



Participation and Responsiveness in Peer Review

Title

Welcome to this Learning Module on Participation and Responsiveness in Peer Review.

Navigation Instructions

This course is designed to be self-paced. Use the playbar below to resume playback, navigate between slides, mute and unmute audio, and toggle closed captions. You can also browse the full table of contents, and collapse or move the playbar.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Identify inappropriate contribution behaviours during committee meetings.
2. Differentiate between professionalism issues and preparedness issues that should be avoided.
3. And identify when timely responses are required to support smooth delivery of these meetings.

Introduction

CIHR is implementing quality assurance practices in peer review for all reviewers to uphold the highest standards of excellence and integrity in our processes. Quality assurance practices are measured by the degree to which reviewers meet the following criteria:

1. Review Quality
2. Participation
3. Responsiveness

Introduction 2

The Participation performance criterion is broken down across three sections. The first, contribution, is the expectation that reviewers will provide high quality reviews and constructively participate in committee discussions. The second, professionalism, is the expectation that reviewers will demonstrate appropriate and respectful behaviour. The third, preparedness, is the expectation that reviewers will be familiar with and abide by CIHR peer review processes and committee roles and responsibilities. For responsiveness, CIHR expects that reviewers will adhere to competition timelines and communicate in a timely manner with CIHR staff. This module will discuss peer review performance expectations using real world examples. Emphasis will be placed on appropriate behaviour at committee meetings.

Main Menu

Please select the peer review performance indicator you would like to learn more about:

- Contribution
- Professionalism
- Preparedness
- Responsiveness

Elements of Contribution

In this section, you will learn how to make valuable Contributions to the Peer Review Process. Peer review contribution consists of two main elements:

1. Written Reviews - Reviewers are expected to provide high quality written reviews, which normally consist of the rating (or score) and explanatory comments before the committee meeting.
2. Constructive Discussions - Reviewers are expected to make quality contributions to peer review meeting discussions.

This module will focus primarily on the second element of Peer Review Contribution: Constructive Discussions. For more information on [review quality](#) in written reviews, please click on the button in the bottom right corner of the screen to be redirected to the Review Quality Page on the CIHR website.

Contribution

To contribute effectively to peer review discussions, reviewers must concisely present the identified strengths and/or weaknesses influencing their application rating and meaningfully participate in discussions for all applications where they have relevant expertise. Reviewers should equally be familiar with applications they were not assigned and, at minimum, read the summaries. Even where expertise is limited, reviewers can ask questions and ensure that the scores and comments align consistently across applications. Reviewers should also ensure the

accuracy of the feedback they have given and that their voices are clearly heard by all the members in the meeting room, including those on teleconference or in a virtual setting.

Knowledge Check 1

Test your knowledge! Which of the following are contribution behaviours that should be avoided during committee meetings? Select all that apply and then submit your response.

Note: Submitting your answer will trigger a pop-up window.

- a) Present comments in an unstructured and unclear manner leading to confusion on what aspects influenced their application rating.
- b) Focus on minutia in applications that do not add value to the discussion.
- c) Ask questions about applications in areas where they have limited expertise.
- d) Read reviews verbatim rather than outlining key aspects that contribute to the consensus score.
- e) Be familiar with applications that they were not assigned.
- f) Speak at a volume that is too low to be heard clearly by all members.

The Importance of Contribution in Committee Meetings

Your Contribution in committee discussions is important to:

- Support transparency and accountability in peer review.
- Produce fair and objective reviews through peer-to-peer interaction.
- Efficiently develop consensus on an application.
- Support an informed score from all reviewers.
- Safeguard the scientific enterprise from fraud and misconduct through the scrutiny of reviewers.

Professionalism

In this section, you will learn how Professionalism impacts the peer review process. It is common that reviewers will have different opinions. Participants in the peer review process must treat each other with respect. By focusing critiques on the ideas presented rather than individuals, being considerate of the diverse views of the review panel, and amenable to other peoples' interpretations, discussions will be conducive to reaching a consensus score.

Committee members must also uphold confidentiality and adhere to [Conflict of Interest](#) policies at all times, including refraining from revealing information related to peer review meetings and committee membership through all forms of communication including social media platforms. Discussions amongst committee participants must be free of aggressive behaviour, biased and/or discriminatory comments, and comments that are construed as flippant or arrogant.

Professionalism Issues

These are some observed examples demonstrating a lack of professionalism, noted by staff and executive committee members that should be avoided during committee meetings:

- Use of offensive language, making biased comments, negative tone of voice such as arrogant, condescending, or aggressive tone, or speaking over other committee members.
- Exhibiting hardline attitudes, have difficulty following directions of committee executives and/or do not take into consideration opinions of other committee members.
- Being aggressive and bullying colleagues who have different perspectives - often leads to difficulty reaching consensus during meetings.
- Being frequently distracted by non-peer review related matters.
- Publicizing participation or a colleagues' participation in peer review meetings on social media and other forms of communication.

