



**ISSA**  
Information Systems Security Association

# ISSA Fellow Program Operating Instructions

For questions and assistance, contact:

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## Mission/Purpose Statement

To recognize an exemplary group of long-term members who have distinguished themselves in advancing the professionalism, stature and influence of information security professionals through serving as leaders of the Information Systems Security Association, by placing them into an elite group of learned people who work together as peers in the pursuit of service, knowledge and excellence for the benefit of the information security field.

### Goals of Fellow Program

- Promote lifetime membership and dedication
- Encourage service to ISSA International, ISSA Chapters, and to the profession
- Provide the information security profession progressive markers of significant professional achievement
- Encourage technical, academic and research excellence
- Encourage managerial and program/project excellence
- Encourage non-profit certification bodies to promote ISSA
- Encourage interaction with fellow ISSA members
- Create value perception in the information security industry

No more than 1% of members may hold Distinguished Fellow status at any given time. Fellow status will be limited to a maximum of 2% of the membership. There is no limitation on the number of members who may be granted Senior Member status.

### ISSA International Fellow and Senior Member Program Levels

- **Distinguished Fellow** recognizes exceptional service to the security community and a significant contribution to local, state, national or international security posture or capability. Qualifications include:
  - 16 person-years of relevant professional experience
  - 12 years association membership
  - 5 years of sustained and demonstrated volunteer leadership in the association
  - 10 years of documented exceptional service to the security community and a significant contribution to security posture or capability
- **Fellow** recognizes sustained contributions to the information security community and demonstrated association leadership at the chapter or international level. Qualifications include:
  - 12 person-years of relevant professional experience
  - 8 years of association membership
  - 3 years of sustained and demonstrated volunteer leadership in the association
  - 5 years of significant performance in the profession such as substantial job responsibilities in leading a team or project, performing research with some measure of success or faculty developing and teaching courses

- **Senior Member** recognizes contributions to the security community and sustained membership in the association
  - 5 years ISSA membership and
  - 8 person-years of relevant professional experience
    - Candidates may apply 2 years toward the work experience requirement for each of the following degrees received through accredited colleges and universities:
      - Master's
      - Ph.D

## Definitions of Program Requirements

- *Person-years of relevant professional experience:* By “person years” we mean actual working hours, not the number of years in a given position, [e.g., a person who writes programming standards may address something about security, but if his primary function is technical writer, then each year should not qualify as a year of security experience, perhaps only one or two months.]
- *Sustained and demonstrated volunteer leadership in the association:* Demonstrated history of recognized contributions to ISSA and the security industry. Volunteer efforts should be documented and that it should have shown results, i.e., more than “I was on the Chapter Board for two years.”]
  - Non-Exhaustive Examples of ISSA Leadership deliverables
    - Measurable positive difference in finances
    - Increase in Organization deliverables
    - Number of presentations on behalf of ISSA
  - Non-Exhaustive Examples of Industry Leadership
    - Significant contribution to security software, processes or products
    - Creation and delivery of education, training and mentoring
    - Demonstration of added value to your organization through the security function

## Selection Process

- **Senior Member**  
Individuals must submit an application that includes the following items:
  - Senior Member Application including endorsement signature from their Chapter Board of Directors. At-Large members may submit directly. Requesting chapter endorsement submission is the responsibility of the applicant.
  - Certification of Membership form
  - Resume with dates and depth of experience

Applications will be reviewed by a committee composed of Fellow Program members. Each application will be reviewed by a committee member to ensure candidates meet Senior Member requirements. Should there be a question as to whether a candidate is

eligible, the application will be elevated to the Committee Chair. Decisions of the committee are final for any given selection cycle. Unsuccessful candidates are welcome to reapply in subsequent cycles.

- **Fellow and Distinguished Fellow**

Candidates for Fellow or Distinguished Fellow must be nominated by an active Fellow Program member of comparable or higher rank, chapter president or sitting member of the International Board of Directors.

- Each nominator may submit a maximum of one (1) Distinguished Fellow and two (2) Fellow nominations in a single cycle.
- In the event a chapter wishes to nominate its current president, the president may recuse him or herself passing the nominating authority to the vice president.
- Nominators should consider that the Fellow Program is specific to encourage and acknowledge, not just industry contributions, but specifically long-term membership and organizational leadership. There are other ISSA award programs available that are not dependent on volunteerism.

Nominators are responsible for ensuring that all components of the nomination package are submitted in a timely manner. The package includes:

- Official Fellow Program nomination form completed by the nominator. The nomination itself is considered a letter of recommendation and should fully describe the candidate's activities, contributions and ongoing influence.
- Application completed by the nominee
- Certification of membership form
- Additional letters of recommendation are not required, but candidates may submit up to two (2) recommendation letters from individuals who are otherwise qualified as nominators, including chapter presidents, Fellows, Distinguished Fellows and sitting members of the ISSA International Board of Directors. A second letter of recommendation (other than the nomination form) from the member making the nomination will not be accepted.
- Resume with dates and depth of experience
- Details of service to ISSA including leadership positions held and dates of service
- Photo

Acceptance is competitive; meeting the base requirements is not sufficient. Candidates are encouraged to present their best case possible. No more than 1% of members may hold Distinguished Fellow status at any given time. Fellow status will be limited to a maximum of 2% of the membership.

All completed packages will be evaluated by a minimum of two members of the Fellow Selection Committee composed of Fellow Program members of comparable or higher rank. Reviewers will make recommendations on each application. In any case when the reviewers do not agree, the package will be reviewed by the committee chair who will cast the tiebreaker.

