

The membership categories of the Society for Editors and Proofreaders reflect different levels of expertise and experience. **Ordinary** membership is for the professionally competent and **advanced** membership is for the highly competent with substantial experience. **Associates** support the aims of the Society, but are not members. Individual associates may apply for membership at any time.

Ordinary members and associates who pass an SfEP Accreditation test will automatically become advanced members. Those with an NVQ in editing and/or proofreading will be transferred to advanced membership on receipt of a copy of their certificate. In these circumstances advanced membership is achieved without the need to follow the normal route for upgrading membership status that is described in this document. Those with certification from the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) or Editors' Association of Canada (EAC), and Accredited Editors (AEs) or Distinguished Editor (DEs) with the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd), can also follow a different route. For ordinary membership, evidence of certification or accreditation is all that is needed (although the membership application form will still have to be completed). For advanced membership, additional evidence is required; details are given below.

For all others wishing to become ordinary or advanced members, eligibility for each level of membership is assessed according to a points system described below. Associates should apply for either ordinary or advanced membership according to the number of points they can achieve: they should not apply for both. Applicants for ordinary membership will not be awarded advanced status, even if they have enough points.

The Society will welcome your application as soon as you can satisfy the criteria for membership; fees are shown on the cover sheet. Note that points can be counted only for events and processes that have been completed before you apply.

Ordinary membership (professionally competent)

A total of 25 points obtained from the criteria numbered 1–4.

1. Training (*obligatory*): the points that can be claimed are shown in the Training document T(12) (available to associates and members on request from the SfEP office). There are no constraints on how recently training must have been completed. Please list **all** relevant training, even if you think it will take you beyond the required number of points; *minimum 10 points*.
2. Successful completion of SfEP mentoring scheme: 10 points. Mentees may not claim another 5 points by nominating the mentor as a referee, but they may list the time spent on the work in Section 3 of the form.
3. Experience: work done in the 36 months before submitting this application: 1 point per 100 hours worked. At least 75 per cent of the hours claimed must have been spent on copy-editing and/or proof-reading (the balance can be project management, but not other work such as typesetting, writing or indexing). No points are given for experience on material published on the applicant's own behalf or where the client/employer would not satisfy the criteria for referees (see **References** overleaf). Please list **all** your experience that fulfils the admissions criteria in the Experience section.
4. References from clients or employers: 5 points each, *maximum two references* (10 points). The referee will be asked to confirm that the applicant has done the work that he or she claims, and that this was satisfactory. See also **References** overleaf.

Advanced membership (highly competent with substantial experience)

A total of 50 points obtained from the criteria numbered 1–4.

1. Training (*obligatory*): see the Training document T(12). *Minimum 15 points*, of which at least 5 points to have been gained in the 36 months before submitting this application (BELS/EAC/IPEd: minimum 5 points, gained in the 36 months before submitting this application). Please list **all** relevant training, even if you think it will take you beyond the required number of points.
2. SfEP mentoring, as above.
3. Experience (*obligatory*): work done in the 10 years before submitting this application: 1 point per 100 hours worked, *minimum 10 points* (BELS/EAC/IPEd: minimum 10 points, or 1,000 hours worked). At least 50 per cent of the hours claimed must have been spent on copy-editing and/or proofreading (the balance can be project management, but not other work such as typesetting, writing or indexing). No points are given for experience on

material published on the applicant's own behalf or where the client/employer would not satisfy the criteria for referees (see **References** overleaf). Please list **all** your experience that fulfils the admissions criteria in the Experience section.

- References (*obligatory*) from clients or employers, as above: 5 points each (*minimum two references, maximum three*) (BELS/EAC/IPed: minimum two references). See also **References** below.

Training

All those admitted to membership of the SfEP have provided evidence of professional training in editorial skills. Advanced members have in addition shown a commitment to their continuing professional development. As a professional society, the SfEP requires applicants to show evidence of training appropriate to the level of membership for which they are applying.

Anonymity

Applications will be assessed by the Society's Admissions Panel. As far as possible, applicants will remain anonymous during the process – this is to protect the Admissions Panel members as well as the applicant. Each application will be identified to the Panel by application number only. To avoid delay, please follow these instructions:

- use plain (not headed) A4 paper for any covering letter or supplementary information, showing *only* your application number (at the top), not your name
- do *not* add your name or signature to any of the printed forms or additional sheets you supply.

However, do not mask your name on any existing references or copies of certificates that you supply.

