



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

***The APA Fellows Application Process:
How Does It Work?***

For APA General Membership



*Presented by the
APA Fellows Committee*

Workshop Overview



Introductions and Mission of Committee



Criteria for First-time Fellows



Fellows Committee Role
and Process



Process of applying for first-time Fellow status



Appeals process



Suggestions

For Candidates/Nominees
For Endorsers
For Division Fellows Chairs



Examples of weak vs.
strong evidence

Fellows Committee Members & Mission

2025 Members:

Dawn Bowers, PhD

June Ching, PhD

Gayle Iwamasa, PhD

Mary O'Leary Wiley, PhD

Ellen Williams, PhD (2025 Chair)

Staff Liaison:

Sonja Wiggins

(swiggins@apa.org)

The mission of the Fellows Committee is:

*“ **to review** the nominations for Fellows and ... report their **recommendations** on each case to the Board of Directors through the Membership Board.”*

APA Criteria for First-time Fellows

- Doctoral degree based in part on a psychological dissertation
- Current Member for at least 1 year
- Nomination by Division
- 5 years postdoctoral experience
- Active engagement in advancement of psychology
- Evidence of unusual and outstanding contributions or performance in the field of psychology; and
- <http://www.apa.org/membership/fellows>

Role and Process of the Committee

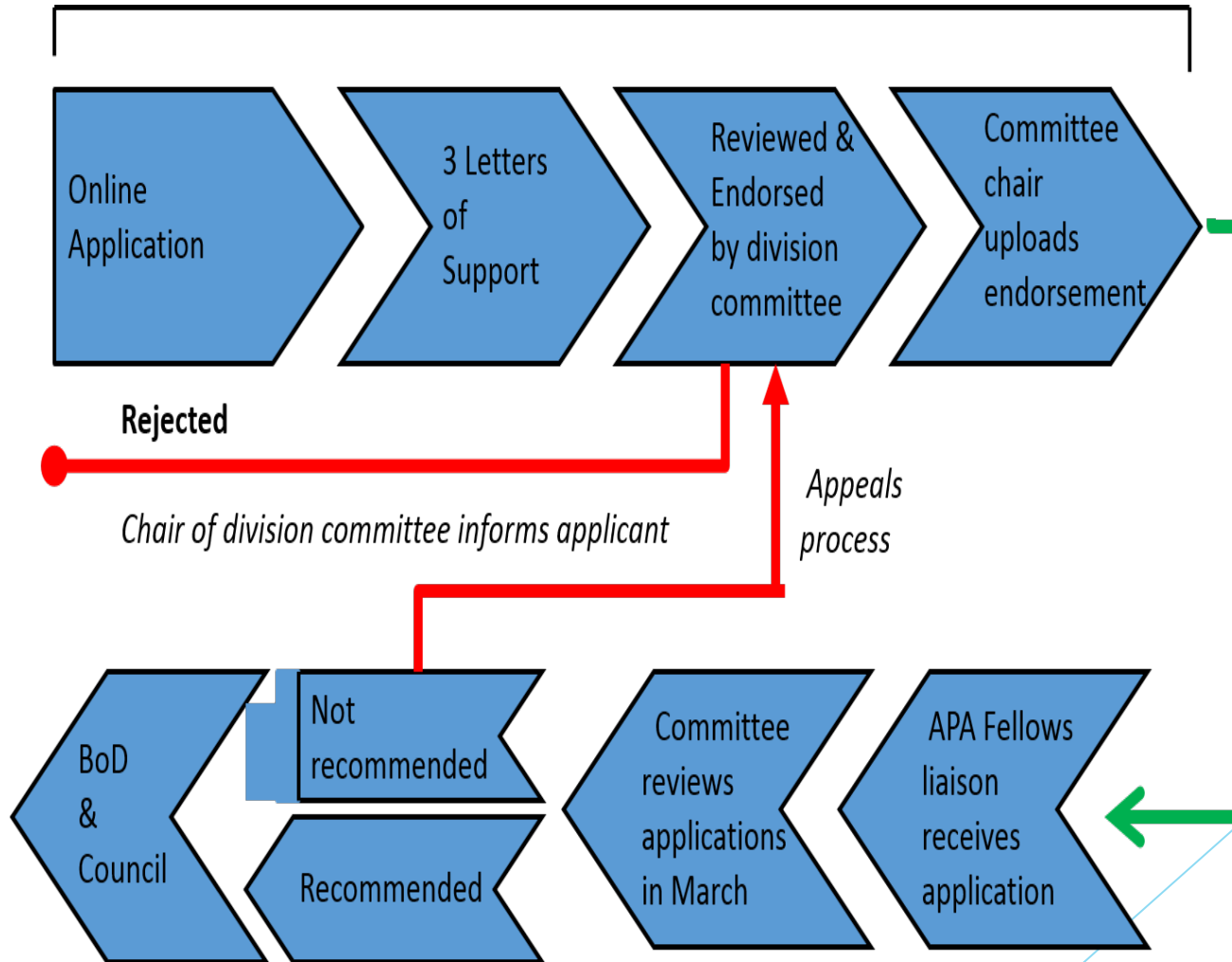
Members of the Committee do:

