Associate and Full Membership

Application Guidance

Contents

1. Who can apply?

CIEEM membership is open to all those who manage, enhance, protect or have an interest in the natural environment. It reflects the depth of the profession, ranging from students and apprentices embarking on a career in the sector, to directors, senior advisers and policymakers. While CIEEM members are drawn from a range of backgrounds, the common thread tying them together is a level of professional competence that we are proud to promote and support.

We offer a range of membership grades and the most suitable one for you is determined by your background, competence and professional experience. This guidance document, along with the application form, will guide you through the application and assessment process for the Associate and Full membership grades. We recommend that, before you start working on an application, you read through this document to familiarise yourself with the application process and its requirements.

2. Eligibility criteria and minimum competence requirements

To apply for Associate or Full membership you must be able to meet the following criteria:

i.   You must be an 'active' ecologist or environmental manager whether in an employed, self-employed, retired or otherwise voluntary capacity.

ii.   Existing members upgrading from any grade other than Student must also have evidence of compliance with CIEEM's mandatory minimum Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement[1] of 30 hours per annum, at least 20 hours of which should be structured CPD[2]. Members may be asked to supply evidence of continuing to meet this requirement through a random auditing process. Non-members are expected to provide evidence of completing CPD as part of their membership application.

iii.   You must meet the minimum competence requirements as defined by CIEEM's Competency Framework for the grade of membership you intend to apply for. i.e. capable level for Associate membership or accomplished level for Full membership (see table below).

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[1] CIEEM members should submit their annual CPD records using the online CPD tool in the members area.
[2] See separate CIEEM Guidance on CPD, located in the Members' area of the CIEEM website or by contacting membership@cieem.net

3. Self-assessment of competence

CIEEM's Competency Framework is made up of a wide range of competencies, divided into technical and transferable competencies and grouped into a series of themes. The Competency Framework recognises four levels of increasing competence: **Basic; Capable; Accomplished and Authoritative**. Associate and Full membership is based upon demonstrating a minimum number of competencies at the **Capable** or **Accomplished** competence levels as defined below.

Associate membership: Capable level competence	Has the knowledge and experience essential to carry out standard tasks unsupervised, confidently, and consistently well. Is likely to need to seek advice before carrying out complex or non-standard tasks.	• You understand the terminology and concepts and are aware of any policy or legislative drivers supporting this activity. • You demonstrate an awareness of and follow good practice guidelines and standards. You have significant experience of putting this activity into practice unsupervised. • You can consistently carry out this activity to the expected standard when straightforward. You can carry out this activity in more complex situations with advice and guidance as necessary. • You can identify when things are generally being done as they should be and you can spot if things are not right. • You can judge your own limits with regards to this activity and when to seek advice.
Full membership: Accomplished level competence	Has the knowledge and experience of this activity to carry out complex, specialist, or non-standard activities confidently and consistently well. Is aware of alternative options and approaches and can provide guidance, instruction, and advice to others on this activity.	• You are knowledgeable about this activity and are capable of explaining it to a range of different audiences. • You have extensive experience of this activity in both straightforward and complex situations. • You can deal effectively with difficult or complex issues relating to this activity and both propose and evaluate alternate solutions. • You can make decisions confidently regarding this activity. • You can provide guidance, instruction and advice to others and may provide mentoring and/or coaching about this activity.

We strongly recommend that you initially complete a self-assessment of your level of competence against all of the competencies that are relevant to you to identify your key strengths. The online self-assessment tool has been designed and built to offer as much flexibility as possible. You can choose to assess yourself against a single competency, a suite of competencies that fall under an overarching theme, or the entire Framework of competencies. You can also decide your 'starting' level of competence to speed up the process.

The online tool will take you through a series of questions that have simple 'yes/no' responses. Although the tool only requires a 'yes/no' response, to answer the questions with confidence you will often need to think about specific examples of when you carried out this activity. It would be a good idea to make a note of these projects so that you can draw upon them in your written evidence. Do remember that the tool's output is just a guide. Answering 'yes' to a sufficient number of questions does not in itself demonstrate your competence, but the tool can give you an indication or confirmation that you are likely to be working at a particular level in specific areas and that you should be able to evidence this.

You can find links to the Competency Framework, self-assessment tool and supporting information on the ['Applying for Membership'](#) pages of the website.

