



AIA New Member Categories Component Staff Leader FAQ

Introduction

The Member and Volunteer Engagement Priority Project is a series of initiatives that will position the organization to engage better, serve, and communicate with a broader set of AIA members. As a result of the work, AIA will be able to modernize our membership structure and operationalize new engagement, experience, and involvement strategies. This work will give AIA and its components a more robust understanding of our members at a deeper level, better activate current members, and recruit and serve more diverse members.

One of the main initiatives of this project is to modernize AIA's membership categories. By updating our membership categories, we will expand the AIA Community and position the organization as the convener for the built environment, support current members at their career stage, and increase membership dues revenue. This work is consistent with AIA's bold strategic plan, which explicitly states that we envision creating a big tent organization and collaborating with those who realize the power of design to solve problems. The proposed new membership structure delivers on that goal and further positions AIA to engage design, construction, and community stakeholders.

Membership Categories define the way people can join AIA. The key category segments below represent both "categories" and "statuses," which in some cases may be combined (e.g., an Architect Fellow who retires and becomes Architect Fellow Emeritus).

These descriptions represent the most simplified level of category differentiation.

Category	Description	Designation
Architect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals possessing a valid U.S. Architecture license. 	AIA
Internationally Licensed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals possessing a valid non-U.S. Architecture license. 	Intl. Lic. AIA
Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate AIA: Individuals with a U.S. degree in Architecture or are practicing architectural design under the direct guidance of a licensed architect. Senior Associate AIA: Individuals with 10+ years of Associate membership who opt-in to show commitment to the Architecture profession without being licensed. International Associate AIA: Individuals with a non-U.S. degree in Architecture. 	Assoc. AIA Sr. Assoc. AIA Intl. Assoc. AIA
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals teaching architecture in a post-secondary school who are not practicing architecture in a non-academic setting. 	
Allied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with a license in a key adjacent field or employed in professions licensed or otherwise that support the business of architecture. 	
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals studying architecture in a post-secondary school. 	
Fellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with 10+ years of appropriate membership and approved by the Jury of Fellows. 	FAIA
Honorary Fellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals residing outside the U.S. with a non-U.S. Architecture license and approved by the Jury of Fellows. 	Hon. FAIA
Emeritus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals retiring from architecture, 70+ years old, with 15+ consecutive or 25+ total years of membership. 	AIA Member Emeritus Assoc. AIA Member Emeritus
Honorary Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals of esteemed character providing distinguished service to the architecture profession and approved by the Jury of Honorary Members. 	Hon. AIA

New members will gain access to an array of AIA benefits, including a wide array of digital resources, networking opportunities, member discounts, and professional development resources.

1 Comments in red have been added to answer questions from attendees of the recent AIA Focused Discussions



Timeline for New Membership Categories

The evaluation and design of the proposed membership structure kicked off in October 2022. Throughout 2023, AIA HQ staff worked with stakeholders from across the organization, including the Board of Directors, to develop and refine the structure above. AIA's Board of Directors approved the new membership structure and bylaw changes at their January 2024 meeting. The following are key dates and activities to be aware of:

- April 5, 2024: All bylaw and resolution information will be sent to AIA Delegates, including a summary of the new membership categories.
- May 1, 2024 (3 pm ET): AIA Townhall for Delegates to review and discuss bylaw changes and resolutions.
- May 7, 2024 (12 pm ET): AIA Townhall for Delegates to review and discuss membership category bylaw changes.
- May 10, 2024 (2:30 pm ET): Chapter Webinar: Delegate Accreditation Process
- May 15, 2024 (10 am ET): AIA Townhall for Delegates to review and discuss membership category bylaw changes.
- June 5, 2024: The AIA Annual Business Meeting is held, where delegates will vote on all bylaw changes and resolutions.
- June 20, 2024: Sample bylaws will be distributed to AIA Components.
- January 1, 2025: AIA's new membership structure begins.

