



Institute of Fisheries Management

Consultation Sections

Changes to Membership Categories

At present there are seven membership categories which is excessive and over-complicated for a relatively small membership organisation. A new system of 4 grades is recommended based on adaptation of the 7 existing grades and re-definition of the requirements for entry into each grade.

- **Professional** grades: **FULL** and **ASSOCIATE**
- **Affiliate** grades: **SUBSCRIBER** and **STUDENT**.

The new grades will accommodate all existing members and will enable any person working in fisheries to join the Institute with a clear pathway to becoming a Full member.

Two additional changes are recommended in relation to raising the age requirement for concessionary subscription rates, and the removal of charges for new member applications.

Background

During 2020 the Executive Team carried out a detailed review of the Institute's membership structure, in particular the number of membership grades/categories. There are currently seven categories which is now considered excessive and over-complicated for a relatively small membership organisation. Moreover, the distinction between the different categories is unclear and likely to be confusing for potential new members. A review of five related professional bodies has indicated that 5 membership categories seems to be the typical structure.

An Executive sub-group developed a set of formal recommendations on a new membership structure which were agreed at the November Executive meeting and approved by IFM Council in December.

Current Membership Structure

The Institute currently has seven-member grades, and this is considered to be overly complex for a relatively small organisation. The current grades are:

- **Registered**
- **Associate**
- **Affiliate**
- **Student**
- **Subscriber**

- **Corporate**
- **Fellow**

General Objectives

The general objectives of this initiative are:

- To reduce the number of membership grades from 7 to a maximum of 4 or 5;
- To clarify the definition of each grade;
- To examine the requirements for entry to each grade with a view an expansion in overall membership.

A general observation of the sub-group was that the current requirements for Registered and Associate membership are perhaps over-prescriptive, with an emphasis on academic qualifications rather than professional competence. The sub-group have developed the view that any person involved in fisheries should be able to join the Institute as a “fisheries professional” regardless of academic background, and that they should have the opportunity to progress to Full membership based on their experience and professional competence. Although this is possible under the current system, it is not clear from the existing requirements. An additional objective is therefore:

- To relax the requirements for professional membership to enable any person working in fisheries to join the Institute with a clear pathway to becoming a Full member.

Proposed New Grades

Full (currently titled Registered)

Objective:

This is our standard membership grade for fisheries professionals and should remain largely unchanged. However, the sub-group have agreed that Full membership should be demonstrably open to all fisheries professionals, irrespective of academic qualifications, provided they can demonstrate an acceptable level of professional competence and experience.

Currently, the criteria for admission to Full (Registered) membership are:

- the Diploma of the Institute **or**
- a degree or equivalent, ideally in fisheries **or**
- a qualification deemed appropriate by Council

and

- at least five years’ work experience in fisheries

Recommended changes:

- A change in title from Registered to Full member is recommended as it better describes the professional level of the grade.

- A lack of academic qualification should not be a barrier to an experienced and competent fisheries professional becoming a full member of the Institute – the current criteria do not make this clear and the insertion of a “competence clause” is recommended to address this.
- Full members are entitled to quote the abbreviation MIFM after their name. They also have the opportunity to apply for Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) status and are eligible for the award of Fellowship. (Fellow will no longer be listed as a separate membership grade but will be highlighted as an award for which Full members can be nominated).

The criteria for admission to Full membership will therefore become:

- **the Diploma of the Institute, or**
- **a degree or equivalent, ideally in fisheries or a related scientific subject, or**
- **a qualification or a level of professional competence deemed appropriate by Membership Committee**

and

- **at least five years’ work experience in fisheries**

Outlook:

Currently we have 256 Registered members, of which 104 have qualified for CEnv and 45 have been elected as Fellows. In addition, there are 9 Honorary members including 7 Fellows and one CEnv. Relaxing the academic requirements and opening a clear path to Full membership should carry some potential for growth.

Associate

Objective:

To enable any person working in fisheries to become an Associate member at minimum, regardless of academic qualification or experience. This will facilitate merging of the current Associate and Affiliate grades and will further broaden the scope of the new grade by reducing the academic criteria for admission.

