

SOP 4-5: QUALIFICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS UPGRADING TO ASSOCIATE FELLOW

Original Date 19 Mar 1968, 7 Revisions

Current Date 9 July 2020

1. GENERAL: For upgrade to ASSOCIATE FELLOW, requirements established by the Board of Directors in accordance with the Constitution, Article III, Section 5, require that:
 - a. An ASSOCIATE FELLOW shall have been closely associated with experimental flight testing for a period of not less than ten years, of which not less than five years shall have been as an experimental test pilot. He/she shall have been an active member of the Society for not less than five years during which period he/she shall have held the grade of MEMBER for not less than two years.
 - b. Applicants for this grade shall file an application for upgrading with the Membership Committee which shall reference five members of the Society in good standing, of whom three or more shall be FELLOWS or ASSOCIATE FELLOWS. The Secretary shall solicit letters of recommendation from each reference listed. There are no recommending criteria, format, or length prescribed in the Constitution for such letters of recommendation. However, in making their recommendations, members chosen for reference may affirm, within their knowledge, the applicant meeting the specific experience requirements as detailed in Section II of this SOP. As selection to Associate Fellow is a step toward the grade of Fellow, those asked to be references for upgrade to Associate Fellow may also subjectively consider the applicant's overall character, integrity, accomplishments to date, and potential for future upgrade. Unless four favorable replies are received within 60 days, the application shall be treated as unsuccessful.
 - c. The Membership Committee shall determine upon receipt of the application and four favorable letters of recommendation whether the applicant possesses the full experience and membership requirements for advancement to ASSOCIATE FELLOW. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply for advancement in grade to ASSOCIATE FELLOW after a lapse of one year from the date of said notification.
2. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS
 - a. Time credited as "closely associated with experimental flight testing" shall normally begin with employment or assignment as a test pilot or upon entry into a recognized test pilot school. Only with special justification shall time prior to assumption of test pilot duties or training for test flying be credited toward the ten years. The Membership Committee shall study the special justification provided by the applicant and rule on its admissibility. "Closely associated" time may include any of the following:
 - i. Any time spent as an experimental test pilot also counts towards the requirement for ten years of "closely associated" time. The entire ten years can be served as an experimental test pilot.
 - ii. Test pilot training is the only type of schooling that is recognized as "closely associated". College attendance shall not be creditable toward the ten years "closely associated with experimental flight testing."
 - iii. Sales, Marketing, System Project Office, and similar duties shall be credited as "closely associated with experimental flight testing" only when the applicant can show positively

- that in the performance of his/her duties, he/she is required to work directly with the flight test organization. Knowing the flight test personnel and being aware of their activities is not, in of itself, acceptable as "closely associated".
- iv. In the organization that contains the flight test activity, any of the various levels of management that are in the direct chain of command from the test pilot to the corporate president or to the commander of the military organization can be credited as, "closely associated with experimental flight testing". Staff duties will not be credited unless the applicant's job requirements list specific duties or responsibilities to be performed with the flight test activity.
 - v. Production flight testing, test pilot school attendance, chase and evaluation flying, and astronaut training prior to a space flight can be credited as "closely associated with experimental flight testing" to meet the ten-year requirement.
 - vi. Flight evaluation of equipment or ordnance not previously flight tested while assigned to an operational unit would be considered "closely associated" time. Operational flying, maintenance flight test, or functional check flights are not considered "closely associated with experimental flight testing."
- b. The applicant must have served at least five years as an active experimental test pilot. Applicants do not need to list actual dates on a monthly basis as was done for the Initial Application, but they must summarize their flight test activity in sufficient detail to show that they have a minimum of five years as an experimental test pilot. For the purposes of upgrading to Associate Fellow, the following experience is considered as qualifying:
- i. Qualifying experience (EXPERIMENTAL or DEVELOPMENTAL as PILOT) previously credited toward ASSOCIATE MEMBER or MEMBER should be included
 - ii. EXPERIMENTAL flight testing is defined as flight testing which investigates the characteristics of an aerospace vehicle or its components under conditions not previously tested. Examples include first flights, envelope expansion and initial performance or flying qualities testing of new or significantly modified vehicles.
 - iii. DEVELOPMENTAL flight testing is defined as flight testing which conducts the initial investigation of the effects of any engineering or design change to an aerospace vehicle or its components. Examples include structural changes, control law development, and certain systems tests. For systems tests to qualify as developmental, the tests must be under conditions not previously tested and the systems must affect flying qualities or be required for the safe operation of the aircraft during critical phases of flight. Examples include, but are not limited to, integrated flight/fire or flight/propulsion control, automatic or manual terrain following systems, and the use of artificial vision systems at low altitude.
 - iv. An astronaut who has completed a space flight and remains assigned as a pilot in an active space program continues to accrue time toward the "five years as an experimental test pilot". This period of qualifying time will cease when an astronaut is re-assigned to a supervisory capacity or management position that will not involve further space flights. Assignment as pilot in a space program prior to a space flight counts toward the "ten years" (paragraph 5) but only time after a space flight counts toward the "five years".
 - v. Although time spent as a test pilot school pilot instructor is not qualifying flight test experience for initial membership (SOP 4-2, III, 11), it may be counted towards the "five years as an experimental test pilot" for the purposes of upgrading to Associate Fellow.

