

# ETHO

## Terms of Reference

*These Terms of Reference are intended to clarify and establish the organisational framework for the work and collaboration within ETHO. They aim to ensure effective, transparent, and democratic workflows. The Terms of Reference define responsibilities, outline the structure of ETHO, and govern the handling of decision-making processes. They further delineate the collaboration with the umbrella organisation ELIA.*

### Glossary

ETHO	European Technical Heads Organisation
ELIA	European League of Institutes of the Arts, globally connected European network of Higher Arts Education (HAE), representing all disciplines of art practice.
Core Group	The Core Group serves as the governing body and is the highest authority within the ETHO community, directing and steering the network. The ETHO Core Group functions as a working group of ELIA and reports to the ELIA Executive Group.
Members	Members in the context of this document refers to all those who want to be part of the ETHO community. Membership in ELIA is required to take part in ETHO activities.
Technical Services	Service function within institutions of Higher Arts Education (HAE) responsible for learner support and maintenance of specialized learning environments enabling hands-on-learning, practical teaching, and practice-based research. Technical Services may be structured either as a centralized unit within the institution or it may be decentralized and distributed within academic departments. Synonyms: Technical Learning Services, Technical Resources Services, Technical Department etc.
Technical Head	Job role responsible for leading and managing of a Technical Services unit.
Technician	Job role responsible for technical service operations. Specialists in the field of material and technique-based practical teaching and learning. Synonyms: instructor, educator, tutors, workshop master, technical staff member, technical expert, technical collaborator, technical teacher etc.
Technical education	Technical education (or technical teaching) within HAE combines artistic expression with practical and technical skills. It can take various forms, such as hands-on instructions in workshops as well as lessons in digital media production or coding.

## 1. PREAMBLE

The European Technical Heads Organisation (ETHO) was founded in 2015 as an informal network of managers and staff members of technical departments in Higher Arts Education (HAE) in Europe and beyond. During its first years, ETHO grew significantly and increased its offering. In January 2020, ETHO Core Group signed a memorandum of collaboration with ELIA and has since developed into a grassroots community of the ELIA network of art universities, art academies, and faculties of arts in universities.

### 1.1. ETHO Mission Statement

Empowering professionals in technical services and education from all disciplines to exchange, innovate, and collaborate in addressing new challenges in higher arts education.

### 1.2. ETHO Purpose and Goals

- To facilitate peer learning for individuals who deliver and support technical services and technical learning within Higher Arts Education.
- To ensure that the voices of those in technical roles are heard within the wider Higher Arts Education community and beyond.
- To advocate for the recognition of technical specialists within Higher Arts Education, their role in delivering technical learning, and their contribution to research.
- To foster a community that empowers technical learning, promotes innovation, and champions the vital role of technical specialists in shaping the future of Higher Arts Education.

### **1.3. Relationship with ELIA**

ETHO is a grassroots platform of ELIA, sharing common values and objectives in promoting Higher Arts Education while facilitating the exchange of good practice.

In this partnership, ELIA supports networking among technical departments of various institutions within its network and actively aids ETHO in delivering activities, including the organisation of events. In turn, ETHO contributes valuable ideas, inputs, and expertise from the realms of technical support and technical education to the discussions led by ELIA.

## **2. TARGET AUDIENCE, PARTICIPATION, OUTREACH**

All professionals engaged in technical services and technical teaching in institutions of HAE that are member of ELIA are welcome to join the community. Participants should demonstrate a commitment to the community's goals and values and actively participate in the activities and initiatives of the network while also contributing positively to the community's overall objectives.

## **3. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE**

### **3.1. Chair**

The primary responsibility for ETHO lies with the Chair of the ETHO platform and Core Group. The Chair assumes the role of spokesperson and is responsible for active networking.

The Chair is tasked with setting the agenda and leading the Core Group meetings. A deputy chair, appointed no later than three days prior to the next meeting, may assist in these duties.

The Chair is nominated by the Core Group and the role undergoes reconfirmation every two years, with a maximum tenure of six years.

### **3.2. ETHO Core Group**

The Core Group, originally formed by the founders of ETHO, is the driving force behind the network. Its members are dedicated volunteers from the community who are particularly attuned to the needs and concerns of the technical staff. The Core Group is an official working group of ELIA and serves as the governing body of the ETHO community, directing and steering the network. The ETHO Core Group is subject to the ELIA governance rules for working groups.

