# The Mature Candidate Route to Membership of the Institution of Fire Engineers

## SECTION 1

### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Mature Candidate Route is to provide a way to membership of the Institution of Fire Engineers in the grades of Technician, Graduate and Member. This route is available for those persons who do not have academic qualifications required for membership of the Institution, but who are able to demonstrate that in later life, they have achieved a standard of professional competence comparable to their contemporaries who have achieved their grade of membership by the academic route. The Institution recognises that fire engineers operate in a broad discipline and may come from diverse professional backgrounds. The Institution seeks to provide access to its grades of membership in as flexible a way as possible, consistent with maintaining standards of professional competence.

### 1.2 Who can apply?

Applicants for membership via the Mature Candidate Route should:
- Normally be at least 35 years of age at the date of application
- Have followed a career path that demonstrates increasing levels of responsibility and experience in fire engineering over a period of at least 15 years for Member or 12 years for the Graduate and Technician grades.
- Have attained a position clearly demonstrating a level of professional competence, which is comparable with contemporary fire engineers in the relevant grade of membership.

### 1.3 What does the application process involve?

The application process has three stages. Each stage must be completed separately, and in sequence. This prevents you from investing time and expense into an application that may be unsuccessful.

**Stage one** - completion of an application form identifying which grade of membership you are applying for. The application must contain full details of your employment record and demonstrate the requisite number of years of increasing responsibility and experience in fire engineering. It must also include a comprehensive training record. Applications for Member must also demonstrate Continuing Professional Development and applications for Member and Technician grades **must** include a Professional Review Report (please refer to the Membership Rules for Titles and Grades for the requirements).

**Stage two** – Together with the application form you will be required to submit a 250 - 500 word proposal for an appropriate technical paper. The Institution will review the application at this stage to ensure the requirements of the Mature Candidate Route can be met. The Institution will also assess the appropriateness of your proposed technical paper.

**Stage three** – The Institution will notify you to begin preparing your technical paper. On completion, your paper will be assessed by the Membership Application Assessment Panel.

## SECTION 2

## 2.1 Application form

An application form is available, together with notes for completion, from the Membership pages of the Institution's website www.ife.ca. You must provide information on this form to demonstrate the necessary training, experience and increasing responsibility appropriate to the grade applied for. A detailed employment record is required, describing the role you carried out in each post and the responsibilities you held, such as the number of staff you were responsible for, the level of the manager you reported to etc. Details of training courses attended or in post training will also be required. The objectives of that training and the outcomes must be included. Details of your experience in fire engineering will be required to provide the basis for an evaluation of "increasing responsibility" and to inform the Panel of the relevance and appropriateness of the proposed technical paper. The application form should be completed with utmost care, since the Institution cannot "assume" information that is not provided. An application that does not indicate that the requirements for the grade can be met will be rejected at this stage.

## 2.2 Proposal for a Technical Paper

As part of the initial application, you will be required to propose a subject for a technical paper. The proposal must be of between 250 – 500 words and set out the title and main divisions of the paper, as well as the methodology to be followed in its completion. The proposal should also outline how this subject is relevant to your involvement in fire engineering.

## 2.3 Review of Application

The Institution will review your application at this stage to ensure the essential requirements in respect of training, experience and responsibility can be met. The review will also consider the appropriateness of the proposal for the technical paper. It is important, therefore, that you do not start work on a paper before this stage is completed.

## 2.4 The Paper

The paper must demonstrate that you have theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding of your area of fire engineering and its underlying principles, in an ordered, critical commentary, defining the problems or development aims involved and demonstrating their resolution or achievement.

If the paper is based on previously produced work, it must provide a commentary and connecting dialogue setting the material into the appropriate perspective and highlighting the application of fire engineering principles and knowledge. Historical reviews should only be undertaken where it is essential background to the topic under discussion.

If you are using previously produced materials it is your responsibility to obtain any necessary clearance from employers or others, particularly where materials are confidential.

Your submission should be written in English, and where appropriate, the text can be illustrated by diagrams, sketches, tables or calculations. All material from a published source must be properly referenced and a comprehensive bibliography of all reference documents must be included.

One copy of your submission must be submitted and be accompanied by a signed declaration identifying exactly, which parts of the paper are your own work. You are strongly recommended to retain one further copy of the paper, as the Institution cannot be responsible for materials lost in transit.

## 2.5 Completion of paper in time scale

Your paper must be completed in time scales to be agreed by the Institution, but will be based upon 6 months for Technician and Graduate grades and 12 months for Member grade. When the paper is submitted, the Institution will arrange for the Membership Assessment Panel to assess your work. The Panel will be seeking to determine if you have reached the same standard of fire engineering knowledge and understanding as your contemporaries have by the academic route. The Panel will not be influenced by accounts of exceptional experience or responsibility. If the Panel conclude that the work is not adequate, they will either agree to you carrying out more work to improve the submission, or reject the application at this stage. Re-submission will only be allowed once in respect of an application.

## 2.6 Recommendation

Following the assessment the Panel will make a recommendation to the Institution on the award of a grade. The recommendation will be based on your application and the grade you have applied for. You should not apply for a higher grade in the hope that if you are unsuccessful, you will be given a lower grade.

Neither the Panel members nor the Institution will enter into any correspondence about the application once a decision is made.

# SECTION 3

## 3.1 Next Steps

If you feel this scheme is appropriate for your circumstances, obtain an application form from the Membership pages of the Institution's website www.ife.ca and complete the form carefully before sending it to the address on the form.

## 3.2 Finally

The Institution seeks to maintain the highest of standards of membership whilst seeking to provide access to the Institution's grades of membership by as many routes as possible, consistent with maintaining those standards. This method of achieving membership of the Institution is no less demanding that the academic route and potential applicants should not underestimate the amount of work involved.