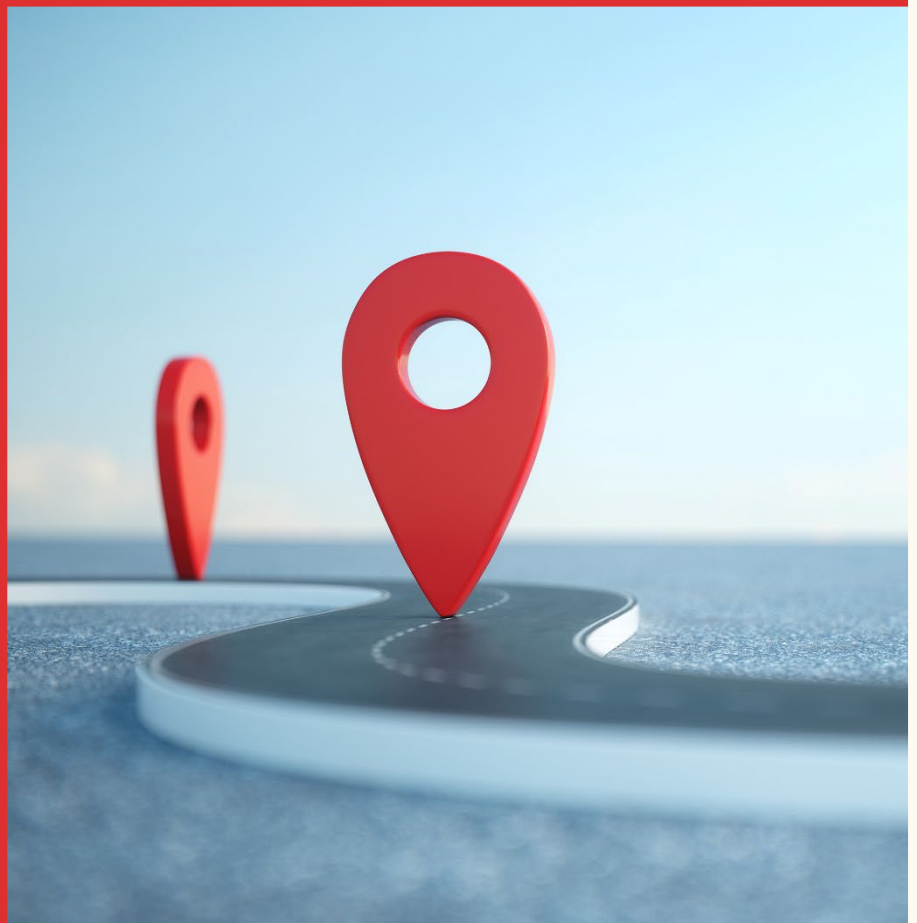


Code of Membership

2 August 2024



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1. Introduction

Membership of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is an investment in your career and the planning profession. Designed to support and assist you throughout your career, membership is split into a range of grades based on level of qualification and experience.

The membership requirements are based on PIA's desire to develop high-quality planners. We promote this high standard by defining the professional qualifications and level of experience for entry. This is complemented by a required commitment to ongoing professional development and a code of professional conduct.

This document, read in conjunction with [PIA's Constitution](#) and [By-Laws](#), sets out the entry requirements to become a member of PIA and the levels of membership offered.

2. How Does PIA Define A Planner?

There are many and varied definitions of planners. In the PIA context, we are primarily focused on urban and regional planners (also commonly referred to as town planners) as being professionals who apply a set of skills, knowledge and tools to manage change and influence the way that the built and natural environment is spatially arranged and functions for the benefit of current and future generations.

3. Membership Grades

You can join PIA under one of two classes: **Member** or **Associate**. Each class is made up of a number of grades to allow for professional growth, regardless of your current career experience.

4. Member Class

The majority of Australia's qualified planning professionals who join PIA will do so as a Member. As such you will be part of a nationwide network of leading industry professionals and be given access to the tools you need to support you throughout your career. PIA has two grades within this class: Full Member and Registered Planner.

Within these two grades, Members may also be elevated to the standing of Fellow or Life Fellow. The requirements and process for this honour are addressed in the PIA By-Laws.

On admission to the Member Class, all Members agree to abide by the **PIA Code of Professional Conduct, Code of Membership**, and **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy** in accordance with the PIA By-Laws.

4.1. Registered Planner

Registered Planner is PIA's highest grade of membership and enables high-calibre planners to clearly and unequivocally demonstrate their competence and their commitment to professional growth, development and ethical practice.

