



Senior Membership: Recognition of Your Career Achievements

By Elya Joffe, EMC Society Vice-President for Member Services

Are YOU a Senior Member? If Not, Why Not?

It's easy to apply for Senior Membership and the requirements are not too difficult to meet. You must have been in an IEEE-related field for 10 years, with significant accomplishment during five of those years. But wait!

- Did you know that you get three years credit for a BS, four for a MS, and five for a PhD degree? Did you know that you could nominate yourself?
- Did you know that it could all be done on-line?
- Did you know that in addition to a handsome plaque, and the ability to enter "IEEE Senior Member" on an application, you receive a US \$25.00, one-year discount for membership in any other IEEE Society?

What are YOU Waiting For?

In an old joke one person asks his friend—*"why do you always answer a question by a question?"* and the second replied: *"Why shouldn't I?"*

Hundreds (if not more) EMC Society members are eligible for elevation to Senior Member grade, and yet, when you ask them "why are you not Senior members" their reply is "Why should we?"

Indeed, why should you want to be a senior member of the IEEE? Doesn't that designation indicate I'm getting old? Do I have to be a professor to qualify? Must I pass some kind of exam? How much more will it cost me? These are just some of the frequently asked questions posed by members inquiring about what it takes to become an IEEE Senior Member.

The grade of Senior Member is the highest for which application may be made and requires experience reflecting the professional maturity of the applicant. For elevation to the Senior Member grade, the candidate must be an engineer, scientist, educator, technical executive, or originator in IEEE-designated fields.

"Senior" refers to professional experi-

ence, not age, and you do not need to be a "senior citizen" or of retirement age to qualify as a Senior Member. Although the term "senior" implies one must be of a certain age, several Senior Members are only in their twenties!

Furthermore, to be eligible to the Senior Member grade, it is not mandatory that you be a professor, or even in academia. Only 21% of about 26,000 IEEE Senior Members are associated with academia, while 79% work in industry and or government. Most Senior Members actually hold applications-oriented careers, working in all levels and areas of electric and electronic engineering.

Why Should YOU Want to be a Senior Member?

The Senior Member grade constitutes a professional recognition of your peers for technical and professional excellence. Earning the Senior Member Grade is an indication of your accomplishments in your professional career and will promote you to your company and profession.

Indeed, the IEEE "Senior Member" grade is an elite status of membership in the IEEE. **Only about 7.5% of the 367,000 IEEE higher-grade members hold this grade and enjoy this international recognition.**

Earning the Senior Membership Grade is therefore, by itself, a significant personal achievement. From my personal experience, it helps to provide credibility in a day and age where everyone is a self-proclaimed "expert" or "engineering specialist." In many countries and regions around the world, an IEEE Senior Member actually carries a certain status, which may be useful to furthering your career. As a Senior Member, you may even include this grade on your business card.

If you are hopeful for further advancement in your IEEE career, and possibly strive for the grade of Fellow of the IEEE, note that one must be a Senior Member to be considered for election to Fellow Member grade. Senior Members can also

serve as References for Senior Member applicants. Senior Members may also be invited to be on the panel to review Senior Member applications.

Why Does the IEEE Want to Promote Senior Membership?

The percent and number of IEEE Senior Members reflects on the competence and prestige of IEEE, its products, and services. Higher-grade members of the IEEE constitute the foundation for all volunteer activities of the IEEE. Many Executive Volunteer offices require that a member hold Senior Member grade. Senior Members serve, therefore, in most leadership positions on a volunteer basis and therefore, a larger number of Senior Members will encourage more members to become further involved in the IEEE leadership and professional activities. Senior Members tend to belong to one or more IEEE Societies, in times where Society membership is, surprisingly, declining. Finally, a larger number of Senior Members enhances the image of IEEE members as professionals to industry and public and encourages others to enter this profession.

Actually, IEEE estimates that the number of members qualified to hold Senior Member grade is at least double the current number of Senior Members.

Finally, Senior Membership in IEEE is Key to Retention: Senior Members have a retention rate of 98%. Also, a greater percentage of Senior Members belong to more IEEE Societies than do other IEEE member grades.

