Guidance Document

Membership

Version: 7

Summary:	Guidance on membership of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM). Explanation of the application process, renewal and ongoing rules and requirements. To be read in conjunction with policy document (017A).	
Target Audience:	All Members, Non Members, Staff and Council	
Next Review Date:	November 2029	
Approved by:	The Management Team	29/04/24
Date issued:	April 2023	

1. Introduction

1.1. This document is to be used in conjunction with Membership Policy Document (017A). It has been written to provide further explanation and guidance on how to meet the criteria set out in the policy.

1.2. The Articles of Association also containing rules and regulations appertaining to membership are available to view on the Institute's website.

2. Membership Grades and Categories

2.1. There are eight grades of individual membership within the Institute and a company category:

2.1.1. **Life Fellow** (corporate) with designatory letters FIFSM (Life).

Elected by recommendation of the Council, this is the highest grade of membership and is awarded to those who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and expertise in the field of fire management and to the Institute. The Life Fellow is a lifetime membership. There will be no limit to the number of Life Fellows.

2.1.2. **Fellow** (corporate) with designatory letters FIFSM.

Fellow members will have made significant contributions to the industry. Elected by recommendation of Council or by self-application following at least eight years of membership at Member grade.

2.1.3. **Member** (corporate) with designatory letters MIFSM.

Members are professionals who have achieved a high level of competency and knowledge in the field of fire management. Members have over five years of experience and usually have a Level 4 or higher certificate in a fire safety-related field or are able to evidence their knowledge.

2.1.4. **Associate** (corporate) with designatory letters AIFSM.

Associates are professionals who are on their path to becoming member grade. They possess a foundational understanding of fire management principles and are actively working towards advancing their careers and expertise in the field. Associates have over three years of experience and usually have a Level 3 or higher certificate in a fire safety-related field or are able to evidence their knowledge.

2.1.5. **Technician** (non-corporate) with designatory letters TIFSM.

Technician grade is for those who are starting out in their career in fire safety having up to three years of experience and usually a Level 2 or higher certificate in a fire safety-related field.

2.1.6. **Student** (non-corporate) with designatory letters SIFSM.

Student members are individuals who are currently enrolled in full time educational programs related to fire safety or are currently undertaking a fire safety-related apprenticeship. Eligibility will also be considered for those undertaking shorter courses based on the course undertaken and the applicant's limited experience in fire safety, which must be less than two years. This grade allows them to access resources and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in preparation for future roles in the industry.

2.1.7. **Honorary** (non-corporate) with designatory letters Hon MIFSM.

Honorary members are individuals who may not have the necessary fire related experience and qualifications to satisfy the other grades of membership but have been given recognition of substantive contribution they have made to the Institute.

2.1.8. **Retired** (non-corporate): with designatory letters RIFSM.

The Retired member status is open to those at any member grade who wish to retire but still attend events, receive news updates and be a part of the Institute.

2.1.9. **Affiliate** (non-corporate): No designatory letters are attached to this category.

Affiliate members are companies that support the goals and mission of the Institute. While they do not have designatory letters, they have use of the Affiliate Member logo to show their association with the Institute.

2.2. Membership grades and categories are categorised as either corporate or non-corporate. Corporate member grades are entitled to vote including the election of Council Members and the President.

2.2.1. Corporate member means any individual admitted to membership with one of the following grades: Life Fellow, Fellow, Member, or Associate.

2.2.2. A 'non-corporate member' means any person or company admitted to Technician grade, Student grade, Honorary grade, Retired grade, or Affiliate membership.

3. Entry Routes & Requirements

3.1. There are two routes of entry for membership. Routes are as follows:

3.1.1. By nomination. This will come from Council or the Chair and will be in recognition of the individual. Grades available by nomination include Honorary, Fellow, and Life Fellow grades.

3.1.2. By self-nomination via an application form. Grades or categories available via an application form include Affiliate, Student, Technician, Associate, Member, and Fellow.

3.2. Specific requirements per grade / category are as follows:

3.2.1. Life Fellow Requirements

Life Fellow status is granted to individuals who have significantly contributed to the Institute over several years. It is an honorary recognition of their sustained and impactful involvement within the Institute. Election to Life Fellow will be by recommendation of the Council at an Annual General Meeting.

3.2.2. Fellow Requirements

To attain the Fellow grade by application, applicants must have held the Member grade for a minimum of eight years. They must also provide two referees who support the application. Ideally, both references should have been a member of the Institute at Member grade for at least five years. If this isn't possible, references from individuals in the fire safety industry may be accepted, but they will be asked to provide further details of their credentials.

To enter Fellow grade by nomination, a member will be recognised by Council for their service within the industry, furthering the aims and objectives of the Institute, or by the Chair in exceptional circumstances.

