

PRSA COLLEGE of FELLOWS

2020 Frequently Asked Questions: Applying to the College of Fellows

Some of the more frequently asked questions are listed here along with the answer to each. [Additional information on any topic can be found on the College of Fellows section on the PRSA website.](#) Read all the documents on the website as they contain significant detail and instructions.

Topic 1: The Six Criteria of College of Fellows Application

- Q. Does it matter how far back I go in my career to find examples?
A: No. In fact, since applicants are required to document at least 240 months of experience, some examples may be at least 20 years old. Examples from previous decades are not uncommon. If the example of your work contributed to the advancement of the profession, meets the specific criterion and has meaningful outcomes, and you played a significant role, you can consider using it. Please note that your examples should also show a progression in your career, including responsibilities, capabilities and results.
- Q. Can I use the same example for two or three different criteria?
A. It is not helpful to you to do that. The application should clearly demonstrate your professional excellence and contributions in a variety of areas over a number of years. Providing 20 different examples is the best way to demonstrate that you have repeatedly accomplished much more than was expected of you if you had been just “doing your job.” You are evaluated on your entire individual body of work and the best way to show the breadth and depth of that work is to have 20 different significant examples.
- Q. If I have worked for the same company for most of my career, can I use the same person as a contact for several of my examples?
A. Ideally, you should have as many different people as possible listed as contacts: 18-20 different people describing your superior work, and outstanding attributes and contributions. Before repeating a name, consider who else might be able to attest to your role and the outcomes of an example: A co-worker? Someone who benefited from your work? Another board member? The boss of your boss? A client/former client? A volunteer? A student? An academic colleague?
- Q. Can a person who writes a letter of support for me also be listed as a contact for an example?
A. Yes, but before you use your letter writer who will already have spoken of your talents and achievements, consider whether there is someone else who might be able to attest to your role and the results of the example you are using.
- Q. What if the contact I would have listed for one of my examples is now deceased?
A. If there is no one else who can speak of the specific project or example you are describing, list the contact as deceased.
- Q. May a member of the PRSA staff at headquarters be listed as a reference or write a letter of recommendation?
A. No.


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- Q. The preparation materials emphasize outcomes versus outputs as important to present in my examples. Can you clarify what you mean by that?
- A. To demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of your public relations work, you need to quantify the results of your examples as much as possible. This means going beyond tactical *outputs* to focus on meaningful *outcomes*. We understand some outcomes are more challenging to quantify and measure than others, and that the bottom-line effectiveness of our work may often involve behavior or attitude changes, engagement, support of a return on investment, or other reputation-related impacts. But meeting that challenge is important to document that what you did went beyond just doing what was expected of you on the job.

The guide below may help trigger ideas and approaches you can use to go beyond listing basic output metrics and share more important outcomes within your examples.

Keep asking yourself, “So what?” as you write.

The Selection Committee needs you to go beyond what you did - and explain why it matters.

<i>What you did:</i>		<i>What the Selection Committee looks for:</i>
Basic output metrics	Go from output to outcomes	What action did the audience take or what impact did the activity have?
Counts of press clippings	Unique visitors	Engagement <i>What happened because of the article?</i>
Audience	Views	Influence <i>How did you impact the audience? Was your advice taken? Duplicated? Replicated?</i>
Reach	Likes	Impact
Target audience reach	Followers	Awareness
Impressions	Fans	Attitudes
Opportunities to see (OTS)	Click-throughs	Trust
Share of voice	Downloads	Loyalty
Cost per thousand (CPM)	Comments	Reputation
Hits	Tone	Relationships
Visits	Sentiment	Return on Investment (ROI)

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Topic 2: Letters of Support

- Q. Since there is no PRSA Chapter where I live, I am not active in a local Chapter. Who, then, would write the Chapter/District/Section Support Letter?
- A. This letter must then come from an officer of the PRSA District in which you reside or from a Section in which you participate.
- Q. Can a PRSSA member/President of my PRSSA Chapter write a letter of support for me?
- A. Absolutely. This would be one of the required **four** letters of support from people in the field of public relations or communication.
- Q. If I am the current PRSA Chapter President, who writes the Chapter letter of support?
- A. The immediate past-president or an officer of the current board would complete the Chapter/Section/District Comment Form and the accompanying one-page letter of support.

Topic 3: GoodFellows

- Q. I have a friend who is a member of the College of Fellows and has offered to be my GoodFellow. Can I be assigned that person?
- A. All assignments of GoodFellows are confidentially made by the GoodFellow Committee for several reasons:
1. All Fellows who want to be a GoodFellow receive special training each year. This allows them to be aware of all current application process requirements, which may be adjusted from year to year.
 2. The GoodFellow Committee seeks to make the best match possible based on both the applicant's and GoodFellow's background and experience. Your friend's professional career may not be well-aligned with your background and may match another applicant's more closely.
 3. A GoodFellow, by definition and purpose, must provide a neutral set of eyes and ears so that the relationship between the applicant and the GoodFellow remains objective. This typically leads to a more productive dialogue, smoother process and greater chance of success for the applicant.
- Q. Is it required that I use a GoodFellow?
- A. It is not, but a GoodFellow can be an invaluable resource and sounding board. Having a GoodFellow does not mean an automatic selection to the College of Fellows, however.
- Q. How often should I contact my GoodFellow?
- A. You should reach out to your GoodFellow and talk about how you would like to work with him or her. Hopefully, you will phone or email several times, so that your questions can be answered and your time writing is well spent.

