

SSR Awards Committee: Standard Operating Procedures

Updated: 06/11/24

SSR Bylaws, Article XI: section 4 (d): An Awards Committee composed of eleven or more Regular Members of the Society shall encourage nominations of worthy persons for Society Awards, annually select a recipient for each award, and recognize the recipient at an appropriate event during the annual meeting of the Society. Any active Member may make nominations for the awards according to the guidelines published annually. The awards are made solely to recognize outstanding contributions to the reproductive sciences and bear no obligation to the recipient or to the donor. The Awards Committee shall also be responsible for selecting and recognizing recipients of the Trainee Research Awards and Trainee Merit Awards that are presented at the annual meeting.

Responsibilities and Goals:

1. The Awards Committee is responsible for the SSR Major Awards, the Distinguished Fellowship, the named Travel Awards, and the SSR Trainee Research and Merit Travel Awards.
2. The Awards Chair prepares an Awards Committee report for the Winter (February) and Summer (July) Board Meetings.
3. At the SSR annual summer meeting, the Awards Chair also organizes and chairs the Major and Trainee Awards Ceremonies, chairs the Trainee Award Finalist Platform presentations, and conducts the annual Award Committee meeting where new members are welcomed, the timeline of committee activities is reviewed, and any new business discussed.

Leadership and Liaisons

Leadership consists of an Awards Chair, Associate Chair, and Past Chair. The term of office is 3 years beginning with Associate Chair, transferring to Chair, and finalizing to Past Chair. The Awards Chair is responsible for transferring in an organized fashion, the committee activities to the next Chair, and to serve a remaining year on the committee as past Chair. Sample documents (e.g., instructions letters for evaluating Major Awards and Trainee abstracts, board reports, etc.) are also transferred to the incoming Chair at this time. During the first year of office, the Awards Chair in consultation with the board designates a co-chair who will take over as the new incoming Awards Chair when the term of the current Chair is completed.

Committee Member Eligibility

Awards Committee members are not eligible to be nominated for major awards. There are no Trainee Representatives on the Awards Committee.

Directors can serve as ex officio members on committees but should not be members of committees. While they are members of the Board of Directors, they cannot be chairs of committees. Ex officio members and Board Liaisons can participate in all committee communications and discussions, but they cannot vote on committees.

Major Activities

1. Major Awards / Distinguished Fellowships
2. Trainee Research Awards / Trainee Merit Awards

YEARLY TIMELINE OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES:

GENERAL

FEBRUARY

- ☐ The Awards Chair submits a winter SSR Board meeting report for the Awards Committee to the office and Board Liaison.

JULY

- ☐ The Awards Chair submits a summer SSR Board meeting report for the Awards Committee to the office and Board Liaison.

AUGUST

- ☐ The chair prepares minutes from the committee meeting held at the SSR annual meeting and sends to the committee for review and edits, then sends the final version to the new SSR president and the committee board liaison.

MAJOR AWARDS

MAY/JUNE

- ☐ With assistance from the SSR Business Office, the Awards Chair reviews the criteria for the Major SSR Awards (Hartman, Distinguished Service, Research, New Investigator, and Trainee-Mentoring Award) and the named Travel Awards (Bahr and Bazer) that are published on the SSR website and makes any changes/updates as necessary.
- ☐ The Awards Chair finalizes the announcement for Major Awards and Named Travel Award Nominations for email and weekly newsletter Award Nomination Announcements, and coordinates publication with the SSR office.
- ☐ The chair and office work together to confirm that the submission web site is functional.

AUGUST

- ☐ The first call for SSR Major Awards nominations is sent by the SSR Office to the membership in late July/early August.
- ☐ The Awards Chair and Associate Chair contacts nominators of the previous year's unsuccessful candidates by email to encourage them to update nomination packages as needed and re-submit. For re-nominations, the Chair and Associate Chair will ensure that the nominator has notified those who have provided supporting letters (if existing letters are reused) to let them know that the nomination will be resubmitted and to give them the opportunity to update their letters.
- ☐ The SSR Office manages submission of the nominations and checks each nomination to be sure the nominator is an active SSR member as stipulated by the SSR Bylaws and that all format requirements have been met. If not, the office will contact the nominator to let them know what needs to be corrected before the nomination can be considered.
- ☐ The Awards Chair is available to answer questions from the membership regarding nomination procedures.
- ☐ The SSR Office and Awards Chair communicate regarding the progress of submissions and any questions that arise.

