



QUALIFICATIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

GUIDELINES

FOR PRINTS AND DIGITAL IMAGES

PHOTO: Lin Kahn-Mai, FNPS



Qualifications and Distinctions Guidelines

Individual photographers of all levels can apply for the International Nature Photographic Society (NPS) Distinctions and submit their portfolios for three levels of Distinctions - Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship. Based in Hong Kong, the NPS is a registered non-profit organization that exists to increase the knowledge and understanding of nature photography, to promote the highest standards of achievement and to raise the public environmental awareness. All submissions are assessed by a Panel of Judges from our Professional Photographers Awards Review Board (PPARB) to ensure an evidence of creativity ability and a high technical standard appropriate to your application.

LEVELS OF DISTINCTIONS, HONOURS & EXEMPTIONS

DISTINCTIONS

There are five levels of distinctions:

1. Licentiate of NPS (L. NPS)
2. Associate of NPS (A. NPS)
3. Fellowship of NPS (F. NPS)
4. Master Photographer of NPS (MP. NPS)*
5. Grand Master Photographer of NPS (GMP. NPS)*

* Please send us email at info@npsintl.org for details

HONOURS

NPS Honours are awarded to recognize a high standard of both photographic achievement and services to our Society. Honours may be awarded to photographers who are generally recommended by our Board of Committees, for outstanding contribution, meeting a standard approved by our PPARB. All application and administration fees are exempted and there is no limit of presentation of honours.

1. Honorary (Hon. NPS)
2. Honorary Associate (Hon. A. NPS)
3. Honorary Fellowship (Hon. F. NPS)
4. Honorary Master Photographic of NPS (Hon. MP. NPS)
5. Honorary Grand Master Photographer of NPS (Hon. GMP. NPS)

EXEMPTIONS

We are pleased to invite you to apply for our Distinctions without assessments. The application is open to photographers who have equivalent honour titles from certain photography art organizations and need to submit the [NPS-ATS Exemption Application Form](#) along with an evidence of all relevant qualifications and awards achieved. Applicants should be assessed and approved by our PPARB.

Please refer to Page 10 of this Guidelines.



PHOTO: Wong Cheuk Kim, FNPS

THE PRACTICALITIES

The Practical Aspects of Applying for a Distinction

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

There are 2 closing dates for PRINTS submission: Last day of June and Last day of December.

There are 12 closing dates for DIGITAL submission: Last day of Every Month.

APPLICATION FORM

1. You must submit an application form, which is available from [HERE](#)
2. You must pay the exact application fee by local bank transaction (for Hong Kong only) or Paypal (paypal.me/npsintl). No refund for all applications.
3. Upon receiving the completed form sending through e-mail or by post, your application will be processed, and a confirmation e-mail will be sent.

GENERAL TERMS OF APPLICATION

1. Applicants may make only one submission to one particular level of Distinction at any time.
2. At each level the submission must be a new body of work. Individual images may not be used in multiple submissions to different levels.
3. The images should be your original work. You should never supply false information or withhold any material information or use someone's photograph in any of the Distinction application without permission or consent. All parts of the image have to be photographed by the applicant who is holding the copyright of all works submitted. The NPS has no responsibility for misuse by anyone of the copyright of published images.
4. All reasonable care will be taken with your portfolio, but the NPS will not be responsible for any loss or damage whilst in its care or in transit.
5. Import duties, taxes and additional postage charges are applicants' responsibility. Please check with your country's customs office or post office to determine what additional costs will be prior to sending your portfolio.
6. The NPS has the right to use all or any of the portfolios in any format and reserves the rights to use the portfolios for publication, exhibition, and publicity for any purpose at no extra cost to the respective applicants. Such publication, exhibition and publicity need not be limited.
7. All submitted portfolios will not be returned to the respective applicants.
8. By submitting your application, you agree to these terms.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS OF SUBMISSIONS

Requirements of photos, fees and advisory

Individual photographers of all levels can apply for International Nature Photographic Society (NPS) Distinctions and submit their portfolios for three levels of Distinctions - Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship. We recommend you apply for the Licentiate first, unless you already have honours of certain photography art organizations, in which case you may decide to apply for our NPS-INTL-ATS exemption. All submissions are assessed by a Panel of Judges from our Professional Photographers Awards Review Board (PPARB) to ensure an evidence of creativity ability and a high technical standard.