Its primary responsibilities include representing the interests of the ETHO community from across Europe and beyond, addressing relevant topics and issues for the community, preparing events, and contributing to the development of the ELIA strategy and programs. The Core Group can assign taskforces to work on specific topics, such as strategy and long-term planning.

The Core Group comprises a maximum of 7 members, not including any ELIA Team member. In alignment with the ELIA EDI policy, efforts are made to ensure a balance of gender, cultural background, age, and the technical and managerial experience among its members. Membership in the Core Group is by call for nominations to the ELIA membership and subsequent selection by the Core Group. The term is at least four years with a maximum tenure of six years. Membership in the ETHO Core Group is subject to final endorsement by the ELIA Executive Group.

### **3.3. ELIA Support of ETHO and the ETHO Core Group**

A member of the ELIA Team participates in the meetings of the Core Group without voting rights and provides administrative support as well as assistance with digital presence, conference management, and community management. The ELIA Team member is assigned by ELIA's Executive Director.

### **3.4. ETHO Representation on the ELIA Representative Board**

To foster co-operation and incorporate the expertise and knowhow from the non-academic technical teaching and support sector into the advancement of Higher Arts Education, the ETHO Core Group has the privilege of nominating one of the group's members to be a non-voting member of the ELIA Representative Board. This privilege will exist if none of the Core Group members is an elected member of the Representative Board.

The ETHO representative follows the discussions in the ELIA Representative Board, contributes insights and expertise from the field of technical services and education, and advocates for the importance of technical learning in Higher Arts Education. The ETHO representative relates first-hand information on ELIA's strategies and activities directly to the Core Group and community.

The ETHO representative on the ELIA Representative Board is nominated by the ETHO Core Group. The term is two years which is renewable.

### 3.5 Members of the ETHO Community

Generally, members of the ETHO community are typically technical staff or managers of technical services. Other staff of ELIA member institutions are welcome to join the activities if they are interested in ETHO topics.

ETHO community members enjoy a range of opportunities, such as the right to participate in events or programs, networking with fellow members and professionals in the field, access to knowledge programs and workshops, as well as availability of educational materials, resources, and facilities provided by both organisations.

ETHO community members are also eligible for leadership roles within the ETHO network.

### 3.6 Technical Managers Council

The Technical Managers Council, originally referred to as the Leadership Group, functions as an informal panel for gathering insights and evaluations from professionals who lead and direct technical services units.

The Technical Managers Council acts as a sounding board for the Core Group, giving active feedback and facilitating the exchange of best practice. Council Members deliberate on noteworthy developments and challenges for the technical services and education, developing measures and solutions for the future and contribute firsthand experience from managing their technical services units. They are willing to provide insights into the operational aspects of their work and actively engage in discussions aimed at strengthening the position of technical services and learning in Higher Arts Education.

Council Members must hold leadership positions with budget and personnel responsibilities in ELIA member institutions. Active participation in events and discussions is expected. Informal membership is obtained by attending the ETHO Management Seminars.

### 3.7 Special Interest Groups (SIG)

There are crucial topics that matter to the technical staff community and require thorough exploration and continuous attention. To meet this need, a temporary, topic-specific Special Interest Group (SIG) can be established by the Core Group.

A Special Interest Group concentrates intensively on specific subjects, such as operational matters (e.g. management, spaces, resources, procedures), educational subjects (e.g. Biolab, New Materials, Post-digitalization, AI, Performing Arts) and the development of ETHO itself, and is designed to thoroughly explore selected topics, cultivate expertise, and execute projects. Moreover, it has the capability to contribute valuable content to events and undertake targeted community initiatives related to specific themes. The appointed spokesperson of the Special Interest Group reports regularly to the Core Group.

Any ETHO member can propose the formation of a Special Interest Group. The Core Group decides on the establishment of such a group in accordance with the current strategy and objectives of ETHO. These groups are usually chaired by a member of the Core Group and work until the assigned task has been completed.

## 4. MEETINGS OF THE ETHO CORE GROUP

### 4.1. Regulations

The ETHO Core Group convenes once a month, typically online, with the Chair presiding over the proceedings. Meetings generally last for an hour. All sessions are documented, and these minutes or notes are then stored in the shared repository. Tasks and actions, linked to a responsible person, are tracked on a list. This document is hosted online as a dynamic record, providing continuous accessibility to all Core Group members, and will be reviewed and updated with a progress update at the beginning of each meeting.

