PREPARING A NOMINATION
FOR
RSC FELLOWS

(GUIDE)
**INTRODUCTION**

Every year, the RSC Secretariat administers close to 500 nominations.

The nomination cycle starts at the RSC Secretariat with the initial review. Once nominations have passed the first review for completeness, the files are then forwarded to one of the nine divisional selection committees. Each committee will review and rank all files submitted for Fellow and Foreign membership types.

In order for the members on the selection committees to be able to better assess the candidate that you have put forward, we require that each dossier follows the templates provided in this guide and includes the elements as indicated below.

1. RSC Nomination form
2. Nomination dossier (compiled in a merged PDF file with the following items in the order below)
   - Primary Nominator letter
   - Co-nominator letters
   - Citation (70 words)
   - Detailed appraisal *(max 1200 words)*
   - Referee letters *(max 3 pages)* + biographical sketches *(¼ page)*
   - CV *(max 50 pages)*

To submit your nomination, send the following two files to nominations@rsc-src.ca not later than December 1 at 8h00pm (Eastern Time). Since the RSC receives hundreds of nominations, it would be preferred that the files are sent in two separate files and are named as follows:

- LASTNAME, First Name - Form
- LASTNAME, First Name (this is the nomination dossier)

Please ensure that the Font is of 10 points or higher.

All the items in the nomination dossier **must** follow the templates provided. All the letters must be signed and on institutional letterhead. Incomplete files **will** be rejected and the Primary Nominators will be contacted in December.

**Nominations dossiers are valid for one competition only.**

If you require assistance please contact the RSC Secretariat at the following address nominations@rsc-src.ca or by telephone at 613-998-9920.
PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

1. There are two distinct routes by which candidates may be nominated for election to the Society:
   a. By a current Fellow
   b. By an Institutional Members (signed by the University President)

2. There are three types of membership which receive nominations:
   
   o **Fellows** are persons whose intellectual achievements have been exceptional through a body of publications, intellectual endeavours or creative activities exhibiting original contributions in the arts, humanities or sciences, as well as in public life. At the time of their nomination they shall be Canadian citizens or have had status for at least three years as Canadian Permanent Residents.

   o **Specially Elected Fellows** are persons in Canadian public life whose accomplishments have been of exceptional value in promoting the objectives of the Society in ways that contribute significantly to Canadian society. At the time of their nomination they shall be Canadian citizens or have had status for at least three years as Canadian Permanent Residents.

   o **Foreign Fellows** shall be persons who, at the time of their election, are neither residents nor citizens of Canada, and who, by their exceptionally distinguished intellectual accomplishments in the arts, humanities and sciences, have helped promote the objectives of the Society in ways that normally have clear relevance for Canadian society.

3. There are many disciplines that are represented within the RSC. Please ensure to select one of the disciplines below while completing the nomination form.

   **Academy of Arts and Humanities**
   Art History, Classics / Humanities, Folklore / Ethnology, History, History & Philosophy of Science, Languages / Philology, Library / Archives Science, Linguistics, Literature, Medieval Studies, Philosophy / Ethics, Theology, Religious Studies, Area Studies, Musicology, Arts, Architecture / Urbanism, Creative Writing

   **Academy of Social Sciences**
   Administration / Management, Anthropology / Archaeology, Criminology, Demography, Economics, Education, Geography, Industrial Relations, Journalism, Law, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work

   **Academy of Science**
   Applied Sciences and engineering, Earth Sciences, Atmospheric Sciences, Ocean Sciences, Animal Biology, Medical Sciences, Microbiology & Biochemistry, Molecular Biology & Genetics, Plant Biology, Astronomical Sciences, Chemistry, Mathematics & Computer Sciences, Physics
4. An overview of the selection process

**Fellows** and **Foreign Fellows**:

1. RSC Secretariat reviews all nominations for completeness (December)
2. The nominations are reviewed/ranked by one of the Society’s nine Divisional Committees for the Selection of New Fellows (DCSNF) (January/February)
3. Recommendations of the Divisional Committees are forwarded to the relevant Academy Committee for the Selection of New Fellows (ACSNF) which finalizes the Academy’s shortlist of candidates (March/April)
4. The final list of candidates is then forwarded to the RSC Council for ratification (April/May)
5. RSC Fellows vote on the Fellows and Foreign Fellows candidates of their Division (May/June)

**Specially Elected Fellows**

1. RSC Secretariat reviews all nominations for completeness (December)
2. The nominations are reviewed/ranked by the Committee for the Selection of New Fellows (March)
3. The final list of candidates is then forwarded to the RSC Council for ratification (April/May)
4. Fellows of the RSC vote on all the recommended candidates (May/June)

Candidates shall be elected by a vote of 75% of the ballots returned, excluding abstentions.

