



**Royal Society of New South Wales  
Fellows and Members Assessment Committee**

**Terms of Reference**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The Royal Society of NSW (the Society, RSNSW) traces its origins to the Philosophical Society of Australasia, which was established on 27 June 1821. The Society received Royal Assent in 1866 and was incorporated by an Act of the NSW Parliament in 1881.

Today, the Society is an inclusive learned institution that aims to enrich lives through knowledge and inquiry. It encompasses a diverse group of people who are dedicated to ideas that matter and contributing to a just, secure, and sustainable society by:

- Mobilising the multidisciplinary expertise of Society members
- Providing authentic and authoritative information
- Addressing national and global challenges
- Recognising and promoting excellence.

### 1.2 Organisational Structure

The Council is responsible for delivering the initiatives of the 2021-23 Strategic Plan.

The organisational structure of the Society has been conceived as a collection of programs that is designed and implemented by Council and its Committees. The Committees will undertake the detailed work of the Society, providing reports and advice to Council on the present and future conduct of the programs.

This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of the RSNSW Fellows and Members Assessment Committee, in accordance with the Society's Rules, Values, Strategic Plan, Policies, Programs, and Council Handbook.

## 2. Role and Responsibilities

The purpose of this Committee is to lead the Fellowship (including Honorary and Distinguished Fellows) and Membership (Including Associate Members) Assessment (FMAC) Program of the Society on behalf of Council. The FMAC Program is designed to assess nominations of individuals wishing to become members of the Society according to the criteria outlined in the Society's Rules for Members, Fellows and Distinguished Fellows.

## 2.1 Program

The Committee will undertake the following activities:

- align the Fellows and Members nomination process with Society policies,
- align the Fellows and Members assessment process with the Society's Rules
- ensure the continued high standing, and confidence in the process of assessing nominations, of individuals who are elected by the Society as members and who, in the case of Fellowship and Distinguished Fellowship, are gazetted by the New South Wales Government.

The Fellows and Members nomination and assessment process will:

2.1.1 Ensure that:

- privacy of information is maintained throughout the process
- storage of and access to all information is in accordance with appropriate confidentiality and information security provisions.

2.1.2 Devise and authorise promulgation of nomination forms via the Society's website, or other electronic means (including the Society's membership management system), that:

- are suitably comprehensive, seeking only that information that is necessary to assess applications for Membership and Fellowship
- are inclusive, in that there is conformance with the Society's Inclusion and Diversity Policy, containing no impediments or discouragement to enhancing the diversity (in all forms) of the Society's membership
- refer to the gazettal by the NSW Government of those whose Fellowship application is successful.

2.1.3 Assess without bias, declaring any potential or actual conflicts of interest as they arise

2.1.4 Maintain comprehensive records of committee meetings, including membership and fellowship decisions, together with laudations where appropriate.

2.1.5 Prepare:

- recommendations of proposed Fellows and Distinguished Fellows for consideration by Council, including a brief laudation statement for presentation when fellowships are announced, and for inclusion on the website
- notification of the nominator of the recommendation for consideration by Council and the expected timeline
- proforma correspondence for the President's authorisation to be sent by the Society's secretariat to successful applicants and copied to the nominators
- individualised correspondence to be sent by the FMAC Chair to unsuccessful applicants and their nominators, as appropriate, addressing issues in applications, as required, and proposing, as appropriate, a course of action for the applicant, (including an application for Membership by unsuccessful Fellowship applicants).

2.1.6 Propose recommendations to Council, as necessary, regarding changes to the nomination process or changes to the assessment criteria, to be reflected in a change of the Society's Rules and voted on by the membership.

- 2.1.7 Undertake each year de-identified analysis of the distribution of nominations among appropriate categories and provide this information to the Community Engagement Committee.

## 2.2 Policies and Guidelines

The Society has several documents that govern the processes for each Committee:

- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Fundraising Guidelines
- Council Handbook.

These documents will be made available to the Committee by the Secretary of the Society.