Registered Planner assesses competency against six key practice areas that have been identified as skills that all professional competent planners (with 5 years or more experience) will have. These six practice areas are listed in *Table 1 – Practice Areas*.

Table 1 Practice Areas

Practice Area	Descriptor
Developing and applying technical knowledge	Integrate and apply knowledge from a range of planning-related skills and disciplines to develop well-informed approaches to planning roles, opportunities and issues
Professionalism and integrity	Demonstrate responsibility and resourcefulness, initiative, judgment, substantial involvement and personal accountability consistent with the expectations of the planning profession and the community when engaged in planning roles and activities
Understanding, interpreting and using spatial thinking	Apply planning theory and skills in support of strategic objectives to achieve social, economic and environmental outcomes that serve the public agenda
Communicating and engaging with stakeholders	Communicate effectively with stakeholders to inform, consult and engage them in planning processes
Understanding and working with planning frameworks	Understand and work within legislative and other relevant frameworks appropriate to their context and professional application
Using a creative and integrative approach, drawing on a range of disciplines and methods	Develop innovative, multidisciplinary, evidence-based and integrative outcomes to facilitate and influence social and economic development, community wellbeing and environmental responsibility

Applicants are also asked to **complete a CPD plan** which is a review of where you are now, where you see yourself in the future and what areas you would like to improve on over the next 2 years through your Continuing Professional Development.

4.1.1. Application process to become a Registered Planner

To be eligible to apply to become a Registered Planner you must first meet each of the following three (3) criteria:

- Be a current Full Member (MPIA) of PIA
- Have five years of professional planning experience (or equivalent part time) that covers at least three of the Categories of Experience - refer to Table 3 - Categories of Experience
- Be actively working as a Planner

Registered Planner requires that applicants' complete assessment pieces that demonstrate competency in each of the 6 key practice areas as well as complete a CPD plan.

To enrol to become a Registered Planner you must email a copy of your CV to the membership team at membership@planning.org.au.

4.1.2. Ongoing requirements for Registered Planners

In order to maintain membership as a Registered Planner a member must undertake ongoing professional development on an annual basis, in accordance with the PIA Continuing Professional Development Policy including completing the Professionalism and Integrity quiz and a CPD plan **every 2 years**.

4.1.3. Registered Planner Plus

Registered Planners may apply for recognition of accreditation in relation to schemes and programs identified by PIA. Such recognition is termed a “badge”. Each badge carries unique requirements specified in the relevant *Registered Planner Plus Booklets* (which are appendices of this Code of Membership).

Once approved by PIA, a Registered Planner gains the Registered Planner Plus badge relevant to their accreditation.

If a Registered Planner Plus ceases to meet the requirements of their badge, they may remain a Registered Planner if they continue to meet the requirements of the grade.

However, if a Registered Planner Plus ceases to be a Registered Planner, their Registered Planner Plus badge or badges also cease at that time.

4.2. Full Member

Joining PIA as a Full Member will galvanise your career as an accomplished planning professional. Membership gives you access to a vast range of professional development activities, opportunities to network with the most successful and influential people in your profession, resources and support.

There are four streams of entry to become a Full Member of PIA depending on your qualifications and professional experience. Table 2 below provides an overview of these four streams.

If you gained your qualifications overseas, please refer to section 4.3 of this document for additional entry requirements.

Table 2 Streams of Entry

Stream of PIA entry	Qualifications	Experience	Entry documents
1	PIA accredited courses	2 years min	Evidence of graduation Detailed CV showing employment history
2	Non- accredited planning #	5 years min	Evidence of graduation Detailed CV showing employment history Statement of Claim may be requested
3	Planning related courses ^ #	9 years min	Evidence of graduation CV showing employment history Statement of Claim Reference from 1 PIA Member (Full Member or above) outlining relevant work and suitability for membership
4	Tertiary qualification or Board discretion *	12 years min	Evidence of graduation or letter seeking Board discretion CV showing employment history Statement of Claim References from 2 PIA Members (Full Member or above) outlining relevant work and suitability for membership

^ Planning related courses include engineering, landscape architecture, public policy, architecture, environmental management and law.

Qualifications gained overseas do have additional entry requirements. Please refer to section 4.3 for more information.

* Board discretion only applies in special circumstances and usually only applies to long-standing, experienced individuals

Experience

To show that your experience has been relevant to the planning profession, your application must also show experience in at least three of the Categories of Experience listed below – refer to Table 3. A minimum of 6 months must be shown for each of the categories selected.