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ The Awards Chair notifies the SSR Business Office to send the final email reminder for SSR members to nominate candidates for Major Awards. **There must be at least three nominees for each award.** If there are less than three nominees for each award, the SSR office contacts the chair, the SSR president and SSR Board Liaison to discuss whether a deadline extension is warranted.

OCTOBER

- ☐ Mid-October is the usual deadline for receiving new nominations and updates of previous nominations. The review process then proceeds as follows:
 1. The SSR Office organizes the nomination materials into a single PDF file for each

candidate.

2. The nomination packets are then placed into the award's online communities. The SSR Business Administrator then develops and distributes a score sheet/ballot for the committee members to rank order the candidates, as well as scoring instructions and award criteria. Committee members are encouraged to review the criteria for each award available on the SSR website. The Chair communicates with the SSR Office about eligibility and other questions that arise during nomination review.
3. The Chair sets a date by which all scores must be returned. The ballots must be returned in sufficient time to prepare a report for the Mid-Winter Board meeting. Time should be allotted for more than one round of balloting, if required. Typically, scores are returned around the end of December. The Awards Chair works with the SSR Office to arrange a conference call for the committee to discuss the nominations and finalize award recipients in early January. The Business Administrator summarizes the committee scores and sends a summary score sheet with the final average scores, score range, and total #1 scores to the committee before the conference call, being cautious of conflicts of interest. The Awards Chair communicates with the committee with email reminders of review deadlines and the conference call date and time. The Chair makes plans to deal with any conflicts of interests on the conference call.
4. Copies of all original ballots should be kept on file; a confidential summary of the results of the balloting along with the list of recommended winners is then submitted to the SSR Business Office and reported to the SSR President.

FEBRUARY

- ☐ Following Board approval of the Awards Committee report and recommended Awardees:
 1. The SSR President first telephones and congratulates the awardees. Awardees are asked not to make a formal announcement until the Awards Chair has contacted nominators of other candidates for the award.
 2. When the SSR President has informed the Awards Chair that all Awardees have been notified, the Awards Chair also congratulates the Awardees and informs their nominators. The request that no formal announcement be made until the nominators of the other candidates have been contacted is repeated to the nominators.
 3. The Awards Chair contacts nominators of unsuccessful candidates and requests that they inform their nominees that they did not receive the award, if the nominee was aware of the nomination. The Awards Chair encourages nominators that they should provide an updated nomination if the candidate is to be considered again next year and addresses any questions about the process or about re-nomination in the future.
 4. The Awards Chair informs the SSR Office and President when notification of Awardees and nominators of all candidates has been completed, at which time the Major Awards are officially announced to the SSR membership by the SSR Office.
 5. SSR Business Office prepares an announcement for the Weekly News.
 6. The Awards Chair works with the SSR Business Office on a press release.

APRIL/MAY

- ☐ The SSR Office contacts the nominators of each Major Award recipient to request an Awardee Citation (a short biography of the Awardee) of approximately 500-700 words to be included in the SSR annual meeting Program Book and website, and also contacts the Awardee for a photo. The nominators are instructed to seek the assistance of the Awardee to prepare the citation; nominators are also directed to the Awards page of the SSR website to obtain examples of past citations.
- ☐ The Awards Chair contacts nominators and awardees to discuss date, time and format of award ceremony. If a nominator or awardee is unable to attend, the Chair works with them

to obtain a statement to read on their behalf. The nominator and awardee for each award should work together to prepare a single slide presentation in PowerPoint that can be uploaded to the presentation system before the meeting or onsite at the meeting.

- ☐ The Chair chooses Major Awards hardware with assistance from the SSR Office, and the office orders and transports the awards to the meetings. The Chair reviews the final order form.
- ☐ The SSR Business Office determines if a representative of the sponsor for an award will participate in presenting the award and notifies the Chair, if so.

JUNE/JULY

- ☐ The Business Administrator, in collaboration with the Awards Chair, prepares a master PowerPoint file to be used at the Major Awards Ceremony. It should include the Award Ceremony introduction, slides for introducing nominators, the Awardee, and the Sponsor for the award.
- ☐ The office will prepare posters for the major award winners using the citation and photo previously obtained. These will be displayed at the meeting to highlight our Awardees. The Awards Chair sends the office a personal photo to be used in the annual meeting program. The Chair reviews and edits text of awards welcome material in the annual meeting program.
- ☐ The SSR Office works with the Awards Chair to set up a time and location for the Awards Committee annual meeting. This meeting should be held prior to all the Trainee Research Awards so that judging assignments and responsibilities can be discussed. The Chair prepares the committee meeting agenda and contacts all committee members to invite them to the committee meeting.