3.2.3. Member Requirements

Applicants aiming for Member grade must complete an online form and upload evidence to demonstrate they have accumulated at least five years of practical experience in fire safety. Candidates must prove they either hold a Level 4 qualification/diploma in fire safety or fulfil the criteria for the Experienced Worker requirements (usually over ten years of experience, see section 3.3).

3.2.4. Associate Requirements

To achieve Associate status, candidates must complete an online form and upload evidence to demonstrate they have more than three years of experience in fire safety. Candidates must prove they either hold a Level 3 fire safety qualification or meet the Experienced Worker requirements (usually over five years of experience, see section 3.3).

3.2.5. Technician Requirements

For Technician grade, applicants need to complete an online form and upload evidence to demonstrate they have less than three years of practical experience in the field of fire safety. This experience requirement suggests a basic level of hands-on knowledge and expertise. Candidates should also supply evidence that they have completed some form of fire safety-related training or course (often, this is a Level 2 fire safety course).

3.2.6. Student Requirements

To qualify for Student grade, applicants must complete an online form and upload evidence to show they are actively enrolled in full-time education, a fire safety-related apprenticeship program, or evidence of a shorter course with the CV demonstrating less than two years in the fire safety field. They must provide this each year on renewal.

3.2.7. Honorary Requirements

Honorary Member status is granted to individuals who have contributed to the Institute. The individuals may not work directly within the fire safety industry or have specific knowledge and experience of fire safety.

3.2.8. Affiliate Requirements

The Affiliate grade is intended for businesses and organisations seeking association with the Institute, support the aims of the Institute and comply with the Institute's Code of Ethics. As part of the application process, companies will be required to provide company details and supporting information to demonstrate professionalism, competence and compliance, they must have at least one employee with individual membership of the Instutute.

3.2.9. Retired Requirements

Members of any grade can apply for Retired grade if they have ceased to be commercially active. Candidates may be asked to provide proof that they have retired.

3.3. Experience Worker Requirements

The Experienced Worker route is designed to allow those that do not have formal qualifications but have sufficient experience to achieve the appropriate membership grade. This option is available for Associate and Member grades, a candidate may substitute a formal qualification by evidencing they have an acceptable amount of practical experience and competency in the field of fire safety.

4. Application Processes

4.1. **Student, Technician, Associate and Member Application Process**

4.1.1. Complete Online Application Form

The application for these grades are via online form. Start by visiting the Institute's website and navigating to the membership application form. Complete the online application form and provide all required information including:

- Personal Information (Name, address, employment)

- Contact details (email and phone number)
- CV & Relevant qualifications or experience.
- Evidence of course enrolment (Student grade only)
- At least one professional reference (usually a colleague or someone you have worked for or with).

Ensure that all necessary attachments, such as educational certificates or proof of work experience, are uploaded as specified in the application form.

4.1.2. Payment of Admin Fee

After completing the online application, applicants are required to pay an administrative fee. There is no admin fee for Student grade; however, in instances where the application for Student grade is not approved, and an alternative grade is assigned, the admin fee will be charged.

4.1.3. Membership Team Review.

Once the online application and admin fee payment are received, the application is forwarded to the Institute's membership team for review. The membership team will assess the application to ensure it meets the eligibility criteria. They may also verify the authenticity of the provided attachments.

4.1.4. Email Confirmation of Membership Grade.

After the membership team completes their review, the applicant will receive an email notification. This email will confirm the membership grade that has been assigned based on the assessment against the applicant's qualifications and experience.

4.1.5. Payment of Annual Fee.

Upon receiving the email confirming the membership grade, the applicant will be prompted to make payment for the annual membership fee.

The email will include details of the amount due, due date and payment methods. If an applicant pays via card, this will be a **recurring payment** and will auto-renew on the applicant's renewal date.

Applications awaiting outstanding information or payment of the annual fee will remain open for four weeks. After this timeframe a new application will need to be made.

4.1.6. Access to Membership Logo and Certificate.

Once the annual fee is successfully paid, the applicant gains access to their online profile on the Institute's website.

Within their online profile, they can download the official membership logo and certificate corresponding to their granted membership grade.

These materials serve as proof of their membership status within the Institute.

4.2. **Affiliate Application Process**

4.2.1. Complete the Online Application Form

Complete the Affiliate Membership application form on the Institute's website. You will be asked to provide the following information and supporting evidence. Please note that the form does not save so it is recommended to have all the information ready.

- **Organisation details** including your registered name and address, proof of company identity, employee numbers, website address and logo.

- **Fire safety services and activities**. Select all that apply on the form and refer to these selections when answering the questions about your work.

- **Accreditations, certifications, registrations and professional memberships** relevant to the services or activities selected. Provide links to public listings or upload supporting evidence. Include details of at least one employee who holds individual IFSM membership. If you carry out fire risk assessments, include details of any relevant company certification or individual fire risk assessor registration.

