Photographic Alliance of Great Britain
AWARDS FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC MERIT

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APM LEAFLET 1
APM DESCRIPTION AND FAQ

APM Leaflet 1. Issue 19.1 Price Increase – Feb 2026

1. QUALIFICATION.

All applicants must qualify and apply via their Federations. Entrants must have been active members of an affiliated Club for a minimum of 2 years for CPAGB, 3 years for DPAGB and 5 Years for MPAGB. A retrospective period of 10 years may be considered. Applications for MPAGB must have held DPAGB for at least 11 months on the date of adjudication. Please contact your Federation Awards Officer for further guidance.

Entries will only be accepted for one Class and one Media in any single Adjudication. Mixed entries with Prints and PDI are not permitted. Holders of an Award for Photographic Merit (APM) at any level may not apply for a lower level APM.

2. PRINTS & PROJECTED DIGITAL IMAGES (PDI).

Print, and Projected Digital Image Adjudications will normally be held in April and November. Although the closing date for applications will normally be 31 January and `31 August, respectively, most Adjudications fill up much earlier. The minimum number of entrants for any one day is normally 30 and the minimum for each section is normally 5.

The maximum number of Prints and Projected Digital Images to be adjudicated on any one day is approximately 850. Pictures will not be presented as panels but will be mixed with those of all other Entrants in the Section and judged as individual photographs.

3. ADJUDICATION METHOD

3.1 Adjudications in Projected Digital Images (PDI) and Prints are carried out by a panel of six Adjudicators selected from the PAGB Approved List of Judges for their photographic skill, their extensive experience and their ability to assess different genre. It is impossible to eliminate subjectivity totally, but they are carefully briefed as to the standard required in each section.

3.2 Photography is more art than science and judges will always be influenced by their emotional response to an image. As in any competition, you should be prepared for some pictures to score higher than you had anticipated and for some to score lower.

3.3 Even pictures which you have submitted to a previous Adjudication may score a little better or a little worse than before.

3.4 The Non-Voting Chairman of the Adjudication Panel observes closely throughout the proceedings and he and his team have the authority to review near misses. This is done on the day and there is no process to appeal.

3.5 Each of the 6 Adjudicators is required to **Vote** on each photograph and their Votes are recorded electronically using ‘silent’ scoring equipment. This leaflet explains how they are briefed to reach that decision, how they assess the work at each level and what each vote/score means. If a photograph does not meet our requirements, it should receive 6 “NO” Votes = 2 points per judge x 6 = 12 or, if it meets our criteria, it should receive 6 “YES” Votes = 4 points per judge x 6 =24.

3.6 However, it is unrealistic to expect complete unanimity with 6 different Adjudicators and most total scores will represent a compromise between these limits. Scores above 24 are relatively unusual but will be achieved by the very best images. High scores may indicate that the image may be successful at the next level.

3.7 Applicants should be aware that photographs which would be best displayed as a coherent panel may score less well as individual images.

NOT SCORES BUT VOTES

For convenience, we announce and record a total score, but we instruct the Adjudicators to consider these as Votes.

A **YES** vote is recorded by pressing **4** and a **NO** vote by pressing **2**. This, of course, means that good pictures which are not quite up to the standard may receive **six NO** votes and a score of 12. This is not an indicator of the value of that photograph in relation to other scores, simply that 6 adjudicators agreed that it was not up to the standard required. Since a score of 200 is required to secure CPAGB and 300 for DPAGB, there is an assumption that 20 is the score to look for. In fact, you should aim for six adjudicators to vote **YES**, giving a score of **24** per photograph.

A vote can be lodged for a **NEAR MISS** by pressing **3**, but we stress that this is a **very near miss**, not just a better 2 than a previous picture. We are not placing a relative value on the photograph, simply voting **Yes** or **No**, so it is important that the **NEAR MISS** vote is used carefully. After all, 4 votes of **NEAR MISS** and just two votes of **YES** will result in a score of 20. 3+3+3+3+4+4. This can result in a passing entry when only 2 adjudicators thought that the pictures were good enough.

For the MPAGB, although use of the **NEAR MISS** button is permitted, we are particularly keen that the judges should try to vote **YES** or **NO**. From the entrants' point of view, this can result in a disappointingly low score, but this does not indicate the value of the picture – just that they agreed that it did not quite reach the standard required.

The **5 VOTE** is only used when the photograph is considered likely to achieve a **YES** vote of 4 at the next level up. If you achieve a score of 24 at (say) CPAGB, this means that all six adjudicators thought it was on the standard for that level but that none of them thought that it was good enough for the DPAGB. So, when you think about entering for DPAGB, you should consider the possibility that your pictures could score up to 6 points less than they did at CPAGB.

