



The  
**Royal  
Photographic  
Society**

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. Incorporated by Royal Charter

**HOW TO WORK TOWARDS  
A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION**

# **ASSOCIATESHIP AND FELLOWSHIP DISTINCTION HANDBOOK**

**ISSUE 6 / JANUARY 2013**

**THE ASSOCIATESHIP & FELLOWSHIP  
DISTINCTIONS HANDBOOK**

**HOW TO WORK TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION**



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For the most up to date information on all aspects of the Distinctions and Qualifications, please visit [www.rps.org](http://www.rps.org)

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## **SECTION A: THE ASSOCIATESHIP**

### **A1 INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Distinctions of The Royal Photographic Society.

This Handbook has been produced to help you work towards a successful Distinction application.

The Royal Photographic Society Distinctions are recognised as some of the most prestigious in the photographic world. The Associateship is the second level of The Society's Distinctions and is a significant step up from the first level, the Licentiate. Whilst in the Licentiate we are looking for a basic competence and skill, to be successful at Associateship level you need to provide evidence of creative ability and the development of a personal style. You also need to be able to show that you are in complete control of the technical aspects which allows you to produce quality which is entirely 'fit for purpose' i.e. it suits the subject. Your work should be consistent and make a statement of a strong personal style. A high standard of presentation is expected.

When you are awarded the Associateship, you are entitled to use the letters ARPS after your name and you will receive a certificate under the Seal of The Society, signed by the President, as well as a lapel badge and a digital file containing the Society emblem which can be used on your personal stationery.

Many people turn to the instructions as a last resort, but for anyone thinking of applying for a Distinction it is essential to study this Handbook in order to be aware of the criteria required as well as the practical aspects of applying for a Distinction.

Everyone involved in the Distinctions process wants you to be successful and it is hoped that this Handbook will help you to achieve that aim. Whatever the final outcome, we want you to feel that you have progressed in your photography and learnt from the process, maybe even making some new friends along the way. Most importantly of all, however, we want you to enjoy the whole experience.

#### **A1.1 Who May Apply?**

Anyone may apply for the Associateship, whether a member of The Society or not. However, Distinctions can only be awarded to members of The Society, so non-members who are successful are asked to join The Society in order to hold the Distinction and use the letters after their name - see A1.2.

While most people start with the Licentiate and work their way up through the levels - and this is recommended for the majority of applicants - if you are an advanced and very experienced photographer you can apply straight for the Associateship without going for the Licentiate first.

#### **A1.2 Non-member Applications**

We welcome applications for the Associateship from experienced photographers who are not members of The Society. When submitting, you must be sure to complete the Non-member section on the application form and include the appropriate membership subscription. If you are successful with your Distinction application, your membership will be processed automatically before a Distinction can be awarded.

If you are not successful, you have the choice of whether or not to join The Society. Otherwise your application is treated in exactly the same way as a member's.

#### **A1.3 What Do I Submit?**

Practical applications will be in the form of Stills, or Multimedia and Narrative, or Research, Education and Application of Photography. Your application will normally be submitted in one of the following ways:

**A1.3.1 Stills Photography:** 15 prints, or 15 digital images or a book containing a minimum of 30 images (minimum of 2 copies).

(The Contemporary Panel considers a wide range and mix of formats, but check first with the Distinctions Department).

**All applicants must also submit a Statement of Intent.**

The statement of intent is a significant part of an application in still photography at both the Associateship and Fellowship levels. Particular requirements apply in both the Contemporary category and also in Multimedia and Narrative. Details of these can be found in their respective sections.

In other categories, candidates should outline in not more than 150 words, the purposes, objectives or intent of the work. This gives an opportunity to explain to the Panel why the images were taken and to place them in a meaningful context. It is not necessary to describe each image or to provide detailed technical information, although, if an unusual technique is used, then the applicant may wish to describe this briefly.

It is best to avoid over-elaborate or wordy statements or to make claims about the submission which do not match the images presented. Statements which are concise are often the most useful and effective. In some cases one or two sentences will suffice. See the website for examples.

**A1.3.2 Multimedia and Narrative:** see A6.1

**A1.3.3 Research, Education and Application of Photography:** Submissions are likely to be in written form see A6.2

**A1.3.4 Exemption:** You may not have to submit practical work if you already have a photographic qualification; see A6.3

## A2 STILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

### A2.1 REQUIREMENTS - GENERAL ADVICE

Having decided to apply for the Associateship, it is **essential** that you understand the requirements

At this level, you need to show evidence of creative ability, a high standard of technical competence and a complete, expert, comprehensive knowledge of your discipline. Your work should be consistent and also make a statement of a strong personal style. A high standard of presentation is expected.

### A2.2 THE CATEGORIES

When you apply for the Associateship in Stills photography you need to submit your work in one of the following categories:

- Contemporary
- Creative Production (available from autumn 2013)
- Natural History
- Professional and Applied (incorporates documentary, portraiture, record, theatrical, visual journalism, wedding)
- Science
- Travel
- Visual Art

### A2.3 TYPES OF SUBMISSION

For each format the requirements in Section 1 are mandatory, i.e. what you **must** do, while Section 2 is advisory i.e. some suggestions to help guide you towards a successful application.

#### A2.3.1 PRINTS

##### Section 1: What you **should** do:

- Submit 15 prints.
- Applicants are advised where possible to use mount board for their prints, although other mediums can be used if agreed by the Distinctions Department\*. Applicants must ensure any medium they use to mount their work is safe to handle and without sharp edges or corners. If you have any questions e-mail [ben@rps.org](mailto:ben@rps.org).
- Whilst it is generally accepted that applicants will have one image per mount this can be increased subject to the fact that the overall mount size does not exceed 59cms/23inches in height\*\*.
- The overall thickness of each mount must not exceed 7mm/5/8<sup>th</sup> inch.
- The maximum size of the mount is 59cms/23 inches high\*\*\*. The width of the mount is up to you, but the maximum width of our display is 4.6meters/180 inches/15 feet.
- Choose the order in which you want your images displayed, bearing in mind that prints are viewed as a panel, and whether you want them in 2 or 3 rows.
- On the back of each print you must put your name and number them 1 to 15 in the order you wish them to be displayed.
- Please do not put a title or have your name on the front.
- Please provide two hanging plans with your prints and they should be kept with your portfolio. This should be a set of thumbnails, set out in the order of display, on a plain A4 sheet (i.e. **not** mounted on card). These hanging plans will be retained by The Society for reference purposes.

\* Although un-mounted prints from overseas are accepted for the Associateship, this is not encouraged and at the very least they should still be stiffened with thin card so that they can be properly displayed on our print stands. Mounting can considerably enhance a portfolio and is part of the presentation.

\*\*If you want to submit more than one image per mount please e-mail [ben@rps.org](mailto:ben@rps.org) with your request

\*\*\* If you want to submit images larger than 23" please e-mail [ben@rps.org](mailto:ben@rps.org) with your request.



**Section 2:** What you are **advised** to do:

- The suggested image size is between 10" x 8" and 20" x 16".
- Most applicants display their prints in 3 rows of 5, or 2 rows (one of 7 and one of 8), but the choice is yours.
- Presentation is part of the assessment, so take care in the mounting of your prints; ensure that the mounting enhances your images and that it is free from marks and blemishes. Careless presentation creates doubts in the minds of the Panel members.
- It is recommended that mounts are generally all of the same colour and size (even if the prints are different sizes) and sympathetic with the subject matter; usually pale, neutral colours are preferred (e.g. white, off white).
- You can mix colour, monochrome, silver gelatine and digitally produced prints if you have good reason to do so. If you chose to use a variety of image types in your submission it is your responsibility to ensure that the finish of all of the images is consistent and cohesive as the assessment process allows for no concession for such applications.
- You can either print your images yourself or have them commercially printed (but remember that you are responsible for the finished result).
- Try to ensure that the print quality is consistent throughout the submission; this adds to the cohesiveness of the set.
- To see how prints are displayed, go to the Distinctions Advisory Zone on the website.

**A2.3.2 DIGITAL IMAGES**

Please ensure that your images comply with the following requirements as your submission will not be viewed prior to the assessment. If, therefore, there is any problem projecting your images, your portfolio will not be assessed.

**Section 1:** What you **should** do:

- Submit 15 digital images.
- Jpeg format, saved at the highest quality.
- Images should be in RGB mode (even for monochrome images), and in the sRGB colour space.
- The image size can be no larger than 1400 pixels wide and 1050 pixels high, with one dimension (width or height) at its maximum. (Therefore, images in landscape format will be 1400 pixels wide and up to 1050 pixels high; images in portrait format will be up to 1050 pixels wide, and will be 1050 pixels high.). The ppi setting of the image is not relevant.
- Please name your files using two digit numbers: 01, 02, 03 ... to 15 so that they sort for projection. Please do not use your name or a title: these will be removed and replaced by the two digit format.
- You can either e-mail your images to us at [assessments@rps.org](mailto:assessments@rps.org) or send them on CD/DVD.
- If you want to add a border, please note that the background colour on our projector screen is black.

**Section 2:** What you are **advised** to do:

- It cannot be emphasised too strongly that your monitor should be calibrated correctly. If you are not able to achieve this, you are advised to submit either prints or a book as only then will you know that the Panel members will view your portfolio in exactly the same way as you see it yourself.
- It is generally better to avoid sudden changes from very bright images to very dark images. It can also help to have some link from one image to the next such as subject matter, colour, tone, etc.

### A2.3.3 BOOKS

A book may be either published with an ISBN number, or an artist's book.

