

Code of Procedure and Requirements for Fellowship Status

A member of The Gerontological Society of America, upon recommendation by a Fellowship Committee of a Section, may be awarded Fellowship status by the Council of the Society to be effective after a minimum regular membership in the Society of five years. To be nominated, Members-at-Large must affiliate with one of the Sections.

Nominating letters should be sent to the Central Office of the Society, which will place it in the hands of the appropriate committee. **The nominating letters should address the minimum criteria below plus the section-specific criteria for the appropriate section.** The Central Office will check membership status/Fellowship endorser's status before sending out applications for review. Fellowship Committees of each Section, which shall consist of three or more Fellows of that Section, will review the nominations and make recommendations to the GSA Fellowship Committee. A GSA Fellowship Section Representative or Chair may nominate an applicant for Fellowship Status, but must recuse themselves from reviewing that particular application. Decisions of the Society's Fellowship Committee shall be presented to Council in writing. Council awards GSA Fellowship status.

Requirements for Fellowship are as follows:

Fellows shall be members of the Society who were nominated by a Fellow of his or her Section and met the standards described below. They must meet the following minimum qualifications, as stated in Article II, Section 2a. of the Society's bylaws<[hyperlink to Bylaws website](#)>, in addition to others which may be required by a particular Section (see item 5). The individual must have been engaged in recognized work related to gerontology for at least five years prior to application such as research, teaching, administration, public or professional service, and additionally must have demonstrated an active interest and responsibility in gerontology as shown by publications or presentations at scientific or professional meetings, or public leadership in one of the fields recognized as pertaining to gerontology.

- 1) The minimum standards for Fellow shall be:
 - (a) an advanced degree beyond the baccalaureate conferred by a graduate school of recognized standing, or a professional degree from an accredited professional institution;
 - (b) prior status as a Regular Member for at least five years and involvement in Society activities – nominees must show evidence of a strong **and sustained** commitment to the Society, which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, for example, by having held elected office in GSA, performing reviews of GSA abstracts or journal submissions, serving on a GSA committee, **publishing articles in GSA journals**, or **contributing to the GSA annual scientific meeting by chairing symposia or giving platform presentations**.
 - (c) active engagement at the time of nomination in the advancement of gerontology, which can be demonstrated by a variety of GSA activities and/or non-GSA activities including but not limited to:

- (1) academic, e.g., teaching aging courses;
 - (2) administration, e.g., chair of a department of gerontology or aging studies program or administration of an aging service or advocacy organization;
 - (3) **clinical or other practice**, e.g., working with older adults, caregivers, staff of geriatric facilities **or aging services organizations** in innovative ways; supervision of students in geriatric practice;
 - (4) research, e.g., administering grants, promoting methodological or statistical improvements; and
 - (5) public policy, e.g., advocacy for older adults at local, state, regional, and/or national levels;
- (d) five years of acceptable professional experience;
- (e) evidence of significant contribution to or performance in the field of gerontology that is reflected in scholarly achievements such as publications in peer-reviewed journals, funded research projects, and/or chairing symposia at national conventions.
- (1) Publication of 5 works represents a minimum;
 - (2) Development of innovative curricula for gerontology tracks, the winning of teaching awards for gerontology courses, directorship of nationally recognized aging-related policy programs are also examples of notable contributions;
- (f) letters of endorsement by two current Fellows of the sponsoring Section – endorsements should clearly reflect how the candidate meets the criteria for fellowship, has had a visible, sustained impact on gerontology and has made regular contributions to the Society.**

- 2) The requirement of an advanced or professional degree may be waived upon submission of evidence satisfactory to the Fellowship Committee of the Society of outstanding contribution or performance in gerontology. Individuals who have made substantial contributions but who do not meet the formal educational requirements or specifically recognized activity in gerontology can be nominated for Fellowship. In such instances, a supporting statement from the Section Fellowship Committee must accompany the application. This statement must give information about the accomplishments of the individual such that the requirements should be waived.
- 3) Fellowship status is awarded by GSA Council. Fellow status is conferred only once by the Society. Application for Fellow status shall be initiated through the Section of the individual's primary identification. The approval process for Fellow shall include the following:
- (a) endorsement by two Fellows (one being the nominator) of the Society who are members of the Section through which nomination for Fellowship is being made;
 - (b) review and nomination by the Fellowship Committee of the appropriate Section;
 - (c) approval by the Society Fellowship Committee
 - (d) award by Council.
- 4) A member whose nomination for Fellow is rejected at any stage may appeal by resubmitting the nomination with additional supporting information to the Society's Fellowship Committee.

5) Additional criteria for specific Sections include:

Biological Sciences:

- (a) either an MD degree or a doctoral degree in the field related to experimental biology and conferred by a graduate school of recognized standing;
- (b) prior status as a member of the Section for at least three years;
- (c) five years of research experience subsequent to the granting of the doctoral degree;
- (d) evidence of meritorious performance in biology or a related field;
- (e) publication of at least five papers (or the equivalent) prior to fellowship application, in areas relating to the biology of the aging process;
- (f) active engagement in the advancement of gerontology at the time of the nomination.

Health Sciences: no additional criteria beyond that identified in the general requirements for Fellowship status.

Behavioral and Social Sciences:

- (a) doctoral degree conferred by graduate or professional school of recognized standing;
- (b) Current active involvement in the advancement of gerontology;
- (c) 5 years of post-doc gerontological experience;
- (d) publication of at least 5 works in refereed journals which contribute to the literature on gerontology in the behavioral or social sciences. The requirement of a doctoral degree may be waived upon submission of evidence of outstanding contribution or performance in gerontology.

Social Research, Policy and Practice: minimum standards shall be

- (a) an advanced degree conferred by a graduate school of recognized standing, or a professional degree from an accredited professional institution;
- (b) prior status as a Member for at least five years;
- (c) active engagement at the time of nomination in the advancement of gerontology;
- (d) five years of acceptable professional experience subsequent to the granting of an advanced degree;
- (e) unusual and outstanding contribution or performance in the field of gerontology as evidenced by:

(1) Expansion of knowledge base in gerontology: authorship of studies, reports, books, monographs, etc. at least three of which required external evaluation for publication; other appropriate evidence such as primary representation in litigation with substantial impact upon the elderly or the design of innovative physical environments for the elderly. All candidates must present evidence of externally evaluated publication. However, it is recognized that new and significant information can also be developed from other professional efforts for members of certain professions. Evidence of such contributions may replace the more substantial publication expectations for the majority of candidates.

(2) Professional activities in gerontology, including but not limited to: officer in professional organization; member of editorial board; member of state or national task force or review committee; testimony before government committees; formal papers, critiques, and research findings presented at professional meetings that

receive peer recognition as having made outstanding contributions to the areas of social research, planning and practice in the field of gerontology. (Stress is placed on scholarly contribution rather than on serving as a panel convener or discussant unless such roles also involve the development of a formal paper.)

(3) Public leadership in gerontology: substantial and significant contributions in research, teachings, or program or policy development; planning and provision of professional services to the aging in various functional fields (e.g., community planning education, health, housing, law, transportation, social services). Moreover, evidence must be presented that the applicant's leadership contributions extend beyond immediate job responsibilities, and that such leadership is widely respected by peers for its creativity and overall value to the field of gerontology.