Topic 4: Selection Committee

- Q. Is there a list of the members of the Selection Committee posted somewhere so I know not to ask one of them to write a letter of support for me?
- A. To ensure impartiality, this list is not made public. If, by chance, you ask someone to be a letter writer for you and he or she is on the Selection Committee, that person will tell you that he or she cannot write a letter on your behalf and will ask you to keep that information confidential.

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Topic 5: Reapplication

- Q. Where can I find information about reapplying to the College of Fellows?
- A. [You will find the specific list of application instructions - including reapplication Instructions - on the PRSA website.](#)

Topic 6: Changes in the Application from 2019

- Q. Are there any changes in the forms from last year?
- A. There were no significant changes; however, there is renewed emphasis in precisely following ALL of the instructions given.
- For example, clearly document your 240 months of public relations or communication experience, which must have been completed by January 1, 2020.
 - Make sure you have listed the percentage (%) of time spent in PR/communication or PR education as well as percentage (%) of time in management or your application will not be accepted.
 - Make sure your letter writers understand the letter writing guidelines.
 - Additionally, criterion 3 has been renamed “Superior Professional Performance” (replacing “Superior Professional Capability”).

Topic 7: Process

- Q. What if my application is denied by the Selection Committee or is not accepted due to a technicality?
- A. In both situations, you will receive a call or letter from the College of Fellows outlining the weaknesses or noncompliance that precipitated the denial.
- Q. Can I file the application electronically instead of sending it by mail?
- A. Yes. Most of our applicants today file electronically; however, both paper submittals and digital applications are accepted. Regardless of the method you choose, be sure your documents are properly signed and submitted by 5 p.m. EDT on May 7, 2020.

Topic 8: Criteria used in evaluating application and candidate

- Q. How do I know how my application will be evaluated?
- A. One of the primary evaluation tools the Selection Committee uses is a scoring rubric. The anticipated rubric the Fellows Selection Committee will use in 2020 can be found on the following pages.

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Selection Committee Guidelines for Evaluating Applicant and Application

Professional Experience and Qualifications <i>Overall progression throughout career; Increased responsibilities</i>	5 = Excellent: Solid progression and increased responsibilities 4 = Good: Reasonable career 3 = Average: Some advancement, but mostly lateral 2 = Fair: Questionable advancement 1 = Poor: Very poor
Superior Professional Performance <i>Consequential and influential work; Outcomes clearly delineated; personal contributions clear</i>	5 = Excellent: Clearly demonstrates consistent exceptional work; influential; clear outcomes 4 = Good: Good examples of work consistent with that of a senior practitioner; most examples show outcomes 3 = Average: Reasonable expectations and influence; average outcomes 2 = Fair: Not impressive 1 = Poor: Work barely meets minimum expectations for “superior” work
Advancing the Profession <i>Superior Contributions to the field of PR; Advancing the state of the profession</i>	5 = Excellent: All excellent examples with positive outcomes; measurable outcomes 4 = Good: Most examples show good outcomes 3 = Average: Modest outcomes 2 = Fair: Few outcomes 1 = Poor: No measurable outcomes mentioned
Service & Leadership <i>Clear, strong leadership in a variety of places/organizations</i>	5 = Excellent: Five exceptionally good leadership examples, excellent variety and career-long 4 = Good: Generally good all around. Good variety, 3 = Average: Only three examples, or only in last few years, some variety 2 = Fair: Mediocre – mostly what would be expected, not outstanding 1 = Poor: Very limited leadership or service shown
Role Model <i>Outstanding personal and professional role model qualities; awards; recognition</i>	5 = Excellent: Five exceptionally good role model examples 4 = Good: Generally good all around 3 = Average: Only three examples worth noting, or only in last few years 2 = Fair: Mediocre 1 = Poor: Very limited; not really a role model example
4 Letters - PR <i>One-page letter that reflects knowledge and outstanding support; Specific achievements</i>	5 = Excellent: All letters have positive examples; at least two letters from College members or members who have earned the APR; plus letters from senior executive leaders 4 = Good: Generally good letters from variety of sources; APR and College included 3 = Average: Letters not explicit, few letters from College members or APRS, not varied, non-executive leaders 2 = Fair: Letters not varied, not explicit, no APRs 1 = Poor: Letters hurt rather than help candidate

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1 Letter – Non PR <i>One-page letter of outstanding support</i>	3= Excellent
	2 = Good
	1 = Fair
Chapter/Section/District Endorsement <i>Clear knowledge of and support for candidate; recent involvement by candidate</i>	5 = Excellent: Firm and strong endorsement with specifics
	4 = Good: Positive endorsement, no specifics
	3 = Average: Middle of the road endorsement; not rousing
	2 = Fair: Barely endorsed
	0 = Poor: No endorsement
Writing <i>Format and organization; meets assigned criteria; completeness of answers and materials; writing ability, grammar, spelling and punctuation; error-free.</i>	5 = Excellent
	4 = Good
	3 = Average
	2 = Fair
	0 = Poor

In addition to the criteria cited above, the Selection Committee will consider the following:

Screener’s Report <i>Based on the results of phone calls with others who have worked with and/or observed the candidate.</i>	Explanation
	5 = Excellent: No objections/all positive responses
	4 = Good: Quite good responses
	3 = Average: Average responses
	2 = Fair: Some questionable responses
	1 = Poor: Poor responses