



INSTITUTE OF PROJECT PROFESSIONALS

Direct Entry and Recognition

Joining without an IPP examination: what is accepted, who decides, and on what evidence



This policy governs admission to IPP membership on the strength of a qualification, a credential from another body, or documented experience, rather than an IPP examination pass. It sets out what evidence is required, which external qualifications the Institute accepts and at what grade, how equivalence is decided, who decides, and what an approval does and does not confer.

It exists because IPP-GOV-003 has told the public since June 2026 that the Institute maintains a recognition register. Until this document there was none, and equivalence was decided case by case with nothing written down. Section 4 is that register.

Issue 2 (10 August 2026): the two-reviewer rule in Section 6 and the twelve-month life in Section 7 are now enforced by the platform. Issue 1, published earlier the same day, recorded both as things the system did not yet do. Section 11 is reduced to what is still outstanding.

1. What this policy owns

It owns the assessment: evidence, equivalence, the register, the decision and the decision-maker. It does not own the tiers, the fees or the three routes into membership, which are IPP-GOV-003, and it does not own the qualifying standards for direct entry to Associate and Member, which are IPP-ASM-001 sections 5 and 5A. Where this document names a standard it is applying that standard, not creating one.

Question	Owned by
Which tiers exist, what they cost, and the three routes in	IPP-GOV-003
The qualifying standard for direct entry to Associate and to Member	IPP-ASM-001 sections 5 and 5A
Which external qualifications are accepted, and at what grade	This policy, Section 4
What evidence must be submitted and how it is assessed	This policy, Sections 3 and 5
What the applicant may then claim about themselves	IPP-GOV-005
How a refusal is challenged	IPP-GOV-006
How long the evidence is kept	IPP-DAT-001 Section 6

2. What direct entry is, and what it is not

- Direct entry is available to Associate (AIPP) and to Member (MIPP). There is no direct entry to Fellow at any time and by any route, per IPP-ASM-001 section 5A.3.
- An approval confers eligibility to apply for that grade, and nothing else. It is not admission, it does not create a membership, and it does not carry a post-nominal. The applicant still completes and pays for the membership application, and is not charged before approval.
- An approval is tier-specific. An approval assessed for Associate does not unlock Member, and the reverse is not true either. A person approved for Associate who later wants Member applies again against the Member standard.
- A member admitted by direct entry holds exactly the same grade, obligations and post-nominal as a member admitted by examination. The route is not recorded on the public directory or on any credential, because a grade either was earned or it was not, and publishing a two-tier membership would make it the second thing every employer asked about.

The Institute's own record does retain the route, because a defensible awarding body has to be able to say how any given member was admitted. That is a record, not a label.

3. Evidence

Every application is assessed on documents, not on assertions. The following is the minimum for each route. A reviewer may request more, and an application that cannot be assessed on what was supplied is not refused without the applicant first being told what is missing.

Route	Minimum evidence
Academic qualification	The awarding institution, the qualification title, the year awarded, and a certificate or transcript showing the applicant's name.
Recognised external credential	The awarding body, the credential title, the year awarded, the applicant's registration or certificate number where the body issues one, and the certificate.
Experience	Current role, years in practice, sector, and a personal statement of at least 200 words describing the projects worked on and the responsibility held. Verifiable references or evidence of delivery where the statement alone does not establish the claim.
Member (MIPP) by qualification	The knowledge evidence above AND the experience evidence above. Both, per IPP-ASM-001 section 5A.1. Five years is the floor and is checked, not estimated.

- Evidence is submitted through the applicant's own authenticated account. IPP does not accept evidence forwarded by an employer, an agent or a training provider on someone's behalf, because the person whose credential it is has to be the person who claims it.
- A document that cannot be read, has no name on it, or has been altered is not evidence. The applicant is asked for a clean copy.
- IPP may verify any credential directly with the awarding body, and says so on the application form so that verification is not a surprise.

4. The recognition register

This is the register IPP-GOV-003 section 4.3 refers to. It records which external qualifications the Institute accepts, and at which grade. It exists so that two applicants presenting the same credential six months apart get the same answer, and so that a refusal can be explained by pointing at a published rule rather than at a judgement.

