

**(INDIAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS)**

Document Title:

**ISOLA ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

(Operational from October 2024)

**for**

**GRANT of RECOGNITION (GoR)**

**to**

**Post Graduate Programs in**

**Landscape Architecture in India**

**(ESP-GoR-PGLA)**

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1. **PREAMBLE**

The mission of ISOLA is to nurture and enhance the profession of landscape architecture by providing leadership in the creation of artistic and ecologically sound designs, and in the shaping and management of human-made, cultural and natural environments.

Details of the organisation can be accessed at  [www.isola.org.in](http://www.isola.org.in)

The remit of the ISOLA Education Board is to study the ways in which Landscape Architecture is taught in India and abroad and suggest strategies and methods for its improvement in the country.

In this world of instant change, the roles and responsibilities of professionals are constantly shifting and mutating. Landscape architecture is a profession that sits at the intersection of art, humanities, technology, and sciences and must continue to evolve to keep up with new challenges and tasks related to each of these areas in the future.

The age of the isolated and cocooned designer is making way for the age of -inter-disciplinary teams. Landscape architects need to be integral members and leaders in these teams. Environmental advocacy is something that the open spaces in our cities and towns have been crying out for; landscape architects need to work together with environmentalists and ecologists and other concerned professionals and citizens in these areas becoming students and stewards of the land. Natural systems and rhythms must be studied and used in our professional lives. Post graduate programs in the discipline of Landscape Architecture must acknowledge and address these roles and responsibilities.

It will also be the social responsibility of the landscape architects of the future to create sustainable spaces for all. This democratization of open spaces also needs to be one of the key focuses of the profession in the modern day.

ISOLA also aims to make our profession more inclusive by loosening the monopoly of architecture graduates on the LA program. The welcoming of students from diverse backgrounds like the earth sciences and the fine arts (among others) will increase the richness of the fabric of the profession and ensure that it is open to many exciting influences. Tomorrow’s LAs will need to be artists, managers, activists, advocates, designers, teachers, facilitators, researchers and writers. A wide palette of students joining the post graduate programs in landscape architecture will help this widening of the profession.

Landscape architects need to involve themselves with larger issues of society, of the environment and of the earth. The Eligibility Standards and Procedures recommendations for post graduate programs seek to increase the relevance and visibility of landscape architects in 21st century India and beyond.

This document (ISOLA ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES for GRANT of RECOGNITION to Post Graduate Programs in Landscape Architecture (ESP-GR-PGLA) was created on the initiative of ISOLA and with inputs from ISOLA Education Board. The document is intended to serve as a guide for Post Graduate Programmes in Landscape Architecture in India for quality education in the field.

1. **ISOLA Education Board (EB)**

ISOLA Education Board shall consist of a minimum of 5 members and maximum of 9 members appointed by the ISOLA Executive Committee (EC). The board shall be a working group with a responsibility to act in matters concerning eligibility of professional landscape architecture degree programs among other issues. The EC shall nominate the Convener, and the Board members shall nominate the Chair from amongst themselves. Two years term of EB shall end with the term of EC. One member from EC shall represent ISOLA EC in EB and he/ she will be a one among the five members of EB.

1. **DEFINITIONS and IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY (for reference)**
	1. **Landscape Architect**

The title landscape architect was first used by Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of New York City's Central Park.

A landscape architect is a professional who is educated in the field of landscape architecture. The practice of landscape architecture includes site analysis, site inventory, land planning, planting design, grading, storm water management, sustainable design, and construction specification and ensuring that all plans meet the current legislative frameworks.

Landscape architects are often natural leaders, able to communicate with many professions and leading multidisciplinary projects.

Landscape architects create places for people to live, work and play and places for plants and animals to thrive. Landscape architects also speak up for and care for our landscapes. A Landscape Architect is a person who develops land for human use and enjoyment through effective placement of structures, vehicular and pedestrian ways, and plantings.

