



**Qualifying Membership  
Guidance for Applicants**

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### 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 our members are drawn from a range of backgrounds, the common thread tying them together is a level of professional competence, whatever that level is, and their passion for the environment that we are proud to promote and support.

We encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, including disabled and neurodivergent candidates. If you need any reasonable adjustments to the application process to enable you to demonstrate your skills and experience effectively, please contact the membership team.

We offer a range of membership grades and the most suitable one for you is determined by your background, competence and any professional experience. This guidance document, along with the application form, will guide you through the application process for the Qualifying membership grade. 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.

Qualifying membership is our 'early-career' grade suited to those who are starting out in the sector. This grade of membership is open to you if you are:

- a recent graduate (including our current Student members who have nearly finished or already completed their course).
- undertaking paid work or apprenticeship in the sector.
- working in a voluntary capacity in the sector whether full or part time.
- seeking employment in the sector.
- currently employed in another sector but looking to find an ecological/environmental role.
- embarking on a career change.

If any of the points above apply to you then Qualifying membership is the natural home for you while you work towards a higher grade of membership that is competence-assessed.

## 2. Getting to know the Competency Framework

Typically, applicants for the Qualifying grade are working towards or are at a '**Foundation**' level of competence as detailed in the Competency Framework.

This means that we expect Qualifying members to have some knowledge with an understanding of terminology and concepts, some experience of practical application, and to be able to carry out straightforward relevant tasks to the required standard under supervision.

The application process for the Qualifying grade is a way for you to start getting to grips with CIEEM's Competency Framework. The building blocks of the Competency Framework are individual 'competencies' within a theme and it helps you link up your skills to the profession. The application process will provide you with an opportunity to think about how you can usefully use the Framework to help you plan your next steps and gain the experience you need to advance your career in the sector, and further down the line upgrade your membership with us to the next level.

We recommend all applicants make use of the online self-assessment tool before starting an application. This tool will help you to identify your key strengths against the Competency Framework as well as areas for future development. It is a useful tool to check that Qualifying membership is the right grade for you.

It should be noted that CIEEM does reserve the right to refuse admission to the Qualifying grade of membership to applicants that are deemed to be clearly working at a higher level of competence. If you think this applies to you, please take a look at the information for Associate or Full membership or get in touch with the Membership team to discuss your situation.

## 3. How do I apply?

The application process is summarised below:

1. Read this guidance document alongside the Qualifying application form.
2. Complete a self-assessment using the Competency Framework – an online tool is available via the CIEEM website to assist you. This is not compulsory for gaining membership, but we advise completing it for your own benefit.
3. Complete the application form and ask a sponsor to sign it (more on sponsors shortly in the next section) then submit it to CIEEM by email for processing.
4. Wait for an email acknowledgement and supply any additional information requested promptly.
5. Await your outcome. Applications for Qualifying membership are processed by CIEEM's Membership team. In your acknowledgement email you will be provided with details of the current processing time, but you will usually receive an outcome within 4-6 weeks.

## 4. The application form

### Personal Details

In this section you need to provide your current contact information, including your preferred contact details. If you have gained employment that is not relevant to the Ecology, Environmental Management (EEM) sector then please do feel free to put these work details in still.

### Details of higher education post-18

There are no eligibility requirements in relation to your post-18 education so if you have not completed any academic studies since leaving school leave this section blank as this will not stop you from being accepted at this grade.

### Details of your current engagement with the sector

In this section we want to hear about how you are currently involved in the sector and what you are doing to get started with your career in ecology or environmental management.

Make use of the word count available and provide details of any work experience (whether paid or voluntary) you have been able to gain, academic courses and any training courses you have attended or any independent learning you may have been doing. We want to hear that you are committed to gaining experience and knowledge to advance your career in the sector.

### Future development areas

This section of the form is an important one and you are going to have to use the Competency Framework to complete it. To get more familiar with the Competency Framework we would like you to spend a bit of time, and you can make use of the online self-assessment tool to do this too, to identify seven competencies that you would like to focus on in order to achieve your career goals and to build your competence.

The Competency Framework is broken down into transferable and technical competencies and we have asked you to select a mixture of these as future development areas. At all the higher membership grades applicants are required to provide evidence for a mixture of competencies as well, so this is good experience for a future upgrade application. You will see on the form that we have already included Professional Standards in your list as this is mandatory for all new applicants and upgrading members when applying for Associate, Full or Chartered Ecologist status.

