

## 2023 Breakthrough Awards Nomination Submission Guide

### Overview

All Breakthrough award nominations are submitted online through a [nomination system](#) based on USC's sponsored awards proposal routing system USCeRA, a familiar interface for most USC faculty members. For all Breakthrough awards, both the nominee and the nominator have a role to play in completing nomination package. Completed nomination packages are ultimately finalized and submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Research by the nominator.

**2023 Breakthrough Award nominations are due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 14, 2022.**

### Nomination Package Preparation

Before starting the nomination inside of the system, the nominee and nominator should prepare the components of the nomination package listed in the guidelines and criteria document for the appropriate award. This will help to make the process of uploading/inputting these items more efficient.

**Each award has different requirements and nomination package components, so it is important to ensure the nominee and nominator refer to the correct documentation when preparing the nomination package.**

2023 Guidelines and Criteria documents are available for download at the links below:

- [Breakthrough Leadership in Research Award](#)
- [Breakthrough Stars Award](#)
- [Breakthrough Graduate Scholars Award](#)



### **New for 2023 Faculty Award Nominations:**

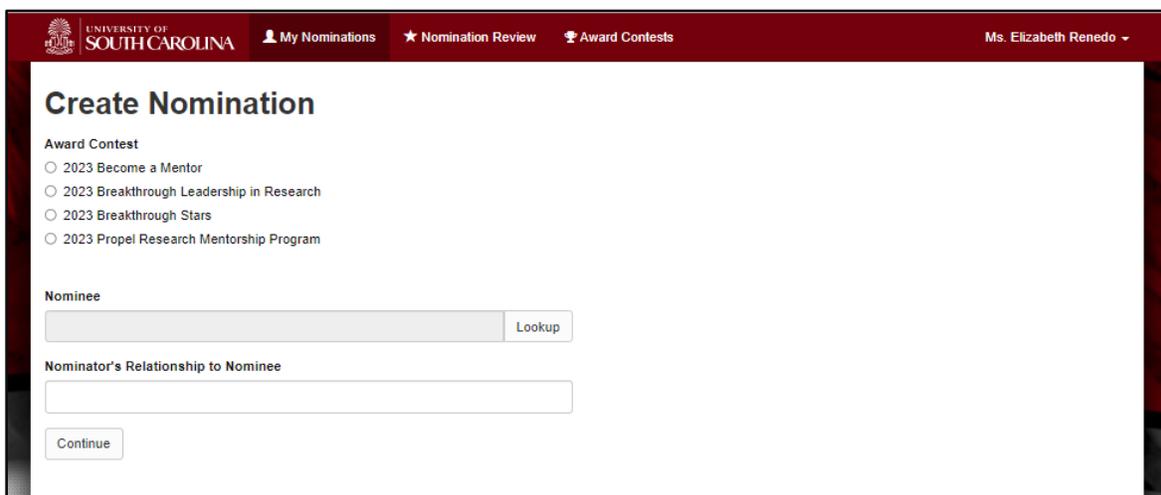
Each year, recipients of the two Breakthrough faculty awards—Stars and Leadership in Research—are featured in a special photo spread with a short write-up, in the annual Breakthrough awards booklet. To ensure 2023 Breakthrough faculty awards recipients have a chance to comment on their research careers, in their own words, we have included three new queries in the nominee questionnaires for these awards. We encourage all faculty nominees to take creative license in answering these new questions, providing their own interpretations and reflections. The new questions are listed below to aid in planning; all questions have a 4000-character limit.

1. Considering your research focus, what drew you to it initially, and what has kept you in those research questions over the years?
2. What's next for your research career?
3. How would you summarize the significance and impact of your research career — how has it advanced your own understanding of the research topic? How has it advanced your students and your particular academic discipline?

