

## **Section A&R Chair Quick Start Guide Lesson Welcome Message and Brief Description of Position**

Welcome to the Section Awards and Recognition Chair Quick Start Training. This training module assumes you have been recently elected to this position and want to quickly learn the basics of your position. These recommendations should serve as a guideline for this role, and it is expected that implementation may vary between sections in order to best meet their unique needs. This training also will help if you have been the Awards & Recognition Chair for a while, and you want to refresh some key skills.

The Section Awards and Recognition Chair, usually referred to as Awards Chair, is typically an experienced volunteer leader in the Section who is appointed by the Section Chair. This appointment is approved by the Section Executive Committee (ExCom). You are a member of the Section Committee and may be a member of the Section ExCom. You are responsible for your Section's awards and recognition programs. Awards and recognition of members of your Section and its organizational units for their professional and technical achievements is an important motivational tool. It is a key to volunteer recruitment and retention and increases the visibility in the community.

Your primary role as Section Awards and Recognition Chair is to recommend members of your Section and its organizational units (chapters, Affinity Groups, and Student Branches) for their contributions and achievements. IEEE awards and recognitions include:

- Section, Chapter, Affinity, and Student Branch Officer Awards (these are specific for a Section and include awards and recognition for service, achievement, or contributions)
- IEEE entity-level awards (Council, MGA, Society, IEEE-USA, IEEE SA, etc.)
- Elevation to higher member grade (Student member to Member, Member to Senior Member, Senior Member to Fellow)

Section awards and membership elevation recognition are may be conducted as part of an annual Awards Banquet hosted by the Section. Entity-level awards including elevation to Fellow recognition are typically conducted by the higher-level organizational unit of the IEEE sponsoring the award or recognition. In your role as Awards Chair, you are responsible for organizing Section-hosted awards and recognition events.

A number of topics have been identified that are important to ensure your success in your position. In this Quick Start Training Module, you'll learn about the following tasks:

- Getting Organized for Action
- Planning Your Awards and Recognition Program
- Identify Award Recipients
- Organizing and Holding a Section Annual Awards Banquet
- Entity-Level Awards
- Recognition for Member Grade Elevation
- Concluding thoughts

### **Getting Organized for Action**

The first step in getting on board as a new Section Awards and Recognition Chair is getting to know other volunteers you will be working with. As a senior volunteer leader of your Section, you probably already know most of your Section leaders. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to reach out to those who you may not know, particularly members of your Section's Student Branches and Affinity Groups. Contact and network with members of your Section's organizational units and identify volunteer

leaders who may be willing to join you in your endeavors to identify those who merit recognition for their contributions and achievements.

As you are doing this, identify potential members of an Awards and Recognition Committee. This is the second step in building an effective awards and recognition program. Choose a small group of volunteers who have a good working knowledge of the various organizational units of your Section. You and your committee will be identifying Section members who should be recognized for their achievement and contributions. It would also be helpful to gather available resumes of members of your Section, particularly (but not exclusively) those members of the Section Committee.

Each of the IEEE Regions will have a regional awards and recognition committee. Information on this committee and the name of the awards and recognition chair should be listed on your region's website (see IEEE Regional World Map). Utilize this resource to help fill in the gaps, as you develop your awards and recognition program.

Once you have your committee members in place, you are ready to commence planning your Awards and recognition program. This should be done in a kick-off meeting. Be sure to brief your committee on the importance of awards and recognition in IEEE volunteer work. Set a schedule of meetings with your committee with a timeline for important milestones.

## **Planning Your Awards and Recognition Program**

Planning your Awards and Recognition program should focus on three areas. First, you should identify the Section Awards that will be presented at your Annual Awards Banquet or other venue. If your Section has not had an active awards and recognition program in the past it may be necessary to create a set of awards. If this is the case it is recommended that your Section start with a set of three to five awards. For example:

- Industry support (Friend of the IEEE Award)
- Outstanding technical contribution award
- Outstanding Young Engineer award
- Outstanding student award
- Outstanding faculty member award

Your Awards and Recognition Committee will need to provide a description and criterion for these awards if they do not already exist. Your committee should also create/maintain a list of past awardees for the various awards. With this framework in place the committee can now develop plans for supporting higher level IEEE awards. Your Section should actively seek out eligible candidates for all higher level IEEE awards. This requires your committee to be aware of awards sponsored by your IEEE Region as well as the major IEEE organizational units (MGA, TAB, SA, EAB, and, IEEE-USA if your Section is located in the United States, IEEE-USA). Your plan for supporting these awards should include plans for publicizing these awards to potential recipients. You should also develop a budget for the annual banquet, plaques pins, and certificates.

Finally your Awards and Recognition Committee should develop a plan for encouraging eligible members to seek elevation to a higher membership grade. Since elevation of Student Members and Graduate Student Members to Member Grade is automatic, your efforts will focus on elevating eligible members to Senior Member or to Fellow of the IEEE. This is primarily an outreach activity that requires publicizing the importance of upgrading one's IEEE membership grade. Your Section leadership should be able to assist you in identifying candidates for member elevation, by solicitation and reviewing the SAMIEEE database. Another aspect of this task is to identify references and nominators who are willing to assist members who are seeking elevation to Senior Member or Fellow.