The cover sheet C(12) will be retained, along with any supporting documents such as evidence of course attendance, before the remaining documentation is sent on to the Admissions Panel. Any correspondence with the applicant will normally be through the Panel secretary. If anonymity is lost for any reason, and it is found that the applicant is known to the Panel member dealing with the application, or if there are other circumstances which make it desirable to do so, the handling of the application will be taken over by a different member of the Panel.

References

Referees should fulfil these criteria.

- Any referee must have been regularly assessing editorial work for at least 12 months on behalf of a publishing organisation or an organisation that publishes material as a regular by-product of its main operations. Referees should normally have been responsible for overseeing/assessing the work listed on the *Referee nomination form*; they may also have been responsible for commissioning the work and for authorising payment. Please ensure that you select an appropriate referee and explain their responsibility for your work. Self-publishers, 'vanity publishers', writers of dissertations and/or theses and other similar private clients will not be accepted for the purposes of references or experience points. Agencies providing editorial services constitute a grey area; if you are in any doubt, please contact the Admissions Panel secretary, Helen Martin, giving details of the work you have done for the company and its URL, so that its suitability can be checked.
- The copy-editing, proofreading and/or editorial project management completed for any one referee should total at least 50 hours during the last 36 months for ordinary membership and 100 hours during the last ten years for advanced membership.
- Referees should ideally be from separate client companies or employers. If two or more referees are from the same parent company, the applicant must declare on the *Referee nomination forms* R(12) that they are from separate, autonomous divisions of that company.
- If you are listing a body outside traditional publishing as a referee or client, it would be helpful if you could supply details of their website or provide information about their activities to demonstrate that they fulfil the criteria.

Further information

It is intended that this process be as clear and straightforward as possible. It is also recognised that many members have atypical career histories. The Admissions Panel is prepared to be flexible, and welcomes applications from those who believe that their skills, training and experience are **equivalent to** the points schemes. Such applications should be submitted on the usual forms, but with an attached sheet of explanation and copies of any supporting documents. Equally, the Panel has discretion to reject submissions of any kind that it considers unsatisfactory. Applicants may be contacted for further information; all information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Applicants will be notified by post of the outcome of their application. If acknowledgement of receipt of the application is required, it should be accompanied by a stamped addressed postcard. In the event of an application being refused, the applicant will have a right of appeal. The appeals procedure is set out in the Admission Regulations.

Successful applicants will be able to apply immediately to take a paid entry in the SfEP's online *Directory of Editorial Services*. Those who gain advanced membership can have this status shown in their entry. New members are offered a discount of 50 per cent on the cost of their first year's directory entry.

Upgrading to ordinary or advanced membership: Q&A

1. I've read the *Notes for applicants* but am not sure whether I will be eligible to apply for ordinary or advanced membership. Where can I find out more about the points system?

All new entrants to the SfEP join as associates. Any associate or member of the Society may ask the SfEP office (administrator@ssep.org.uk) for an upgrade pack. This has full details of how to upgrade to ordinary or advanced membership, together with all the necessary forms. You pay nothing at this stage, and the pack answers most questions about the process. Please read all the documents, and carefully check these Q&A. If you still have a question, please contact the office.

2. Can I send you my CV, or a brief summary of my training and experience, and ask you how many points I would get?

No, we can only assess your points score once we have your full application. If your background does not easily fit the framework, read the section 'Further information' in the *Notes for applicants*. Assess whether your background could be considered equivalent to what we require of ordinary or advanced members and, if you believe it is, send in an application with a covering note of explanation. If necessary, the admissions panel will get in touch with any questions it has.

3. Do I have to gain points in all the first four sections on the application form (Training, Mentoring, Experience, References)?

No. For ordinary membership the only obligatory part of the form is section 1 (Training), and you can apply for ordinary membership if all your 25 points come from training alone. For advanced membership training, experience and references are all obligatory. Mentoring is not obligatory in any application.

4. I'm interested only in proofreading, not copy-editing. Do I need to offer both these skills?

No. You can be a member just as a proofreader, or just as a copy-editor, or as both. We expect your overall work experience to be reasonably consistent with your training.

5. My background doesn't fit the criteria for ordinary/advanced membership, but I know I'm a good proofreader...

Please read the section 'Further information' in the *Notes for applicants*. The upgrade framework allows us to assess applications fairly quickly, so we can charge a relatively low application fee. We don't receive or assess

any of your work. If you would prefer to have the SfEP test the standard of your proofreading work, please ask the office for details of the Society's accreditation scheme (currently available only for proofreading). It has a higher fee because it costs more to administer, but if you pass the test you will automatically gain advanced membership.

6. I've done training courses that are not on the Training sheet in the upgrade pack. How do I know how many points they'll get?