Work experience or internships undertaken as part of your qualification will not be counted toward your years of professional experience.

Table 3 Categories of Experience

Plan making including strategic planning, master planning and structure planning

Planning policy development, review and/or policy interpretation and advice

Plan implementation including development assessment and statutory planning

Place-making and urban design

Assessment of impacts and effects of policy and development actions including environmental, social, cultural, transport, built form and economic

Land use assessment and management, including planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation and the assessment of natural resources

Research, evaluation and publishing of urban and regional related planning matters

Teaching of planning

Planning expert witness and/or advocate

Communication, negotiation and/or mediation for planning outcomes with stakeholders

Designing and/or delivering community engagement of planning related matters,

Administration and/or leadership of urban and regional governance

Preparation and/or prosecution of planning law

Project management of planning related matters

GIS / Spatial design including the use of data for city analytics

4.2.1. Stream 1



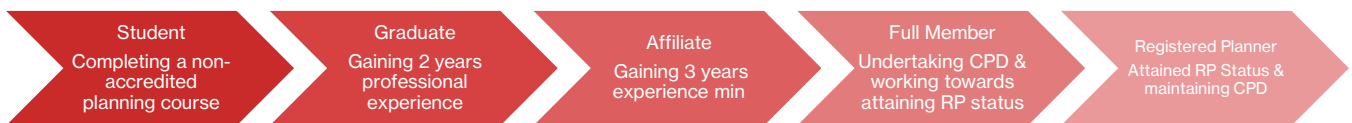
Education - To be eligible for Full Member membership through Stream 1, you will have completed a PIA accredited course. A full list of these courses can be found at www.planning.org.au

Experience – You must have completed a minimum of two years’ professional planning experience including at least one year of experience that has been gained after graduation. To show that your experience has been relevant to the planning profession, your application must also show experience in at least three of the Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. A minimum of 6 months must be shown for each of the categories selected.

Required Documentation

1. Academic transcript or certificate of graduation from your completed qualification(s).
2. A current CV that describes your employment history (not just the projects worked on) in enough detail to demonstrate your planning experience.

4.2.2. Stream 2



Education - To be eligible for Full Member membership through Stream 2, you will have completed a planning or geography course (**Bachelor, Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral Degree**) which has not been accredited by PIA.

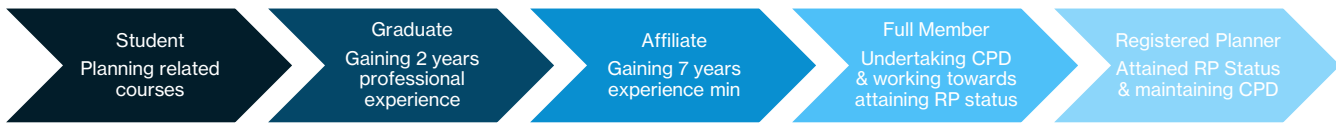
If your qualifications were gained overseas, please see 4.3 for additional requirements.

Experience - You must have completed a minimum of five years’ professional planning experience. To show that your experience has been relevant to the planning profession, your application must also show experience in at least three of the Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. A minimum of 6 months must be shown for each of the categories selected.

Required Documentation

1. Academic transcript or certificate of graduation from your completed qualification(s).
2. A current CV that describes your employment history (not just the projects worked on) in enough detail to demonstrate your planning experience.
3. Subject to details in your CV, a Statement of Claim may be requested. If requested the Statement of Claim will need to briefly summarise your career and addressing a minimum of 3 Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. The Statement of Claim should pick out relevant and strong examples of your work experience that can show competency in the required areas.

4.2.3. Stream 3



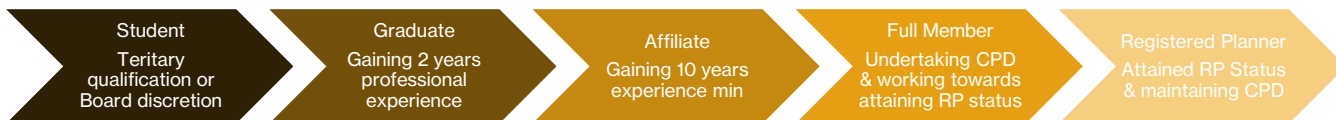
Education - To be eligible for Full Member membership through Stream 3, you will have completed a planning-related course, specifically an undergraduate or postgraduate course in a related discipline. Examples of related courses include engineering, landscape architecture, public policy, architecture, environmental management and law.