THE SUBMISSION

	LICENTIAE (L.NPS)	ASSOCIATE (A.NPS)	FELLOWSHIP (F.NPS)
Standards & Techniques	For those who have started their photographic journey. An approachable level for those to develop their competence in their work and visual awareness.	Photographers who can demonstrate a high technical competence and comprehensive knowledge of techniques, also shows an individual approach.	Photographers recognized at the highest level with an established distinguished and distinctive work. A unique style and a discerning quality are expected.
Number of Images	12	15	20
Statement of Intent	No	No	Yes (Within 200 words)
Application Fee	USD110	USD150	USD210
Hanging Plan / Sequence Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theme of Images	A mix of themes	A particular theme	A particular them
Examples of Theme	Landscapes, wildlife, plants/flowers, natural phenomena, macro/close-ups, insects, birds, underwater		

FOR PRINT & DIGITAL SUBMISSIONS

1. Your portfolio should be either monochrome or coloured-printed. An image is considered to be monochrome only if it gives the impression of having no color (i.e. contains only shades of gray which can include pure black and pure white). The NPS does not accept a grayscale image that has been toned in one color across the entire image. (e.g. Sepia, red, gold, etc.). Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed.
2. Images / Image files should be **free from your name, marks, blemishes and artefacts**. Under no circumstances can the applicant's name be displayed on the front of the prints. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in immediate disqualification and loss of the application fee.
3. Once your portfolio is submitted, you are not allowed to make changes of your portfolio.
4. If a submission is incomplete, the assessment will not take place.
5. All photos or digital files will not be returned, the NPS may retain them for educational or other purposes, otherwise they will be securely disposed.
6. The **NPS reserves the right** to retain submissions beyond the date of assessment to promote the NPS and its Distinctions. We are unable too offer a refund or deferral of the assessment.

FOR PRINT SUBMISSIONS

1. All photos should be appropriately **mounted on 40cm x 50cm (16" x 20") backing boards**. Framed images are not permitted.
2. Image sizes should be **not less than 30cm x 40cm (12" x 16")**. When considering the image size, remember the consistency of quality throughout your portfolio is more important than size alone.
3. There is a maximum of three display rails. Your submission can be displayed in max. 3 rows.
4. For **Fellowship** submissions, your submission must be accompanied by a **Statement of Intent**, outlining in a maximum of 200 words, the purpose, objective or intent of the work. A **word count** must be included below the statement.
5. You must make sure your prints are packed away in the numeric order. On the back of each print you must stick our "Photo Details Label" (Please go to Download area).
6. Make sure that your work is securely packed and clearly labelled with your name and addressed.
7. All submissions must be delivered at least **14 days prior** to the assessment date.

FOR DIGITAL SUBMISSIONS

1. The image data must be in **RGB mode** (even for monochrome images) and in the sRGB colour space, NOT CMYK.
2. Image files must be saved in standard baseline **JPEG format**, saving at the highest quality is recommended. Images must be **named with two digits** only: 01.jpg, 02.jpg, 03.jpg, through to 10.jpg. All files are correctly numbered in the sequence in which they should be displayed. Files that are not named properly might not be judged.
3. The size of each image should **not be less than 2560 pixels wide x 1704 pixels** high in 300 dpi.
4. The digital files should **not be framed** in any format.
5. You can upload your photos via WeTransfer or Google Drive and share with info@npsintl.org, or simply attached in the email and send to npsintl.org@gmail.com. We also accept you post a USB drive or burnt disc to our office.

PERSONAL DELIVERY AND COLLECTION

You may deliver your submission to us at our Kwun Tong Office by appointment only.

Please contact our staff at 91054243 or email us at info@npsintl.org

CANCELLATIONS OR DEFERRALS

After submitting your application form, if for any reason you are unable to send your portfolio or need to make other changes, please notify us to our e-mail address: info@npsintl.org

- Any cancellations or change requests must be made by e-mail. If you cancel / defer within 14 days of your assessment date you will be fully charged for the assessment. We are unable to offer a refund or deferral.
- You can request once only to cancel / defer 15 days or more prior to your assessment, without any charge, but all future requests will incur a USD30 administration charge.
- The NPS is unable to refund any cancellation or offer a transfer to another event if the attendee does not notify us by e-mail 14 days prior to the assessment date.
- The NPS reserves the right to cancel any assessment 7 days prior to its assessment date, or less than 24 hours due to adverse weather conditions or extraordinary circumstances beyond its control. The NPS is unable to offer compensation for any loss.

