



Information for Applicants

Any Voting Member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia may apply for registration as a Registered Professional Forester. Registrants are entitled to use the designation Registered Professional Forester and the post-nominal 'RPF'.

The Registered Professional Forester scheme allows applicants to define and nominate the area/s of skills/expertise in which they seek recognition. Registrants each receive a Certificate identifying the approved area/s of skills/expertise.

Overview of requirements

Applications are invited from those who:

1. Are eligible for membership of the IFA at Voting Member level
2. Agree to abide by IFA Code of Ethics
3. Have 5 years relevant professional experience which includes at least 2 years relevant experience in Australia
4. Provide details sufficiently substantiating their recognition at one of the following recognised categories:
 - General Practicing Forester
 - General Practicing Forester with recognised skills
 - Specialist
5. Undertake (after approval) to complete at least 30 hours Continuing Professional Development each year.
6. Professional Indemnity Insurance or where relevant, a statement of cover or indemnity by employer. (required only if employed and practicing in external consultancy).

Details of requirements for categories and CPD are as follows:

Recognition Categories

The applicant should ensure that he/she addresses each skill or expertise claimed with supporting documentation.

The proposed guidelines recognise three categories of citation for the RPF scheme, as follows-

- A1. General Practicing Forester
- A2. General Practicing Forester with recognised skills
- B. Specialist

The rules are -

A1. General Practicing Forester

Academic qualifications

- Have a BSc. (Forestry) or equivalent, plus a minimum of 5 years forestry work.

Supporting experience and information to be provided

- Evidence of current (within the last 3 years) expertise in a range of general forestry activities, including involvement in field application.

General explanation

- **A General Practicing Forester is a forester, who has completed appropriate tertiary qualifications, obtained some field experience (at least 5 years) in forestry, agrees to comply with a Code of Ethics, is insured for professional indemnity when consulting and undertakes Continuing Professional Development.**
- The RPF scheme recognizes at this level that the forester is sufficiently experienced and matured in forestry work to be accepted by their peers as an experienced and professional forester.
- This level of application is the most common level and will cover most applicants.
- Importantly it certifies the currency of the GPF's work.
- The RPF Scheme primarily recognises professional forestry work and applicants will not normally be assessed on their day-to-day management skills which are expected of persons in the normal

workplace employment such as Project management, Personnel management, Budgetary Control and the like.

A2. General Practicing Forester with recognised skills in(as listed*)

Academic qualifications

- Have a BSc. (Forestry) or equivalent, plus a minimum of 5 years forestry work.

Supporting experience and information to be provided

- evidence of current or previous expertise in a range of general forestry activities, including involvement in field activities; and
- specific nominated 'recognised skills' must be current and supported by:
 - i. Peer recognition by practitioners of skills, expertise and experience in applying the knowledge at a medium to high level of responsibility (i.e. as operational or project supervisor); and
 - ii. Evidence of up to date expertise in the subject area (Generally a minimum of about 5 years), as demonstrated by relevant professional development.

General explanation

- **A General Practicing Forester with recognised skills in is a forester, who has met all the assets of the General Practicing Forester mentioned at 1 above, but who has streamed off into a specialty in one or two specific areas in forestry.**

It would typically relate to those who spend their earlier years in general field forestry and then concentrate in a more specific area of forestry. In the process of this specialization the forester would have updated, researched and gained experience in that particular specialization.

- The specific nominated skills should be stated in broad terms ' eg: 'Plantation Management' or 'Native Forest Management' or 'Consultancy Services' or 'Regulatory Control'. It is not appropriate to nominate a shopping list of areas for 'recognition' but rather the

nomination of one or two generic areas should be used without its sub elements. Of course full details, including all relevant supportive material should be provided in support of the claims for recognition.

- The RPF scheme recognizes at this level that the forester is sufficiently experienced and matured to be accepted by their peers as having special and current skills in an area of forestry.
- It is acknowledged that within areas of special skills, that some applicants will have a greater level of expertise than others. This may need to be examined further in time; however the current concept is to recognise the special skills of foresters, rather than the level of those skills.

B. Specialist in(as listed)

Academic qualifications

- Have a Degree – at least. But not necessarily a BSc. in Forestry. Plus 5 years working in the field of forestry)

Supporting experience and information to be provided

- evidence of a professional focus and specialisation in the subject area; and
- recognition as a specialist by peers in the subject area (e.g. through papers, conferences, responsibility for major projects, positions held at a senior level on relevant bodies etc.); and
- evidence of up to date expertise in the subject area, as demonstrated by relevant professional development; and
- evidence of a continuing involvement or contribution to the subject area through major projects, research, development, innovation, training or education.

General explanation

- **This classification recognises those who are not Foresters but who work in an area of forestry eg: an ecology, fire specialist, water catchment, research, academia, etc.**
- Applicants are expected to have a high level of respect and recognition as an expert in a particular field in a forestry environment with at least 5 years and

current experience in the nominated area of speciality.

- The nominated speciality should be stated in broad terms ' eg: 'Fire Management' or 'Native Forest Management' or 'Forestry Science & Research'.