#### Section 1: What you **should** do:

- Submit a minimum of two copies of the book.
- Your book should contain a minimum of 30 significant images, all of which must be of the required standard and cover a minimum of 70% of the page.
- Submit 3 prints as supporting evidence.
- The minimum size of the book should be 8" x 10".
- The sequencing and storyline will be assessed within the standard criteria.
- You are responsible for the quality of the book in the same way that you must take responsibility for commercially produced prints.
- You will not be able to see your book being assessed. Books are assessed without an audience because they cannot be displayed to an audience in the same way as prints or projected images are shown.

Your statement should provide information concerning the following areas:

#### a) Concept or commission

- What was the initial idea or concept for the book – a personal project or commissioned by a client?
- Was the book accompanied by any other presentations of the work such as an exhibition?
- What were the decision making processes in the planning and production of the photography and to what extent was the photographer involved?
- If there was joint authorship in either the text or photography, give details of your personal contribution as well as publisher and distribution details.

#### b) Editing/Narrative

- What was your personal contribution to the planning process of the editing and the sequencing or layout of the imagery and text?

#### c) Design and Presentation

- What was your personal contribution in the negotiation process of the design, layout and presentation?
- To what extent have the original photographs been modified by the publisher?

The Panel Chairperson may call for additional evidence such as a sample of the original material used in compiling the book.

### A2.3.4 SLIDES/TRANSPARENCIES

If you would like to submit slides/transparencies, please contact [andy@rps.org](mailto:andy@rps.org) for the requirements.

### **A3 CRITERIA FOR STILLS PHOTOGRAPHY - ALL CATEGORIES**

The following general assessment criteria apply to all submissions. You also need to read the specific requirements for the specialist category in which you are applying; these can be found in the following section: A4).

#### ***Communication***

- The portfolio should clearly meet the objectives given in the written statement.
- The photographic style should be consistent across the portfolio.
- The images should capture and communicate mood, emotion, or a sense of atmosphere where appropriate.

#### ***Presentation***

- Presentation should be of the highest standard.
- There should be no repetition of images. (As a general rule more than two similar images will be unacceptable.)
- Prints should be appropriately mounted and free from marks and blemishes.
- Projected images should be sequenced to their best advantage.
- Slides must be suitably masked and free from marks and blemishes.

#### ***Artistic Skill***

- A competent understanding of composition, design and form should be demonstrated to communicate the purpose of the work.
- Appropriate lighting and viewpoint must be evident.
- The printing style should be appropriate to the subject and intent.

#### ***Cohesion***

- The portfolio of work should be visually balanced and sequenced.
- The images should support each other in expressing the photographer's message.

#### ***Originality***

- There should be adequate evidence of originality in presenting the subject.
- The portfolio should show evidence of personal engagement with the subjects.

#### ***Technical Skill***

- Use of appropriate equipment and camera controls should be evident.
- Image exposure should be consistent in contrast and/or colour balance.
- Highlight and shadow detail should be adequately recorded.
- Images should be adequately sharp.
- The work should demonstrate appropriate control in the preparation of images.

## **A4 CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL STILLS PHOTOGRAPHY CATEGORIES**

As well as the general criteria, each category has its own specific criteria which are set out in this section. Please note: occasionally you will find that the criteria for a particular category is different from the general criteria. Where this occurs you should make your submission in accordance with the requirements set out by the specialist category. If you are in any doubt, please do not hesitate to ask. As with any other query, the Distinctions Department is only too pleased to help.

### **A4.1 CONTEMPORARY**

The fundamental essence of a Contemporary submission is conception. The Panel attaches key importance to ideas and favours work by photographers who, through their photographic image making, wish to explore, define, illustrate or evaluate contemporary issues or their own particular vision of the world.

The statement of intent should be a minimum of 150 words and a maximum of 300. The success of the work depends very much on the strength of the idea, the appropriateness of expression and how well the work articulates its message. Submissions should have intellectual content, be visually engaging and provide evidence of distinctive personal practice and commitment.

The Contemporary category cuts across the other categories, as it is about what you want your work to say on a topic, rather than what that topic actually is. Work that carries this personal message can be of any genre - visual art, documentary, portraiture etc; however, work that is purely pictorial, commercial etc. for its own sake would not be suitable.

Submissions in this category should be in the form of a body of work based on a theme, project or concept that really interests or concerns you. Typical themes could be those that explore contemporary issues of self, society, environment, art and culture. They can range widely from substantive to more whimsical topics.

The Panel will also consider mixed-media images and text. Applications in the form of books or catalogues are acceptable but 3 prints will be required as supporting evidence. The number of images may slightly exceed the 15 or 20 normally allowed for Associateship and Fellowship respectively if these are important to ensure a balanced coverage of the topic selected. Several images may be mounted together if this is required to support the presentation and such images (not the mount numbers) will be considered as separately making up the totals required.

Applications for both Associateship and Fellowship may be in a wide range of forms and the examples listed below are based on graduate and postgraduate-level photography and similar fine art degree work. This list is not restrictive.

Personal project portfolios comprising workbooks, associated research, references to relevant influences, or similar material, plus a minimum of three representative photographic images for display relating to such projects. Assessment will be based on all material submitted, not just the images for display. Personal project portfolios as above where some or all of the work is in the form of a visual-based construction e.g. in three-dimensional form.

If you are considering a wider form of submission, you should seek advice from the Chairperson of the Contemporary Panel well in advance of the assessment day. This can be done through the Distinctions Department who will also need to know of such a submission so that arrangements for its display can be considered; you should ensure that it can be put in place within a short timescale on the assessment day.

*Exhibited work:* Requests for assessment of exhibition work e.g. displays in gallery spaces, where the context or other practicalities do not allow normal submission, will also be considered. In these cases you will be required to make additional payments to cover the cost of Panel members travelling to the venue.

Assessment of photo books will align with established contemporary criteria, where the book is considered as a distinct entity rather than simply a depository for a set of photographs. This is similar to the way a multi-media entry is assessed. Its design, sequencing and how text (where used) supports the imagery and the intent of the book will form part of the assessment as well as the photographs themselves.

### ***Specific Assessment Criteria***

Submissions must fulfil their stated aim well and with clarity. The work must be cohesive in structure. Communication of the meaning/purpose of the work needs to be clear. It must be of good and balanced technical quality as appropriate to the subject.

Submissions for both Associateship and Fellowship will be assessed as to how well they relate to your written statement in both content and meaning. The assessors will consider the images and their arrangement in the totality of the photographic artwork submitted. Assessment will be based on interpretation and meaning of the work rather than primarily on photographic technique. However, the technical quality must be at the general levels that apply to all Associateship or Fellowship submissions. Technical quality must support your ideas and not be overtly gimmicky. If the submission is a book you, the applicant, are responsible for the quality of the printing and reproduction. The Panel members will be looking for the depth of your involvement in the work submitted.

If your submission is in the form of projected images, you should ensure that you exploit the use of the display space to fully express your ideas, not just be limited to a series of sequential single images.

Communication of a personal style at both informative and emotional levels is expected and assessors will take into account work where a wider degree of involvement may be required from the viewer in extracting the messages contained.

### **A4.2 CREATIVE PRODUCTION (available from autumn 2013)**

This relates to the printing process, both silver and digital, normally produced for a commercial purpose and is currently being developed.

### **A4.3 NATURAL HISTORY**

This category covers any of the various branches of natural history, including zoology, botany, meteorology, astronomy and palaeontology.

Each image should be correctly identified and, as well as your statement of intent, you should include with your application a list in the order of presentation, with both a common name and a scientific name.

In general, subjects should be free and unrestricted, in a natural or adopted habitat, although in some circumstances, subjects photographed under controlled conditions may be permissible. For further information contact Andy Moore [andy@rps.org](mailto:andy@rps.org)

No kind of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement is permissible, except for the removal of minor distractions or blemishes.

#### ***Purpose and Communication***

Your statement should clearly state your intention in choosing the work submitted, in order to enable the Assessment Panel to consider your work in a meaningful context.

Your panel should fit your statement and provide clear evidence of a genuine interest and involvement in this type of photography.

Each individual subject should be shown in an illustrative way, which is of interest to a well-informed naturalist, but should be clearly seen to be relevant to the submission as a whole. It should at the very least accurately depict what the subject looks like, although it might, to your advantage, show some aspect of its life-cycle or behavioural pattern as well.

For Fellowship, the Assessment Panel looks for a personal style or an original approach, but at the very least you must demonstrate that you are capable of maintaining to the highest standard the momentum of current trends and developments in nature photography. It is advisable to choose a particular natural history theme or topic and to explore and develop it photographically. It is only rarely acceptable to present a similar collection of images, produced by similar techniques and differentiated from each other only in terms of species differences.

### **Cohesion**

If you are submitting prints, you should present them so that they appear coherent and visually well-balanced in terms of subject matter, print size, format, colour, contrast and mounting. A submission of prints displayed in an unplanned, haphazard manner is unlikely to impress.

Transparency and digital image submissions should be sequenced in a similarly coherent and visually well-balanced way, avoiding sudden changes in colour, contrast or key. Where several different subject types are included in a submission, it is usually more effective to present them interspersed with each other, rather than grouped together.

### **Technical Quality**

Your submission should demonstrate that:

- i) you are able to produce consistently sharp and correctly exposed pictures, with image sizes appropriate to the subjects being shown.
- ii) you have the ability to control depth of field in such a way that all your images have backgrounds appropriate to the type of subject being shown; whether that subject is being depicted in close-up or within the wider context of a particular habitat.
- iii) you have a good understanding of how to use light effectively, whether natural or artificial.
- iv) if flash is used, it has been used discreetly, sympathetically and in a manner which is completely in keeping with the subject, avoiding areas of heavy shadow or excessive contrast.

### **Artistic Considerations**

Although work submitted in the Nature Category should be mainly informative or illustrative, an overlay of pictorialism is not only permissible but may be to your advantage, provided that it does not detract from the informative content of the work.