Experience - You must have completed a minimum of nine years' professional planning experience. To show that your experience has been relevant to the planning profession, your application must also show experience in at least three of the Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. A minimum of 6 months must be shown for each of the categories selected.

Required Documentation

1. Academic transcript or certificate of graduation from your completed qualification(s).
2. A current CV that describes your employment history (not just the projects worked on) in enough detail to demonstrate your planning experience.
3. A formal Statement of Claim briefly summarising your career and addressing a minimum of 3 Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. The Statement of Claim should pick out relevant and strong examples of your work experience that demonstrates competency in the required areas.
4. Reference from one PIA member (Full Member or above) outlining relevant work and suitability for membership that supports your Statement of Claim.

4.2.4. Stream 4



Education - To be eligible for Full Member membership through Stream 4, you will have completed a tertiary degree in a field other than planning or planning related or have approval at the PIA Board's discretion.

Experience - You must have completed a minimum of twelve years' professional planning experience. To show that your experience has been relevant to the planning profession, your application must also show experience in at least three of the Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. A minimum of 6 months must be shown for each of the categories selected.

Required Documentation

1. Academic transcript or certificate of graduation from your completed qualification(s), or a letter to PIA setting out why you feel you are suitable for membership.
2. A current CV that describes your employment history (not just the projects worked on) in enough detail to demonstrate your planning experience.
3. A formal Statement of Claim briefly summarising your career and addressing a minimum of 3 Categories of Experience – refer to Table 3. The Statement of Claim should pick out relevant and strong examples of your work experience that demonstrates competency in the required areas.
4. References from two PIA members (Full Member or above) outlining relevant work and suitability for membership that supports your Statement of Claim.

4.2.5. Application Process for Full Member

Membership applications are completed online at [Become a Member](#). Required supporting documentation - as outlined in each stream - can be uploaded as part of the online application process.

If it is not possible to submit an online application you can email membership@planning.org.au or ring 02 6262 5933 to arrange an alternative method.

4.2.6. Ongoing requirements for Full Members

In order to maintain membership as a Full Member a member must undertake ongoing professional development on an annual basis, in accordance with the [PIA Continuing Professional Development Policy](#).

4.3. Overseas Qualifications and PIA Membership

All applicants applying for Full Member must meet the entry requirements of one of the four entry streams as outlined in *Table 2 – Streams of Entry*. There are two additional requirements for applicants who hold qualifications gained overseas;

1. Qualification Equivalence
2. Australian Competency

4.3.1. Qualification Equivalence

Qualifications gained overseas must be assessed for Australian equivalence. There are 2 ways to achieve this:

1. Membership with an international planning organisation
2. Qualification Assessment

4.3.1.1. International Planning Organisation Membership

PIA recognises membership of several international planning organisations. If you are a member of one of these organisations we will automatically recognise your educational qualification as equivalent to an Australian non-accredited planning qualification.

We recognise Full Membership (or equivalent grade) from:

- Canadian Institute of Planners
- New Zealand Planning Institute
- Irish Planning Institute
- Royal Town Planning Institute Chartered members; and
- American Institute of Certified Planners

If you do not hold membership with one of the above institutes but have completed a degree accredited by the institute, PIA will recognise your educational qualifications.

4.3.1.2. Qualification Assessment

If you are not a member of one of the organisations listed in 4.3.1.1 or have not completed an accredited course recognised by them, you are required to have your planning qualifications assessed for Australian equivalence.

To demonstrate that your international qualifications are equivalent to Australian Standard, you can have your qualifications assessed by an assessing body linked to the Department of Immigration, such as VETASSESS or through the Department of Education and Training.

VETASSESS (www.vetassess.com.au) has been approved by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to determine the equivalence of planning qualifications.

If you are not eligible to have your qualifications assessed or if you have another qualification that may apply, contact our membership team at membership@planning.org.au to discuss your situation.

4.3.2. Australian Competency

If you wish to apply for Full Member, you will also need to demonstrate a working knowledge of Australian planning law and systems. There are two ways you can do this:

1. Show proof of a minimum of two years' work experience in Australia, accompanied by a supporting reference from a PIA member (Full Member or above); or
2. Undertake a unit of study in Australian Planning Law, and provide a transcript or certificate of completion for this unit.