Whatever competencies you select as part of your Qualifying application, there is no expectation that you will submit evidence of these as part of an application for higher grades of membership later. We appreciate there is no way of knowing in what direction your career might head over the next few years and your areas of strength will change and develop at different rates. This exercise has been included in the application process for Qualifying membership to help you engage with the Competency Framework and provide you with some development areas to focus on to help you progress your career.

## **Personal statement**

Make use of the word count and provide a brief summary of your ambitions for the future within the sector, and then provide details of how you propose to develop your competence in the seven future development areas you have selected from the Competency Framework.

We suggest looking at each competency in turn and providing details of what your plan to develop your competence looks like e.g. working on a particular type of project, gaining relevant licenses, completing training courses etc. Use this application process as an opportunity to plan out how you are going to gain experience and improve your knowledge and skillset. What do you need to do to achieve it? Who do you need to talk to? What training do you think you might need? Use your sponsors to help you in this planning process.

Remember that transferable competencies are found across professions so you may have started to gain these, or already built up these in a non EEM sector, and therefore wish to continue developing further.

## **Sponsor's declaration**

At this grade of membership we just require you to have your form checked by someone who can confirm that the information provided in your application is correct to the best of their knowledge. Your sponsor will need to complete and sign this section of your application form after they have read it through. Please ask your sponsor to insert either an electronic or typed signature into the box provided. If typed, we will drop your sponsor an email to seek confirmation of their support.

Some useful Qualifying application sponsor tips:

- Your sponsor does not need to be a CIEEM member.
- Your sponsor must not be related to you.
- Your sponsor should be someone you have known long enough for them to be able to confirm the information you provide within your application form is correct to the best of their knowledge.
- You could ask a previous university tutor/lecturer, a volunteer/work manager or a colleague even if they do not work within the sector.

## **The use of Generative AI in the application and assessment processes**

You must complete the 'Use of AI in this application' table in a paper application.

## **Declaration by applicant**

You 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.

Please insert either an electronic or typed signature into the box provided.

## **Submission and payment**

Before submitting your application, take time to ensure you have provided all the relevant information requested within the form. 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 to: [membership@cieem.net](mailto:membership@cieem.net). All applications are acknowledged by email, typically within one week of receipt.

Should your application be successful an invoice for an administration fee and 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:

| <b>Month application is successful</b> | <b>Proportion of subscription fee due</b> |
|--|---|
| October, November, December            | Full amount                               |
| January, February, March               | Three quarters full amount                |
| April, May, June                       | Half full amount                          |
| July, August                           | Quarter full amount                       |
| September                              | Full amount for following year            |

All current application and subscription fees can be found on our website. Any charges incurred by CIEEM due to cheque payments being declined will be your responsibility.

We are here to help. If you have any queries regarding the application process or your own application, please do not hesitate to contact the Membership Team: 01962 868626 or via [membership@cieem.net](mailto:membership@cieem.net).

## 5. What next for Qualifying members?

- Once formally admitted you can put that you have 'Qualifying membership of CIEEM' on your CV.
- A post-nominal is not awarded at this level of membership as Qualifying applications do not involve an assessment of competence. Please note that any inclusion of a self-constructed post-nominal, for instance in reports, on *LinkedIn* or in an email signature etc, is in breach of the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.
- Qualifying members are allowed up to four years at this grade of membership within which time you should be able to gain a sufficient amount of experience and competence to be able to progress and apply for a higher grade of membership.
- It is worth noting that when you come to apply for a higher grade of membership you will need to select people as sponsors who have knowledge of your activity and experience, so bear this in mind as you continue to gain experience.
- Make sure you continue to use the Competency Framework and self-assessment tool to identify competencies you have been able to work on. Make the most of the benefits we offer to try and build on skill areas as, for example, our training and events programme is linked to the Framework.
- As a Qualifying member you will be expected to complete Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and keep a record of relevant training you complete. As a member you have access to an online CPD tool where you can populate a development plan and record training completed to help you progress your career.
- You will start to receive our quarterly *In Practice* magazine filled full of interesting features and articles and the latest news from the sector. Keep an eye out for our digital newsletters and updates including reminders for when your membership renewal is due. If you would like to you can opt to spread the cost of your membership by signing up to pay your subscription by direct debit.
- We are here to support you! Please drop us a line or give us a call if you have any questions about your membership with us.