DATA PROTECTION

By applying the distinction, you are explicitly consenting to the personal details you have supplied, including e-mail address, being held, processed and used by the NPS. You acknowledge and accept that applying the distinction means that the status and results of your application may be made public.

REVIEW PROCEDURE AND DISPUTES

The decision of the assessment panel is final. However, if an applicant feels that there is any question as to whether the assessment process has been correctly adhered to, they can ask the NPS to review their application. All such requests must be made in writing within four weeks of receipt of the result, outlining fully the substance of the applicant's case. In such cases, the Chair of the Distinctions Committee will initially review the case and decide if the Appeal merits further action. If that is the case, the Distinctions Committee will appoint a moderator to investigate and report to the Distinctions Committee for a decision. In such cases, the decision of the Distinctions Committee will be final.

FINAL DECISIONS

- The NPS reserves the right to interpret and amend the regulations and details of the Distinction Assessments without advance notice.
- The NPS reserves the right to request the original file, negative or transparency of an image used in a Distinctions application.
- In the event of any disputes, the NPS reserves the right of the final decision.



DISTINCTIONS: THE PROCESS AND FORMATS
HOW YOUR WORK IS ASSESSED AND OUTCOMES

ON THE ASSESSMENT DAY

- Each submission is assessed by a Panel of Judges consisting of 3 or above professional photographers, experts or fellows of the NPS. A Chairperson is normally be present in monitoring and implementation processes. Submissions are assessed against the criteria set out in these Distinctions guidelines.
- Assessments are conducted without an audience. Assessment results rest on the final decision of the judges and the NPS. Applicants shall raise no objection.
- For the Fellowship, the portfolio is displayed as per your hanging plan. Submissions are assessed anonymously. The images are displayed in the sequence as you have numbered them and the Statement of Intent is read out by the Distinctions staff.
- Submissions are assessed anonymously. The Chairperson monitors the whole process. There are two stages of assessments.

STAGE ONE

1. The judges initially views the portfolio as a whole, followed by a detailed examination of all images.
2. The judges individually mark the portfolio on identified marking sheets according to the listed aspects as below:
Relevancy and Concept, Presentation and Style, Artistic Expression, Creativity and Standard of Images
3. The judges are not allowed to have any discussions regarding the submission.
4. The Distinctions staff will add up the marks from the Panel of Judges, the portfolio can be counted as passed if:
For the Licentiate, the average score of the portfolio reaches 50% or above.
For the Associate, the average score of the portfolio reaches 65% or above.
For the Fellowship, the average score of the portfolio reaches 75% or above.
5. If the applicant has achieved the average score or above AND not more than 2 photos in the portfolio are marked as failed, the portfolio can be ratified as passed.

STAGE TWO

1. If the applicant has achieved the average score or above BUT more than 2 photos in the portfolio are marked as failed, the assessment will be moved to Stage 2. The Chairperson will ask the judges for any further comments. A final vote is taken anonymously and the decision is made. If over or half of the judges voted to pass the portfolio, the portfolio will be announced as passed.
2. All Panel recommendations and reviews are forwarded to The PPARB for final ratification.
3. Once approved by The PPARB, you will be notified that your Distinction has or has not been awarded.

