

YALSA Board of Directors  
Midwinter Meeting, Seattle  
January 25 – 29, 2019

**Topic:** Recommendations for Award Manuals and Eligibility Criteria

**Background:** This discussion item was brought forth by the Awards Oversight Committee, based on their observations. The Awards Oversight Committee recommends changes regarding eligibility, service, and voting. The document was brought forward by Rob Bittner on behalf of the Awards Oversight Committee.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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**Overview of the Issue**

The Awards Oversight Committee has brought forward the following recommendations for changes to the Award Committees.

**Regarding Eligibility:**

The following recommendations have been developed in response to multiple and redundant questions from committee chairs over the course of the last year (2018) which could be better clarified across award manuals and eligibility sections of the various committee sites.

**Recommendation Regarding Adaptations:**

Adaptations of original work into other formats and for other audiences is becoming increasingly common in YA publishing and as such we believe it would be important to make sure there is more explicit language included in various manuals and sites regarding YALSA's position on the eligibility of these adaptations, particularly where Printz and Morris are concerned. The following are three examples that came up repeatedly throughout the last year (2018):

- Graphic novel adaptations of existing literature (eg. *Speak* adapted to graphic novel)
- Web comics adapted to graphic novel format (eg. *Check Please*, originally web content)
- YA adaptation of an Adult text for a YA audience (eg. *We Are Not Yet Equal* adapted from *White Rage*) \*
- Plays and scripts and performances adapted to novel format (eg. *Black Girl Magic*, originally performed as poetry slam in 2016)

\*For further consideration in this type of situation is the specifics of what would be considered an “adaptation” for a new audience. In the instance noted earlier, the book has been heavily revised, while in another situation, the following was noted by committee member Betsy Fraser:

The Printz committee has provided us with another interesting example: Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* (adult version - 352p., came out to much acclaim in 2014), now has a 288p Adapted for

Young Adult version. The beginning, as per the excerpt is identical. Material has been published before; now packaged and directed at YA audience (Delacorte instead of Spiegel & Grau.)

As this seems to be a re-packaging as opposed to a significantly updated or revised “adaptation” it would be helpful for the Board to discuss and decide on a detailed definition to ensure continuity for future committees.

**Recommendation Regarding “Debut” Definition:**

In relation to the Morris Award, there have been questions regarding whether or not academic publications (articles, books, workbooks, etc.) count against an author being considered as a “debut.” Establishment of eligibility with regard to this type of previously published work would be helpful for future committees, particularly as we see an increase in the overlap between academics/educators, and fiction publishing.

In addition, the eligibility dates need to be consistent between the website and the downloadable manuals, particularly where the cycle start, and end dates are concerned.

**Regarding Service:**

**Recommendation:**

A number of scenarios came up over the course of the year (2018) during which active committee members were asked to take part in panels at conferences or were asked to introduce potentially eligible authors at events. Clarification of the YALSA Board’s position on this would be very helpful for future training sessions and for inclusion in the online FAQ.

**Regarding Voting:**

**Recommendation:**

In regard to the Edwards committee manual and procedures, over the last two years I (Rob Bittner) have received questions regarding the voting process. Considering the fact that clarification has been requested over multiple years, it would seem necessary to incorporate language into the manual to clarify the voting system. Chairs have wondered if it is a simple majority or if some more formal system is required.

In conclusion we would like to thank the Board for taking the time to consider these recommendations and we would be happy to continue working with the Board to develop clear and explicit policy language in the coming year once the new Awards Oversight Committee has been formed.

**Possible next steps**

Provide clarification to the Award Oversight Committee.