

Hints & Suggestions

College of Fellows – Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)

This document is intended to assist in the preparation of a nomination for the College of Fellows and is optional to use. It explains what is mandatory, gives prompts and suggestions, a final submission checklist and a handout for letter-writers'. It is drawn from the [CIP Fellow Nomination Guidelines](#). For ease of submission a Dossier Template is available in a Word format that has standardized format and headings to match the Guidelines.

Questions regarding draft submissions can be directed to the Specialist, Recognition and Member Engagement at impact@cip-icu.ca.

How to prepare the dossier

1. **Read the current CIP Fellow Nomination Guidelines first.** These files support them; they do not replace them. If they differ, the guidelines apply.
2. **Work through the Template in order (Cover, then Parts A to G).** Use it to start the writing process. Each Part in the Template carries a one-line status marker to let you know if it is required or optional and what information to provide.
3. **Go through the Hints and Suggestions section by section,** matching the Part you are writing in the Template.
4. **Before you submit,** check the Template against the pre-submission checklist found near the end of this document.

Legend

What you see	What it means
REQUIRED	The dossier is incomplete without this Part or element.
OPTIONAL	May be included if it strengthens the case. Delete it (and its table-of-contents entry) if unused.
RECOMMENDED	Not required by the guidelines, but customary (for example, the cover page).
MUST INCLUDE (red box, below)	What the guidelines say this Part must contain, including limits.
HINT (green box, below)	Suggestions, prompts and sample wording. Helpful, not mandatory.

The dossier at a glance

Part	What it contains	Status	Limit
–	Cover page	RECOMMENDED	1 page
A	Table of contents summarizing the whole dossier	REQUIRED	–
B	Overview: categories put forward, synopsis of nationally/internationally significant contributions, list of supporters	REQUIRED	1 page maximum
C	Up-to-date résumé, emphasising the roles key to the nomination	REQUIRED	4 pages maximum
D	Description of contributions in each selected category, with compelling evidence	REQUIRED	2 pages per category, 8 pages total; at least 2 categories
E	Letters of support from Professional (full) or Retired members in good standing	REQUIRED	Minimum 5, maximum 8 letters
F	Additional letters from Candidate, Pre-candidate, Student or Public Associate members, or non-members	OPTIONAL	Maximum 5 letters
G	Signed nominator's statement that the process stayed confidential and the nominee is unaware	REQUIRED	Signed statement

Ground rules to keep in mind

Who can be nominated. A planner who has been a member of CIP (MCIP) in good standing for ten or more years, **or** is a retired member as defined in the by-laws, **or** was a member in good standing and is nominated posthumously within five years of death; **and** has achieved a high degree of excellence in at least two of the four categories and made a nationally significant contribution in one of them.

If you are unsure of a candidate's membership status? Contact the Specialist, Recognition and Member Engagement at impact@cip-icu.ca.

Who can nominate. Any Professional (MCIP/FCIP) or Retired member of CIP in good standing.

Confidentiality is mandatory. Prepare the dossier without the nominee's knowledge. The guidelines also strongly recommend that the nominee's family is not informed.

The dossier must stand on its own. The jury relies primarily on the written dossier and does not seek other information. Nominators are responsible for submitting a complete, and accurate dossier.

Deadline and upload. The deadline for nominations is January 18, 2027 at 11:59 pm PT, by upload to Submittable. Questions: impact@cip-icu.ca

Cover Page

Recommended

HINT

- Give the nominee's name as they use it professionally, with designations, e.g. "Dr. Jane Doe RPP, MCIP". Add "(Retired)" or "(Posthumous)" where it applies.
- Date the cover with the submission date. Keep the cover plain: no logos, photographs or decoration.
- The cover is not required by the guidelines, but customary on a Fellow dossier.

Part A: Table of Contents

Required

MUST INCLUDE

A table of contents summarizing the contents of the dossier.