Current requirements are:

- Associate - individuals with qualifications for Full membership but with at least two years’ work experience;
- Affiliate - persons who may be working in fisheries management in a paid or voluntary capacity and undertaking professional development within fisheries (Affiliate was created for those undertaking IFM study courses).

Recommended changes:

- the current Associate requirement regarding qualifications and duration of employment be dropped so that any person working in fisheries would be eligible.

The requirement for admission to Associate membership will therefore be:

- **Any individual working full or part-time in fisheries shall be entitled to become an Associate member.**
- Associate members will be entitled to quote the abbreviation AMIFM after their name.
- Associates will also be eligible to apply for the new Registered Environmental Practitioner (REnvP) status if adopted by IFM as proposed by Soc Env.
- An Associate will be entitled to progress to Full membership after 5 years, provided they satisfy the requirements with regard to academic qualifications and/ or professional competence.

Outlook:

Currently there are 52 Associate and 20 Affiliate members. However, the intention is that anyone working in fisheries at any level should, as a minimum, be able to join IFM as an Associate. This will include those enlisted in training for the Environment Agency (EA) Award, currently listed as Student members, but all of whom are working in fisheries or a related discipline.

Associate should therefore be a level of membership which can be expanded significantly. The key will be to provide a product which is viewed as both attractive and value for money.

Subscriber

Objective:

Re-definition and expansion of Subscriber grade to accommodate individuals or groups with a general interest in fisheries e.g. anglers, angling clubs, river trusts, environmental groups, corporate bodies etc. Essentially this would be an amalgamation of the existing Subscriber and Corporate grades. The current requirements for these grades are:

- Subscriber: those not included in the above (existing) categories who have an interest in fisheries management.
- Corporate: Bodies having an interest in fisheries management or incorporating individuals with such an interest, or sharing some common goal with the Institute;

Currently there are 38 Subscriber and only 7 Corporate members, although each corporate body has 1-4 named representatives. It would make sense to accommodate the small group of Corporate memberships within another membership grade, and Subscriber is potentially be the most suitable. Corporate membership would therefore be terminated as a separate grade.

Recommended changes:

- Merging of Subscriber and Corporate membership grades and termination of Corporate membership as a separate grade.

The expanded Subscriber membership will therefore include:

- **individuals or groups with an interest in fisheries e.g. individual anglers, fishery owners, angling clubs/associations;**
- **corporate bodies with an interest in fisheries e.g. river trusts/foundations, conservation bodies etc;**
- **commercial bodies with an interest in fisheries and the aquatic environment e.g. in manufacture and/or distribution of equipment for use in fisheries research/management or environmental monitoring.**

In effect this will enable any individual, group, corporate or commercial body with an interest in fisheries to join the Institute.

Outlook:

This is potentially a major growth area if we can develop a service which will be attractive to related interest groups in the angling sector. It would probably be appropriate to have a range of subscription rates for the three Subscriber groupings listed above.

Student

Objective:

To maintain a low-cost membership grade for students, provided they are not in regular paid employment. **The current definition for Student membership is:**

- **Individuals involved in fisheries management and who are in full or part-time education but are not in regular, paid employment.**

At present student members include those undertaking:

- IFM Certificate
- IFM Diploma
- Environment Agency (EA) Award
- Persons undertaking university/ higher education courses in fisheries, aquaculture or a related scientific subject.

The bulk of the Student membership consists of those undertaking one of the three IFM courses (Certificate, Diploma, EA Award) and most of these individuals are in some form of employment; however, under the current criteria their employed status would suggest that they are ineligible for Student membership.

Recommended changes:

It is recommended that the principal requirement for Student membership be refined as follows, along with removing the requirement relating to employment:

- **Individuals involved in full or part-time education in fisheries, aquaculture or a related scientific subject.**

Outlook:

At present there are 124 Student members, almost 25% of the total membership! In the proposed re-structure EA Award students will become Associate members, but all of those undertaking the IFM Certificate or Diploma courses will remain as Student members. The overall number of student members would therefore be reduced in the short term, but there may be potential for recruitment from “external” students undertaking university/ higher education courses in fisheries, aquaculture or a related scientific subject i.e. non-IFM courses.