The results of the balloting are tabulated by the Secretariat late June and new Fellows are notified of their election during the month of July.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPONENTS OF A NOMINATION**

a) **Primary nominator letter** - see model letter in Appendix I

All nomination letters *must* follow the proposed model. Nominations that do not follow the model will automatically be rejected and excluded from the nomination process.

The nominator must either be a Fellow of the Society or the President or CEO of an Institutional member of the RSC.

The letter should introduce the nomination and indicate who the referees are. The letter should list the names of the referees whose letters are also attached to the nomination, with a brief indication of why those referees have been selected.

The nomination letter should be written on the letterhead of the institution and it must be signed. If the letter is not on letterhead (e.g. emeritus), please specify the reason.

Nominators are permitted to serve on Fellowship Selection Committees but they must disclose a conflict of interest to the Committee.

b) **Co-nominator letters** - see model letter in Appendix II

These letters should only indicate that they support the nominator and should follow the model. They should not contain an appraisal of the candidate. *All nomination dossiers require two co-nominator letters no matter what type of membership or who the nominator is.*
c) **Citation** - see model citation in *Appendix III*

The citation is a statement of the significance of the candidate’s work usually prepared by the Primary Nominator. It is meant to state briefly why a candidate should be elected. The citation usually takes the form of a summary of the detailed appraisal. The citation should establish that the candidate has achieved such distinction as described in the By-laws.

Citations will have a maximum length of **70 words**. The citation should concentrate on the candidate’s original contributions to research and scholarship and should be written so that it can be understood by non-specialists. The citation normally does not play a role in the assessment of a nomination by the selection committee since the information it contains will be repeated in the detailed assessment. The citation will also be reviewed by the Fellows of the RSC during the voting process on the final list of candidates.

d) **Detailed Appraisal** - see model in *Appendix IV*

One of the keys to a successful nomination is the cogency of the “detailed appraisal.” The detailed appraisal shall have a maximum length of **1200 words**.

The detailed appraisal is the primary nominator’s opportunity to present a narrative of the candidate’s career in a manner that clearly indicates how the candidate meets the statutory criteria for election and why the candidate is deserving of election. The detailed appraisal is not a reference and therefore should not contain information about how the nominator has come to know the candidate.

The appraisal should be as technical as is necessary to indicate the candidate’s contributions, but should not be so technical that members of the Selection Committee from other disciplines are unable to make a confident assessment of the candidate’s work. It is important that the detailed appraisal be written in non-technical language that can be understood by all members of the relevant Division.

The detailed appraisal should explicitly note how and why the work of the candidate is original and significant. Reference can be made to the works listed in the CV although the appraisal should not simply be a re-listing of these works. Notice of awards and prizes for scholarship is helpful in establishing impact. The appraisal should also advert to the national and international impact of the candidate’s career and the reputation the candidate has acquired. For example, mention should be made of election to significant international scholarly bodies, publication in top-rated international and foreign journals, translation of technical papers or other materials into foreign languages, invitations to give named lectureships at foreign universities, service on scientific advisory panels of leading international agencies and NGOs, and like indicia (such as, in certain disciplines, citation indexes) of impact and reputation.

The appraisal should establish that the candidate has achieved such distinction. Depending on the specific discipline in question, it may be that sub-headings referencing each of the stated criteria can help a Selection Committee to navigate a three-page narrative.

e) **Curriculum Vitae**

The purpose of providing a CV is to enable the Selection Committee to appreciate the entire scope of the candidate’s scholarly contributions. The page limit on the CV is **50 pages**. The purpose of the limits on the CV is to keep the files manageable for the selection committees.
The CV should be divided into four sections:

1. **Publications**

2. **Key scholarly presentations** - for example, having given a leading “named lectureship” at a university, or in a discipline, or for the public (Massey Lectures, Killam Lectures, Trudeau Lectures, etc.) even if these lectures actually do not wind up in a publication.

3. **Awards and distinctions.** However, sometimes one’s “administrative contributions” are in fact scholarly contributions—being asked to chair a governmental task force; taking the senior substantive leadership role in a recognized scholarly organization; or actually designing and organizing a major international scholarly conference, for example.