## 3. Committee Composition

### 3.1 Members

- 3.1.1 The Council appoints committee members who are members of the Society, but who are not necessarily members of Council. In certain circumstances Council may determine that a representative of a partner organisation should also be a member of a Committee to further the mission of both organisations.
- 3.1.2 Rule 21 states that the President and the Secretary are *ex officio* members of all committees and have the right but not the obligation to attend Committee meetings.
- 3.1.3 Council will ensure that the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee membership meets the requirements of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- 3.1.4 Committee members are appointed for a two-year term from the Annual General Meeting by Council resolution at a Council meeting immediately following the Annual General Meeting or earlier should circumstances require it.
- 3.1.5 The Committee membership shall include at least one Distinguished Fellow

### 3.2 Chair

- 3.2.1 The Chair of the committee is appointed by resolution of Council and is preferably a current member of Council.
- 3.2.2 The Chair has the responsibility for:
- Making committee membership recommendations to the Executive Committee to endorse and forward to Council for approval
  - Ensuring that the Committee develops and maintains an annual work plan for the Fellows and Members Assessment Program
  - Developing, with assistance from the Committee Secretary, agendas for formal business meetings of the Committee
  - Reporting on the Fellows and Members Assessment Program work plan activities to each Council meeting using the standard reporting template
  - Ensuring effective communication and engagement, as appropriate, with other Council Committees, Office-bearers, key Society appointees, Branches, and relevant partner organisations (including service providers) for the conduct of the business of the committee
  - Ensuring that Fellows and Members Assessment Committee activities comply with Policies and Council Handbook requirements.

### 3.3 Secretary

- 3.3.1 The Committee will appoint a Committee Secretary from within its membership, other than the Committee Chair.
- 3.3.2 The Secretary has the responsibility for:
- Ensuring completeness of information provided for assessment and requesting that nominators/nominees to remedy deficiencies before an assessment can proceed.
  - Working with the Chair to develop the meeting agenda and preparing it with the standard agenda template
  - Circulating draft minutes including actions of any meeting to all Committee members within one week of each meeting, writing meeting minutes using the standard template, and with the Chair's approval, circulating the minutes to Committee members within two weeks of each meeting
  - Tracking subsequent actions from meetings
  - In advance of each Council Meeting, providing the Society Secretary with the Chair-approved report on Fellows and Members Assessment Program activities using the standard Council reporting template
  - Ensuring that the agendas, minutes, actions, and any other relevant material are stored in the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee collaborative space and are accessible to all Committee members
  - Liaising with the Society's Webmaster to ensure that the Committee's decisions are reflected on the website, as appropriate.

## 4. Expert Advisors

- 4.1 The Committee may engage suitable advisors who are not necessarily members of the Society to provide the Committee with expert, independent advice, provided that if any expenditure is required it must be authorised by the Executive Committee on behalf of Council.
- 4.2 The Committee is not bound by the independent advice it receives, but it is responsible for advice it provides to Council.

## 5. Meetings

### 5.1 Formal Meetings

- 5.1.1 The Committee conducts its business by formal meetings, the dates being determined annually in advance to facilitate reporting to Council meetings.
- 5.1.2 An agenda for each formal meeting, prepared using the standard template, and any relevant supporting documents will be forwarded to each Committee member at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting, unless otherwise agreed by all Committee members.
- 5.1.3 The quorum for Committee meetings shall be the number which exceeds one half of the Committee members provided that at least one of those present is the Committee Chair or Committee Secretary.
- 5.1.4 The Committee Chair has a deliberative and a casting vote.
- 5.1.5 In the Chair's absence, the Committee shall choose another Committee member to chair the meeting.

5.1.6 An additional meeting of the Committee may be called at the written request of two or more Committee members.

## 5.2 Informal Meetings

5.2.1 The Committee may conduct routine business by appropriate means, provided that all Committee members are apprised of the decisions in writing and that a record of those decisions is included in the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee collaborative space and in the Committee's report to Council.

5.2.2 Informal meetings may take place as frequently as required.

## 6. Key Dates

Date Originated	March 2021 (Council Approval)
Date of last review	N/A
Date of next planned review	Jan 2023 by the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee for submission to Council
Designated Owner	Fellows and Members Assessment Committee Chair