



## **GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSORS**

Each year, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia elects new Fellows who are deemed to have achieved distinction as a researcher in one or more branches of the social sciences, or who have contributed significantly to the advancement of social sciences in Australia through other means. A key part of the election process is asking distinguished social scientists in the nominee’s field to provide an independent assessment report. The following is a guide for assessors during this process.

### **The Fellowship election process and the importance of your independent assessment report**

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia recognises and champions excellence in the social sciences in Australia. Election of Fellows to the Academy takes place once a year, normally in November.

Nominations for election are reviewed by the Academy’s Membership Committee which makes recommendations for candidates to go to a general ballot of Fellows. The Membership Committee consists of the President, the CEO, the Panel Committee Chairs, and four members of the Academy, one from each of the Academy’s discipline-based panels. The Membership Committee is concerned with establishing whether the person nominated is of suitable standing to be considered for Fellowship. Independent assessor reports assist the Membership Committee in this assessment.

### **Primary Grounds for Nomination**

Candidates may be nominated for a distinguished contribution to social science research; for the advancement of the social sciences through significant and sustained contributions to public policy, professional practice and/or the public understanding of social issues in Australia; or a combination of both. The primary grounds for the nomination of a candidate will be one of the following three categories:

- 1) Research excellence in the social sciences
- 2) Advancement of the social sciences in Australia
- 3) Research excellence in the social sciences and advancement of the social sciences in Australia

### **The fields to complete in your report will depend on the nomination category**

**Please note that the nomination category will determine the fields that need to be completed in your report. Some sections of the Assessor Form may not need to be completed and these sections will be ‘greyed-out’ preventing you from entering text.**

The table below outlines the three main fields in the report, the nomination categories they are applicable to, and some guidelines on the information we are seeking in each section.

<b>Field</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Nomination Category</b>
Assessment of Distinction in <b>Research</b>	Provide a statement outlining the impact of the candidate’s research achievements on their discipline(s). You should be explicit about the original, innovative, and significant qualities of the candidate’s work and the way in which it has influenced thinking or direction within the field(s).	Only to be competed for candidates nominated in categories 1 or 3

<p><b>(Approx. 150-250 words)</b></p>	<p>Evidence or Indicators of impact may include but are not limited to: highly-cited publications; development of new methods, concepts and theory that have advanced research practice; or significant changes in the way bodies of knowledge are understood, organised and used (e.g. as a result of challenging previous conventional wisdom).</p> <p>Please do not focus solely on the volume, citation rates and impact factor of publications, and/or the dollar value of external grants received. Rather the demonstrated quality and impact of the work should be clearly stated.</p>	
<p>Assessment of Impact on <b>Public Policy, Professional Practice, or Public Understanding</b> of Social Science in Australia</p> <p><b>(Approx. 150-250 words)</b></p>	<p>Describe the candidate’s significant contributions through sustained and substantial advances in policy or practice, or through the promotion and dissemination of social science knowledge.</p> <p>Evidence or indicators of impact may include but are not limited to: social science informed changes in relevant public policy and/or government investment or operational strategy; changes to professional community practice; cultural or social change within communities of significant size; successful promulgation or uptake of new products, processes, IP, or services based on an innovation/new knowledge; publications and major reports; the championing of ideas and policy based on social science research.</p>	<p>Only to be competed for candidates nominated in categories 2 or 3</p>
<p>Assessment of National/International <b>Profile and Peer Recognition</b></p> <p><b>(Approx. 150-250 words)</b></p>	<p>Describe the candidate’s national and/or international reputation including how the wider community has recognised the candidate’s collective achievements and expertise.</p> <p>Evidence or indicators include but are not limited to: invitations to speak; honours, awards and prizes; membership of prestigious organisations or committees; grants and Fellowships; translations of work into foreign languages; journal editorships; service on advisory panels of leading national/international agencies and government/non-government organisations. Where possible, please provide details such as the context or importance of these awards, honours, and appointments in the candidate’s field.</p> <p>Please give an indication as to where you believe this candidate sits in the field.</p>	<p>To be completed for all candidates</p>

### The importance of a detailed report

Please note that election to the Academy is a competitive process and assessors may have differences of opinion about the merits of a candidate. Unfortunately, very brief assessor reports that simply express the assessor’s support or otherwise without providing much information about the merits of a candidate are generally not helpful to the

Membership Committee. In some cases, very brief assessor reports may disadvantage a nominee in the election process.

To ensure each nominee is considered fairly, we ask that you please provide a detailed rationale for your support or otherwise. This should include information on whether, and how, the nominee's achievements have made a scholarly impact or contribution to the field and if so, why you feel they are worthy of recognition by the Academy. (Please note, comments such as 'see CV' are not helpful to the Membership Committee).

## **Administrative and Service Roles**

It is important to note that while important, administrative or service roles such as serving as President of an academic association, as a university executive, or as Editor of a journal are not sufficient in their own right to merit election to the Academy. A nomination may list such appointments, and if they are evidence of high standing in the candidate's field of expertise, they may be taken into account, though in themselves they are not criteria for election. Such a nomination would need to be accompanied by evidence of the ways in which the candidate has made a significant contribution to the social sciences in addition to service and administrative positions that they have held.

## **Overall Rating**

The essential criterion in your assessment is distinction in a nominee's contribution to, or impact in, one or more domains of social science research, practice, social policy or public understanding of social issues in Australia. You are asked to summarise your support for the candidate's election in one of the following five categories:

- A. Strongly Support
- B. Support
- C. Neutral
- D. Do Not Support
- E. Strongly Do Not Support

## **How to complete your assessment and contact details if you require support**

Your assessment should be made via the Academy's online portal. If you have any queries about the assessment or election process, please contact the Academy's National Office via [fellowship@socialsciences.org.au](mailto:fellowship@socialsciences.org.au) or phone +61 2 6249 1788.

## **Confidentiality**

Independent assessor reports are confidential and will be held in strict confidence by the Membership Committee. At no point will a candidate receive or view the report.

## **Conflict of Interest Guidelines**

Independent assessors in the Fellowship election process must not have a direct conflict of interest with the candidate. Where an indirect conflict, or the potential for a perceived conflict of interest exists, assessors should note this in their assessment report.

## **Definitions**

A direct conflict of interest can occur for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, if the assessor:

- a. has, or has had, a close personal relationship (including enmity) with the candidate;

- b. has a professional research relationship with the candidate including:
  - i) is applying for/negotiating/holds/has held within the past two years funding conjointly with the candidate;
  - ii) has been a collaborator or co-author with the candidate on a research output published or presented within the past four years;
  - iii) has been a co-editor with the candidate of a book, journal, compendium, or conference proceedings within the past two years;
  - iv) has been a direct supervisor of the candidate within the past five years;
- c. has been employed by the same organisation and in the same department/centre/school/faculty/college as the candidate within the past two years;
- d. is a nominator or seconder of the candidate's Fellowship nomination.

Independent assessors may have an indirect or potential conflict of interest with a candidate if any of the following apply:

- a. they have ever had any of the professional research relationships listed in 'b' above at any time in the past;  
or
- b. they have been employed by the same organisation as the candidate within the past two years, but not in the same department/centre/school/faculty/college as the candidate.

Other real or perceived conflicts of interest may arise from a personal or professional relationship with a candidate, which may throw into question an individual's ability to fairly and independently judge their nomination. In this circumstance, they may seek clarification from the Committee Chair. Where the Chair of the Committee has a potential conflict, clarification may be sought from the President of the Academy.