



american
institute for
conservation

**Preserving Cultural
Heritage**

Member Designation Proposal - 2nd Draft (5/11/21)

(First Draft 4-29-2019)

Introduction

The Membership Designation Working Group (MDWG) is pleased to provide its second draft proposal for revised member designations. The draft is based on discussions with members in a variety of forums, research into professional designations used by allied organizations, surveys of members, focused conversations, and comments received on the first draft.

The goal of this proposal is to update membership categories in AIC to foster greater inclusivity to reflect the range of current professional practice within the field of cultural heritage preservation. The proposal aims to do this by improving the application and evaluation process for professional membership categories to increase transparency, and instituting required continued professional development to encourage professional members to remain current and engaged with our evolving field.

Member involvement in this process is key to developing a successful proposal. Please review the draft plan and its associated documents ([FAQ document](#), [Essential Competencies](#), [Rubrics](#), and Continuing Professional Development [system A](#) and [system B](#)). Your comments can be recorded on this [Google form](#) or by email to membership@culturalheritage.org

You can also find supporting information on the AIC website and in the Library of the AIC Member Community, in the “Membership” folder. Please take time to review related documents to help inform your comments. Here is a link to the [FAQ document](#). You must be logged in to the AIC Member Community to view the document. You can either click on the file to read it online, or download a copy for future reference.

The most significant revisions include:

- Changing the name of PA (Professional Associate) to Professional Member.
- Applicants will choose one of the following categories under which to apply for professional status: Conservation, Preservation, and Scientific Analysis
- Updating the [Essential Competencies](#) document to include the perspectives of preservation professionals and scientific analysts as well as conservators, and developing a [rubric](#) for applicants based on the Essential Competencies.
- Updating the application process to support increased equity and transparency and using a rubric format to ensure consistency in evaluating applications
- Adding continuing professional development requirements to maintain Professional Member designation; there are currently two different systems being considered, [system A](#) and [system B](#)

- Changing Fellow from the “next step” following PA to a recognition indicating a Professional Member who has made significant contributions to the field of conservation and who promotes adherence to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice

MDWG will prepare a final proposal to present to the AIC Board of Directors later this year. Following Board approval, AIC members will vote on the proposal. If the proposal is accepted, it will require a second member vote to revise the AIC Bylaws to reflect approved changes to member designations.

The overall goal is to have strong, clear, and meaningful professional member designations that AIC can stand behind and promote, and which members can obtain in a clear, fair, and inclusive process.

Please review the draft plan and its associated documents.

Your comments can be recorded on this [Google form](#)

or by email to membership@culturalheritage.org

The second draft Member Designation Proposal 5-11-21 begins on the next page.

Draft Member Designation Proposal 5/11/21

The goal of this proposal is to update membership categories in AIC to foster greater inclusivity to reflect the range of current professional practice within the field of cultural heritage preservation. The proposal aims to do this by improving the application and evaluation process for advanced membership categories, making these more transparent, and by instituting a continued professional development requirement to ensure that professional members remain current with our evolving field.

1. Name change for the current Associate membership category

1.1. Framework

- 1.1.1. The new designation will be “Member”
- 1.1.2. Any person with an interest in the purposes for which AIC is organized may be a Member.
- 1.1.3. Other than changing the name from “Associate” to “Member”, there are no additional changes to this membership category.

2. Changes to the current Professional Associate designation

2.1. Framework

- 2.1.1. The new designation will be “AIC Professional Member” (PM).
- 2.1.2. Members who meet the qualifications outlined below may apply to become an AIC Professional Member.
- 2.1.3. The goal is to uphold professional standards by:
 - 2.1.3.1. Assessing applicants' capabilities to use and abide by the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice in their decision-making process, demonstrating adherence to these core documents
 - 2.1.3.2. Increasing professionalism by requiring continuing professional development Providing stronger support for evaluation of ethical practices
- 2.1.4. Benefits of being an AIC Professional Member include listing in the online guide to professional services (commonly known as “Find An Expert”), promoting public awareness of the member’s active peer-reviewed designation, recognition in member profile and at annual meeting via designation ribbon, use of marks (logo), priority consideration in applications for select Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC) professional development and funding opportunities, and leadership opportunities.

2.2. Eligibility qualifications (*applicants must have the qualifications listed in 2.2.1, 2.2.2 & 2.2.3, below*)

- 2.2.1. Education and training: This could be demonstrated through a formal graduate program, or other education and training that demonstrates skill development at the professional level.
- 2.2.2. Work Experience: Two years of experience demonstrating the ability to use acquired knowledge to make independent decisions (see 2.3.4).
- 2.2.3. Professional Involvement: Demonstrated engagement with the field. This could include collaborating with conservators, professional outreach, participating in professional development opportunities, maintaining membership in professional organizations, and/or contributing to the body of knowledge for conservation.