You must take time to read the descriptions of what each theme and competency covers before completing your self-assessment. When you go on to complete the membership application form, you will need to provide convincing written evidence of your chosen areas of competence, so choose the ones that you feel most confident in.

4. How do I apply?

If this is your first application for CIEEM membership you need to follow the process below:

1. Read this document and the additional resources supplied on the membership webpages.
2. If yet to do so, approach suitable sponsors (see p7) and involve them in the process from this point onwards. Send them a copy of the 'Guidance for Sponsors' document so they know what is involved and expected of them.
3. Complete a self-assessment using the Competency Framework and the online tool available via the CIEEM website.
4. Decide which grade of membership you intend to apply for.
5. Decide which competencies you will provide written evidence for, taking into account the total number of competencies and the ratios of technical and transferable competencies required.
6. Complete your written evidence taking into account the need to provide convincing evidence of your claimed level of competence. Use the STARE method to present your evidence and make good use of the word count.
7. Complete the rest of your application, proofread it, gather your CPD records and ask your sponsors to endorse your application. Then sign the form and then submit it to CIEEM. We do not have assessment deadlines and process applications in chronological order.
8. Wait for an acknowledgement and supply any additional information requested promptly.
9. Await your assessment outcome.

You can find application forms, short instructional videos and other useful guidance material on the Membership pages of the website.

If you are reapplying for membership and you previously applied in or after April 2021, you may have the option to carry forward any competencies successfully evidenced in your first application. You should reapply using the form and guidance supplied with your initial application outcome. Please note competencies successfully evidenced at the Capable competence level can only be carried forward for up to three years from the date of the outcome of your original application.

5. Completing the application form

Personal details
In this section, you need to provide your current contact information, including your preferred contact details.

Summary of higher education post-18
There are no eligibility requirements concerning your post-18 education. The assessors will use this information to understand your qualifications further and how these have been applied in your professional practice. This section relates to taught courses leading to a regulated qualification as follows:

Qualifications and Credit Framework (England and Northern Ireland)	Levels 4 - 8
Credit and Qualifications Framework (Wales)	Levels 4 - 8
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	Levels 7 - 12
The National Framework for Qualifications for Ireland	Levels 6 - 10
European Qualifications Framework	Levels 5 - 8

These levels include, for example, all degree courses, foundation degrees, Higher National Diplomas, Higher National Certificates and Baccalaureates or their equivalents gained outside the UK.

Other qualifications and licences
This is an opportunity to further complete the picture of your background and experience. Use this section to list relevant (to your current or previous roles in the sector), nationally recognised qualifications, including diplomas and certificates, or licences resulting from examination or assessment that do not fit the criteria in the previous section.

Research and publications record
Please summarise any research or publications you have been involved with or refer to, and append a CV containing this information.

Membership of professional bodies and learned societies
This is part of the supplementary information that allows the assessors to better understand your background and interest. You should only list those bodies and societies that are relevant to your activities in the ecological or environmental management sector within which you operate.

Details of professional activity
Current activity
In this section, you are asked to provide details of your current role. You might be undertaking paid work or acting in a voluntary capacity, applying your ecological and environmental management knowledge and skills. You are asked to describe concisely the main purpose or scope of your role and give details of some relevant tasks or projects undertaken. The assessors will use this information to understand the professional context in which you are currently operating.

Previous relevant experience
In this section, you should provide a summary of all your previous relevant appointments.
- Professional experience can be paid, unpaid or voluntary.

- You should include the month and year of the start and finish of each role. You should include part-time work and indicate the proportion of a full-time position either as a fraction (e.g. 0.5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent)) or the number of days per week or month. You may have had paid and voluntary roles that ran concurrently. You should include them all in this section.
- Do not leave any unexplained gaps. If there are any gaps, give the start and end dates of the gap, put not applicable (N/A) in the next four columns and then briefly indicate the reason in the final column.
- Ensure any previous work experience you may wish to reference within your evidence of competence is listed within this section.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is the range of learning activities by which professionals maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills throughout their career to ensure that they continue to practise to the highest standards. Undertaking CPD not only supports career development but is also a responsibility to clients, employers and society. On admission as a member, you will be required to maintain a record of CPD undertaken.