## Submitting the Nomination Online

### Nominator Steps 1-3

1. The nominator initiates the nomination process through the USCeRA-based system by logging in at [vprinitatives.research.sc.edu](http://vprinitatives.research.sc.edu), with the username and password he or she uses to access USC email, USCeRA, etc. When logged in, the nominator will begin on a screen titled “My Nominations.”
  - To initiate a new nomination, the nominator should click the red “+ Create Nomination” button.



The screenshot shows the 'Create Nomination' page in the USCeRA system. The header includes the University of South Carolina logo, navigation links for 'My Nominations', 'Nomination Review', and 'Award Contests', and the user name 'Ms. Elizabeth Renedo'. The main content area is titled 'Create Nomination' and contains the following elements:

- Award Contest:** A list of four radio button options: '2023 Become a Mentor', '2023 Breakthrough Leadership in Research', '2023 Breakthrough Stars', and '2023 Propel Research Mentorship Program'.
- Nominee:** A text input field followed by a 'Lookup' button.
- Nominator's Relationship to Nominee:** A text input field.
- Continue:** A button at the bottom left of the form.

2. On the “Create Nomination” screen (above), the nominator should select the desired award, then select the nominee using the “Lookup” tool to search for first and last name. Once the nominee is selected, the nominator enters a short description of their relationship to the nominee (colleague or mentor, for example). Once all selections are made, click the green “✓ Continue” button.
  - When a faculty member is selected, USCeRA will capture the nominee’s basic details like name, email, tenure status, etc., automatically.
  - See page 3 for special notes on creating Breakthrough Graduate Scholars nominations.



## Special Notes for Creating Breakthrough Graduate Scholars Nominations:

- Only faculty members who are denoted in the nomination system as graduate directors will see the “2023 Breakthrough Graduate Scholars” option in the “Award Contest” list, as shown in the screenshot below.
- If you are a graduate director, but you are unable to see the Graduate Scholars option, please contact Debbie Gipson at [GipsonD@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:GipsonD@mailbox.sc.edu) or 803-777-5458 for support.
- When selecting a graduate student nominee who may not already be in the USCeRA system, enter the first three letters of the student’s first and last names to search the system.
  - If the student has an existing USCeRA account, the nominator may select him or her and basic details will be captured automatically.
  - If the student is not already a USCeRA user, the nominator will use the “Create Student Account” screen to fill in the complete first and last name, email address and department. The nominated student will then receive an email at the address entered and be prompted to complete their portion of the nomination steps.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

My Nominations Nomination Review Award Contest

### Create Nomination

**Award Contest**

- 2023 Become a Mentor
- 2023 Breakthrough Leadership in Research
- 2023 Breakthrough Stars
- 2023 Propel Research Mentorship Program
- 2023 Breakthrough Graduate Scholars

**Nominee**

**Nominator's Relationship to Nominee**

The screenshot shows the 'Prepare Nomination' interface for Deborah Gipson. At the top, the University of South Carolina logo and navigation links for 'My Nominations', 'Nomination Review', and 'Award Contests' are visible. The user 'Ms. Elizabeth Renedo' is logged in. The main heading is 'Prepare Nomination' for 'Deborah Gipson'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'My Nominations / Prepare Nomination'. A 'Details' box contains the following information:

- Award Contest:** 2023 Breakthrough Stars
- Nominee:** Deborah Gipson
- Nominee Department:** Office Research - General
- Nominee Job Title:** Administrative Manager I
- Nominator's Relationship to Nominee:** Colleague

To the right of the details is a 'Guideline Documents' button. Below the details is an 'Edit Nomination Information' button. A light blue informational box contains the following text:

Clicking on the button below will start the next step of the nomination process by notifying the nominee via email to login and complete their part of the nomination. You will receive an email once the nominee is finished with a link to this nomination so that you can then submit it to the Office of Research.

At the bottom of the main content area is a 'Send to Nominee to Complete' button. A second breadcrumb trail 'My Nominations / Prepare Nomination' is located at the very bottom of the page.

