

# A GUIDE ON HOW TO APPLY FOR A FELLOWSHIP

## Distinctions and Qualifications Guidelines



Please consider the environment before printing this document

# What are Distinctions and how do I apply



**LICENTIATE (LRPS)**



**ASSOCIATE (ARPS)**



**FELLOWSHIP (FRPS)**

# INTRODUCTION TO THE DISTINCTIONS

The Royal Photographic Society Distinctions are recognised as some of the most prestigious in the world. There are three levels of Distinctions – **Licentiate**, **Associate** and **Fellowship**. Should you be awarded a Distinction, you are only entitled to use the Distinction while you remain a member of The Society.

## LICENTIATE

There are no restrictions on the subject matter when applying for this level. A Panel of Associate or Fellowship members of The Society assesses your application.

## ASSOCIATE AND FELLOWSHIP

Applications are assessed by Panels as detailed below. Panel members are normally Fellows of The Society or, in particular circumstances, external advisers may be consulted.

- **Applied:** Photography which has a specific end purpose or use. This by definition includes all professional photography as well as many other disciplines such as: documentary, portraiture, theatrical, record, architectural, wedding, visual journalism, astronomy and palaeontology.
- **Conceptual and Contemporary:** photography which explores, defines, illustrates or evaluates issues through photographic images.
- **Creative Production:** recognises technical and imaginative skills in the post production of still imagery through digital or analogue processing. Submissions will be from applicants working in graphic and illustrative arts and this is to be encouraged in so far as the application is principally based on photographic imagery.
- **Multimedia:** encompasses Audio Visual, Film and Television and interactive multimedia. Multi platform work should be submitted in this category.
- **Natural History:** includes all branches of natural history, including zoology, botany, and meteorology.
- **Science:** Most applicants involved in scientific subjects apply for one of the Imaging Science Qualifications (ISQ). It is possible however, to apply for a Distinction in scientific and medical imaging, medical photography or other related discipline by the submission of a portfolio of prints, transparencies or digital images.
- **Travel:** Applications have no geographical limitations, and should express the feeling of a time and place, and portray a land, its people or culture.
- **Creative:** This category recognises digital creativity either in camera or in post production. Applications must originate as the applicant's own photography, but manipulation will have altered the reality of the images.
- **Pictorial:** This category is intended to recognise the creative use of the camera, in producing images which are not fundamentally altered either in post production processing or in-camera manipulation.
- **Research, Education and application of Photography:** as a general rule, applications will be by way of a written paper.

Fellowship applications are assessed in the first instance by the Panel appropriate to the category in which you apply. Should the submission meet the requirements of that category and they consider the application worthy of further consideration for The Society's Fellowship, they will forward it to the Fellowship Board. The Fellowship Board is the final arbiter in all applications for Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society. The purpose of the Fellowship Board is to maintain a consistent standard of distinguished photographic ability across all the categories. The Board consists of the most experienced Fellows of The Society, drawn from the Distinctions Advisory Board and general



membership. The recommendations made by this Board will go to Council for ratification.

Individual images may only be submitted at one level of Distinction. In assessing submissions at a higher level, any previous successful application will, when practicable, be reviewed to ensure a development in photographic skills and understanding.

The applicant must own the copyright to, and be the creator of, all the photographic elements in a submission. No third party images may be used in the majority of categories. A limited number of third party images may be used in Multimedia submissions (see Panel requirements 5e); third party images can be used in Research, Education and Application of Photography submissions; and in Creative Production applications.

It is expected that your submission will have a high technical quality appropriate to the category in which you are applying. It is accepted that technical quality relevant to one category may not be appropriate for another. For instance, medical or scientific images may require consistent sharpness, while Natural History may require key points of focus, with backgrounds appropriate to the subject and scale of the subject. Lighting must be used effectively, whether natural or artificial. Submissions should be free from technical faults.

Applicants may make only one submission to a particular Distinctions Panel at any time (multiple submissions in the same category at the same time by an individual will not be accepted).

All assessments are carried out anonymously, with the candidates' names only being announced after a successful assessment. Details of the deliberations are not made public.

The Royal Photographic Society is a photographic society and an educational charity, and whilst other elements can feature, and be an integral part of an application for a Distinction, the assessment will be heavily weighted to the standard of photography within the submission.

# **DISTINCTIONS: THE PROCESS AND FORMATS**

## **ASSESSMENT DAYS: HOW YOUR WORK IS ASSESSED**

Licentiate and Associate assessments are normally conducted in front of an audience, many of whom will have applications being considered during the day. Fellowship submissions are conducted without an audience.

The day begins with a welcome from the Distinctions Department and a brief introduction from the Chairperson. Each submission is assessed by a Panel of experts, normally consisting of five panel members and a Chairperson. A Distinctions Advisory Board moderator will normally be present. Submissions are assessed anonymously; only the Chairperson and Distinctions staff are aware of the applicant's name. Submissions are assessed against the criteria set out in these Distinctions guidelines.

### **LICENTIATE: PRINTS**

- The portfolio is displayed as per your hanging plan; in a maximum of three rows. The panel initially views the portfolio as a whole, followed by a detailed examination of the images.
- The chair will collate the assessment forms and announce the decision, if successful the applicant will be named and a panel member will speak about the successful panel, if unsuccessful applicants remain anonymous and the reasons for the decision are concisely explained to the audience.
- The Panel Chair may have a private discussion with the members of the Panel, without an audience being present.
- All Panel recommendations are forwarded to the Distinctions Advisory Board and Council for final ratification. Once approved by Council, you will be notified that your Distinction has been awarded.
- All unsuccessful applicants will receive a feedback letter giving the reasons why they were not recommended, based on the comments written on the marking sheets.