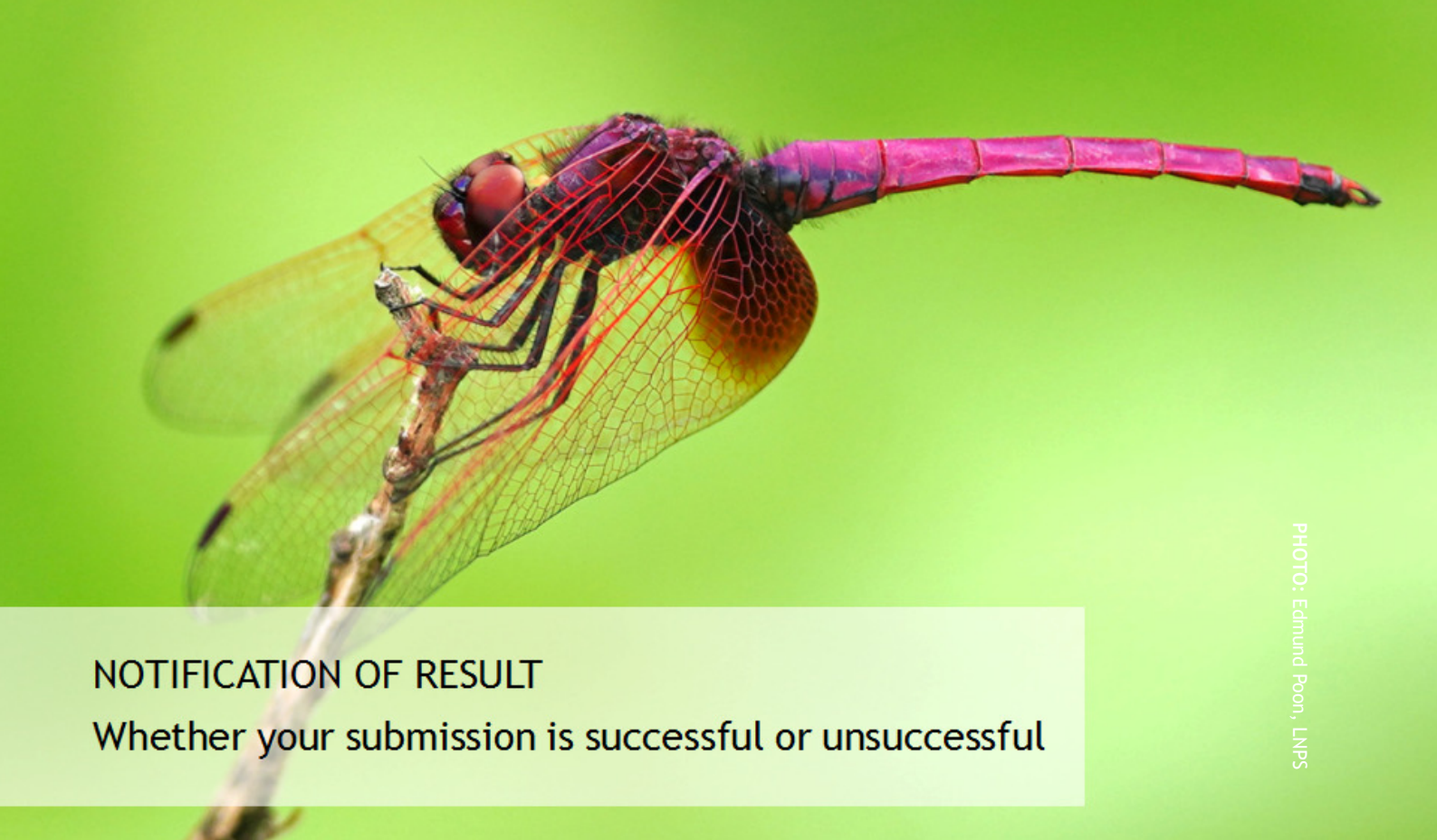


PHOTO: Edmund Poon, LNPS

NOTIFICATION OF RESULT

Whether your submission is successful or unsuccessful

Results of the assessments should not be revealed to the public or anybody before the PPARB approved. The names of all applicants whose submissions are recommended for Distinctions need to be checked by the PPARB. It is the Board of Committees who finally award the Distinctions.

SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSIONS

1. Once approved by the PPARB, you will be notified by e-mail that your Distinction has been awarded in 7 days after the assessment date.
2. An e-certificate will be sent to you by e-mail in 14 days after the assessment date. You will also receive a digital file containing the NPS Distinction emblem which can be used on your personal stationery or on your website. You are entitled – and encouraged – to use the letters LNPS/ANPS/FNPS after your name. Applicants should ensure that they provide an active e-mail address and that spam filters are set to accept emails from info@npsintl.org
3. For printed certificates, you can add USD20 for a hard copy and it will be posted to your postal address within 60 days.