SUMMARY

Our adjudicators do not score the photographs. They vote **YES** or **NO**, with some leeway to vote **NEAR MISS** or **GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE NEXT LEVEL**. The process is to Pass or to Fail and you should not be discouraged if your scores fall well short of the total required. A score as low as 12 simply means that all 6 Adjudicators thought it was not up to the standard required. It could be quite a close decision and you may have missed by very little.

4. ENTERING PDI AND PRINTS. Prints may be sent in advance or they can be delivered and collected on the Adjudication Day. PDI copies and titles of all prints, and all PDI entries must be submitted online via the PAGB CES, not later than the advertised deadline. For details of how to submit an entry, please see the separate APM Leaflet 2 and to the instructions in the Entry Pack from the APM Secretary.

5. ALL REASONABLE CARE will be taken with entries, but no liability of any kind is accepted for loss or damage**.** The Host Federation is responsible for the return of Prints not collected on the day, and they will normally return them by your preferred method if you have included the correct payment. Payment for return is paid directly to the Host Federation and they will provide details of how this should be done. These will be included in your Entry Pack

6. AUDIO VISUAL. Applicants may apply either singly or jointly for an Award in AV. Adjudications will be held as and when it is deemed appropriate and provided there is sufficient demand. Please see the separate APM Leaflet 4 dealing specifically with Audio Visual.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. Applications will be acknowledged on receipt and an Adjudication Date will be provided as soon as possible, normally about 4 months prior to the Adjudication.

8. WITHDRAWAL OF ENTRY. It is difficult to fill places in the event of cancellations, and as we get nearer to the Adjudication date, it is almost impossible. Whilst we are currently looking at other payment options, the fee is currently paid by cheque. We will retain the cheque securely for 6 weeks, during which time an applicant may withdraw without penalty, and we will not present the cheque. After this grace period, the cheque will be presented and no money can be returned in the event of a cancellation.

Should such applicants wish to take part in a future Adjudication they will need to complete a new Application Form, including the Certificate of Qualification by their Federation Awards Officer, and the full fee, not the re-submission fee, will be payable.

9. ADJUDICATIONS are normally open to spectators. Applicants receive one free ticket. Further tickets may be purchased from the organising Federation. Details will be included with the Entry Pack.

10. RETAINED WORK. One print, occasionally two, will be retained from every successful entry. All the PDI and all the Audio-Visual Sequences will also be retained. These may be used, without payment, to promote the Awards for Photographic Merit, including, but not confined to, publication in **e-news**, use in Advisory Workshops and to brief the Adjudicators at future events. They may also be compiled into an advisory programme to be made available through the PAGB Recorded Lecture Service.

Copyright of these images remains with the Originator. The PAGB will try to credit the photographer wherever possible but accepts no liability for failing to do so.

Whilst individual scores are not normally published, scores from successful entries may be disclosed where it is useful in a workshop, article or a recorded lecture.

11. RESUBMISSION. Entrants who fail to gain the award may make further applications at the same level for the resubmission fee stated under each level. A new application form must be completed, including the Certificate of Qualification signed by their Federation Awards Officer

12. CHAIRMAN OF ADJUDICATORS. The Non-Voting Chairman will brief the Adjudicators beforehand and will observe throughout to ensure a high degree of consistency.

13. IMMEDIATE REVIEW OF RESULTS. After every section the Non-Voting Chairman of the Adjudicators, together with other experienced judges, will review the "near miss" applications. There is no right of appeal and after this Review the decision made on the day cannot be changed.

14. DECLARATION. By completing the Application Form the Applicant confirms that he/she has read this Explanatory Leaflet, accepts the PAGB General Conditions for Entry* and confirms that all the photographs entered are entirely their own work. Composite images are permitted provided all component images meet this requirement. For the avoidance of doubt, use of images from any other source including, but not limited to, royalty free image banks and clipart are not permitted.

15. APPLY EARLY but not before you are ready - there is a cancellation penalty. Adjudications are usually oversubscribed well before the closing dates specified above. PAGB policy is to try to ensure that every applicant is offered an Adjudication date not more than 12 months distant.

Note. Please also download APM Leaflet 1 Supplement (FAQ + A), which may answer any questions that you have about the Awards for Photographic Merit.

*See the PAGB General Conditions

WHAT DO OUR ADJUDICATORS LOOK FOR IN A PHOTOGRAPH?

Most Club members can recognise a good photograph when they see it but it is impossible to define in advance what a good photograph will look like. Judging is an Art and not a Science and our response to an image can be highly subjective. Sometimes we don't even know why we have reacted positively or negatively to a photograph.

