Review Integrity Training for Reviewers: Preliminary Results from CSR

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Background

- Previous CSR review integrity online training module launched in 2019 (developed with input from CSRAC working group)
- Review integrity concerns persist
- **New** training module released for Fall 2022 meetings:
  - Offers a refresher
  - Uses scenario-based experiential approach, prompting learners to think through potential issues
  - Leverages new technology to increase learner interactivity and engagement (active learning)
Learning Objectives

• Identify integrity as critical to the peer review process

• Identify breaches in integrity (increased awareness)

• Describe the consequences of breaches in integrity

• Describe reviewers’ role/responsibilities in maintaining integrity

• Apply tools to maintain integrity
Overview of 30-min Training Module

Before the Meeting

Preparing for the meeting by reviewing the agenda and potential issues.

At the Meeting

Identifying potential integrity breaches during the meeting.

After the Meeting

Summarizing the meeting and discussing next steps.

Preventing inappropriate influence on review during a seminar visit with an applicant.

Protecting confidential information when interacting with an applicant.
Training and Survey Response Rates (2023/01 Council Round)

**Training**
- 9,158 reviewers asked to take training 4 weeks before meeting
- 7,072* completed the training (*to date)
- 77% response rate

**Post-Training Evaluation Survey**
- 6,206 reviewers completed the survey
- 88% response rate
Survey Measures

Training-Specific Measures
- Knowledge and awareness of integrity in peer review
- Tools to prevent and report integrity breaches
- General satisfaction with the training
- Usefulness of specific training activities

Other Measures
- Prevalence of integrity breaches in NIH review
- Frequency of reporting integrity breaches

Qualitative Feedback
- General comments about review integrity and recommendations for improving the training
- Request to be contacted
Results: Prevalence of Integrity Breaches in Review Process

Problem with integrity breaches
- Moderate problem = 35%
- Big or very big problem = 21%

Encountered/suspected integrity breaches in the last year
- At least once = 11%
69% of reviewers **never or rarely reached out** to an NIH official when they thought a breach in review integrity was present or possible (in the last year).
Results: Knowledge and Awareness of Review Integrity

~ 90% of reviewers reported that the training **substantially increased** their knowledge and awareness of review integrity.
Results: Tools to Prevent and Report Integrity Breaches

Over 90% of reviewers reported that the training **substantially increased** their knowledge of tools to prevent and report integrity breaches, and comfort contacting NIH with concerns.
Results: General Satisfaction with the Training

~ 90% of reviewers were satisfied (strongly agree or agree) with the training.
Results: Usefulness of Specific Training Activities

Over 90% of reviewers found the training activities to be moderately to extremely useful.
Qualitative Feedback

General comments and recommendations for improving the training
• Currently being analyzed for common and salient themes

Request to be Contacted
• Had general comments or concerns about review integrity:  N = 16
• Reported specific integrity concerns to RIO after the training:  N = 4
Summary

- Reviewers report a significant problem with review integrity in NIH review.

- Many reviewers do not reach out to NIH about concerns (pre-training).

- Reviewers were highly satisfied with the training and scenario-based format.

- The training succeeded in increasing reviewers’:
  - Understanding of the importance of protecting integrity
  - Awareness of integrity breaches, how they occur and the consequences
  - Knowledge of tools to prevent and report integrity breaches
  - Comfort contacting NIH with concerns
Next steps

- **2023/05 Council Round**: CSR reviewers who haven’t yet completed the training will be asked to complete it.

- **Expected Fall 2023**: Review Integrity and CSR’s Bias Awareness and Mitigation training modules will be integrated into Commons and made mandatory for all NIH reviewers (OIG mandate for Review Integrity).

  - Reviewers will only be asked to complete each module once.

  - Plan to develop new version/update of each training every three years.

  - Plan to require reviewers to take each training every three years.
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Questions?