

Nominating Fellows

Updated 2025

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Preface

The Academy of Social Sciences welcomes nominations for new Fellows from both learned societies and existing Fellows.

The paramount requirement for successful nomination is evidence of eminence and impact of the nominee's contribution to social science.

This contribution can be in any area, discipline or inter-disciplinary social science and can include research, teaching, professional practice, consultancy and the promotion and dissemination of social science knowledge. Social scientists wholly based overseas, and who have made a significant contribution to, or had substantive engagement with, UK social science and whose work is recognised internationally, may also be nominated.

Those nominating new Fellows must provide evidence of the impact of the contribution to wider social science that the nominee has made and the ways in which this has been both distinguished and significant.

A helpful checklist is available at the end of this booklet.

Suitable Nominees

Please read this carefully before making a nomination

The Academy recognises that the assessment of excellence and impact is ultimately a judgement. The Academy's Nominations Committee will make this judgement in the context of the evidence presented to it, the recommendation of the proposer, past decisions and current policy.

What makes a suitable nominee?

Nominees must be people of a suitable established status and reputation. Nominees must have made a substantial contribution to wider social science – to policy or practice – *going beyond the normal requirements of their position*.

- A suitable nominee will be a leading figure in their field and have already left a clear mark on it. For example, thought development, thought leadership or significant new methodologies should be clearly attributable to them, or they may have developed policy or practice that has been widely adopted. It must be clearly demonstrable that they merit the esteem of their peers for the excellence of their work and their championing of social science.
- It must be clear that the nominee has furthered social science, even if they would not normally be regarded as a social scientist.
- It would normally be expected that Academic nominees would be working at or around Professorial level.
- Including examples of capacity building is welcomed.
- Sometimes nominations are received that are felt to be premature. The Committee is unhappy about the need to defer such people as this may be regarded as discouraging. It would prefer such nominations to be delayed until the nominee has a firmly established reputation.
- Excellent social science research and a strong publications list are normally expected of social scientists working in academia as part of a 'significant contribution to social science' but they are not sufficient on their own.
- A moderate track record of research and publications is unlikely to commend itself to the Committee, unless there are other contributing factors.

- Loyal service to a Learned Society is not sufficient reason on its own for the award of Fellowship. However, it can be a contributing factor.
- Similarly, reaching a senior position, such as Vice Chancellor, Director of a Research Institute or a Company, is not in itself sufficient to warrant nomination. Such a nomination would need to be accompanied by evidence of the ways in which the nominee has made a significant contribution to the social sciences during, or before, holding this position.
- Individuals who are putting social science into practice professionally, such as psychologists, family therapists and social and market researchers could be considered to be making a significant contribution if they have developed innovative approaches and/or new research techniques, and applied these to practice. It is recognised that such nominees may have few – or no – significant publications. In such cases, the nomination must provide clear evidence of the significant influence of the nominee's work. The Academy wishes to increase its representation of practitioners.
- Being a prime mover behind a major survey, particularly a continuous or cohort survey, or a manager/administrator developing such a survey on an on-going basis, could be considered a significant contribution.
- Individuals working in the public, commercial or voluntary sectors can be considered to be making a significant contribution if they demonstrate they have been regular users of social science, advocated its use to others and enhanced the public understanding or impact of social science.
- Contributions to the development of the social sciences by people funding research in government, research councils and charitable bodies can be seen as significant if they have, as individuals:
 - taken the lead in supporting and encouraging innovative work;
 - assisted the creation of a strong infrastructure of professional practice, such as ethical guidelines;
 - promoted the benefits of social science to wider audiences;
 - helped to embed findings from or impact of social science in policy and practice.
- Communicators, in the media and elsewhere, can be seen to have made a significant contribution if they make regular use of social science knowledge, acknowledge and promote the findings of social science research, and enhance the public understanding or impact of social science.

Making a Nomination

The Process and Timetable

There are separate nomination forms for learned societies, learned societies with accredited selection processes, and individual Fellows to submit nominations. These forms can be downloaded from the Academy's website (<https://acss.org.uk/our-fellows/nominate-a-fellow/>). Please download the most recent version of the relevant form as they are regularly updated.

