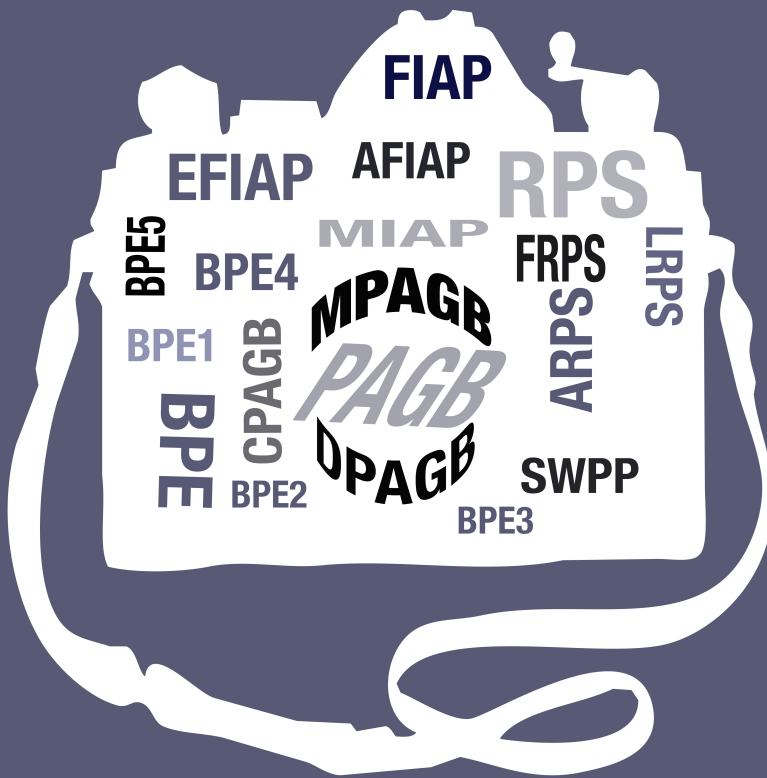


# ACRONYMS!



DO THEY DRIVE YOU MAD!  
HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY MEAN!

LET ME EXPLAIN

Acronyms representing different levels of distinction in photography can be confusing, especially for individuals with dyslexia. People often use them in camera clubs, leaving you overwhelmed and unsure of their meanings.

Let me try and explain. The first two acronyms we will examine are associated with the organisational body.

The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (**PAGB**) and the Royal Photographic Society (**RPS**) are two distinct organisations in the field of photography, each serving unique purposes:

**PAGB** is a national umbrella organisation for photographic clubs and societies in the UK. Individual membership is not available; access is through clubs affiliated with the PAGB only.

It also coordinates activities, competitions, and events for its affiliated clubs through 15 regional federations, ours being the Western Counties Photographic Federation (**WCPF**).

The PAGB also offers distinctions known as Awards for Photographic Merit. These awards recognise increasing levels of photographic skill and achievement. They are open to members of

affiliated photographic clubs and are held for life without requiring an annual fee. The distinction levels are as follows:

**BPAGB** (Badge Award of the PAGB)

Standard: Approaching “Good Club Photography”

Requirements: 7 Printed images.

Eligibility: Must be an active club member for at least 2 years.

Entry Fee: £52.

**CPAGB** (Credit Award of the PAGB)

Standard: “Good Club Photography”

Requirements: 10 prints/projected digital images or an audio-visual sequence.

Eligibility: Minimum of 2 years as an active club member.

Entry Fee: £75.

**DPAGB** (Distinction Award of the PAGB)

Standard: “Open Exhibition Photography.”

Requirements: 15 prints/projected digital images or an audio-visual sequence.

Eligibility: Minimum of 3 years as an active club member, with evidence of participation in exhibitions recommended but not mandatory.

Entry Fee: £112.

**EPAGB** (Excellence Award of the PAGB)

Standard: A high level of acceptance in “Open Exhibitions.”

Requirements: 15 prints, none of which were used for DPAGB submissions.

Eligibility: Must already hold the DPAGB distinction and have been an active member for at least 3 years.

Entry Fee: £112.

**MPAGB** (Master Award of the PAGB)

Standard: "The Highest Standard of Amateur Photography."

Requirements: 20 prints/projected digital images or an audio-visual sequence.

Eligibility: Must have held the DPAGB for at least 11 months and been a club member for at least 5 years.

Entry Fee: £150.

Holders can use the corresponding letters (e.g., CPAGB, DPAGB) after their names.

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**RPS**, on the other hand, is an international charitable and learned society dedicated to photography. It promotes the art and science of photography through exhibitions, workshops, and qualifications. Membership is open to anyone interested in photography with an international reach. It operates under a Royal Charter and is headquartered in Bristol, UK. It has a long history dating back to 1853 and acts as a global voice for photographers.