### **LICENTIATE: IMAGES FOR SCREEN/TRANSPARENCIES**

- The portfolio is projected onto a screen/monitor with a black background. The images are projected individually for seven seconds each in sequence as you have numbered them, and the whole portfolio is projected twice.
- Digital images only - Thumbnails are then left on the screen while a decision is made. The software used performs no manipulation in putting the image on the screen.
- At the conclusion of the viewing, any panel member can select any of the 10 images for closer inspection regarding technical issues, and voice their concerns. No comments will be made at this stage other than those related to technical concerns.
- The chair will collate the assessment forms and announce the decision, if successful the applicant will be named and a panel member will speak about the successful panel, if unsuccessful applicants remain anonymous and the reasons for the decision are concisely explained to the audience.
- The Panel Chair may have a private discussion with the members of the Panel, without an audience being present.
- All Panel recommendations are forwarded to the Distinctions Advisory Board and Council for final ratification. Once approved by Council, you will be notified that your Distinction has been awarded.
- All unsuccessful applicants will receive a feedback letter giving the reasons why they were not recommended, based on the comments written on the marking sheets.

### **LICENTIATE: BOOKS**

- Due to the difficulty in reviewing books, they are assessed without an audience.
- Books are viewed by the Panel members and the assessment procedure is as for Prints, above.

### **ASSOCIATE: PRINTS**

- The portfolio is displayed as per your hanging plan, in a maximum of three rows and the Statement of Intent is read out. The Panel initially views the portfolio as a whole, followed by a detailed examination of the images.
- After studying the portfolio; an initial vote is taken and the Panel Chair asks one or more panel members to comment, following which, a final vote is taken. On occasion, the Panel Chair may have a private discussion with the members of the Panel, without an audience being present.
- The Panel Chair then announces whether the submission will be recommended, and if successful; the applicant's name will be announced.
- Unsuccessful applicants remain anonymous; and the reasons for the decision are concisely explained to the audience.
- All unsuccessful applicants will receive a feedback letter giving the reasons why they were not recommended.

### **ASSOCIATE: IMAGES FOR SCREEN/TRANSPARENCIES**

- The portfolio is projected onto a screen/monitor with a black background. The images are projected individually for seven seconds each in sequence as you have numbered them, and the whole portfolio is projected twice.
- Digital images only - Thumbnails are then left on the screen while a decision is made. The software used performs no manipulation in putting the image on the screen.
- At the conclusion of the viewing, any panel member can select any of the 15 images for closer inspection and voice their concerns.
- The chair will ask for initial vote, panel members will show either a red or green card. The chairman will ask one panel member from the minority to talk about the submission, and then one panel member from the majority. The chairperson will ask the remaining panel members for any further comments. A final vote is taken and the decision is made. If recommended the applicants name will be announced, and if not recommended the panel will write down the reasons why they can not recommend the submission, and the chairperson will explain the reasons why.
- The Panel Chair may have a private discussion with the members of the Panel, without an audience being present.
- All Panel recommendations are forwarded to the Distinctions Advisory Board and Council for final ratification. Once approved by Council, you will be notified that your Distinction has been awarded.
- All unsuccessful applicants will receive a feedback letter giving the reasons why they were not recommended, based on the comments written on the comment sheets.

### **ASSOCIATE: BOOKS**

- Due to the difficulty in reviewing books, they are assessed without an audience.
- Books are viewed by the Panel members and the assessment procedure is as for Prints, above.

### **FELLOWSHIP: PRINTS AND BOOKS**

- Fellowship applications are assessed in the first instance by the Panel appropriate to the category in which you apply. Should the submission meet the requirements of that category and they consider the application worthy of consideration for The Society's Fellowship, the Panel will forward it for consideration to the Fellowship Board.

- The Fellowship Board is the final arbiter in all applications for Fellowship of The Royal Photographic Society. The purpose of the Fellowship Board is to maintain a consistent standard of distinguished photographic ability across all the categories. The Board consists of the most experienced Fellows of The Society, drawn from the Distinctions Advisory Board and general membership.
- All recommendations are subject to the approval of Council.
- There is no audience present during the consideration of a Fellowship application.
- At the Fellowship Board, again without an audience, the Statement of Intent is read out and the portfolio displayed. The Chair from the category who has forwarded the submission introduces the portfolio, and the DAB moderator who was present comments. The assessment procedure then follows that detailed for Associate applications.
- The Fellowship Board Chair then announces whether the submission will be recommended to Council, and if successful, the applicant's name will be announced.
- Unsuccessful applicants remain anonymous.
- If a submission is unsuccessful, the Fellowship Board will vote as to whether any re-submission should be considered first in the category which forwarded the submission, or whether it can return directly to the Fellowship Board.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF THE SPECIALIST CATEGORY RESULTS**

Applicants for Licentiate and Associate will normally receive an email within two working days of the assessment, advising them of the decision of the initial Panel assessment. Fellowship applicants will be advised whether they have been forwarded to the Fellowship Board for further consideration, and the date of that meeting. (If you do not have email, a letter will be sent by 1st class post).

