

ICOM ACADEMY – SCIENTIFIC BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE
<i>(adopted by the ICOM Executive Board on 9 November 2025)</i>

ARTICLE 1 – DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ICOM ACADEMY

In line with [ICOM Strategic Plan 2022-2028](#), namely with the Focus Areas 3 - Diversity, Sustainable Funding, Digital Futures and Leadership and its mission to promote sustainable professional development and capacity building for museum and heritage professionals worldwide, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) is establishing the ICOM Academy.

The ICOM Academy is an institutional initiative of ICOM aimed at strengthening capacity building across the museum and heritage sectors. It serves as a global framework for developing and delivering accessible, multilingual, and locally relevant training opportunities for museum professionals worldwide.

It will provide ICOM members with high-quality courses and resources developed by ICOM's network of experts from International Committees, Regional Alliances, and institutional partners.

In the framework of this project, ICOM is establishing the **ICOM Academy – Scientific Board** (hereinafter the “**Scientific Board**”).

ARTICLE 2 – MISSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC BOARD

The Scientific Board serves as the strategic and academic body of the ICOM Academy. Its mission is to (i) guide the Academy's scientific direction, ensure the quality, relevance, and ethical standards of its programmes, and (ii) promote innovative approaches to capacity building and e-learning in the museum and heritage sectors.

The Scientific Board ensures that the Academy's activities reflect ICOM's global diversity and respond effectively to the training needs of museum professionals worldwide.

The organisation and the mandate of the Scientific Board is governed by the present terms of reference of the Scientific Board (hereinafter the “**Scientific Board Terms of Reference**”).

The ICOM Secretariat shall support the Scientific Board and assess and ensure the feasibility, compliance, and financial viability of any decisions taken by the Scientific Board.

ARTICLE 3 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To fulfil its mission, the Scientific Board shall:

- Define the academic direction of the Academy's curriculum:

- Approve educational themes, course structures, and pedagogical formats;
- Select the ICOM experts that will be working on the content of the ICOM Academy courses, offering clear goals and direction to stakeholders;
- Review annual achievements and set priorities for the coming year;
- Provide written report(s) on the activities and progress of the Scientific Board to the ICOM Executive Board.
- Formulate and submit recommendations to the ICOM Secretariat on prospective curriculum for consideration and potential implementation.

ARTICLE 4 - COMPOSITION

The Scientific Board shall be composed by a minimum of five (5) to a maximum of seven (7) ICOM members (collectively referred to as the “**Scientific Board Members**”). One (1) of these members will serve as Chair of the Scientific Board.

The composition of the Scientific Board shall be guided by the following criteria:

- Balanced representation between museum professionals and academic experts (university professors, researchers, or PhDs with experience in e-learning);
 - Geographical diversity, with members representing all ICOM regions;
 - Linguistic diversity, with proficiency in at least one of ICOM’s official languages (English, French, or Spanish);
 - Gender balance, consistent with ICOM’s commitment to inclusivity;
- Professional experience, with preference for candidates having five (5) to ten (10) years of relevant experience in museum work, capacity building and/or e-learning. To ensure alignment with contemporary practices, applicants must demonstrate active professional engagement in e-learning, education, or digital training.

Upon acceptance of their appointment, each member of the Scientific Board, including the Chair, shall be required to sign a (i) Charter of Commitment, a (ii) Conflict of Interest Declaration, and a (iii) Personal Data Protection and Image Rights Statement.

External experts from partner institutions (e.g. UNESCO, ICCROM, universities, or other cultural bodies) may be invited to contribute to specific courses or thematic areas.

4.1. The Chair of the Scientific Board

The Chair of the Scientific Board shall have overall responsibility for guiding the Scientific Board’s work and ensuring its effective functioning. Specifically, the Chair shall

- coordinate the activities of the Scientific Board and preside over its meetings;
- serve as the main liaison between the Scientific Board, the ICOM Secretariat, and the Executive Board;
- ensure that the Scientific Board’s recommendations and activities are aligned with ICOM’s strategic objectives;

- ensure that the ICOM Academy activities do not compromise ICOM financially, professionally or reputationally.

4.2 *Ex officio* members

Ex officio members of the Scientific Board include:

- the ICOM President, and
- the ICOM Director General,

both of whom hold voting rights.

4.3 *Secretariat*

The work of the Scientific Board is further supported by three (3) members of the ICOM Secretariat — namely, the Impact and Innovation Manager, the Head of Capacity Building – Museum and Society Department, and the Project Manager of the ICOM Academy.