If you are new to CIEEM, you should list here all relevant CPD completed in the last three years. For existing members please follow the guidance provided on the online CPD tool regarding the submission of your CPD records for the last three subscription years, or since you joined CIEEM if less than three years ago.

The description of the CPD activity should outline what type of CPD it was (e.g. training course, coaching, conference, reading, work shadowing), the training provider and the subject matter. The structured or unstructured column requires an 'S' or a 'US' depending on the nature of the CPD. Structured CPD includes attendance on a training course, at a conference, formal home study and organised 'on-the-job' training. Unstructured CPD includes the reading of relevant literature, personal study, research, site visits and committee involvement.

Sponsors

The role of a sponsor is an important one. They play a critical role in upholding the integrity of the standards of membership and making sure that we continue to be a body that you would be proud to be a member of. There is currently no professional review interview as part of the application process for Associate or Full membership. Sponsor endorsements are therefore an essential part of the assessment process and contribute significantly to the success or otherwise of an application. Sponsors must confirm that the information contained in your application form about your competence and professionalism is correct. To do this they must have sufficient knowledge of the quality of your practice as a professional. Each claimed competency in your application must be endorsed by at least one sponsor.

It is up to you to present the necessary evidence to the assessors so that they can see you have reached and are working at the level of competence you are claiming.

Two sponsors are required to support applications for Full or Associate membership to confirm the accuracy of the information contained within it. It is preferable, but not essential, that sponsors are members of CIEEM. They should be at the same grade as that being applied for or above, and they should ideally have known the applicant for at least 12 months. In all cases, all sponsors must have good knowledge of the applicant's work and be able to endorse their competence and integrity as a

potential member. All non-member sponsors must be suitably experienced and working at or above the level of membership being applied for. A copy of their CV or work profile must be provided to demonstrate their suitability. It is the responsibility of the applicant to request this information from the non-member sponsor and forward it to us with their application. **Sponsors cannot be related to applicants.**

Sponsors of membership applications are encouraged to read the information available on the [Applying for membership](#) webpage of the CIEEM website to ensure that they feel able to support the application. We strongly recommend that you send this guidance, along with the following documents, to your sponsors:

- Your application form
- CIEEM Membership Regulations
- CIEEM Code of Professional Conduct
- CIEEM Competency Framework

Please contact the membership team via membership@cieem.net if you have difficulties in identifying sponsors or need further advice.

Please note that a sponsor may be in breach of the Chartered Institute's Code of Professional Conduct (or that of another professional body of which they are a member) if they knowingly endorse false claims of competence. In the interests of clarity, further information may occasionally be sought from sponsors.

Summary of competence
This section is where you will need to provide evidence of having your claimed level of competence in the minimum required number of competencies. To complete this section, you should have read the Competency Framework and understood:

- What is meant by Basic, Capable, Accomplished and Authoritative competence levels?
- The difference between technical and transferable competencies.
- What areas of knowledge and skill each of the competencies typically covers.

Professional Conduct is a mandatory competency for all applicants. Professional conduct is about your understanding of what it means to uphold high standards of conduct, what ethical concerns or considerations you come across, or might come across in the course of your role and what measures you take to ensure that your actions are appropriate. You may find it useful to familiarise yourself with the Code of Professional Conduct, which can be found on the website.

If you have completed the self-assessment process, you should have a better idea of which six additional competencies you can most confidently evidence your competence in. You should then list your chosen competencies, stating whether they are either technical or transferable. For both your mandatory and optional competencies you will need to justify your claims.

Use the STARE method of providing evidence of competence:

- Explain the **S**ituation or **T**ask you were involved in.
- Identify the **A**ction you took as an individual, and why.
- Explain what the **R**esult was.
- **E**valuate the outcomes in relation to your competence level. This is essential.

Choose a variety of examples of your work and projects to demonstrate that you have the breadth of knowledge required. Assessors tell us that a good statement of evidence makes it clear in the first sentence that this activity has been carried out several times and then uses the rest of the word count to focus on specific examples that demonstrate the required skills and experience for that competency.