HINT

- List every Part in order, with page numbers. Under Part D, list each category you have selected and the summary if you include one.
- Update page numbers **last**, once every Part (including the letters) is assembled. Use the page numbers of the file you upload.
- Use the exact Part titles from the Template in the table of contents, so the contents and the pages agree.
- Delete the Part F line if you are not including additional letters.

Part B: Overview of the Dossier

Required · Maximum 1 page

MUST INCLUDE

- The **categories** in which the nominee is put forward.
- A **synopsis of the nominee's nationally or internationally significant contributions** to planning.
- A **list of the supporters** whose letters are part of the dossier.

HINT

- **Write this Part last.** It is the jury's first impression and must make the whole case on one page.
- Open with who the nominee is, their CIP status (MCIP for ten or more years, Retired, or posthumous) and one sentence on the career.
- Say what sets the nominee apart and the nationally or internationally significant contribution(s)* to planning. Explain how and where the nominee's reach extends beyond their own community or institution. Use the official category names exactly as in the guidelines (for example, "Planning and Community Research") and say which category carries the national or international significance.
- Give each category two to four sentences dealing with scale, duration, external recognition.
- If possible provide factual evidence to support opinions.
- List each supporter once, with designation and organization, in the same order as the letters in Parts E and F. The list of supporters can be in a two-column format to save space.

* See hint on page 5 regarding the guidelines for national or international significance

Part C: Résumé of the Nominee

Required • Maximum 4 pages

MUST INCLUDE

An up-to-date résumé of the nominee, **maximum of 4 pages**, with emphasis on the roles played that are key to the nomination as a Fellow.

HINT

- **Condense.** A full academic or corporate CV will almost always exceed four pages. Select the roles, projects, publications and honours that support the categories chosen in Part D.
- **Build it from public sources if necessary** (employer profile, published CV, publication databases). Do not ask the nominee for a copy: the nomination is confidential.
- **Using part or all of an existing CV with a different format** than shown in the template is acceptable provided it is no longer than four pages.
- Show the nominee's CIP status clearly: other designations and current status.
- Label long lists "Selected" (for example, "Selected Publications") and keep the full list out.
- Keep titles, dates and spellings consistent with the information in Parts B and D.

Part D: Description of the Nominee's Contributions

Required · Maximum 2 pages per category, 8 pages in total

MUST INCLUDE Part D must contain

- A description of the nominee's contributions in **at least two** of the four categories, with a **maximum of 2 pages per category** and **8 pages in total**.
- **Compelling evidence** of excellence that addresses the criteria for each selected category.
- A nationally or internationally significant contribution (or potential to be adopted nationally or internationally) shown in **at least one** category.
- For any contribution described as "innovative", an explanation of how it is truly original and impactful on planning theory, teaching, practice or the profession.
- Ideally any statement related to national/international significance or innovation should be substantiated by factual evidence and/or the stated experience of the nominator or those providing supporting letters.

HINT How to write Part D

- **Choose categories by strength of evidence.** Pick the categories where the record and the letters of support are strongest. Excellence only needs to be shown in two of the categories.
- **Follow the structure in the Template.** Each category opens with a short paragraph on the overall case, then one short section per criterion. The criterion sub-headings use the guideline wording so the jury can find each one.
- **Show, do not list.** A list of accomplishments does not help the jury judge importance. For each claim say what was done, when and for how long, at what scale, with what result, and who says so.
- **Use your supporters' words.** Don't hesitate to quote from letters (one to three sentences) that appear in Parts E or F, in italics, introduced by the supporter's name and designation. Draw on different supporters.
- **Add independent evidence.** Prizes, awards, honours, citations and national or international publication show significance that goes beyond the letter writers.
- **Show what sets this nominee apart** from CIP's many active and skilled members.
- **Watch the page count.** Move long lists to Part C. Start each category on a new page so the two-page limit is easy to check. If you delete the first category, remove the page break before the category that follows.

