

Who can join the Union?

Who can join the union's Freelance Association?

An applicant is accepted as a member of the union if she or he works full time as a freelance journalist, and on the condition that the applicant does not have a permanent full-time employment contract (at least half of applicant's income/work is for a news papers or magazines, periodicals, journalistic work for radio or television), that the applicant's earnings constitute at least 50 % of the journalistic/editorial earnings group of an employment contract in accordance with the pay of earnings group 2A.

Eligibility for membership will be considered to be forfeited, if the applicant has not fulfilled the above conditions for two calendar years.

The board of the Freelance association may make certain exceptions to these conditions for particularly pressing reasons.

To avoid unnecessary complications in dealing with your membership application, please pay attention to the following instructions and interpretations of regulations.

The half-year timeframe

This is to ensure that the applicant is seriously involved in the profession. It is worthwhile giving details of previous work experience in the profession as precisely as possible on the application form. The timeframe does not apply to union members who shift from having employment contracts to become freelancers. Bear in mind that earnings-related unemployment benefit does not as a rule apply to freelancers, who are regarded as self-employed.

Full-time work

You will not be eligible for union membership, regardless of what you earn from freelance work, if you have regular work in another field but nevertheless do freelance journalism on the side, for instance in an expert capacity. The same applies to the freelance applicant who receives over half of her or his income from a source other than journalism. You may not become a member if you are registered as unemployed. If you are studying temporarily or undertaking supplementary studies, you must attach an explanation to your application that details the temporary and secondary nature of your studies. Fulltime students in the field of journalism can receive student membership of the association. Student applicants are as a rule urged to join the regional association of the union in their place of study.

Journalistic work

According to the regulations of the Union of Journalists, the journalistic work carried out by applicants must be for the Finnish media or the photograph, news or article-writing agencies that serve it, or for communications or publishing companies. Freelancers working from Finland for foreign employers may also become members of the union. The membership eligibility of people working on in-house staff magazines, and as journalists or freelancers working only on free papers, is decided on a case by case basis. Attention is paid to the journalistic intent of the publications. The same considerations are used in relation to publications on the borders of the field of magazine publishing. You are eligible for membership, if you work for the information section of a company or association, if over half your job description concerns producing a paper or magazine.

The development of the journalistic sector and of new communications have widened the interpretation of regulations, but the common denominator is that the main emphasis of an applicant's work must be in journalism.

It is worthwhile to attach samples of your work when applying for membership of the Freelance Association, if you work for several publications, customer or company publications, or for several news media or employers.

Earnings limit

In practice the earnings limit is average gross monthly income, which is at least 50 % of the basic 2A income group (excluding the years of service supplement). In 2011 this amounted to some EUR 1,300 a month. Applicants who normally earn less must show that, despite the small amount of income earned, the amount of work they do corresponds with the primary profession referred to in the regulations.

Complete your application form carefully and precisely to ensure that it is processed quickly. you may be required to submit further information for your application.

If you have not been a member of the union of journalists before, print out a copy of the membership application form, complete the form and send it to the freelance association.

Please contact the ombudsman of the Freelance Association if you need further information on completing the application.