



## On becoming a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology

### *Guidance for Nominators to Prepare Nominations for the Academy fellowship*

#### *How to use this guide:*

- This document is not about the mechanics of how to submit a nomination. Rather, it focuses on factors a nominator should consider BEFORE beginning a nomination. Please read this and the instruction document before you start your nomination.
- This document is the interpretation of [the selection criteria](#) taking into account the diverse subdisciplines and different work settings within the field of microbiology
- This is a living document written for Academy fellows and will be updated yearly following feedback from fellows.

#### **General Recommendations before starting a nomination:**

- Nominating a person for the Academy is telling THEIR story and making a compelling case for WHY they should be elected to the Academy. The case must be very clear and strong. The CV and other information should be presented in a manner that supports the case.
- The nomination letter should *clarify, amplify and highlight* the specific contributions of the nominee and, importantly, the **impact** (why they matter) of those contributions. Specifically, where applicable, explain how the nominee's research contributions have moved the field forward and/or helped address one or more societal needs (e.g., clinical, environmental, etc.)
- Don't assume the reviewers know the nuances related to the nominee's subfield or work environment. The nominator needs to explain the nominee's unique circumstance and the significance of their work. For example, if a nominee works mostly in teams and often publishes with collaborators, point that out and explain the nominee's unique and critical role.
- While evidence of sustained excellence is required, excellence in every domain is not expected.

#### **What are the major metrics of professional & scientific excellence indicative of the election to fellowship? Tips:** Highlight these in the nomination letter where applicable to the nominee

- Research discoveries that have a significant impact on the individual's specific field within the microbial sciences. The breadth of impact can be supportive but is not a must-have.
- A strong and sustained record of productivity. Original research contributions are essential. Evidence could be in the form of publications, patents, creation of new devices, IP, etc.
- Senior standing in the field and/or leadership role within their organization, e.g. department chair, program director, director of medical affairs, Chief Scientific/Clinical Officer, etc.
- National and/or international reputation and presence.
- Go-to person for a certain scientific area or subspecialty.
- National or international awards and recognition.
- Record of national/international service in the field of microbiology: editorial board member or editor of a journal in their field, hold office in a national organization, member of a committee in a national organization(s), which does not have to be with ASM.
- Mentoring within the field, either within or outside of the nominees' own work setting.

**What should be the minimum educational requirement for the Academy fellowship for members of your field? E.g. is a doctoral degree required for the Academy fellowship?**

There is NO minimum educational requirement for Academy Fellowship. A doctoral degree is typical among current fellows. Nominees without a doctoral degree must display an exceptional level of achievement. A clear explanation by the nominator and supporters is needed to make a compelling case.

**What is the minimum length of time since becoming an independent investigator needed for election to fellowship? Why?**

Minimum 10 years after the start of an independent research career or post-terminal training. Exceptions will be rare. This requirement is to allow for a sustained record to be demonstrated while ensuring that the relevant contributions originated from the nominee's own research program. The nominator must show the nominee has a proven record of independent research through the body of work and contributions to the field.

**What factors should be considered for microbiologists working internationally in this field? Are there different international norms around publication, funding, mentoring and/or service that should be taken into consideration?**

The same criteria for consideration for the Academy fellowship should apply to microbiologists working internationally as they do to microbiologists working in the U.S. It is noted that the culture and context are varied. Not all reviewers are familiar with the situations in different countries. Thus, it will be important for nominators to include information about the context and explain how the person has made sustained, important contributions to the national and international scientific community. If a nominee is from a low or middle-income country, a nominator may want to address differences in opportunity compared to those who are based in a developed country.

---

***How was this Guidance document developed?***

In 2024, the Governors of the American Academy of Microbiology (Academy) embarked on the journey to provide additional guidance to the current fellows on what the Academy is looking for in the new fellows. This question has come up in several settings. Thus, this initiative is intended to take a comprehensive approach to look across the subfields in microbiology to answer several important questions that are commonly asked by fellows. The goal is to enhance clarity and transparency in the Academy fellowship selection process to encourage nominations from the broad and diverse community across subdisciplines and backgrounds in microbiology and around the world.

The Governors established 3 working groups: Basic Research, Clinical Research and Industry. Each working group was composed of the current fellows of the Academy. These working groups worked independently for several weeks, taking a deep look at the current selection criteria and reflecting on how these criteria could be applied to their community. Then, the groups developed a series of recommendations to the Academy Governors and Subcommittee on Elections, who are the reviewing bodies that make the fellowship selection decision. The recommendations were approved by the Academy Governors and presented in this document.