The RPS offers three primary distinctions, representing increasing photographic achievement and expertise. These distinctions are available to members and non-members, although non-members must join the RPS upon receiving a distinction. The distinction levels are as follows:

**LRPS** Licentiate

Standard: Demonstrates a good standard of photographic competence.

Requirements: Submit 10 digital images showcasing a variety of approaches and techniques (not necessarily in subject matter).

Purpose: Designed for photographers seeking to establish a solid foundation in photography.

Assessment: Evaluates technical skills, creativity, and presentation.

**ARPS** Associate

Standard: Requires a high level of technical ability and a cohesive body of work with a clear purpose.

Requirements: Submission of 15 images accompanied by a written Statement of Intent outlining the aims and objectives of the work.

Specialist Categories: Applicants must choose one category, such as Fine Art, Natural History, Conceptual and Contemporary, Film, Research, or Travel.

Assessment: Focuses on an individual's vision, understanding of their chosen genre, and artistic presentation.

### **FRPS** Fellowship

Standard: The highest level of distinction, recognising exceptional photographic ability and originality.

Requirements: Submission of 20 or 21 images (or a book) that display distinctive style, innovation, and mastery in a specialist category. A written Statement of Intent is also required.

Specialist Categories: Similar to ARPS but with expectations for groundbreaking work that demonstrates an individual approach.

Assessment: Evaluates technical excellence, creativity, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively.

Successful applicants can use the respective letters (e.g., LRPS, ARPS, FRPS) after their names, provided they remain members of the RPS.

All these distinctions provide a structured pathway for amateur photographers to demonstrate and be recognised for their growing expertise within the UK photography community.

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Next, we have the British Photographic Exhibitions (**BPE**) and Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (**FIAP**), two distinct organisations in the field of photography. Each offers prestigious recognition and awards for photographers.

### **BPE**

Established in the late 1980s, the BPE is a UK-based organisation that promotes national photographic exhibitions and encourages photographers to participate in competitive photography.

The BPE has a Crown Award scheme, under which points are accrued for each photo accepted into a BPE member exhibition. After acquiring a certain number of points, photographers can apply for different distinctions.

The BPE gives the following Crown Awards:

- BPE1: 25 points
- BPE2: 50 points
- BPE3: 100 points
- BPE4: 200 points
- BPE5: 300 points

After achieving BPE5, individuals can gain further acceptances and awards to apply for an Associateship (ABPE) or Fellowship (FBPE) at the British Photographic Exhibitions.

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## **FIAP**

FIAP, founded in 1947 and recognised by UNESCO, connects national photography associations worldwide. It organises global events such as biennials, congresses, and photo meetings to celebrate photographic art and culture.

FIAP awards distinctions based on the number of acceptances in international salons accredited by FIAP.

**AFIAP** (Artistic) Requires at least 40 acceptances in 15 different salons with at least 15 images.

**EFIAP** (Excellence) Requires at least 250 acceptances in 30 salons across 15 countries with at least 50 images.

FIAP distinctions are internationally recognised and aim to elevate photography as an art form globally.

While BPE is focused on national competitions within the UK, FIAP operates on an international scale, offering broader recognition for photographers worldwide. Both systems provide structured pathways for photographers to achieve professional distinction.

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## **SWPP**

SWPP stands for the Society of Wedding and Portrait Photographers. It is a long-established international association based in the UK that supports both full-time and aspiring photographers. Founded in 1988, the SWPP is a leading qualifying body in social photography. SWPP members specialise in wedding, child, baby, newborn, pregnancy, family, lifestyle, and pet photography.

SWPP offers a system of qualifications recognised throughout the photographic industry. The levels of qualifications/distinctions that can be awarded are Licentiate, Associate, and Fellowship

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Finally, the Welsh Photographic Federation (**WPF**) and the Irish Photographic Federation (**IPF**) are both umbrella organisations that support photography clubs in their respective regions. However, they differ in their specific activities and offerings.

## **WPF**

The WPF represents over 50 camera clubs in South Wales and focuses on promoting Welsh photography. Its activities include:

- Hosts the Welsh Salon of Photography and the Welsh International Photographic Salon, open to both local and international photographers.

- Organises a unique annual photographic convention featuring speakers, workshops, and activities.

- Offers workshops to improve photographic skills maintains lists of judges and presenters and provides insurance benefits for member clubs.

- Represents members at national (PAGB) and international forums like FIAP

- Awards the AWPF distinction and provides guidance for members seeking FIAP or PAGB awards.

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## **IPF**

The IPF serves as the governing body for photography clubs across Ireland. Its activities include:

Organises national competitions like the National Nature & Wildlife Photography Competition and the National Audio Visual Championships.

Represents Ireland in the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) and supports participation in international exhibitions.

Provides opportunities for skill development through workshops and assessment sittings for distinctions.

Awards distinctions such as Licentiate, Associateship, and Fellowship to recognise individual photographic achievements.

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Well I think that just about covers it. If you need more information, please contact the body directly or an official within your club.

Linda Meaton

Publicity Officer WCPF