

ASHG Awards Policy and Nomination Process

Bestowing awards is one important way that the Society honors excellence, reflects its values, and affirms its community. Being named an ASHG awardee is expected to be a lifetime honor and bestows the Society's determination of the individual's exemplary role in the field and fitness to be affiliated with ASHG on an ongoing basis. ASHG considers awards an honor, not a right, and has the sole discretion to choose a candidate it thinks best reflects the Society's expectations and community standards. In service to these goals, the Society may reserve the right to decide that credible and substantial information about conduct inconsistent with ASHG's current standards may be a prudent reason not to confer an ASHG award on an individual, even if there has not yet been a definitive determination establishing misconduct.

For this reason, all awardees will be expected to comply with the standards of [ASHG's Code of Ethics](#) as a condition of holding the award, regardless of when the award was bestowed on the awardee. The ASHG Board of Directors updated the Code of Ethics in May 2019 to include professional conduct standards. The new awards policy and procedures are the result of ongoing deliberations of a Professional Conduct Working Group of the ASHG Board of Directors. The Working Group recommended the steps in October 2019 to the Board, which were approved unanimously. [The new policy was announced in March 2020.](#) In bestowing awards, ASHG will consider whether the past conduct of the nominee is consistent with professional conduct standards. In certain circumstances, ASHG may also revoke an award for past misconduct. To support these values and standards, ASHG has established the following procedures to guide decisions related to the suitability of bestowing an award, or when considering award revocation.

Procedures and Policies

1. ASHG welcomes and encourage nominations for awards and honors.
2. In nomination letters, nominators will be asked to state whether, *to their current knowledge*, the individual they are nominating has behaved consistently with the standards articulated in the current ASHG Code of Ethics. Nominators are not asked or expected in any way to independently investigate or make determinations but rather to attest to their own knowledge of the candidate.
3. Prior to ASHG bestowing an award, all nominees will be informed of professional conduct expectations for awards. Nominees will be given the opportunity to decline, with no imputation of any inappropriate conduct. If nominees proceed to be considered, nominees will be asked to state, confidentially and in writing, whether they are now, or have been, subject to an allegation, inquiry, action or decision regarding alleged professional misconduct as outlined in the [ASHG Code of Ethics](#), or whether they have engaged in conduct that could reasonably give rise to such a claim.
4. The nominee's statement will be maintained confidentially by the Board's Professional Conduct Working Group. Based on the nominee's response, the Society may ask the candidate for additional information and will determine, at its sole discretion, whether it will bestow the award. Disclosure of this information will not automatically disqualify a nominee from consideration, but it will allow the Society to make an informed decision with the benefit of any context provided by the nominee.
5. Candidates will be informed that, if it is later determined that the candidate omitted or misrepresented relevant information, ASHG reserves the right to revoke the award.
6. Once an award is bestowed, the Society will follow the process below if developments lead to consideration about whether to **revoke** the award.

Award Revocation

The Society may, at its sole discretion, determine whether to revoke the award status of individuals in cases of proven scientific misconduct, serious breaches of professional ethics, or breaches of [ASHG's Code of Ethics](#). In May 2019, ASHG updated its [Code of Ethics](#) to explicitly incorporate professional conduct standards. If the conduct when it occurred did not breach the Society's Code of Ethics in place at the time but does violate the current Code, the Society will consider whether the awardee, at the time of such conduct, had reason to understand that the conduct was unlawful, unethical, and/or professionally unacceptable. In considering revocation awards based, ASHG will abide by the following procedures:

1. Requests to consider revocation must be made in writing using the [secure online form](#). Anonymous requests

are discouraged.

- a. Requests reporting an allegation must include an investigative report and/or verifiable record or announcement of findings or actions taken (or links thereto) from a credible body such as the Federal government's Office of Research Integrity, other Federal or state agencies (e.g., NSF, NIH), a professional organization, an academic institution, or a court of law, or must reflect admitted conduct by the awardee.
 - b. Media reports alone will not be sufficient to support a request.
 - c. A finding from ASHG itself could be the basis for a request, such as a report produced due to an investigation of alleged inappropriate behavior at the ASHG meeting.
 - d. Although the content of the report may be shared with the awardee, ASHG will keep the identity of the reporter confidential except as may be required by a court of competent jurisdiction or as otherwise required to comply with ASHG's legal obligations.
2. Once the request is received, it will be reviewed by the ASHG Professional Conduct Working Group (members are a subset of the current Board of Directors).
 3. Upon receipt of a report, ASHG's Professional Conduct Working Group will conduct a preliminary review to determine if the request is substantive, has adequate documentation, and complies with these procedures. As a result, the case will either continue or be dismissed due to lack of supporting documentation. If there is insufficient documentation and the submitter has provided contact information to ASHG, the Working Group will provide the submitter the opportunity to provide supplemental documentation before the Working Group dismisses the request.
 4. ASHG deliberations and decisions will be based on the evidence or information submitted or that is otherwise available publicly or in ASHG's own records. Except as stipulated in this policy, solicitation of other information from third parties or of new complaints or charges will not occur as part of the deliberations. ASHG will not undertake its own, independent investigation of the facts presented as part of this process, although this process does not preclude any individual from filing a complaint under ASHG's Code of Ethics based on the same underlying facts.
 5. If the Working Group decides there is merit to moving a case to a Board discussion, the awardee will be notified in writing of the recommendation and provided a copy of the documentation that served as a basis for the recommendation (other than identity of the requester). The awardee will be provided at least 30 days before the date of the Board meeting to submit a written response.
 6. The Working Group's recommendation and the awardee's response, if any, will be provided to the full Board of Directors for consideration at a meeting of the Board. The awardee will be provided the opportunity to participate telephonically in the meeting by providing a statement of up to 10 minutes in length followed by Q&A with the board. A 2/3 majority of voting Board members will be required to revoke the award and/or issue a public letter of censure. The Board may also, by majority vote, take any other action it deems appropriate in its discretion, in addition to revocation of the award. Such actions may include but are not limited to barring the awardee from attendance at ASHG events. By majority vote, the Board may also table the matter for consideration at a future Board meeting pending submission of additional information.
 7. As a general practice, unless the Board has voted to table the matter, such votes after action is taken or voted down will be revisited by a future Board only based on new or substantively different formal documentation in accordance with this policy. The Professional Conduct Working Group will review that material and determine whether to return a decision to the Board for further discussion.
 8. Notification of revocation or other sanctions imposed will be provided to the award recipient and may be communicated through standard Board reporting channels to the membership.