

## THE RSE ELECTION PROCESS

The Society appoints three categories of Fellowship:

- Honorary Fellows – members of the Royal House, or persons of truly exceptional distinction. They should be internationally renowned and are likely to be widely known outside their specialism. They may be of any nationality or country of residence but should usually have some demonstrable interest in, or connection to, Scotland.
- Corresponding Fellows – must be resident outside the UK and may be of any nationality. They should usually have some demonstrable interest in, or connection to, Scotland, and there is an expectation of future engagement with the RSE.
- Fellows – successful candidates must be active in their area of work and will be able to evidence a contribution across the three dimensions of excellence (outstanding achievement, professional standing and societal contribution). There is no nationality requirement for ordinary Fellowship, but candidates for election must be resident in the UK and should have a clear connection with Scotland related to their expertise.

The process consists of three key stages: nomination, selection and election.

### 1. Nomination

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#### Nominations Groups

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- Nominations groups are responsible for proactively identifying people in underrepresented areas who should be put forward for Fellowship.
- The current underrepresented areas (one Nominations Group per area) are Gender [established 2013], Creative Arts [2013], Business [2014], Professions [2015] Younger [2017]
- The groups are independent of the rest of the nomination process (no members of the Sectional Committees or the Fellowship Committee are involved)
- Each Group is made up of a Chair and around six members (experts in the relevant area(s), normally with experience of the nomination process).
- The Groups meet to discuss and identify suitable candidates to be nominated for Fellowship. Candidates will be matched with appropriate nominators and assessors willing to prepare the nomination (nominators and assessors may be members of the Nominations Group, or may be identified from the wider Fellowship where appropriate).
- Once the nomination is received, the candidate will be treated in the same way as all other candidates, and the Sectional Committees will not be made aware that these candidates have been identified by the Nomination Groups.

#### Nominations

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- Candidates must not initiate their own nomination.

- Proposers must be (Ordinary) Fellows of the Society.
- The proposer is responsible for identifying two assessors and arranging for their assessment to be submitted.
- Assessors can be from any category of RSE Fellowship (including Corresponding and Honorary)
- The role of assessors is to state the candidate's standing in the field, the candidate's principal achievements and their significance, and the impact of the candidate's contributions. They are also asked to explain why, in their opinion and bearing in mind the Criteria for Election, the candidate's work has attained sufficient stature to justify election to the Royal Society Edinburgh, and how they might contribute to the RSE if elected.
- The Proposer and Assessors must have personal knowledge of the candidate's work, and guidance indicates that it is advisable that at least one is from the same subject area / area of work.
- However, the guidance notes that it is also advisable that the proposer and assessors have some distance from the candidate (not a line manager, recent supervisor, close collaborator etc.)
- Only one of the proposer or assessors may be employed by the same institution as the candidate.
- A Fellow can normally be associated with only two new nominations for Fellowship in a given year whether as a proposer or assessor. An exception exists for new nominations of female candidates, younger candidates, candidates in the creative arts, business, the professions or otherwise outside academia, and Honorary and Corresponding candidates – here there is no restriction. Existing nominations in their second or third year of consideration do not count towards this limit.
- Sectional Committee Conveners cannot act as Proposers or Assessors. Members of Sectional Committees, and ordinary Council members not directly involved in the final decision-making process (i.e. not on the Fellowship Committee) can be Proposers and Assessors (no other Council members may do so).
- Nominations must be submitted electronically, on standard forms, by 31st May. No unsolicited additional materials, references or letters of support will be accepted. [forms include a key statement, written jointly by the candidate and nominator, and a 4-page CV]
- The Proposer must secure the candidate's signed agreement that they, a) agree to the accuracy of the information presented on them, b) confirm that they are content for the information provided to be held on the RSE's systems and made available to select Fellows of the RSE as part of the selection process, and c) agree to stand for election. There is no need to obtain a signature from Honorary candidates.

