

The Picture Research Association

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PRA

Introduction

Picture Researchers and Picture Editors, sometimes termed Photo-buyers, Image Buyers in the transatlantic idiom, search out images for use in all media: print, such as books, newspapers and magazines, but also film, television, video, CDs or DVDs, as well as the internet, and other forms of new media. It is a picture researcher's job to find appropriate images, check their quality, negotiate fees, administrate the project and solve many complex problems, customarily under the pressure of deadlines.

The Picture Research Association (formerly *SPRed*) was formed over 25 years ago as a professional trade association to assist Picture Researchers in their tasks and raise the profile of this vital skill.

The aims of the Picture Research Association are:

To provide a forum in which picture researchers can meet to discuss and exchange information and ideas related to the job of a picture researcher.

To improve the understanding by employers of the picture researcher's work methods.

To provide picture researchers with access to educational resources in order to continue their self-development and education.

To provide support and advocacy in the event of picture researchers encountering difficulties during a picture research assignment.

To provide a magazine and newsletter informing and keeping picture researchers up to date with every change and development to their suppliers the Picture Libraries, Museums and Archives, and other trends within the industry.

To distribute to members freelance or full time job vacancies. To offer advice on social and professional events for the members.

To facilitate through the PRA website an online area to publicise their work experience to employers.

What a Picture Researcher is:

The best work of the professional picture researcher is to visually illustrate concepts in an imaginative, creative way, which extends the meaning of the text and enhances or underlines it.

He, or she will use research skills, lateral thinking, and wide experience to source appropriate images for the subject matter, and to do so in the most cost-effective and timely way, so as to maximise the business efficiency of the publishing organisation producing the work.

Experienced picture researchers have accumulated deep knowledge, contacts and sources over a considerable period of time by working on many different projects. They normally follow through projects from beginning to end, clearing rights and administrating everything connected to the supply of images for reproduction.

Picture Researchers can be staff or freelance, and work in a wide variety of organisations, from publishing, newspapers, TV, video, film, advertising, through to all forms of new media.

Skills a Picture Researcher Needs:

- To locate and acquire visual material, both online and offline, in digital or analogue form, in a timely manner so as to facilitate and streamline the creation of the final product.
- An ability to conduct an effective search of commercial photo libraries, private or state collections, museums and archives, using the web, as well as older methods of deep searching via cataloguing, card indexes and library catalogues.
- To be able to analyse and manage images of every format, including digital files, transparencies, prints, and illustrations, for defects, both technical and aesthetic.
- An ability to store these images safely as appropriate to the format. Expertise with graphics software is needed to examine digital images to check file size, quality and read file header information for caption notes.
- To be able to commission photographers to shoot particular images, involving briefing, arranging permissions, contracts and dates; receiving the commissioned images at the right time and in the right format so as to incorporate them into the publishing workflow.
- To keep good records of all images acquired, and to provide captioning and photo acknowledgments.
- Financial negotiations such as budgeting, pricing and fee agreements.
- An awareness of the additional fees such as search fees, holding fees and scanning fees, which may be applied by suppliers for the delivery of required and requested visuals. Skilled picture researchers are adept at obtaining high quality material and reducing costs by effective negotiation.
- An understanding of copyright law and other legal matters, including model releases, and how they pertain to the use of the product is imperative.
- Copyright or permission to publish should be cleared on any image used in any medium as a legal necessity.
- This complex and often omitted stage of publication is an essential part of a picture researcher's plethora of skills. Lack of attention to such matters can lead to litigation.
- An aesthetic sense is highly desirable, to be able to suggest which images will enhance the subject matter.
- Diplomacy. To be able to deal with a wide variety of individuals so as to ensure smooth running of the project.

Membership of the PRA

Membership is available to all those who are responsible for the research and supply, editing and management of images required for visual media.

Any person normally engaged in the co-ordination and administration of Picture Research, Picture Editing or Picture Management, shall be eligible for membership.

Membership is available for individuals only, however companies may sponsor individual staff for the relevant category of membership. If more than five members of staff wish to join from one company or department, there is a 20% discount on the membership subscription.

Categories of Membership are:

Introductory: (Up to two year's experience working as a picture researcher or picture editor.)