The Statement of Justification

- This is the most important part of the process. The nominee must be presented clearly as an eminent and leading figure in social science.
- The statement of justification must be written by the proposer or proposing body. It must not be written by the candidate, but must reflect the considered opinion of the proposing Fellow or Learned Society. Writing the statement for a suitable nominee will be straightforward as their contribution and leadership will be clear; difficulty in writing this statement may be an indication that the nominee is not currently a suitable candidate for Fellow status.
- The statement should be presented as a short series of bullet points or paragraphs that make the case. What is important is that it shows clearly and unequivocally where the nominee meets the criteria for Fellowship as outlined above. Trying to 'cover all bases' is not helpful, as the key points that clinch the argument can be difficult to identify.
- Each point demonstrating how the nominee meets the criteria must be evidenced in some way – either in the supporting CV or within the Statement of Justification itself. Please do not simply repeat the contents of the CV.
- Please include all relevant information and do not refer the Committee members to information elsewhere, for example on websites.
- The most common reason for the Committee to call for further and better particulars is the failure to provide a full rationale, and the delays involved in seeking clarification can cause embarrassment and inconvenience to all concerned. If there is any doubt about the nature and level of information

required, the Chief Executive is able to provide advice and, if necessary, to seek additional guidance from the Chair of the Nominations Committee, before the application is submitted.

- Some fictitious, sample statements are available on our website as a general guide to style and content.
- The statement must not exceed 500 words.

The Accompanying CV

- The nomination form must be accompanied by a summary CV giving evidence of the nominee's achievements to support the statement of justification.
- The CV should be no more than 4 pages long and in a clear font of at least 12 point.
- A traditional format is usually most helpful, and it must show the nominee's contribution to social science within their role and beyond their role.
- Please do not include 'testimonial' statements as these are rarely helpful
- The CV must be tailored to the nominations process and this work (unlike writing the statement of justification) may be done by the nominee.

The statements below are for guidance for nominees from different sectors. They are intended to help nominees provide clear evidence in certain areas; they are not intended to indicate the totality of the information required on a CV.

For academic nominees:

- Include details of research funding, including the awarding body, title of the award, date of the award, award figure and whether the nominee is the principle or associate investigator.
- Include details of the impact of your work, any knowledge exchange/impact funding received; and any independent measures of esteem.
- A publications list must include enough detail to show the strength of the nominee's record but the whole CV must not exceed the 4-page limit (see also below).

- Publications may include:
 - Scholarly books (indicating whether authored, co-authored, edited or co-edited), date and publisher.
 - Refereed journal articles (indicating whether authored or co-authored), date, title of journal, issue number, page numbers of article. When including a selection of the most relevant publications, it can be helpful to also include the total number of peer reviewed publications.
 - Book chapters (indicating authorship or co-authorship), date, title of book in which chapter appears and page numbers.
 - Other relevant publications, including encyclopaedic entries, conference proceedings, newspaper articles, and blogs or other social media activity.
 - Reports and contributions to governmental publications.

For nominees from public, private and third sectors:

- Include details that clearly demonstrate, as a professional practitioner, how the nominee has used or developed the social sciences in your career.
- Include details of research and/or policy engagement, if relevant.
- Include details of major reports on which you were the lead or contributing author, if relevant.
- Provide evidence of the impact of your work, if available, and any independent measures of esteem.
- Examples of additional ways through which professional practitioner nominees may demonstrate impact beyond their role could include senior positions in professional bodies, advisory roles, contributions to government policy and mentoring.

For nominees based outside the UK:

As the Academy of Social Sciences for the UK, a requirement of Fellowship being awarded to those based outside the UK, is that the nominee is a) making a significant contribution to UK social science, and b) has substantive engagement with UK social science.

In addition to the criteria set out above under academic nominees and nominees from public, private and third sectors, the supporting statement that forms part of the application should include a clear statement setting

out the significant contribution to, and substantive engagement with, UK social science. It would normally be expected that in order to demonstrate this, the nominee would be regularly contributing at this level to UK social science through their work, including recent work.

Due to the diverse nature of the social sciences, the committee does not wish to be prescriptive in the types of evidence supplied, but the CV provided with the nomination should reflect the case that is being made in the supporting statement.

The committee must also be able to see evidence that the nominees' work is recognised by the UK social science community as being of eminence and that the nominee is making a significant contribution to the wider social sciences, beyond the work in their own country.

Nominations should be independently proposed and seconded by existing Fellows or member learned societies.

Please ensure the application is submitted in English.

Guidance for Individual Fellows

- An individual Fellow in good standing (i.e. whose subscription has been paid) may nominate or second suitable people for Fellowship.
- Proposers must belong to a different institution or organisation from the nominee and seconder, and proposer and nominee should not have worked closely together in very recent years. Seconders may belong to the same institution as the nominee and it is acceptable for them to have worked together in recent years. Oxford and Cambridge colleges do not count as separate institutions.
- Fellows must not nominate people who are their close relatives. If necessary, proposers should declare any interest.
- The Nominations Committee is especially uncomfortable when Vice Chancellors or Principals nominate staff of their own HEI – or vice versa – because election as a Fellow is an Institutional Esteem measure. A Vice Chancellor or Head of Department who feels that a member of their staff is worthy of Fellowship should suggest the individual as a potential nominee to another Fellow who knows their work, and refrain from making or seconding the nomination.