Certification

- **MIFM**
Full members are entitled to use the suffix MIFM. In the past this was formally conferred through the issue of a certificate. It has been agreed that this practice will be restored through the design of a new certificate using the updated IFM branding for issue to Full members.
- **AMIFM**
Associates are entitled to use the suffix AMIFM. It is recommended that this should also be recognised through the issue of a certificate to those in this grade.

Subscriptions

It is proposed that annual subscriptions shall be:

- Full member £75 (unchanged)
- Associate £55 (existing: Associate £65; Affiliate £40)
- Subscriber £40 - £100 (existing: Subscriber £40; Corporate £95-£175)
- Student £15 (unchanged)

Two additional changes are recommended:

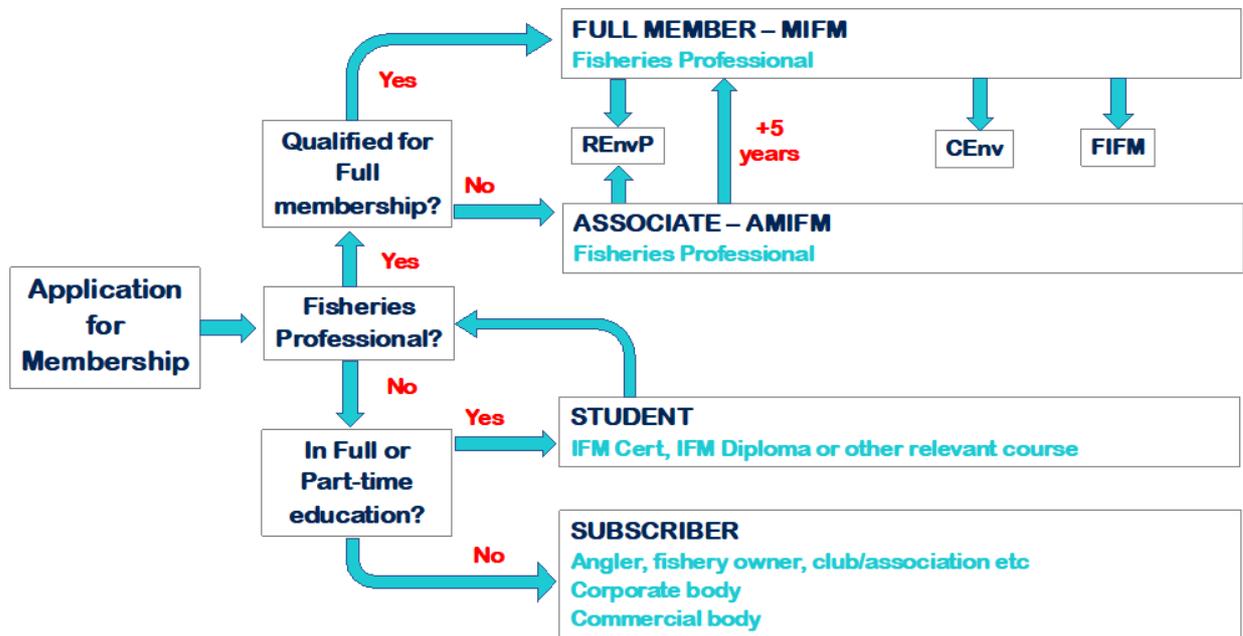
- Currently a £10 charge is applied for new member applications. This seems unnecessary and it is recommended that the charge be discontinued.
- Concessionary rates (50% discount) are applied to all grades at age 60. As very few people now retire at 60, it is recommended that the age to qualify for reduced rates be raised to 65. Those members aged 60-65 already receiving reduced rates would continue to do so.

Assuming a seamless transition of the recommended changes (i.e. that all individuals are agreeable to a change in sub rate where applicable), the new structure and proposed subs are likely to have a negligible effect on overall subscription income (a financial projection has been conducted which demonstrates this outcome).

Membership Pathway

The following chart is set out to illustrate how a new application would be considered in the light of the recommended changes. It also demonstrates the pathway for a new person in

fisheries (including new graduates) to progress via Associate to Full membership and indicates the potential route to chartered status (CEnv) and fellowship (FIFM).



We commend these changes to you as these revised membership categories provide a more logical and inclusive structure than the current system of 7 membership categories.