Good composition is an important aspect of effective and visually satisfying nature work, so your submission should show your skill in this respect.

N.B. There is one hard and fast rule for all nature photographers, the spirit of which must be observed at all times: The welfare of the subject is more important than the photograph. The Nature Photographer's Code of Practice gives some useful pointers for the well-being of subjects as well as indicating legislation of which all nature photographers should be aware.

## **A4.4 PROFESSIONAL AND APPLIED**

The Professional and Applied Panel incorporates Documentary, Portraiture, Record, Theatrical, Visual Journalism and Wedding Applied photography can be defined, for the purposes of the Panel, as photography which is used to illustrate, record, promote or inform on a specific subject or project. For example, it may include work that can be categorised as architecture, illustrative, documentary, portraiture, theatrical, wedding or visual journalism. An application may illustrate different disciplines especially if you are a professional photographer working in various fields of photography or perhaps if you are a stock photographer. **Note:** work from different disciplines **must** still look good as a cohesive set and show your own distinctive style and approach.

An application at Associateship level must demonstrate a range of photographic ability even if the chosen discipline is of a narrow nature. Repetition is a common cause of failure.

At Fellowship level there must be a distinctive personal style demonstrating a distinguished ability. The use of appropriate equipment cannot be over emphasised.

Your statement of intent should clearly set out the purpose and end use of your photography. You should not include technical matters or outline any problems.

Your application will be assessed to a large degree against the criteria you set out in your statement of intent. For example if the photography is for publication, part of the assessment will question whether or not the work is of the required standard to be published (i.e. in national press or major magazines). You may submit supporting evidence with your application.

Applied photography is often of a technical nature and the emphasis will be on a very high standard of technical skill relevant to the purpose of the photography. You will also have to demonstrate that you have applied imaginative and visual skill to your photography.

#### A4.5 SCIENCE

Most applicants involved in scientific subjects apply for one of the Imaging Scientist Qualifications (ISQ). However, it is possible to apply for a Distinction in imaging science, medical imaging, medical photography or other related discipline by the submission of prints, transparencies or digital images.

Your statement of intent should provide a clear explanation of the purpose, objectives or intent of the work as is required for other panels. The statement should also clearly indicate whether the work was entirely undertaken and produced by the applicant or if it was a collective effort. If there was contribution from others, then clearly state the contribution made by those involved.

In addition, separate and full information on the technical details of each image should be provided that includes details of sample preparation (if appropriate) and any image manipulation or image processing that has been applied. Any manipulation, however, must not alter the authenticity of what is being presented. Where appropriate, magnification or scale of reproduction should be included.

Each image must be numbered, correctly orientated (by indicating top & bottom on the reverse side of the image if in print format) and correctly identified.

Submissions will be assessed against criteria appropriate to the particular nature of the material submitted and similar to the criteria for other categories. In particular your images will be assessed against the criteria in your statement of intent and must be of the highest technical quality and level of technical skill.

Applications at Associateship level must show a range of skills even if in a narrow discipline; whilst at Fellowship level there must be a demonstration of distinguished ability in the chosen subject area.

#### A4.6 TRAVEL

What makes a 'Travel' image? The answer is virtually anything that records an impression of a time and place. Environmental portraits, architecture, landscape, street life, still life, if it identifies a location, an event or show, it qualifies as photographic travel. In terms of exposures made or pictures taken the majority of photographers should be in a really powerful position for compiling a "Travel Panel". There is no need to travel to the four corners of the world to get your images...do so if you want to, and many of us do, however excellent panels can be captured on your doorstep. The advantage of 'doorstep' photography is that you can revisit the location time and time again until you get it right.

The actual place which the photography depicts is not of great importance: it can be literally anywhere in the world, but ideally, the submission should be entirely from one place or region, which could be as small as a beach, or as large as a country; but a collection of random pictures from around the world is not a sensible choice.

Your submission should have a theme which could relate, for example, to a journey from place to place; to aspects of a particular place - landscapes, seascapes, or architecture of a region; to an event or activity carried out at a particular place; or to the people making up a community; and so on.

##### **Criteria**

There should be a strong content of related but varied pictures to match the statement which should describe the theme being illustrated and any particularly important aspects within it.

The subject should be explored as widely as possible and your images should show some originality, inspired vision and interpretation, inferring devotion and commitment on your part. Artistic and technical issues must be of a high standard and consistent throughout the portfolio.

Manipulation by digital or other means which **significantly** alters the truth of the situation or event is not permitted. We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, without doubt a time of enormous photographic changes, and accept that techniques employed to enhance images should be permitted so long as they don't significantly change the photo travel content of the image. All adjustments must appear natural.

For Fellowship the assessors are looking for outstanding work which shows considerable originality, inspired vision and interpretation, as well as clear evidence of distinguished ability. The subject should be explored as widely as possible and your images should infer complete devotion and commitment on your part.

#### **Advice**

Remember that it is the actual photographs that are being assessed, not the difficulty of obtaining them. A good set of pictures from your local area, which you have time to study and explore in depth, and repeat with ease until you are satisfied, is much more likely to succeed than a panel shot on a one day's visit to an exotic location.

Similarly, be aware of "event" pictures: if your viewpoint is constrained by being in a public stand, with little or no chance of being able to move amongst the action, and the event is a one day a year affair, you have virtually no chance of getting a sufficient variety of pictures to meet the criteria.

It is recognised that photographers may travel in groups and care must be taken to avoid stereotyped images.

#### **A4.7 VISUAL ART**

The Visual Art category is very wide ranging and really there is no restriction about the subject matter. However, the images must be much more than just a record; your portfolio, whether you are an amateur or professional photographer, should communicate a personal statement about your chosen subject. The Panel is looking for clear evidence of a personal vision or style which should convey a sense of design, emotion, mood or some meaning which encourages the viewer to look beyond the subject. The Panel will ask not where or how the images were taken, but why?

In recent years there has been a tendency at Associateship level for many applications to be quite narrowly focused around a theme or a particular technique. An alternative approach could be to submit a portfolio consisting of more than one theme. If you decide to send a portfolio comprising two or three themes, the individual pictures should be presented within their themes and not intermingled; it is also important that you consider carefully the cohesiveness of the work as a whole. A set of random images is unlikely to be successful.



## A5 WHERE TO GET HELP

**A5.1 The Standard:** In order to avoid disappointment, before you apply for a Distinction it is important that you understand the standard required. There are several ways of doing this:

- a) You have already taken the first essential step required before making a submission, i.e. reading this Handbook.
- b) Interactive guides can be downloaded from the website - full of helpful information, examples of successful portfolios, opportunities to test your knowledge and experiment choosing and laying out a portfolio. At present these are available for Natural History and Travel.
- c) Attend one of the Distinctions Advisory Days which are organised around the UK. These are led by Panel members who will show successful examples and comment on any work you bring with you on the day. See A10.3 Distinctions Advisory Days for further details.
- d) Attend an Assessment Panel meeting - open to both members and non-members who want to watch, whether or not your own work is being assessed. The dates, locations and where to obtain tickets are published in The Royal Photographic Society Journal and on the website - [www.rps.org](http://www.rps.org) See Section A7.1 for further details of what happens on the day.
- e) If you are a member of The Society you can e-mail your images for advice at [advice@rps.org](mailto:advice@rps.org) for full details and to download an advice form – visit [www.rps.org/distinctions-introduction](http://www.rps.org/distinctions-introduction)

**A5.2 General Guidance:** You may make as many applications as you wish to the same or different categories, but each one must be accompanied by a completed application form and fee. A portfolio which has failed in one category **must not** be submitted to another category.

The evidence must be your own work (full copyright details can be found on the application form) but you can have your work commercially processed. Remember, however, that you must accept total responsibility for the quality of the work submitted.

Your submission should be of a consistent standard throughout and of a high technical standard, as well as providing evidence of creative ability and the development of a personal style. The way you present your portfolio is equally important - the Panels expect a high standard of presentation.

It is essential that you submit your evidence in accordance with the requirements as set out in this Handbook. Submissions which do not conform to these requirements will be returned without being assessed. You must also ensure that your images are in the correct order for presentation - it is not the responsibility of the Distinction staff to check portfolios prior to assessment.

If you took any of your images as part of a group activity, such as during a course or on a travel expedition where guidance is provided, you must clearly show your own individual style and approach. If there is any doubt, you may be asked to provide additional evidence.

If you would like advice from a Panel member regarding your application, you must arrange this through the Distinctions Department. Please do not approach the Panel member directly.

**N.B.** Only members of The Royal Photographic Society are entitled to hold a Distinction; if, therefore, your membership lapses, you should stop using the letters after your name. It is usually possible, however, to rejoin and have your Distinction reinstated.

While Panel members are happy to give advice, you should not expect them to choose your portfolio for you. This must be *your* decision. It is important to take plenty of time deciding which images to submit and try to look at them objectively.

When putting a portfolio together you should also consider it as a whole as well as each individual image. Do the prints look good as a set? Do the projected images flow easily in the sequence? If you find that you have 14 images about which you are confident that they are up to standard, don't include another image just to make up the numbers – the Panel will spot it immediately! Wait until you are satisfied with the whole panel.

**Note:** Panel Members who give 'one to one' advice other than at an official Distinctions Advisory day, may not vote on the application at the adjudication. It follows that if you consult more than one Panel member, you could jeopardise the adjudication of your work.

### **A5.3 DISTINCTIONS ADVISORY DAYS AND A CELEBRATION OF DISTINCTIONS**

Distinctions Advisory Days provide the opportunity not only of seeing successful submissions, but also having your own work considered and commented upon. You should, if possible, bring 15 images, plus 5-10 extra. Ideally prints should be mounted. However, if you only have a few images about which you would like advice, that's fine – you do not have to bring a portfolio which is almost ready to submit.