2.3. Application Applicants may apply in one of these categories: Conservation, Preservation, or Scientific Analysis.

- 2.3.1. Education and Training Background: Applicants must document their education and training path.
- 2.3.2. Work experience: Applicants must document their work experience.
- 2.3.3. Work Examples: Applicants must outline 3-5 projects that show they fulfill the [Essential Competencies](#) as demonstrated through the [rubric](#).
 - 2.3.3.1. No more than one graduate program project may be included.
 - 2.3.3.2. Each project should demonstrate independent thinking and a comprehensive understanding of, and strong commitment to promoting, the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.
- 2.3.4. Narrative: A (2-3 page) narrative describing how the submitted projects demonstrate the applicant's command of the [Essential Competencies](#), according to the rubric for the applicant's chosen category.
- 2.3.5. Ethics statement: The applicant will sign a statement agreeing to abide by the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice
- 2.3.6. Sponsors: Applicants need two sponsors who are Professional Members or Fellows. At least one sponsor must be in the applicant's category (Conservation, Preservation, Scientific Analysis), and specialty in the case of Conservation
 - 2.3.6.1. Sponsors read the application and support the applicant through the process, using the rubrics based on the Essential Competencies.

- 2.3.6.2. Only one sponsor may be from the applicant's current workplace and only one sponsor may be faculty/staff who taught the applicant.
- 2.3.6.3. Sponsors do not need to be someone with whom the applicant has worked directly. Membership staff can assist an applicant with finding a Professional Member who has agreed to serve as a volunteer sponsor.
- 2.3.6.4. Sponsors will sign a statement attesting to the applicant's competencies, professionalism, and independent thinking in support of decision-making.
- 2.3.6.5. Sponsors will remain anonymous to the Membership Committee. AIC staff will confirm the sponsor's membership status.

2.4. Evaluation The Membership Committee will evaluate all applications.

- 2.4.1. The [rubrics](#) based on the AIC Essential Competencies will be used for evaluating applications.
- 2.4.2. The Membership Committee will designate two reviewers to ensure that every application is reviewed by Professional Members within the applicant's category (Conservation, Preservation, Scientific Analysis), and specialty in the case of Conservation.
 - 2.4.2.1. Professional Members may volunteer to be part of a pool of reviewers, who will be trained in reviewing applications and will work with the Membership Committee.
 - 2.4.2.2. The Membership Committee intercedes if there is not consensus among the reviewers.
- 2.4.3. Following the review, if an application is denied, the Membership Committee will prepare a narrative outlining the applicant's strengths and areas for growth.

2.5. Transition from existing membership designations

- 2.5.1. Following acceptance of the new membership designation structure through member vote, and upon any necessary Bylaws changes, current AIC Professional Associates in good standing will become Professional Members. PAs transitioning to Professional Members will choose a category (Conservation, Preservation, Scientific Analysis) for the sole purpose of being able to be identified as a future reviewer or sponsor.

- 2.5.2. All Professional Members will be required to comply with continuing professional development as outlined in Section 2.6 in order to maintain their designation.

2.6. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- 2.6.1. The goal of Continuing Professional Development is to encourage Professional Members to remain actively engaged with learning and service to cultural heritage communities.
- 2.6.2. Continuing Professional Development activities will be required to maintain Professional Member designation. Tracking of CPD will enable AIC to formally recognize the work professional members do to develop their skills, conduct outreach, and contribute to the field, and to promote the ongoing professional development of its members.
- 2.6.3. All Professional Members are required to engage in CPD to maintain their PM status.
- 2.6.4. The proposed CPD system identifies three categories of qualified activities and defines a minimum threshold of CPD activities in a five-year period. Two different systems are proposed for member discussion: [System A](#) and [System B](#).
 - 2.6.4.1. There are three broad categories of professional development activities: teaching/disseminating information, service/outreach, and individual learning/skill development. The CPD documents provide a list of potential activities. If a PM participates in an activity that is not listed, they can add it to their own activity log.
 - 2.6.4.2. Each member is required to complete an on-line Ethics refresher once in each CPD cycle.
 - 2.6.4.3. Tracking: Professional Members log CPD activities in an electronic system, uploading documentation of each CPD activity.
 - 2.6.4.4. Members will be updated yearly on their CPD progress.
- 2.6.5. The time frame for the CPD self-reporting cycle is five years, beginning the year after the Professional Member designation is received.
 - 2.6.5.1. Random, periodic audits will be conducted by AIC staff to view members' progress towards meeting CPD requirements. In cases where it has been determined that a member has not met the requirements, the Membership Committee will make recommendations as to the next steps.