PIA runs a correspondence course called Legislation and Governance that will meet this requirement. Alternatively, a unit of study from one of the courses recognised by PIA can be completed ([Accredited Courses](#)) *Note: Applicants are not required to complete a full course of study, just the relevant unit.*

5. Associate Class

If you don't qualify to join PIA as a Member, you may wish to join as an Associate. You will receive relevant communication and support depending on where you are in your career. Whilst you will not receive all the benefits or voting rights of a Member, we will make sure you are kept in touch with the planning profession and will assist you to transition into the Member Class if and when you are ready to do so.

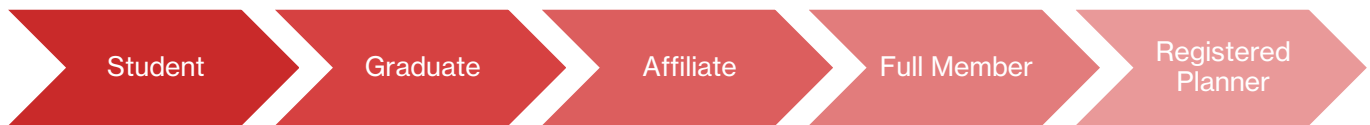
The Associate membership grades are:

- Student
- Graduate
- Affiliate
- Allied Professionals
- Para-Planner

On admission to the Associate Class, Associates agree to abide by the PIA Code of Membership and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy (as far as it applies to their grade), uphold the aims and objectives of PIA and act in accordance with the spirit and intent of the Code of Professional Conduct.

Associates admitted under the Para-Planner grade also agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct.

The envisaged pathway through the PIA classes and grades for planning professionals is:



5.1. Student

As a Student member you can be confident that you are making the best start possible in your planning career. PIA will provide you with tools, information and advice so you can review the different career paths that are open to you, and get the guidance that you need to be confident that you are making the right choices now, that will set you up for the future.

If you are a student studying your first planning or planning related degree, you can join as a full-time or part-time student depending upon your study load.

It is worthwhile seeing if your degree is accredited by PIA, as this will play a role in determining your membership pathway through PIA.

Required Documentation:

1. Evidence of your current course enrolment - must include student name, name of University, name of course, year & semester of current enrolment and study load (Full-time or Part-time).

5.2. Graduate

PIA membership is a critical element to the development of your career in its early stages. It sets the foundation for you as a planner and provides the tools, assistance and networks you need to find the right first job. Once employed, PIA will assist you in being aware of the skill sets you need to advance in your career faster and more successfully than those who haven't made the same investment in themselves.

If you have recently completed a planning course accredited by PIA, a non-accredited planning degree or a planning-related course, you should sign up under our Graduate grade.

Graduate membership is available for two years following the completion of your first planning degree, after which time PIA will elevate you to the next relevant grade.

Required Documentation:

1. Evidence of your course completion - must include student name, name of University, name of course and the date of completion (conferral date or graduation date).

5.3. Affiliate

If you are a planner but do not yet meet the entry requirements to move to our Member Class, this is the grade for you. Here we will help you continue to develop your skills and experience needed for your career to develop.

If you have studied overseas and don't yet meet the requirements to join as a Full Member, this is also the grade for you.

Documentation

1. No supporting documentation is required with your application, however if you upload a copy of your qualifications and CV they will be assessed for a potential elevation pathway to Full Member.

5.4. Allied Professionals

For non-planners, our Allied Professional grade provides you a vital link to the planning community and a range of benefits to fit your needs. There are no qualification or experience requirements for you to join as an Allied Professional – apart from not being an urban and regional planner.

5.5. Para-Planner

If you are studying or have completed a para-planning course and/or are working as a para-planner you may be eligible for this grade.

If you are determined to be eligible as a Para-Planner Associate, you are not eligible to apply for an alternative Associate grade.

Para-Planner members who move from a para-planning role to a planning role will no longer be eligible for the Para-Planner grade and will be transferred to the Affiliate grade.

Documentation

1. Evidence of your study or course completion - must include student name, name of Institution, name of course and the date of completion.
2. A copy of your CV and current position, for consideration to determine whether you are working in a position of Para-Planner.

5.6. Application Process for the Associate Class

Associate applications are completed online at [Become a Member](#). Supporting documentation can be uploaded as part of the online application process.

If it is not possible to submit an online application you can email membership@planning.org.au or ring 02 6262 5933 to arrange an alternative method.

5.7. Ongoing requirements for Associate Class

Student

Student members commence learning through completing their studies, they are encouraged to engage with the planning profession however, there are no requirements for ongoing professional development beyond their study, in accordance with the Continuing Professional Development Policy.