* 1. **Landscape Architecture**

Landscape Architecture is the discipline which deals with the design of outdoor areas, landmarks, and structures to achieve environmental, social-behavioural, or aesthetic outcomes(Jellicoe, 1975). It involves the systematic investigation of existing social, ecological, and soil conditions and processes in the landscape, and the design of interventions that will produce the desired outcome. The scope of the profession includes landscape design and planning; site planning; storm water management; erosion control; environmental restoration; parks and recreation planning; visual resource management; green infrastructure planning and provision; and private estate and residence landscape master planning and design; all at varying scales of design, planning and management.

A practitioner in the profession of landscape architecture is called a landscape architect.

* 1. **Institute**

The Institute offering the said programme should either be affiliated to a university recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) or be a program run by a government approved Institute with Degree awarding status.

* 1. **Program**
		1. A Program is an inclusive term for the formal educational course, coursework and other learning experiences leading to a degree and the supporting administration, faculty, facilities and services which sponsor and provide those experiences facilitated by an institute affiliated to or is a part of a university.
		2. The program title and degree description should incorporate the term "Landscape". (e.g. M.Arch. (Landscape), Masters in landscape architecture)
		3. The title of the degree should not be the only determinant for eligibility; rather the program curriculum shall be evaluated.
		4. The degree shall be offered by an Institute in a UGC / statutory government approved University
		5. The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.
1. **ADMISSION TO PROGRAM- ELIGIBILITY**
	1. For a Post Graduate program, the Program shall fulfil the Eligibility criteria, and the admission procedures stipulated by the concerned Apex body/ Authority or the University (deemed or private/ cluster approved by UGC) for Admission to the Program awarding the respective title of the degree to the student.
	2. For a Post Graduate program ISOLA recommends that the Program shall fulfil any of the following criteria as Eligibility for Admission to the Program*.*
		1. A first professional undergraduate degree (bachelor’s degree) in Architecture, Landscape Architecture.
		2. A first professional undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering, Planning or other Design disciplines connected with the built environment, of least four full-time academic years in duration offered by a recognized Institute.
		3. A bachelor’s degree of minimum three years duration other than the degrees mentioned in (a) and (b) with a two-semester bridge pre-landscape course (which shall include design, design drawing and architectural and landscape graphics by hand and with software as mandatory learning modules. Completion of the prescribed bridge course based on the framework provided by ISOLA (spanning across four semesters), shall be mandatory for all, other than bachelor’s degree holders in Architecture or Landscape Architecture.
2. **SYLLABUS**

The syllabus of the program must include the following broad areas as minimum criteria:

* 1. Humanities including history, criticism, theory and methodologies in design and planning
	2. Natural and cultural systems including principles of sustainability, study of geology, hydrology, climate, soils, plant science, ecology
	3. Plant material, planting design and practices
	4. Site engineering including materials, methods, technologies, construction documentation and administration, and applications
	5. Professional practice, Construction documentation and administration, Professional values and ethics, public policy and regulation, Communications and public facilitation, Written, verbal and visual communication
	6. Landscape design, planning and management at varied scales and applications
	7. Information technology, computer applications and other advanced technology related to Landscape Architecture
	8. Thesis or dissertation which is based on research, landscape design or landscape planning
1. **FACULTY REQUIREMENTS PER PROGRAM**
	1. A minimum of two full time faculty who hold professional degrees in Landscape Architecture (of which one faculty must have a minimum of ten years’ experience in academics and/ or the profession)
	2. Visiting faculty holding a professional degree in their respective discipline and minimum of five years of academic/ professional experience.
	3. For every additional program, the number of core and visiting faculty shall be increased proportionately and shall be as per the norms by the concerned statutory authority such as UGC, AICTE or COA as applicable. There shall be a designated program head/ Head of the department of Landscape Architecture, as per UGC, COA or applicable norms. The Faculty to Student ratio for the program should be maintained at minimum of 1:10.
2. **GRANT OF RECOGNITION**
	1. Grant of Recognition means that the respective educational program has been evaluated by Recognition Review Panel (RRP) which will be a peer review panel appointed by ISOLA, to ascertain that it is in consonance with the Landscape Education based on the standards and procedures listed herein.
	2. ISOLA Eligibility for the Grant of Recognition means that the students of the ISOLA recognized programs are eligible for the students/graduates of the Institution to apply for ISOLA membership.
	3. An institute can apply for GoR for a PG program in Landscape Architecture, whenever it meets the criteria for the same specified in this document.
	4. A program must meet the requirements before the application letter is sent to ISOLA.
	5. The Institute needs to submit the prescribed documents (as given in Appendix 1) to ISOLA, with one soft copy by email in pdf format and hard copy in the form of A4 size spiral bound report including each document with date, stamp of the college and signature of the Principal and the Head of the Department (Programme Head) and the covering letter as specified, with an application Letter as a covering letter on Institute’s letterhead, seeking eligibility for membership.
	6. The applications for ISOLA GoR can be received under any of the following three categories whichever is applicable to the program, the details of each are given further in this document:
		1. **Category 1:**