Eligibility for the Senior Member Grade

IEEE Bylaw I-105.3 sets forth the criteria for elevation to Senior Member grade, as follows:

"... A candidate shall be an engineer, scientist, educator, technical executive or originator in IEEE-designated fields. The candidate shall have been in professional practice for at

least ten years and shall have shown significant performance over a period of at least five of those years.”

Such “significant performance” may include one or more of the following:

- Substantial engineering responsibility or achievement
- Publication of engineering or scientific papers, books, or inventions
- Technical direction or management of important scientific or engineering work with evidence of accomplishment
- Recognized contributions to the welfare of the scientific or engineering profession
- Development or furtherance of important scientific or engineering courses in a program on the “reference list of educational programs” (REP list)
- Contributions equivalent to those of the above in areas such as technical editing, patent prosecution, or patent law, provided these contributions serve to advance progress substantially in IEEE-designated field.

In addition, candidates for Senior Member grade must supply three references from current IEEE members holding the grade of Fellow, Senior Member, or Honorary Member.

There is no cost to convert to a Senior Member and there is no increase in your IEEE membership dues. While many other professional societies charge higher dues for higher membership grades, the IEEE does not. There is no increase in cost - only an increase in the IEEE’s recognition of your technical and professional accomplishments. You’ll also receive a Senior Member plaque and one new IEEE Society membership, both free of charge.

How Do YOU Apply for the Senior Membership Grade?

Once you determine that you fulfill the requirements for Senior Member grade, identify your three references that must be IEEE Senior Members or Fellows. If you have difficulty in locating individuals to serve as your references, contact your local Section or Chapter or us, at the EMC Society Membership Development Committee (see below). For help in contacting your Section/Chapter Chair, send an e-mail to senior-member@ieee.org.

If a Section or Chapter officer has notified you that they intend to nominate

you for Senior Member grade, the nominator serves as one reference as long as he/she is a Senior Member or Fellow. Otherwise, the required number of references is still three in addition to the nomination. Alternatively, contact your Section or Chapter Chair and ask if they can nominate you.

You do not need to pass any exam to be elevated. You have already been “tested” throughout your entire career. The Senior Member application is simply a brief one-page documentation of your career that is used to evaluate your qualifications for this membership grade.

The application process is fairly straightforward. The Senior Member application form is available in three formats:

- Online version
- Downloadable version
- Electronic version

This form can be completed by the applicant and submitted electronically as an email attachment. If you are a nominator, you can fill in your portion of the form and forward it to your nominee. The nominee can then complete the rest of the form and send it as an email attachment as instructed.

To expedite the processing of your application, we suggest submitting your application online or sending the electronic version to senior-member@ieee.org. **Make sure that you have contacted three people to serve as your references** and that they submit the reference forms in a timely manner.

For details on the Nominate-a-Senior-Member Initiative, guidelines, the online application and reference forms, simply visit <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/sminitiative.html>. For application forms, visit: <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/membershipforms.html>

What Will YOU Receive?

In addition to the prestige and recognition, which are the most significant benefits you receive, the IEEE also provides you with some more “material” benefits, including:

- An attractive wood and bronze engraved Senior Member plaque to proudly display
- A gift certificate of up to \$25.00 toward one new Society membership
- A letter of commendation to your employer on the achievement of Senior Member grade (upon the

request of the newly elected Senior Member)

- Announcement of elevation in Section/Society and/or local newsletters, newspapers and notices

How Can YOUR Local Chapter or Section Help?

Chapters are the core of membership development as well as technical activities. That is why chapters, first and foremost, should strive to nominate and support the nomination of members to the Senior Member grade. To achieve that goal, chapters may try one or more of the following initiatives:

- Encourage qualified members to apply for Senior Member elevation.
- Form local Senior Member nomination committees
- Use the SAMIEEE data base to identify potential SM candidates and assist applicants identify SM references
- Assist candidates in finding Senior Members and Fellows who can serve as references.
- Explain the qualifications and have applicants’ complete applications at a special Senior Member Nomination/Elevation session
- Have Fellows and Senior Members on hand to meet applicants and for applicants to acquire the needed references
- Encourage newly elected Senior Members take an active role serving as references
- Conduct Senior member elevation events at least twice a year. (See the box at the end of this article: “*Chapter Chairs: Plan a Senior Member Nomination Night*”)

This will also help your Section earn a rebate at the end of the year through the Nominate a Senior Member Initiative.

