



ASPP PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE GUIDE

ABOUT THE ASPP

The Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) is a key activity of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Formerly known as the Aid to Scholarly Publications Program, the ASPP is a competitive funding program designed to assist with the publication of scholarly books on topics in the humanities and social sciences.

Under the program's mandate to support books of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences that make an important contribution to knowledge, the ASPP has supported the publication of over 7,000 books that have helped to enrich the social, cultural and intellectual life of Canada and the world.

Each year, the ASPP offers 180 Publication Grants of \$8,000 and five Translation Grants of \$12,000, contributing 1.5 million dollars to the dissemination of Canadian research. The ASPP is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

More information about the ASPP is available on the Federation's website at <https://www.federationhss.ca/en/programs-policies/aspp>.

ABOUT THE PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Publications Committee is a large and diverse committee of scholars that includes specialists in all of the primary disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. They assess Publication Grant applications for their scholarly quality and fitness with the program's mandate.

Committee members work a maximum of two three-year terms on a volunteer basis. Drawn from universities across Canada, most committee members are bilingual, with some unilingual anglophones and francophones. The vast majority are active scholars, with a small number of recent retirees also participating at any given time.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Publications Committee member's role is the following:

- Primarily, to assess Publication Grant applications for the awarding of ASPP funds;
- Occasionally, to suggest appropriate peer reviewers for submitted works;
- Occasionally, to recommend scholars as potential candidates for the Publications Committee.

Publication Grant Application Assessments

The most demanding task for a committee member is assessing Publication Grant applications. This involves reviewing the complete application package, which includes the application form, an excerpt of the work, the peer reviewers' reports and the author's response, though your assessment should be largely based on the peer review reports and the author's response.

Before making an assessment, you should familiarize yourself with the program's conflict-of-interest guidelines, which are included as an appendix to this guide. If you are concerned that you may be in conflict-of-interest with an author, please contact the ASPP's Program Officer.

When making an assessment, you are asked to consider the mandate of the program, which is to assist with the publication of books of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences that make an important contribution to knowledge. The ASPP's funds are limited, and the program is meant to support works of the highest quality.

The ASPP seeks to process applications as efficiently as possible in order to best serve the scholarly community. It is important that you are able to assess applications in a timely fashion. In most cases, you will be expected to submit your assessment for an application within **four weeks** of receiving it. If for some reason you cannot meet this deadline, or if you will be unavailable for any extended period of time, please advise the ASPP's Program Officer.

You should examine all elements of the application and assess it according to the following scale. Please submit your assessment as a number to one decimal place with comments.

Score	Descriptor
5.0-6.0	Excellent. Strongly recommended for funding. The work is at the forefront of its field, and it will have significant impact within its discipline. The work's methodological/theoretical framework is strong. The manuscript is well-structured and well written. The work's contribution to knowledge is important.
4.0-4.9	Very good. Recommended for funding. The work meets all the standards for high quality within its field and makes a major contribution within its discipline. The work's methodological/theoretical framework is sound, though some parts of it might have been strengthened. The manuscript has structural integrity, and is generally well-written. The work's contribution to knowledge is of some importance.
3.0-3.9	Good. Recommended for funding if funds are available. The work meets most of the standards for high quality within its field, and makes a modest though interesting contribution within its discipline, but lacks distinction in at least one of the following areas: methodological/theoretical framework, structure, writing style, and/or importance.
2.9 or less	Not recommended for funding. The work meets some of the standards for achievement within its field, but makes only a limited contribution within its discipline, and is flawed in at least one of the following areas: methodological/theoretical framework, structure, writing style, and/or importance.

In most cases, five committee members work on any given application. At least three members must submit an assessment in order for an application to be scored. All applications scored in a given month will be ranked and the top ranking applications will be approved for funding. Applications scoring 2.9 or less will not be approved for funding.

Recommending Peer Reviewers

Committee members may be asked on occasion to suggest names of potential peer reviewers for submitted works. In such cases, you may recommend scholars from Canada or abroad. You are also asked to provide the institutional affiliation of the suggested peer reviewers, if possible.

According to the program's guidelines, for every application at least two peer reviewers, conforming to the ASPP's conflict-of-interest policy, must provide detailed reports on the work.

Most applications requiring the ASPP's Program Officer to gather peer review reports come directly from authors. Publishers must provide at least one peer review report with their applications and many, including members of the Association of Canadian University Presses, will provide both peer review reports.

Before recommending peer reviewers, you should familiarize yourself with the program's conflict-of-interest guidelines, which is included as an appendix to this guide. Please do your best to avoid recommending a peer reviewer who has an obvious conflict-of-interest with an author, such as being employed at the same institution.

Recommending New Committee Members

Refreshing the membership of the Publications Committee is an ongoing process. New committee members are invited by the ASPP's Program Officer on the recommendations of current and/or outgoing members. The Academic Council is also invited to recommend potential new members. When gaps remain, the Program Officer may also research potential candidates, and review their profiles and history with the ASPP.

In order to maintain the regional and institutional diversity of the Publications Committee, please recommend scholars from institutions other than your own.

OTHER SPECIFICATIONS

Committee members may continue to review for publishers without restriction. If you act as peer reviewer for a work submitted to the ASPP, you will simply not be called upon to assess that application as a member of the Publications Committee.

Committee members are allowed to apply for ASPP grants. Of course, you will not be asked to assess your own work as a member of the Publications Committee.

CONCLUSION

Being a member of the ASPP Publications Committee demands time, good judgment, and a desire to maintain high standards in humanities and social sciences scholarship. Committee members' knowledge, experience and sensitivity to new trends in scholarship will help ensure that the ASPP assesses applications fairly.

On behalf of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, please accept our sincerest appreciation for the work you will perform and for your contribution to maintaining excellence in Canadian scholarship.

QUESTIONS

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