Frequently Asked Questions

- What changes are happening for the Architect category?
 - No changes are being made to the Architect membership category, and all current requirements will remain the same as part of the membership restructure. The AIA designation is recognized by clients, civic leaders, the public, and the AEC industry as an abiding commitment to professional excellence. Please note that no new member categories will be allowed to use the AIA designation.
- What is the most important thing needed to make these categories work and succeed?
 - A strong communications strategy is needed. The category changes are only a platform that allow us to better activate current members, recruit and serve more diverse members, but also to provide us with a more robust understanding of our members at a deeper level. For the categories to succeed, our communications plan will need to work with these new structures to operationalize new engagement, experience, and involvement strategies.
- What specific benefits to the AIA come from "broadening the tent"?
 - The AIA Strategic Plan directs us to "Create a bigger tent" to "Collaborate with those who realize the power of design to solve problems." By updating our membership categories, we will expand the AIA Community and position the organization as the convener for the built environment, support current members at their career stage, and increase membership dues revenue. This expansion will focus on domestically and internationally licensed architects because the environmental threat we're facing is global, and we need to connect effective design to a global scale. The proposed new membership structure delivers on that goal and further positions AIA to engage design, construction, and community stakeholders.
- Are you prioritizing non-Architects?
 - No, we will always prioritize architects as we continue to support future architects, those who educate architects, and those who work with architects. Our current public relations work positions the architect at the center of the built environment, through initiatives like our mayoral advocacy campaign and partnership with CBS on the America byDesign television show. Realistic goals are a small fraction of the "Total Audience". We ended 2023 with 1,721 international Associates and our goal is to triple that number in the next three years, making that category still only 5,160 members. Pricing is not dramatically less for international members, only \$88 less at the National level and some international chapters are more expensive than some local chapters. From a recruitment POV, in order to attract those architects who don't see current value in AIA we have to change the value proposition to enhance the value of membership by providing more influence and partnering opportunities under the tent of the AIA community.



- Why is AIA not concentrating on reaching the registered architects in the country who are not architect members?
 - Licensed Architects are the main audience for AIA, and we are focused on recruiting licensed architects who are not members. AIA National has developed effective and extensive recruitment campaigns that use multiple channels to grow our funnel of new members, including new digital campaigns. AIA had never recruited more than 10,000 members in a year before 2022. In 2022 we recruited over 11, 590, and then we recruited over 11,598 in 2023. We are also exploring campaigns with chapters to recruit more licensed architects.
- What current numbers are in the existing categories, mapped onto the proposed new categories?

Category	2024 Year-end membership projections	Total Audience
Architect	68,194	119,906
Associates	19,488	35,361
Allied	1,465	86,110
International Associate	1,721	2,700,000
Academic	400 (estimated)	6,420
Student	0	30,000

- What membership increase does AIA anticipate achieving with the proposed new categories?
 - The new categories are just the first step. We will use the categories as a platform to communicate more targeted messages to prospective and new members, educate them on, and deliver relevant value. We will target 10% growth across all membership categories over the next three years, focusing on Architect and International, where we have the most significant opportunity.
 - AIA National partners with components to grow membership. These new categories, including Academic and Student, will further our efforts for membership growth.
- Has AIA calculated the direct cost of membership to national and local chapters.
 - AIA National will incur expense to recruit new members through communications plans to potential members for each category at a national level, which will be covered by additional revenue generated. Our campaigns are designed to drive membership to all three tiers and should result in no additional expense for Chapters.
- What is the projected annual revenue upon implementation of these new membership categories?
 - We are projecting an additional \$1.2 million in National membership revenues as we expand the international and academic concepts.
- What is the marginal cost of servicing a new member in each category, and thus, what does the Institute earn with each new member?
 - We estimate what the Institute will earn using a Lifetime Value of a Member (LVAM) calculation, which multiplies the revenue of a member annually by the average years of membership. Members contribute an average of \$511 of revenue annually to AIA National. Based on the average lifetime membership of 19 years for architects, the lifetime value is \$9,709. Based on the average lifetime membership of 5 years for associates, the lifetime value is \$2,555. We believe the other categories have LVAMs similar to associates' and expect our international category to have a longer average lifetime based on the increased value we intend to deliver.
- Is this primarily an internal initiative, the product of consultation with AIA components and membership, or a combination of both?
 - This initiative included a cross-section of AIA's member stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, committees, member groups, and representatives from the component network. The engagement process will continue through the annual business meeting to understand the new structure and clearly articulate how this supports architects in their critical work.