Qualification	Awarding body	Accepted for	Conditions
Project Fundamentals Qualification (PFQ)	APM	Associate	None beyond the tier's own experience requirement.
Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)	PMI	Associate	None beyond the tier's own experience requirement.
PRINCE2 Foundation	PeopleCert	Associate	None beyond the tier's own experience requirement.
Level D Certified Project Management Associate	IPMA	Associate	None beyond the tier's own experience requirement.
Project Management Qualification (PMQ)	APM	Member	With the five years of practice the Member tier requires.
Project Management Professional (PMP)	PMI	Member	With the five years of practice the Member tier requires.
PRINCE2 Practitioner	PeopleCert	Member	With the five years of practice. Re-registration status is not required; a lapsed Practitioner registration does not withdraw the recognition.
Level C or Level B Certified Project Manager	IPMA	Member	With the five years of practice the Member tier requires.
Chartered Project Professional (ChPP)	APM	Member	With the five years of practice. ChPP is not accepted for Fellow; Fellowship is by assessment only.
Managing Successful Programmes Practitioner	PeopleCert	Member	With the five years of practice, where the applicant's practice is programme delivery.
Degree at bachelor's level or above in project or programme management, or a closely related discipline	Any recognised institution	Associate, or Member with five years	Closely related is assessed against the Competency Framework, not by the title of the course.

- **Currency.** A qualification awarded more than ten years before the application is accepted where the applicant has been in practice since, evidenced by their experience statement. A qualification more than ten years old with no practice behind it is assessed on the experience route instead. Competence decays; a certificate does not.
- **Absence from the register is not a refusal.** A credential not listed is assessed on its merits against the Competency Framework, and where it is accepted it is added to the register at the next review, so the second applicant benefits from the first one's assessment.
- The register is maintained by the Governance Board under IPP-GOV-004 section 5, reviewed annually, and amended by resolution. Its issue is this document's issue.

This register records the Institute's own recognition of these qualifications. It does not state, imply or request that APM, PMI, PeopleCert, IPMA or any other body recognises IPP qualifications. None of them has agreed to, and describing the arrangement as reciprocal would be untrue. The word is not used anywhere in this policy for that reason.

5. How equivalence is decided

For a credential on the register, the register decides it. For anything else, the reviewers assess the evidence against the IPP Competency Framework (IPP-GOV-002), and the test is the standard reached, not the hours studied or the reputation of the provider.

- Associate requires standing at Award level: awareness across the framework areas, and practice at a level where the applicant is responsible for delivery of defined work.
- Member requires standing at Foundation level, and separately five years of practice. Neither substitutes for the other. A strong qualification does not shorten the five years, and long service does not supply the knowledge standard.
- A decision records which framework areas the evidence was found to cover, so that the assessment can be read back later and so that the approved profile can be seeded into Calibrate on the same basis as a qualification pass.

6. Who decides

Direct entry is the only route by which a person acquires IPP standing without sitting an IPP examination, so it carries the control that matters most: no single person can confer it.

- An application is decided by two named reviewers. One reviewer may assess and recommend; the approval does not take effect until a second reviewer, who did not prepare the recommendation, agrees it.
- A refusal follows the same rule. One person cannot refuse an application alone, for the same reason they cannot approve one alone.
- A reviewer does not decide an application from a person they employ, are employed by, or have a personal, financial or recent working relationship with. Where that leaves fewer than two available reviewers, the application goes to the Governance Board.
- Where the two reviewers do not agree, the application goes to the Governance Board and is not resolved by seniority.
- The identity of both reviewers is recorded on the application and given to the applicant on request.

IPP-ASM-001 sections 5.2 and 5A.2 state that the governance board reviews the evidence. That was written before the Board existed and is stricter than this policy operates. This document is the specialist standard for the assessment, and IPP-ASM-001 is corrected at its next issue to point here rather than to describe a review it does not perform.