Only current or recent Panel members can officially give advice and there are usually 2 or 3 present at these days which normally run from 10.30 am - 4.30 pm. The day usually starts with the Panel members saying a few words about the Distinctions and the specific categories they represent and showing examples of recently successful portfolios. Those attending then take it in turns to show their work; it can seem rather daunting to have to present your images in front of 20-30 people, but these advisory days are quite informal and friendly and remember - everyone is in the same position!

You should bear in mind that any advice you receive from a Panel member is only his/her own opinion and at the assessment itself there will be four or five Panel members who may view your portfolio differently. It follows that Panel members cannot commit themselves to saying that you will definitely be successful; but they will give honest and constructive guidance and the benefit of their experience.

Advisory days are held throughout the UK, organised by the Regional Organisers in conjunction with the Distinctions Department. Details of dates and venues can be found on the website and in the RPS Journal. Tickets need to be booked and paid for in advance through the relevant Regional Organiser.

Following the spring and autumn assessments The Society will host celebrations of Distinctions. The days will cover successful applications from all three levels and categories. Successful applicants will be invited to explain their route to success and senior assessors from the Fellowship Board will be on hand to give advice and comment. This event is open to all and gives members and the public a unique opportunity to see the very best work from the distinctions over the previous 12 months. Please see website for full details [www.rps.org](http://www.rps.org)

### **A5.4 THE PANEL MEMBERS**

At each assessment there are usually 4 Panel members and a Chairperson (the minimum requirement for a quorum is 3). Panel members are normally appointed every two years following the Council elections. Council makes these appointments, following advice from the Distinctions Advisory Board (DAB). All are Fellows of The Society (Associate members may serve on the Licentiate Panel) and have been chosen for their experience and for their ability to assess, regardless of their own personal taste. Occasionally non-members with particular expertise are co-opted to Panels.

Panel members normally serve up to a maximum of 8 years and Chairpersons for 6 years. In order to make sure that standards remain consistent, as well as taking into account advances in photography, changes in the membership of the Panels is a gradual process.

## **A6 ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF SUBMISSION**

### **A6.1 MULTIMEDIA AND NARRATIVE**

#### **Introduction**

This category encompasses Audio Visual, Moving Image and Multimedia including interactive Multimedia. Whilst these may be discrete areas of practice, multi-platform work will be welcomed. Supporting evidence should include a structured Statement of Intent.

Whilst the term Narrative is important in ensuring the sequence has a clear theme and progression, it does not necessarily mean that the sequence has to have words or commentary to convey a storyline. The term emphasises that the sequence should be viewed as a cohesive piece running for a set time, rather than viewed as separate images. In the case of multimedia submissions (see below), the time may vary from viewer to viewer. It is further recognised that occasionally submissions may not contain an obvious narrative, for example, they may interpret a poem or piece of music.

Applications should consist **predominantly** of the candidate's own images although, where appropriate, third party images are acceptable. An application might consist of a new interpretation of previous work, or a creative reworking of content to bring a new and different value to the original photography.

It is anticipated that Multimedia and Narrative will require only one distinction panel in the foreseeable future but that the membership of the panel will be broad enough to deal with all possible submissions. Because of the nature of the panel, there may be some flexibility in the stated requirements and any interpretation is normally the responsibility of the Chairperson.

In line with other distinction panels, the candidates will remain anonymous. The applicants' names should not appear on the file on title or anywhere on the sequence itself. Projection will be on RPS equipment and any applicant who wishes to use other equipment must make prior arrangement with the Distinctions Manager.

Written and/or oral feedback will be provided for any unsuccessful candidate.

#### **Statement of Intent**

1. This will state the intention of the applicant in producing the body of work. Normally it should provide an outline/script/storyboard, explaining how the work developed and how the outcome was arrived at. The Panel will be looking for evidence of the way in which the project was conceived. Applicants should describe their own creative input.
2. Where copyright belongs to others, full attribution must be given. Candidates are required to explain how this has been achieved.
3. Candidates should indicate the target audience.
4. Where there is a collaborative presentation, the extent of any collaboration should be outlined.

#### **Technical details/Information**

We use a Dell Laptop – Model M4600, with a Graphic card NVIDIA Quadro 2000m with 2GB GDDR3. Speakers are EVS40B.

#### **Assessment Criteria**

Applicants must satisfy the Panel that they reach the required standard in the following criteria.

1. Sound Quality/Narration
2. Story line/production/editing
3. Photography – which should be appropriate for the task

## **Audio Visual**

Traditionally this is a still image medium within which animation and the moving image are welcomed but not required.

Submissions can be wholly the work of an individual or may include third party images as long as the photography is predominantly the work of the applicant. Copyright and licenses for third party images and music must be obtained and detailed. Where applications are the work of a team, the applicant must state clearly what he/she has contributed and what was contributed by others.

## **Audio Visual Associateship**

The requirement is for one or more sequences with a maximum running time of fifteen minutes. Whilst there is no stated minimum time it is anticipated that most applications will be close to the maximum time. Applicants are also advised that a submission of two or more sequences within the time limit may better show their versatility than one long piece.

The panel is looking for excellence in image quality and the recording, mixing and editing of the soundtrack, held together by a strong narrative. The Associateship will be awarded for a high standard in bringing all these elements together.

## **Audio Visual Fellowship**

The requirement is for one or more sequences with a maximum running time of twenty minutes. Whilst there is no stated minimum time, it is anticipated that most applications will be close to the maximum time. Applicants are also advised that a submission of two or more sequences within the time limit may better show their versatility than one long piece.

At Fellowship level the Panel is looking for outstanding ability and originality. All the components of the submission must be excellent and each sequence must demonstrate creative flair. The final product will be at an appreciably higher level than the individual components. By using the particular qualities of this medium, it is anticipated that the application will enable the Panel to see the world in a different way.

## **Moving Image**

The Panel is seeking submissions which demonstrate not only that the applicant understands how to operate a camera, light a scene or edit a film but how all these aspects relate to one another. The panel is looking for 'a personalised visual treatment appropriate to the subject?') and careful balance between words, sounds and pictures. The exploration of the subject must be thought provoking and it is hoped that the viewer will learn something, even if the subject matter is familiar. While manipulation techniques are acceptable they should not be used in such a way which detracts from the story being told. The script and use of music should suit the visual components. Copyright elements must be referenced. Where third party images are included this must be acknowledged and any application must still consist predominantly of the candidates' own images. The panel is seeking innovative approaches to filming, lighting and editing.

There are no technical barriers to the production format in the category and delivery may be on a large screen, television, tablet or personal device and in any chosen aspect ratio. Applicants working in other areas should consult the Distinctions Manager so that suitable arrangements for assessment can be made.

## **Moving Image Associateship**

Applications should consist of two examples with a maximum total running time of fifteen minutes. It is expected that most applications will be close to the fifteen minutes allowed. There must be a good working technique and standard of photography as well as mastery of camera movements. Applications using both still and moving images will also be considered. Associateship is awarded for bringing all the appropriate elements together.

## **Moving Image Fellowship**

Applications should consist of two examples with a maximum total running time of twenty minutes. It is anticipated that most applications will be close to the twenty minutes allowed. The panel is looking for originality, creative flair and imaginative presentation. The demonstration of outstanding ability is of greater significance than technical skill. The entry needs to be appreciated at a considerably higher level than its individual components.

Applications may also be considered on the basis of contributions to the field of moving image in the form of writing; the development of technical innovation; the combination of still and moving image making; challenges to the conventions of the moving image and the examination of its changing role in visual culture.

## **Multimedia**

The term Multimedia was first coined in the 1960s and since then it has taken on various meanings. In this context, it is a broader term than Audio Visual and Moving Image and includes a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video or interactivity. Interactive submissions will be assessed 'in camera'. Multimedia is usually recorded and played or accessed by information content devices. Typically these are computerised electronic devices but it can also be part of a live performance. Work submitted here will explore the emergence of new story-telling techniques that explore the opportunities presented by the digital world. It could involve a digital representation on the web or a multiplatform presentation. Submissions could perhaps investigate collaborative and trans-media approaches to storytelling. It could also involve new means of photo distribution in order to attract new audiences and communities. Applications in this category will need to be explored and investigated at the pace dictated by the viewer, with the movement from different sections varying from one person to another.

The panel will be looking for imaginative work of a high standard at Associateship level. Evidence must be shown of creative ability and a high standard of technical competence in the discipline. Work should be consistent and reveal a personal style or approach.

To obtain a Fellowship, candidates must be highly creative, highly individual and submit work which moves Multimedia forward. Typically the panel will be looking for work which either pushes the boundaries in your chosen area or shows the very highest practice.

## A6.2 RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND APPLICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

### Introduction

As a general rule, applicants gain a Distinction for work that is generally written, rather than for the ability to compose, expose and produce photographic images. Note, however, that submissions on medical applications of photography, or the imaging sciences are directed to the appropriate panel.

Because the work submitted is usually of a scholarly nature, the Panel has identified a number of popular categories for submissions:

- The application of photography in education.
- Research on a photographer who merits a biographical treatment.
- Aspects of the history of photography.
- The use of photography to access history.
- The conservation and restoration of photographs and photographic materials.
- Photography as an aid to conservation.
- Curatorial accomplishments, such as, archival content management, photographic exhibitions.
- A treatise on a new way of thinking about photography.

### **Requirements - General**

Irrespective of the application or the subject matter, the Panel assesses the submission from a number of viewpoints. The Panel members will judge the form of presentation and look for assurance that you are able to demonstrate good technical skills. In a successful submission, you will display competence in gathering suitable material as well as the ability to present the material as evidence, and which supports the claims made for it. In doing so you may choose to place the emphasis on text or images, or both. Illustrations must be of good quality and for a written document, it is important to provide the appropriate references to any information that third parties provided. In addition to written or printed work, a website may also form a submission.