#### **PANEL DECISIONS:**

- All portfolios that the Panels or Fellowship Board consider meet the required standard need to be ratified by the Distinctions Advisory Board and The Society's Council, and it is Council which finally award the Distinction. This is usually within 14 days of the assessment. Once ratified, you will receive a letter of confirmation 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 Distinction emblem which can be used on your personal stationery. You are entitled – and encouraged – to use the letters LRPS/ARPS/FRPS after your name.
- The Society reserves the right to request the original file, negative or transparency of an image used in a Distinctions application.
- Please note that if a submission for Associate or Fellowship is unsuccessful, normally you will not be able to submit any part of it to another category. If however, the Panel considers it more appropriate to another category, they can recommend transferring it to that category prior to giving their assessment.

**Unsuccessful applications:** Unfortunately, not everyone may be recommended. Applicants will normally be notified of the decision within two working days. Within 28 days of the assessment, all applicants who have not been recommended will receive a feedback letter giving the reasons for the decision. Whenever possible, you will be given the opportunity to receive help and advice from a member of the Panel.



## **REFERRALS**

Where an applicant has narrowly failed but shows clear evidence of the required standard in all but a limited number of images, The Society has a 'Referral Procedure', in which the applicant has the relevant images identified, and is given the opportunity to amend them. There is a set procedure for this, which will be explained in detail to the applicant in their feedback letter.

## **RESUBMISSION**

A resubmission is offered by the Chairperson to those applicants whose submission has not been recommended, but the panel felt their submission had merit and was close to the standard.

The Society has a 'Resubmission Procedure', in which the applicant has the relevant images identified, and is given the opportunity to amend them. There is a set procedure for this, which will be explained in detail to the applicant in their feedback letter.



## **DISTINCTIONS: THE PRACTICALITIES**

### **THIS SECTION SETS OUT THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF APPLYING FOR A DISTINCTION.**

#### **YOUR APPLICATION: THE FORM**

- You must complete an application form.
- You may submit more than one application to different categories, 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 Images for screen, in which case they can be sent together.

#### **YOUR APPLICATION: THE SUBMISSION**

- Make sure your prints are in the correct order, and on the back of each print, you have put your name and the number in the order of display.
- If sending prints, send two copies of your hanging plan and Statement of Intent where applicable.

OR

- If sending digital images, make sure your digital files are correctly numbered in the sequence in which they should be displayed.
- Your name must not be shown on the front of prints, or in the digital file name, or on the front of your book submission, unless a commercially produced publication. Failure to adhere to this requirement may result in the disqualification of the application.
- If you are sending your work, make sure that:
  1. It is securely packed.
  2. It is clearly labelled with your name, email address, category and date of assessment.
  3. The parcel must arrive 14 days prior to the assessment date. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that it arrives on time.
- You will receive an email confirmation when your submission has been received.

#### **OVERSEAS PARCELS**

- Import duties, taxes, and charges are the applicants responsibility.  
Please check with your country's customs office to determine what these additional costs will be prior to sending your portfolio.  
For more details please visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/customs/post/customs-procedures](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/customs/post/customs-procedures)
- Please stick the evidence label provided on the front of your parcel. Ensure 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 import fees, and will not accept parcels requiring additional payments.
- Note – it may cost more to have your prints returned than to reprint them; let us know if you do not wish them to be returned. If prints or digital files are not to be returned, The Society may retain them for educational purposes, otherwise they will be destroyed.
- If you have requested your portfolio to be returned, please ensure we have valid credit card details, as payment will be taken on receipt of the courier invoice.



## **PERSONAL DELIVERY AND COLLECTION**

- You can bring your prints on the day of the assessment between 9am and 9.45am.
- You may leave your submission at Reception at The Society's Headquarters between 9am and 5pm, Mon to Fri.
- If you wish to collect your submission on the day of the assessment, you should state this on your application form and it will be available at lunch time or the end of the day.
- To collect your submission at a later date – during office hours – please contact the Distinctions Department.

## **FEES AND PAYMENT**

- For current fees, please go to our website.
- Distinctions are only awarded to members of The Society. If you are a member, you must ensure your current 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.
- If you have requested your portfolio to be returned, please ensure we have valid credit card details.

## **RETURNING YOUR PORTFOLIO**

- Please see the application form for details.
- CDs will not be returned and will be destroyed.
- Personal collection – see above.
- All reasonable care will be taken with your submission, but The Society will not be responsible for any loss or damage whilst in its care or in transit. The Society insures for £75. By submitting your application, you agree to these terms.

## **RETENTION OF PORTFOLIOS**

- The Society reserves the right to retain successful submissions for six months beyond the date of assessment to promote The Society and its Distinctions. There will be no commercial use. By submitting your application, you agree to these terms. You will be notified if your submission is to be retained.

## **CANCELLATIONS/DEFERRALS**

- After submitting your application form, if for any reason you are unable to send your submission or need to make other changes, please e-mail the relevant level [lrps@rps.org](mailto:lrps@rps.org) or [arps@rps.org](mailto:arps@rps.org) or [frps@rps.org](mailto:frps@rps.org). Any cancellations or change requests must be made via e-mail.
- If you cancel/defer within 14 days of your assessment date you will be fully charged for the assessment. We are unable to offer a refund or deferral.
- You can request once only to cancel/defer 15 days or more prior to your assessment, without any charge, but all future requests will incur a £25 administration charge.

