⬜ Membership (Academic Definition)

Membership refers to formal inclusion in a professional, academic, or scientific organization — often used to signal credibility, network access, and institutional alignment.

⬜ Types of Membership

- **Active membership** – Participation in committees, working groups, or regular contributions to the organization's goals.
- **Passive membership** – Annual dues paid for access to events, journals, or name inclusion, without actual involvement.
- **Honorary membership** – Given in recognition of past achievements or influence, often symbolic.
- **Strategic membership** – Obtained mainly to boost one's CV or social capital.

⬜ In Practice

> A researcher lists 15 memberships on their CV, but has never contributed to a meeting, task force, or policy statement in any of them — this is *prestige through subscription*.

⚠ Critical Issues

- **Membership inflation** – Accumulating memberships to appear more influential or connected.
- **Name-dropping** – Using prestigious society names to signal status without actual involvement.
- **Credential padding** – Inflating CVs for promotions, grants, or speaking invitations.

⬜ Related Terms

- [Careerism](#)
- [Glossy CV](#)
- [Academic Theater](#)
- [Institutional Prestige](#)

Bottom line: *Membership is meaningful when tied to contribution — otherwise, it's academic window dressing.*