Graduate

Continuing Professional Development is encouraged for Graduate members with the intent of growing active professional planners focused on turning knowledge into professional practice. In recognition of looking for employment and learning on the job, a reduced professional development requirement is in place, as outlined in the Continuing Professional Development Policy.

Affiliate

In order to maintain membership as an Affiliate a member must undertake ongoing professional development on an annual basis, in accordance with the Continuing Professional Development Policy.

Allied Professional

There is no requirement for Allied Professionals to undertake professional development.

Para-Planner

In order to maintain membership as a Para-Planner, members must undertake ongoing professional development on an annual basis, in accordance with the Continuing Professional Development Policy.

6. Sub-categories of membership

There are sub-categories of membership available to both the Member and Associate grades. These sub-categories recognise that members go through various career stages and lifestyle changes that impact on their professional needs. Fees are reduced for these grades, which provide a simple and flexible response to changing circumstances.

If a sub-category is applicable for your current membership grade you will have the option to self-select into the sub-category when applying or renewing your membership online. Alternatively, or you can contact the membership team for assistance at membership@planning.org.au or 02 6262 5933.

Please note: Each sub-category will be reverted to the full grade prior to the membership renewal period with the exception of the Retired and Academic categories.

6.1.1. Career Break

The Career Break sub-category is for Members who are having an extended break from paid employment, such as those on maternity or paternity leave, those caring for relatives, recovering from illness or on a sabbatical.

6.1.2. Part Time Professional

The Part Time Professional sub-category is for Members who work part-time, typically at a 0.5FTE or less.

6.1.3. Retired

The Retired sub-category is for Members who have retired from active work, but still want to remain connected to the profession and the Institute. Retired members may work 2 days per month while still maintaining the retired rate.

6.1.4. Academic

Academic membership is for Members & Associates engaged in teaching, lecturing and research in the field of Planning. It recognises their unique contribution to the profession and provides a suitable route into PIA membership for those who work outside of the traditional Planning role in government or private consultancy.

Individuals applying for academic membership status must be employed at a PIA accredited university and be either:

- Teaching staff (0.6 FTE or greater)
- Research fellow

6.1.5. Reduced Fee

If you are experiencing difficulties renewing your membership and your circumstances do not fit into the above categories, you can apply for a reduced fee. Each application is assessed individually, and consideration and approval are at the discretion of the Board.

7. Payment for Membership

An updated table of annual fees is available from our website www.planning.org.au.

PIA's Membership year is aligned with the financial year – running from 1 July to 30 June of the following year. Membership fees can be paid through various on-line methods** at the time of application and subsequent renewal. To assist business payment processes, an invoice is emailed at the time of on-line application or renewal for subsequent payment.

If you wish, PIA can establish a monthly deduction from a member's bank account or credit card for membership payments.

Note: Before membership applications can be assessed, payment for the relevant membership grade must be received by PIA or a monthly payment scheme established.

If you apply to join PIA or apply to elevate your membership to a higher-grade part way through the year, the membership fees will automatically be charged on a pro-rata amount for the remainder of the financial year.

In the unlikely event that an application is assessed and approved for a lower membership grade than requested, a refund will be paid for any difference in fees.

** PIA can accept payments through a range of on-line methods including credit card (VISA or MASTERCARD only); by BPAY; or by direct funds transfer (EFT). PIA can also accept payment by cheque or Money Order.

Version Control

Authorising Entity: Board

Version	Author	Revision Notes	Date Approved
2	CEO	Major revision	16 February 2015
3	Membership Team	General refinement, removal of Certified Practising Planner, addition of Registered Planner	8 August 2018
4	Executive Assistant	Incorporation of Registered Planner Plus and clarification in Section 5 Associate Class	15 October 2021
5	Membership Team	Addition of Para-Planner as a membership grade and associated changes. Clarification of the categories of experience.	11 October 2023 Board resolution ref: 2023-10-11/2.2 Effective 21 November 2023
6	Board	Removed text from Stream 2 regarding acceptance of qualifications lower than a Bachelor	23 November 2023 Board resolution ref: 2023-11-23/4.6
7	Board	Clarified minimum course level requirements for Full Member Stream 2 entry.	2 August 2024 Board resolution ref: 2024-08-02/5.3
7.1	Executive and Board Coordinator	Minor update 14/8/2025 to fix hyperlinks throughout and transfer document to new brand template.	N/A

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