

Guidance on making Nominations for Academicians

Introduction

The Academy of Social Sciences welcomes nominations for new Academicians from both Learned Societies and individual Academicians. *The paramount requirement for successful nomination is a significant contribution to Social Science and its promotion.* 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. With the development of the social sciences, there are new areas and disciplines emerging, including ones which overlap with the Arts and Humanities, and the environmental, medical, natural or physical sciences. Those nominating new Academicians must provide evidence of the contribution that the Nominee has made and the ways in which this has been distinguished and significant, including impact. The Academy has recently decided that members may also be permitted from abroad so long as they can demonstrate a strong continuing link with UK social science. This link must be made clear in the case for nomination.

Some examples of what constitutes excellence

The Academy recognises that the assessment of excellence and whether an individual has made a significant contribution is ultimately a judgement. The Nominations Committee of the Academy will make this judgement in the context of the evidence presented to it, the recommendation of the Proposer and past decisions. It will also use standard peer review processes (such as those developed by the Research Councils). People nominating individuals for election might like to take the following into account:

- Nominees must be people of a suitable status and reputation.
- Excellent social science research and a strong publications list would be strong components of a significant contribution to the social sciences but should be augmented by contributions of other kinds.
- Reaching a senior position, such as a 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 Therapist and Social and Market Researchers could be considered to be making a significant contribution if they developed innovative approaches and/or new research techniques, and applied these to practice.
- Being a prime mover behind a major survey, particularly a continuous or cohort survey, or a manager/administrator developing such a survey on an ongoing basis, could be considered a significant contribution.
- Individuals working in the public, commercial or voluntary sectors could be considered to be making a significant contribution if they demonstrated they were regular users of social science, advocated its use to others and enhanced 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 could be seen as significant if they had, 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; or
- helped to embed findings from or impact of social science in policy and practice.
- Communicators, in the media and elsewhere, could 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

There are separate Nomination forms for Learned Societies and for Individual Academicians to submit nominations. Both forms are available from the Academy of Social Sciences office and can be downloaded from the Academy website (www.acss.org.uk). The form must be accompanied by a short summary CV (no more than 4 pages long). There are two nominations rounds each year (Winter and Summer) and the closing dates for receipt of papers is given on the Academy website, or can be obtained from the office.

Forms are sometimes received with very limited information to support the nomination. In many cases an attempt to compensate for this deficiency is made by supplying a lengthy CV with a detailed publications list. This approach is unhelpful to the members of the Nominations Committee, whose primary concern is to understand the contribution to the advancement of social sciences made by the Nominee, who may be working in a field or discipline quite different to their own. This contribution cannot readily be measured by the number of publications on the list and standard CVs rarely emphasise the ways in which the individual contributes to the advancement, enhancement or impact of the social sciences.

Failure to provide a full rationale for the nomination is the most frequent reason for a nomination to be unsuccessful 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 Executive Director is able to provide advice and, if necessary, to seek additional guidance from the Chair of the Nominations committee, before the application is submitted.

Once its Nominations Committee has met, the Academy's Council ratifies the decisions at its next meeting. After this, successful candidates and their nominators are notified of the outcome. New Academicians are then sent joining information and certificates, and are invited to a reception.

Guidance for individual Academicians

An individual Academician in good standing (i.e. whose subscription has been paid) may nominate one person for election to the Academy per year, and second two nominations. The Nominations Committee relies on Academicians to refrain from nominating people who are their close relatives or who are in the same department or research group within their institution and, if necessary, to declare their interest. When an Academician wishes to nominate a person from another department in their own HEI it is *essential* that the nomination is seconded by an Academician from another HEI or organisation.

The Nominations Committee is especially uncomfortable when Vice Chancellors or Principals nominate staff of their own HEI because election as an Academician is an Institutional Esteem measure (and is now often used in the RAE or the future REF and by Research Councils). It is preferable in this case for the Vice Chancellor to suggest the individual as a potential Nominee to another Academician who knows their work and to 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.

The Academy Nominations Committee expects the 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 Academicians 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 and, finally, papers are prepared for decision by the full Governing Body.

Other approaches could include a vote of all members, a decision of the executive committee, or a decision of an ad hoc committee of a society's current Academicians. Learned Societies must provide a description of the selection process as part of the nomination and the Academy of Social Sciences reserves the right to refuse nominations that have not been through an appropriate selection process.

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 an Academician. However, where a Learned Society has not carried out a peer review of its nominations, then the Nominations Committee will arrange for one.

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