AMERICAN COLLEGE of RHEUMATOLOGY
Empowering Rheumatology Professionals

ACR Award Nomination Guide

This guide gives nominators and nominees a comprehensive overview of the ACR awards nominations process and what is expected before, during, and after a nomination. If you have questions after reading this guide, please contact us at acrnominations@rheumatology.org.

Fast Facts About ACR Awards

1) ACR award nominations for 2026 will open on March 2, 2026, and run through May 1, 2026. Nominations can be submitted using this link.
2) Both nominators and nominees must have active ACR/ARP membership. You can check the status of your membership on your My Account page.
3) Nominations for Awards of Distinction and Master Awards are eligible for consideration for one additional year. For example, anyone nominated in 2025 who is not selected as an awardee in 2025 is eligible for 2026 consideration.
4) Award winners are only eligible every other year. For example, anyone nominated in 2025 who was selected as an awardee is not eligible for award selection until 2026.
5) Award winners are only eligible to win any particular award once. For example, if John Smith won the ACR Distinguished Service Award in 2025, he is no longer eligible to win that award. However, he is eligible to win any award that he has not previously won.

Before You Begin

Before you begin your nomination, there are a few items you need to have compiled. Having all the necessary documents saved and available at the time that you start the nomination will make the process much more efficient and effective.

The following items are the required materials that will allow you to successfully submit your nomination:

- Curriculum Vitae/Resume: The ACR Committee on Membership and Awards uses the CV/resume of the nominee to evaluate their eligibility for the award. If this information is missing, the committee will not be able to evaluate the nomination.
- Letter(s) of Recommendation: The letter(s) of recommendation are part of the committee's nomination review, so we ask that you submit those as well. Letters of Recommendation must come from current ACR/ARP members.
    - Note that most awards require 2 letters of recommendation but specifics for each award can be found on https://rheumatology.org/acr-awards.

Make sure you know the ACR Award for which you are making the nomination. There is a list of ACR Award descriptions on https://rheumatology.org/acr-awards. Each award description includes specific application evaluation criteria. This example comes from the Henry Kunkel Early Career Investigator Award:

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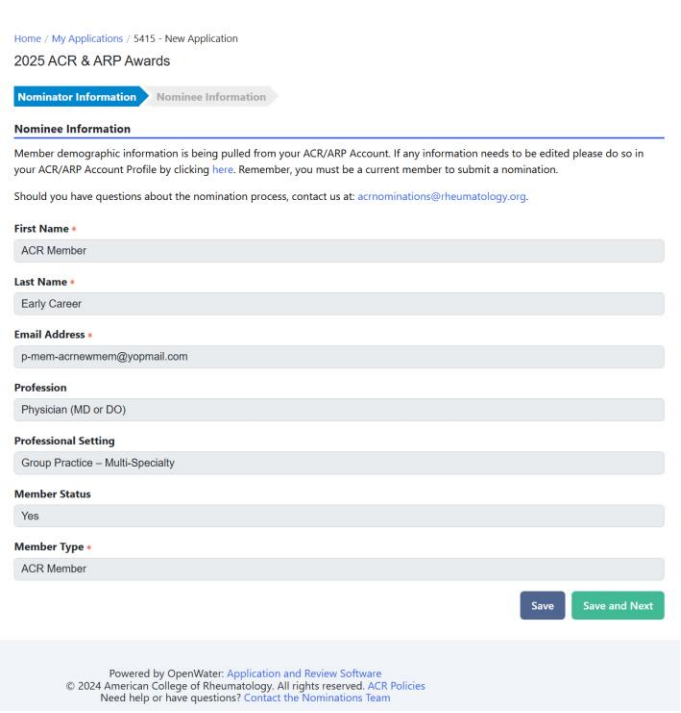
Application Evaluation Criteria: Applicants are evaluated on research and scholarly activities, and service to the ACR/ARP.

Submitting Your Nomination

Once you've identified the right award for your nominee and gathered your supporting materials, you'll begin your nomination by logging in using this link. This will take you to the ACR's award platform OpenWater.

When submitting your nomination, you'll review your demographic information first and then you'll enter your nominee's information.



Start by selecting the award you wish to make a nomination for and then search for your nominee.

