



Center for
Scientific Review

Council Working Group on Review Integrity

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Integrity of the Peer Review Process

Critically important for all of us

- Maintaining the public trust in the NIH's stewardship of taxpayer dollars to support U.S. biomedical science research
- Confidentiality is critical for candor in discussion and evaluation, and thus impacts the very basis of the peer review process
- Will take the support of the entire research community – investigators, reviewers, chairs, NIH staff, institutional officials
- NIH is taking this issue very seriously– not widespread problem, but increased reporting/action – culture change

Peer Review Integrity Reviewer Training

- Long-term goal: Raise reviewer awareness/change peer review culture
- Short-term goal: Develop a web-based training module for reviewers
- Web-tool content:
 - Introduction to NIH policies/general principles
 - Case studies of violations ranging from low-level to egregious
 - Guidance on how to respond to cases reviewers encounter
- Format: Brief, interactive (e.g., Y/N, multiple choice questions), trackable

Current Version of Training Module (beta)

Brief Introductory Videos (with captions), 1-3 min each

- General Introduction
- Reviewer Responsibilities (Confidentiality and Conflict-of-Interest)
- Applicant Responsibilities
- What should you do as a reviewer if you believe a breach in review integrity may have occurred?

INTERACTIVE EXERCISES (7)

Brief Concluding Videos (with captions), 1 min each

- Consequences of a breach in peer review integrity
- Conclusion

Integrity Exercises: Interactive Q/A

Exercise	Integrity Topic	Format
1	Confidential info related to review meetings: scores, assignments, conflicts-of-interest	drag and drop
2	Integrity breaches in commonly encountered situations: dinner/hallway conversations, revealing details of prior applications/assignments during meeting discussions, sharing applications with lab members	Y/N
3	Issues related to reviewer/applicant interaction: seminar invitations	multiple choice
4	Review tampering (what should you do?): requests for 'favors', breach of confidentiality, access to prohibited information	video skit/multiple choice
5	Review tampering (what should you do?): "tit-for-tat" review requests	video skit/multiple choice
6	Issues related to reviewer/applicant interaction: applicant requests for information/advice	multiple choice
7	Misappropriation of intellectual property: plagiarism/theft of application data or ideas	multiple choice

Demo of Integrity Training Module

Videos and Exercises

[Introduction](#)

[Exercise 1](#)

Next steps

- Revise in response to Council feedback
- Reassess informational videos for brevity (want main focus on Exercises)
- Refine the module
- Re-record Exercises 4 and 5 with live actors
- Pilot revised version with group of SROs and reviewers
- Establish tracking in order to monitor reviewer participation

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Discussion

Council thoughts?