

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS SEEKING ELECTION TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE INSTITUTE OF ACOUSTICS

MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

Membership is divided into two classes, **Corporate** and **Non-Corporate**. Only Corporate members are entitled to vote at General Meetings of the Institute.

Corporate Membership

- Honorary Fellow
- Fellow
- Member

Non-Corporate Membership

- Associate Member
- Technician Member
- Affiliate
- Student
- Sponsor

The definitions of the various classes and grades of membership and the qualifications necessary for election thereto are set out in the Membership By-laws of the Institute. The information given below for each grade provides a broad outline of the requirements with some indication of how these By-laws are normally interpreted by the Institute's Membership Committee and Council.

Honorary Fellow

In broad terms, Honorary Fellowship (which must not exceed 2% of the number of Corporate members) is by special invitation of Council and is restricted to extremely distinguished individuals in the field of acoustics who have made an outstanding contribution to the art and science of acoustics or similarly distinguished persons who have given outstanding or exceptional service to the Institute.

Fellow

The grade of Fellow is the senior professional class, granted to those normally over thirty-five years of age who have made significant contributions to the field in responsible acoustical work. In addition, the applicant must fulfil all the requirements for Corporate membership of the Institute as set out for the grade of Member below.

Member

The grade of Member, which is the junior professional class of Corporate membership, is granted to individuals who are at least twenty five years old, who

satisfy Council as being suitably qualified educationally and who have a minimum of three years experience of responsible work in acoustics.

The qualifications that are normally considered acceptable for Corporate membership are a degree in acoustics, the IOA Diploma in Acoustics or some other degree level qualification where the course included a significant element or module in acoustics. Where the applicant does not hold such qualifications, Council may be prepared to accept evidence of a long period of responsible work in the field of acoustics in lieu of a formal qualification.

Associate Member

The Associate Member grade is open to persons of twenty one years of age or more who satisfy Council as being suitably qualified educationally in acoustics or have an appropriate period of experience in acoustics in lieu of such qualification. This class of membership is aimed primarily at persons who have obtained the appropriate academic qualifications for the grade of Member but who do not (yet) have the relevant period of experience in the profession for the grade of Member.

The qualifications that are normally considered acceptable are a degree in acoustics, the IOA Diploma in Acoustics or some other degree level qualification where the course included a significant element or module in acoustics. Where the applicant does not hold an appropriate qualification, Council may be prepared to accept evidence of a significant period of professional experience in lieu of a qualification

Technician Member

The Technician Member grade is open to persons who have a suitable level of general education and who satisfy Council as being suitably qualified educationally in limited field of acoustics with a minimum of one years experience of work in acoustics. This grade of membership is intended for practitioners working in a limited area of acoustics who wish to be involved in the profession or to be able to access the services provided by the Institute to its members but who are not yet able to qualify for Associate Member or Member grades. This could include acoustics support staff within Local Authority Environmental Health Departments, technicians in speech and audiology departments, people involved in noise monitoring, sound insulation and vibration testing and those working in the audio industry.

For this grade, the Institute will accept a relatively broad range of general educational qualifications at NVQ level 3 or higher, supplemented by an acoustics related qualification such as one or more of the Institute's Certificate courses. In technical areas where there are currently no IOA courses, a relevant award such as the BTECs in Music Technology, Sound Engineering or Acoustic Associates' Sound Insulation Training Course would be acceptable. An alternative, experience based route would be considered for those with no formal qualifications.

Affiliate

The grade of Affiliate is open to persons of eighteen or more years of age who satisfy Council that they have a serious interest or involvement in acoustics or a related discipline. No formal qualifications in acoustics are required.

Student

The Student grade of membership is open to people normally at least sixteen years old and normally no more than twenty-five, who are bona-fide students in acoustics or a related subject involving acoustics and whose general education is of a standard acceptable to Council.

Sponsor

Sponsor membership is open to firms, organisations or individuals engaged in or having an interest in acoustics and whose support can advance the aims and objects of the Institute. These Guidance Notes do not deal with Sponsor membership for which there is a separate leaflet and application procedure.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It has long been recognised that acoustics is an inter-disciplinary subject, involving people from a wide range of educational backgrounds. For example, workers in acoustics of the human auditory system may have obtained their higher education in medicine, speech researchers may be qualified in linguistics or psychology, and workers in sonar and many other fields may have a background in electrical or mechanical engineering, physics or mathematics. For these reasons the Council will normally accept qualifications at a sufficient level from a wide variety of relevant disciplines, provided that the candidate has been applying his or her knowledge to some branch of acoustics.

For some grades of membership, the By-laws require a period of relevant work experience in addition to the academic requirements. The Institute's view is that this experience cannot be fully worthwhile if it is undertaken without the benefit of some formal education in acoustics prior to that period of work. Accordingly the Membership Committee will require that the minimum periods of experience set out above must **all** be undertaken **after** completion of the appropriate qualification in acoustics. This applies particularly to the 3 year period required for the grade of Member and the 1 year period for Technician Member.

