



FELLOWS COMMITTEE GUIDE TO BECOMING A FELLOW

“It is not the purpose of the fellowship to create an aristocracy of membership, but to give those who have shown their worth an accolade and a charge that their responsibilities have just begun.”

OVERALL PROCESS

The process for becoming a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects has two steps and they are big ones.

STEP 1

Each candidate must have completed a total of 10 years of membership in the AIA (need not be continuous) and be nominated by one of the following:

1. AIA Philadelphia or AIA Pennsylvania;
2. by petition of five Fellows; or
3. by petition of ten AIA members.

In Philadelphia, most candidates are nominated by the AIA Philadelphia Chapter. Most candidates pursuing nomination by the Chapter work through the Fellows Committee, which submits its recommendations for nomination to the Chapter board in June of each year. While the Committee is charged with supporting members on their path to fellowship, a candidate does not have to work with the Fellows Committee and Chapter. Candidates can submit for fellowship by petition of five current Fellows or by petition of ten AIA members.

If you qualify and are interested, you should reach out to the AIA Philadelphia Fellows Committee to express your interest. The following information is requested by the Committee at the pre-nomination stage of its consideration:

- an indication of your willingness to be considered;
- the Object (see Step 2 below) that you believe should be the basis for your nomination, should you be selected, together with a brief outline of accomplishments supporting your choice;
- an indication of your second choice of Object if you are undecided about a category, together with a brief outline of accomplishments supporting this choice;
- a brief outline of other relevant accomplishments such as AIA, academic, civic awards, or honors;
- a current Curriculum Vitae;
- a simple portfolio of the projects that you might use to support this nomination. (This can be something “off the shelf.” It is not necessary to create special presentation materials at this time.);
- the names of at least five potential references and a possible sponsor. (The Committee recommends a list of ten potential references, that may be edited to enhance success, noting that the FAIA submission requires seven recommendations in addition to the sponsor.)

STEP 2

After nomination, each candidate must complete a related set of tasks:

1. Choose one of the following “objects of Fellowship” promulgated by National AIA. (These cover the wide range of activities architects engage in and the design category covers all aspects of design)

- Design (design, urban design, and preservation)
- Education, Literature, Research, Practice
- Leadership of the Institute or Related Organization
- Advancement of Living Standards
- Alternative Career, Volunteer, Service to Society

STEP 2 CONTINUED

2. Choose a sponsor, who must be an AIA or FAIA member in good standing. (The Committee recommends a Fellow as sponsor.)
3. Choose seven references of which a minimum of five must be AIA members in good standing. (The Committee recommends a national distribution of reference writers, weighted towards Fellows.)
4. Submit a highly structured digital portfolio supporting the case for Fellowship to the annual national Jury of Fellows, using the template provided and required by AIA. (The Committee emphasizes that this must be a well-crafted document with a compelling summary statement.)

The national Jury of Fellows is the sole authority in the naming of Fellows. The jury is taken from the broadest geographic reach. The candidate's entire application is usually due in October of each year. Applicants should check the College of Fellows website for the exact deadline. Candidates should not submit their credentials until all reference letters have been submitted, as the candidate's submission will close the application process. The jury meets early in the following year to make and notify candidates of their success or failure to achieve Fellowship. New Fellows are elevated at the Investiture Ceremony and celebrated at a formal dinner at the AIA National Conference in the spring each year.

ROLE OF THE FELLOWS COMMITTEE

In Philadelphia, the Fellows Committee seeks to nominate candidates who exemplify excellence in their work and achievements. The Committee is both proactive in seeking out and inviting members to submit preliminary materials for consideration and invites requests from members for their own consideration or from members on behalf of other members. The Committee strives to orient prospective candidates to the rigors and nuances of the process through counsel offered by individual Committee members, providing practical advice for successful applications. Due to the sensitivity of this process the Committee considers its work confidential.

While the Committee's focus is primarily concerned with facilitating the nomination process, the decision to nominate for Chapter approval is taken with strong consideration of the likelihood of success of the candidate in fulfilling the complexities of the submission process. This is a process that is collectively well understood by the Committee since many of the members of the Committee have served as references and sponsors, and a few have served on the national jury.

RESOURCES

The National AIA and several Chapters put out useful references to the process which can be found at the following website locations:

National:

<https://www.aia.org/awards/7076-fellowship>

http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/2020_Submitting_for_Fellowship.pdf

<https://www.aia.org/articles/91796-the-long-and-winding-road-to-aia-fellowship>

College of Fellows – the Redbook: History of Fellowship and the current roster of fellows.

https://issuu.com/aiacollegeoffellows/docs/faia_20directory

New York City

<http://www.aiany.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-Demystifying-Fellowship-Presentation-and-Resources.pdf>