Grant of Recognition - New Academic courses in Landscape Architecture to enable ISOLA membership for students

* + 1. **Category 2:**

Review of Recognition granted to Institutions presently offering Academic courses in Landscape Architecture to enable ISOLA membership for students

* + 1. **Category 3:**

Grant of ISOLA Membership to Academically Qualified candidates

1. **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTITUTE AFTER THE RECEIVING THE GRANT OF RECOGNITION**
	1. The Institute after receiving the grant of recognition/ acceptance letter from ISOLA is required to encourage all students and faculty (landscape architects) to become ISOLA members and to actively engage themselves with ISOLA and its mission. All the students should become seek ISOLA student membership to actively participate in all ISOLA activities.
	2. The core faculty appointed (including the programme head or the head of the department) for the program shall be members (with valid/renewed membership) of ISOLA at the time of application for eligibility and need to continue being valid ISOLA members throughout the period of recognition.
	3. Record of Students:

The institute will send a list of admitted students at the beginning of the academic year and the list of passed out students at the end of the academic year (This will make the student membership easier to grant for the secretary).

* 1. Students’ Placements-

Patterns of placement of students need to be quantifiable. The school should have a mechanism in place to track responses from alumni for at least the first two years after post-graduation.

1. **ISOLA MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME (ISOLA- MP) FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE FACULTY**
	1. The ISOLA-MP intends to guide/mentor the post graduate programme in Landscape Architecture through capacity building of its own faculty members of the institute which enrols for the programme, to help in the execution of the syllabus and the objectives of the same. ISOLA- MP shall be institute-specific programme and these programmes shall be designed based on the needs of the institute which enrols for the programme.
	2. It is recommended that the Institute after receiving the acceptance letter from ISOLA for its students to become eligible for ISOLA membership shall enrol for the ISOLA mentorship programme, by approaching ISOLA through email. The mentorship programmes shall be customized by ISOLA based on the needs and the objectives of the course and ISOLA both, by ISOLA representatives/ mentors and the representative members from the respective Institute.
	3. It is recommended that each institute undertakes the ‘ISOLA Mentorship Programme’ minimum once in every two years in the form of interactive sessions, symposium or a workshop, towards achieving capacity building of the faculty members for imparting quality education in Landscape Architecture. If the course is new or less than two years old, it is recommended that the Institute enrols for the ISOLA MP every year in the first cycle of five years of the eligibility, till it gets established.
	4. It is recommended for the institute which is seeking or in process of starting the master’s course in landscape architecture, to enrol for the ISOLA MP before starting the course.
	5. Any of the eligible institutes can approach ISOLA for the ISOLA-MP whenever they wish to seek guidance and / or assistance from ISOLA with respect to the education in Landscape Architecture.
	6. The expenses and other logistics of the ISOLA MP (such as venue, honorarium, travel and accommodation for the mentors, documentation, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the institute which enrols for the programme. The details of the same shall be based on the specific programme objectives, time, location and duration of such a programme.
2. **CONDUCTING TEACHERS’ TRAINING PROGRAMME (TTP)**
	1. The Institute after receiving the acceptance letter from ISOLA is required to conduct a Teachers’ Training Programme, with minimum duration of two days for training of post graduate teachers, to be organised by the respective institute and to be held at the institute at a minimum of once in a year.
	2. The training programme will involve ISOLA members as resource persons and it is recommended that it would be conducted under ISOLA’s mentorship and with its collaboration with ISOLA. Additionally, the TTP can involve resource persons from allied disciplines depending on the selected theme.
	3. TTPs registrations could be additionally made open to all professionals, who are interested in the specific theme selected for the same.
	4. The expenses and other logistics of the TTP (such as venue, honorarium, travel and accommodation for the mentors, documentation, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the institute who is organizing/hosting/conducting the TTP.
	5. The duration of TTP is recommended to be of minimum two days.
	6. The theme for the TTP could be based on current as well as future issues and challenges to be addressed in landscape architecture practice and research both.
3. **PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORTING ISOLA CONFERENCES AND OTHER CHAPTER LEVEL EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**