It is also appropriate to draw the attention of applicants to the term "responsible work" in the context of applications for Corporate membership. This term should be interpreted as requiring that the applicant is involved in the decision-making process related to acoustics or its applications and not merely performing technician level tasks. That is, he/she should be involved in responsible decision making in one or more of the following activities: education, research, development, design of surveys, experiments or procedures, writing of professional reports, preparation of briefs or evidence. Use of standard procedures and undertaking routine acoustics measurements will not in itself be sufficient for Corporate membership.

Applicants are reminded that for most grades of membership there are alternative, experience based, routes to membership when the applicant's academic qualifications do not meet the specified requirements. In particular, attention is drawn to By-laws 3(b) and 5(b) and, in exceptional circumstances, By-law 19 can be employed to offer membership.

All persons seeking membership must demonstrate in their application that they have an appropriate balance of academic qualifications and duration and level of experience for the grade of membership being sought. If this information is not clearly set out in the application form it is likely that the application will be rejected.

If you have any doubts or concerns about which membership grade would be appropriate for you then please contact the Institute office for advice.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

When the office receives an application form it will be checked by the staff to ensure that all the required information has been supplied. It will then be put before a meeting of the Institute's Membership Committee. Every application will be considered in detail by members of the Committee and recommendations on whether or not the application should be accepted will be prepared for consideration by Council at its next meeting. Council Meetings are normally held about 2-4 weeks after the Membership Committee meeting. It is Council that takes the final decision on applications for membership.

Those seeking membership are reminded that applications can be considered only on the information provided. It is, therefore, in the interests of all applicants to ensure that the information submitted by them is clear, comprehensive and accurate. Any information provided will be completely confidential and will be considered only in relation to the application for membership.

Failure to give complete information may necessitate further correspondence and could delay consideration of an application.

The Membership Committee reserves the right to make further enquiries should this be considered necessary. The applicant's Proposer and/or other Supporters may also be contacted when this is felt to be desirable.

If an application does not meet the requirements of the grade sought, the Membership Committee may recommend that the candidate be offered membership in a more appropriate grade.

Both these Guidance Notes and the accompanying Membership By-laws should be read with care before completing the application form and if in doubt do please contact the Institute office for assistance.

The Institute does not charge an admission or joining fee for new applicants but those wishing to transfer to a higher grade will be asked for a fixed upgrade fee when applications are made, to cover the change in the annual membership fee plus a small administration cost. All fees should be submitted at the same time as the application form.

NOTES CONCERNING THE COMPLETION OF THE APPLICATION FORM

The application forms for the various grades of membership have many similarities. Please make sure that the correct form is used for the grade that is sought. In general terms they are all divided into 5 sections as described below.

Contact Information

This section is common to all the application forms for all grades of membership.

Applicants are asked to provide both their private address and details of their employer (where relevant). Applicants should indicate whether they wish future Institute correspondence and mailings to be addressed to their home or place of employment. It is important that members ensure that the Institute is advised of all subsequent changes in their private or employment addresses.

Please insert the title by which you are normally addressed, for example, Professor, Dr, Mr, Ms, Mrs or other.

State your present grade of IOA membership (if any).

Educational, Academic and Professional Qualifications

Different levels of academic qualification are required for each of the membership grades and the individual forms call for different levels of detail.

Please list, in chronological order, all educational/academic establishments attended. Give dates of attendance and details of course(s) completed with title and grade of any award.

Applicants should list membership of any other professional bodies or learned societies that they consider relevant to their application.

Applicants for the grades of Fellow and Member may wish to provide, in support of their application, details of any publications relevant to the field of acoustics or any awards received. A list should be given in the box entitled "Other Relevant Information", using additional sheets if necessary. The full reference details of papers etc. should be included.

Should an applicant for any of the other grades consider that there are matters not covered specifically by the form, which he or she wishes to put forward in support of their application, these may be inserted under "Other Relevant information".

Photocopies of all certificates for Higher Educational (post 'A' level) or Professional qualifications or awards, authenticated by the Sponsors, should be enclosed with the completed application forms, (e.g. IOA Diploma, BSc, HNC, MSc, PhD etc). These copies will not be returned but will be stored with the application form and other papers in the Institute's files. **On no account should applicants send original certificates for which the Institute cannot accept responsibility.**

If the name used on a certificate or one of the publications listed is not the current name of the applicant (for example, it shows a maiden name) then the details of

this change of name should be given with the Contact Information on page 1 of the form.

The Institute also needs to know whether applicants are already registered with the Engineering Council and, if not, whether they would be interested in receiving information about Engineering Council registration.

Applicants for Student membership must also provide details of their current course of study and have their form signed by a course tutor to confirm their status as a student.

