

Full Membership

Full CSC accreditation after a cinematographer's name is a mark of distinction. It is the recognition of achievement for the craft of cinematography's elite practitioners. As a diverse society, we are welcoming to everyone regardless of gender, race or heritage.

The following outlines the process for becoming an accredited Full Member of the CSC.

Twice a year, the Canadian Society of Cinematographers puts out the call for applications from working cinematographers who are at the top of their game. (See application for eligibility criteria) These new applicants are asked to provide a résumé (with dates) and at least 5 long form (60+ minutes) samples of their work via Vimeo (as outlined in the Submission Checklist detailed below), and to fill out a form that details and describes the technical aspects of the work. When submitting complete short works, 2 shorts could replace 1 long form. Dramatic show reels are not eligible works, but may be included if the applicant feels they add another dimension to the submission. Clips or other selectively edited pieces as well as unfinished projects will not be accepted. Anyone can apply but it is expected that the applicants have a significant body of work to their credit, have a significant period of time working as a cinematographer (10 years) and that they are fully qualified to take on the responsibilities of Director of Photography before they will be considered. This means that they are experienced in managing a crew of technicians at an international standard and producing work that is consistently excellent. It must rise above the average, above mere professional competence, and must demonstrate a sensitivity and creativity that services and elevates the material it illustrates. Three reference letters from current CSC members or other industry professionals are required. We also ask for details of any cinematography related activities involving volunteering, teaching or mentoring as well as any awards/nominations or published articles.

Traditionally the term Director of Photography relates to shooters of scripted productions and commercials, and most successful applicants to Full membership are from these categories. However, documentary and other genres can have contenders due to our exceptional achievement clause. The membership committee recognizes that excellence and great craft exist in every genre. Sometimes someone has a talent that shines through and should be recognized before the 10-year mark is reached. Not everyone has a truckload of lights and an army of film technicians to help them realize their visions. The interpretation of the material and how one deals with the opportunities one is given is of paramount importance. Composition, lighting, creative use of natural light, movement, and exposure are all important but most of all, evidence of an experienced, thoughtful and accomplished mind must be at work behind the images. How is the story, whatever it is, being told visually? What kind of experience is being brought to bear? Is a work derivative or visionary? These are the issues the jury will evaluate.

Twice a year, the CSC will convene a Membership Jury made up of any Full member who would like to attend and contribute. Every effort is made to ensure that there is diverse representation. Each of those members brings with them their own preferences, experiences and aesthetics. It is the sum of those parts applied to our rules that decide what Full membership stands for. The jury views the work and all application materials provided. They are each given forms to assist in evaluating the work guiding them to examine technical mastery, artistic merit, control, consistency, complexity and range of experience. During the adjudication period, they may submit questions through the office to be forwarded to an applicant should the need arise. The applicant's responses are then distributed to the jury. At the end of the adjudication period, there is a week to consider any final questions that the jury submitted. A meeting is then convened for the final jury deliberations. Each candidate's application and work are discussed and finally a vote is taken. 80% approval is considered a passing grade. Any jury member that votes no is required to write detailed, constructive reasons for their decision. In the event that a candidate is not accepted, it is hoped that these critiques can illustrate to the applicant a constructive path towards re-applying in the future.

The final step of the process will be an orientation meeting (in person or online depending on circumstances) between the applicant and the President and all committee chairs to welcome the new Full Member to the CSC.