HINT National or international significance (needed in at least one category)

The guidelines say a contribution can be of national or international significance if it is, for example:

- an unusual or unique policy, approach, design or service, conceived locally, that **has been or could be adopted by other jurisdictions in Canada or abroad**;
- active participation over an extended period in shaping, debating or implementing policies and proposals that have, or could have, significant national impact;
- academic research or professional practice that makes, or could make, an extraordinary contribution nationally or internationally;
- international accomplishments the nominee has introduced into the Canadian planning context;
- exemplary service to CIP over an extended period in a variety of roles.

Say plainly which category carries this significance and why. A strong case should be made for any contribution that is put forward as potentially having a national significance.

Category #1: Professional Practice

MUST INCLUDE What the guidelines require

Exceptional achievement in planning practice and mastery of planning theory, approaches and techniques, shown in plans, projects or policies **in communities of any size and at any jurisdictional level**, supported by evidence under each of the four criteria below.

Professional practice over an extended period of time

HINT

- How many years, and how did roles progress?
- What range of employers, jurisdictions or project types has the nominee worked across?
- What was the scale of the work (population served, budgets, geography)?

Planning contributions that demonstrate a mastery of the principles of planning

HINT

- Which plans, policies or projects best show mastery?
- Which principles, theories or methods did the nominee apply or advance?
- How was the quality recognized (planning awards, peer adoption, citations)?

Responsibility for planning contributions that have made a significant and positive change in a community

HINT

- What was the nominee's role?
- What changed in the community, and can it be measured?
- Who benefited, and how do we know (evaluation, community response, independent source)?

Demonstrated ability to transfer planning knowledge and practice from one location to others

HINT

- Where was an approach first tried, and where was it later adopted or adapted?
- Did the nominee advise, train, publish or present to help others adopt it?
- Is there national or international take-up, or clear potential for it?
- Demonstrate the potential clearly rather than just stating it as a fact.

Category #2: Teaching and Mentoring Planners

MUST INCLUDE What the guidelines require

Exceptional achievement in **advancing and sharing planning knowledge and practice** through teaching planning and/or mentoring planners **outside of an employee–employer relationship**, supported by evidence under each of the four criteria below.

Teaching and/or mentoring over an extended period of time

HINT

- How many years, in which programs, courses or institutions?
- Approximately how many students or mentees were taught, supervised or mentored?
- Include formal work (courses, theses, structured mentorship) and informal mentoring, and any teaching awards.

Influence on the practice of planning within Canadian and/or international contexts

HINT

- Where do former students and mentees now practise, and in what roles?
- Which approaches or standards have spread through them?
- Has the nominee influenced curricula, accreditation or national guidance?

Leadership in advancing the teaching of planning and/or mentoring of planners

HINT

- What did the nominee create or change (curriculum, teaching methods, mentorship programs)?
- Has the nominee contributed to program accreditation or to CIP's education work?
- Are their texts or teaching resources used by others?

Long-standing and exceptional commitment to planning education

HINT

- How consistent has the commitment been across the whole career?
- What has the nominee done beyond their duties (unpaid mentoring, guest lectures, student chapters)?
- How have students and peers recognized it (awards, testimonials)?

Category #3: Planning and Community Research

MUST INCLUDE What the guidelines require

Exceptional achievement through a **significant contribution to the theoretical basis of planning and its practice**, supported by evidence under each of the three criteria below.

Research over an extended period of time

HINT

- How many years, and what are the main research themes and how do they connect?
- What is the volume and quality of output (publications, reports, funded projects)? Give highlights and leave the full list to Part C.
- Where meaningful, include measures of reach such as citations.

Innovation in planning and community research

HINT

- What is new in the nominee's methods, ideas or findings?
- Who, other than the nominator, says it is original?
- Explain how it is truly original and impactful on planning theory or practice. The guidelines require this wherever "innovative" is used.

Application of research to planning practice in Canadian and/or international contexts

HINT

- Which policies, plans or practices changed as a result?
- Who uses the research (governments, practitioners, other countries)?
- Have decision-makers sought the nominee's advice or opinion?