- **Competence and continuing professional development (CPD) arrangements.** Explain how you check that the people carrying out or supervising the work have the relevant qualifications and experience, and how you support, record and review CPD. A sole trader could provide a relevant qualification and a sample CPD record. A larger organisation could provide a training policy or an extract from a competence or training matrix, alongside a sample training or CPD record. If the evidence relates to one person, explain which services they carry out or supervise.

- **Quality checks and complaints handling.** Explain how you check the quality of your work, put issues right and handle complaints or concerns. Supporting evidence could include a written procedure, a sample quality check or a complaints log.

- **Reasons for applying.** Briefly explain why you want to become an Affiliate Member and you could give an example of how your work supports the Institute's mission to promote competence, professional standards and excellence in fire safety.

- **Insurance and ICO registration.** Upload your insurance certificates and, where applicable, evidence of registration with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

- **Contact details** for the applicant, the authorised officer and the accounts or billing contact. Where the form is not completed by the authorised officer, confirmation by email will be requested, a response should be sent within 28 days of the request.

Provide supporting evidence proportionate to the size of your organisation and the fire safety work you undertake. Remove any unnecessary personal or client details from the documents you upload.

4.2.2. Payment of Annual Fee.

At the end of the form you will be prompted to make payment for the annual membership fee.

If paid via card, this will be a **recurring payment** and will auto-renew on the renewal date.

If the application is uncessessful the fee will be refunded.

4.2.3. Application Review Period (Up to 28 Days)

After submitting the online application, the application process may take up to 28 days from the point of application.

4.2.4. Email Confirmation

After the membership team completes their review, the applicant will receive an email notification.

4.2.2. All enquiries regarding affiliate membership should be emailed to affilaite@ifsm.org.uk

4.3. **Fellow Application Process**

4.3.1. Fellow applications are made by an offline form, this is available from the 1st of April to the 1st of August to ensure that all new Fellow grade members are processed ready to be announced at the following Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4.3.2. Obtaining the application form:

Applicants must initiate the application process by contacting the Institute's membership team. The membership team will ensure that the candidate has

eight or more years at Member grade level; once this has been confirmed, an application form will be emailed.

4.3.3. Applicants must complete the form, providing all necessary information including:

- Contact details.
- Current membership details.
- 500 words on why they should be a Fellow.
- Contact details of two nominators
- The nominators membership details if they have been at Member grade for five years or more or if not their credentials.
- 250 words from each nominator giving their reason for nomination.

4.3.4. Submit the application and make payment.

The completed application form should be emailed to membership@ifsm.org.uk before 1st August and payment made for the application fee.

4.3.5. Presentations and Interviews

Once the application has been reviewed, successful candidates will be invited to give a presentation supporting the reasons they put forward in their application and will be given an interview. This will take place in September at the Institute's head office/online.

4.3.6. Email Confirmation

Confirmation of the outcome will be sent to applicants by email. Successful applicants will have the Fellow certificate and logo attached and these will also be available to download from their profile. Those able to attend the AGM will be presented with a certificate.

4.3.7. Appeal

There will be no right to appeal, but it is hoped the applicant will use the feedback given by the panel and use this to look at how they can work towards becoming a Fellow grade and reapply again in the future.

4.4. **Retired Application Process**

4.4.1. To apply for this grade, the member will need to contact the membership team either by calling the office on 0330 355 1286 or by emailing membership@ifsm.org.uk

4.4.2. Final Payment

They will have the option to make a final payment equivalent to the annual subscription fee at the time of their retirement. This payment allows them to continue enjoying ongoing membership benefits.

4.4.3. Returning from Retirement:

If a retired member decides to come out of retirement and return to active status, they must promptly inform the Institute of their intention to do so. A retired member can do this by contacting the membership team via membership@ifsm.org.uk. They will be asked to make payment of their annual fee, and update information and documentation as per section 7.1.

5. Upgrading Membership

5.1. Members are expected to progress within the Institute and be at the correct membership grade in line with their experience and qualifications. Members are encouraged to apply for an upgrade as their careers progress.

5.2. Members should use the upgrade link to the application form available in their profile page, or for Fellow grade follow the instructions in section 4.3.

5.3. Successful applicants will be notified by email and the new certificate and logo will be available to download from the member's profile page. Payment for the new annual fee will be due on the members usual renewal date, the anniversary date of first becoming a member.

6. Fees

6.1. Current fees are available to view on the Institute's website and comprise two elements:

6.1.1. Application Fee – A one-off, non-refundable fee to cover the administrative costs associated with processing the application. For Affiliate Membership, the application fee is payable upon submission of the application and is currently £0, but may be subject to change.