7. Outcomes

Outcome	What it means
Approved	Eligibility to apply for the named grade. The applicant completes and pays for the membership application in the ordinary way.
More evidence required	The application is not refused. The applicant is told precisely what is missing and the clock stops until it arrives.
Approved at a lower grade	The evidence supports Associate but not Member. Offered rather than imposed, and the applicant may decline it and appeal instead.
Refused	With reasons, in writing, naming the standard not met and what would change the answer.

- An approval is valid for twelve months. A person who does not complete the membership application in that time applies again, because the evidence and the standards both move.
- A refused applicant may apply again with new or additional evidence at any time. There is no waiting period, because a waiting period would punish somebody for applying early rather

than for applying badly.

- Every decision is subject to challenge under IPP-GOV-006, which sets the timescales for acknowledgement and decision. They are not restated here.

8. Early examination access

The same intake handles a different request: a member with substantial prior learning who asks to sit an IPP examination without first completing the course. This is not direct entry and confers no membership and no exemption. It changes the order of study and assessment, nothing else.

- The applicant submits a prior learning statement of at least 150 words identifying which examination and what they have already covered.
- Approval issues an access code, valid for twelve months, that opens the examination. The examination itself is unchanged: same paper, same pass mark, same conditions, all owned by IPP-ASM-001.
- The two-reviewer rule in Section 6 applies. Unlocking an assessment early is a smaller decision than conferring a grade, and it is still not one person's to take alone.

Early access is deliberately not called an exemption anywhere in IPP's materials. Nothing is exempted; the candidate still has to pass.

9. Withdrawal of an approval

- An approval obtained by false or altered evidence is withdrawn, and any membership admitted on it is referred into IPP-GOV-001, where misrepresentation is already a breach of the Code.
- An approval given in error is corrected. Where the error is IPP's and the applicant acted honestly, IPP bears the consequence: the membership stands, and any fee paid is not reclaimed.
- A withdrawal is a decision like any other and is challengeable under IPP-GOV-006.

10. Records

IPP records, for every application: who applied and for which grade, the route, the evidence submitted, the framework areas the evidence was found to cover, both reviewers and their declarations, the decision, the reasons, the date, and any onward challenge. Retention is owned by IPP-DAT-001.

Evidence submitted in support of an application is personal data belonging to the applicant, including where the application is refused. It is not used for any purpose other than the decision, and a refused applicant may ask for it to be deleted.

11. What has to be true in the platform

Stated on the face of the policy rather than in an internal note, because the controls above are only as good as the system that enforces them. This section records what is outstanding, and it empties as the work is done.

11.1 In place

- **Two named reviewers.** Approval and refusal are both two stage. The first reviewer records a recommendation and the application stays pending; a second and different reviewer makes the decision take effect. The same account cannot do both halves, a reviewer who disagrees with the first cannot overturn them and is told the matter goes to the Governance Board, and both reviewers' reasons are kept on the decision rather than only the last one's.
- **The twelve-month life.** An approval records the moment it was granted, and eligibility is tested against that rather than against the last time the record was touched, so an approval cannot be extended by editing the row. An expired approval no longer opens the membership application, and no longer blocks the person from applying again.

11.2 Outstanding

- The recognition register in Section 4 is not visible to the reviewer at the point of decision. A register published in a PDF and not in the review screen will be consulted for the first three applications and then remembered wrongly, which is how a published rule quietly becomes a judgement again.
- The framework areas an approval was granted against are not captured. Until they are, an approved applicant's competency profile cannot be seeded the way a qualification pass seeds it, so a member admitted by direct entry starts with a blank record while a member admitted by examination does not.

*The route stored against an application remains **reciprocal**, which IPP-GOV-003 stopped using at Issue 6 because it asserts a mutual arrangement that does not exist. The stored value is kept for data continuity and is not shown to anyone; the applicant-facing wording was corrected on 10 August 2026. A value in a column is not a claim to the public.*

12. Review

Reviewed annually by the Governance Board, and on any change to the membership tiers, the qualifying standards in IPP-ASM-001, or the recognition register in Section 4. The register may be amended between reviews by Board resolution, which reissues this document. Its issue and date are recorded in the IPP Document Register (IPP-REG-001).