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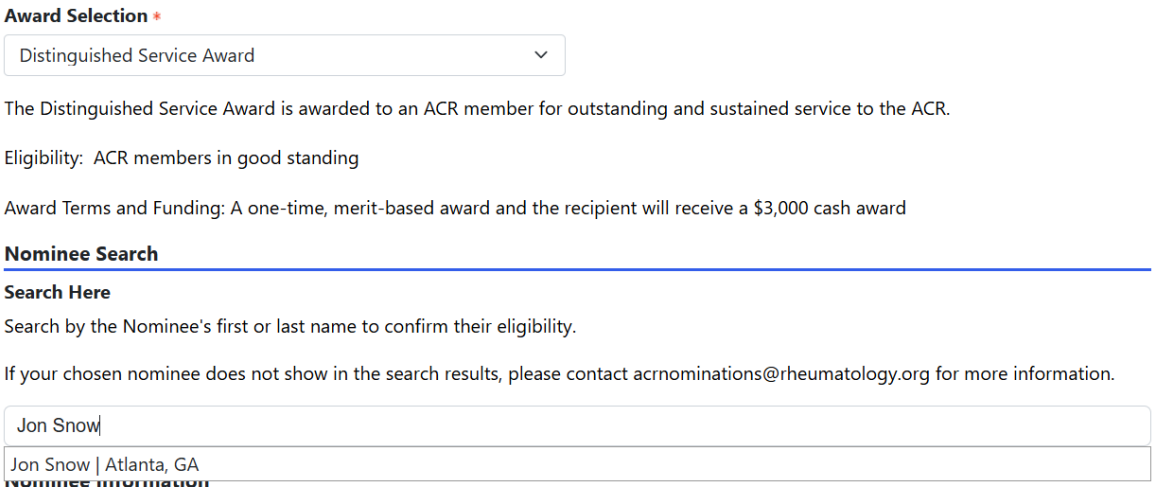

Note: If your nominee does not appear in the search results, please contact acrnominations@rheumatology.org to confirm their eligibility.

After you've selected a nominee, you'll be prompted to answer additional questions about the nominee, send the nominee a nominee questionnaire, and upload your supporting documents. Once you've completed all fields, select "Save and Finalize" to submit your nomination. If you'd like to save and come back later, you can click the "Save" button.

Sample Letter of Recommendation

Insert Your Letterhead

Date

American College of Rheumatology Membership and Awards Committee
2200 Lake Boulevard NE
Atlanta, GA 30319

Re: Nomination of NOMINEE for ACR Award

Dear Committee on Nominations and Appointments:

Paragraph 1 of your letter explains your connection to the person you are recommending, including how you know them and why you are qualified to write a recommendation letter. Your qualifications may be just as important as theirs. It is also a good idea to clearly state whether you are nominating or recommending that person.

e.g.: It is a distinct pleasure for me to write a letter in support of NOMINEE to be awarded the ACR AWARD by the American College of Rheumatology. I have known NOMINEE for XX years and have had the pleasure of working with them (In what way--research, committee work, etc.).

Paragraph 2 of your letter showcases why the person you are writing about is special, including a detailed description of why they are qualified to receive the award. Choose a few points based on the evaluation criteria, giving specific examples, reinforcing these points, and then return to those throughout the letter. Using specific examples is a must to ensure your candidate stands out from others.

This section is also where a community-based clinician would need emphasis on their special role within the community or beyond (i.e., advocacy for patients with special needs, education for patients, and/or trainees in the community setting, mentorship, etc.).

e.g.: NOMINEE is a pioneer in rheumatology (doing what and why).

Paragraph 3 addresses any specific work the nominee has done on behalf of ACR. This section should address any participation in ACR volunteer positions or educational meetings and include examples that are relatable to the criteria required for the award.

e.g.: NOMINEE has served the College in a variety of ways (list ways)

The concluding paragraph of your letter will contain another summary of why you are recommending the person. It is important to stick to the points that you raised in the previous paragraphs and not to introduce any new information that you will not be able to explain in the remainder of the letter. The person reading the letter should have no doubt as to what the nominee's qualifications are. It is also a great idea to once again state that you "highly recommend" the person or you "recommend them without reservation".

e.g.: I believe NOMINEE is a worthy candidate for the ACR Master Designation. It is my pleasure to nominate them for this incredible honor.

The signature section of your letter should include a sign off, such as "Sincerely," an actual hand-written signature, your name, title (if applicable), and contact information. An example of a standard signature might read:

Sincerely,

John Doe
Department of Rheumatology University of America
123-456-7890
John.doe@gmail.com

Tips for Nominee Resume/CV

Depending on the award, nominations are evaluated on two or more of the following ACR/ARP service record, research and publications, practice history, educational impact, advocacy, and previous awards history. The award description and evaluation criteria can help you ensure your nominee's resume/CV highlights relevant information.

Based on the award, you may wish to highlight some or all of the following areas:

- Publications
- Basic Research

- Clinical Research
- Clinical Practice Leadership
- Trainee Education and Mentoring
- ACR/ARP involvement including Advocacy, Volunteerism, and Community Activities related to rheumatology or medicine
- Overall impact on the field of Rheumatology