- Is it expected that components will provide benefits for each category?
 - As with any member, it is essential to have engagement at the local, state, and national levels. For the new categories of Academic and Student, it is important for AIA components to provide access to the already established rich opportunities and programming to serve these new members. From networking opportunities, events, and participation in volunteer groups – these new members will be key contributors to the organization.
 - The Allied membership will remain as it is today, and benefits will only be at the national level. AIA components will not be expected to provide local benefits to these members. HQ will ensure that the one-tiered membership is clearly articulated as part of the joining process for Allied members.
 - **We are not asking chapters to add any services – rather those new members will be given access to the GREAT content and events that our 205 components already offer.**
- How will these categories be governed to ensure members join/remain in the appropriate category?
 - AIA HQ's membership team will continue to review membership records to ensure accurate placement within the membership model. In addition, we will visibly post key details such as the Academic non-practicing requirements on applications and ensure there is an acknowledgment from the member. In addition, our ethics policy is in place as a last-resort tool to enforce all AIA membership standards and qualifications.
- How will AIA enforce any fraud and abuse of designations?
 - AIA will continue to aggressively pursue any complaints of improper usage of the AIA designation. The misuse of the designation and misrepresentation of licensure status is a serious violation of the AIA's Code of Ethics and subjects that individual to further discipline by the jurisdictional licensing board.
- Will the dues model change for the new membership categories?
 - Components can expect to continue submitting dues amounts for all current categories.
 - For the new Academic category, components can opt-in to standard dues rates (\$199 estimated) in which revenue will be shared equally across membership tiers.
 - For the Internationally Licensed Architectural Professional, the current International Associate rate (\$230) plus the annual increase that is determined by the component.
 - No dues rates need to be submitted for the student category since this membership is complimentary.
 - More information will be shared with components during the call for dues webinar on June 26, 2024. The deadline to submit 2025 dues will be September 15, 2024.
- Have dues rates for these new categories been set for 2025?
 - The Board of Directors will establish all dues rates in May 2024. The staff recommendations for new categories are outlined below. Please note that revenue will be shared equally across all tiers of AIA for the academic category.

Category	2024 Dues	2025 Dues
Internationally Licensed Architectural Professional	\$230	\$230 plus Core CPI *
Academic	N/A	\$199 across three tiers **
Student	N/A	\$0 across three tiers **

- Which categories can be terminated for non-compliance of CE?
 - **All categories that have CE requirements can be terminated for non-compliance. These categories are Architect, Associate, and Internationally Licensed.**



- Why have some rights and privileges been moved in the draft bylaws?
 - As part of the review of the AIA Bylaws, editorial changes were made to the bylaws to provide clarity, reduce redundancies, and consolidate language that was spread through various chapters and sections. Chapter 2.2 was expanded to consolidate rights and privileges that were previously included under each membership category and were moved to 2.24, 2.25, and 2.26.
- How will this impact governance throughout AIA?
 - There are no changes to the governance structure for any existing membership category. With the expanded membership categories, Internationally Licensed Architectural Professionals will gain voting rights for many matters impacting the international chapter and to serve as a delegate. For Allied, Academic, and Student- there are limited voting rights associated with each category. Many state and local AIA components may already have Allied, Academic, and Student membership categories with rights and responsibilities already defined in their Bylaws. Those categories' rights and responsibilities at the component level may differ from the chart below and are not required to change. For your convenience, we have included an AIA HQ Chart of Category Privileges below:

Category	Architect	Internationally Licensed Architectural Professional	Associate	Allied	Academic	Student
Vote on section, chapter, and state boards	Yes	Yes	Limited	No	Limited	No
Speak in component meetings on business matters and in elections	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes	Limited
Vote in component meetings on business matters and in elections	Yes	Yes	Limited	No	Limited	Limited
Appointed as members of committees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Limited	Limited
Serve as a chapter delegate	Yes	Yes	Limited	No	No	No
Serve as a national officer, national director, or component officer or chair	Yes	Limited	Limited	No	No	No
Pin and Symbol	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Designation	AIA/FAIA (or Member Emeritus)	Intl. Lic. AIA or Honorary FAIA (or Member Emeritus)	Assoc. AIA; Senior Assoc. AIA; Intl. Assoc. AIA (or Member Emeritus)	None	None	None
Statuses	Emeritus, Fellow	Emeritus	Senior; Int'l; Emeritus			
C.E. (HSW or L.U.)	18	6	6	N/A	N/A	N/A



The blue boxes above indicate areas of change; all non-shaded areas are unaffected.



- How will we handle migrating current members to these new categories?
 - Current International Associates meeting the Internationally Licensed Architectural Professional criteria will be sent information in late 2024 notifying them of their new membership category.
 - For Associates and Academics, AIA will not preemptively change any member's category as part of this expansion. Members who opt to change to Sr. Associate and Academic must submit an online change request to be moved to a new category. As part of that process, the members will acknowledge that they meet the criteria for the new membership. Please remember that the member must remain in the corresponding category to use the AIA, FAIA, or Associate AIA designations.

