

IEEE FELLOW COMMITTEE

Society/Technical Council Fellow Evaluating Committee Handbook (June 2021)

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IEEE Fellow Committee

S/TC Fellow Evaluating Committee Handbook

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1. Introduction

The IEEE Fellow Committee (IEEE FC) Operations Manual (hereafter referred to as “Manual”) contains the main policies for the Fellow Nomination and Evaluation process.

This normative Handbook complements the Manual specifying additional requirements, responsibilities, and recommendations for S/TC-FECs in addition to those already specified in the Manual. This Handbook shall be reviewed at least annually to ensure that the procedures and information given are up to date and shall be posted on the IEEE Fellow webpage. In case of any discrepancy, the Manual takes precedence over this Handbook.

Amendments to this Handbook shall require approval of the Fellow Strategic Planning Subcommittee (FSPS) and the IEEE FC Chair. The IEEE FC and the IEEE Board of Directors (IEEE BoD) shall be notified in a timely fashion of any amendment to this Handbook.

Hereafter, IEEE FC Members (except Chair/Vice-Chair) shall be referred to as “IEEE Judges” and S/TC-FEC members (except the Chair) as “Evaluators.”

1.1 Section Labeling

With the goal of maintaining some history on who and when policies were approved, labels have been added to the end of a Section title followed by the year the decision was made.

The labels are:

1. **“BoD”**: consequence of a resolution of the IEEE BoD or change in higher precedence documents (IEEE Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies)
2. **“FC”**: resolution of the IEEE Fellow Committee
3. **“FSPS”**: resolution of the IEEE Fellow Strategic Planning Subcommittee

If a Section title has no label, then it means that what is specified is a legacy policy inherited from the 2015 Manual or a policy added to align with practices in use up to June 2016.

2. Goal of the S/TC-FEC

As specified in the Manual, the goal of an S/TC-FEC is to provide IEEE Judges with a critical technical evaluation and an assessment of the degree of qualification of Nominees referred to that S/TC by the Nominator. This evaluation shall be performed by the S/TC-FEC by completing an S/TC-FEC Evaluation Form for each referred Nominee and then forwarding it to the IEEE FC. The IEEE Judges shall subsequently score the “Strength of S/TC Support” rating category based on the information contained in the S/TC-FEC Evaluation Form, as specified in the Manual in §17.3.

S/TC Evaluators shall evaluate the Nominee’s contributions, role, and impact according to the same evaluation principles followed by the IEEE Judges, as specified in the Manual in §17.1. Additionally, S/TC Evaluators shall also:

1. Provide a technical assessment only, disregarding any service the Nominee may have provided to the S/TC or IEEE.
2. Treat equally all Nominees referred to them, regardless of whether they are active as volunteers in the S/TC or active elsewhere or not active at all in IEEE or recommended by other S/TC committees.
3. Have no contact with any other S/TC committee on matters related to the Nominees referred to the S/TC and their evaluation, as specified in §5.

3. Conflict of Interest

It is the responsibility of all S/TC-FEC members to determine, for each item of business where they have a vote or decision-making authority, if a real or perceived conflict of interest may exist. The current IEEE Conflict of Interest Policy can be found in [IEEE Policy](#) 9.8.

4. Responsibilities and eligibility requirements of S/TC-FECs –These policies are given in the [Fellow Operations Manual](#), see Section 9.5 and its subsections.

5. Collaboration between the S/TC-FEC and Other S/TC Committees

There shall be neither collaboration nor exchange of any information related to the Nominations referred to a S/TC between the S/TC-FEC and any other committee in its or other S/TCs, such as for example Technical Committees or Fellow Search Committees. Only the S/TC-FEC Members shall have access to Nomination and Endorsement Forms and the information therein shall be kept confidential. No person external to the S/TC-FEC shall receive information on the Nominees or provide input of any kind to the S/TC-FEC (except for the final communication of S/TC Evaluation Forms to the IEEE FC).

If the S/TC-FEC does not have enough expertise to handle the set of Nominees referred to its S/TC, then it implies that the S/TC-FEC may not have been staffed appropriately, the Nominator did not select the most appropriate S/TC, or that a Nominee worked in an esoteric area – which is likely to be a rare occurrence. Should problems arise and additional expertise be needed, additional S/TC Evaluators may be appointed.

5.1 The Role and Limitations of Fellow Search Committees

We define as an S/TC Fellow Search Committee a committee whose charter is to identify/champion Fellow Nominees inside the S/TC. Not all S/TCs have such a committee and some S/TCs may have more than one such committee. Some such S/TC committees may be known by other names (e.g., Fellow Nomination Committee). Some S/TCs may have multiple such committees (e.g., for different technical areas within an S/TC's scope).

Such Fellow Search Committees can be useful to raise awareness of the Fellow program and increase the number of Nominations from the S/TC. However, Fellow Search Committees and S/TC-FECs shall:

- Operate in complete independence as specified in §5. This independence also implies that Nominations championed by the Search Committee shall not be granted preferential treatment as the S/TC-FEC must not even be aware of the Nominations championed by the Search Committee.
- Share no common members.

It is recommended that the Charter or the Policies & Procedures (P&Ps) of any Fellow Search Committees and the S/TC-FEC be included in the S/TC governing documents and that these clearly state that Search Committees and S/TC-FEC shall operate with complete independence from each other.

6. Transparency Requirements (FC 2019)

After all Evaluators have submitted their preliminary assessments for all nominees assigned to them, all FEC members shall be able to see the scores and the narratives of all nominees. This is a mandatory requirement that shall be supported by the scoring software.