### **Year 2 and 3**

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Candidates are automatically considered for three years, unless a nomination is withdrawn. Proposers are responsible for completing a new nomination form each year. Feedback is provided to the proposer and candidate after the first and second years (feedback is not currently provided at the end of the three-year process).

Unsuccessful candidates may be re-nominated after a fallow period of two years.

## **2. Selection Process**

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### **I. Sectional Committee**

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- There are fifteen Sectional Committees, normally comprising up to fifteen Fellows each. Efforts are made to have a spread of disciplines, organisations, academic/non-academic and gender balance within the membership.
- Conveners are approved by the Vice-Presidents (normally from the existing committee membership). Other committee members are identified by the RSE office in discussion with the convener and other committee members where necessary.
- Members are on the committee for three or four years. Conveners are in post for three years (regardless of how long they have previously been on the committee).
- The Vice-President normally attends the relevant Sectional Committee meetings as an observer.
- Candidates are allocated to one or more Sectional Committees.
- Nominators make an initial recommendation of which Committee(s) a candidate should go to, and Conveners are responsible for checking this is appropriate
- The nomination forms and assessors forms are provided to each committee member.
- If needed, the Convener may confidentially seek expert advice on any of the Committee's candidates. Such advice may be taken from outside the RSE Fellowship.
- Each member is asked to rank each candidate for each of the three measures of excellence, and provide their scores to the Fellowship Office before the meeting. Committee members with conflicts of interest do not provide a score.
- Scores are collated and used as an initial basis for discussion. The scores are not carried forward beyond the Sectional Committee meeting.
- At the meeting a list of ranked candidates is drawn up, together with any recommendations for cross-discipline places.
- The Conveners prepare a short paragraph summarising each of the short-listed candidates. This should summarise the candidate's strengths, suitability for Fellowship and any key elements of the discussion at the Sectional Committee. These paragraphs and the ranked lists go to the relevant Sector Group and VP.

### **II. Sector Group**

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- Each of the four Sector Groups is chaired by the relevant Vice-President and includes the Sectional Committee Conveners from that area, with the Fellowship Manager in attendance.
- The Conveners initially act as advocates for their short-lists before proceeding to seek consensus on the allocation of Fellowship places for that Sector.
- The Chair of the Group has a casting vote when necessary.
- The ranked recommendations of candidates, along with reserve candidates plus any recommendations for cross-discipline places, go to the Fellowship Committee for consideration.

### **III. Fellowship Committee**

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- The Fellowship Committee meets in November and agrees a final list of recommendations to go to Council.

- The Fellowship Committee is chaired by the Fellowship Secretary and comprises the President, Vice-Presidents, General Secretary, Treasurer and two Ordinary Council Members.
- The Committee uses the Sector Group shortlists as guidance but is not restricted by them.
- The Committee agrees the allocation for each Sector, cross-discipline places and any additional places (which can be used to address any imbalances or oversite).
- A final list of recommendations for Honorary Fellowship, Corresponding Fellowship and Fellowship is forwarded to Council.

#### **IV. Council**

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The Fellowship Committee recommendations and the Ballot list are presented to Council in early December for approval. If approved, Fellows are then invited to vote on the names on the Ballot list.

#### **V. Fellowship Ballot**

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The ballot takes place electronically, with paper ballots sent only to those Fellows who have specifically requested communications from the RSE in paper format.

Fellows will previously have seen the full list of those candidates being considered for Fellowship (which is circulated with the ASM papers), and now receive the list of only those recommended for Fellowship.

Fellows are asked to indicate those who in their opinion are unworthy of election. All votes are treated anonymously. The ballot is counted in late January/early February by two Fellows appointed as Scrutineers. To be elected a Fellow, each candidate must be supported by at least two-thirds of the votes cast. In recent years response rates have been around 50%, with no candidate for Fellowship receiving more than a 3% rejection rate.

#### **3. Election**

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New Fellows are approached after the ballot and asked to confirm that they are still willing to become Fellows.

The Scrutineers' report goes to the Council meeting in February, and the result is announced at the first Ordinary meeting in February/March.

New Fellows are officially elected as of 1 March of each year.