

Guidelines for Improving your ACNP Membership Application

Thinking of applying for ACNP membership in the coming year? The deadline for receipt of application materials is typically mid-September. Early preparation will help you approach the application process efficiently and effectively. Below we suggest a time-table for completing your application. Please note that this document is NOT intended to replace a careful reading of instructions and other materials on the ACNP website: <https://www.acnp.org/membership/applications.aspx>

Early Fall:

- Consider attending this year's meeting. This is a college, not a society. As a college, we want active participation. Having attended and presented at the ACNP meeting will increase your chances of success. It will also help you decide if ACNP is a good investment of your time. Finally, it will give you a chance to meet members who may be able to nominate you for membership.
- How do I get an invitation for this year's meeting? Talk to ACNP members at your institution, or ask your mentor, colleagues, or department chair if they know ACNP members. Many members do not use their invitations. In addition, there are "invitation banks". Please review the annual meeting FAQs from the ACNP website, <https://www.acnp.org/annualmeeting/faq.aspx>, for additional information.

November-December:

- If you are able to attend the meeting, take advantage of opportunities to network with scientists in your field. In the process, work on finding ACNP members willing to nominate you. It is best to do this early, before they commit to other people. The poster sessions offer an excellent opportunity for informal interactions that could set the stage for a strong nomination.
- Regardless of whether you are able to attend this year's meeting, the next step is to download the appropriate membership application and instructions from the ACNP website and prepare a quick draft of your application so that you can begin to assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- Briefly, other than papers and grants, the things that are reviewed by the Membership Committee are:
 - Participating in the Meeting
 - What you will bring to the College
 - Information provided by your Nominator
 - Reviewing for the ACNP Journal, *Neuropsychopharmacology*
 - For Regular Membership - Mentorship

January-February:

- Having prepared a draft of your application, identify potential weaknesses while there is still time to do something about them. Here are two strategies for assessing your application draft:
 - First, check the ACNP website. It is full of information about membership requirements. Two of many helpful pages are: FAQ on membership <http://www.acnp.org/membership/faq.aspx#11> and the Membership Advisory Task Force Poster (which contains membership statistics and explains why the number of successful applications varies from year to year): <http://www.acnp.org/membership/default.aspx>

- Second, find an ACNP member at your institution, preferably one who has served on the Membership Committee. Show them your draft. Ask them to identify areas for improvement. If you don't know anyone in ACNP, ask your mentor or department chair for help. There are also Membership Mentors located on the ACNP website that are recent past Membership Committee members who have agreed to counsel prospective membership nominees and/or their nominators on membership applications to the College. Mentors may offer advice as to whether a prospective applicant is likely to be competitive and if they are, aspects of the application process that might enhance their likelihood for success. Please note that Membership Mentors are offering their best advice, but they do not speak for the Membership Committee nor Council. There is no guarantee that following their advice will result in a successful application.

<https://www.acnp.org/membership/applications.aspx>

March:

- Consider submitting a panel for the annual meeting, you do not have to be a member to participate. Proposals are due in May. *Only ACNP members may serve as the chair of a panel, mini-panel, or study group session.

April-May:

- Work on panel submission, if appropriate.
- Continue building your CV.
- Formally request a Nominator, if you have not done so already. When you make the request, attach your CV, a Research Statement, and some information about what you hope to gain from ACNP and what you will offer the college. If they agree, ask whether other materials would be helpful and provide these materials in a timely manner, along with information on how and when to submit their nominating information on the submission site.
- If you are still looking for nominators, ask your mentor/senior colleagues/department chair to identify ACNP members in your research field. Ask them to introduce you (in person or by email).

Summer:

- Complete your application. Proof carefully. Then ask a senior colleague (preferably an ACNP member) to look it over. One year after beginning your quest, you should be in possession of a very polished initial application or a significantly improved re-application.
- If your credentials match the Associate level, but you apply for regular membership, the pool of candidates that you will enter will be more accomplished and you will be less likely to be successful. If you are a Travel Awardee or Past Travel Awardee, remember you are eligible to attend the four annual meetings immediately following your award year. You should consider your years of eligibility when making a decision about whether to apply this year or to wait and attend additional meetings, as a past award recipient, gaining experiences and additional ACNP participation activities to strengthen your application.
- A final word – if you feel your credentials are suitable, don't be put off by the fact that the membership process seems cumbersome. The only certainty is this: If you don't apply, you won't get in.