## **REVIEW PROCEDURE AND DISPUTES**

The decision of the assessment panel is final. However, if a candidate feels that there is any question as to whether the assessment process has been correctly adhered to, 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 Chair of the Distinctions Advisory Board will initially assess the case, and decide if the complaint merits further review. If that is the case, the Distinctions Advisory Board will appoint a moderator to investigate and report to the Distinctions Advisory Board for a decision. In such cases, the decision of the Distinctions Advisory Board will be final.

## WHERE TO GET ADVICE ON YOUR PORTFOLIO

There are a number of ways in which you can obtain guidance from The Society in working towards applying for one of The Society's Distinctions.

- The website has examples of successful applications.
- Attend a Licentiate and Associate Distinctions Advisory Day – organised throughout the UK and Europe, with web advisory sessions for overseas members. These are led by Panel members who show successful submissions, and comment on potential submissions you bring with you on the day. (see below).
- Attend an Assessment Panel – open to members and non-members who want to watch, whether or not your submission is being assessed. Dates, locations and where to obtain e-tickets are published in The Society's Journal and on the website.
- The Distinctions Department may be able to offer one to one advice with a Panel member. In such circumstances, at an assessment, the Panel member who gives advice will declare their involvement. This may preclude the Panel member from voting or commenting when a portfolio is being assessed. If you consult a number of Panel members, you may jeopardise the assessment of your portfolio.
- You are recommended only to obtain advice from a current Panel member who will be aware of the current processes and standards.
- You can upload your images to our website if you require specific Distinctions advice prior to making a submission at [www.rps.org/advice](http://www.rps.org/advice).

### **DISTINCTIONS ADVISORY DAYS**

Distinctions Advisory days are educational events and provide an opportunity for members and non-members working towards The Society's Distinctions at Licentiate and Associate level to receive informed advice from members of the appropriate Distinctions Panel. You will see successful submissions and have the opportunity to receive comments on your own work, and to hear comments on work by others attending throughout the day. Many attend initially as observers to begin to understand what is required, and the differences between the different categories.

- Ideally, you should bring your preferred selection, plus a reserve of around 10 extra images.
- Ideally prints should be mounted but not framed, and of the size you would intend to submit.
- Remember, the advice given will depend on the portfolio seen at the time – projected images intended to be printed cannot be commented on in terms of print quality, the same applies with small working prints.
- Applicants should try to ensure that they attend an Advisory Day with a Panel member appropriate to the category in which they propose submitting. Panel members cannot give advice on categories where they are not a member of the Panel.
- Advice from a panel member is only their opinion – at the assessment there will be four or five Panel members who may view your Panel differently. Individual Panel members can only give guidance and cannot guarantee success.
- A limited number of separate Fellowship Advisory days are held at venues throughout the UK. Only members working towards a Fellowship application may attend, and no audience will be present. You may only attend two Fellowship Advisory Days with any given application.
- Distinctions Advisory Days organised by Overseas Chapters may consider Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship applications in all categories.



## **INTRODUCTION AND CELEBRATIONS DAYS**

The Society promotes a number of these events each year in the UK. At these events, members and non-members have the opportunity to see recent successful submissions at Licentiate, and at Associate and Fellowship in each of the categories.

# What are the requirements for a FRPS Distinction



**LICENTIATE (LRPS)**



**ASSOCIATE (ARPS)**



**FELLOWSHIP (FRPS)**

## FELLOWSHIP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

'Fellowship of The Royal Photographic Society' is the highest level of The Society's distinctions and is a significant step up from Associate. Fellows of The Society are entitled to use the letters FRPS after their name. On being awarded your Fellowship, you will receive a certificate under the Seal of The Society, and lapel badge.

- Only Associate members of The Society are eligible to apply for Fellowship.
- The application need not be made in the same category as your successful Associate application.
- You are only entitled to retain the Distinction as long as you are a full member of The Society.
- In exceptional circumstances, an application direct to Fellowship in Research, Education and the Application of Photography or in Science may be appropriate. Applicants wishing to submit in this way should contact the Distinctions Manager in the first instance with details of their proposed submission. Similar direct applications in respect of Imaging Science and Creative Industries Qualifications may be appropriate – please see sheets **6a** and **6b**.

Your application can be a submission of one of the following:

- 20 or 21 prints (if prints are mounted, then more than one image per mount is permitted but they will only count as one of the 20 or 21 prints).
- A book containing a minimum of 40 key images and three prints (a minimum of two copies must be supplied).
- 20 transparencies (any format is acceptable, but please advise the Distinctions department before submission to allow appropriate viewing).
- Applications cannot be a mix of the above.
- Your application will be accompanied by a Statement of Intent, outlining in a maximum of 150 words, the purpose, objective or intent of the work.
- A word count should be included below the statement.\* Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification and loss of your application fee.

**Multimedia** and **Science** applications have their own specific requirements for applicants, listed in detail under their own headings.

**Research, Education and Application of Photography** applications will normally be a written paper.

To become a Fellow of The Society, you will need to show clear evidence of distinguished ability and the highest technical standard appropriate to your application, together with a comprehensive knowledge and ability in your discipline, and an individual, personal approach to your subject.