Additional extraordinary meetings or working sessions may be arranged if deemed necessary.

Core Group Members are expected to communicate their absences to the Chair well in advance and, in the case of agenda items requiring decisions, designate a substitute from within the Core Group. They should exercise discretion and sensitivity when dealing with confidential information.

In case of decisions, outcomes are determined by a simple majority vote.

### 4.2. Content

With the support of the ELIA Team member, the Chair sets the agenda for each meeting, which includes recurring items such as the approval of the previous minutes and the review and updating of the task list.

The agenda will be shared with all Core Group members in advance and approved at the beginning of the meeting. The agenda is accessible online and is to be treated confidentially. Core Group members can submit agenda items up to three days before the next scheduled meeting.

Periodically, spokespersons from Special Interests Groups provide updates on the progress of their work in the meetings. Additionally, guests may be invited for specific agenda items. The Core Group jointly decides on the guest list.

## 5. EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The events and activities of ETHO are compliant with the ELIA EDI Policy and Eco-Policy.

### 5.1. ETHO Technical Community Conference

The ETHO Technical Community Conference, originally called ETHO Staff Meeting, is a networking event, that brings technicians and professionals in the field of technical services and teaching together to share knowledge across the network.

Its primary focus is to address topics directly relevant to the daily lives and work experiences of the technical staff members. The event includes keynotes, presentations, lectures, and interactive sessions as well as visits to workshops. Top priority is given to the fostering personal exchange and networking.

The event is primarily designed for technicians, with Heads of Technical Services included in the target audience.

The Program of the ETHO Technical Community Conference is developed by the Core Group and centres on topics that directly impact members of the ETHO community.

The event is held every two years, primarily as an in-person event, with the possibility of remote participation in keynotes, presentations, and lectures.

The hosting institution is chosen by the Core Group based on a call for hosts. Any institution of HAE with technical teaching services that is an ELIA member can apply. The selected host institution is expected to accommodate a minimum of 120 participants and to make the necessary financial investment. The Event is organised with the support of the ELIA Team.

### 5.2. ETHO Technical Management Seminar

The ETHO Technical Management Seminar, formerly known as ETHO Leadership Meeting, is specifically designed for Heads of Technical Services, and is centred on managerial and strategic topics. Its purpose is to foster discussions and initiatives that contribute to the effective management and strategic development of technical support and learning services within institutions of HAE.

The seminar features a mix of lectures, keynotes, and presentations, complemented by interactive breakout sessions dedicated to hands-on work on pertinent topics and projects. Opportunities for personal exchange and networking are highly prioritised.

The Core Group designs the program, focusing on managerial practices, innovative approaches, policymaking, and advocating for collaboration between Technical Services and faculty and all the important topics essential for strategic development in the field of technical services and education.

Limited to 30 participants to ensure an intimate and interactive environment, the event is held every year, typically in a hybrid format allowing for both in-person and remote participation. The location is chosen by the Core Group. The seminar is supported by the ELIA Team.

### 5.3. Other Activities

ETHO also provides a variety of events and services, including thematic webinars, networking opportunities for professionals, exchanges with local technician networks, and more. Additionally, presentations at conferences and the submission of papers are part of the offerings. These initiatives can be initiated by both the Core Group and the Special Interests Groups. Furthermore, collaboration with other ELIA sub-communities may lead to the creation of additional events.

## 6. OTHER PROVISIONS

### 6.1. Amendments to the Terms of References

Any proposed amendments to the Terms of References must be submitted in writing to the ETHO Core Group. The Core Group will review and discuss the proposed changes, and if deemed necessary, a voting process will be initiated. A majority vote from the Core Group is required for the approval of amendments. The ELIA Executive Group has final endorsement rights.

### 6.2. Regulations in the event of the dissolution

In the event of dissolution of ETHO, the Core Group in collaboration with the ELIA Team holds the responsibility for deleting document files to ensure data privacy and security. The ETHO Core Group in collaboration with ELIA shall inform the community members about the dissolution.

### 6.3. Effective Date

Terms of Reference, endorsed by ELIA Executive Group, are effective from June 2024 and will continue until such time as a review is required or mandated.