- vi. ENGINEERING EVALUATIONS test flights which cannot be considered EXPERIMENTAL or DEVELOPMENTAL but do gather previously unestablished data. This type of flight test experience is not considered qualifying for Initial Membership, but it may be counted towards the “five years as an experimental test pilot” for the purposes of upgrading to Associate Fellow. Examples include systems evaluations such as air-to-air or air-to-ground RADAR’s, autopilots, weapons delivery systems, electronic primary flight displays, etc., so long as the systems are intended to be part of the aerospace vehicle being tested.
- vii. The following are not considered qualifying or counted towards the “five years as an experimental test pilot” for the purposes of upgrading to Associate Fellow:
 - a) Production test flying.
 - b) Service testing, operational evaluations, and corroboration of flight tests previously performed.
 - c) Flights conducted solely to provide environmental conditions, i.e., as a test bed for the testing and/or development of systems, components, or other equipment which are unrelated to the test aerospace vehicle.
 - d) Flights flown as chase aircraft, missile control aircraft, or other test support.
 - e) Endurance (reliability, durability) testing and purely maintenance testing (functional check flights).
 - f) Flights performed on an irregular basis in a supervisory capacity for the purpose of program familiarization.
- c. The applicant must list five members of the Society in good standing, of whom three or more shall be Fellows or Associate Fellows. The Secretary of the Society shall solicit letters of recommendation from each reference listed. Unless four favorable replies are received within 60 days, the application shall be treated as unsuccessful.
 - i. If the applicant does not personally know five members of the Society and/or does not know three members in the grade of Fellow or Associate Fellow, the applicant shall list those members in good standing that the applicant does personally know.
 - a) The remaining number of required references should be filled with other aerospace professionals that have first-hand knowledge of the applicant’s test pilot duties and experience.
 - b) The Membership Committee Chairperson will then solicit a sufficient number of volunteer SETP members in the required grades to interview the provided references of those who do not meet the requirements of the Constitution. Each such reference must have a different volunteer interviewer. If possible, members of the Membership Committee should be given priority to fill the required number of volunteers.
 - c) After the interviews, each volunteer shall provide a letter of recommendation (favorable or unfavorable) regarding the applicant’s advancement to Associate Fellow.
 - d) In total, to be successful, the applicant must have at least four favorable letters of recommendation within the 60-day period. The 60-day period begins once the appropriate number of SETP members have volunteered.

3. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

- a. Complete the BACKGROUND RESUME on the enclosed form (use additional sheets if necessary) to briefly describe your flight-testing activities in narrative form. Include all relevant information on the form plus describe the test programs and duties you performed on each program including the applicable dates so that the Membership Committee can assess your qualifications with regard to meeting the requirement of five years as an experimental test pilot and 10 years of closely associated time.
- b. The application and completed application forms are handled by the Society as private information.
- c. Applications will be placed in a HOLD status if additional information is required. If the additional information is not provided to the Membership Committee within a period of 60 days, the application will be placed in an invalidated file.
- d. A recent photo should be submitted with your application. A high-quality digital photo is preferred.