**Associateship:** The work submitted will be of a high standard and must further an understanding of the subject, with all the evidence presented clearly and unambiguously. In places, you should demonstrate evidence of original thinking, but you must also show a comprehensive knowledge of the chosen subject.

**Fellowship:** In general, work submitted for Fellowship must achieve a high level of excellence. It will also represent a significant contribution to the comprehension of photography. Your submission will reveal an individual style and display originality, either in its methodology or in the material discovered, or in both.

### **Procedure for Associateship and Fellowship**

For both Distinctions, there are two phases. At the first stage, all potential candidates are expected to submit an application form along with a synopsis of approximately 500 words, which summarises the intended work. At this stage, the Panel will comment and provide you with advice on your proposed submission. Subsequently, two examples of the completed work will be required.

If necessary, you can submit an application form for work that already exists, e.g. a thesis, dissertation, exhibition, website or a book. In this case, the Panel members reserve the right to ask for additional information, which provide details of the methodology, research sources, assessment and the potential merits of the work. Such a report will be two to three thousand words long, and may carry illustrations.

### **Advice**

On occasions, the Panel will consider a proposal from a potential candidate (member or non-member) and give a brief opinion on its suitability for an application. Contact the Distinctions Manager with a short outline of your proposed submission and you will receive a brief opinion from the Panel; please note that the opinions are given without prejudice.

### A6.3 EXEMPTIONS

If you have gained a photographic qualification within the last ten years you do not have to submit a portfolio of work for the Associateship. To view a current list of excepted course please visit:

<http://www.rps.org/associateship/Exemptions>

Applying is then very easy. All you need to do is:

1. Complete the application form, available from the link above.
2. With your application we require proof of the qualification you have gained such as a **photocopy** of the certificate you were awarded or a letter of confirmation from the University/college. This evidence must state your full name, the award gained and the place of study.
3. Both **members** and **non-members** of The Society should send the application form, proof of qualification and the application fee to the Distinctions Department. **Non-members** must complete the Membership subscription.

All Distinction applications have to be ratified by our Council which meets every month and it is following this meeting the Distinction is awarded (and for non-members, your membership application is processed).

## A7 THE PROCESS

### A7.1 ASSESSMENT DAYS: HOW YOUR WORK IS ASSESSED

Assessment Days (also known as Panel meetings) are held throughout the year and are listed in the RPS Journal and on the website. They usually start at 10.30 am and finish about 3.00/4.00 pm with a break for lunch around 1.00 pm. (A few assessments finish at lunchtime – it depends on the number of applications received.)

Tea and coffee are normally available for those attending, but you will need to provide your own lunch. Tickets are free to applicants and there is a small charge for observers, but bear in mind that seating is limited and tickets for some assessments do run out.

The day usually begins with a welcome from the Distinctions Manager and a brief introduction from the Chairperson and then it is time for the work to be viewed. Submissions are assessed by a Panel of Fellows of The Society, normally 5, and a Chairperson (the minimum number required is three). Each submission is assessed in turn, anonymously, (only the Chairperson sees the application form) and this will be the first time it has been seen by the Panel.

**Prints:** The statement is read out and the submissions are displayed in two or three rows which Panel members view from their seats before getting up to have a closer look.

**Digital Images:** The statement is read out and submissions in the form of digital images are projected on to a screen with a black background. The 15 images are projected individually for 7 seconds each and the whole portfolio is projected twice; the thumbnails are then left on the screen while the Panel makes its decision. The software used is ACDSee which does not perform any manipulation in putting the image to the screen.

**All Submissions:** The Panel members make their assessments against the criteria set out in this Handbook. When they have studied the submission, an initial vote is taken and the Chairperson then asks one or more Panel members to comment on each application, following which a final vote is taken. The Chairperson then announces whether or not it is being recommended to the Distinctions Advisory Board and Council for the Distinction. If you are successful, your name is announced - usually to a round of applause. Unsuccessful applicants remain anonymous and the reasons for the decision are concisely explained.

*(N.B. As photobooks and Interactive multimedia cannot be displayed to an audience in the same way as other formats, the assessment takes place without an audience, but otherwise the same procedure is followed.)*

By the end of the day you will have a good idea about what the Panel is looking for as you will have heard whether or not each submission has been recommended for the Distinction as well as the reasons for the Panel's decisions.



## A7.2 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Applicants present at the assessment will hear the Panel's decisions as they assess each submission. All applicants will receive an email informing them of the Panel's recommendation within two working days of the assessment. (If you do not have e-mail a letter will be sent by 1st Class post.)

**Recommended Applicants:** A list of all the recommended applicants will be posted on the website on the Introduction page. All Distinctions recommendations need to be ratified by the Distinctions Advisory Board and The Society's Council, and it is the Council which finally awards the Distinction. This is usually done within 10 working days of the assessment. You will receive a letter of confirmation of the award and a Certificate under the Seal of the Society, signed by the President. You will also receive a lapel badge and a digital file containing The Society's distinctions emblem which can be used on your personal stationery. Additionally when you are awarded the Associateship you are entitled – and encouraged - to use the letters ARPS after your name. If you would like to have your certificate formally presented, contact your Regional Organiser and this can be arranged.

**Non Recommended Applicants:** Unfortunately not everyone can be recommended. Normally within 14 working days of the assessment, all non-recommended applicants will receive a feedback letter giving the Panel's reason for their decision. Whenever possible you will be given the opportunity to receive help and advice from a member of the Panel.

You may make one re-submission for half the usual application fee. **Please note:** If you fail in one category of the Associateship, you may not submit the identical portfolio to another category.

## A8 FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

### A8.1 Which category? How to Decide

Sometimes applicants find it difficult to decide on the category they should go for; and in fact some types of photography could be submitted to more than one Panel.

The main thing to consider is the *purpose* for which the photographs were taken - what are the photographs intended to show? Are they records, were they taken with an artistic intent or were they taken on commercial assignment? Think about what you are going to say in your statement. For example:

#### **Intention**

Is your work creative, pictorial, artistic?

Do you have a purposeful message that you wish your images/presentation to convey?

Is your work taken for publication or other commercial purpose?

Is there a clearly defined end use or application, not necessarily commercial?

Is your main purpose to make an accurate record of, for example, a building, or to document a process or event?

Is your main intention not only to make an accurate record of a place, or to document a journey, but also to portray the essence of that place, or the places through which you travel?

Is your main intention to make an accurate record of some aspect of the natural world?

*\* The Professional and Applied category includes architecture, illustrative, theatrical, wedding, portraiture, documentary, visual journalism, whether taken for commercial or for personal use.*

#### **Most suitable category**

Visual Art

Contemporary

Professional and Applied\*

Professional and Applied\*

Professional and Applied\*

Travel

Natural History

N.B. Landscapes, taken for their pictorial impact, should be submitted to the Visual Art category; landscapes taken to show concerns over environmental issues (e.g.global warming) could be submitted to either the Contemporary or the Professional and Applied category, depending on the purpose for which they were taken.

Obviously there are crossovers - a good record nature picture is often a good pictorial image as well, but its main intention is still to record. It is therefore important that you clearly describe the *main* purpose of your work in the Statement of Intent.

The Society recognises that not all photographers wish to specialise but prefer variety in their photography. While, therefore, you may submit a portfolio which concentrates on a specific theme, it is equally acceptable to submit a selection of work comprising two or three different types of photography. You could, for example, submit five pictures of street photography, five abstracts and five landscapes to the Visual Art Panel; similarly, you could submit five portraits, five documentary and five weddings to the Professional and Applied Panel, or any other types of work taken for commercial purposes.

If you decide to send a portfolio comprising two or three themes, the individual pictures should be presented within their themes and not intermingled. You should still consider how the portfolio looks as a whole; it is important that it is arranged in a cohesive manner and there should also be a consistency throughout. A completely random set of images is rarely acceptable.

If you are still undecided, the Distinctions Department can advise but remember - if a Panel thinks that the work submitted to them is really more suitable for another category, then they will transfer it. Your work and form will be retained by the Distinctions Department and will be presented at the next meeting of the recommended Panel without further cost.

### A8.2 Moving to the Next Distinction Level

Although applicants for an Associateship can use images from their Licentiate submission, it is advisable, in most cases, to submit new work as the Associateship as it's a considerably higher level.

In the case of Fellowship, the work submitted **must** be different from your successful Associateship submission.

## A9 THE PRACTICALITIES

This section sets out the practical aspects of applying for a Distinction.

### A9.1 Your Application – The Form

- You must complete an Associateship application form (which can be downloaded from the website or requested from the Distinctions Department).
- Send the completed form together with the current application fee to the Distinctions Department. Early application is advisable to avoid disappointment.
- You may submit more than one application, but a separate fee and form must be submitted for each one.
- Do not send the application form with your work unless you are applying with a CD in which case they can be sent together.

### A9.2 Your Application – The Evidence

- Do make sure that prints/slides are in the correct order (i.e. 1 - 15) and that on the back of each print you have put your name and the number in the order of display.
- Please enclose your hanging plans and statement of intent with your portfolio. (hanging plan applies to print submissions only)
- Portfolio boxes are highly recommended for carrying as well as sending your evidence. ('Nomad' will make boxes, whatever size you want: 01858 463114; website: [www.nomadplc.co.uk](http://www.nomadplc.co.uk). When ordering it is advisable to ask for it to be foam lined and with handles.)
- If you are sending your work, make sure that:
  - a) it is securely packed;
  - b) clearly labelled with your name, email address, category and date of assessment;
  - c) the parcel must arrive 10 days prior to the assessment date.
- You will receive an email confirmation when your submission has been received.
- The form and evidence must be sent separately.