- 2.6.5.2. There will be a sixty-day grace period for completing CPD if requirements are not met by the renewal deadline. If a member has not met the requirements after the sixty days, their name will be removed from “Find an Expert” until they have completed their requirements.
- 2.6.5.3. An extension may be requested if members are experiencing extenuating circumstances which prevent completion of CPD in the sixty-day grace period.

3. Changes to the current Fellow designation

3.1. Framework

- 3.1.1. “AIC Fellow” will be a recognition by one's peers of a body of achievement that has had a significant impact on AIC and the field
 - 3.1.1.1. Mid-to-late career Professional Members who meet the qualifications outlined below are nominated for Fellow by AIC Fellows in recognition of the member’s professionalism, engagement, and ethical practice. Eligible PMs may also self nominate.
 - 3.1.1.2. Those members who are actively practicing in their fields are expected to maintain their Professional Member designation, and would be identified as “AIC Professional Member and Fellow”.
 - 3.1.1.3. If a current AIC Fellow and Professional Member lets their PM designation lapse, they would then be identified only as “AIC Fellow”. Because they no longer hold the Professional Member designation, they would no longer be listed in AIC Find An Expert.
- 3.1.2. The goal is to encourage a sense of community among Fellows as an important resource to AIC, and to recognize individuals who:
 - 3.1.2.1. Promote adherence to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice
 - 3.1.2.2. Make meaningful contributions to advance the field
 - 3.1.2.3. Maintain a significant record of professional development and service through their teaching/dissemination of information, outreach, and individual learning/skill development
- 3.1.3. Unique benefits and responsibilities of being an AIC Fellow include opportunities to contribute to position papers and to offer guidance on issues through advance notice of organizational initiatives and special surveys, serving as first reviewers for AIC policy changes, mentorship

opportunities, promotion of AIC Code of Ethics, and special events at the AIC Annual Meeting. For Fellows who continue to maintain their PM status, additional benefits include priority registration for select professional development programs.

3.2. Qualifications

- 3.2.1. Professionalism: A Professional Member for at least 5 years and engagement with the field for 12 years. Engagement could include collaborating with conservators, mentoring, participating in professional development opportunities, reviewing grants, maintaining membership in professional organizations, and contributing to the body of knowledge for conservation.
- 3.2.2. Service: A notable record of service within AIC and the profession. This may include serving in volunteer leadership capacity(ies), encouraging promotion of conservation and the AIC organization, publishing, education, and mentoring.
- 3.2.3. Ethical Practice: Nominees should be committed to advocating for the AIC Code of Ethics (CoE) and Guidelines for Practice (GfP), practicing ethical behavior, and serving as role models in our organization.

3.3. Process

- 3.3.1. Each year, existing Fellows will receive a list of PMs who have reached (or exceeded) the experience requirements for Fellow. There are two equal pathways to becoming a Fellow once eligible:
 - 3.3.1.1. An existing Fellow may nominate an eligible Professional Member for Fellow. If the individual accepts, the nomination can proceed.
 - 3.3.1.2. Eligible PMs may request a Fellow to support their nomination.
- 3.3.2. Three letters of support from Fellows are required. The nominating Fellow asks two additional Fellows to provide letters.
- 3.3.3. The nominee submits their CV reflecting their experience in achieving the qualifications (3.2, above). A separate portfolio of work is not required.
- 3.3.4. The nominee provides a statement registering their intent to serve as a Fellow and their commitment to continuing to abide by the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.

3.4. Evaluation The Membership Committee will review all completed submissions.

- 3.4.1. Fellow nominations are accepted based on the Membership Committee cycle.

- 3.4.2. Following Membership Committee review, accepted submissions are sent to existing Fellows for comment, as currently outlined in AIC bylaws.
- 3.4.3. Fellows receive notification of their acceptance following the regular Membership Committee cycle. In addition, a special yearly recognition of new Fellows will take place during the Annual Meeting.

3.5. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- 3.5.1. Fellows who want to maintain their listing in AIC's public professional services location tool and use of Professional Member mark will need to submit Continuing Professional Development documents in order to maintain their Professional Member designation. (see section 2.5, above).
- 3.5.2. Fellows are not required to pursue Continuing Professional Development to maintain their status as an AIC Fellow.
- 3.5.3. All Fellows will be expected to complete the on-line ethics refresher every five years or to help create or teach it.

3.6. Transition from existing membership designations

- 3.6.1. Following acceptance of the new membership designation structure through member vote, and upon any necessary Bylaws changes, current AIC Fellows who are actively practicing would be designated as AIC Professional Member and Fellow, and would be expected to maintain their Professional Member designation as outlined above. Current AIC Fellows who are retired would maintain their designation as AIC Fellow.

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