CCO

- Chair: liaison person, regularly reports to the exec; responsible for close communication with the exec, for data collection from conferences over the past years, for chairing the organisation of the annual conferences)
- CCO conference organisation as in the past, incl. preparation and evaluation

Rationale

Introducing the CCO frees capacities in the exec meetings to address activities outside the conferences that have been identified as priorities by the members

CCO reduces burden for conference organisers caused by double role (conference organiser & exec member) and distribute the workload more evenly

Introducing the role of the chair ensures continuity in organisation and allows monitoring conferences over the years

Having a separate CCO, with important decisions taken by Exec Committee will ensure that important decisions are only taken by Exec Committee elected by the membership

The proposal was discussed from various perspectives, e.g. if the CCO should be member of the Exec (Norman Verhelst), whether one Member at Large would be enough. Also, if there would be too many members in the Exec after introducing the new officers (Gudrun).

b) Introducing the role of Members at Large

- Sit on the Exec, take part in Exec meetings
- Support the Exec in ad-hoc tasks as agreed by the Exec committee
- Enhance capacities of the Exec to address activities that have been identified as priorities by the members
- Distribute workload more evenly

Changes in 3 steps

1. Proposed for the AGM 2018

Exec asks the AGM to approve the new CCO which is to be put in place at the AGM 2019

➔ Should the CCO be a member in the Exec / chair as part of the EXEC?

Abstain = 5
No = 0
Yes = everybody else

CH then concluded that as it comes to the next year's organiser, we continue as now. The new CCO is to be established for the year after, and the chair to be nominated and elected at next year's AGM. The exec will send the necessary modifications of the constitution to the membership.

Exec asks the AGM to appoint 1 Member at Large as a supplementary member (see constitution 3e) to the exec for a transition period for 2 years

→ Should Ealta appoint 1 member at large for 2 years?

Abstain = 0
No = 0
Yes = all

→ AGM to appoint 1 Member at Large: Zoltan Lukacsi, Budapest Business School:

Abstain = 0
No = 0
Yes = we appoint him

2. Proposed for the AGM 2019

Election of another Member at Large for the regular period of 3 years

Effective operation of the CCO

=> nomination and election of the chair of the CCO and one member at large at the AGM 2019

3. Proposed for the AGM 2020

Stepping down of the first appointed Member at Large

Election of another Member at Large for the regular period of 3 years

c) Proposal to change the time period within which candidates for the Executive Committee can be nominated

Membership Committee

Issues:

The EALTA Constitution lacks information regarding the:

1. Procedures for election and establishment of the Membership Committee
2. Role and service of the committee members
3. Length of committee members' service

Official guidelines are needed to ensure transparent and effective work of the Committee.

Proposed addition to constitution 3h

Existing:

h. The Membership Committee will normally consist of a Chair, elected at the Annual General Meeting, and three specialists proposed for the post by the Chair, from at least two different countries, and approved by the Executive Committee.

Addition:

Each Member of the Membership Committee serves a term of two years. Each Member can be appointed to serve on the Membership Committee for no more than two consecutive terms in the same capacity. The Members can decide to resign from their service on the committee before their term expiration. In such case, the Members must notify the Chair at least 30 calendar days before their resignation date.

AGM to decide on this change:

Abstain = 2
No = 0
Yes = everybody else

Proposed change to constitution 3j

Now:

j. Both the Executive and the Membership Committees will have the power to replace members who resign and to co-opt up to three additional members. Such decisions must be ratified or changed at the next Annual General Meeting.

New:

j. The Executive Committee will have the power to replace members who resign and to co-opt up to three additional members. Such decisions must be ratified or changed at the next Annual General Meeting.

Vote

Abstain = 2
No = 0
Yes = all the others

5. President's and Executive Committee's report on EALTA activities and progress in 2018 including events, membership, and finances.

a) CH commented on the 2018 conference and thanked Sonja Zimmermann and her team for excellent preparation and hosting of the event, which had gathered 251 participants from 36 countries (69 from Germany), 9 of which outside Europe. She also expressed EALTA's gratitude to the sponsors for their support. Moreover, CH acknowledged the generous contributions of the pre-conference workshop leaders, the invited keynote speakers, the lunch time workshop leaders, the SIG leaders and the sponsors.

Events

The reports for 2017-2018 EALTA funded events are available online. Following events took place during the past year:

- First meeting of the Spanish SIG in Language Testing and Assessment, October 2017
- Workshop: Communicative Language Assessment. Promoting Best Practice for English Language Classroom, November 2017
- Joint Meeting of the EALTA Special Interest Groups Assessment of Writing and Assessment for Academic Purposes, 17-18 November
- 1st EALTA Winter School, 6-10 January, Innsbruck
- 5th Meeting of the EALTA CEFR SIG, 27 February in Dublin
- EALTA-funded Workshop « Companion Volume, Piloting the new descriptors in Romania », 9-10 March
- C-Test project LaPlace e.V. – language placement for displaced people: registered as charitable NGO in Germany, tests developed an online, contacting NGOs for piloting – see our table here and pre-con event

Webinars:

- Dr. Sathena Chan: Developing rating scales for integrated assessment tasks, 21 November 2017
- Dr. Jamie Dunlea: Setting standards: the role of assessment in implementing the CEFR in education reform, 9th May 2018

b) Membership

The EALTA membership numbers at the time of the conference were the following:

Individual members had **decreased by 1018** and Associate members by **118** mainly due to the renewal of membership in 2017. The number of the institutional members had increased by 3, and expert members by 2. On 25th May 2018 at the 2016 AGM, the EALTA membership numbers were the following:

Individual members: 684 / 40 countries Associate members: 91 / 30 countries
Institutional members: 59 / 22 countries Expert members: 24 / 11 countries

- the top 10 countries in terms of individual membership numbers being UK, Turkey, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Greece, Italy, Finland, France.

