

**ACADEMY**  
*of* **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**NOMINATING**  
**ACADEMICIANS**

*Issued January 2012*

# INTRODUCTION

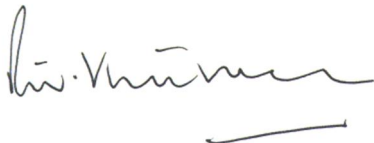


Over the past three years during which I have chaired the Academy's Nominations Committee, it became increasingly apparent that there was a need for comprehensive guidelines to assist Academicians and Learned Societies in making successful nominations. Using the experience accumulated from dealing with around 300 nominations during that time, the Nominations Committee felt it was time to clarify some matters and help proposers better understand the requirements and the mind of the committee. In this way the Committee hopes to avoid unsuitable nominations and the inevitable embarrassment that follows from the need to request further particulars or even (but very rarely) outright rejection.

Some of these matters concern the way in which nominees are selected, for example, what makes a good nominee. Others deal with the practical presentation of the case. The Committee has received CVs that are over 40 pages long, or in very small type; it has also received justification statements written by the nominee or that simply repeated the contents of the CV without drawing out the reason why that person should be an Academician. Similarly it has been apparent that

the guidelines were less easy to interpret for those wishing to propose people outside the academic world.

I hope that by careful reading of these new Guidelines, the process of making an appropriate and successful nomination will be simplified.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Vickerman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Roger Vickerman AcSS  
Chair, Nominations Committee

# PREFACE

The Academy of Social Sciences welcomes nominations for new Academicians from both learned societies and individual Academicians.

**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, but who identify with UK social science and whose work is recognised internationally, may also be nominated.

Those nominating new Academicians 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.

# **SOME NOTES ON WHAT IS EXPECTED IN A NOMINATION**

***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 *per se*.

- 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 one's own learned society is not accepted as sufficient reason on its own for Academician status. 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 is keen 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 the 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 Academicians to submit nominations. These forms are available from the Academy of Social Sciences' office and can be downloaded from the home page of the Academy website ([www.acss.org.uk](http://www.acss.org.uk)). Please download the most recent version of the form as they are regularly updated in an on-going endeavour to improve the process.

### 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 – or appear to be written - by the candidate, but must reflect the considered opinion of the proposing Academician 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 Academician status.
- The statement must not be lengthy and should be presented as a short series of bullet points that make the case. What is important is that it shows clearly and unequivocally where the nominee meets the criteria

for Academician status 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 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.

## **The Accompanying CV**

- The nomination form must be accompanied by a short summary CV, which provides the underlying evidence of publishing record or involvement in key bodies that has been pointed to as the reason for nomination.
- The CV should be no more than 4 pages long and in a clear font of at least 12 point.

- Please do not include ‘testimonial’ statements as these are rarely helpful.
- A traditional format is usually most helpful and it must evidence the nominee’s contribution to social science. A publications list must include sufficient detail to show the strength of the nominee’s record, but must not be too long.
- The CV must be tailored to the requirements of the nominations process and this work (unlike writing the statement of justification) may be done by nominee.

## **Specific Guidance for Individual Academicians**

- An individual Academician in good standing (i.e. whose subscription has been paid) may nominate suitable people for Academician status.
- Proposers *must* belong to a different institution or organisation from the nominee, but seconders can belong to either the same institution or another. Oxford and Cambridge colleges do not count as separate institutions in respect of the proposer; there is no restriction in respect of the seconder.
- Academicians must not nominate people who are their close relatives or who are in the same department or research group within their institution. If necessary, proposers should declare their interest.
- The Nominations Committee is especially uncomfortable when Vice Chancellors or Principals nominate staff of their own HEI – or vice versa - because election as an Academician is an Institutional

Esteem measure. A Vice Chancellor or Head of Department who feels that a member of their staff is worthy of Academician status should suggest the individual as a potential nominee to another Academician who knows their work, and refrain from making or seconding the nomination.

## **Specific 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.
- 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 Academicians, although it recognises that they may not be members of their subject associations.
- The Academy's Nominations Committee expects the 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 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, which includes an*

*Academician. 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 Academicians. However, it is vital that nominations are not sought from a small section of the society only, and that the society's Governing Body agrees or ratifies the final list of submissions.
- It is good practice to include at least one Academician 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 of Social Sciences reserves the right to 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 an Academician.

- It is usual for one person to 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**

- Nominations should be submitted to the Academy Administrator: administrator@acss.org.uk .
- Forms may be submitted by email with electronic signatures or with covering emails from the proposer (and seconder in the case of nominations by individual Academicians) stating their support for the nomination. Alternatively they may be sent in hard copy by post to the Administrator at the office address shown on the forms.
- 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 Academy office. The dates are usually in early December and mid-June. But nominations may be submitted to the Administrator at any time of the year.
- 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 Academician conferred on them. Sometimes cases are referred back to their proposers for further

information; they may then be decided by chair's action, or returned to the Committee at its next meeting. Very occasionally, nominations are rejected but this *does not preclude* nomination at another date.

- The list of recommendations is considered by Council at its next available meeting: usually in February for the winter round and September for the summer round.
- Following Council's ratification of the Nominations Committee's recommendations, the Chair of Council and Executive Director write to all new Academicians with joining information. They also write to inform their Vice Chancellors and, where appropriate, the learned societies who nominated them. A Press Release is issued at the same time.
- New Academicians are 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 Academicians.

## **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 September** – The Academy's Council considers the recommendations its Nominations Committee

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

**June/July or November/December** – Presentation of certificates to new Academicians at the AGM event or the President's Lunch