

Committee on Odyssey Evaluation

Joint Board Report

Date: November 9, 2019
To: YALSA Board of Directors, ALSC Board of Directors
From: Committee on Odyssey Evaluation
Subject: Recommendations re: award manual and eligibility criteria

Charge:

To evaluate current Odyssey eligibility criteria and determine effective ways of reducing the workload of committee members while ensuring that the committee continues to evaluate audio productions efficiently and critically. To advise the ALSC and YALSA Boards of Directors on recommendations for the 2020 awards cycle and continuing tasks for the 2021 cycle and beyond. While we will have further recommendations forthcoming in the new year, we have two recommendations that can hopefully be implemented in time for the incoming Odyssey committee.

Recommendation #1:

Regarding Committee Size

The following recommendation has been developed in response to current concerns from the Odyssey committee chair and other committee members with regards to workload and efficacy of critical evaluation. The current committee has, as of November 4, 2019, listened to over ten thousand hours of audio recordings, which is a significant increase from previous years.

As noted by Heather Booth, Booklist consultant, the audiobook industry continues to thrive, and thus the amount of work will continue to rise for future committees. As such, this committee is working on developing a series of recommendations to bring to both the ALSC and YALSA Boards over the next year.

In light of this information and until we are able to formulate a long-term solution, we recommend that both YALSA and ALSC appoint one more member each for the 2020 awards cycle, to serve on the Odyssey committee. This would bring the total committee size to 11 members, which will help to alleviate some of the current concerns around workload.

Recommendation #2:**Regarding Eligibility of Audible-Only Submissions**

Audible productions are available for public consumption but are not available for institutional purchase for the purpose of lending either through school or public libraries. This has become a cause for concern in light of different interpretations of policy wording over the last few years by different chairs. As such, this committee recommends more explicit wording in the policies--both in the manual and on the division website, both of which contain very out-of-date language--regarding Audible productions.

The current wording states that the audiobook “must be available for school and public libraries as well as consumer use.” We recommend changing the wording to: “The audiobook must be available for school and public libraries *to purchase as an institution for the purposes of lending*, as well as consumer use.”