

ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY

Fellowship nominations: optimising the chance of success

For many pharmacists, recognition by their professional body with an award of Fellowship is one of the proudest days of their lives. As the nominator of a prospective Fellow, you want to do your professional colleague justice when you complete the nomination form. But how do you make sure your submission makes it easy for the Panel of Fellows to understand what sets this pharmacist apart and see clearly why the Award should be made? Panel members share a few tips.

First and foremost, if you follow the *Fellowship Guidelines and Nomination Form* properly, then you won't go far wrong, but there are elements of the form which are particularly important for the Panel when making their assessment. We're going to assume you and your fellow supporters fit the bill (see page 2 of the form for eligibility) and the pharmacist being nominated fulfils the criteria. Your job is to make clear to us exactly how those criteria are met and therefore we are going to concentrate on the supporting statement(s) - the most important part of the nomination form.

Before we leave page 2, however, the checklist is helpful for a final check of a completed form – we do receive nominations containing only a single sentence as the “supporting statement”. It's unlikely that any non-qualifying nomination will get as far as the Panel. You'll get a polite reply from the Panel's secretary telling you what is missing, or which section needs another look – but there are submissions that are borderline; it is important to note that there is no minimum word count.

We're going to focus on the Primary Nominator's supporting statement (Section 3 page 5), since that is generally the section the Panel members look at most for evidence that the award of Fellowship is justified.

1. The form (page 5) says: *Where possible please provide information using bullet points and follow the headings below.* Please use these headings and the bullet points in your nomination statement because they provide the Panel with the information they need to know.
2. If you have a full CV, and it is best if you can submit one along with your application, you need only provide a brief summary in the 'Biography' section. Don't forget to capture, in a sentence or two, your candidate's best-known achievement here too.
3. The 'Justification' section is the place to detail the key reasons for the nomination, as you see them. It really helps to provide examples of how a pharmacist has led the profession, or developed their role, or impacted on patients in their care, or supported other professionals in the development of their careers. Think: 'why do I think this person should be a Fellow of the RPS' and write it here. If it helps, consider what impact they have made on you, or someone you know.
4. The 'Above and Beyond the Day Job' section is the most important bit of the form. There are thousands of pharmacists who perform their jobs to the best of their ability. They may run a research team, teach students, have served their community for 40 years, or run a hospital pharmacy department. The Panel is focused on what sets an

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individual apart. Fellowship is not a long service medal, so be sure to highlight where you consider that nominee has gone beyond the day job in terms of their achievements and tell us why. They may have prevailed against the odds or taken pharmacy and pharmacists into a new working environment. They may have exercised leadership where others have failed or innovated in a way which has changed things for patients (or those around them). You're looking for the kind of thing which makes you think: "I wish I'd done that".

5. The Panel is less impressed by long lists of committee appointments *per se*, so where you think membership of or chairing a particular group adds to the picture, tell us why. Include your thoughts here under "Achievements and Outcomes". The second word of this phrase is the important one and make clear what your nominee has personally done. Just sitting on a committee is not enough.
6. 'Distinction to the Profession' is the place to summarise why everything you have written so far should convince the Panel the pharmacist is distinct, has gone well beyond what they are paid to do, and has achievements that set them apart from the many thousands of well-respected pharmacists in membership.
7. Supporting member statements are best when they add to the "above and beyond". It may seem like a good idea to get the nominee's friends and close working colleagues to pen short supporting statements, but the Panel is less impressed by quantity and more by quality. It is better to have two supporting statements that fill out the picture of the person being nominated, than have ten sentences from acquaintances or the rest of the committee someone sits on. We do read them all, but we can get a little jaded by the fifth or sixth short letter telling us what a great person x is and that they've known him or her for years.

Remember the Panel rely heavily on a properly completed nomination form, which highlights the key aspects of a pharmacist's career which you, the nominator, feel sets the pharmacist apart. If you've gone to the trouble of identifying someone worthy of an RPS Fellowship, then completing the form while following these pointers is more likely to produce a submission which will find the Panel agrees with you. Making a nomination does take a bit of time and thought but it is well worth it when you see your nominee's achievements recognised by one of the highest honours their profession can bestow on them.