Part of your plan for elevation in membership grade should be to recognize those who move to a higher membership grade. This should include identification of new Senior Members and Fellows in your Section's newsletter or on its web site. Although Fellow elevations are recognized at the Section level, the new Fellow's IEEE Technical Society will sponsor a recognition event such as a major conference or IEEE event. The newly elevated Fellow may elect to formally receive the award at these IEEE Technical Society events or at a Section event.

## Identify Award Recipients

Now that you have planned awards and recognition activities for your Section, and reviewed higher-level IEEE awards, it is time to identify candidates for awards and recognition from your Section and its organizational units (chapters, Affinity Groups, and Student Branches) for their contributions and achievements. If you have been successful in forming an awards and recognition committee, then this effort can be distributed. During the first half of the year, your focus should be on evaluating the higher-level IEEE awards and soliciting for nominations. You should use your Region leadership as resources for doing this, as they will be able to provide guidance on how to provide the right information for the award a candidate is nominated for. In particular, your Region Area Chair will be familiar with other Sections in the Region, and your Region Awards and Recognition Chair will be actively involved in soliciting and gathering nominations from across your Region to present for higher-level IEEE awards. In addition your committee should refer to your list of past awardees for the various awards to make sure that the awardee has not received this particular award in the past.

If you have determined what Section awards will be given at the end of the year, you should look for opportunities to identify potential nominees throughout the year. At a minimum, the Section Excom Committee members should be recognized for their participation with certificates or awards as the committee sees fit. Plaques, pins and certificates can be ordered from the IEEE MGA website, or you can find a local source for awards.

Upon request, the Awards and Recognition Committee should provide letters to employers or the media, detailing awards granted. This can be beneficial to the member, and provide visibility and build the reputation of the organization. Your committee should develop a template for these letters and for press releases you will send.

## Entity-Level Awards

Entity-level IEEE awards have been previously discussed, and in this section you will be directed to resources to help with planning for these awards deadlines. Anyone can nominate another member for an IEEE entity award, but individuals cannot nominate themselves. The Section Awards and Recognition Committee should assist in notifying Section members of the awards deadlines, and identifying candidates for these awards. The Region Awards and Recognition Chair will announce the deadlines for most entity-level awards, and will act as a resource when it comes time to submit nominations.

Nominations for IEEE entity-level awards should be tailored to the type of award. There are awards for the following categories:

- Individual Achievement
- Technical Achievement
- Literary Achievement
- Section Achievement
- Education Achievement
- Public Relations Achievement
- Organization Achievement

Nominations need to be completed fully and accurately to be considered. This means the nominator must gather details from the nominee to complete the nomination form. The nominator must also obtain letters of recommendation from two or more members. They may seek your assistance in obtaining letters of recommendation and guidance on how to make a successful submission. It is important to carefully read the instructions for each award and not resubmit one nomination for an award in another category. Each nomination should be tailored to the specific award. The selection committees will not enhance nominations that are lacking key elements.

Entity-Level IEEE Awards Resources:

[IEEE-USA Awards & Recognition](#)

- [Member and Geographic Activities \(MGA\) Awards & Recognition Program](#)
- [Technical Activities Board \(TAB\) Awards & Recognition Manual](#)
- [Educational Activities Board \(EAB\) Awards](#)
- [IEEE Standards Association \(SA\) Awards](#)

Major IEEE Awards Deadlines:

- IEEE EAB Awards – April 30
- IEEE MGA Middleton & Outstanding Large/Small Section Awards – April 30
- IEEE-USA Awards – July 31
- IEEE MGA Individual Awards – October 15
- Deadlines for other awards can be found online

## Recognition for Member Grade Elevation

Member grade elevation is an important way to recognize the contributions that a member has made to his or her profession. A candidate shall be an engineer, scientist, educator, technical executive or originator in IEEE-designated fields. Candidates shall have been in professional practice for at least ten years and candidates shall have shown significant performance over a period of at least five of those years. In addition, candidates for Senior Member grade must supply three references from current IEEE members holding the grade of Fellow, Senior Member, or Honorary Member.

In addition to recognizing members for their professional contributions, elevation to Senior Member is an important way to boost member retention, and therefore the Membership Development Chair will be involved in promoting Senior Member elevation. Some Sections have found success in hosting Senior Member elevation events, where eligible members and nominators gather at a local venue, like a college campus. Nominators are able to interview several candidates over a few hours, and then write the required recommendations. This type of an event addresses the difficulty of connecting grade-elevation candidates with existing Senior Members. Sometimes Sections may partner, to hold a joint Senior Rodeo event. Depending on the number of candidates in your Section, it might make sense to have more than one such event annually.

Members with a distinguished career and extraordinary achievements may qualify for elevation to the IEEE Grade of Fellow. The IEEE Grade of Fellow is conferred by the Board of Directors upon a person with an extraordinary record of accomplishments in any of the IEEE fields of interest. The total number selected in any one year does not exceed one-tenth of one percent of the total voting Institute membership. Each new Fellow receives a beautifully matted and framed certificate with the name of the Fellow and a brief citation describing the accomplishment, a congratulatory letter from the incoming IEEE president and a gold sterling silver Fellow lapel pin with antique finish. IEEE Fellow nominations are due March 1, annually.

The Section Awards and Recognition Chair should draft letters of recognition of newly elevated Senior Members and Fellows for signature of Section Chair, and distribution by Section Secretary.