All applications at Fellowship level will be assessed against the following criteria as well as those criteria specific in the category in which you choose to submit (detailed under their own headings):

The submission should clearly meet the objectives outlined in your Statement of Intent.

- Photographic style should be consistent, illustrating mood and emotion as appropriate, although with some categories this will be represented by the highest technical excellence (eg Medical, Forensic and Scientific).

- The submission should normally show a distinctive personal style and originality of approach.
- A personal and distinctive use of composition, lighting and viewpoints must be demonstrated, with a visual balance (sequence) and style appropriate to the subject.
- Applications in all aspects of photographic practice are encouraged. Where that might be a popular aspect of photography, a Fellowship is still achievable, providing the submission demonstrates the highest standards in that chosen field of practice.
- Personal engagement with the subject should be evident where appropriate.
- The highest standard of presentation is expected.
- There should be no repetition of similar images.
- Images included in a previously successful application for Licentiate or Associate Distinctions cannot be included in a Fellowship application.
- Images should be appropriately mounted, to the highest technical standards.
- The Society is an educational charity, and the Distinctions are designed to recognise development of relevant photographic vision, skills and ability. When available, in assessing a Fellowship application, your Associate application will be reviewed to demonstrate the development of photographic skills, personal creativity and depth of knowledge and understanding displayed. It is incumbent on the applicant to show clear evidence of development in photographic skills and technical quality throughout the process from Associate to Fellowship.

\*Some categories have requirements as to additional written information required. For details of these, see the information on specific categories.

Your submission should be sent to **The Distinctions Department, The Royal Photographic Society, Fenton House, 122 Wells Road, Bath, BA2 3AH.**

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR A FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION WITH PRINTS**

### **MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS**

- The application must be a submission of 20 or 21 prints.
- Framed images are not permitted.
- Your submission can be displayed in a maximum of three rows.
- Under no circumstances can the applicant's name be displayed on the front of the prints. (Failure to comply with this requirement will result in immediate disqualification and loss of application fee).
- Two copies of a hanging plan and statement of intent must be submitted with your submission.
- The hanging plan should normally be printed on A4 paper, not mounted.
- You must submit a Statement of Intent, outlining in a maximum of 150 words; the purpose, objective or intent of the work. This should concisely put the images into a meaningful context, and should not include technical information.
- A word count must be included below the statement.\* Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification and loss of your application fee.

### **ADVISORY**

- It is normal for prints to be mounted in matte mounts. Unmounted prints can be accepted but applicants should stiffen their images with thin card to ensure they are presented to a high standard.

- More than one image can be displayed in one print or mount but will only count as one of the 20, or 21 prints.
- The size of images including mounts submitted is not restricted but the following points are worth considering;
  - There are three display rails.
  - The maximum height between the display rails is 23" (585mm).
  - The maximum length of the display area is 28ft (8.500m).
  - Image sizes are normally between 10"x8" (254mm x 204mm) and 20"x16" (508mm x 408mm).
- If you are considering submitting images greater than the height between display rails, you must contact the Distinctions department before submitting your portfolio.
- When considering the image size, remember the consistency of quality throughout your portfolio is more important than size alone.
- When choosing your mount medium consider a consistent and harmonious presentation.
- Print portfolios can be mixed medium; colour, monochrome, toned, digital and chemical process can all be included.
- Commercially produced images are acceptable but the applicant is responsible for the quality of the submitted work.

\*Some categories have requirements as to additional written information required. For details of these, see the information on specific categories.

Your portfolio should be sent to **The Distinctions Department, The Royal Photographic Society, Fenton House, 122 Wells Road, Bath, BA2 3AH.**

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR A FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION WITH BOOKS**

### **MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS**

- The applicant must submit a minimum of two copies of the book.
- The minimum page size of the book is 10"x8" (255mm x 204mm).
- The book must contain a minimum of 40 key images.
- Each key image must occupy a significant area of the page.
- All key images contained in the book must be to Fellowship Standard.
- Where there is joint authorship in any aspect of the production of the book, the applicant must state clearly who was responsible for which elements.
- Three images within the book must be supplied as supporting evidence in the form of prints.
- You must submit two copies of a Statement of Intent, outlining in a maximum of 150 words, the purpose, objective or intent of the work. This should concisely put the images into a meaningful context, and should not include technical information.
- A word count should be included below the statement.\* Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification and loss of your application fee.

### **ADVISORY**

- Books are assessed without an audience.
- Consideration should be given to the sequence and layout of your images, the sequence of the images is part of the assessment criteria.



- The applicant is responsible for the technical quality of the images; commercial self published books may not be printed to the required standard.
- For Fellowship, commercially published books would normally be expected. However, handcrafted art books may be accepted where appropriate.
- It is preferable that no name should appear on or in, the book. If a name appears, it will not be an anonymous assessment. It is accepted however, that books may have been commercially published, and the photographer's name will be published with the work.

\*Some categories have requirements as to additional written information required. For details of these, see the information on specific categories.

Your books must be sent to **The Distinctions Department, The Royal Photographic Society, Fenton House, 122 Wells Road, Bath, BA2 3AH.**

Contact details [frps@rps.org](mailto:frps@rps.org)

# What are the requirements for the individual categories



**LICENTIATE (LRPS)**



**ASSOCIATE (ARPS)**



**FELLOWSHIP (FRPS)**

## APPLIED

Applied photography can be defined as photography which has a specific end purpose or use. This by definition includes all professional photography as well as many other disciplines such as; documentary, portraiture, theatrical, record, architectural, wedding, visual journalism, astronomy and palaeontology.

