



Kilkenny
Photographic
Society
Established 1983

APPLYING FOR DISTINCTIONS

Licentiatehip – Associateship

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Contents:

- 1: Definitions/Standards required for the Licentiatehip, Associateship, and Fellowship Distinctions for both the RPS and IPF.
- 2: Criteria for the Licentiatehip.
- 3: Criteria for the Associateship.
- 4: Differences in Procedures/Methods between the RPS and IPF.
- 5: The Months and Dates of the Irish Photographic Federation's Distinctions Sittings.
- 6: Geoff Harris LRPS Shares his personal account and offers valuable tips and advice

1: Definitions and standards required for the Licentiate, Associateship and Fellowship as defined by The Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain (RPS). The Irish Photographic Federation offers the same three Distinctions Levels with the same objectives.

- **LRPS (Licentiate of The RPS)** - images of a high standard of photographic execution - demanding but achievable for most dedicated photographers. Applicants must show variety in approach and techniques but not necessarily in subject matter. **Ten images.**
- **ARPS (Associateship)** - images of exceptional standard and a written Statement of Intent (what you hoped to achieve). This is a significant step up from the LRPS. At this stage creative ability and personal style (what makes your work unique to you), along with complete control of the technical aspects of photography must be evident. It is at this level that you can first choose to submit your work to a particular specialist category. **15 images.**
- **FRPS (Fellowship)** - our highest level of Distinction. Images must be of an outstanding photographic and creative standard and accompanied by a Statement of Intent. An obvious personal style is expected at this stage. You need to have achieved the ARPS before you can apply for the FRPS. **20 images.**

2: Criteria for the Licentiate (10 Images):

- Panel must show a variety of approaches and/or techniques--Panel must have variety--though not necessarily in subject matter!
- Must be cohesively panelled.
- The focus in the image must be bang-on accurate and sharp.
- No over sharpened images.
- No tell-tale signs of masking and selection tools being used.
- Good exposures with details in both the highlights and shadows.
- Suitable depth of field for the subject matter.
- Panel must show imagination and/or creativity.
- **DON'T LEAVE PRINTING TO THE LAST MINUTE!** Allow yourself plenty of time. Unless you are a master printer, get the best printing that you can afford!

3: Criteria for the Associateship (15 Images):

- Panel submission must clearly meet the objectives outlined in your Statement of Intent--which should not be any longer than 150 words. A word count is required beforehand from applicants applying for the RPS Associateship and must be adhered to or risk disqualification;
- Photographic style should be consistent (emergence of a style), illustrating mood and emotion as appropriate;
- Panel should show clear evidence of photographer's input and originality of approach;
- Avoid repetition of images (no more than two similar images will be accepted);
- A high standard of presentation is expected with images being appropriately mounted.
- A high level of understanding of composition, lighting and viewpoints must be demonstrated with a visual balance (sequence) and style appropriate to the subject matter (or theme);
- For IPF Associateship submissions, two levels of paneling are required; for RPS submissions, three levels tend to be the norm, but two levels are acceptable;
- Personal engagement with the subject matter should be evident where appropriate;
- Images contained in a Licentiate's panel should not be included in an Associateship panel;
- The same technical requirements as stated above for the Licentiate's panel should be abided for the Associateship submission; though the focus for Associateship is not to demonstrate a whole range of photographic techniques and approaches as required for the Licentiate's (various shutter speeds, depths of field, view points, etc.) but what distinctly makes you, **you**, such as style, mood, etc.

4: Differences in Distinctions Procedures/Methods between the RPS and the Irish Photographic Federation.

- Upon successful Distinctions application, annual fees for the IPF are €25 and for the RPS are Sterling £118.
- Under the IPF, Distinctions Panels are panelled in two tiers/levels. Under the RPS, applicants can panel in either two or three tiers/levels.

- Under the IPF, applicant has to attain the Licentiatehip first before applying for the Associateship. Under the RPS, an applicant can apply directly for an Associateship without attaining a Licentiatehip, though the RPS recommends applying for the Licentiatehip first.
- When applying for Associateship and Fellowship Distinctions, the RPS has many more specialty categories and has a full complement of Distinctions panel members with expertise in the specific area or genre (usually five judges plus chairperson). Under the IPF, there aren't as many specialty areas, and Distinctions panels tend to be led and guided by one or two specialists in the particular photographic genre. Also, under the RPS, Fellowship panels are adjudicated privately with only the judging panel in attendance. If a panel is deemed successful, it then goes on to the Fellowship Board for further approval/verdict. RPS judges will compare the Fellowship panel with the prior Associateship panel to look for/prove progression and advancement by applicant.
- Under the RPS, Licentiatehips, Associateships and Fellowships are assessed on different days, with the various specialties within the particular Distinctions levels (A & F) being assessed on different days as well. Under the IPF, all Distinctions Levels are assessed on the same day. Thus, registration for forthcoming IPF Distinctions Assessments books up rather quickly, so one needs to register many, many months in advance if interested in applying.