It is recommended that the institute encourages the students to participate in ISOLA conferences and other Chapter level events/ activities. It is also recommended that the institute offers local and infrastructural support for the same as and when needed. This is to connect ISOLA and the student members on a regular basis for a meaningful learning and strengthening of the profession.

1. **ELIGIBILITY TERM**
	1. A Program may be granted recognition after the review of the documents submitted to ISOLA by the respective institute to fulfil the eligibility criteria.
	2. EB recommends that ISOLA representative should visit and file an Interim report on the Institution, every two years OR The institute shares a Self-Disclosure of Academic Activities, every two years/five years as applicable.
2. **WITHDRAWAL OF ELIGIBILITY**
	1. If the institute has not had any admission into the program for more than 5 years, the recognition shall be withdrawn.
	2. The eligibility shall be withdrawn if the program fails to comply with the prescribed standards. The institute may appeal to the ISOLA EC.
3. **ISOLA REGISTER OF RECOGNISED INSTITUTES**

ISOLA shall maintain a Register of Recognized Institutes, which shall be regularly updated every year on the ISOLA website.

1. **PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED BY EDUCATION BOARD FOR ELIGIBILITY**
	1. The ISOLA Education Board shall evaluate the program on receipt of an application in the prescribed format with all necessary documents.
	2. The ISOLA Education Board shall evaluate these documents against the criteria set by ISOLA and may ask for further information as may be required.
	3. The ISOLA Education Board shall send its evaluation report and recommendations based on the review report submitted by RRP (Recognition Review Panel) to the ISOLA Executive Council for a final decision.
	4. On the recommendation of the EB, a resolution shall be passed in the EC meeting with respect to the GoR acceptance and a letter of grant of recognition shall be issued to the respective institute by ISOLA.
	5. An acceptance letter or GoR letter shall be issued by ISOLA EC to the applicant institute, on recommendation of ISOLA EB steering committee in hard and soft format and copy will be sent and emailed to ISOLA EB steering committee members and all ISOLA EC members for information.
	6. The applicant institute shall send an acknowledgement towards the receipt of the feedback/ review and or GoR letter received from ISOLA
2. **Category 1****: Grant of Recognition - New Post Graduate Academic programs in Landscape Architecture to enable ISOLA membership for students**
3. **Scope of this Document**

This document outlines the process towards GRANT OF RECOGNITION to CURRENT students and ALUMNI from new programs in Landscape Architecture. The following cases are covered under this document.

1. These Institutes have submitted a request for grant of recognition with ISOLA.
2. These programs are offered by Architecture Colleges at Graduate and/or Post-Graduate level, in India.
3. The programs are affiliated to and recognised by the Council of Architecture, India.
4. The programs are new courses in New Institutes
5. The programs are new programs in established Institutes which previously did not have a Landscape Architecture program.

This document recognises the likelihood for future courses stemming from lateral and technically divergent courses and therefore recommends their articulation in a near future, thereby framing the current scope of this document to the cases mentioned above.

1. **Documentation and Submittals**

The Documentation required shall be as per the standard list of documents put forth by ISOLA as a submittal towards GRANT OF RECOGNITION (GR) to students studying in Landscape Architecture courses in India (As listed in Appendix 1 as part of this document)

Format for Self-Evaluation Report (SER) format that covers a wide range of official and aspirational factors is also enclosed as Appendix 2 of this document

1. **Two Stage Process for Recognition and its Rationale**

A two-stage process for recognition of the Institute is recommended and can be effected through the SER (Self -Evaluation Report- Refer Appendix 2), along with a rationale as listed below.