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- An applicant may include more than one discipline in their submission but each must be relevant to this category. The submission however must still retain a cohesive and balanced appearance.
- An application must demonstrate a range of photographic ability even if the chosen discipline is of a narrow nature.
- The Statement of Intent must clearly set out the purpose and intended end use of your photography. Do not include technical data or problems surmounted. If work has been published then copies of the publication can be submitted as supporting evidence.
- Your submission should demonstrate that you have applied imaginative and visual skill to your photography where applicable.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your Statement of Intent, and whether the technical quality is appropriate to the purpose of the photography.

## CONCEPTUAL AND CONTEMPORARY

The Conceptual and Contemporary category considers applications which explore, define, illustrate or evaluate issues through photographic images.

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- Your submission will be about what you want your images to say on a topic, rather than what that topic actually is.
- Submissions will be in the form of a body of work based on a theme, project or concept that really interests or concerns you. Typical themes are those that explore issues of self, society, environment, art and culture.
- Applications in the Conceptual and Contemporary category can be by way of an exhibition or installation where photography is the prominent component. If an applicant wishes their work to be assessed in situ this can be arranged through the Distinctions department. There are likely to be additional costs involved and the applicant will be expected to cover these. Alternative approaches to a submission will be considered by The Society, providing the evidence submitted is consistent with the quality required for other categories. Applicants wishing to submit in this way should contact the Distinctions Manager in the first instance with details of their proposed submission.
- The Conceptual and Contemporary category wishes to encompass all photographic art forms and is open to alternative submissions. Where your submission is of an alternative format, please contact the Distinctions Manager to arrange this.
- The Conceptual and Contemporary category allows the applicant to extend their Statement of Intent to a **maximum** of 300 words. A word count must be included below the statement.
- The assessment will include the strength of the idea, the appropriateness of expression and how well the images articulate the message. Portfolios will have intellectual content, be visually engaging and provide evidence of personal practice and commitment.

The assessment of your application will consider how the images relate to the Statement of Intent in both content and meaning. The assessors will consider the images and their arrangement in the totality of the photographic artwork submitted. Assessment will include the interpretation and meaning of the submission as well as the quality and appropriateness of the photographic technique. Successful submissions will be required to show technical quality that is fit for purpose as it applies to all Associate and Fellowship categories.

## CREATIVE

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- Your submission must be based on photography, but the photographer will subsequently have creatively altered the reality of the images through the use of manipulation.
- Each image in the submission may be based on one or more original photographic images. The applicant must own the copyright to, and be the creator of, all the photographic elements in the images submitted. No third party images may be used.\*\* To be successful, The Society must be satisfied that the Portfolio has been created through recognised photographic processes and The Society reserves the right to view the original files.
- There is no restriction on the subject matter or techniques used. However, your portfolio should present a cohesive visual statement on your chosen subject or subjects, with a clear personal vision or style, communicating a sense of design, emotion, mood or meaning which encourages the viewer to look beyond the subject.
- Submissions may be based on a single or a small number of themes or techniques, although this is not essential.
- It is not necessary to include a wide range of techniques; rather it is important to illustrate the management and control necessary to enhance the photography while creating an individual and unique visual statement.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your statement of intent, and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.

\*\*If your application includes third party images, a submission in the Creative Production category would be appropriate.

## CREATIVE PRODUCTION

The Creative Production category is intended to recognise technical and imaginative skills in the post-production of still imagery through digital or analogue processing. Submissions will be from applicants working in graphic and illustrative arts and this is to be encouraged in so far as the application is principally based on photographic imagery.

- Applicants will be expected to provide a Statement of Intent for each final image, outlining in a maximum of 150 words, the purpose, objective or intent of the work. A word count should be included below the statement. **\*\*Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification and loss of your application fee.**
- An application will be assessed principally on the process to the final images.
- Each stage of the production of each image should be fully set out. For this purpose mixed media is permissible.
- The application will demonstrate an extensive range of skills rather than one technique repeated.
- It is not required that the applicant is the author of the photography used. The applicant must ensure that all matters of copyright are adhered to and any relevant permissions are obtained.\*\*
- Submissions may be prints or digital projected images.
- In this category, high technical skills are expected appropriate to the purpose specified in the detailed Statement of Intent.
- It follows that an application in this category may be a collection of images rather than a cohesive body of work.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your statement of intent, and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.

**\*\*If your application is based solely on your own photographic images, a submission in the Creative Digital category will be more appropriate**

# MULTIMEDIA

The Multimedia category recognises media content in a combination which can include still images, video, audio, graphics and text, and the integration of two or more of these in an application. It encompasses audiovisual, moving image and multimedia applications.

All applications for the Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the general criteria set out in the appropriate outline documents. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- In Multimedia applications for all levels of Distinction, the submission must meet the required standard in the following:
  - Photography
  - Production – including editing and storyline
  - Sound quality
- A commentary is not necessary, as long as the theme or narrative is clear. Any script and music should complement the photography.
- Joint applications are not acceptable.
- Where a submission includes collaborative work, the extent of any collaboration should be outlined, and will be part of the assessment process.
- Under no circumstances can the applicant's name be displayed. (Failure to comply with this requirement will result in immediate disqualification and loss of application fee)

## DURATION

- The durations below are guidelines only and apply to the total length of the submission, not to individual sequences. We do not specify exact times; variations, either shorter or longer, may be accepted after consultation with the Distinctions Department
  - Licentiate: between 8 and 12 minutes
  - Associate: between 12 and 18 minutes
  - Fellowship: between 18 and 25 minutes
- Credit will be given for variety of technique. It may require more than one sequence within the overall duration to demonstrate sufficient variety.