Internationally Licensed Architectural Professionals

- Why are only six (6) continuing education credits required for Internationally Licensed Architectural Professionals, less than the eighteen (18) hours currently required today?
 - To maintain their applicable license in the countries where they operate, Internationally Licensed Architectural Professionals must participate in defined amounts of continuing education (CE) each year or recurring period. Respecting the variability of these requirements globally, AIA will require 6-hours of CE for members in this category.

Associate

- Will current Associate AIA members be required to have six hours of CE for the 2025 renewal period?
 - Members who renew their Associate membership in 2025 will renew for an Associate category that requires continuing education. This is consistent with the forward-thinking standard that all members with a designation must have continuing education requirement to show dedication to the profession. These continuing education credits will not be required at the point of renewal and will only need to be completed in time for the 2026 continuing education audit cycle.
- What is the value proposition for switching to a Senior Associate?
 - As the profession continues to evolve, many architecture school graduates choose not to seek licensure and are still dedicated design professionals. As part of exploring the new membership structure, current Associate members reported a desire to signify their breadth of expertise and tenure as design professionals. The status and designation of "Senior" is earned through 10+ years of Associate membership.
 - **Members will be able to opt-in for the Senior associate status, it is completely optional.**
- What changes can US-based International Associates expect with the new membership structure?
 - Members can be International Associates regardless of current residence location since the category is based on the location of the architecture degree (i.e., US degree vs. non-US degree).
- **With the new optional Senior Associate designation, will these members still be permitted to participate in and serve with NAC?**
 - **Yes, these individuals are still part of the Associate Member category and will be represented by the NAC.**
- **Will the 6 hours CE be HSW for Associates?**
 - **All continuing education credits will be accepted, including ARE and AXP hours.**



Student

- Many AIAS students assume they are already members of the AIA. Will this new category confuse these students?
 - The current confusion is one of the reasons for this new category. AIAS is an independent organization and a member of the Architectural Alliance, but its members do not automatically become AIA members. By partnering with AIAS and other existing student organizations, AIA will be able to begin communicating earlier with this important segment, provide a seamless transition to the free 18-month New Grad membership, and help grow student involvement everywhere, even where an existing AIAS, NOMAS, or other student organization chapter is not present. This will support more architecture students and help all organizations expand their influence and offerings.
 - We plan to call this membership the AIA Student Access Pass as part of a communications plan to provide clarity.
- Does a student need to be enrolled in an NAAB-approved architecture program to join the student membership category? What about related fields of study? Or non-NAAB and community colleges?
 - AIA is taking an expansive view of the architectural community, and we want to be as inclusive as possible for this pipeline of future architects and design professionals. As such, this category will be open to anyone in a post-secondary school interested in architecture.
- Will the free 18-month New Graduate membership promotion remain? Will it change to a graduated dues model?
 - The first 18 months after graduation will still be a \$0-dollar New Grad Associate membership. We do not plan to implement graduated dues but are evaluating that possibility for the future.
- What is the value proposition for AIA, AIAS, and students?
 - This category is about collaboration in non-competitive ways to help elevate students, AIAS, and AIA and will strengthen the partnership between AIAS and AIA.
 - For Students this membership category will alleviate confusion, provide more benefits, and create an easier transition into their careers. As an AIAS member, they will get “access” to AIA Leadership Opportunities; Online Community; Knowledge Communities; AIA Transcript; access to firm owners and mentors; Career Resources; AIA benefits and discounts; and a clearer pathway to the next stages of their career.
 - AIAS is the voice of the student and provides a unique community that is valuable to students. AIAS receives access to more students and the ability to provide more benefits. AIAS currently has 4,500 members, and the AIA Student access will be available to all 40,000 architecture students in the US. This will help AIAS increase membership, grow their reach, expand to more chapters, and provide more value to their members.
 - AIA HQ will offer this for free and is not looking to make money from this category. This category allows AIA to connect with students and to create a clearer pathway and community for all students.
 - The success of this category hinges on clear communications about how the student is served better by a collaborative system of organizations and chapters.
- Will students have CE requirements?
 - No, students will not have CE requirements.
- Will students be assigned to local chapters?
 - Yes, students will be assigned to state and local chapters. Many chapters already have student membership, and they actively engage students in the activities of the chapter. This has created a connection between the student and AIA that we will emulate across the country.