1. **The first stage** will be the submittal of the complete SER would include all the points given in it, presenting the aspirations of the course.
2. **The second stage** with be a partial re-submittal of SER, after two years (i.e. passing out of one batch).
3. The second stage submittal will comprise ofpoints 11 onwards, in the SER format.
4. This submittal can illustrate how the institute has met the aspirations, whether there have been any course corrections, or even the rollback of some aspects due to unforeseen issues.
5. The Institute must also use this submittal to present Institute-specific ground realities, to enable ISOLA to extend support in realisation of aspirations or negotiating the challenges in meeting them.
6. **Period of Application and review**
7. The application can be submitted to ISOLA by emailing the required documents to isolasecretary@gmail.com
8. The window for sending the application is from June to September of every year.
9. ISOLA will review the application during September & October of every year and communicated its decision in November of that year.
10. **Involvement of EB in GoR process**
11. At least one ISOLA EB member shall physically visit and meet and greet the department after the first six months and Twelve-month period after the Grant of Recognition. This could be through invitation as a Jury/ Invited speaker.
12. The second stage submittal will by followed up by ISOLA through a review visit by an EB member and/or ISOLA members nominated by ISOLA EB. The travel costs for the reviewers will be borne by ISOLA, while the Institute shall make suitable hospitality arrangements including local transfers.
13. **Points to remember:**

Process for Grant of Recognition to new Institutes offering landscape programs:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage**  | **Recognition granted** | **Eligibility criteria** | **What is required? (List of documents/ Expert Visit)** | **Desirable** | **When to apply?** | **Review period by ISOLA** | **Decision communicated by ISOLA** | **What next?** |
| 1 | Provisional | Before starting the program or as soon as the program has started | Items listed in the appendix 1, including the SER and the aspirations of the course | Host visit by an ISOLA EB member/ Expert nominated by the ISOLA EB after one year of the start of the program | June to September of every year | September & October of every year  | November of that year | 1.Send the list of admitted students to ISOLA office2.All students and faculty (if they are not already members) apply for membership3.Apply for Stage 2 after 2 years of grant of Provisional Recognition and after one batch has completed the course. 4. Send the list of graduated students to ISOLA office before October |
| 2 | Permanent  | After 2 years of grant of Provisional Recognition and after one batch has completed the course | 1. Partial resubmittal of the SER and the Items listed in Appendix 12. Host visit by aISOLA EB member/ Expertnominated by the ISOLA EBwho will talk to the faculty,Students and Managementand also review theprogram its outcome et | Engage actively with ISOLA activities | June to September of every year | September & October of every year | November of that year | 1. Send the list of admitted students to ISOLA office every academic year before October 2. All students and faculty (if they are not already members) apply for membership 3. Send the list of graduated students to ISOLA office before October. |

1. **Category 2: Review of Recognition granted to Institutions presently offering Post Graduate Academic programs in Landscape Architecture to enable ISOLA membership for students**
2. **Scope of this Document**

This document outlines the process towards REVIEW OF RECOGNITION to courses in Landscape Architecture. The following cases are covered under this document.

1. These courses are offered by Architecture Colleges at Graduate and/or Post-Graduate level, in India.
2. The courses are affiliated to and recognised by the Council of Architecture, India.
3. The Institutes have an existing affiliation with ISOLA, which is due for renewal
4. **Documentation and Submittals**
	1. The documentation required shall be as per the standard list of documents put forth by ISOLA as a submittal towards GRANT OF RECOGNITION (GoR) to students studying in Landscape Architecture courses in India (As listed in Appendix 1 as part of this document)
	2. Format for Self-Evaluation Report (SER) format that covers a wide range of official and aspirational factors is also enclosed as Appendix 2 of this document
5. **Review Cycle for Applicants**
6. It is recommended to review the recognition after a period of **FIVE (5) years from the date it has been brought into effect,** unless required to be done so sooner, due to some unforeseen circumstances.
7. EB recommends that its representative shall visit and file an Interim report on the Institution, **every two years.** OR The institute shares a Self-Disclosure of Academic Activities, **every two years**.
8. **Two Stage Process for Recognition and its Rationale**

A two-stage process for recognition of the Institute is put in place from 2024 as per the following categories

1. Institutes older than 3 years and up to 10 years since inception
2. Institutes older than 10 years

The rationale for the split is to motivate nascent programs to be robust, and nip frivolousness or superficiality. It allows the creation of a well-mixed team, combining experience and youth. It also allows the young institutes to create a solid foundational programme and outreach methods.