Ten top tips to remember when it comes to writing your evidence:

1. When talking about projects you have worked on, indicate their size and complexity.
2. If you are undertaking work that would typically require a protected species licence, then your evidence should make it clear that you hold/held the relevant licence.
3. Explain any acronyms you may use within your evidence if they are not commonly used ones, for example, SSSI, EcIA. This way you can demonstrate your depth of knowledge and proof of your competence level within the word-count.
4. If you were given another contract or project as a result of your good work in the example chosen to illustrate your competency, then use this as evidence of your competence.
5. If you studied something relevant to your chosen competency and were assessed by an exam or piece of coursework, give the mark you achieved as evidence of your competence.
6. It may be necessary to refer to the information provided in the 'Details of professional activity' section of the form within your written evidence. Be sure to make the link as assessors will otherwise only assess the information provided for each competency to make their final assessment.
7. Be sure to review the individual competency descriptor in the Competency Framework document for the level of competence you are claiming to ensure the evidence you provide sufficiently addresses what is required. But also ensure you keep an eye on the overarching descriptor for the competency in question too to make sure you have sufficiently addressed it.
8. Your sponsors will be asked to verify the accuracy of the information and you are reminded that falsely claiming competence that you do not have would be a breach of the Code of Professional Conduct.
9. Please note that there is a recommended minimum of 250 and a maximum of 350 words per competency. Assessors expect the word limits to be used and applications that fall far outside these limits may be returned for editing or rejected.
10. Please do not provide us with a long list of projects you have worked on, as this does not prove your competence. Do not supply additional supporting documents alongside your application. You need to be able to evidence your competence within the word limit provided within your application form.

Declarations

Sponsors must complete and sign the relevant declaration section on your application form. Scanned or electronic signatures are accepted. If signatures are typed into the form your sponsor will be contacted to confirm that they support your application.

Applicants must sign and date the application declaration which confirms that, should you be admitted as a member, you agree to abide by the terms and conditions of membership as set out in the Member Regulations and Code of Professional Conduct. Both of these documents are available on the website. You are also confirming that the information in the application form is, to the best of your knowledge, correct.

It is very important that the information that you give is accurate and can be verified. Successful applicants who are later found to have deliberately fraudulently completed the application form will be referred to the Professional Standards Committee for a breach of the Code of Professional Conduct.

Submission and fees

Before submitting your application, take time to ensure you have provided all the relevant information requested. Taking the time to ensure your application is complete on submission will enable the Membership Team to process your application more quickly and efficiently.

You should email your completed application form as a Microsoft Word document, together with any attachments, to membership@cieem.net.

All applications are acknowledged by email, typically within one week of receipt. An application administration fee will be invoiced on receipt of your application and payment is required according to the terms stated on the invoice. Administration fees are non-refundable should an application be withdrawn, or an outcome not accepted. Any charges incurred by CIEEM due to cheque payments being declined will be your responsibility.

If your application is successful an invoice for either your first year of membership (for new members) or the appropriate upgrade subscription (for current members) will be issued and payment is required according to the terms stated on the invoice. Invoices are generated on a pro-rata basis. Please see the following table for more information:

Month application is successful	Proportion of subscription fee due
Oct, Nov, Dec	Full amount
Jan, Feb, Mar	Three-quarters full amount
Apr, May, Jun	Half full amount
Jul, Aug, Sept	Quarter full amount

All current application and subscription fees can be found on the website.

5. What happens next?

i.   Your application will be checked to ensure you have provided sufficient information. If anything is missing you will be notified by email and asked to submit this information as quickly as possible to allow the continued processing of your application.

ii.   The form will then be passed to three current senior members of the Institute who have volunteered to be trained as assessors. We process a large volume of applications and at the busiest times of the year it can take up to three to four months from receipt of application to outcome.

iii.   Please allow sufficient time for your application to be processed if you require membership by a specific date.

iv.   The three assessors review your written evidence independently and have no way of conferring with any of the other assessors reviewing the application.

v.   Each assessor returns their review to CIEEM, providing scores to reflect their assessment of each competency and feedback that might support any future resubmission of competencies assessed as insufficiently evidenced. Scores are attributed by assessors according to the following criteria:

Score	Definition	Examples/clarification
3	Excellent response, exceeding what would be expected for the level of competence claimed.	Meets requirements of the competency claimed and, in at least one aspect, meets the requirements of the competency at the level above that being claimed (where applicable).
2	A response that meets the requirements for the level of competence claimed.	Covers the necessary elements of the competency description. As long as the **majority** of the descriptors for this competency are evidenced this is deemed sufficient in proving competence.
1	A response that meets some aspects of what is required but not all, or not at the expected level.	Evidence that would fall in this category includes: • Inadequate application of STARE (especially competence claimed but no supporting evidence provided (e.g. no Evaluation)). • Some aspects of the competency covered adequately but the evidence does not sufficiently address the breadth of the competency. • Only a small proportion of descriptors are evidenced.
0	The evidence fails to address the competency in any meaningful way.	The wrong competency claimed (e.g. confusion between EcIA and EIA) or misunderstanding of the competency (as often happens with Data & Document Management). Evidence does not meet the requirements of the level being claimed **or** the immediate level below.
R (Referral)	Response raises significant concerns about the applicant being suitable for membership at the level they are applying for.	For example, the applicant describes doing protected species surveys but does not show that they are aware this needs to be covered by an appropriate license. Evidence under any competency that suggests an applicant may have acted in contravention of the Code of Professional Conduct.

vi.   CIEEM Secretariat staff collate all the submitted scores and feedback and calculate the majority outcome for each competency. Each competency needs to be awarded a score of 2 or higher from at least two of the three assessors to be deemed successfully evidenced. All evidenced competencies need to be successful for an applicant to be admitted at the level they have applied for. Successfully evidenced competencies carried forward from any previous assessment are not re-assessed.

vii.   You will be informed of the outcome of your application by email. There are several possible outcomes:

- **Your application is successful.**
  You will be admitted as a member at the grade for which you applied.

- **You may be offered a lower grade of membership.**
  For the competencies that were not successfully evidenced at the level being claimed, the evidence may be assessed at the competency level below (if applicable). This may result in you being offered a lower grade of membership. For all competencies which were not sufficiently evidenced at the level being claimed, feedback will be provided. All competencies successfully evidenced will be stored against your record and can be carried forward as part of a resubmission without the need for further assessment. You will be provided with guidance on the resubmission process within your outcome email.

- **Your application is unsuccessful.**
  For all competencies which were not sufficiently evidenced at the level being claimed, feedback will be provided. All competencies successfully evidenced will be stored against your record and can be carried forward as part of resubmission without the need for further assessment. You will be provided with guidance on the resubmission process within your outcome email.

You are not allowed to call yourself a member or use any applicable post-nominals/suffix until after your admission has been confirmed in writing. A false representation of your status is a breach of the Code of Professional Conduct. You are, however, allowed to tell people that you have applied for a particular grade of membership.

6. What if I do not agree with the outcome?

It is possible to appeal the outcome of an application using the procedure below.

i.   Unsuccessful candidates will be notified and given feedback as to why their application has failed as soon as possible after a decision has been reached.

ii.   Any applicant who feels that their application has been failed incorrectly has recourse to an Appeals Process, provided they have sufficient grounds for appeal. The only grounds on which the Secretariat shall consider an appeal are failure of process – for example, if an applicant thinks that assessment criteria have been incorrectly applied – and not simply a difference of opinion.

iii.   An appeal must be lodged in writing with the Secretariat within 30 days of notification of the failure of the application and must be accompanied by the appropriate administration fee which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld. The appellant must clearly state their grounds for appeal, providing evidence of the proposed failure of process.

iv.   Appeals will be considered by CIEEM's Membership Operations Manager or Head of Membership in the first instance. Should these officers agree that the appellant has presented sufficient evidence to justify further investigation, the original application and this evidence will be sent to the Chair of the Membership Admissions Committee (MAC) or, in the case of applications to Chartered Ecologist, to the Chair of the Registration Authority (RA) for review. A

decision to send an application for review does not constitute acceptance that an appeal is justified or should be upheld.

v. Should the Chair of the relevant committee have played any part in the assessment process prior to the appeal being lodged, the review will be undertaken by the Vice-Chair of that committee.

vi. The outcome of this review is final and the applicant must either accept the decision of the committee or withdraw their application. Should the applicant withdraw their application the membership fee shall be refunded but the application administration fee is retained by CIEEM.

We are here to help. If you have any queries regarding the application process or your application, please contact the Membership Team on 01962 868626 or membership@cieem.net.