- **Review** applications against APA criteria
- **Confirm** whether clear evidence of those criteria has been demonstrated and *clearly articulated in the application*
- **Provide feedback** on applications that have not clearly demonstrated or articulated the criteria

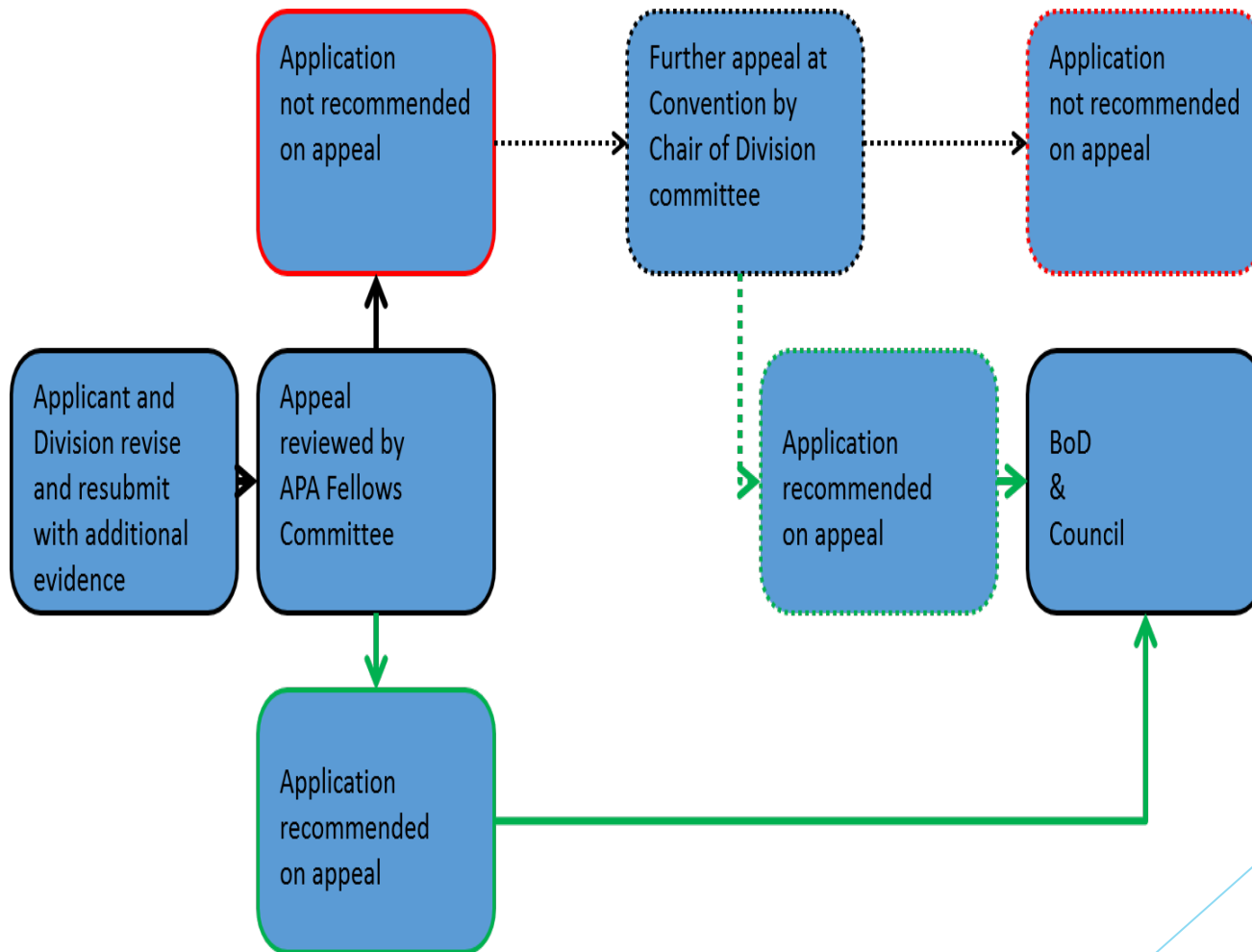
Members of the Committee do not:

- *Independently evaluate* an applicant's contribution to the profession
- *Independently judge* the impact of research or practice
- *Undertake additional research* where the contribution or impact is unclear
- *Work from personal knowledge* of the applicant or necessarily specific expertise on the relevant subject(s)

Process: First-time Fellow of APA Online Application via a Division



Appeals Process



Suggestions for Candidates/ Nominees

Successful applications do the following:

- Explicitly address APA criteria, as well as any division criteria
 - ❑ Meeting divisional criteria alone is not sufficient
- Provide **clear explanation** of the unusual or outstanding contribution(s)
 - ❑ Listings or volume of achievements (grants, numbers of publications, professional positions or roles) is not sufficient
 - Explain **how** these achievements have impacted the profession
 - Work in a national or international context or topical arena does not itself convey national or international impact on the profession.
- Tell **the story** of your success(es), don't just list them

Suggestions for Endorsers

Successful endorsements do the following:

- Explicitly address all APA criteria;
 - ❑ stating that “Divisional criteria were met” is not sufficient—use these to detail how the APA criteria are met
- Explain how the evidence provided by the applicant is unusual or outstanding and impactful on the field itself, beyond the division
- Avoid listing the candidate’s achievements....
- Instead, focus on **how** one (or more) of those achievements shows broad impact on the field of psychology
 - ❑ Note that work in a national or international context or topical arena does not itself convey national or international impact on the profession.
 - ❑ Do not rely on persuasive statements that the candidate is meritorious; rather use clear examples of how the candidate is meritorious.

Suggestions for Division Fellows Chairs

Successful Fellows Chairs endorsements do the following:

- Narrate the impact of the applicant upon the field of psychology, which is typically a national and/or international impact
 - Summarize **only** the critical points from endorsements, application
 - Prioritize **specific examples** of tangible, impactful achievement(s) explaining their unusual and/or outstanding merit
 - Demonstrate clear distinction from others in similar positions
 - Avoid a lengthy list of achievements
 - Volume of work does not necessarily convey impact and unusual/outstanding contributions
 - Avoid cutting/pasting from others' statements; paraphrase
- Qualify a Divisional committee's decision; stating that "endorsements are strong" is not sufficient
- Multiple examples of impact are not required
- Fellows chairs should review endorsement letters
 - Strength of endorsement letters is important
- Make sure CVs are updated
- Work with candidates to put forth strongest self-statements

The following statements are *suggestive* of outstanding contributions with impact, but they lack specificity:

- ✧ “My research program has received major national funding.”
 - ✧ **What impact has that funding demonstrated?**
- ✧ “My research [or work] has had an important impact on the field.”
 - ✧ **In what way? What is the impact?**
- ✧ “My [research, practice, teaching, collaborations] is/are international in scope”
 - ✧ **Location is not impact; discuss how the scope has impact on the field**
- ✧ “I’m an editorial board member” or “I’ve chaired...” etc.
 - ✧ **Most applicants have many achievements, but how is it unusual or outstanding for members of the field?**
- ✧ “I’ve taught many [topics, students]....”
 - ✧ **Explain how impact of the teaching reaches beyond local or individuals**
- ✧ “I undertook a longitudinal study of ...”
 - ✧ **Show how the study changed important theory, practice, policy, etc.**

Examples: Weak Statements

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The following statements are *suggestive* of outstanding contributions with impact, but they lack specificity:

- ❑ “She has multiple/many publications/grants/funding on [topic].”
- ❑ “He has presented regularly at national/international meetings.”
- ❑ “He is an outstanding teacher/researcher/clinician.”
- ❑ “Her research is [incredibly interesting, novel, creative, important] and makes an important contribution to the field.”
 - ❖ **Statements need to specifically explain the impact of these publications, grants, presentations, ‘contributions’ to the field of psychology, such as changes in theory, teaching, practice or policy**
- ❑ “His work bridges the gap between academic research/teaching and the real-world...”
- ❑ “Her practice addresses an oft overlooked area and changes lives.”
 - ❖ **Specifically describe *how* it does so**
- ❑ “She has made important contributions to the Division.”
 - ❖ **Describe how Division contributions impact the field more generally (APA criteria)**

Examples: Strong Statements

The following examples give clearer *evidence* of impact:

- ✧ “I developed a new [test, measure, coding scheme, therapy, biomarker, etc.] that has had an important impact on [the field] by..... [explicit description].”
- ✧ “I’ve provided empirical evidence challenging the theory that... [explain impact].”
- ✧ “...This work led to a significant change in national policy by [specify].”
- ✧ “...This work changed how we train psychologists by....”
- ✧ “...This work changed theory about [or established a new theory of...] by...”
- ✧ “...This research has changed practice by...”
- ✧ “...This book is the standard in doctoral training programs [specify how known]”
- ✧ “...Her/his leadership in Division X has led to.... [examples with clear nation-wide or international relevance].”

Examples: Strong Statements

The following examples give clearer, specific *evidence* of impact:

- ✧ “...This work has been instrumental to bringing national attention to [explicit details] ..., which led to changes in [credentialing, training, treatment, etc.,] at the national levels [articulating how this was done].”
- ✧ “...His/her work on the phenomenon of [...] has stimulated important methodological changes and substantive additional work by others into [with clear details].”
- ✧ “...In these roles [heretofore explicitly described], Dr. Smith has directly contributed to shaping the quality of the scholarship produced in, and disseminated to, our profession.”
- ✧ “...This research has [founded, established] the effectiveness of [model, approach, treatment, etc.] for [treating ADHD, intervening in high school drop-out, reducing recidivism, etc.], which has now been put into practice [give context.]”

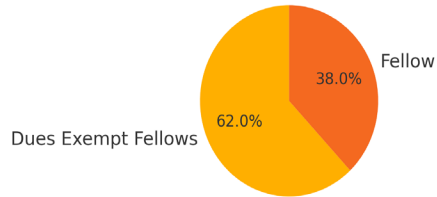
Benefits of Becoming an APA Fellow

- ▶ **Professional Recognition:** Honors outstanding contributions to the field of psychology and affirms your expertise, reputation, and dedication.
- ▶ **Peer Acknowledgment:** Offers meaningful recognition from colleagues, affirming your impact and leadership in the profession.
- ▶ **Career Advancement:** Strengthens candidacy for promotions, leadership roles, and institutional support—some organizations, provide financial or professional incentives.
- ▶ **Inspiration and Mentorship:** Serves as a model of excellence for students, early career psychologists, and underrepresented voices in the field.
- ▶ **Field-Wide Impact:** Elevates the importance of psychology as a profession and reinforces the influence of your specialty area within practice and research.
- ▶ **Division Recognition:** Reflects positively on your APA Division, showcasing its role in advancing the field through the achievements of its members.
- ▶ **Leadership Engagement:** Encourages the involvement of diverse and emerging psychologists in shaping the future of APA.

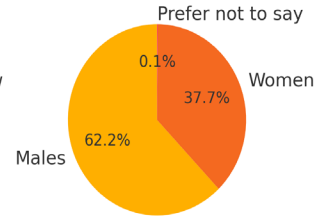
APA Fellows Breakdown

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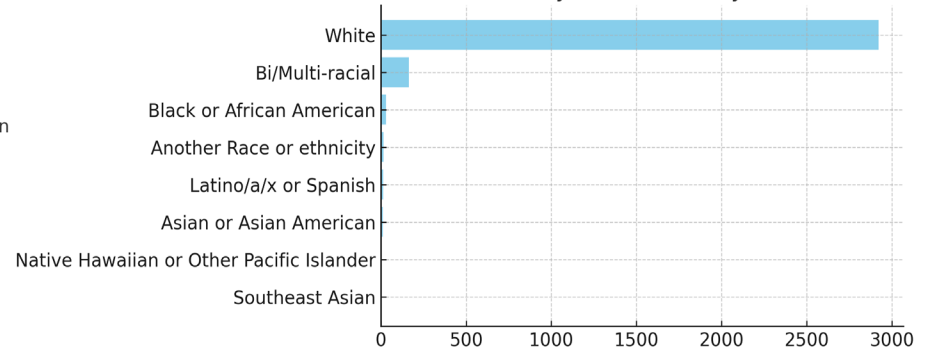
By Member Category