TRAINEE RESEARCH AND MERIT TRAVEL AWARDS

NOVEMBER

- ☐ With assistance from the SSR Business Office, the Awards Chair reviews the final copy of instructions and application forms for the Trainee Research and Merit Travel Awards.

JANUARY

- ☐ The Awards Chair coordinates with the SSR Business Office to ensure that the abstract submission site includes separate selection boxes for each, individual Merit Travel Award. This streamlines selection of the awardees, as discussed below.

MARCH-APRIL

- ☐ The Chair reminds the Awards Committee members that they will receive abstracts to review for the Trainee Research and Trainee Merit Awards shortly after the SSR abstract deadline. February is the usual deadline for submission of Abstracts and applications for Trainee Awards.
- ☐ The Chair assigns members of the awards committee to two specific abstract categories for review and scoring and sends that information to the office. Assignments are made by area of expertise as much as is possible.
- ☐ The office checks for any conflicts of interest, and notifies the chair if so, who then reassigns the abstract.
- ☐ The chair sends an email to the committee with details of this process, deadlines, etc. Each abstract is reviewed by two awards committee members and two program committee members according to criteria published on the SSR website.
- ☐ The scoring of Abstracts is done online.
- ☐ When reviewing is complete, the SSR Business Office forwards the Awards Chair a spreadsheet containing a summary of all scoring and final average score for each abstract.

- Based on abstract rankings and eligibility criteria that are revised annually and posted on the SSR website, the Awards Chair then identifies:

1. *Twenty-four (24) finalists for the SSR Trainee Research Awards:*

6 finalists for the Trainee Poster Competition (Pre-Doctoral), 6 finalists for the Trainee Poster Competition (Post-Doctoral), 6 finalists for the Trainee Platform Competition (Pre-doctoral) and 6 finalists for the Trainee Platform Competition (Post-doctoral). These are the top 24 scoring eligible trainee abstracts. A minimum of three alternates for each category (poster and platform) is also selected in the event of withdrawal or ineligibility. Platform and poster finalists will be judged and ranked by Awards Committee members in attendance at the SSR annual meeting. Rankings will determine first/second/third place winners. Previous winners (first, second, or third place) from any given year are not eligible to receive an award. The list of Trainee Research finalists and alternates is given to the SSR Business Office onsite as soon as possible after the competition is completed. The SSR Business office is responsible for verifying the final eligibility of all trainee award recipients before awards are presented.

The Awards Committee determines the First- (USD \$500), Second- (USD \$300), and Third- (USD \$200) place winners in the Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral categories; the recipients are recognized at a special ceremony at the Annual Meeting.

2. *Trainee Merit Travel Awards:*

Abstract rankings are also used to identify recipients of different merit travel awards. Typically, the Awards Committee recommends 20 Lalor merit awards, 10 USD NIFA merit travel awards, the Male Contraceptive Initiative Award, the Gates Contraceptive Award, the Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Award, and the Best International Abstract Awards (1 per region; Australia/New Zealand, Korea, China/Taiwan/Hong Kong, Europe, Latin America, Japan, and India/Middle East/Central-Southeast Asia/Africa) although these numbers and awards may change from year to year. In any given year, the SSR office will inform the Awards Chair of the type and number of Trainee Merit Awards available. The Awards Chair will then identify a list of recommended recipients and alternates depending on the number of awards that are available. The criteria for eligibility of the different Merit Travel Awards are reviewed annually (in November/December) with assistance from the SSR Business Office and posted on the SSR website. The Office assists the Chair in confirming eligibility for each award. The list of Merit Award recipients and alternates is forwarded to the SSR Business Office by the Awards Chair after abstract scoring is complete. Trainees are eligible to receive both a Trainee Research Award and a Merit Travel Award. However, they may not receive more than one Merit Travel Award. All 24 Trainee Research Award competitors should receive a Merit Travel Award. The SSR office checks the list of Trainee platform and poster session finalists that the committee has recommended against a list of previous Trainee platform and poster winners (first, second and third place); previous winners are ineligible. If a previous winner has been chosen as a finalist by the Awards committee, an alternate will be chosen.