Guidance for Learned Societies

- A Learned Society in good standing as an Academy member has the right to submit up to 10 nominations every year. These may be submitted as a single batch to one meeting of the Nominations Committee, or spread throughout the year.
- The Academy would like to see learned societies taking a lead in ensuring that the key figures in their disciplines are well represented in its Fellowship, although it recognises that they may not be members of their subject associations.
- The Academy's Nominations Committee expects a Learned Society to generate its proposals for nomination in ways that satisfy the society's members and to take responsibility for the appropriateness of its nominations. An example of good practice is the following:

The society has adopted a standardised procedure for the nomination of Fellows to ensure transparency and democracy. We advertise annually via our newsletter and email list for nominations from the membership. Nominations are then discussed by a sub-group of the officers of the society's Governing Body, which includes a Fellow. Finally, papers are prepared for decision and ratification by the full Governing Body.

- Other approaches could include a vote of all members, a decision of the society's executive committee, or a decision of an ad hoc committee of that society's current Fellows. However, it is vital that nominations are not sought only from a small section of the society, and that the society's Governing Body agrees or ratifies the final list of submissions.
- It is good practice to include at least one Fellow in the group overseeing the selection process, where this is possible.
- Learned Societies must provide a description of the selection process as part of the nomination and the Academy may refuse nominations that have not been through an appropriate selection process.

- Societies may submit their selection process for accreditation which is valid for a period of 5 years. Accreditation of process assures the Nominations Committee that the nominees have been selected appropriately by suitably qualified peers and are therefore likely to be suitable. The justification statement may, accordingly, be kept simpler, stressing only the key points.
- No seconder is required for a Learned Society nomination, since it is assumed that the Learned Society's nominee selection process includes a rigorous scrutiny of the nominee's suitability to become a Fellow.
- Ideally, one person should take responsibility for submitting the nominations and act as proposer on behalf of the Learned Society for all its nominations in any one batch.

The Process

- Please email nomination forms to operations@acss.org.uk. Forms can be completed online by the proposer or downloaded, signed electronically or accompanied by a covering email from the proposer (and seconder in the case of nominations by individual Fellows) stating their support for the nomination.
- There are two nominations rounds each year and the closing dates for receipt of papers is given on the Academy website, or can be obtained from the Academy office. The dates are usually in early December and early June. But nominations may be submitted to the Administrator at any time of the year and they will be kept for submission to the next available meeting.
- The Nominations Committee meets in January and July each year.
- The Committee considers each case in light of the criteria outlined above and recommends to Council those nominees who should have the award of Fellow conferred on them. There are three other possible outcomes:

Chair's action. The case is sent back to the nominator for further information; it may then be decided by Chair's action or returned to the Committee at its next meeting.

Resubmission requested. The Committee asks for the nomination to be re-written to demonstrate more fully how the nominee meets the criteria. The resubmission can be to the next meeting of the Committee.

Unsuccessful nomination. In the committee's view, the nominee does not yet have sufficient strength to warrant Fellowship. We would not expect a resubmission for several years.

- The list of recommendations is considered by Council as soon as possible after the Nominations Committee meeting.
- Following Council's ratification of the Nominations Committee's recommendations, the Chief Executive writes to all new Fellows with joining information. They also write to inform Vice Chancellors and proposers. A Press Release is issued.
- New Fellows have the opportunity to be welcomed and awarded their certificates by the President of the Academy at the President's Lunch each winter and at the AGM each summer, which provide opportunities for them to meet other Fellows.

Informal Checklist

This covers the main issues only. Please check through the guidelines for other, more detailed, information and further clarification of the points below.

- ☐ I am using the most recent version of the appropriate nomination form.
- ☐ The Proposer belongs to a different institution from the Nominee.
- ☐ The Proposer and Secunder belong to different institutions.
- ☐ The accompanying CV is no more than 4 pages long.
- ☐ The Nominee is an eminent figure in his/her field and widely respected by his/her peers.
- ☐ The Nominee has made a clear and distinctive contribution to social science, or, if not a social scientist per se, has furthered social science.
- ☐ This contribution to social science is above and beyond the normal expectations of the nominee's job.
- ☐ This nomination is not premature.

- ☐ The Justification Statement sets out clearly the evidence-based argument why a Fellowship is appropriate to the nominee.
- ☐ The Justification Statement is written by the Proposer.

A Summary of the Timetable

December or June – All completed nominations forms are received by the Academy's office

January or July – The Nominations Committee meets to consider cases

February or August – The Academy's Council considers the recommendations its Nominations Committee

March or October – A list of new Fellows is published and a press release is issued. Nominees, proposers and Vice-Chancellors (where appropriate) are notified.

June – New Fellows formally welcomed at the AGM