- On the Prepare Nomination Screen (above), the nominator should review the nominee details to ensure the correct nominee has been selected for the intended award, then click “✓ Send to Nominee to Complete” button to send the nomination to the nominee who will complete his or her portion of the nomination package.
  - If the selected nominee or award is incorrect, use the grey “Edit Nomination” button to go back and adjust.
  - Remember, later in the process the nominator will upload the letter(s) of recommendation before submitting the final nomination package to the Office of Research. Refer to the specific award’s guidelines and criteria document for details on the required recommendation letter(s).

## Nominee Steps 4-6

- The nominee will receive an email prompting him or her to log in and complete the nominee portion of the nomination package. When the nominee logs in (using normal credentials for accessing USCeRA, USC email, etc.), the nomination will appear on the “My Nominations” page, under the heading “You have been nominated” along the right-hand side of the page. Click the nomination to access the “Prepare Nomination” screen.

The screenshot shows the 'Prepare Nomination' interface for Deborah Gipson. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'My Nominations', 'Nomination Review', and 'Award Contests'. The main content area is titled 'Prepare Nomination' and includes a breadcrumb trail 'My Nominations / Prepare Nomination'. A 'Details' section lists the award contest as '2023 Breakthrough Stars', the nominee as Deborah Gipson, her department as 'Office Research - General', her job title as 'Administrative Manager I', and her relationship to the nominator as 'Colleague'. A 'Nominee Questionnaire' section features a red button labeled '? Complete Nominee Questionnaire'. Below this is a 'Required Documents' section with three items: 'Mentor Letter of Recommendation' (nominator upload), 'Nominee CV' (nominee upload with an 'Upload Document' button), and 'Second Letter of Recommendation' (nominator obtain and upload). A 'Guideline Documents' button is also visible in the top right.

- From the “Prepare Nomination” screen (above), the nominee will:
  - Upload an up-to-date CV (for faculty nominees only) in PDF format.
  - Click the red “? Complete Nominee Questionnaire” button to access and complete the questionnaire prompts associated with the award for which they are nominated.
    - Important notes on entering responses into the questionnaire:**
      - If the nominee pastes text that is longer than 4,000 characters into a response box, the characters over 4,000 will not be pasted. Nominees should check carefully to ensure that text has not been truncated. If it has, they must shorten the response to fit within the allotted 4,000 characters.
      - Nominees may begin their questionnaire, save it using the green

“Continue” button, and complete it later. To do this, nominees must enter placeholder text in all empty response boxes before saving.

- When working on questionnaire responses, users may click and drag the grey square in the lower right-hand corner of the response box to adjust the size of the box, if desired.
6. When the nominee has completed the questionnaire and uploaded a current CV (CV is a requirement for faculty nominees only), the nominee should click the green “✓ Submit to Nominator” button to electronically certify the information and return it to the nominator for final review and submission to the Office of Research.
- After the nominee has completed and submitted the questionnaire, the nominator will be able to review the nominee’s responses. The nominator cannot edit the nominee’s responses, but he or she can ask the nominee to make revisions (and save them) at any time before the final nomination package is submitted.

### **Nominator Final Step 7**

7. The nominator will receive an email notification when the nominee completes their portion of the nomination package. The nominator’s final step is to log in and upload the letter(s) of recommendation, review the nominee’s questionnaire and CV (CV is a requirement for faculty nominees only) and ensure that all items are accurate. Once all items are final, click the green “✓ Submit Nomination to the Office of Research” button to send the package to the Office of Research for consideration.
- The nominator cannot edit the nominee’s questionnaire responses, however, he or she can ask the nominee to make and save changes at any time before the final nomination package is submitted to the Office of Research. The nomination package is not submitted until the nominator clicks the green “✓ Submit Nomination to the Office of Research” button.

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For questions regarding the Breakthrough Awards or the nomination process, contact **Debbie Gipson** in the Office of the Vice President for Research.

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