1. **Period of Application and review**
2. The application can be submitted to ISOLA by emailing the required documents to isolasecretary@gmail.com
3. The window for sending the application is from June to September of every year.
4. ISOLA will review the application during September & October of every year and communicated its decision in November of that year.

**G - Involvement of EB in GoR process**

1. For Stage 1 - At least 1 EB member shall physically visit and meet and greet the department after the first 6 months and 12-month period after the Grant of First Recognition. This could be through invitation as a Jury/ Invited speaker.
2. For stage 2 - The submittal of documents will by followed up by ISOLA through a review visit by an EB member and/or ISOLA members nominated by ISOLA EB. The travel costs for the reviewers will be borne by ISOLA, while the Institute shall make suitable hospitality arrangements including local transfers.
3. While The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) format is very comprehensive, the EB recommends that the documentation should be simplified and augmented with an interactive session with the Institute. This should include at least two students from past batches and two students from current batches.
4. Alumni should NOT be encouraged to become faculty members without FIVE years of Technical / Professional Exposure at the Post-graduate level.

**H -Points to remember:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Status of Existing recognition** | **Eligibility criteria** | **What is required? (List of documents/ Expert Visit)** | **Desirable** | **When to apply?** | **Review period by ISOLA** | **Decision communicated by ISOLA** | **What next?** |
| Permanent | After 5 years of grant of Permanent Recognition | 1. Partial resubmittal of the SER and the Items listed in Appendix-1,
2. Host visit by a ISOLA EB member/ Expert nominated by the ISOLA EB who will talk to the faculty, Students and Management and also review the programme its outcome etc
 | Engage actively with ISOLA activities | June to September of every year | September & October of every year | November of that year | 1. Send the list of admitted students to ISOLA office every academic year before October 2. All students and faculty (if they are not already members) apply for membership 3. Send the list of graduated students to ISOLA office before October |

**I - Process for Renewal of Recognition to Institutes offering landscape programmes after lapse in the renewal of recognition**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Status of Existing recognition** | **Eligibility criteria** | **What is required? (List of documents/ Expert Visit)** | **Desirable** | **Review period by ISOLA** | **Decision communicated by ISOLA** | **What next?** |
| Not recognised | Had Permanent recognition but failed to renew the recognition for a few years but not more than 10. Have a running Landscape post graduate programme | 1. Partial resubmittal of the SER and the Items listed in Appendix 12. Host visit by one ISOLA EB member/ Expert nominated by the ISOLA EB who will talk to the faculty, Students and Management and also review the programme its outcome etc. | June to September of every year | September & October of every year | **November of that year** | 1. Send the list of admitted students to ISOLA office every academic year before October 2. All students and faculty (if they are not already members) apply for membership 3. Send the list of graduated students to ISOLA office before October. 4. Encourage the students who have graduated during the period when the recognition had lapsed to apply for individual membership |
| Not recognised | Had Permanent recognition but failed to renew the recognition for number of years more than 10. Have a running Landscape post graduate programme | 1. Items listed in the Appendix1 including the SER and the aspirations of the course 2. Host visit by one ISOLA EB member/ Expert nominated by the ISOLA EB who will talk to the faculty, Students and Management and review the programme its outcome etc | June to September of every year | September & October of every year | **November of****that year** | 1. Send the list of admitted students to ISOLA office every academic year before October 2. All students and faculty (if they are not already members) apply for membership 3. Send the list of graduated students to ISOLA office before October. 4. Encourage the students who have graduated during the period when the recognition had lapsed to apply for individual membership |

1. **References and recommended readings:**

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