A Manual policy currently in force requires that, after the FEC Chair submits final evaluations as approved by the FEC, all evaluators will be sent a link allowing them to see all the final forms submitted by the Chair, including the forms of the nominees they have not evaluated.

The Computer Society FEC shall be granted a three-year exception for the transparency requirements above in order to gradually reduce the size of its FEC down to around thirty members. By the start of the evaluations for Fellow Class 2024 (March 2023), the Computer Society shall comply with all the transparency requirements like any other S/TC.

7. Approval process for the S/TC-FEC Final Evaluation Forms

The main roles of the S/TC-FEC Chair is to be the primary point of contact between the S/TC-FEC and the IEEE FC and to coordinate the process ensuring transparency, ensuring parliamentary procedures are properly followed, providing guidance to Evaluators, helping Evaluators reach consensus, and meeting deadlines set by the IEEE FC (see also Sect 9.5.5 of the Manual, reported here in §4, for a list of Chair responsibilities). The Chair shall neither perform nor prepare any evaluation and shall not make any decisions related to the evaluation outcome. Vice-Chair(s) and Evaluators shall finalize evaluations.

Once evaluations are finalized, they shall be submitted to the full S/TC-FEC for final approval (simple majority vote required). If there are disagreements among members, the Chair should first help the committee reach consensus but, in case disagreements persist, only a formal vote at a regularly scheduled meeting (in-person or teleconference) can correctly validate the approval of the evaluations. S/TC-FEC Chairs should be aware of this approval requirement (see Manual, §9.5) and should incorporate any additional time for this process into the FEC work schedule accordingly. The deadline set by the FC Chair for submitting all Evaluations is strict and, in the event an S/TC-FEC does not meet it, none of their Evaluations shall be sent to the FC. This will, understandably, not indicate strong support from the S/TC.

After the S/TC-FEC approves the Evaluation Forms, no change to the forms can be made – not even by the Chair or the Vice-Chairs. Once approved by the S/TC-FEC, the Chair shall submit “as is” the Evaluation Forms to the IEEE. After the Chair submits the approved S/TC Evaluation Forms to the IEEE, all Evaluators shall be notified of the submission and receive a copy of the submitted evaluations.

The role of the Chair in helping committee members reach a consensus is very important and, in doing so, the Chair should always be (and be perceived to be) unbiased and not favoring any specific position advocated by members. On the other hand, a Vice-Chair is a regular member (like an Evaluator) and thus can participate in debates and perform evaluations. In the case that a Vice-Chair becomes Chair, then that person assumes all the responsibilities of the Chair – including being barred from performing or preparing evaluations.

If a Conflict-of-Interest arises for the Chair on a specific issue, the Chair’s “gavel” shall be temporarily passed to a Vice-Chair for the discussion of that specific issue. Once that item of discussion is disposed of, then the Chair can resume chairing as usual.

8. Best Practices for Appointing S/TC-FEC Members

S/TC-FEC Members should be chosen as experts to cover most of the fields of interest of the S/TC. Since the S/TC-FEC shall operate in complete isolation from any other committee such as technical Committees (see §5), it is important to staff it in a way that most fields of interest in the S/TC are covered. In addition to covering the fields of interest, it is also important to ensure broad diversity in terms of demographics, for example with respect to factors such as gender, nomination category, employment affiliation type, and geographical distribution.

This diversity in the FEC roster will facilitate the task of assigning a diverse set of evaluators to nominees. Having a diverse set of evaluators contributes to painting a more complete picture of the nominee compared to the case when the evaluators are homogenous. Furthermore, not all evaluators need to be experts in the field of the nominee, as also “generalists” can comment intelligently on the qualifications of the nominee and the strength of the presented evidence.

It is recommended that S/TC-FEC Members be preferentially chosen among those who have already served as IEEE Judges in the IEEE FC. The S/TC-FEC Chair should preferentially be selected among current Evaluators or Vice-Chair. The experience of having served as an IEEE Judge provides an evaluator with a better understanding of what an IEEE Judge would ideally want to find in an S/TC Evaluation Form. S/TC-FEC Evaluators who are past IEEE Judges can hold orientation or Q&A sessions with the FEC to complement the orientation sessions held by the IEEE FC Chair and Vice-Chair for S/TC-FEC Chairs. These training sessions should be held before the evaluation process starts and should use generic examples and not refer to any specific current or past Nominee.

It is strongly recommended that S/TCs appoint S/TC-FEC members (including the Chair) at least a few months in advance of the deadline – see also §9.5.1 of the Manual which requires that S/TC Presidents inform by January 31st the FC Chair, FC Vice-Chair, and Fellow Activities Staff of the complete roster of the S/TC-FEC including the Chair. This will enable Fellows within the S/TC to know their role during the cycle: Nominator, Endorser, Reference, or S/TC-FEC members. This will avoid the problem of having too few Fellows to serve on the S/TC-FEC because they have already served as Nominator or Reference or Endorsers. Following this recommendation is particularly important for smaller S/TCs as they have fewer Fellows available to serve on the FEC than larger S/TCs.

Nominations (including self-nominations) for serving as an IEEE Judge can be made by following the Nominations and Appointments Committee Guidelines posted here:

http://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/nominations/nominations_guidelines.html

9. Further Reading

For further details on the normative requirements for the IEEE Fellow Nomination and Evaluations process as well as the eligibility requirements of all the participants in the IEEE Fellow process, please see the IEEE Fellow Committee governing documents and Recommendation Guides posted at <http://www.ieee.org/fellows>.