

# Student Hub: New Qualifying Grade

How can we help you get where you want to go?

Chances are, like the rest of us, you decided to study ecology or environmental management because you care about the environment, you're passionate about conservation and you're fascinated by flora and fauna.

With the average salary for an ecologist starting at an aspirational £18k, you certainly didn't sign up with dreams of Lamborghinis and glamorous holidays in the Seychelles. No, you're going to be found freezing your wellies off in the back of a muddy 4X4, in the middle of the night, counting bats... And that's because you're doing something that you really care about, which is amazing, and laudable and, unfortunately, means a lot of people are going to assume you can live on passion and fresh air alone: they're going to expect you to work for free. At least for a bit.

And that's because a lot of people do end up doing just that. Competition for jobs in this sector is fierce and you're going to need a little more than just great grades and a strong moral compass to get ahead.

So, we've changed our membership structure to include a new grade:

**Qualifying** – designed to help you get where you want to be. No longer do you have to prove to us what you're capable of in order to become a member at this level. No, instead, you tell us what your goals are, and we'll use all our years of experience to help you get there. Because if everyone's willing to work for free, then you're going to need the sort of CV that makes people think, 'Wow, over-achievers make me sick'.

If you're currently a Student member, then the new Qualifying grade has been designed for you, as Student membership is only available for 12 months after the



end of your course. Ditto, if you've entered the profession via a more vocational route, then listen up.

Five reasons why you should upgrade and remain a member:

1. **Figure out where you're at.** Using our Competency Framework allows you to work out exactly what your strengths and areas for development are, so you can shout about the former and start putting in the legwork on the latter. By familiarising yourself with the Framework, you can build a stronger CV and talk confidently with prospective employers about the boxes you already tick and the ones you're proactively upskilling yourself on.

2. **Training that doesn't break the bank.** Once you know the areas that need some attention, you can start putting together a plan of action. We offer Member discounts on our training courses and our Member Network events are great and cost-effective ways to learn more.
3. **Sometimes it's not what you know...** Attending training and Member Network events are also brilliant ways to network. Because you never know, the nice person pouring tea on the butterfly walk may just be your next employer!
4. **Careers top tips.** As well as training and events, we host regular webinars aimed specifically at early careers professionals, with info gathered directly from the people you're hoping to get a job with, so you can be sure the advice is relevant to you.
5. **Our Membership speaks for itself.** Many employers specifically require you to be a CIEEM Member before they'll consider hiring you and, by becoming a Qualifying member, you're one step closer to having those much-coveted letters after your name!

## How do you upgrade?

To upgrade your membership, you will need to apply for your chosen grade using the relevant application form. Fill this out and send it back to us as soon as possible. If you look on the upgrade pages within your My CIEEM area of the website, it will talk you through the process and will provide you with suitable links to guidance documentation and application forms. If you upgrade from a Student to Qualifying member you don't need to pay an admin fee, just the difference in subscription fee. Please get in touch with the Membership Team if you have any questions about the upgrade process: [membership@cieem.net](mailto:membership@cieem.net).