## ASSESSMENT

In considering the application, the Panel will consider three aspects equally.


These are:

- Photography
- Sound
- Concept, production and editing

The application will be required to meet the standards in all aspects

## THIRD PARTY IMAGES

Photography must consist of no more than 30% third party images – this applies to each element of a submission.



Third party images will be accepted where they are deemed necessary to support a theme, to suggest a new interpretation of previous work or to creatively rework content to bring a different value to original photography. Full attribution and copyright consent must be provided for all third party images and music.



### **LICENTIATE**

To be awarded Licentiate of The Society, you will need to show variety in approach and technique with evidence of creative ability and a high technical standard in all aspects of your application. It is essential that a range of skills are demonstrated within your application.



### **ASSOCIATE**

To be awarded Associate of The Society, you will need to show evidence of creative ability and high technical standards in image quality, sound recording, mixing and editing, combined with a strong theme or narrative, together with a comprehensive knowledge and ability in your discipline.

- It is essential that a range of skills are demonstrated within your application.
- A high level of understanding of composition, lighting and viewpoints must be demonstrated, with a visual progression and style appropriate to the subject.
- Personal engagement with the subject should be evident where appropriate.
- Your application should be accompanied by two copies of a Statement of Intent, outlining in no more than 150 words, the purpose, objective or intent of the work. This should indicate the target audience and concisely put the work into a meaningful context. A word count must be included below the statement.



### **FELLOWSHIP**

To be awarded Fellowship of The Society, you will need to show outstanding ability and/or originality and creativity, combined with excellence in all technical areas.

- The combined product will be at a significantly higher level than the individual components.
- A wide range of skills are demonstrated within your application.
- Personal engagement with the subject should be evident where appropriate.
- Your application should be accompanied by two copies of a Statement of Intent, outlining in no more than 150 words, the purpose, objective or intent of the work. This should indicate the target audience and concisely put the work into a meaningful context. A word count must be included below the statement.



# NATURAL HISTORY

The Natural History category recognises all branches of natural history, including zoology, botany and meteorology.

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- Your submission should show clear evidence of a genuine knowledge and understanding of your subject.
- The images should accurately depict the subject.
- Each image in your submission must be correctly identified and listed in addition to your statement of intent.
- The listing should be in order of presentation and include both common and scientific names where appropriate.
- In general, subjects should be free and unrestricted, in a natural or adopted habitat. Captive specimens or species are generally not acceptable. It is recognised that this will not be the case in all disciplines and should your portfolio contain images taken under controlled conditions you are required to contact the Distinctions Department before submitting your application.
- Associate applications can have a maximum of four images taken in commercially set up conditions. These images must be listed on the species list.  
Fellowship applications must not include any commercially set up images.
- Image manipulation that alters the truth of the photograph is not permitted, apart from the removal of minor distractions or blemishes.
- The use of a limited number of images captured by the use of focus stacking will be permissible in a Natural History application. However, if focus stacking is used for images that make up a complete, or substantial part of, an application, it should be submitted in the Applied category.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your statement of intent, and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.

## PICTORIAL

The Pictorial category is intended to recognise the creative use of the camera, in producing images which are not fundamentally altered either in post-production processing or in-camera manipulation.

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- There is no restriction on the subject matter or techniques used.
- Your portfolio should present a cohesive visual statement on your chosen subject or subjects, with a clear personal vision or style, communicating a sense of design, emotion, mood or meaning which encourages the viewer to look beyond the subject.
- Submissions may be based on a single or a small number of themes or techniques, although this is not essential.
- Image manipulation that alters the truth of the photograph is not permitted, apart from the removal of minor distractions or blemishes.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your statement of intent, and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.

# RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND APPLICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

This category looks at how photography is considered, how its history is recorded and preserved, how photography is taught and how it is understood in its own terms and as part of wider visual and artistic culture.

Applications are usually of a written and scholarly nature. The following covers most of what the Panel would expect to see:

- Research on an individual photographer, school or genre.
- Photographic education.
- Aspects of the history of photography.
- The conservation and restoration of photographs and photographic material.
- Curatorial accomplishments.
- New thinking about photography and photographic theory.

## REQUIREMENTS – GENERAL

In addition to the particular requirements for Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship, the panel will also assess the following:

- Context and analysis
- Quality of writing.
- Presentation, References and Bibliography.
- Research, and analysis and interpretation.
- Content.
- Arguments and Conclusions.
- Any other relevant issues.
- Originality (applies to Associate and Fellowship applications only).

Irrespective of subject matter, in addition to the general requirements noted above, the panel will assess the following:

## LICENTIATE

- Clear and concise standard of writing.
- A high standard of technical presentation.
- Evidence of thorough research, appropriately referenced, to include a bibliography.
- Awareness of relevant current theory and context.
- Developed, structured and coherent arguments.
- Contribution to the understanding of photography.