Meeting the Continuing Professional Development requirements

The RPF scheme acknowledges the need for registrants to take an active approach to professional development to meet ever-changing challenges of modern forestry. It encourages the acquisition of new skills to address these issues but also stresses the need for integrative as well as specific skills.

Applicants are not required to provide evidence of CPD prior to RPF registration, BUT on receiving approval, they are required to comply with the following CPD requirements:

Minimum requirement of CPD hours

30 hours a year must be attained and should be drawn from at least 3 of the recognised activities.

Compliance

An RPF applicant does not have to comply with the CPD requirement until after she/he is registered.

Annual Record of activities

A completed Annual Record of Activities form must be provided to the Institute's National Office. The form RPF06 is available for completion and submission via the IFA website. Completion of the Scheme's requirements on an annual basis is basic to maintaining RPF registration.

Verification

Verification must be such that an auditor could confirm that the activity was carried out as stated. It can include written confirmation of attendance by an organiser or a peer, receipts, inclusion in list of delegates, printed material, notes taken at seminars, etc. *Note: No attachments should accompany the Annual CPD report unless requested to do so by the RPF Co-ordinator.*

Recognised Activities

Below is a list of activities that the RPF Registration Committee will recognise. The list

below is not complete and members may undertake other professional development activities in the spirit of the CPD requirements.

1. Conferences, workshops, seminars, fieldtrips

Attendance at conferences, workshops, field trips and seminars and preparation time and presentation of papers, (including IFA, ACFA, AFG, Austimber, IUFRO).

2. External, employer provided and self-study programs

- a) Participation in programs conducted by tertiary institutions and commercial education providers. These may include relevant award and short courses and distance learning programs using reading, video, audio or computer assisted learning.
- b) Activities presented by the employer that is designed to expand the professional's knowledge, eg, supervision courses, project management.
- c) Technical training programs, eg fire suppression, silvicultural practices

3. Updating existing knowledge

Updating existing knowledge through self-directed study and reading eg, computing skills, inventory techniques and study tours.

4. Teaching and research activities outside normal employment

- a) Preparation and publication of a paper in a suitable professional journal such as *Australian Forestry*.
- b) Teaching or formal lecturing

5. Mentoring

Providing support, advice and guidance to a less experience forester. The time devoted to this activity may be claimed by both parties.

6. Community Service

Leadership or major contribution in Landcare, Bushcare, Greening Australia, Australian Forest Growers, "friends of" agroforestry/growers groups or international aid.

7. Professional Service

- a) Service on the IFA Board or other IFA committees or to similar professional organizations.
- b) Reviewing a paper for *Australian Forestry* or similar standard journal (to a maximum of three hours per paper).
- c) Contribute to the standing of the forestry profession, or to Australian or world forestry.
- d) Preparation and publication of articles in the IFA newsletter: forestry knowledge articles, general interest articles but not office bearer reports.

8. Other Activities

Consideration will be given on an annual basis to the recognition of other activities considered by a member to be appropriate and detailed by a member in his/her annual report.

Level of information and material required in support of an application?

When deciding on the structure of an application and the extent of information and evidence to provide to the RPF Registration Committee, applicants are encouraged to follow a 'job application with supporting portfolio' model. The quality and the standard of each application for registration are considered, along with other evidence as an indication of the applicant's professionalism.

The applicant must ensure that each skill or expertise claimed is addressed with assessable clear supporting argument including dates and a full description of experiences.

Obligations and responsibilities of applicants and the Registration Committee

Applications for RPF Registration must clearly support the area(s) nominated for recognition.

By applying for registration, the applicant agrees that the RPF Registration Committee of the IFA, or its representatives, may make such enquiries of individuals or employers as it believes necessary to verify statements and evidence provided by the applicant in support of the application and that the areas approved may be included on the IFA website.

The RPF Registration Committee must ensure that the applicant's experience, skills and knowledge are appropriate to the current state

of knowledge and the maintenance of high standards of professional practice.

Final determination of registration rests with the RPF Registration Committee or its delegate(s), with an appeal process to the IFA Board. The applicant must receive written advice of the outcome of the determination. If an application is unsuccessful, the RPF Registration Committee must write to the applicant, describing the aspects to the registration requirements that need to be addressed in any future application. An application fee is required for each subsequent application.

Administration and application fees

An application fee of \$110 (includes GST) for members and \$360 (incl. GST) for non-members is charged for the determination of initial registration. This amount contributes partially to the additional costs associated with processing the application. In the event that an application is not approved, this fee will not be refunded to the applicant. Appeal against determinations by the IFA Board may only be pursued if there is evidence of bad faith or misinterpretation of criteria. An Appeal is to be directed through the Executive Director, Institute of Foresters of Australia, who is required under IFA Regulations to forward the appeal to the Appeals Investigation Committee and for ultimate decision by the IFA Board.

Registration will be for a period of five years, with an annual review. After 5 years the Registration requires renewing. Renewal of registration is subject to a moderate fee determined by the IFA Board and subject to the Registrant continuing to meet the RPF Registration Committee's requirements.