ARTICLE 5 - DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Decisions of the Scientific Board are made collectively through discussion and voting. All decisions of the Scientific Board are taken by a simple majority between the Members present and represented.

Each member of the Scientific Board, including the Chair and *ex officio* members, shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

In the event of a deadlock, the Chair of the Scientific Board shall be entitled to exercise a casting vote.

External experts may participate in discussions upon invitation by the Scientific Board, but do not hold voting rights.

This process ensures that decisions reflect the collective judgment of the Scientific Board while maintaining accountability and alignment with the strategic direction set by ICOM.

ARTICLE 6 – MEETINGS and WORKING METHOD

The Scientific Board shall hold a minimum of two (2) meetings per year, of which at least one (1) shall be held in person.

The working language of the Board shall be English. Meetings shall be conducted online unless otherwise decided by the Board.

A quorum shall be established when at least fifty percent (50%) of the Scientific Board members are present or duly represented.

The ICOM Secretariat shall provide all necessary administrative and logistical support to the Scientific Board and shall ensure that minutes of each meeting are duly recorded.

ARTICLE 7 - SELECTION PROCESS

7.1 Open Call

The Scientific Board Members shall be selected through an open call for applications for the Scientific Board (hereinafter the “**Scientific Board Call for Applications**”) launched by ICOM and published on its official communication channels.

Candidates shall apply to become members of the Scientific Board. There are two (2) positions within the Scientific Board: regular members and the Chair. Candidates apply only to be regular members, whereas the Chair will be elected from among the appointed members during the Scientific Board’s first meeting following their appointment by the ICOM Executive Board.

7.2 Eligibility

To be eligible, candidates must:

- Be ICOM members in good standing;
- Minimum of 5–10 years of documented professional experience in capacity building or e-learning within the museum and heritage sector, including demonstrated engagement in e-learning, education, or digital training.

7.3. Restrictions

In order to guarantee independence and impartiality of the Scientific Board Members, the following restrictions shall apply:

- Chairs of ICOM National or International Committees, Regional Alliances, Affiliated Organisations, Standing Committees, and Working Groups shall not serve on the Scientific Board, in line with ICOM’s principle of non-accumulation of offices;

7.4 Assessment

The ICOM Secretariat shall carry out a preliminary assessment of all candidacies to verify compliance with the eligibility criteria and shall present a shortlist of eligible candidates to the ICOM Executive Board for consideration and final decision.

7.5 Election of the Chair

The Chair of the Scientific Board shall be elected by and from among the Scientific Board Members during the Scientific Board’s first meeting following its appointment by the ICOM Executive Board. The election shall be conducted by simple majority vote, with each member having one (1) vote. In the event of a tie, the ICOM Executive Board shall decide the outcome.

ARTICLE 8 – MANDATE

The Scientific Board members, including the Chair, can serve two (2) consecutive three (3)-year terms in each position, with a maximum consecutive serving time of four three (3)-year terms.

The Scientific Board shall meet at least twice (2) per year, primarily online. Additional meetings or consultations may be convened as needed by the Chair or the ICOM Secretariat.

During its term of office, the Scientific Board members shall commit to participate in all the work sessions and meetings related to the ICOM Academy.

ARTICLE 9 – CONFIDENTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Members of the Scientific Board shall maintain confidentiality regarding all deliberations, materials, and internal documents related to their role.

They shall act in full independence, free from external influence, and in the best interest of ICOM and the global museum community.

Members of the Scientific Board shall sign a *Charter of Commitment* outlining their obligations of confidentiality and independence.

ARTICLE 10 – REMUNERATION

Members of the Scientific Board shall serve on a voluntary basis and shall not receive any remuneration.

ICOM may, however, cover travel and accommodation expenses for in-person meetings, if applicable, in accordance with ICOM's financial policies, upon formal and written decision of the ICOM Executive Board.

ARTICLE 11 – VACANCIES

In the event of a vacancy among the members of the Scientific Board (excluding the Chair), for any reason whatsoever — including impeachment, loss of membership status (such as failure to pay annual membership fees), resignation, unavailability, infringement of the terms of reference, or conflict of interest — the position shall not be filled. However, should the number of ordinary members fall below five (5), the ICOM Secretariat shall launch a new call for applications to restore the required composition of the Board.

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Chair of the Scientific Board, for any reason whatsoever — including impeachment, loss of membership status (such as failure to pay annual membership fees), resignation, unavailability, infringement of the terms of reference, or conflict of interest — the members of the Scientific Board shall elect an interim Chair from among their members. The appointment shall remain interim until officially confirmed by the ICOM Executive Board.