## ASSOCIATE

- Clear, focused and fluent standard of writing appropriate to specialists and non-specialists in the field.
- A high standard of technical presentation.
- Evidence of thorough and wide ranging research, appropriately referenced, to include a bibliography.
- Understanding of relevant current theory and context, divergent points of view are represented and evaluated.
- Developed, structured and coherent arguments, with an evidenced clear point of view.
- Contribution (some original) to the understanding of photography.

## FELLOWSHIP

- Clear, focused, fluent and of the highest standard of writing, detailed without repetition appropriate to specialists and non-specialists in the field.
- An excellent standard of technical presentation.
- Evidence of thorough and wide ranging research, engaging with diverse sources and points of view, appropriately referenced, to include a bibliography.
- Thorough understanding and evaluation of relevant current theory and context, divergent points of view are represented showing a critical engagement with the subject.
- Developed, structured and coherent arguments that are original and sustained throughout, supported by appropriate evidence.
- Original contribution to the understanding of photography.

## PROCEDURE OF ASSOCIATE AND FELLOWSHIP

- Potential candidates are expected to submit an application form along with a synopsis of approximately 500 words, summarising the intended work. At this stage, the Panel will comment and provide advice on your proposed submission. Subsequently two examples of the completed work will be required.
- An application may be submitted for work that already exists, e.g. a thesis, dissertation, exhibition, website or book. In this case, the Panel reserves the right to request additional information providing 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.
- In exceptional circumstances, an applicant in this category may apply direct for Fellowship, without being an Associate of The Society. Applicants wishing to apply using this route must contact the Distinctions Manager at [distinctions@rps.org](mailto:distinctions@rps.org), who will seek the approval of the Panel Chair and Distinctions Advisory Board. It is recommended however, that applicants should become an Associate before applying for Fellowship.

## ADVICE

The Panel will consider a proposal from a potential applicant (member or non-member) and give an opinion as to its suitability for an application. Contact the Distinctions Manager with a short outline of your proposal, and you will receive a brief opinion from the Panel – please note that opinions are given without prejudice.

## SCIENCE

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

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- The Statement of Intent should provide a clear explanation of the purpose, objectives or intent of the images, and should also clearly indicate whether they were entirely undertaken and produced by the applicant or were a collective effort. Any contribution from others must be clearly stated.
- Separately, full information on the technical details of each image should be provided that includes details of sample preparation (where appropriate) and any image manipulation or image processing that has been applied. Any manipulation 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 and bottom on the reverse side if in print format) and correctly identified.
- Submissions will be assessed against criteria appropriate to the particular nature of the material submitted as well as the general criteria applicable to all 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 Associate level must show a range of skills even if in a narrow discipline; at Fellowship level there must be a demonstration of distinguished ability in the chosen field.
- In exceptional circumstances, an applicant in this category may apply direct for Fellowship, without being an Associate of The Society. Applicants wishing to apply using this route must contact the Distinctions Manager at [distinctions@rps.org](mailto:distinctions@rps.org), who will seek the approval of the Panel Chair and Distinctions Advisory Board. It is recommended however, that applicants should become an Associate before applying for Fellowship.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your Statement of Intent, and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.

# TRAVEL

Applications have no geographical limitations and should express the feeling of a time and place, portraying a land, its people or culture.

All applications for the Associate and Fellowship Distinctions of The Society will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Associate and Fellowship outline document. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of, those criteria.

- Your submission should show clear evidence of a genuine knowledge and understanding of your theme.
- The theme could, for instance, relate to a journey, to aspects of a particular place – landscapes, seascapes or architecture of a region, to an event or activity carried out in a place, or to people making up a community.
- The images should accurately depict the theme.
- The Statement of Intent should describe the theme being illustrated and particular important aspects of it.
- There should be a strong content of related, but varied pictures to match the statement.
- Care should be taken to avoid stereotyped images.
- Image manipulation that significantly alters the truth of the situation or event is not permitted.
- The use of some images recorded using High Dynamic Range (HDR) photography will be acceptable for an application in the Travel category provided the use of such a method does not alter the truth of the original scene. However, if High Dynamic Range (HDR) photography is used for images that make up a complete or substantial part of a submission, it should be entered in the Applied category.

Assessment of your application will include whether it meets the criteria set out in your statement of intent, and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.

# How to contact and find us



**LICENTIATE (LRPS)**



**ASSOCIATE (ARPS)**



**FELLOWSHIP (FRPS)**

# CONTACT DETAILS

## THE DISTINCTIONS DEPARTMENT

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

t +44 (0)1225 325733 f +44 (0) 1225 448688

[www.rps.org](http://www.rps.org)

[twitter.com/The\\_RPS](https://twitter.com/The_RPS)

[facebook.com/royalphotographicsociety](https://facebook.com/royalphotographicsociety)

For general Distinction enquires please email [distinctions@rps.org](mailto:distinctions@rps.org)

For individual Distinction enquires please email either Licentiate [lrps@rps.org](mailto:lrps@rps.org), Associate [arps@rps.org](mailto:arps@rps.org), or Fellowship [frps@rps.org](mailto:frps@rps.org)

You will be most welcome to visit Fenton House. We are open weekdays from 9am to 5pm, and look forward to seeing you. Please note, there is no parking at The Society's offices but on-street parking can be found on the main road or on streets to the left.

[Link to Google Maps](#)