Reviewers should note: these practices should never occur and are standards that are already agreed upon by all reviewers as part of the CIHR Standards of Practice for Peer Review and Code of Conduct and Confidentiality agreements.

Please click on the buttons on the bottom of the screen to learn more about [CIHR's Standards of Practice for Peer Review](#) and [Peer Review policies and procedures](#).

The Importance of Professionalism

Maintaining Professionalism is important so that:

- Participants experience a sense of cooperation, security and inclusivity leading to a positive working environment.
- Committee members are more likely to participate in future peer review competitions.
- Reviewers maintain a favorable reputation amongst the scientific community.
- Committees can produce efficient and reliable peer review results.

Preparedness

In this section, you will learn why Preparedness is necessary in the peer review process. Reviewers are expected to have completed the mandatory learning modules prior to participating in one of CIHR's peer review processes and be familiar with CIHR policies. Reviewers should be prepared for committee discussions and present application strengths and weaknesses in their reviews. This includes being familiar with the scores and comments of other reviewers assigned to their set of assigned applications. Reviewers should also be prepared to block their calendars and make arrangements to facilitate their presence and engagement for the duration of the peer review meetings.

Knowledge Check 2

Test your knowledge! Please identify examples of preparedness issues that should be avoided during committee meetings. Select all that apply and submit your response. Note: Submitting your answer will trigger a pop-up window.

- a) Reviewers who speak out of turn.
- b) Reviewers who use their cellphone during committee meetings.
- c) Reviewers who are unfamiliar with their colleagues' scores and/or comments on their assigned applications.
- d) Reviewers who require repeated clarification of committee meeting instructions.

The Importance of Preparedness

When properly prepared, reviewers contribute to productive and efficient committee meetings. Coming to the meeting prepared shows respect for the time of all participants and creates a forum for all applications to receive fair and reasonable consideration.

Responsiveness

In this section, you will learn how Responsiveness ensures smooth operation of the peer review process. Reviewers are responsible for meeting the relevant competition timelines established and communicated by CIHR staff. Reviewers are responsible for informing CIHR staff as soon as possible if they are unable to meet their commitments. Reviewers are responsible for submitting scores and reviews by the deadlines outlined.

Responsiveness Issues

The following are some responsiveness issues encountered in committee meetings:

- Not identifying all potential conflicts in applications, forcing last minute reassignments.
- Completing tasks late, impacting competition timelines and the peer review process, which burdens Committee executives and CIHR staff. These tasks include submitting scores, reviews, and conflict declarations after the deadlines.
- Not updating reviews, comments, or scores post-meeting, if committee discussions resulted in necessary changes.

The Importance of Responsiveness

Reviews that are submitted late make it difficult for CIHR to create meeting agendas and for your colleagues to get ready for panel discussions. Punctuality shows respect for your colleagues. Completing tasks late or often being late (especially at the start of a meeting) can be

disruptive to the peer review process. Occasional lateness is unavoidable but habitually late reviewers place an additional and avoidable burden on the rest of the panel and CIHR staff.

Knowledge Check 3

Test your knowledge! Read the following scenario carefully and choose the correct response based on the information provided. Tap the submit button once you've made your selection.

Note: Submitting your answer will trigger a pop-up window.

Scenario: The deadline for submitting the scores and reviews of your assigned applications is fast approaching. Due to exceptional circumstances, you are unsure if you will be able to submit them by the requested time. What should you do?

- a) Rush through your reviews so you can complete and submit them on time.
- b) It doesn't matter because you can submit them later.
- c) Reach out to CIHR staff and let them know of your situation.
- d) No action required, only submit your scores by the deadline, and submit your reviews after the meeting.

Conclusion

Congratulations, you have now completed the learning module on Review Quality Assurance - Participation and Responsiveness in Peer Review. You should now be able to:

- Understand how to effectively participate and be responsive during peer review.
- Value the importance of preparation and meaningful contribution to peer review discussions.
- Remain professional in your peer-to-peer interactions.

Resources

Select the resources below to view important links on Review Quality Assurance - Participation and Responsiveness in Peer Review. Please also take a few moments to [complete the module survey](#).

- [Peer Review: Policies and Procedures](#)
- [CIHR Standards of Practice for Peer Review](#)
- [Conducting Quality Reviews](#)
- [Quality Assurance in Peer Review](#)
- [Sex and Gender Considerations](#)