Category #4: Community Service and Leadership in the Profession

MUST INCLUDE What the guidelines require

Exceptional achievement and breadth of experience in **advancing the planning profession and the principles of planning for the benefit of the public domain**, supported by evidence under each of the four criteria below.

Community service in planning through leadership over an extended period of time

HINT

- Which boards, committees or pro bono work, and for how many years?
- What role did the nominee play (chair, founder, lead)?
- What did the community gain?

Leadership in the profession over an extended period of time

HINT

- In which bodies (CIP, provincial or territorial institutes, international organizations)?
- Which offices were held and which initiatives led?
- What changed in the profession as a result?

Influence on planning that benefits the public domain and the planning profession in Canada

HINT

- Which policies, standards, advocacy or national initiatives did the nominee shape?
- How did planning practice or public understanding change?
- How was the influence recognized (invitations, citations, awards)?
- Note that participation in PTIA affairs at the provincial level is generally not considered a national contribution.

Support of community-led activities that advance community involvement in planning

HINT

- Which community organizations or initiatives did the nominee support?
- How did this widen community participation in planning?
- What capacity or lasting change was left behind?

Part E: Letters of Support from Professional and Retired Members

Required • Minimum 5, maximum 8 letters

MUST INCLUDE

A **minimum of five and a maximum of eight** letters from CIP Professional (full) members in good standing and/or CIP Retired members in good standing.

Each letter must contain:

- the **identity** of the letter's author;
- the **length of time, and in what capacity or capacities**, the writer has known the nominee;
- the **reasons** why the nominee's work is nationally significant, or outstanding for other reasons, **and evidence** for the assertions;
- the **signature** of the letter's author.
-

HINT

- Ask people who know the work first-hand and can speak to different categories and perspectives. The guidelines say a stronger submission draws on diverse sources.
- Start this process as soon as possible, experience has shown that it is the most time consuming.
- Letters **cannot** come from a member of the CIP Honours Jury or Board of Directors, and **should not** come from a staff member of the same firm or immediate employer (posthumous nominations are the exception).
- Simple letters of endorsement are not enough.
- Provide in writing to each letter writer the Guide for Letter Writers, the confidentiality reminder and a deadline well ahead of the submission deadline.
- Insert the letters in the same order as they are listed in Part B, each starting on a new page and signed.
- Quote from these letters in Part D, and check each quotation matches the letter word for word.

Part F: Additional Letters of Support

Optional • Maximum 5 letters

MUST INCLUDE

A **maximum of five** additional letters from CIP Candidate, Pre-candidate, Student or Public Associate members in good standing, or from CIP non-members.

The same four required elements apply to each letter:

- the **identity** of the letter's author;
- the **length of time, and in what capacity or capacities**, the writer has known the nominee;
- the **reasons** why the nominee's work is nationally significant, or outstanding for other reasons, **and evidence** for the assertions;
- the **signature** of the letter's author.
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HINT

- Use Part F to add perspectives that members cannot: community partners, elected officials, collaborators from other disciplines, or former students and mentees not yet fully qualified.
- Provide in writing to each letter writer the Guide for Letter Writers, the confidentiality reminder and a deadline well ahead of the submission deadline.
- Non-members may be unfamiliar with the Fellow criteria. Give them a short briefing on what evidence helps.
- The ineligibility rules still apply: no members of the Honours Jury or Board, and no letters from staff of the same firm or immediate employer (unless the nomination is posthumous).

Part G: Confidentiality Statement

Required • Signed by the nominator

MUST INCLUDE

A **signed statement from the nominator** that the nomination process has remained confidential and that, to the nominator's knowledge, the nominee is unaware of being considered for FCIP status.

HINT

- **Sign only if it is true.** Confidentiality is mandatory. If the nominee has learned of the nomination, contact CIP before submitting.
- Sign and date at the time you assemble the final dossier, after all letters have been collected.
- If there are several nominators, add a signature block for each.

