

# AAS Membership Grading

## *On the Grading of Membership Applications by the Council Standing Committee on Membership (CSCM)*

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*This Article has been prepared to assist Grading Committees, new applicants, and existing members transferring their grade of membership, to complete the Society's Application Form.*

*Admission to the Society is open to people working in all fields of acoustics. There are seven grades of membership in the Society; Fellow, Member, Honorary member, Associate, Subscriber, Student and Sustaining member. More information about these grades of membership can be obtained from the Membership Information leaflet available from the General Secretary or the State Division Secretaries.*

*The completed Application Form and Entrance Fee should be submitted to the General Secretary, PO Box 4, TALLY HO VIC 3149. The entrance fee is currently \$74.00 except in the case of applicants for Student grade when the fee is \$20.00.*

*It should be noted that the Society's Articles of Association are presently being amended. This may result in minor changes to the Articles covering membership and the procedure for assessing applications. However, these changes are unlikely to take effect before 1998.*

*Enquiries regarding membership and sustaining membership should be directed to the General Secretary or the appropriate State Division Secretary (see back of journal for names and addresses).*

More than one article in *Acoustics Australia* has provided guidelines for admission and grading of members. The "Gates" for grading have been an interpretation of Articles 16 and 18 of the Memorandum of Association. CSCM grades an application for membership, taking into account the details of the application form submitted and the recommendation by the referring division.

This article restricts discussion to just two grades of membership, namely Member and Associate, since these are where most of current difficulties arise for CSCM in seeking to support the referring division/applicant.

Remember, if CSCM is not able to establish from the application form the undisputed level of acoustics in understanding, expertise and experience, no grading decision will be made. This means disputed matters need to be pointed out to the referring division, likely causing long delays in eventual grading decisions.

The intention of this article is to provide further guidelines for intending applicants for admission to the Australian Acoustical Society, and for divisions who will forward their recommendations to CSCM. Divisions should be mindful that applicants in general will be seeking guidance in the provision of an application form which correctly follows the intention of the Society Articles.

There are perhaps the following important components in an the application for membership, all of which are brought out in the Application form:

### **1. Education**

There is a distinction on the form between

#### (a) Formal qualifications, which are

- (i) "recognised educational qualifications" in Gates MA and MB for Member grade,
- (ii) not specifically mandatory in Gates MC and MD for Member grade.

The Application form requires applicants (whether applicant be for grade Member or Associate) to provide certified copies of qualifications. CSCM is prepared to accept a copy of the qualification(s) so long as it has been signed by a responsible member of the referring-division committee to certify that the original or certified copy has been sighted; and;

#### (b) Other studies at tertiary level

The application form provides space for applicants to state source title, course duration, stage reached, Institution or Organisation, and relevant dates. Such information could be relevant to applicants for grade Member or Associate.

### **2. Present position**

As shown on the Application form, it is essential to state the proportion of time spent in acoustics. In some other statement on the form it is important to indicate the level of employment time in acoustics:

(a) For each of the gates for grade Member it is mandatory for the applicant to show engagement in the science or practice of acoustics at a professional level. Professional level refers in this context to the degree of difficulty, complexity, understanding, experience of the work in acoustics by the applicant.

(b) For each of the gates for grade Associate it is mandatory for the applicant to show engagement in the science or practice of acoustics at technician level. Technician level refers in this context to the degree of competence of following established procedures for measurement, testing, calculating or similar.

### **3. Professional and technical experience**

The statements to be included in the application should make it perfectly clear in the extent to which an applicant has adequately developed an understanding and ability to work in, and follow developments in their field of acoustics. It is from such information that CSCM will be in a position to judge both the level of activity/experience in acoustics and the equivalent period in each level of activity.

The requirement of the application is two-fold:

(a) The form needs to "Provide in chronological order a list of positions held and associated duties. Include details of major projects or activities". Note the additional need to state the proportion of time spent in acoustics and the Verification of the statements made. Applicants and division grading committees should recognise that administrative and

management work are not recognised as work in acoustics; thus an applicant may typically have to work for 5 years with 40% involvement in acoustics at a professional level to achieve a total of 2 years experience in acoustics.