The EMC Society is Here to Help YOU Become a Senior Member

For answers to questions about the application process or about the grade of Senior Membership in general, contact either Elya Joffe, EMC Society VP for Member Services, at eb.joffe@ieee.org; or Dave Staggs, EMCS Membership Coordinator, at CmmdrZap@aol.com. We will be more than glad to help and lead you

through the process, and even act as one of your nominators, if you are eligible to the grade.

Summary

We all work hard throughout our careers, but don't always realize the extent of knowledge we gained or how much responsibility we have accepted over the years. Think back to when you began your career. With time and experience, your knowledge has grown, your responsibilities have increased, and you are now one of the engineers the company counts on. So take the time to get recognized for it.

The grade of Senior Member is the highest a member may attain through application, and reflects professional recognition of your peers for your technical and professional excellence. The Senior Member Grade by its own merit is an indication of your accomplishments in your professional career and will promote you to your company and profession.

Surely you may consider this gratifying to know that you have made a contribution to our profession and Society even though you may not have designed the next generation of engineering technology. It is worthwhile becoming a Senior Member, if not for professional reasons, then at least for personal satisfaction.

Useful Web Resources

- http://www.ieee.org/web/membership/Admission-Advancement/Senior_Member_Requirements.html
- <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/sminitiative.html>
- <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/membershipforms.html>
- [http://www.ieee.org/portal/pages/membership/understanding.html#Senior Member](http://www.ieee.org/portal/pages/membership/understanding.html#Senior_Member)

Chapter Chairs: Plan a Senior Member Nomination Night

Are you looking for a way to make a Senior Member elevation easier to arrange for colleagues in your area? Plan a Senior Member Nomination Night at your local Chapter. With Senior Members and Fellows willing to coach candidate members, the evening becomes a social networking event.

First, identify Senior Members and Fellows through your Section's membership database. They don't have to be EMC Society members: Simply IEEE members, holding Senior Member Grade or higher. Contact them personally to ensure their commitment to coach candidates and make this a successful event. Several higher grade Members per candidate Member is preferred. Experience shows that a recommended ratio is two Senior Members for each candidate.

When you invite prospective members who are appropriate candidates for Senior Grade elevation, remind them to review the requirements [hyperlink to <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/smrequirements.html>] so they are prepared. They should bring their resume to help guide conversations with the higher-grade members offering to provide references.

On the evening of the event, the Senior Members and Fellows work "one on one" with candidate members, clarifying the significant performance requirements of the application process. Once documented, this makes the reference writer's job much easier. When the Society or Section takes the job of nominating the candidate, only two references instead of three are required.

The Senior Member process is all online [hyperlink to <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/smprogram.html>] now. Schedule the evening in a room with network access and a number of computers. Have some snacks and beverages to keep the evening casual and the conversation flowing. Chatting around the tables and making careers the feature of the evening offers the chance to exchange backgrounds and talk about useful career directions. EMC

Announcing the New EMC Aviators Club!

EMC Society members Andy Marvin and Antonio Orlandi recently formed the NEW EMC Aviators Club. To be part of the Club, one should be involved in EMC, have a pilot's license (power or gliding) and a wish to share one's adventures and pictures with others.

You can use the club web site <http://orlandi.ing.univaq.it/EMCfly/index.htm> to post photos or links to your own sites.

You can arrange to share flights with other EMC people when traveling to meetings or conferences. We will arrange informal meetings at the main EMC conferences, probably



Andy Marvin

over lunch or an evening with beer or wine. There is no membership fee. Simply send your profile details and any pictures (please use standard and efficient file formats) to Antonio Orlandi at orlandi@ing.univaq.it.

Incidentally, planning is now underway for some flying in Hawaii in conjunction with the 2007 IEEE International Symposium on EMC next summer. Andy Marvin added, "I know several people are already talking about the flying in Hawaii which by all accounts is spectacular. I'm starting to sort my US permit already!"