



Changes to the Member Grade structure

1.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BPS MEMBER GRADES

The proposed changes upon which members were consulted and which were agreed by the Board of Trustees in June 2021 can be summarised as follows:

1	<p>New grades of membership</p> <p>The addition of two new grades of membership:</p> <p>Associate Member with eligibility to those who are part of the wider psychological workforce and who may or may not hold the Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC), but who hold specific BPS accredited qualifications.</p> <p>Full Member with eligibility to those who hold GBC (or equivalent) and who are able to demonstrate expertise beyond Graduate achievement, gained through experience or qualifications.</p>
2	<p>Expansion of Student Membership to include students on any BPS accredited programme, not just those leading to GBC.</p>
3	<p>Acceptance of direct evidence of competence (through a portfolio-based Professional Recognition route) as well as qualifications, in assessing eligibility for a membership grade. This is a change from practice, which has been qualifications only.</p>
4	<p>Change in the criteria for the awards of Associate Fellow and Fellow, including the removal of the requirement for nominations for Fellow by two existing Fellows. Additionally the new member grades will be able to apply for both Associate Fellow and Fellow.</p>

2.0 WHY ARE WE RECOMMENDING THESE CHANGES TO MEMBER GRADES?

The Member Grades initiative has been instrumental in shaping the redesign of the society's grade structure to improve inclusivity, to address the lack of opportunity for graduates who are not intending on a career as a Chartered Psychologist, to improve flexibility in accessing membership (without impacting on standards) and to open the society to wider membership from the wider psychological workforce.

A Task and Finish Group of members from the Member Board established a set of principles to guide this work, and developed a proposed new grades structure. The Board of Trustees has undertaken consultations on draft versions with a range of members and with external stakeholders, and has approved these changes as appropriate to create a membership structure that is fit for the changing context and development of the psychological professions.

3.0 BACKGROUND TO THE NEW GRADES OF MEMBERSHIP

Currently there is no grade of membership between Graduate Member and Chartered Member. Associate Membership provides a home for the new wider psychological workforce, mainly Wellbeing Practitioners within the NHS, who may not hold the Graduate Basis for Chartership, but who do hold a BPS accredited qualification in applied psychology. As the workforce changes, the society needs to respond by embracing these new roles within our membership and ensuring proper academic and practice standards are both developed and maintained. Members who hold this grade will be entitled to vote on society issues.

Full Membership offers a recognition of additional expertise gained by those who have developed beyond their undergraduate degree, but who, for whatever reason, are not intending to become Chartered. Full Members might be characterised as having depth of knowledge in specific areas of psychology or experience in its application in specialist contexts. Adding these two new grades enables the society to better reflect the position of psychology in society through its membership structure. Members who hold this grade will be entitled to vote on society issues.

4.0 EXPANSION OF STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Student membership is currently restricted to those on undergraduate or conversion programmes that are accredited for the Graduate Basis for Chartership. The BPS accredits other programmes, including those for the wider psychological workforce (e.g. Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners, Education Mental Health Practitioners and Children Wellbeing Practitioners along with Clinical Associate Psychologists) but the current statutes are not flexible enough to include these students. The change allows us to include all students on BPS accredited courses, all of which are set against the highest possible accredited standards.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP THROUGH QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCY

Eligibility for membership is currently based in qualification only. Many people come to psychology as a second or third career and recognition of their expertise is only possible if they return to formal education through accredited programmes; this is not only time-consuming and expensive but does not recognise existing expertise and experience. By introducing routes to recognise an individual's competences directly, rather than relying solely on qualifications, we can improve our inclusivity to recognise the competence of those who have come to psychology through non-traditional routes.

Any consideration of competencies will be approved through a formalised recognition route and set against the Partnership and Accreditation Standards and approved by the Education and Training Board.

6.0 CRITERIA FOR ASSOCIATE FELLOW AND FELLOW

Revising the award criteria allows the society to recognise members on the basis of contribution made to the society and to the advancement of psychology pure and applied. Removing the requirement to be recommended by two existing Fellows improves inclusivity by widening access to members from a more diverse range of contexts.

The basis of applying for Associate Fellow will be:

Demonstration of significant service to the Society and have made a notable contribution to the work of the Society;

or

Demonstration of a significant contribution to the development or application of psychology in their context.

The basis for applying for Fellow will be:

Demonstration of a sustained contribution to the development, application or reputation of psychology.

A new process will be developed and introduced subject to approval of the proposed changes by Her Majesty's Privy Council.



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