Our Adjudicators are very experienced and are chosen for their ability to assess all kinds of image fairly and as accurately against our requirement as is humanly possible. They are carefully briefed and we have in place an established review team who are able to adjust the score of any image which has been "unlucky".

None of this is very helpful to an entrant trying to understand what is required at each APM level, so we have tried to list just some of the things that you should consider when assessing your own work.

Content. We are looking for the interesting, original, creative content to convey an idea, an emotion, a message or a purpose. The subject can be quite mundane, provided that the photographer has demonstrated an interesting approach, showing us something that we may otherwise have missed.

Composition. This is central to the attraction of an image and should bring all the visual elements together harmoniously, so as to express the purpose of the image. Effective composition immediately attracts the Adjudicators to the image and should prompt them to look where the photographer intended. Good composition will normally lead the viewer to the main point of interest. There can be primary and secondary centres of interest, and occasionally there will be no specific point to look at if the entire scene collectively serves as one focus of interest.

Impact. Our Adjudicators are not pressed to assess too quickly but the immediate impression is still important. Images with impact can instantly evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, admiration or wonder.

Lighting. The use and control of light is the essence of photography and critical in APM entries., Our Adjudicators will look for the effective use of light, natural or manmade, to add excitement to a photograph, enhancing its story telling and impact

Story Telling. We are not looking for a "big" story, simply how the image communicates with the viewer to help them understand why it was taken.

Colour Balance. Our Adjudicators will consider the use of colours and tones in an image. An image in which the tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance harmony. Of course, a lack of harmony can be used for effect, to evoke negative feelings

Technique. This is the approach used to create the image. Does it show effective input and choice by the photographer, in view point, lens chosen, focus and other camera settings? In other competitions where the image has done well, did the prize go to the photographer or to the subject? What did the photographer bring to the image beyond pressing the shutter release? Effective use of focus, tone and contrast can greatly enhance an image, giving it depth, with a more 3 dimensional quality.

Delivery. All of the above are the most decisive factors, but the APM also require a degree of skill in processing and printing - appropriate to the level applied for. At CPAGB this should demonstrate competence but minor errors or deficiencies may be overlooked if the image meets the other criteria. Processing, printing and presentation should be excellent for a successful DPAGB entry and at MPAGB should be extremely proficient, approaching perfection with no detectable faults.

BADGE AWARD OF THE PAGB. (BPAGB)

The entry fee is £56. Resubmission £46.

Entrants must have been active members of an affiliated Club for a minimum of 2 years.

7 Prints are required and a total score of 125 or more will gain the Award.

Our Adjudicators are able to assess an image against the many criteria which contribute to a good photograph in a very short time, but they must also apply their judgement in relation to the level of Award being considered.

Entries will be assessed at the same level as required for CPAGB and the images needed to achieve the Badge Award can be described as approaching “Good Club Photography”. Photographs which meet the requirement for BPAGB will probably do well in a good Club in an Advanced Section of their internal competitions or in Inter-Club competitions, the kind of image which a Club may sometimes choose to represent them in Federation events.

However, this is simply offered as general guidance since there is no such thing as a consistent “ Club Standard”. The quality of photography varies considerably from Club to Club and what is “Good” in one Club may not be so successful in another one.

We cannot know the standard of work in your Club or in your Federation and, **by the sheer variety of Club work, there can be no consistent “Club Standard**”. It is our experienced Adjudicators who define for this Award what the requirement is for “Good Club Photography”.

They have judged at a great many Clubs and they are well equipped to do this, plus we have in place a permanent team and careful briefings to ensure that the process is as fair and consistent as is humanly possible.

Our Adjudicators are likely to be receptive to a greater range of images than may be successful in some Clubs.

CREDIT AWARD OF THE PAGB. (CPAGB)

The entry fee is £80. Resubmission £70.

Entrants must have been active members of an affiliated Club for a minimum of 2 years.

10 Prints or 10 PDI are required and a total score of 200 or more will gain the Award.

Our Adjudicators are able to assess an image against the many criteria which contribute to a good photograph in a very short time, but they must also apply their judgement in relation to the level of Award being considered.

The images needed to achieve the Credit Award can be described as “Good Club Photography”. Photographs which meet the requirement for CPAGB will probably do well in a good Club in an Advanced Section of their internal competitions or in Inter-Club competitions, the kind of image which a good Club might choose to represent them in Federation events.

However, this is simply offered as general guidance since there is no such thing as a consistent “ Club Standard”. The quality of photography varies considerably from Club to Club and what is “Good” in one Club may not be so successful in another one.