First, try assessing points by comparing your training courses with the ones listed on the Training sheet. If you think you may have at least the minimum total number of points, please follow the instructions on page 2 of the Training sheet, under 'Equivalent training'. Remember to show the dates you began and completed every course. If a course is not listed on the Training sheet, please leave the points column on the application form blank, as the Admissions Panel will assess the points value.

7. I have a lot of experience, and most of what I've learned has been through 'learning on the job'. Does that count as training?

We recognise that learning on the job is often valuable, but in your application it can count only as hours of work experience in section 3 (Experience). Formal training sessions provided by your employer or a client can count towards section 1 (Training), but every applicant must have undertaken some formal training not tailored for specific employers or clients. This is explained on page 2 of the Training sheet. You can read more about the importance of formal training in the Training section on the SfEP website.

8. I have many years' experience as a copy-editor/proofreader in publishing. Do I have to do further training before I can be a member of the Society?

It depends how much training you have already done. If your training already supplies all the training points we require for ordinary or advanced membership, we don't ask you to do any further training. The points system is explained in the upgrade pack that you can request, at no charge, at any time after joining the Society.

9. Can I apply before I have completed all the training or work experience (and/or mentoring) on my application form?

No. We cannot accept forward-dating or uncompleted processes.

10. I think I'm well trained, and have not needed to do any more training in the last 36 months. Why does an application for advanced membership need five points for recent training?

We want advanced members to show a commitment to continuing professional development (CPD). Provided you have solid previous training in proofreading and/or copy-editing, we can be flexible in what constitutes recent training – e.g. attendance at academic or industrial conferences, or further study of a subject that you focus on in your work. It must be clear that this CPD is relevant to your work as a proofreader, copy-editor or editorial project manager.

11. What if it's not easy for me to attend training courses?

Although we recommend that you attend courses, we will accept training gained entirely by good-quality distance learning, with some extra self-study if necessary. For example, you can gain the minimum training points needed for ordinary membership by successfully completing the basic proofreading or copy-editing distance-learning course offered by the Publishing Training Centre. Please see the Training sheet in the upgrade pack.

12. Can I enter the same work in section 3 (Experience) and on the referee nomination forms?

Yes, that would be normal. Please list **all** your experience that fulfils the admissions criteria in the Experience section.

13. For section 3 (Experience), can I include work for an author, student or self-publisher ('vanity' publisher)?

Working for this kind of client is a different experience from working for mainstream clients or employers; they will probably also judge your work by different criteria. So for the purposes of upgrading membership this work is not accepted. Provided your clients/employers would satisfy our criteria for referees (see 'References' in the *Notes for applicants*), you can enter work for them in section 3. (This applies whether or not you are nominating the employers/clients as referees.) If you are struggling to find work with mainstream clients, remember that experience is not obligatory for those applying for ordinary membership. (See Q&A 3.)

14. I believe I work at an advanced level but I'm employed and can supply only one reference, from my employer. Why do advanced members need at least two references?

Two references give us more confidence that an advanced member is aware of how two companies may currently have different ways of tackling the same task. This experience helps advanced members to pre-empt

misunderstandings that could be expensive for the client.

At advanced level, we also expect more than one employer or client in section 3 (Experience).

15. Can my referee be an author or a student, a self-publisher ('vanity' publisher)?

No, we cannot accept this kind of referee, for the reasons given in Q&A 13. Please read the section headed 'References' in the *Notes for applicants*.

16. Do you contact all referees?

Yes. We make it easy for them by sending a one-page checklist with space for further comments. Please make sure that your referees are willing to give you a reference, and that their contact details are up to date. Please also read 'References' in the *Notes for applicants*.

17. I gained ordinary membership a while ago and now want to apply for advanced membership. Can I use the same training/experience/mentoring/referees again?

Yes. You will need to ask the office for an up-to-date upgrade pack, and fill in an advanced application form and new referee nomination forms. For training and experience (and mentoring, if applicable) you should include items that were on your ordinary application form, provided they are within the time limits shown in the advanced application form. If you have put forward the same referees we will contact them again for confirmation that you are working satisfactorily at advanced level.

18. You sent me an upgrade pack some time ago. Can I still use it?

Please check the code at the foot of the documents, e.g. 12 for 2012. (Ignore any letters in the code.) If your pack is coded 10, or even earlier, please discard the whole pack and ask the office for a new one. Read the new documents carefully, and make sure you fulfil any new requirements.

19. Some of the courses listed on the Training sheet are no longer running. Why are they still listed?

Because some applicants will wish to include in their application courses that they took some years ago, a number of courses that have been discontinued or renamed are still included on the Training sheet. Bear in mind, though, that for advanced membership at least five points must have been gained in the last 36 months.