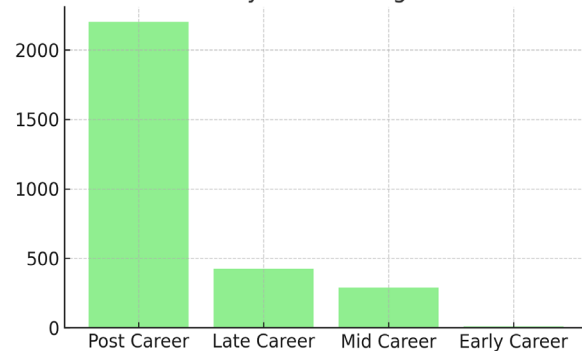
By Gender



By Race/Ethnicity



By Career Stage



Category	Count
Total Fellows	3676
Dues Exempt Fellows	2213
Fellow	1355
Males	2279
Women	1383
Prefer not to say	4
White	2923
Bi/Multi-racial	163
Black or African American	30
Another Race or ethnicity	14
Latino/a/x or Spanish	12
Asian or Asian American	10
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
Southeast Asian	1
Post Career	2201
Late Career	424
Mid Career	288
Early Career	11

Important Links and Dates

Fellows Webpage:

<http://www.apa.org/members/your-membership/fellows/apply.aspx>

On this site you will find:

- Fellows criteria
- Portal link for applicants to apply
- List of Division Fellow Chairs

Initial Fellows Deadline: February 10, 2026 to submit applications to APA

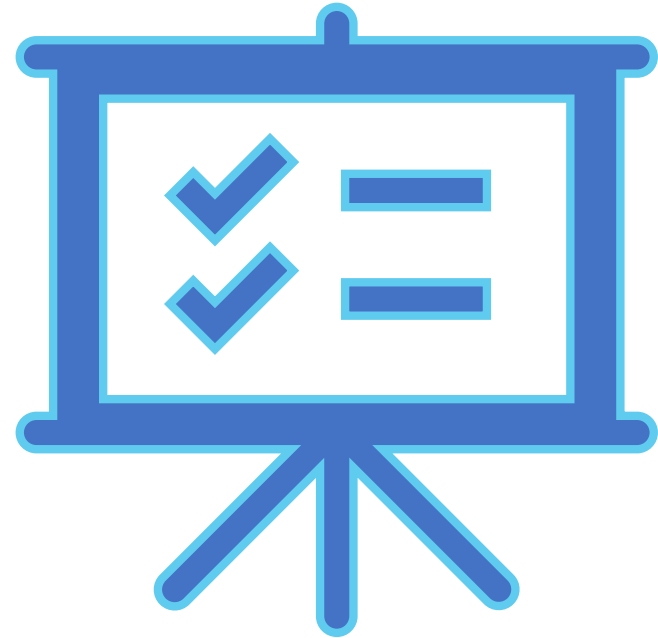
Current Fellows Deadline: July 1, 2026 to submit names to Sonja Wiggins

Please contact Sonja Wiggins at swiggins@apa.org with any

Questions about the application process!

Tips:

- ▶ 1. Update your division website
- ▶ 2. Request a roster of division members to encourage members to apply for Fellow status.
- ▶ 3. Request a roster of division members who are Fellows in other division to but not in your division to consider making them a Current Fellow of your division.
- ▶ The following division leaders have access to the Division Leadership Portal and can run rosters for you:
 - ❑ Presidential Trios
 - ❑ Treasurers
 - ❑ Membership Chairs
 - ❑ Secretaries
 - ❑ Executive Directors/Administrators
 - ❑ Listserv Managers



Questions?

Thank You for Attending!