



Guidance Notes for Off College Peer Reviewers

These Guidance Notes provide advice and guidance for Peer Reviewers, who are not members of the AHRC Peer Review College, on completing reviews in accordance with the AHRC peer review process, including:

- Conflict of Interest
- Quality of Reviews
- Grading Scale
- Principal Investigator Response

Conflict of Interest

It is vital that all reviewers are seen to be completely impartial at all stages. Where possible we will ensure that proposals are not forwarded to you for review where there is an obvious conflict of interest. For further information on when a conflict may arise please see paragraph 36 in the following link: -

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/PeerReview/Documents/Role%20of%20the%20PRC%20reviewer%20within%20the%20PR%20process.pdf>

If you have a clear conflict of interest, then please decline the review. If you think that you may have a conflict of interest which would mean you could not, or would not be perceived to, provide an objective review, please contact the AHRC for advice before proceeding with the review.

Quality of Reviews

We approach reviewers with knowledge and expertise in the subject areas covered in the application. AHRC's peer review assessment process gives significant weight to reviews. We need to ensure all proposals receive reviews of sufficient detail, evidence and explanation to enable members of the prioritisation panel to compare proposals fairly. The review form asks for comments against particular considerations; there is guidance available as to what is expected in each section and it is helpful to address these directly and specifically. Please be as objective as possible and clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of the application. It is important that any comments, whether in support of the application or querying a particular aspect, are supported by evidence.

Grading Scale

You should assign a grade to each section and to the overall proposal. The assessment criteria and grading scale are outlined in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) (Section 5: Assessment Criteria and Peer Review). Please do not mention the grade you have given in your comments, as this is not normally disclosed to the applicant. You should also try and avoid using words or terms which appear in the descriptors and which might reveal the grade.

Principal Investigator (PI) response

For applications which pass the quality threshold, the PI is invited to submit a response to the reviews received. This allows applicants to correct any factual errors or conceptual misunderstandings, or to respond to any queries you may have highlighted in your comments. These responses are forwarded to the peer review panel and are taken into account in the ranking of proposals.

Only your comments are forwarded to the applicant. Your identity and grade are not disclosed. You are therefore asked to bear in mind that you provide only comments that relate to information in the proposal, and are relevant to the scheme/programme criteria. You should also avoid revealing your identity as part of your written comments.

Further information:

'Checklist for an effective review' -

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/PeerReview/Documents/checklist%20for%20an%20effective%20review.pdf>

If you have any questions or queries, which have not been answered in these notes, please contact the Peer Review College Team on: peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ac.uk