APRIL/MAY

- All applicants for Trainee Research Award and Merit Travel Awards are notified by the SSR Office informing them of their status by the SSR Business Office. Award recipients and competition finalists will be provided with specific information and instructions pertaining to their award, including details regarding their presentation, the awards ceremony, certificates and checks, etc.
- The Office confirms that all Trainee award recipients will attend the annual meeting.

Trainees must be present to win. If they will not attend, an alternate is chosen in their place.

- ☐ The Awards Chair receives the finalized list of Trainee Merit Travel Awards from the SSR Business Office.
- ☐ The Chair invites the senior Trainee Representative to cochair the Trainee Platform Competition.
- ☐ The Office prepares ribbons to be attached to the posters for the Trainee poster competitors to highlight these outstanding trainee posters. Trainees competing in poster competition should be scheduled by the Office on the first and second day of posters only, not on the third (last) day.

JUNE

- ☐ The Awards Associate Chair queries members of the Awards Committee to determine who will attend the Annual meeting and inform those attending of their responsibilities (attend the Trainee finalist Platform talks, view the posters of Trainee Research Poster finalists, meet to select the Trainee Research Awardees, attend the Awards Committee meeting, and attend the various awards ceremonies).
- ☐ The SSR Business Office will provide score sheets to the Awards Committee members for both the Trainee Finalist Poster and Platform presentations. Score sheets will indicate the date and time of the presentations to be attended.
- ☐ Instructions for ranking the Trainee Research finalist presentations will be sent to the Awards Committee members by the Awards Chair prior to the meeting.

JULY

- ☐ The Awards Chair will coordinate with the SSR Business Office to provide final rankings for both Platform and Poster Trainee Research awards onsite at the meeting as early as possible so that sufficient time is left available to prepare the Trainee Research Awards and checks.
- ☐ The SSR Office will prepare a PowerPoint presentation to present and recognize the Trainee Research and Merit Travel Awards at the Trainee Awards Ceremony.
- ☐ At Awards ceremonies and the Closing ceremony, the SSR Office arranges to have photos taken of all award winners.
- ☐ The trainee awardees are announced by the Chair and asked to come to the front of the room to shake hands with the president and the award sponsor, if applicable.
- ☐ Travel Awards for Underrepresented Minority Trainees and Junior Faculty are administered by the Diversity Committee (sponsored by the Burroughs Welcome Fund). Trainee Travel Awards (TTA) are administered by the Trainee Affairs Committee.

DISTINGUISHED FELLOWS

The SSR Distinguished Fellowship recognizes active SSR members for their outstanding contributions to the field of reproductive biology and to the Society, illustrated by sustained high impact research, leadership, service, mentorship and legacy. The Distinguished Fellows subcommittee, either independently formed or consisting of the Awards Committee Leadership, will review the applications and recommend new fellows to the Board. A maximum of 5 Fellows can be awarded each year.

JULY/AUG

- ☐ With assistance from the SSR Business Office, the Awards Chair reviews the criteria for the Distinguished Fellowship that are published on the SSR website and makes any changes/updates as necessary.

- ☐ The Awards Chair finalizes the announcement for the Distinguished Fellowship Nominations for email and weekly newsletter, and coordinates publication with the SSR office.
- ☐ The Chair and office work together to confirm that the submission web site is functional and makes sure that all the file attachments can get uploaded.

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Deadline to submit applications; this deadline coincides with the SSR Major Awards deadline and fluctuates accordingly.

OCTOBER

- ☐ The Distinguished Fellows subcommittee will review the applications, rank them and recommend potential new Fellows to the Board.

FEBRUARY

- ☐ At the SSR Mid-Winter Meeting Board approves new fellows.
- ☐ The SSR President notifies the new fellows, and the Awards Chair notifies via email those not selected.
- ☐ The SSR Business office prepares press releases and notifications of the fellowship awardees.

JULY

- ☐ The new fellows are recognized in a ceremony at the SSR annual meeting.
- ☐ The SSR Business office prepares press releases and notifications.

Modifications to this SOP require Board approval before they are applicable.

SSR: 11-28-2012

RSV (updated): 06-11-2024

Revised by Patrick Hannon and James MacLean