Professional Experience

This section is only required for applications for Fellow, Member and Technician Member. In the case of Associate Member, the section only needs to be completed for applications being made under By-law 5(b) where experience is being offered in lieu of a specific qualification in acoustics. Where the academic qualifications are not specifically related to accredited acoustic courses additional information here would enhance the application.

Remember that the requirement for qualifying 'years of experience' relates to work experience at a level commensurate with an understanding of the subject and should, therefore, all be post qualifications

Membership Committee requires that applicants describe clearly those aspects of their work that require a knowledge of acoustics and/or its application. Details of all experience in acoustics should be entered including the present post. This should be completed in chronological order giving appropriate dates and durations. Applicants should indicate clearly the nature of the work undertaken (not merely state the job title) and should also make clear the level of responsibility attached to this work in acoustics. Failure to provide sufficient detail is likely to cause delay in processing or even outright refusal of the application. Only experience relevant to this application should be included. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Should applicants for the grades of Fellow or Member consider that there are matters relating to their professional experience that are not covered specifically by the form, which they wish to put forward in support of their application, these may be inserted under "Other Information Relevant to Professional Experience".

Professional Development

Applicants are also encouraged to provide formal evidence of their professional development in support of their application. Under the Code and Rules of Conduct, members undertake to upgrade their professional knowledge and skill and to maintain awareness of developments in their field. Applicants are invited to provide evidence of their professional development over the preceding 3 years in the case of applications for Fellow and Member and 1 year for applications for Associate Member and Technician Member.

Such evidence may include:

- IOA Personal Professional Development Folio
- Equivalent Professional Development Records of other schemes

- Any other evidence demonstrating professional development in accordance with A1.1 of the IOA Code and Rules of Conduct

It is assumed that applicants for Student and Affiliate membership would not have this information available.

Declaration

All members of the Institute are required to sign a common declaration before being elected to membership.

Applicants are reminded to sign their application. Failure to do so will result in the form being returned - possibly missing a meeting of the Membership Committee - and thus delaying matters by several months.

Attestation by Sponsors

Applications for Corporate membership require 3 Sponsors (a Proposer and two Supporters) while for Non-Corporate membership grades only 1 Proposer is required.

All Sponsors must be Corporate members of the Institute (Hon Fellows, Fellows or Members). The only exception to this is that applications for Student member may be proposed by the Head of Department for the applicant's current course of study.

In the case of applications for the grade of Fellow the Proposer and both Supporters (i.e. all three Sponsors) should be Fellows or Honorary Fellows of the Institute. In exceptional circumstances, it may be more appropriate for the primary sponsor to be a work colleague who is in a professional Institute closely related to the IOA such as the IET or the Institute of Physics and at the equivalent grade to Fellow. The IOA can advise if this is acceptable. The primary sponsor will be asked to provide a letter of support for the applicant outlining why they consider the candidate is suitable for election to Fellow and what significant contribution they have made in Acoustics.

Sponsors should have personal knowledge of the applicant and should be able to verify the applicant's academic qualifications and statements of experience. They should ensure that the applicant has provided sufficient detail in each section of the application form to allow the Membership Committee to obtain a clear picture of the applicant's academic background, professional competence and level of responsibility.

If completely satisfied with the accuracy of the information given by the applicant in respect of their educational and/or professional qualifications, levels of responsibility and details of experience in acoustical work, Sponsors are requested to verify the information by adding their initials in the various spaces provided. To be acceptable, the completed form must bear at least one set of verifying initials in each of the relevant boxes. Sponsors should verify the academic awards of the applicant by examining the original certificates before initialling each entry. Sponsors should only initial statements made by the applicant of which they have first hand knowledge. If they are unable to support the 'Details of Experience' claimed by the applicant, then the applicant should be advised to obtain a supporting statement from his/her employer or supervisor.

Proposers, and any Supporters required, should sign the form and provide an address at which they can normally be contacted. In signing the attestation, Sponsors should note that they are not recommending acceptance of the individual application but indicating that the person is, in their view, *worthy of consideration* by the Membership Committee.

The Membership Committee reserves the right to approach Sponsors for further information concerning the applicant and Sponsors should be prepared to provide a confidential report on the applicant if requested to do so.

If difficulty is encountered in finding suitable Sponsor(s), applicants should contact the Institute office or their local IOA Branch Secretary.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please check the following to ensure your application is correctly completed:

- Have you used the correct form for the grade that you wish to apply for?
- Have you completed all sections of the form fully?
- Have you signed the form?
- Have your Proposer and any Supporters signed the form?
- Have your Proposer and/or one of your Supporters initialled the form where necessary verifying the statements and claims you have made? Please note that at least one set of initials is required in each relevant box to render the form acceptable.
- Have you enclosed photocopies of your certificates for higher educational and/or professional qualifications? DO NOT enclose original certificates.
- Have you enclosed the correct fee?

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