The chair of the Membership Committee, Slobodanka Dimova, reported that all the members of the Committee will continue, that is – Jayanti Banerjee, Monica Barni and Dina Tsagari. The activity during the year had been 2 applications for Institutional membership, all of which successful, and 2 for expert membership.

c) Finances

The Treasurer Jamie Dunlea (JD) presented the accounts for 2017, which have been audited by Barbara Blair. The accounts were approved by the AGM.

The Executive Committee asks the AGM to approve that necessary steps are taken to clarify the legal status of EALTA in order to:

- avoid legal liability of Executive and membership;
- ensure no taxation liability in jurisdiction in which accounts are held;

- smooth transition of Treasurer position by stabilizing accounts in one location that would not require the accounts to be moved to the country of residence of the Treasurer.

-> clarification to the different sums → JD will send a confirmation, but audited sum is the correct sum. Slobodanka Dimova explained that the audited document included costs of webinar software, whereas JD's Financial Strategy document did not.

d) CURRENT SITUATION FOR ACCOUNTS

Based on review of documents available on UK Government and Charities Commission websites, EALTA would likely qualify as a Charitable Unincorporated Association:

- Members still liable (organization not a “legal persona”)
- For tax purposes not liable for tax on activities related to mission
- Required to register with Charities Commission and submit annual reports, BUT no penalty for not registering
- No requirement to submit tax returns to HMRC provided that organization is a Charitable Unincorporated Association

SHORT TERM

- Seek professional, written opinions on tax status and obligations, and possibilities for registering as an organization in both UK and other jurisdictions
- Stabilize status by registering as an Unincorporated Charitable Association for tax purposes

MID TERM

- Seek registration as Charitable Incorporated Organization, which provides limited liability for the organization (so members not liable)

MID – LONG TERM

- Investigate the best jurisdiction to register as a not-for-profit / charitable organization that has limited liability protection and legal status as an organization
- Open accounts in that jurisdiction so that accounts do not have to move when treasurer changes

Vote: Does EALTA need a professional opinion of an organisation like APMG, which may incur costs?

abstain = 0
no = 0
yes = all

The AGM approved of the financial strategy as put forward by the Treasurer, including the suggestion for registering EALTA, which may incur additional costs.

6. Appointment of the auditor for 2019

CH thanked Barbara Blair for auditing the financial year 2018. Barbara Blair has accepted to be the auditor for the year 2019.

7. Election of the Upcoming President, Secretary and Treasurer

The following nominations were received before the AGM: Peter Lenz (Switzerland) for Upcoming president, Sébastien Georges (France) for Secretary, and Jamie Dunlea (UK) for Treasurer. Two nominated persons for secretary withdrew before the AGM.

Results of the elections:

- ➔ Upcoming president: Yes = 49; No = 2; Abstain = 6
- ➔ Secretary: Yes = 49; No = 1; Abstain = 1
- ➔ Treasurer: Yes = 54; No = 0; Abstain = 3

Peter Lenz (Switzerland) as Upcoming president, Sébastien Georges (France) as Secretary, and Jamie Dunlea (UK) as Treasurer.

CH congratulated the newly elected members and welcomed them to the executive committee.

8. Proposal for 2019 Summer School

Jamie Dunlea presented a proposal for 2019 Summer School which would be hosted by CIEP and British Council Assessment Group and which would take place in Sèvres, France 15-19 July 2019. The theme would be Standard setting in relation to the CEFR, with a particular focus on establishing and maintaining standards across assessments in different languages or in the same language.

- Selecting a strategy for linking, that is appropriate for the design of the tests involved, particularly in relation to cross-linguistic projects and for less-common languages (e.g. modern foreign languages departments, language testing for diplomatic contexts, defence forces, etc). Detailed information on costs, program, and registration will be available in October 2018.

9. 2019 Conference venue and dates

The 2019 EALTA Conference will take place in Dublin, Ireland at the UCD Applied Language Centre **from 31 May to 2 June**, with pre-conference workshops and SIG meetings running before the conference as usual. The conference will be organised by Anna Nunan and colleagues. Further information about the conference will be given in due course via the EALTA website and electronic membership list.

10. Date of the next AGM

The next AGM will be held during the 2019 EALTA conference in Dublin on Saturday 1st of June.

11. AOB

To honour Sauli Takala, an online Festschrift titled *Developments in language education – papers in honour of Sauli Takala* is going forward. More than 10 proposals has already come in and 10 still coming. By the end of July the 1st version, in August feedback. Final version at the end of September. Ready at the end of the 2018. Certain number of books planned to be printed to be distributed at next conference. Contents: personal accounts, research articles.

Executive Committee

Between the 2018 and 2019 AGMs, the EALTA Executive Committee will have the following members:

Claudia Harsch – *President*

Peter Lenz – *Upcoming President*

Sébastien Georges – *Secretary*

Jamie Dunlea – *Treasurer*

Slobodanka Dimova – *Chair of the Membership Committee*

Zoltan Lukacsi – *Member at large*

Anna Nuna – *Conference organiser*

Sonja Zimmermann – *Past conference organiser*