

The International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB) established the Fellows Program in 2009 to recognize members who have demonstrated exceptional achievements and contributions to the fields of computational biology and bioinformatics. The program aims to honor individuals whose work has significantly advanced these fields while upholding the values of scientific excellence and ethical standards.

The selection process, managed by the Fellows Selection Committee, permits the election of up to 0.5% of the ISCB membership as new Fellows each year, though this number may vary depending on the quality of nominations. In response to feedback from ISCB Board members and Fellows, the Board approved revisions to the Fellows Selection Protocol in July 2024, strengthening the process to ensure the highest standards are maintained. These protocols are subject to further refinement with approval from the ISCB Board of Directors, ensuring the continued integrity and prestige of the Fellows Program.

ISCB FELLOWS ELECTION PROCESS

The ISCB Fellows election process is conducted in five phases:

- Open call for nominations and endorsements
- Nominations and endorsements review by Fellows Selection Committee to select ALL excellent candidates
- Ranking by Fellows to select 50% of the slate of Fellows
- Review by Fellows Selection Committee to consider Fellows ranking and other criteria to select the remaining 50% of the slate of Fellows
- Ratification of the Fellows slate by the Board of Directors

Organizing Bodies Defined

Fellows Council - The Fellows Council is comprised of nine (9) Fellows who have made substantial contributions to ISCB (e.g. Presidents, Vice Presidents, Members of the Board) and whose demographic diversity characteristics reflect those of the ISCB Membership and Computational Biology Community, as far as possible. Fellows Council membership will be reviewed annually by the Fellows Council and Executive Committee to ensure this representation endures. Fellows on the Council can serve a term of up to 3 years with an option to apply for renewal for one further term. All ISCB Fellows with significant ISCB service will be eligible to apply to the Fellows Council. Other ISCB Fellows may be considered where other community citizenship (i.e. external to ISCB) merit their joining the Council.

The Fellows Council select the members of Fellows Selection Committee (FSC) annually and shall ensure that the expertise of the FSC covers as broad a set of scientific themes as possible, and is comprised of a diverse nature taking into consideration gender, ethnicity, scientific expertise, geography, etc. The Council may solicit additional members to the FSC where there is not sufficient coverage of themes from volunteers and to ensure broad demographic representation. Volunteers are selected based on experience in review processes, their particular scientific field and demographic considerations.

As well as annually appointing the FSC in a meeting at ISMB (which may be hybrid), the Fellows Council will meet one more time in the Autumn to coordinate the annual ISCB Fellows Statement highlighting major developments in the field of computational biology for that year. They may also schedule additional meetings if they wish to coordinate reviews on selected topics, Fellows workshops or discussions to promote additional Fellow's activities.

Fellows Selection Committee - The Fellows Selection Committee (FSC) is comprised of no more than nine Fellows composed of a diverse (gender, ethnicity, scientific expertise, geography, Fellow type, etc.) group of Fellows. The role of the FSC is to execute the ISCB Fellows election process. The committee shall take into consideration all requirements and criteria that have been established for the ISCB Fellows program (<https://www.iscb.org/fellows>), while taking into consideration the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in representing our scientific field. The end result of the committee's work will be the Class of Fellows for the ISCB Board of Directors ratification.

Fellow(s) – Elected members of the computational biology and bioinformatics community who have been bestowed the honor of being named an ISCB Fellow. Current list of members can be found at <https://www.iscb.org/fellows>.

Open Call for Nominations

https://www.iscb.org/cms_addon/fellow/fellow.php

Establishment of the Fellows Selection Committee

Annually, prior to the conclusion of the nomination deadline, a Fellows Selection Committee (FSC) of no more than nine members composed of a diverse (gender, ethnicity, scientific expertise, geography, Fellow type, etc.) group of Fellows will be established. Appointments to the FSC will be made by the Fellows Council who will issue an open call to the Fellows for volunteers. The appointed FSC will be endorsed by the ISCB Executive Committee.

Names of the people on the FSC will be made public after the committee have made the selection of Fellows.

Volunteers will be solicited annually and service on the committee is two years with the option to renew. A Fellow may serve up to three consecutive years on the committee.

Open call for nominations and endorsements

All nominators and endorsers must declare relationships with any candidate who is:

- From the same department/institution
- A past trainee (e.g., student, or post-doc), direct employee/employer, or formal advisor/mentor/supervisor
- A collaborator (co-authored a paper within the last five-years or current active)
- A family member

Nominations can come from any member of ISCB. The nominator is required to provide names and email addresses of at least three (3) and no more than seven (7) endorsers. These will be contacted directly by ISCB for the endorsement letter. The nominator is responsible for informing the endorser in advance of the submission of the nominations to ensure they are aware of the endorsement request. The endorser **MUST BE** a current ISCB Fellow or an established researcher in the field who has been elected as a Fellow or obtained Fellow status by another scholarly scientific society, e.g. Royal Society or National Academy of Sciences. The endorser will be asked to complete a form with the following information:

- Statement of endorsement highlighting the excellence of scientific, service, leadership, and contribution impact to the field. This statement should include the candidate's contributions to mentorship, citizenship within our community, and commitment to fostering a positive research culture. Maximum 600 words.
- Identification of five (5) publications that demonstrate the scientific work

At least 3 endorsements should be obtained for a nomination to be considered by the FSC.