### A9.3 Overseas Parcels

- Please make sure that all clearances are paid, in order to avoid delays in delivery. For customs purposes, you must indicate that your evidence is a TEMPORARY IMPORT ONLY – NO COMMERCIAL VALUE i.e. it is not being sent to the UK to be sold.
- Please stick the evidence label provided on to the front of your parcel. Ensure that you have clearly written your email address on this label and you will be notified by email when we receive your portfolio.
- The Society will not take responsibility for paying any import fees or taxes, and will not accept parcels that require any additional payments.
- **Please note:** It may cost more to have your prints returned than to reprint them; let us know if you do not wish to have them returned.

### A9.4 Personal Delivery and Collection

- You can bring your prints on the day of the assessment between 9.15 am and 10.00 am. (**Please note:** there will be no access before 9.15 am)
- You may leave your submission at Reception at The Society's Headquarters during normal office hours (9.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday) but not at weekends.
- If you wish to collect your evidence on the day of the assessment, you should state this on your application form and it will be available at lunch time or at the end of the day.
- You can collect your evidence from The Society after assessment during office hours - contact the Distinctions Department giving a week's notice if possible.

#### **A9.5 Fees and Payment**

- For current fees please see the website.
- One resubmission for Associateship may be made at the reduced rate of half the normal application fee.
- For Fellowship, one resubmission to the same category may be made at a reduced fee.
- The fee for applications through the exemption scheme is half the standard application fee.
- You must send the application fee with each application. You may pay by Paypal, using [distinctions@rps.org](mailto:distinctions@rps.org) or by credit card, sterling cheque or postal order, or by an International Money Order or banker's draft drawn on a UK bank made payable to The Royal Photographic Society and crossed.
- Distinctions are only awarded to current members of The Society, so if you are already a member, you must ensure that your current year's subscription is paid. If you are not a member you must complete the Non-Member section on the application form and include the membership subscription. This will only be processed if you are successful.
- You should also include the cost of the return of your evidence including the cost of any insurance or registration by air freight.

#### **A9.6 Returning Your Portfolio**

- Please see application form for details.
- CDs will not be returned unless specifically requested.
- Personal collection - see [A9.4 above](#)
- All reasonable care will be taken of evidence submitted, but The Society will not be responsible for any loss or damage whilst in its care or in transit.

#### **A9.7 Retention of Work**

- **Please note:** The Society reserves the right to retain your portfolio for six months beyond the date of assessment. This is to enable it to be copied and used to help other potential applicants, for inclusion in a Society publication without payment of a fee, or for use on The Society website.

#### **A9.8 Cancellation or Other Alterations**

- After submitting your application form, if for any reason you are unable to submit your portfolio or need to make any other changes, you must immediately email [ben@rps.org](mailto:ben@rps.org). Due to the volume of work received, it is essential that cancellations are made in writing.
- **N.B.** Owing to the high demand for places, if you cancel within 2 weeks of the assessment date – either by withdrawing your application or transferring it to a future date - you will still be charged for that assessment.

#### **A9.9 Review Procedure**

The decision of the assessment panel is final. However, if a candidate feels that there is any question as to the validity of the assessment process, they can ask The Society to review their application. All such requests must normally be made in writing within four weeks of receipt of the feedback letter, outlining fully the substance of the applicant's case. In such cases the chairperson of the Distinction Advisory Board will initially assess the case and decide if the complaint merits further review. If that is the case the matter will be handed to the Fellowship Board member with particular responsibility to the assessment panel involved in the initial decision. The matter will be investigated and if considered necessary can be taken to the Fellowship Board for a final decision. In such cases the decision of the Fellowship Board will be final.

## A10 CHECK LISTS

It is worth taking a few quiet moments to go through these check lists to make sure that you can tick all the boxes and reassure yourself that your submission is complete.

### A10.1 The Application Form

Completed all relevant sections	
Current application fee enclosed	
Current return postage included	
Checked website for availability of Assessment date. <a href="http://www.rps.org/assessment-dates">http://www.rps.org/assessment-dates</a>	
<i>Non-Members:</i> Membership subscription, payment and proof of status, if appropriate (ARPS Only)	
<i>Exemptions:</i> Proof of qualification/status enclosed (i.e. copy of certificate) (ARPS Only)	

### A10.2 The Evidence

Submission sent 10 days prior to the assessment date (if applicable)	
Two copies of the statement of intent & hanging plan enclosed (print submission only)	
Each image numbered in order required for display	
Prints: packed in numerical order and named on the back	
Evidence suitably packaged for sending	
Label for sending completed and affixed to outside of parcel	
Return label completed and enclosed	

## SECTION B: THE FELLOWSHIP

### B1 INTRODUCTION

The assessors will be looking for outstanding work that may be either:

- a) pushing the boundaries of photography in your chosen area of photography  
or
- b) showing the very highest practice in a given area.

Images used in a successful Associateship panel cannot be resubmitted at the Fellowship level. You must submit with a completely new body of work. If possible you should include thumbnails of the previous Associateship panel or provide other evidence that the work is completely new. What is acceptable can be discussed with the Distinctions Manager.

It is possible to achieve the Fellowship with a unique panel of images, in which the assessors will be looking for both originality and individual photographic vision that shows a clear indication of a strong personal style and presentation. Alternatively it can be achieved with a panel of images in a common area of photographic practice such as natural history, landscape, portraiture etc. In this case the assessors will be looking for photographic practice that incorporates both an individual approach and technical standards at the very highest level.

In all cases the assessors will be looking both at the individual images as well as the presentation as a whole and will need convincing that you are seeing, thinking and working as a photographer at the very highest level.

Attaining the Fellowship involves a significant amount of time and effort, but it is a goal worth aiming for as it confers a recognition that you are a photographer of considerable merit and expertise, and is an achievement of which to be very proud. In order to be successful, it is essential that the technical quality of your submission is excellent and, if the work is interpretive, then the quality should be appropriate to the subject and intent. The presentation of your submission should be to the highest possible standard.

#### B1.1 Who May Apply?

Only Associates of The Royal Photographic Society and Fellows of the British Institute of Professional Photography (BIPP) may apply for the Fellowship. It does not matter in which category you gained your Associateship – you can apply in the same or a different category for the Fellowship.

#### B1.2 What Do I Submit?

Your application will normally be in the form of Stills, or Multimedia and Narrative, or Research, Education and Application of Photography. It is also possible for a submission to be made in the form of an installation. Depending on your choice, you will need to submit as follows:

**B1.2.1 Stills photography:** 20 mounted prints (displayed in 2 or 3 rows; the maximum height between each row is 23" and the maximum width of the display is 20') or 20 transparencies or a book containing a minimum of 40 significant images (at least 2 copies) (Currently digital images are not accepted for submission for the Fellowship)  
(The Contemporary Panel considers a wide range and mix of formats, but check first with Distinctions Department)

**B1.2.2 Multimedia and Narrative:** see A6.1

**B1.2.3 Research, Education and Application of Photography:** Submissions are likely to be in written form: see A6.2

**B1.2.4 Installations:** see B3

All applicants must also submit a **Statement of Intent**

The statement of intent is a significant part of an application in still photography at both the Associateship and Fellowship levels. Particular requirements apply in both the Contemporary category and also in Multimedia and Narrative. Details of these can be found in their respective sections.

In other categories, candidates should outline in not more than 150 words, the purposes, objectives or intent of the work. This gives an opportunity to explain to the Panel why the images were taken and to place them in a meaningful context. It is not

necessary to describe each image or to provide detailed technical information, although, if an unusual technique is used, then the applicant may wish to describe this briefly.

It is best to avoid over-elaborate or wordy statements or to make claims about the submission which do not match the images presented. Statements which are concise are often the most useful and effective. In some cases one or two sentences will suffice. See the website for examples.

### **B1.3 DIRECT APPLICATION**

A direct route for application to the Fellowship is available only for photographers (both members and non-members) who have an established national/international reputation. Contact [andy@rps.org](mailto:andy@rps.org) for further details.

## **B2 CATEGORIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

The categories in which you can apply for the Fellowship and the criteria are the same as for the Associateship (see A3 and A4) They are assessed, however, at a considerably higher level, as described above (B1).

## **B3 INSTALLATIONS**

An installation is a presentation of photographs within an environment that may be permanent or semi-permanent within a designed or natural space and may be presented as evidence for a submission for the Fellowship. The photographic requirements come within the general regulations for the Fellowship of The Society.

The application is in two stages: the pre-assessment and the on-site / off-site assessment. The former requires a statement of intent and a visit to the site by a member of a Distinction Panel. Following a positive report, members of the Fellowship Board will visit the site and make a recommendation to Council. *Alternatively* it is possible to present the installation as a model or show the environment in still or movie form. The photographic element may be presented as a panel of prints or as a book.

Whatever the outcome of your submission, you will be asked to cover all expenses relating to these viewings. While The Society will endeavour to keep costs to a minimum, this could result in an additional charge in the region of several hundred pounds.

## **B4 THE PROCESS**

When you apply for the Fellowship of The Society, you submit your application to one of the specialist categories. These assessments are strictly confidential and therefore not open to an audience in order to allow for a totally open debate on each submission. The method of assessment is the same as for the Associateship (A7) but in the case of Fellowship, the Panel makes its recommendations to the Fellowship Board.

## **B5 FELLOWSHIP BOARD**

The purpose of the Fellowship Board is to provide a moderating process and to ensure that standards are maintained evenly across all categories and it is this Board that makes the final recommendations to Council.