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They have judged at a great many Clubs and they are well equipped to do this, plus we have in place a permanent team and careful briefings to ensure that the process is as fair and consistent as is humanly possible.

It is not a requirement that images entered should have won Club awards and our Adjudicators are likely to be receptive to a greater range of images than may be successful in some Clubs.

DISTINCTION AWARD OF THE PAGB (DPAGB)

The entry fee is £120. Resubmission £110.

Application can be made for the DPAGB Award without first gaining the CPAGB, provided the applicant meets their Federation requirement.

15 Prints or 15 PDI are required and a total score of 300 or more will gain the Award.

The Adjudicators are looking for photographs that, in their opinion, should be good enough to achieve a high level of acceptance in Open Exhibitions but, although there can be a much greater commonality of standard at exhibition level, there are still considerable variations.

Some Exhibitions accept up to 40%, or more, of the entries, many accept around 20%. Some Exhibitions have experienced judges whom the PAGB would choose as Adjudicators, some don't. Some Exhibitions, particularly overseas, apply different criteria and standards. Not necessarily poorer but different.

Exhibitions cannot therefore be relied upon to define a consistent "Exhibition Standard". Other bodies, such as FIAP, BPE and PSA award their distinctions for a high number of exhibition acceptances but the PAGB Award is given based solely on an assessment by an expert panel of Adjudicators. They will not be informed of any previous Exhibition successes although they may, of course, be aware from their own experience.

The pictures do not need to have been previously entered in any Open Exhibition although success at this level is obviously a good guide. However, a high number of exhibition acceptances for an image does not guarantee it a high mark in the PAGB Adjudication.

Our Adjudicators will also give due credit to photographs, such as Record and Documentary, which meet our requirements but may be less likely to be accepted into exhibitions.

EXCELLENCE AWARD OF THE PAGB (EPAGB)

The entry fee is £120. Resubmission £110.

Only existing holders of the DPAGB Award may apply for the EPAGB and none of the images used at DPAGB may be used for EPAGB.

15 Prints are required and a total score of 330 or more will gain the Award.

The Adjudicators will assess at the same level as for DPAGB and are looking for photographs that, in their opinion, should be good enough to achieve a high level of acceptance in Open Exhibitions but, although there can be a much greater commonality of standard at exhibition level, there are still considerable variations.

Some Exhibitions accept up to 40%, or more, of the entries, many accept around 20%. Some Exhibitions have experienced judges whom the PAGB would choose as Adjudicators, some don't. Some Exhibitions, particularly overseas, apply different criteria and standards. Not necessarily poorer but different.

Exhibitions cannot therefore be relied upon to define a consistent "Exhibition Standard". Other bodies, such as FIAP, BPE and PSA award their distinctions for a high number of exhibition acceptances but the PAGB Award is given based solely on an assessment by an expert panel of Adjudicators. They will not be informed of any previous Exhibition successes although they may, of course, be aware from their own experience.

The pictures do not need to have been previously entered in any Open Exhibition although success at this level is obviously a good guide. However, a high number of exhibition acceptances for an image does not guarantee it a high mark in the PAGB Adjudication.

Our Adjudicators will also give due credit to photographs, such as Record and Documentary, which meet our requirements but may be less likely to be accepted into exhibitions.

MASTER AWARD OF THE PAGB (MPAGB)

The entry fee is £160. Resubmission £150.

Applicants for MPAGB must have held the DPAGB for a least 11 months on the date of the adjudication.

20 Prints or 20 PDI are required and a total score of 450 or more will gain the award.

The MPAGB is awarded for the very best of UK amateur photography and the Adjudicators are looking for images which, in their opinion, contain the elements of a good photograph in abundance, which are beautifully produced, and which should enjoy a very considerable level of success in Open Exhibitions, including consistent and frequent awards.

Pictures do not require to have been entered or accepted previously in any Exhibition but must be of an exceptional standard.

As an applicant for MPAGB, you will probably have submitted to many exhibitions, and you will be aware that even your most successful pictures sometimes fail. If, for example, a photograph has achieved 40 acceptances in 50 attempts that still represents a 20% failure.

Many Exhibition acceptances indicates the possibility of a good Adjudication score, but this is given as general guidance only, and does not guarantee success at MPAGB.

Exhibitions cannot be relied upon to define a consistent "Exhibition or Award Standard". Other bodies, such as BPE, FIAP and PSA award their distinctions for a high number of exhibition acceptances but the PAGB Award is given based on an assessment by an expert panel of Adjudicators.

Some photographs, such as Record or Architectural photographs, may not be particularly successful in most International Exhibitions, but they will be given due and fair consideration by our Adjudicators.