5: The Months and Dates of the Irish Photographic Federation's Distinctions Sittings.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ANY PHOTOGRAPHER CURIOUS ABOUT OR THINKING ABOUT APPLYING FOR A LICENTIATESHIP DISTINCTION HERE IN IRELAND ATTEND ONE OF THE IPF DISTINCTIONS SITTINGS TO EXPERIENCE THE DISTINCTIONS PROCESS. IPF DISTINCTIONS ARE HELD IN **SEPTEMBER, NOVEMBER, MARCH** (L&A ONLY) AND **MAY**.

The next Sitting, **26th, November, 2016**, At **Lit, Thurles**. Attendance Is Free And All Are Welcome!

TO REGISTER AN APPLICATION FOR A DISTINCTION, THE MAY 2017 SITTING WILL BE THE NEXT AVAILABLE SITTING AS PRIOR SITTINGS TO THIS ARE FULLY BOOKED OUT.

See more at:

<http://irishphoto.ie/distinctions/assessment-dates/>

See more RPS at:

<http://www.rps.org/regions-and-chapters/regions/headquarters/blogs/2014/june/tips-on-getting-the-lrps-distinction#sthash.EZbYxkWP.dpuf>

<http://www.rps.org/distinctions/distinction-successes/lrps-galleries>
(Successful Licentiate panels including Geoff Harris LRPS)

See more IPF at

<http://irishphoto.ie/distinctions/>
(Distinctions general information)

<http://irishphoto.ie/distinctions/lipf/>
(Licentiate useful information)

<http://irishphoto.ie/distinctions/aipf/>
(Associate useful information)

6: Geoff Harris LRPS shares tips on attaining a successful LRPS Distinction:

So, I was finally granted my LRPS in April 2014, and I passed first time. Getting this distinction was a great experience, and I learned a lot by going through it. Here are some tips and insights I have for anyone who's either thinking of doing the LRPS, or is in the middle of preparing for it. Several people helped me a lot, so hopefully I can help, too!

Read the handbook: as somebody from the RPS explained to me **"the assessors don't need to like your images, they just need to be sure they meet the required standard."** This is actually a really important distinction. The images in your panel don't need to be great examples of photographic art but they must be technically competent, by which they need to be well composed, well exposed (ie no burnt out highlights or excessive shadow) and as sharp as they need to be. The handbook explains it in detail. PS: you don't need to have a theme for the LRPS panel. Mine had a strong travel theme, but that's more to do with the fact that I am a lousy landscape/macro photographer!

Variety is key: when I decided to do the LRPS back in 2011, I hadn't properly read the handbook, so the first panel I submitted for early feedback was criticised as it didn't show enough variety. I'd provided a series of black and white portraits taken on the street in Bangkok, and although I got some good feedback on individual images, they didn't show enough variety as a panel. I have since discovered that you don't need to photograph 10 DIFFERENT genres or subjects, but you need to make sure your panel shows a variety of techniques and were taken in a variety of different lighting conditions. So in my final panel I tried to include indoor shots, outdoor shots, wide aperture portraits, portraits with more depth of field, flash being used to freeze action, panning, and so on.

Go to an advisory day: it's really important to go along to an advisory, or feedback, day. As well as getting a better sense of the standard required, the RPS advisors will give you a strong steer on what are your strongest and weakest images. Several of my prized images were trashed, which annoyed me a bit at the time, but in hindsight this was invaluable. Often you are too close to your work to make objective decisions. **If you can't take feedback on the chin and learn from it, you won't get through the RPS distinction process.**

Do obsess about blown out highlights, poor focus and over sharpening: from what I understand these are key reasons to fail. Make sure the highlight warning is on in your camera or photo editing software, and check sharpness at 100%. If you are in doubt about an image, don't submit it.

Give yourself enough time for printing: I left my printing to the last minute, and it was very stressful. You need plenty of time to pick the right paper (I went for expensive art paper as it really lifted the colours), do the prints (or order them) and mount the images. You are marked on presentation so give yourself plenty of time to get it right. I could only do my final hanging plan once I had all the physical prints, but in the meantime, **you need to think about how the images lead in the eye, and how colours and themes complement each other.** Mixing colour and black and white is a bit risky but it's probably less risky if your panel is less themed than mine. Ensure a black and white image is really benefitting from losing the colour though. Don't use mono to hide poor technique or messy composition.

Last but not least, don't panic! I almost withdrew a few days before as I didn't think my panel was strong enough. **Don't be put off by other panels you see online, just because they are really good doesn't mean yours is rubbish!** Do your best with your panel and then let go of the outcome!