Appendix 1: Pre-submission checklist

Eligibility and confidentiality

- ☐ The nominee is eligible: a member of CIP in good standing for 10 or more years, or a Retired member, or a member nominated posthumously within five years of death.
- ☐ I am a Professional (MCIP/FCIP) or Retired member in good standing and am not on the Honours Jury or the CIP Board.
- ☐ No letter writer sits on the CIP Honours and Awards Jury or the CIP Board.
- ☐ The nominee has not been told about the nomination, and (as recommended) neither has the nominee's family.
- ☐ Every letter writer has been reminded in writing that the nomination is confidential.

Content and limits

- ☐ **Part A** lists every Part (and the categories under Part D); page numbers are correct for the assembled file.
- ☐ **Part B** fits on 1 page and contains the categories, the synopsis of national/international contributions, and the list of supporters.
- ☐ **Part C** is 4 pages or fewer and emphasises the roles key to the nomination.
- ☐ **Part D** covers at least 2 categories, at most 2 pages each and 8 pages in total; national/international significance is shown in at least one category; every use of "innovative" is explained.
- ☐ **Part E** has 5 to 8 letters, all from Professional or Retired members in good standing.
- ☐ **Part F** (if used) has no more than 5 letters.
- ☐ Every letter is signed and contains the five required elements (author's identity, how long and in what capacity the author has known the nominee, reasons and evidence, signature, contact points).
- ☐ No letter comes from a staff member of the same firm or immediate employer (unless the nomination is posthumous), and none is a simple endorsement.
- ☐ **Part G** is signed and dated.

Clean-up and upload

- ☐ Every status marker line in the Template is deleted.
- ☐ Fonts, sizes and headings are consistent throughout the document.

Ensure that names, designations, titles and dates are consistent across all Parts.

- ☐ Quotations in Part D match the letters exactly and come from letters that are in the submission.
- ☐ The dossier is assembled and named as CIP requires and uploaded to Submittable before the deadline.

Appendix 2: Guide for Letter Writers

Supporting a nomination to the CIP College of Fellows

Nominators: it is optional to give this page to each person you ask to write a letter. It is a handout and is not part of the dossier.

You have been asked to support the nomination of **[Nominee name]** for election as a Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Planners (FCIP), the highest honour the Institute can bestow on a planner. Your letter is a key part of the dossier: the Honours and Awards Jury makes its recommendation from the written dossier alone and does not seek other information.

Please keep this nomination confidential. Do not discuss it with the nominee, the nominee's family, or colleagues who might mention it to them. Please return your signed letter to [Nominator name, email] by [date].

Your letter must include

1. Your name and role, so the jury knows who is writing.
2. How long, and in what capacity or capacities, you have known the nominee.
3. The reasons the nominee's work is nationally significant, or outstanding for other reasons, **and the evidence for your assertions.**
4. Your signature.
5. How you may be contacted.

Your letter should not

- Come from a staff member of the same firm or immediate employer as the nominee (posthumous nominations are the exception).
- Be a simple letter of endorsement. Say what you know, and how you know it.
- Be written by a member of the CIP Honours Jury or Board of Directors, who are not eligible to write letters.

What makes a letter stronger

- Write from your own vantage point. The jury values diverse perspectives on the nominee's achievements.
- Give context and evidence, not a list. Explain why an accomplishment matters and what sets this person apart from CIP's many skilled members.
- Point to independent recognition where you know of it: prizes, awards, honours, citations, national or international publication.
- If you call something "innovative", explain how it is truly original and what impact it had on planning theory, teaching, practice or the profession.
- Say whether, and how, the contribution has national or international significance.

A simple structure

1. **Opening:** who you are, and how long and in what capacity you have known the nominee.
2. **Assessment:** one or two of the four categories where you have first-hand knowledge (Professional Practice; Teaching and Mentoring Planners; Planning and Community Research; Community Service and Leadership in the Profession).

3. **Evidence:** specific examples, outcomes and recognition.
4. **Significance:** why it matters nationally or internationally.
5. **Close:** signature, printed name, designation (MCIP, FCIP, Retired, or other status), organization and contact details.