6.1.2. Annual Fee – Payable upon successful application, this fee covers the member's annual subscription and supports the ongoing benefits and services provided by the Institute. This fee may be refunded within 14 days of payment in accordance with the Membership Policy. For Affiliate Membership, the Annual Fee is payable upon submission of the application and will be refunded if the application is unsuccessful.

6.2. Any changes to membership fees will be announced at the Institute's AGM and will take effect from the following January.

7. Requirements of Members of any Grade / Category

7.1. Keeping the Institute Updated

Members of the Institute are required to maintain accurate and up-to-date contact details. This is essential for effective communication and ensures that members receive important updates, notifications, and information related to their membership and fire

safety matters. Members can view and update their contact information via their profile page excluding their email addresses, this can only be updated by contacting the office.

Members should also notify the Institute of any change of circumstances or event that may affect their membership.

Failure to keep all details up to date can be classified as dishonourable or unprofessional conduct and may be investigated under the Institute's Ethical Policy and Complaints Procedure.

7.2. Fire Risk Assessors Register

Members of the Institute at any grade that carry out Fire Risk Assessments are required to be registered on a recognised Fire Risk Assessors Register. If it comes to the attention of the Institute that a member is carrying out Fire Risk Assessments and is not on a recognised fire risk assessors register, without good reason, they will have their membership suspended, for a short period until they are on a register or they stop carrying out fire risk assessments. If neither of these actions are forth coming, their membership will be revoked.

7.3. Code of Conduct

Members should familiarise themselves with the Institute's Ethical Policy (available on the website). This Code of Ethics sets out the high standards and behaviour expected of members.

Matters brought to the attention of the Institute will be dealt with as per section the Institute's Complaints Policy (available on the website). .

7.4. Designatory letters and logos

Members are able to use the postnominals and logo designated to their grade of membership whilst their membership is active. The Institute has strict guidelines set out in the 'Official use of IFSM logos' document. The Institute will take action for any unauthorised use or abuse of these.

8. Renewal

8.1. Renewal Payment Schedule

Membership renewal payments are scheduled to become due on the anniversary of the first payment made by the member. This means that members should expect to make their renewal payments on the same date each year corresponding to their initial membership registration.

8.2. Late or Missed Renewal Payments

If a member fails to complete their renewal payment, their membership will be suspended from the due date until payment is made. If this period exceeds three

months, membership will be terminated. Individuals would need to submit a new application if they wanted membership after this time.

9. Resignation of Membership

9.1. Members are asked to notify the Institute by email if they no longer wish to be a member. Members who cancel their subscription via their profile page will be contacted to confirm they wish their membership to cease. If no reply is received within four weeks they will be removed from membership.

10. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

10.1. All members must keep an up to date record of their CPD and could be asked to submit the last 12 months record at any time. An annual audit will take place summarised as follows:

10.1.1. 10% of members will be selected at random and asked to email their CPD record, within one month.

10.1.2. This record will be assessed against the criteria detailed within the Institute's CPD policy by a trained administrative team member within one month of receipt.

10.1.3. The results and feedback will be provided back to the member at the email address held on record.

10.1.4. The Chairman or President may also review any individual CPD records at any point within the audit process.

10.2. Full details of CPD requirements are given in the Institute's policy document 'CPD Procedures and Allocations' (019A). To summarise the following is expected:

10.2.1. The CPD should record, the date of the activity, a description of the activity, the "point value" (typically counted at 1 point per hour spent, with a maximum of 8 points per day), and a reflective statement covering what was taken from the activity.

10.2.2. It should include at least 25 points within the last 12-month period obtained from a variety of formal and informal activities.

10.3. There is a CPD recording tool within the members profile, it is not compulsory to use it.

11. Disciplinary Procedures

11.1. Further details of how the Institute manages breaches of the rules of membership are set out in the Complaints Policy.

11.2. Any instance of dishonourable or unprofessional conduct reported to the Institute will be considered in line with the Complaints Policy.

11.3. Members should notify the Institute of relevant convictions, investigations, or proceedings by emailing info@ifsm.org.uk.

11.4. Failure to disclose relevant information at the appropriate time may be taken into account during any investigation and could result in more severe outcomes.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
06/11/24	HH	2	10	Correction to 7.3 Code of Conduct, updated to refer to section 11 not 10.
17/07/25	HH	3	3 & 5	Updated student membership to include those on shorter courses with limited experience.
11/08/25	HH	4	8 & 11	Removed CPD from application requirements. CPD required upon membership.
22/12/25	HH	5	11 & 12	Disciplinary Procedures moved to Complaints Policy. Disclosure of convictions and investigations added.
19/05/26	HH	6	2	Correction from eight to nine grades of membership
19/11/26	HH	7	ALL	Clarification of affiliate membership being a category and not a grade of membership. Updated to reflect additional affiliate application requirements and process.

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
HH, RK & DW	Management Team	V7 – 19/11/26