Subjectivity of each candidate's application is a priority. Stated objectives on the application are to be met in a manner best suited to the candidate as determined by the judges – anecdotal information not included as part of the official submission is disallowed. This may include demonstrated ISSA leadership activity, demonstrated security industry leadership activity, and consideration of any known objections to candidate's qualifications presented to the entire judging team.

The reviewing members of the Fellow Selection Committee reserve the right to re-level the applicant's perceived level during the application review process for Senior Members, Fellows, or Distinguished Fellows.

The committee chair will present a slate of recommended candidates to the International Board of Directors with an executive summary on the qualifications for each.

- A majority of Board members present will be required for approval.
  - The Board of Directors has the ultimate authority to grant Fellow or Distinguished Fellow status.
- **Initial Seeding**  
To initiate the program, Hall of Fame members were invited to become the inaugural class of Distinguished Fellows to evaluate proposed Fellow and Distinguished Fellow nominees

### **Fellows Selection Policies and Procedures**

- The International Board member designated as Fellow Program Chair by the President may appoint chairs of the Fellow Selection Committee and Senior Member Review Committee. Committee chairs shall be current Fellow Program members of good standing of the appropriate rank. The term of service shall be one selection cycle and may be reappointed for subsequent cycles at the discretion of the Fellow Chair.
- Sufficient committee members will be recruited for each selection cycle to ensure applications are reviewed in a timely manner. Members of each committee should be members in good standing of the appropriate or higher rank and may be reappointed for subsequent cycles.
- Committee members are eligible to make nominations but will recuse themselves from processing any nominations they make. Any judge that nominates or submits a Letter of Recommendation for any candidate must recuse himself from any discussions or voting with regards to that candidate. No judge shall advocate on behalf of any nominee.
- Selection cycles will be on an annual basis. Submissions can happen anytime during the year. In a given year, the acceptance cycle lasts for a nine (9) month period followed by ten (10) weeks for review and acceptance followed by the notification and presentation

processes. Submissions received after the first nine months of the cycle will be considered in the following cycle.

- The selection cycle will be timed to present Fellow and Distinguished Fellow certificates with the International Awards during the ISSA International Conference. Staff will work with the chairs of the committees to develop a timeline for application submission, review and selection. Announcements of new Fellows and Senior Members should whenever possible be made at least 45 days prior to the presentation event.
- Application review process:
  - Staff will conduct a preliminary review of all applications to document:
    - Applicant is an active member in good standing.
    - Any missing nomination components
      - Nomination
      - Application form
      - Certification of Membership form
      - Resume
      - Details of ISSA leadership service
      - Copies of diplomas and current certifications
      - Digital photo of publication quality (optional)
      - Confirmation that applicant has no felony convictions
      - Any other currently required application criteria
  - Candidates with incomplete packages will be notified in writing prior to Selection Committee review.
  - The ISSA Fellow Review Committee reserves the right to allow for substantiated objections from recognized, reputable individuals with knowledge of candidate's submission for review.
  - Application review process
    - Senior Members
      - Applications will be reviewed by a committee composed of Fellow Program members within 7 days of receipt by the reviewer of the application package.
      - Each application will be reviewed by one committee member to ensure candidates meet Senior Member requirements. Should there be a question as to whether a candidate is eligible, the application will be elevated the Committee Chair.
      - Decisions of the committee are final for any given selection cycle. Unsuccessful candidates are welcome to reapply in subsequent cycles.
    - Fellows and Distinguished Fellows
      - All completed packages will be evaluated by a minimum of two members of the Fellow Selection Committee composed of Fellow Program members of comparable or higher rank.

- Reviewers will make recommendations on each application within 14 days of receipt by the reviewer of the nomination package. In any case when the reviewers do not agree, the package will be reviewed by the committee chair who will cast the tiebreaker.
- The committee chair will present a slate of recommended candidates to the International Board of Directors with no later than 5 days prior to the Board meeting at which the slate is to be considered. Nomination packages will be made available to Board members.
  - The Fellows Selection Committee chair or a designated representative will be present at the Board meeting during the discussion of the slate.
  - A majority of Board members present will be required for approval.
  - The Board of Directors has the ultimate authority to grant Fellow or Distinguished Fellow status.
- Notification of Applicants
  - Senior Members will be notified by email within 7 days of approval by the Fellow Committee
  - New Fellows will be notified by email within 7 days of approval by the International Board of Directors.
  - Unsuccessful applicants will be notified before any public announcement is made.
- Announcements of new Fellows and Senior Members will be made on the ISSA website, in eNews and the ISSA Journal.
- Certificate Presentations
  - Certificates will be prepared annually.
  - Distinguished Fellows and Fellows will be invited to accept their certificates at the annual presentation event. Recipients will be responsible for their own travel expenses. Certificates of those not attending a presentation event will be forwarded to the President of the recipient's chapter for presentation at a chapter meeting.
  - Certificates of At-Large members will be mailed directly to the recipient.
- Promotion or Inactivity
  - Promotion to Another Award Category
    - When in a designated tier of Fellowship, inclusion in lower tiers is implied and should remove perceived need for a candidate that moves from one level to another be listed in both
  - Inactivity
    - Upon the confirmed professional retirement of a Fellow, their name is moved to the equivalent level on the Emeritus list and removed

from the active list. Emeritus Fellows and Distinguished Fellows will not count against the member percentage limitation.

- When the death of a Fellow is confirmed, their name is moved to the equivalent level on the In Memoriam list and removed from the active list. In Memoriam Fellows and Distinguished Fellows will not count against the member percentage limitation.