Nominators and endorsers should follow a standard format which includes a set of questions related to the nominees' contributions. Some guidance will be provided e.g. nominators and endorsers should comment on the most relevant papers of the nominee for the FSC to consider when assessing excellence. Endorsers can be ISCB Fellows or Fellows undertaking computational biology research elected by other scientific societies.

Guidelines will be given on what is considered to be computational biology research (e.g. it is not sufficient to have just built an AlphaFold model or performed routine statistical analyses).

A task force will be set up to solicit nominations that broaden the diversity of the slate of nominees.

The nomination package - i.e. nomination and endorsements will be made available to the Fellows for voting. Nominees of the ISCB Fellows program must not only demonstrate outstanding scientific excellence but also adhere to the highest ethical standards outlined in the ISCB Ethical and Professional Code of Conduct, ensuring integrity and professionalism in all aspects of their work.

Nomination and Endorsements Review Phase

The Fellows Selection Committee will review all nominations and endorsement statements for the nominees and determine if a nomination meets the Fellows' criteria of the program. Nominees of the ISCB Fellows program must not only demonstrate outstanding scientific excellence but also adhere to the highest ethical standards outlined in the ISCB Ethical and Professional Code of Conduct, ensuring integrity and professionalism in all aspects of their work.

Scientific excellence will be considered in a broad sense i.e. not just following metrics on citations etc. and will take into account the research field of the nominee.

The FSC will produce a reduced slate by removing any candidates they judge are not yet ready to be considered as Fellows. Nominees removed at this stage may be considered in future years if their portfolio is updated with further contributions.

Note: Any unsuccessful nominees from 2023 will be rolled over for 2024 (and in subsequent years) but nominators will be requested to update the nomination in the provided format.

The ISCB Board of Directors will have an opportunity to review the slate of candidates before releasing the ballot to ISCB Fellows for voting. This deliberation phase will serve to identify any instances of potential unethical or unprofessional behavior that might otherwise go unnoticed.

During this review period, members of the Board of Directors are encouraged to provide such feedback on any candidate. This feedback will then undergo an evaluation by the Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee (EPCC). If the EPCC determines that further investigation into a candidate is warranted, it will proceed according to our established procedures.

Only candidates deemed suitable for consideration, following this evaluation process, will proceed to the stage of the Fellows vote.

Ranking by Fellows to select 50% of the slate of Fellows

Fellows are asked to vote on the reduced slate. Fellows are allowed $2N$ votes – where N is the number of total electable Fellows.

Fellows can vote with 'Yes' or 'Not yet'.

We also aim to facilitate the disclosure of pertinent information that might cause the ISCB to reconsider electing an individual as a Fellow. To achieve this, an additional section will be included on the ballot. This section will afford current Fellows the opportunity to bring to light any facts regarding a candidate that could potentially reflect negatively on the Society if that candidate were to be elected as a Fellow. Such disclosures may pertain to matters concerning professional conduct or ethical considerations. As confidentiality is important, any information entered into this section will be held in confidence and only reviewed by the ISCB Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee following the procedures and protocols ([details](#)) that are put in place for such review of cases. Recommendations by the committee will only be shared with the Fellows Selection Committee.

The top 50% candidates ranked by the number of votes are automatically selected provided:

- they are supported by at least 50% of the Fellows who voted

- they have a total number of votes equal to or more than 20% of the total number of Fellows (i.e. in the case that only a small proportion of Fellows vote).

These numbers reflect the proportion of Fellows that typically vote in these processes.

Fellows' votes will only be visible to the Fellows Selection Committee

Review by Fellows Selection Committee to consider Fellows ranking and other criteria to select up to 50% of the remaining slate of Fellows

The remainder of the candidates are assessed by the FSC based on the nominations, endorsements, the ranking from the Fellows and demographic considerations to ensure that the final slate broadly reflects the characteristics of the ISCB membership and the Computational Biology Community (i.e. gender, ethnicity, scientific expertise, geography, etc.).

Only the FSC will know which candidates were voted in by the Fellows and which were subsequently selected by the FSC.

Review of Slate

The ISCB Fellows Council will have an opportunity to review the slate of candidates prior to the information being released to the ISCB Executive Committee and Board of Directors. This review is intended to ensure the process was followed as stated here within.

Ratification of the Fellows by the ISCB Board of Directors

The final slate of new Fellows goes to the Executive Committee for review followed by the ISCB Board of Directors for ratification. The review of the slate by the Executive Committee is to further validate that the process was followed. The ratification by the Board of Directors is to ratify the process and finalize the election.

Adopted by the ISCB Board of Directors
2024 June 13