4. **Grants**

For files from candidates who do not publish or give scholarly presentations, the format of the CV may vary (fine arts, indigenous files, etc).

**Letters of reference** - see model in Appendix VI

Perhaps the most significant element of a nomination package is the reputation of the referees and the quality and persuasiveness of the letters they submit. The choice of referees is crucial since this is the only external narrative about the achievements of the nominee that the Selection Committee will have. This is why nominators cannot act as referees. The emphasis in the reference letters should be on the scholarly impact that the work of the candidate has had. How did it influence the work of the referee?

It is essential that all referees submit a short biography to accompany their letter of reference. Please see an example of the short biography in Appendix VII.

The requirements for the number and provenance of referees vary between Academies. They also vary depending on the type of nomination—Regular, Foreign and Specially Elected Fellow.

1. All three Divisions of Academy I require letters from **three referees** who are experts in the candidate’s field.
2. Both Divisions of Academy II require letters from **three referees** who are experts in the candidate’s field.
3. All Divisions of Academy III require letters from **five referees** who are experts in the candidate’s field. **There is no longer a requirement to provide three Foreign and two Canadian letters** however it is still very important that the letters demonstrate the impact of the candidate’s work in Canada.

These requirements are the same regardless of whether the nominee is being proposed as a Fellow or as a Foreign Fellow. Where a candidate is being proposed as a Specially Elected Fellow the nomination must include three letters of reference, regardless of the Division or Academy from which the nomination originates.

An important feature of each nominee’s file is national and international reputation as a scholar or artist. For this reason, it is advisable to have at least one, and depending on the discipline perhaps two, of the required references provided by international referees.

The requirement for referees from outside Canada is meant to ensure that Selection Committees have a solid basis for assessing international impact. For this reason, a Canadian citizen who has spent his or her scholarly career in a foreign country would constitute an international referee, whereas a foreign national who has spent a scholarly career in Canada would not. Likewise, a Canadian referee who is spending a
sabbatical abroad, or who is working on a two to three years foreign research contract would not qualify as an international referee. Questions about whether any particular referee is an international referee can be directed to the Secretariat.

Although referees can be persons who have collaborated with the candidate, they must disclose within their letter the nature and extent of their relationship to the candidate. References should be a maximum of three pages in length and are typically shorter. A good letter of reference will usually address: (a) the referee’s direct and personal knowledge of the candidate and his or her work; (b) the originality, significance and impact of the candidate’s career; (c) the national and international reputation of the candidate; and (d) other relevant information that indicates the substantial contributions made by the candidate to the Arts, the Humanities, the Social Sciences or the Sciences. Where appropriate, a detailed comparison to the work of other scholars who are Fellows of the RSC or sister Academies in other countries can assist in establishing a candidate’s international reputation.

Referees should be reminded that, for most scholarly nominations, the emphasis must be on research. Teaching awards that do not also speak to scholarship do not contribute to a file. The number of PhD candidates supervised is not worth noting unless these mentees are continuing the scholarly work of the candidate in their own research careers. The same is generally true of administrative positions in universities, research institutions and scholarly societies. However, where the nominee has made an exceptional contribution to advancing the discipline in his or her role as administrator, this should be noted.

The volume of publications accumulated over a lengthy career is less important than the impact that even a small number of publications may have had. The referee’s task is to indicate what the impact of the nominee’s scholarship has been.

Good letters of reference tend to be “fact heavy.” Assertions about quality of work should be backed up by reference to some objective source that can confirm the assertion. Statements such as, for example, “won Award X for best publication in Y field,” or “won Award as best article of the year published in journal Z,” or “has been cited 400 times” are confirmatory of quality.

When speaking about impact, it is helpful to indicate in what way the candidate’s work has made a practical or theoretical impact in the discipline in question. Statements such as, for example, “developed a new theory which resulted in XXX,” or “published a critique of XYZ that stimulated a great debate in ABC,” or “developed a product that changed the way XYZ” are helpful in situating the nominee’s impact.

External measures such as citation indexes should also be mentioned in letters if they are current measures in the discipline in question. A common mistake of referees is to analogize the process to tenure or promotion process. General statements like “is a great teacher,” “was an excellent department chair,” “is a treasured colleague,” “is generous in reading and critiquing manuscripts,” do not carry much weight with Selection Committees.

### The Number of Letters Required from Referees

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