



## 2021 MEDAL & AWARDS COMPETITION PREPARING A NOMINATION GUIDE

The following Medal & Awards will be open to receive nominations  
from January 15, 2021 to March 31, 2021:

Henry Marshall Tory Medal (Astronomy, Chemistry, Physics)  
Jason A. Hannah Medal (History of medicine)  
John L. Synge Award (Mathematics)  
Kitty Newman Memorial Award (Philosophy)  
McLaughlin Medal (Medical Sciences)  
Miroslaw Romanowski Medal (Environmental issues)  
Pierre Chauveau Medal (Humanities)  
Rutherford Memorial Medal in Chemistry  
Rutherford Memorial Medal in Physics  
Yvan Allaire Medal (Governance)  
Sir John William Dawson Medal (Interdisciplinary  
research)

Deadline to submit new nominations: March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.



## THE NOMINATION PROCESS

This section provides introductory information for nominators, reviews the annual cycle of the nomination process, and provides samples of the required documents of a complete nomination dossier.

### General Points for Nominators

There are two distinct routes by which nominations for one of the Society's Medals and Awards may be made.

1. Candidates may be nominated by a *Member* and the nomination shall be supported by two co-nominators neither of whom needs be a Member of the Society. There is no limit on the number of nominations any Member may present each year.
2. Candidates may also be nominated by *Institutional Members*. The Nominator shall be the President or CEO of the university or organization. The nomination must be supported by two co-nominators, neither of whom needs be a Fellow of the Society.

A complete nomination consists of the following elements

1. **Nomination form**
2. Letter of nomination from the Primary Nominator
3. Two letters of support from co-nominators (max 50 words)
4. Citation (max 70 words)
5. Detailed appraisal (max 1200 words)
6. Three letters of reference (max 750 words per letter)
7. Three bio from referees (max 250 words)
8. Curriculum Vitae (max 20 pages)

All the elements below must follow the examples

The complete nomination must be compiled in **two PDF** files (file 1 includes the nomination form and File 2 includes items 2 to 8 above in order) and submitted by email to [nominations@rsc-src.ca](mailto:nominations@rsc-src.ca) by **March 31, 2021**.

### The Annual Cycle for Nominations for Medals and Awards

Nominations are accepted between January 15 and March 31, 2021.

Once nominations have been submitted, they will be reviewed for completeness and accuracy of the required components. They are then transferred to the appropriate Medals and Awards Selection Committee.

The results of the deliberations of the various Medals and Awards Selection Committees will be sent to the Secretariat in the summer and winners will be notified during the month of July. While information about medal and award winners is shared with Primary Nominators and Institutional Members over the summer, the information is otherwise embargoed until the official announcement in late September.



All nominations are valid for **one competition only**.

### **Validity of Nominations**

To be eligible for an RSC medal or award, candidates must be Canadian citizens or have had the status of Canadian Permanent Resident for at least three years.

### **Primary Nomination Letters**

The Primary Nominator must be an RSC Member. Where the nomination is made by an Institutional Member, the Primary Nominator shall be the President or CEO of the university or organization.

The letter from a Primary Nominator introduces the nomination and indicate who the referees are. The letter lists the names of the referees whose letters are also included in the nomination, with a brief indication of why those referees have been selected.

The nomination letter should be sent on the letterhead of the institution and must be signed. The nomination letter should not repeat information in the detailed appraisal of the nominee; nor should it be cast as an additional letter of reference. Letters that have more information than is required in the model will automatically be rejected.

Nominators are permitted to serve on various Medals and Awards Selection Committees. Nonetheless, they must disclose to the Committee the nature and extent of any interest which they may have the selection of a candidate nominated for a Medal or Award that comes before that Committee.

### **Letters of Co-nomination**

Letters of support from co-nominators should be sent on the letterhead of the institution of the co-nominator and they must be signed. These letters should indicate only that they support the nomination. They should not contain additional information.

Two letters of co-nomination are required, and the co-nominators do not need to be Members of the RSC.

### **Citation**

The citation is a brief statement of the significance of the candidate's work usually prepared by the Primary Nominator. It is meant to outline briefly why a candidate ought to be recognized for his or her contribution to the field of achievement being recognized by the medal or award. The citation often takes the form of a summary of the detailed appraisal.