The Fellowship Board normally comprises five members plus a Chairperson and meets after the spring and autumn assessments. All Board members are appointed by Council for their in-depth knowledge and wealth of experience of both photography and the Distinctions of The Society. The Chairpersons of all the Fellowship Panels subject to review are expected to attend as observers and also to present any submissions recommended from their Panel. (The Science and Research, Education and Application of Photography Panels are not included in this process.)

You are kept informed of the progress of your application, but you should be aware that a recommendation to the Fellowship Board does not in any way guarantee success; submissions which do not have the unanimous support of the Panel can be referred to the Board; the reasons for this will be explained to the applicant.

If the specialist Panel does not recommend your submission to the Fellowship Board, you will receive feedback, normally from the Chairperson of the Panel, and given the opportunity of seeking further advice and guidance from a Panel member.

If you are recommended to the Fellowship Board but your application is not successful, you will be encouraged to attend a Fellowship feedback day where you will be given the reasons for the Board's decision; you will also have the opportunity to discuss your work in depth with a member of the Fellowship Board. This can either be done privately or, if you are willing to share the comments on your portfolio, it is very helpful if you are prepared for the discussion to take place in front of the other attendees. Overseas applicants will be sent a video by a member of the Fellowship Board explaining the reasons for the Board's decision.

The Science and Research, Education and Application of Photography categories which take a different form of submission are not included in this arrangement. Successful applicants in these categories will be notified of the Panel's recommendation by email (or 1<sup>st</sup> Class post) and their names will be posted on the website within two working days of the assessment. Unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback, normally from the Chairperson, giving the reasons for the Panel's decision.

All recommendations from the Panels and the Fellowship Board have to be formally ratified by Council and it is Council who awards the Distinction.

## **B6 FELLOWSHIP ADVISORY DAYS**

Advisory days for the Fellowship are normally held three times a year in different parts of the UK and are limited to 12 participants with no additional audience. They are open to anyone eligible to submit an application for the Fellowship, i.e. current Associate members of The Society and current Fellows of the BIPP. Two specially selected advisors with the appropriate skill and experience give advice on these days which follow a similar format to those held for Licentiate and Associateship: successful submissions are shown and discussed and then those attending have their own work considered.

Tickets need to be booked in advance through the relevant organiser – details can be found on the website and in the RPS Journal. You should bring a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 30 prints which should be mounted. You should bring a body of work which forms a substantial part of your proposed Fellowship submission and you will be expected to have a clear idea of the theme/concept of your submission.

You are only allowed to attend one such day prior to applying for the Fellowship, unless you produce an entirely new body of work.

## **B7 CELEBRATION OF DISTINCTIONS**

*(see Section A5.3 for more details or visit <http://www.rps.org/events> )*

## **B8 RESPONSIBILITY OF FELLOWS**

The Fellowship is The Society's highest Distinction and, as such, makes a statement about you and your achievement. As a Fellow, you have a continuing commitment to maintain the highest level of photographic excellence as well as conducting your photography to the highest ethical standard. As a representative of The Society you are expected to play a full and meaningful role in promoting good photographic practice



## SECTION C: IMAGING SCIENTIST QUALIFICATIONS

### C 1 INTRODUCTION

Photographic and imaging techniques are used increasingly in practically all walks of life; the image is as important as the printed word. The basic science and technology that makes this possible comes from imaging scientists who work in a wide range of disciplines and applications. To recognise achievements in this field, and also to enhance career prospects and recognise professional competence, The Royal Photographic Society offers professional Imaging Scientist Qualifications.

These provide a structure leading to professional qualifications for engineers, scientists and technologists whose professional activities are concerned with quantitative or mechanistic aspects of imaging systems or their applications. They are being recognised by the imaging science community as essential benchmark qualifications benefiting all sections of the imaging world. The relevant academic disciplines (chemistry, engineering, physics, computer science, imaging science, colour science etc.) and their applications will be interpreted as widely as possible.

The Qualifications may be gained by members of The Society working within relatively narrow specialisations but their achievements will require a range of widely applicable professional skills. Candidates are required to demonstrate at an appropriate level, and as required by their particular professional circumstances, an ability to undertake a programme of work, write reports and papers, work within a team and produce results.

Those members who acquire an Imaging Scientist Qualification will receive additionally a Society Distinction. In common with most bodies awarding vocational qualifications, the former (ISQ) status only continues whilst the person is professionally active, whether in full time employment or fully retired and is a member of The Society. Professional activity includes one (or more) of the following:

Professional activity (e.g. involvement in a professional body by serving on committees, attending meetings, mentoring)

Work based learning (e.g. consultancy, supervising staff/students, external examining, reflective practice)

Formal/Educational (e.g. writing articles/papers, further education)

Self-directed learning (e.g. reading journals, reviewing books/refereeing articles)

Other (e.g. voluntary work, public service)

Members who terminate qualified membership, on ceasing to be professionally active, may retain The Society Distinction as long as they remain paid up members of The Society.

#### C 1.1 Levels

*Level 1* (QIS & LRPS) Qualified Imaging Scientist & Licentiate: for those with academic qualifications below degree level.

*Level 2*: (GIS & ARPS) Graduate Imaging Scientist & Associate: for those with a first degree.

*Level 3*: (AIS & ARPS) Accredited Imaging Scientist & Associate: for those with postgraduate experience as imaging scientists.

*Level 4*: (ASIS & FRPS) Accredited Senior Imaging Scientist & Fellow: the senior professional qualification.

Candidates with a valid claim for entry to a higher category need not proceed through the lower categories.

#### C1.2 Evidence

The evidence required in support of applications for qualifications will normally be in 4 parts:

- i. Documentary evidence of prior academic qualifications. In certain cases this requirement may be replaced by a longer period of relevant experience.
- ii. A statement of experience as a professional imaging scientist.
- iii. A full curriculum vitae.
- iv. Statements from referees which will allow the extent, level, scope, and experience of the candidate in imaging science to be assessed. Where a mentor (see supervision below) has been appointed, his/her report must be included.

#### C1.3 Standards

For each level of qualification there are three basic routes designated A, B and C. The descriptions below are not prescriptive but are intended to give a general indication of the level required.

##### C1.3.1 Qualified Imaging Scientist & Licentiate (QIS & LRPS)

For this level there is a minimum age of 21 years.

- a) BTEC HND in engineering or science.
- b) One year of relevant experience. Where the candidate has not satisfied part A, four years of relevant experience will be accepted instead.
- c) Normally, the candidate will have performed work of a non-routine nature, which may have been directed by a senior colleague, and have produced accurate records and simple internal reports.

### **C1.3.2 Graduate Imaging Scientist & Associate (GIS & ARPS)**

- a) A suitable degree in engineering or science.
- b) One year of relevant experience where the candidate has an honours degree and two years of relevant experience where the candidate has a pass degree.
- c) Normally, the candidate will have made a useful contribution to the work of a team of scientists and may have directed the work of a technician.

### **C1.3.3 Accredited Imaging Scientist & Associate (AIS & ARPS)**

- a) Normally either QIS or GIS.
- b) Five years of relevant experience post QIS or 3 years of relevant experience post GIS. Where the candidate has not satisfied part A, nine years of relevant experience will be accepted instead.
- c) As GIS but more evidence reflecting the years involved. Normally, the candidate will have generated and completed an individual project, such as a postgraduate thesis, and will have written internal reports and/or published refereed papers. The Qualifications Board will expect to see evidence of independent work.

### **C1.3.4 Accredited Senior Imaging Scientist & Fellow (ASIS & FRPS)**

NOTE: The ASIS qualification was conceived as being equivalent to having Chartered status.

- a) Normally AIS.
- b) Five years of relevant experience post AIS. Alternatively, nine years of relevant experience post GIS or eleven years post QIS. Where the candidate has not satisfied QIS (part a) fourteen years of relevant experience will be accepted instead.
- c) Individual work of a high standard, which has shown originality. The Qualifications Board will expect to see evidence of a broad involvement in imaging science beyond a narrow specialism.

### **C1.4 Exemptions**

Members of The Royal Photographic Society who are also members of other professional or learned bodies and hold equivalent qualifications may apply for AIS (e.g. MRSC, or MInstP) or for ASIS (e.g. FRSC, or FInstP) provided that they have a sufficient period of appropriate imaging science work experience. In these cases, only evidence of the exempting qualification, a statement of relevant experience, a curriculum vitae and one referee's report (Referee 2) are required.

### **C1.5 Supervision**

It is recommended that the candidate registers an intention to apply for a Qualification at the beginning of the period of qualifying experience or as soon as practicable thereafter. This allows the candidate to seek a mentor who will monitor, assist and advise the candidate on their progress during the qualifying period. The mentor's final report provides detailed evidence in support of the application.

In cases where the candidate's work is confidential, the mentor's report may provide the major or sole evidence.