UNSUCCESSFUL SUBMISSIONS

1. All unsuccessful applicants will receive an email notifying them of the outcome in 7 days after the assessment date.
2. A result report will be sent within 28 days from the date of the assessment.
3. Whenever possible, you will be given the opportunity to receive help and advice from a member of the Distinction Committees by sending an email to info@npsintl.org.



PHOTO: Lau Tat Choi, LNPS

NPS-INTL-ATS EXEMPTIONS

For advanced and experienced photographers

You could be awarded a Licentiate / Associate / Fellowship distinction without having to be assessed. You're eligible to apply if you've equivalent honour titles from any of the below photography organizations:

- 1. The Royal Photographic Society (RPS)
- 2. Photographic Society of America (PSA)
- 3. Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP)
- 4. Distinction of any photography registered organizations

Please download a copy of the NPS-INTL-ATS (Award Titles Scheme) Exemption Application Form, fill it in and e-mail us along with a list of all relevant qualifications and awards achieved and copies attached. Please note: The accompanying evidences must state your full name, the award gained and date gained.

	LICENTIATE (L.NPS)	ASSOCIATE (A.NPS)	FELLOWSHIP (F.NPS)
Number of Images	12	15	20
Statement of Intent	No	No	Yes (Within 200 words)
Sequence Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exemption Fee	USD99	USD230	USD420

Images can be sent digitally at npsintl.org@gmail.com. The fee can be settled by Paypal at paypal.me/npsintl or local bank transaction (for Hong Kong applicants).

All applications will be forwarded to the Professional Photographers Awards Review Board (PPARB) for ratification. Once ratified, the distinction will be awarded. You will then receive a letter of confirmation and e-certificate of Distinction. For printed certificates, you can add USD20 and it will be posted to your postal address.

If you have any enquiries with the exemptions, please send us an email at info@npsintl.org



NPS DISTINCTIONS TECHNIQUES & REQUIREMENTS

PHOTO: Leung Wai Fui, FNPS

For all levels of NPS Distinctions, a high standard of presentation is expected. A high level of understanding of composition, lighting and viewpoints must be demonstrated, with a visual balance (sequence) and style appropriate to the subject.

All applications for all levels of Distinctions (Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship) will be assessed against the criteria set out in the NPS Qualifications & Distinctions Guidelines. The following criteria are in addition to, not instead of those criteria.

1. Nature Photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation.
2. Human elements must not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves.
3. Digital manipulation by software such as Photoshop is allowed provided the Natural integrity (authenticity) is not affected. Removal of minor distractions or blemishes is permitted. Applicants may be contacted to verify the authenticity of the original image file.
4. The use of some images recorded using High Dynamic Range (HDR) photography will not be acceptable.
5. Submitted portfolio should show clear evidence of a genuine knowledge and understanding of the subject.
6. The images should accurately depict the subject.
7. No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping and adjustments of brightness and contrast are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene.
8. The welfare of the subject must come before photography and any action by the photographer or third party that puts the welfare of the subject at risk is unacceptable and may result in the portfolio not being successful.
9. In general, subjects should be free and unrestricted, in a natural habitat.
10. Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves.
11. Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals or domestic animals are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation.
12. Images of captive specimens or species are not acceptable. It is recognized that this will not be the case in all disciplines. Should the applicant's portfolio contain such images taken under controlled conditions, the Board of Committees should be notified in advance.
13. Focus stacking and composite photos are not allowed.
14. Assessment of a portfolio will include whether it meets the criteria set out in the applicant's statement of intent (for Fellowship application only), and whether the techniques used are appropriate and suitably controlled.
15. The standard of photography should reflect the level of distinction being sought.
16. In some cases we may ask the original image to verify. The photos that cannot be verified will be disqualified. In the event of any disputes, the NPS reserves the right of the final decision.

The NPS reserves the right to interpret and amend the regulations and details of this Qualifications and Distinctions Guidelines without advance notice.

Your submissions must be sent to The International Nature Photographic Society:
Unit 10, 3/F, Shing Yip Industrial Building, 19-21 Shing Yip Street, Kwun Tong, Hong Kong
Or send your digital submissions to npsintl.org@gmail.com
Please feel free to email us at info@npsintl.org if you have any enquiries