(b) A most important section for applicants in the grade of Member or Associate is sufficient evidence provided that the experience gained is at the appropriate level stated in the membership gate. It is in this area that CSCM has experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining sufficient justification. Consequently, the words of the Application form are here shown in full:

**"Applicants for the grade of Member or Associate must include details of involvement in acoustical aspects, e.g. in design, analysis, drawing, specification, reports, papers".** What is needed is the extent of involvement and degree of difficulty of the acoustical content, and to make the picture clear, examples of work, photocopies of calculations, reports and similar.

Of particular relevance is the application for grade Member, gate MD where there is a lack of recognised educational qualifications. In addition, an applicant may currently be employed in a position which is deemed "non-professional", so circumstantially does not seem worthy of consideration of grade Member. On the other hand the applicant may well be involved (in toto, part time) in activities of a professional nature. In such a case the applicant must attempt to convince the Society that the grade Member is appropriate, via the medium of the Application form.

(c) Applicants for the grade of Associate are reminded of the need to provide complete details of involvement in technical aspects of acoustics. There are the two gates AA and AB for grade Associate, distinguished as follows:

(i) Gate AA the applicant must show evidence of satisfactory completion of an appropriate certificate course or other appropriate post-secondary qualification (refer to (a) above). Applicants must also show that they have been engaged in the science or practice of acoustics at technician level, and have been so for not less than 2 years

(ii) Gate AB - in the absence of approved technical qualifications it is essential for an applicant to demonstrate completely that they have been actively engaged in the science or practice of acoustics at technician level and have been so for not less than 5 years. Entry via this gate is not likely to be entertained unless the applicant's work history has been shown on the Application form in great detail.

For provision of the above required information, CSCM is mindful of two aspects:

A. The information is likely to be confidential/economically sensitive. Such information will be classified by CSCM as highly confidential. Following grading the applicant's form/attachments are closed and sent to Archives via Federal Registrar

B. Information may be part of a project for a client, so would be confidential/strictly not transferable apart from client. CSCM is quite prepared to accept field notes/project/reports etc. where client's name or project location does not appear. Remember that CSCM is

#### 4. Verification

A separate column appears on the Application form under Professional and technical experience, for Verification. A verifying person must give careful consideration as the extent to which they are verifying any statement made by an applicant. Unless this is clearly set out, if necessary by an accompanying statement, there is every likelihood the weight given to the application by CSCM will be zero.

(i) It should be obvious that an applicant may rely heavily on the support of a verifier, especially in cases where the verifier is the direct supervisor and possibly in a position to support project work. This is particularly important in cases where a judgement is made as to whether the applicant's work has been professional, technically adequate or just laboratory assistant grade. Persons verifying claims in a membership application form would assist the applicant if they were to supply a letter advising how they are able to verify the claims, such as through supervision of the applicant and personal knowledge; this may avoid the appearance of verifiers relying on oral information from the applicant himself or herself.

(ii) Verification of proportion of time spent on acoustics, i.e. active involvement in science or practice of acoustics at a professional level. Accordingly, employment time spent as managing director or director of a firm dealing in acoustics will contribute nothing in the eyes of CSCM in respect to satisfying time in acoustics referred to in the gates for Member admission.

(iii) Verification of professional and technical experience. Verification should be of the activities in acoustics/proportion of time spent therein, in preference to verification of employment period.

#### Associate

There are two gates for entry to Associate, so much the same attention to detail as for Member should be provided on the Application form.

#### Grading of applications by CSCM

As pointed out above, the assessment of an application is based on the information provided on the application form and the attachments forming part of this form.

(a) For a correctly-completed application, grading in general is straightforward since there is just the one set of rules.

(b) When the application form/attachments are incomplete, CSCM then makes judgements of the time spent in acoustics under the following columns:

Duration in an employment, months  
Percent time in acoustics, as claimed  
Claimed time in acoustics, years  
Percentage time in acoustics assessed by CSCM  
Time in acoustics assessed by CSCM, years

This last column is totalled, then compared with the requirement for a specific gate to judge whether the experience is sufficient. Note that this decision is made only on the condition that CSCM is convinced that the time in acoustics has been an involvement at a professional level (in the case of Member), or in the science or practice of acoustics at a technician level (in the case of Associate).