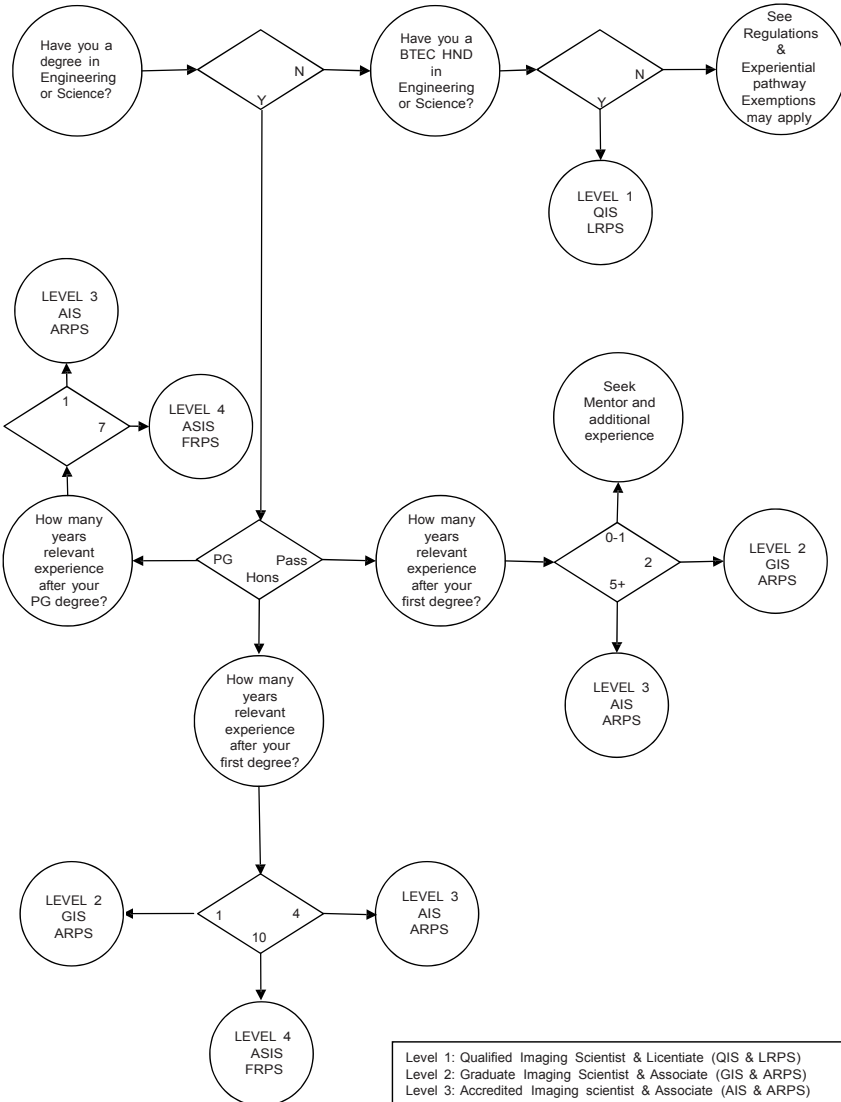
**Note:** It is the responsibility of the candidate to identify and engage with a suitably qualified mentor and contact The Society for approval.

### **C1.6 Qualifications Board**

The Qualifications Board will consider applications for all Qualifications. Membership of the Qualifications Board will be determined by the Council of The Royal Photographic Society and will consist of members who hold an ASIS Qualification. The Qualifications Board will be responsible for the recognition of academic courses.

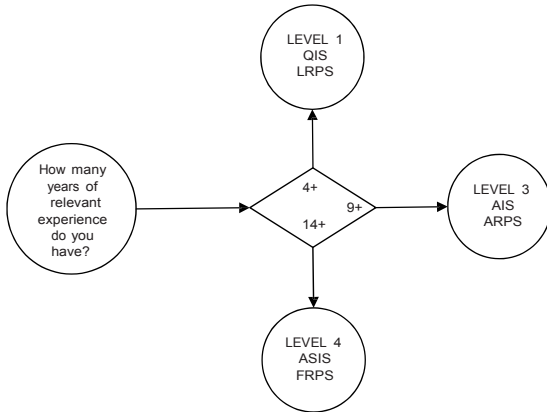
In cases of failure the Qualifications Board will give clear reasons to the candidate and, where appropriate, guidance and advice, without prejudice or commitment, as to how a future application should be made.

**C1.7 PATHWAYS TO IMAGING SCIENTIST QUALIFICATIONS**

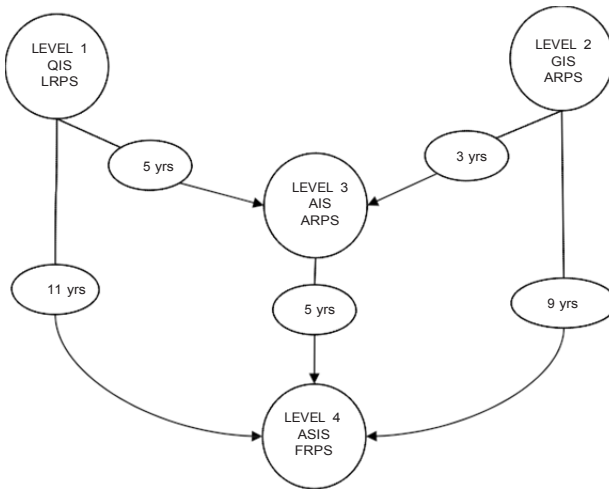


Level 1: Qualified Imaging Scientist & Licentiate (QIS & LRPS)  
 Level 2: Graduate Imaging Scientist & Associate (GIS & ARPS)  
 Level 3: Accredited Imaging scientist & Associate (AIS & ARPS)  
 Level 4: Accredited Senior Imaging scientist & Fellow (ASIS & FRPS)  
 PG: Postgraduate (Doctorate). For Masters add 2 years

**C1.7.1 EXPERIENTIAL PATHWAYS TO IMAGING SCIENTIST QUALIFICATIONS** (For those without formal degree qualifications)



**PROGRESS BETWEEN LEVELS**



Level 1: Qualified Imaging Scientist & Licentiate (QIS & LRPS)  
 Level 2: Graduate Imaging scientist & Associate (AIS & ARPS)  
 Level 3: Accredited Imaging scientist & Associate (AIS & ARPS)  
 Level 4: Accredited Senior Imaging scientist & Fellow (ASIS & FRPS)

## SECTION D: CONTACT DETAILS / DIRECTIONS / ACCOMMODATION / MAP

### D1 Contact Details:

**Distinctions Manager:** Andy Moore LRPS  
Email: [andy@rps.org](mailto:andy@rps.org) Tel: +44 (0)1225 325760

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Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/royalphotographicsociety](https://facebook.com/royalphotographicsociety) and Twitter at [twitter.com/The \\_RPS](https://twitter.com/The_RPS)

### D2 DIRECTIONS TO FENTON HOUSE

You can be sure of a warm welcome when you visit Fenton House. There is a small exhibition of members' work to view at Reception which changes every month and you can help yourself to a cup of tea or coffee. We are open weekdays 9.30 am - 4.30 pm and look forward to seeing you.

#### D2.1 TRAVELLING BY CAR: Directions from M4 motorway

Exit M4 motorway junction 18. Proceed south on A46 to Bath.  
As you approach the city on a dual carriageway take the exit to Bath and go right at the roundabout, entering the city from the north east on the A4 London Road; follow this towards the city centre.

At the first main traffic lights (after Morrisons supermarket on the left) turn left onto A36/A367 Wells and Exeter "ring" road. Proceed over Bridge, past Fire Station (on your left) and at the second set of traffic lights turn right signposted Bristol A36 (A4) Wells A39.

Go straight over next roundabout and follow "ring" road through main traffic lights under railway bridge and on through Widcombe Village, (follow road and stay in left hand lane) until you reach the large roundabout which is bisected by main railway line viaduct.

At this roundabout/intersection take first left exit A367 Shepton Mallet/Radstock and continue up the hill "Wells Road" for approx. 3/4 of a mile. Fenton House is on the right just before the sharp right hand bend and shops.

## D2.2 TRAVELLING BY TRAIN

Regular half-hourly service from London Paddington. Journey time: approximately 90 minutes.  
From Bath Spa train station:

**By bus:** Turn left out of the station and within a few metres you will find the bus station. Take the No.13 (every 20 minutes) and ask to alight at Bear Flat. When you get off the bus, you will find Fenton House a few minutes' walk back down the hill on your left.

**On foot:** Approximately 25 minute walk up a steep hill. Exit station walking left along Dorchester Street, past bus station, over foot bridge, under viaduct, through subway, turn right, go up the hill (Wells Road). Fenton House is at the top of the hill on the right.

**By taxi:** there is a taxi rank immediately outside the station

## D3 PARKING

There is limited parking at The Society's offices at weekends when workshops are taking place;  
During the week there is on street parking in the surrounding area.  
If you drive past the RPS, parking spaces can usually be found either on the main road or streets off to the left.

## D4 OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

If you are booking an assessment day or course taking place at Fenton House and need to stay overnight, why not make a weekend of it in the beautiful historical city of Bath. We have a short list of local accommodation near to the Royal Photographic Society. For a more comprehensive list please visit [Visitbath.co.uk](http://Visitbath.co.uk)

The following list of Bed and Breakfast will **offer discount** to current RPS members. Please contact them for details.

**Astor House**  
14 Oldfield Road  
Bath, Somerset BA2 3ND  
01225 429134  
[astorhouse-bath.co.uk](http://astorhouse-bath.co.uk)

**Bloomfield House**  
46 Bloomfield Road  
Bath, Somerset BA2 2AS  
01225 420105  
[ecobloomfield.com](http://ecobloomfield.com)

**Dorian House**  
1 Upper Oldfield Park  
Bath, Somerset BA2 3JX  
01225 426336  
[dorianhouse.co.uk](http://dorianhouse.co.uk)

**Lavender House**  
17 Bloomfield Park  
Bath, Somerset BA2 2BY  
01225 314500  
[lavenderhouse-bath.com](http://lavenderhouse-bath.com)

**Oldfields Bed and Breakfast**  
102 Wells Road  
Bath, Somerset BA2 3AL  
01225 317984  
[oldfields.co.uk](http://oldfields.co.uk)

**Please note:** *These are not recommendations and The Royal Photographic Society is in no way affiliated to any of them*

## NOTES

**THE DISTINCTIONS DEPARTMENT**

**The Royal Photographic Society**

Fenton House, 122 Wells Road, Bath BA2 3AH, UK

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**Simon Vercoe LRPS** Distinctions Assistant

**Email: [si@rps.org](mailto:si@rps.org) Tel: +44(0)1225 325742**