

Judging Criteria and Procedures for Pellegrin Scholarship Awards

In the Pellegrin selection progress, each judge weighs the following criteria according to his/her own preference, the only requirement being to do so equally for all candidates. Thus, one judge might give more weight to GPA; another to the letter; another to STC service. The criteria are as follows:

- Academic performance (GPA, in major and overall; plus transcript)
- Writing ability (letter)
 - Content, organization, coherence, creativity, and writing style of the letter, as it reflects the candidates understanding of and commitment to the technical communication profession
 - Editorial quality of the writing in terms of syntax, grammar, usage, and mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, etc.)
- Service to STC
- The candidate's understanding of and commitment to the technical communication profession, as reflected in the letter
- Other factors (financial need, disability, veteran, single parent, non-traditional student, hours of employment per week, etc.)

If you know a candidate personally, it is appropriate to use that knowledge in your evaluation (positively or negatively), although you should not give the candidate credit for achievements you know about that he/she fails to include in the letter. If this situation occurs (and if often does, as our mentees tend to be "in the chase"), take care to maintain a "level playing field" vs the candidates you don't know personally by studying their applications and letter very closely. *The paramount consideration is the evidence presented in the letter*, not what you do or do not know about the candidates outside what's in the letter.

We typically meet to read the applications and each judge ranks them numerically from 1 to N, before there is any discussion. We tabulate the scores. Sometimes the arithmetic is so compelling as to obviate the need for a detailed discussion to establish consensus. Other times, it is very close, and there is significant discussion. In such cases, it is not a foregone conclusion that the best score wins ... if it's real close, it can go either way (even, but rarely, a tie).

A final consideration for the judges occurs if there are more applications in one category (undergraduate or graduate) than the other. This has occurred several times, always with more candidates at the u-grad level, sometimes with only 1 or 2 (or even none) at the grad level. This can get a little tricky. We have deliberately given ourselves the latitude to grant anywhere from zero to 4 scholarships (the latter in the extremely unlikely case of having "unbreakable" ties at both levels) although we've never actually given more than 3. We generally give 2, sometimes just 1. However, we wouldn't want to give 1 of the 2 scholarships to a mediocre graduate candidate who happened to be the ONLY graduate candidate. In that instance, if we had 2 highly qualified u-grad candidates, we'd give out 2 u-grad awards and no grad award. Conversely, if the graduate candidate is equal to or better than the top u-grad candidate, we'd grant 1 award at each level rather than giving out 2 at the u-grad level.

Under committee policy, all scholarship application materials and ballots are handed out at the consensus judging and collected by the committee manager at the end, to eliminate any possibility that confidentiality will be compromised. Such materials are not distributed by e-mail, regular mail, or any other means. We did have a breach of ethics (with confidential and personal information from a student application being brought out in a public forum) once several years ago, and it had serious consequences.