Academic

- Why is there a new category dedicated to Academics when they could join as Architect or Associate Members in the past? Will this discourage educators from joining in other categories?
 - As part of exploring the new membership structure, Academics reported the desire to be a part of the AIA community. Still, many of the benefits are tailored to practicing architects or those on the path to licensure. This new category allows educators to engage with AIA at a reduced price but with a more suitable benefits set. Educators will still have the option to be an Architect or Associate member if they meet those requirements and may choose to use the AIA or Associate AIA designations.
- What are the parameters for this category?
 - This category will be for individuals teaching architecture in a post-secondary school who are not practicing architecture in a non-academic setting. This category is not intended for licensed individuals working outside an academic setting most of the time. Adjunct Professors working full-time as Architects must remain in the appropriate membership category to use the AIA, FAIA, and Assoc. AIA designations. **Licensed Architects are not eligible for this category.**
- Are academics teaching in non-NAAB schools and community colleges allowed to be AIA members?
 - Yes, individuals who teach architecture at all post-secondary schools will be eligible.
- What will be the financial impact on components? What if all academics shift to this category?
 - We do not anticipate that all academics will shift to this category. You must remain in those corresponding member categories to use the AIA, Associate AIA, and Fellow (FAIA) designations. This category will not be available for individuals who serve in adjunct professorial roles. Not having a designation will deter individuals who could be either Architects or Associate members and have the corresponding designation.
- How can we leverage academic members to influence architectural students?
 - Students who have professors who are AIA members have a greater appreciation and awareness for the organization. We intend to provide value to academic members by helping them increase their visibility as subject matter experts throughout the AIA community. This increased value will improve the affinity of educators toward AIA, which will be transferred to their students. As with other member categories, this begins with creating more value for these members.

Allied

- What changes are being made to the allied membership category?
 - The Allied Member Category currently exists at the National level, and the rights and privileges remain unchanged. The AIA HQ membership will only be for those individuals with a license in a key adjacent field or employed in professions licensed or otherwise that support the business of architecture.
- How HQ and components share information, and how will local allied members interface with this category?
 - Components will continue their current offerings to allied members as a standalone option in their markets.
- Some individuals may be eligible for both Allied and Associate membership. Is there a process in place to counter confusion?
 - Associate membership is for individuals with a U.S. degree in architecture or practicing architectural design under the direct guidance of a U.S. licensed architect. Allied membership will target adjacent design professionals and vendors. In cases of confusion, AIA's Support Center will direct prospective members to the appropriate category.
- Currently, are all CE providers also Allied members?
 - AIA HQ does not bundle allied membership for CES providers. Being a provider does not make an individual (or company) an AIA member.



Miscellaneous

- What is the value of licensure from AIA's POV?
 - Licensure is very important. It is important to clarify that Licensure is the domain of the individual states in which an individual works. A license allows an individual to work in their chosen field, in our case, architecture.
 - The AIA designation shows the public that the AIA Member strives to do more than hold a license, and that they engage in continuing education and abide by a code of ethics that elevates them over a registered architect.
- Is there a plan for helping the public understand what the designations mean?
 - Yes. AIA currently has nine (9) designations for members. If the proposed changes to the bylaws pass, we will have 11. We plan to communicate clearly about all the designations, and what their limits are. Additionally, we plan to stress the value of the AIA to audiences that hire architects, such as building owners, to ensure they know why they should hire an architect.
- Will the categories be voted on through a single motion?
 - No, there are four different proposed motions. The proposed motions are:
 - Motion to amend the AIA Bylaws categories of Membership related to Architect Members, Associate Members, Allied Members, and Honorary Fellows and Honorary Members (Chapter 2.011, 2.012, 2.017)
 - Motion to amend the AIA Bylaws to expand AIA membership to Internationally Licensed Architectural Professionals (Chapter 2.013)
 - Motion to amend the AIA Bylaws to expand AIA membership to Student Members (Chapter 2.014, 2.015)
 - Motion to amend the AIA Bylaws to expand AIA membership to Academic Members (Chapter 2.016)

Category Designation Examples

Below are example signature block lines for the new or updated membership category designations. All other currently existing category designations will remain unchanged, including Fellow, Emeritus, and Honorary statuses. **There are no changes to the AIA designation for Architects.**

Category Updates	Proposed Designations
Internationally Licensed	John Smith, Intl. Lic. AIA
Senior Associate	John Smith, Sr. Assoc. AIA
International Associate	John Smith, Intl. Assoc. AIA (same as current category)

No designations are applicable for Academic, Student, and National Allied categories.

If you have additional questions, please contact:

- [Mike Skiados](#), AIA Managing Director, Membership Strategy and Engagement
- [Kevin Watkins](#), Chief Membership Officer