ICA Public Relations Division

Guidelines for the ICA Public Relations Book Awards

1. Overview

The Public Relations Division of the International Communication Association establishes the bi-annual “ICA Public Relations Book Awards” to recognize the most outstanding book(s) published in English annually in the field of public relations.

2. Eligible books

One to two awards (see “Additional Parameters” below) will be granted to the author(s) of the outstanding book(s) in the field of public relations. The types of books eligible for the award will be a) monographs or scholarly books, and b) edited books, including handbooks. First editions can always be nominated. Second or further editions are only eligible if an earlier edition of the nominated work has not received this award. If books are published in different formats (e.g. hardcover, softcover, eBook) in different years or in different versions (e.g. national vs. global version), only one version can be nominated.

To be considered for the award, books must meet the following criteria:

- Nominations will be accepted for books published in the previous two calendar years. For simplicity and consistency, the copyright date printed in the book will be used. *
- Books nominated in a previous round must be re-nominated to be considered.
- At the time of nomination and at the time of receipt of the award, at least one author of the book must be a current ICA Public Relations Division member. Nominated authors who have previously been members but have allowed their membership to lapse may be given an opportunity to renew membership.
- Award recipients will be announced during the Public Relations Division business meeting at the annual ICA conference, and award winners should attend the conference in person or virtually to receive their award.
3. Nominations

Self-nominations are not allowed. To nominate the work of others, the nominator should submit the following to the Chair of the Book Award Review Committee:

1. A brief statement of nomination (500 words maximum, including the book’s title, author(s) or editor(s), copyright date, publisher, ISBN and an explanation of the book’s contribution to the field of public relations under the scope and vision of ICA);
2. The author(s) or editor(s)’ affiliations, mailing addresses, contact phone numbers and email address, as well as confirming their membership with the ICA Public Relations Division;
3. Inspection copies of the accompanying book or an accessible link to the electronic version of the book (i.e., e-book). The nominator should work with the nominees to ask the book publisher to mail one hardcopy of the book to the Chair of the Book Awards Committee and send one e-book or PDF to each selection committee member. Nominators shall be instructed to check the contact information with the Chair of the Book Awards Committee prior to nominations.

Nominating statements for books will be shared with all members of the ICA Book Award Review Committee.

All nominations must be received no later than December 1 and copies of the book or accessible link to e-book must be received by committee members by February 10, in order to complete reviews and decisions by early April, ahead of the annual ICA conference. Given the potential large numbers of nominations each year, only complete nomination packages will be considered.

4. Assessment and selection Criteria

All books will be assessed on the following criteria and a judgment will be made holistically by the Book Award Review Committee. That is, it may be that the winning book is exceptional in meeting some criteria but not others.

1. Originality: The extent to which the book breaks new ground conceptually and theoretically (e.g., does it make a difference in how we think about, research, teach or practice public relations?)
2. Contribution: The extent to which the book makes a social and/or practical contribution to the teaching, study, or practice of public relations.
3. Rigor: The extent to which intellectual rigor is evidenced (e.g., are the methods sound and sophisticated if it is empirical? Is the assessment and analysis thorough and meticulous if it is primarily a review or handbook?)
4. Writing: The extent to which it is written in language that is clear, engaging, and accessible to the intended audience.
5. Utility: the extent to which the book is useful, helpful, and/or efficacious in actual teaching, research and/or practice.
6. Excellence: The overall extent to which the book exemplifies the best work of its kind in the field (e.g. how does the work stand out related to previous or similar books; in which way is it innovative and outstanding.)
5. Decision to grant an award

- The decision to grant an award, or to grant more than one award, in a given round is solely at the discretion of the Book Award Review Committee, with the following additional parameters.
- Normally if three or more eligible books are nominated in more than one category (i.e., scholarly book or edited book), the Awards Committee will choose to award winners for each category.
- If three or more books are nominated, an award must be given. If fewer than three books are nominated and the Book Awards Committee deems none worthy, it may decide not to choose a winner that year.
- The Chair and the committee members should strive to unanimously identify winners. Only in the event that the Book Award Review Committee reaches an impasse in its decision-making, which should not be on a regular basis, members will summarize their deliberations to Public Relations Division current officers, who will then determine the outcome.
- The selected winning book will be awarded a cash prize.

6. Book Award Review Committee

The Book Award Review Committee and the Chair of the Book Award Review Committee will be appointed by the Chair of the ICA Public Relations Division in consultation with the current officers of the Division. The Committee will normally comprise 3-4 senior members of the Division who represent the diversity of the Division’s membership. In the event when the Chair and/or a committee member faces a situation of conflict of interest related to any of the nominations, he or she should declare and be excused from reviewing the nomination in question.

* E.g. publication years 2020 and 2021 (imprint) for awards that will be given in 2022. However, in the first round the awards are offered, books published in the previous three years will be considered.

Note. These guidelines have been prepared by the ICA PRD Book Award Rules Committee (Ted Zorn, Ralph Tench, Juan Meng, Amiso George) in 2020/21. They were approved by the members of the ICA PRD in the September 2021 referendum and thereby put into effect.