RPS DISTINCTIONS PANEL MEMBERS

APPLYING TO BE A PANEL MEMBER

Thank you for your interest in becoming a panel member for RPS Distinctions.

RPS Distinctions are one of the most widely recognised and respected photography awards throughout the world. We support people to undertake our structured assessments through a tailored and friendly education programme, with a high standard of care and support for everyone. Being a panel member is an important and enjoyable role. This document sets out what is involved, and how you might apply to get involved.

The RPS aims to be inclusive in all its programmes and with its staff, volunteers and membership. It encourages applications from everyone regardless of their ethnicity, their sexual and gender identity, age or any other aspect of their identity, background or circumstance.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Andy Moore LRPS, RPS Distinctions Manager
The Royal Photographic Society (the RPS) is a registered charity which aims to educate members of the public, promote the highest standards of photography, and encourage public appreciation of photography. The RPS was established in 1853 and has thousands of members in the UK and abroad. It is the UK’s leading photography organisation, realising its aims through a combination of workshops and courses, competitions and touring exhibitions, a distinctions and qualifications programme, and an annual awards ceremony.

The RPS is a worldwide community of photographers, united by their love of photography. Our shared vision is for everyone to be as inspired, empowered and educated in the art and science of photography as we are.

Throughout our long history, the Royal Photographic Society has grown and evolved alongside the practice of photography. This evolution has been driven by the ambitions of our members, by leaps in technology, and by changes in society.

The RPS recently launched its strategic plan 2021-26 ‘Photography for Everyone’. It consists of twenty-one ambitious programmes, all of which are underpinned by supporting aims around inclusion, environmental and social responsibility, member involvement, financial sustainability and profile raising. Some programmes are a continuation of past activities but eleven are new – providing an opportunity for the RPS to engage with new audiences to inspire, supporting their creativity and connect them to a wider community of photographers.

More info at www.rps.org/strategy
ABOUT THIS ROLE

Distinction panel members are a vital part of the Distinctions process. In this role you will be supporting the Distinctions team by helping to guide and inform individual photographers of varying ability through their journey towards gaining their chosen Distinction.

It can be a challenging role, but very enjoyable too, meeting like-minded photographers, and helping many people to make progress with their own creative journey. Our dedicated team will provide you with regular support to help you.

Panel Members’ activities include:
- Providing individual advice via the department’s one2one advice service
- Attending Advisory Days in regions.
- Answering questions submitted on the Distinctions Facebook Page
- Attending as an Assessor during assessments, either in person or held online.
- You will need to apply our published criteria to every panel being assessed, leaving your own personal preferences aside.
- Providing feedback to the Panel Chair.
WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

To volunteer for this role, you must be a current RPS member and hold the necessary Distinction (see below).

As well as good interpersonal, diplomacy, communication and teamwork skills, we are looking for people who are interested in the work of the RPS and are willing to give their time to help support a very busy Distinctions process.

Previous experience in an image evaluating role is desirable, but not essential, as we as we will develop your skills in this area, and help you gain in confidence. We are looking for a broad range of panel members, and may select those with less experience in order to provide new opportunities and a diversity of perspectives.

If you are invited to the Induction Day, you will need to show us that you can talk clearly about a set of images, and provide sympathetic feedback in front of an audience, basing your comments on the published criteria.

This new application process is designed to give all suitable photographers a chance to become a panel member. There are a limited number of places available, so it is likely that we will receive more applications than the available positions. We will therefore be unable to select all applicants, including those who may otherwise be perfectly suitable for the role. If you are not shortlisted, please do not interpret this as a criticism of your photographic standing within the RPS.

The selection to invite to an induction day is made by the Distinctions Manager and the relevant Panel Chair(s). On some occasions either one might call the application to have a discussion over the phone before deciding to invite to the induction day. Each application will be considered very carefully.
**Licentiate**
We are currently looking for volunteers who can help potential individuals to attain the first level of our Distinctions - the Licentiate. The role involves being supportive, understanding, fair and able to suggest how to move forward with a clear plan.

All assessors at this level must at least be an Associate of the RPS. It is also desirable (but not essential) to have previously been awarded the Licentiate Associate and Fellowship

**Associate and Fellowship**
We are looking for volunteers who can help potential individuals to attain the Associate and Fellowship level of our Distinctions in Natural History, Travel, Documentary, Landscape, Photobooks, Film, Research, Visual Art, Applied and Portraiture and Contemporary. The role involves being supportive, understanding, fair and able to suggest how to move forward with a clear plan. It’s important at this stage to help and guide individuals to fully understand at which level they are currently working at. All assessors at this level must be a Fellow (or Honorary Fellow) of the RPS. Applying for more than one genre is acceptable.
WHAT WE OFFER

As an RPS Distinctions panel member, you will form part of our Distinctions community, helping support many photographers on their personal journeys. We aim to be welcoming and friendly, giving a positive experience to everyone.

You will receive a clear explanation of what your role involves at an Induction Day, including an overview of the RPS and its strategic plans for the future.

We will ensure you have full support from the Distinctions department staff team, and individual support from an experienced panel member for the first 6 months. Additional training may be available if necessary.

Recognition for your volunteering, including (from June 2022) a new online system for recording the time you contribute. Agreed out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed.

Locations
All assessments will take place in Bristol – with some additional online work, including one2one sessions. Advisory days take place in our UK regions.

Hours
The time commitment will vary, but as an idea, you should be prepared to help each year with two days of assessments; ten one2one sessions; and two advisory days; as well as preparation for each.
Typical tasks include

- Maintaining a current knowledge of the Distinctions regulations
- Helping the Distinctions department with bespoke requests
- Offering advice and support at either a region event or at home
- Supporting the chair of the panel, by providing clear and informative feedback at assessments
- Attending a minimum of a two-day assessment in Bristol per year
- Attending two advisory days per year (within reasonable distance of your location)
- Completing around 10 one2one’s per year

Closing date for applications – 31 March 2022 (other rounds may take place later in the year)

Please email Andy Moore LRPS Distinctions Manager andy@rps.org with a covering letter of no more than 500 words, why you would like to become a panel member for the RPS and how you think your own skills and experience would enable you to fulfil the role. Please send in a brief CV of your photographic or film experience, previous mentor roles and any examples of the skills needed to fulfil this role.

We will review all applications, and invite a cross-section of suitable applicants to the (online) induction day, from which the final selections will be made.

The Royal Photographic Society is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive organisation. We encourage all qualified applicants, regardless of their ethnicity, their sexual and gender identity, age or any other aspect of their identity, background, or circumstance.

We ask all applicants to complete and return an EDI form with their application. Download our EDI form at www.rps.org/jobs