



**American College of Neuropsychopharmacology**

## **Membership Applications and Nominations**

### **Guidelines for Improving Your ACNP 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.

### **Early Fall:**

Consider attending the annual meeting. This is a college not a society! As a college, we want active participation. So having attended and presented at the ACNP annual 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 write letters of nomination.

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 always use their invitations. In addition, there are "invitation banks", review the annual meeting FAQs from the ACNP website <http://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 count are: 1) participation in the meeting; 2) what you say about what you will bring to the college; 3) the letters of nomination; 4) reviewing for the ACNP journal (*Neuropsychopharmacology*); 5) 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:

1. Check the ACNP website, it is full of information about membership requirements. Two helpful web pages are: FAQs 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>
2. 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.

Once you have identified areas for improvement, start to address them! Get those manuscripts and grants submitted. Increase your level of service to your university and to the field. Offer mentoring to junior colleagues. At the very least, clean up your CV and think about how to best present your accomplishments. And... don't forget to review for *Neuropsychopharmacology* if you are asked! This really counts. People who usually say "no" to reviewer invitations, or do not bother to reply to these invitations at all, often run into problems when applying for ACNP membership.

**March:**

Consider participating in 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 letters of nomination, 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. Make sure there are no typos and that everything is formatted consistently. 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 letter (do the work for them).

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.

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!