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 and elaborated upon in the detailed assessment.



While there is no standard form for citations, the citation should include at least the basic information in the following order: last name, first name of the nominee; the nominee's scholarly discipline or artistic field; the institutional affiliation (if any).

### Detailed appraisal

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 nominator's opportunity to present a narrative of the candidate's achievements in a manner that clearly indicates how the candidate meets the criteria for receiving a medal/award and why the candidate deserves this recognition. The detailed appraisal is not a reference and therefore need not and should not contain information about how the nominator has come to know the candidate. Normally the detailed appraisal will repeat and elaborate upon any substantive information about the nominee's achievements that appears in the citation.

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 fields in the discipline or from other disciplines are unable to make a confident assessment of the candidate's work. Where highly specialized technical language or terms are used an effort should be made to explain them in non-technical language that can be understood.

The detailed appraisal should explicitly note how and why the work of the candidate is significant, given the terms of reference for the medal or award. Where relevant the appraisal should also advert to the international impact of the candidate's work. For awards and medals that recognize career accomplishments, 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.

Depending on the specific medal or award, and the practices within the discipline in question, it may be that sub-headings referencing each of the stated criteria for a medal or award will help a Selection Committee to navigate a three-page narrative.

### Referees

One of the most significant elements of a nomination package for a medal or award 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 relevant achievements of the nominee that the Selection Committee will have. This is why nominators cannot act as referees. It is essential that all referees submit (or that nominators submit on their behalf) a short narrative biography to accompany their letter of reference.

The nomination must include *three letters of reference (maximum of 750 words per letter) And biographies (maximum of 250 words each)*. Letters and biographies of reference should be sent on the letterhead of the referee's





institution as indicated in the nomination letter and they must be signed. Unsigned letters will be considered invalid.

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 750 words in length and are often 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) for medals and awards recognizing an entire career the originality, significance and impact of the candidate's career; for medals and awards given to recognize a particular accomplishment in a discipline, the letter should speak in detail about the significance of that accomplishment; (c) the national and international reputation of the candidate, or as the case may be, the reputation that attends to the accomplishment in question; and (d) other relevant information that indicates the substantial contributions made by the candidate in the light of the specific criteria for the medal or award for which the candidate is nominated. Where appropriate, a detailed comparison to the work of other scholars who have won the particular medal or award, or analogous medals or awards of the RSC's sister National Academies in other countries can assist in establishing a candidate's international reputation.

Referees should be reminded that, for most (but not all) medals and awards, the emphasis must be on research. As with the Detailed Appraisal, teaching awards that do not also speak to scholarship are not normally relevant to a file. Likewise, 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. Similarly, where the specific criteria for a medal or award speak to teaching, mentorship, academic administration, ability to communicate with the general public, and so on, the nominee's contributions in these areas should be included in the referee's assessment.

Even when a medal or award is meant to signal an entire career, the volume of publications accumulated over a lengthy career is less important than impact that even a small number of publications may have had. The referee's task is to indicate what has been the impact of the nominee's contributions to the field or discipline for which the medal or award is given.

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 the types of statement that confirm the quality of a nominee's file.

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 field to which the medal or award is directed. 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 of



nomination for a medal or award to the 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 for medals and awards.

It is important to append a brief biography (250 words maximum) of each referee to the referee letters.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

For career achievement medals and awards, the purpose of providing a CV is to enable the Selection Committee to appreciate the entire scope of the candidate’s scholarly contributions. Where a medal or award is for a particular achievement, a full CV may not be necessary. Indeed, in some cases a comprehensive listing of scholarly activities may be counter-productive in that it could bury the truly significant accomplishments that relate to the precise criterion or criteria for the medal or award in question.

In all cases, the uploaded CV should be stripped of all material relating to teaching and administrative contributions, unless the medal or prize specifically lists such matters as a relevant criterion. The CV should provide the relevant Selection Committee with, in the first part, a complete listing of the candidate’s pertinent publications, as well as, in the second part, any awards, honours and recognition that the candidate has received for achievements in the specific domain to which the medal or award is directed. The CV should **not be longer than 20 pages**.

As a general rule, and taking into account the specific criteria for the medal or award in question, the CV would list (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) major awards and distinctions; and (4) where relevant, other accomplishments of the nominee that speak to the criteria of a medal or award.