Eligible to vote, receive all the information the Association supplies including the magazine and news service and attend all the Association's meetings. Not eligible to join the Freelance Register.

Full: (Two years+ as full time experience working as a picture researcher or picture editor – outside of a content library or image collection)

Eligible to vote and receive all information and services the Association provides. Freelance Full members are eligible to join the Freelance Register and put their membership details online as soon as they have paid their subscription.

Associate: (For individuals working in content picture libraries and other similar organisations.)

Eligible to receive information the Association provides including the magazine and news services and attend all meetings. Not allowed to vote at AGM's or EGMs.

Montage Magazine Subscribers

Anyone can subscribe to the Association's quarterly magazine. If you are a fully paid up member in any of the membership categories, the magazine is available to you via your unique log in details given.

Subscribing to the magazine can be very useful for photographers, picture libraries, publishers or researchers new to the profession or those not eligible for membership. It is a good way to keep informed of the Association's activities.

The Picture Research Association Constitution (Currently suspended until May 2013 and due for revision)

THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION IS THE PICTURE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (PRA)

1. AIMS & PURPOSES

The PRA exists to promote the interests of its members and to promote the international recognition of people involved in the business of researching, selecting, editing and managing pictures in all areas of visual media as members of a profession requiring particular skills and knowledge.

THE PRA AIMS

- To publicise the specific and necessary skills of picture researchers, managers, picture editors and all those specifically involved in the research, management and supply of visual material to all forms of the media. To this end it will provide all such appropriate services to its members as may be thought to be practical and desirable.
- To co-ordinate its members on an international basis and to bring together all those involved in the picture profession by providing a forum for information exchange and interaction.
- To co-operate and exchange information with organisations in similar fields of interest.
- To promote the specific skills of its members by encouraging anyone needing images in any form and for any media, to engage members of the PRA in order to obtain them, and thus to ensure that professional standards in all areas are upheld.
- To advise those specifically wishing to embark on a profession in the research of and supply of pictures for all types of visual media information and publishing, providing guidelines and standards in so doing.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is offered to all those who are responsible for the research and supply, editing and management of images required for visual media. Any person normally engaged in the co-ordination and administration of Picture Research, Picture Editing or Picture Management, is eligible for membership.

The Committee, whose decision is final, will consider all membership applications on their merit.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP IS NOT AVAILABLE BUT COMPANIES MAY SPONSOR INDIVIDUAL STAFF FOR THE RELEVANT CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP ARE:

Introductory: Up to two years' experience working as a picture researcher or picture editor. Eligible to vote, receive all the information the PRA supplies, including *Montage* and the *Bulletin* and to attend all PRA meetings. Not eligible to join the Freelance Register. Introductory status is eligible for review to full membership after two years. Candidates must submit an updated CV showing that their work is concentrated in the field of picture research, as defined by the PRA.

Full: Over two years' experience as a picture researcher, as defined by the PRA. Eligible to vote and receive all information and services the PRA provides. Eligible to join the Freelance Register and to have access to information on all job vacancies received.

Associate: For individuals working as a picture researcher in picture libraries, or similar organisations. Eligible to receive information the PRA provides, including the *Bulletin* and copies of *Montage* and to attend all meetings and events except **AGMs** and **EGMs**. Not eligible to vote. Not eligible to join the Freelance Register.

3. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are to be paid on an annual basis if paying by cheque. If paying by direct debit, payments may be monthly, quarterly or annually. If a member wishes to resign during the year, no refund will be paid if it is within six months of the renewal date. If a member is expelled, no refund will be given. The decision to increase subscription rates will be made by the Committee.

4. RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

If a member wishes to resign, written notification should be sent to the Membership Secretary. If a member fails to pay their subscription within six months of the renewal notice being issued, they will be deemed to have resigned. A reminder will be sent within that six-month period.

5. EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

Members can be expelled from the PRA for serious professional misconduct, which shall be defined by the Committee, and which can include, but is not limited to:

- Actions that damage the reputation of or the functioning of the PRA
- Gross professional malpractice
- Misuse of the assets of the PRA, including financial, intellectual property and data [**PRA has a legal duty to protect member's confidential information under the Data Protection Act, 1988**]

Disputes between PRA members about matters affecting the PRA not covered above should be resolved by conciliation arranged by the Committee.

6. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee will be elected at each Annual General Meeting. The election will be the first item on the agenda after the consideration of the previous year's Minutes. Candidates will be proposed and seconded and elected by a show of hands. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote. The new Committee will not take office until after the meeting.

Committee roles shall include:

Chair, General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Montage Editor, Events, Careers, Webmaster & IT

Other members can be co-opted. A description, and the responsibilities, of each role will be available from the Committee.

The Committee shall be comprised of Full members, who are elected for a one-year term.

On relinquishing a Committee post, all related files must be passed on to the new holder of the post. No copies are to be retained by the outgoing officer.

A quorum at a Committee meeting shall consist of no less than three officers.

A quorum at an Annual General Meeting shall consist of no less than 10%, or ten, of the total voting membership, whichever is greater. Should an AGM be non-quorate, the existing Committee will continue in office and will reconvene the AGM within one calendar month of the date of the initial AGM, and will continue to do so, until an AGM is quorate.

7. MEETINGS

There shall be an Annual General Meeting once every twelve months. Notice of the date of the AGM, together with the Agenda for the AGM will be given to the membership, no less than four weeks in advance of the meeting. Formal announcements will be made regarding Committee member(s) retiring from their post(s) at the forthcoming AGM, in order to allow any of the membership the opportunity to stand for election to these posts. Any member wishing to raise a motion for inclusion at the AGM, or wishing to stand for election to the Committee, must advise the Chair and General Secretary of their intent before the AGM in order to facilitate their motion or potential election being included in a revised Agenda. Any member standing for election to the Committee must be proposed and seconded. Any motion moved at an AGM must be proposed and seconded.

The Proposer will have the right to reply to the debate. Any amendments made to alter the original motion must be proposed and seconded and a vote must be taken on the amendment. There will be no procedural motions except "the proposal to vote". If this is moved and seconded, it must be followed at once by a vote on the motion then on the floor.

The Chair will be responsible for keeping order at meetings and the General Secretary will take the minutes.

Committee meetings will be held throughout the year and will be called by the Chair and General Secretary.

If not less than five voting members request an EGM, one has to take place within six weeks. There are only three reasons for calling an EGM:

- i) to make changes to the Constitution (that cannot for expediency wait until the next AGM)
- ii) to consider the dissolution of the PRA
- iii) to consider an emergency that has arisen in between AGMs.

Amendments to the Constitution must be put to the General Secretary either before or upon notification of the forthcoming AGM or EGM and at least two weeks before the AGM or EGM date. Should a proposal be accepted by an AGM or EGM, it will then be followed by a postal vote.

8. COPYRIGHT

Copyright of any written or visual material generated for PRA use shall be considered copyright of the PRA.

9. DISSOLUTION OF THE PRA

The PRA can only be dissolved by an Extraordinary General Meeting called specifically to consider a motion to dissolve the PRA.

All Members shall be given 21 days written notice of such a meeting, which shall contain the wording of the resolution

The PRA shall only be dissolved if two-thirds of the members present at the meeting vote for the motion to dissolve it.

The Extraordinary meeting shall also decide upon the disposal of PRA assets, which may not be divided amongst the membership. The recipient of any surplus funds must be a trade charity or similar body.

Any remaining Grant Funding shall be returned to the originator.

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Join the PRA

You can join the PRA online, as either an introductory, full, or associate member. Currently (2012-13) annual fees are

- **£45.00 Introductory members**
- **£55.00 Full Members**
- **£50.00 Associate members.**

How to apply:

Click here – or paste the address and go online to complete the application form:
<http://www.picture-research.org.uk/join-pra.html>

You will need a copy of your C.V. to paste into the application. Applications are carefully considered by the membership secretary and endorsed by the Chair. The PRA reserves the right to turn down applicants in certain circumstances (*though that rarely happens in practice*). So depending on when you apply, it might take up to two months for us to decide on your application.

Once accepted as a member we would then organise for you to make the necessary payment subject to the approved category of your membership fees – all benefits of the organisation are instituted immediately upon payment of that invoice.